

Delegates play active role at RA

The 50 OEA-Retired delegates to the OEA Representative Assembly played an active role in the April 15-16 annual event at the Red Lion Hotel on the River, Jantzen Beach, Portland.

The retired delegates from all over the state began with a caucus, chaired by OEA-Retired President Marty Bronstein, on Friday afternoon to discuss the major topics. The discussion covered such items as the organization of the RA Handbook, proposed Bylaws, Policies, Resolutions, New Business Items and Legislative Objectives, committee hearings and more.

Not only did the OEA-Retired members participate with more than 600 other OEA delegates during the business sessions of RA, several also:

- worked at the OEA Foundation table, organized by Anne and Bob Jones, to raise more than \$2,500,
- volunteered at the OEA-Retired table where more than 289 books and \$95 were collected for the Literacy Project, organized by Janet Jackson,
- participated in meetings of the Freedom Caucus with Bruce Adams being elected president, Marleen Wallingford; vice president, Dan Domenigoni, membership wrangler; and Jerry Wilkins, Richard Phay and Walt Marchel, Advisory Council members,



The 50 members of the OEA-Retired delegation to the 2011 OEA Representative Assembly pose for their group photo following their Caucus Meeting.

- attended the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus Luncheon and Business Meeting and
- attended several hearings as committee members-- Nancy Lewis, Resolutions; Eileen Wende, chair of Bylaws and Policies; Dan Domenigoni, Legislative;

and Ray Johnson, Human and Civil Rights.

Several awards were presented, too, to:

- OEA-Retired for the highest OEA-PIE contribution per member for the fifth time (previous ones in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010),
- Pat Eder, the OEA Foundation Award,
- Aurora Cedillo, the Deanna Conner Award and
- OEA-Retired for meeting the NEA standard for the diversity of its delegation.
- Both OEA President Gail Rasmussen and Vice President Hanna Vaandering were reelected and John Larson was elected NEA Director. Pam Morris chaired the Credentials Committee.

All Bylaws proposals, which were only cleaning up language, passed as did all Policies but were a major revamp to bring them in line with the Mission, Vision and Core Values that were adopted by the 2010 RA.

Under Education Reform in Legislative Objectives, the delegates adopted replacing "teachers" with "school employees" and adding a statement to discourage the use of test data for educators' evaluations or pay.

Several Resolutions were changed or added to:

- oppose state reliance upon competitive grants to fund schools,
- emphasize that attending school regularly helps students attain excellence,
- encourage emergency/contingency plans for school districts to assure the safety of students and staff,
- support educator collaboration that is not tied to evaluation,
- oppose alternatives to current college and university licensing programs of teacher preparation as they are counterproductive to effective education and
- encourage affordable, quality comprehensive healthcare for all students.

For New Business Items, proposals that were passed included having the OEA president write letters that support

a congressional bill to establish a National Educational Support Personnel Award and hold a second Education Symposium. The delegates also raised \$18,550 for OEA-PIE and \$4,060 for the NEA Children's Fund.

Random remarks



**By
President
Martin A.
Bronstein**

With the recent celebration of National Teacher Day, I decided to do some reflecting. As most of you might know, National Teacher Day is a day of recognition for teachers traditionally celebrated on the first Tuesday of May. This day, of course, follows the May 1 "May Day" celebration around the world that honors working men and women everywhere. What incredible irony, some would say "chutzpah," for the powers to be to trumpet the efforts of working people at a time when public employees and unions, in general, are being blamed for all of the fiscal woes of our tepid economy and are the scapegoats for mismanaged state budgets.

As Dennis Van Roekel, NEA president, recently noted, "What is

happening in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and other states is a classic shell-game. While state leaders slip corporate tax breaks into their budgets, they blame and demonize middle class public workers for growing state deficits. This is a coordinated and resourceful effort to disassemble or severely weaken unions and silence the voices of working men and women."

Richard Sanders, our still rather new OEA executive director, in his address to his first OEA Representative Assembly, summed it up best with his "I'm Sick and Tired" speech about the hypocrisy and disingenuous nature of the current fiscal and budget debates. He also expressed being "sick and tired" of the rain, but we can't help him with that one.

Although, I recently shared with him that after he spends the second half of July, all of August, September, and early October in Oregon, he won't even remember the wet days of January through June! But, I digress.

All of this politicized "blaming" got me to think about the amazing sacrifices and austerity that our predecessors in public education went through as we plowed into the pain-

ful experiences of gaining collective bargaining rights

and how important that turned out to be for us to com-commit to being a part of public education.

Recently, at the annual NEA-Retired West Regional Conference I attended, one of the presenters shared the teacher contract that his mother signed in 1929. His mother, a young teacher in North Dakota, was paid "at the expiration of each month of service the sum of eighty (\$80) dollars." The contract further stipulated that "the teacher is to do the janitor work, that the clerk shall retain 10% of the salary until mutual termination or expiration of this contract. The board will hold the right to hire or fire any teacher."

The list of "Duties of Teachers" at the bottom of the contract is way too lengthy, and condescending, to even delineate! How important was (and is) the gaining and maintaining of collective bargaining rights for public employees? Let's all step back a bit, catch our breath and cogitate on that one for awhile.

I always posted on my bulletin board behind my desk, a poster entitled "1872 Rules for Teachers." It was a great reminder to me of how far we've come and how important it is for us to continue to protect the integrity and dignity our profession. I'll share two of two of my favorites from that above- See Pay Page 3.



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PRIMETIMES

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PrimeTimes, the official publication of OEA-Retired, is published five times a year as a benefit of membership.

For address changes, contact:
503-684-3300 or becky.nelson@oregoned.org.

Switch meets with success

The addition of all OEA-Retired members with an email address to the electronic mailing of PrimeTimes proved successful. More than 1,400 members (68 percent) are now receiving the email version, whereas only about 27 percent were receiving it before. Thanks for your willingness to do this and save mailing and printing costs.

2010-11 CALENDAR

2011

June 1	PrimeTimes published
June 28-29	NEA-Retired Annual Meeting Chicago
June 30-	
July 5	NEA RA, Chicago
July 18	Retired Board, Salem
September 1	PrimeTimes published
September 6	Fall Picnic, Tigard and Salem
October 3	Fall Conference, Salem

New officers are elected

By Nancy Lewis

The Elections and Credentials Committee and volunteers tallied the recent OEA-Retired election and announce the following results:

For officers for two-year terms, Secretary Chris Nelson, Treasurer Barbara Hodgson, and for three-year terms, Region I Director Roberta "Bobbi" Yambasu and Region III Director Barbara Davidson

For NEA-Representative Assembly Delegate for three-year term, Marty Bronstein and for OEA-RA Delegate/OEA-Retired Board for three-year terms, Paul Zastrow, Nancy Giuliani, Jerry Wilkins, Martin Bronstein, Betty Tumlim, Kathryn Warrior, Richard Phay, Gilda Phay, Shirley House, Susan Wilcoxon, Darielle Church, Roberta Yambasu, Pat Eder, Susan Bolen and Ronald Church, with alternates of Paul Schutz, Marleen Wallingford, Peg Hewlett, Alan Holland and Ardeth Woods.

Director visits New Mexico

By At Large Director Judy Richards

As my co-At Large Director Greg Abbott is under the weather, I am writing for both of us.

It was my turn to attend the NEA-Retired West Regional Conference April 9-11 at Pueblo New Mexico along with President Marty Bronstein and Vice President Terri Domenigoni.

The annual conference was at the Tamaya Resort and Spa which is on an Indian Reservation similar to our Kah-Nee-Tah in Eastern Oregon. The Conference was good but the weather was not. It was mostly cold and very windy; sometimes blowing so hard you could hardly see the mountains. Terri tried swimming one day and it was just too cold.

One Conference session I attended on Membership Organizing was particularly good. During the Conference,

we were able to meet with members from Idaho, Wisconsin, Michigan and several other states facing union dismemberment. The message came across loud and clear that we need to collaborate with others as never before. How we come together with others will help strengthen our Union. There is a feeling that we need to work with the next generation of educators so that together we can make a difference.

Terri said that the session on pensions was very informative and offered a website for each state to check out their state's "Pensionomics." If you would like to check Oregon's status, go to www.nirsonline.org/storate/nir/documents/factsheet_OR.pdf. If you want info for other states, just type in the state abbreviation where OR is located in the address.

Along with this session, Terri also attended the social networking session. She said there was good information from the Arizona Retired Association and she was going to take it to the Communications Committee for discussion.

We saw some Indian dances and ate some Indian bread baked in outdoor ovens made out of clay. One evening after the windstorm Terri and I walked to the Rio Grande, about one-half mile away.

Our next planning session for the potential two-day Fall Conference was May 16 at our OEA-Retired Board meeting. As we have mentioned, the goal of a two-day conference would be to offer more presentations and activities to increase attendance.

If any of you have some ideas about what topics you would like to hear, or if you know someone who would be a good speaker on a topic you think most people would enjoy, please contact me at 541-535-2329 or richj@q.com.

Events going on in Portland area

By Region I Director Bobbi Yambasu

As we are now getting ready for our annual fall event, the Not-Back-to-School Picnic, 11 am to 3 pm, September 6, be sure to mark it on your calendar now and think positive thoughts for good weather. As it is for all retired educators and guests, be sure to come and bring friends.

Once again it will be held at Cook Park, Tigard. Hopefully, we will once again have a good crowd of people.

On May 10, we held our annual Portland Metro spring event, appropriately named, Thank Goodness I'm Finally Retired (TGIFR).

About 20 retired educators met at VINO Vixens (a funky wine bar and lounge) in SE Portland where we socialized, met new people, noshed and drank. It was three hours of good fun.

Pay: Lay aside

From Page 1. mentioned infamous list of rules. The first one is that "the teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves."

And, my favorite, "Every Teacher should lay aside from each day pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society." Gender references aside, it is most telling about what the prevailing attitudes of the day were towards teachers.

In closing, we cannot afford to be bullied, scapegoated or cajoled into thinking that we are the reasons for our weak economy or for the serious flaws in our revenue systems. Our long history of working for what is right should not be sacrificed because of "political" expediency and rhetoric. Our active members, and those who will follow, deserve our continued vigilance in protecting the rights of all. The prevailing attitudes of the day need to be honest about what we value and truly support. Our teachers and education support professionals, and public employees everywhere, deserve better.

RA smooth

By OEA Director Paul Zastrow

There has not been a great deal of action since my last report, save for perhaps the least contentious OEA Representative Assembly in history. As my teaching career got started many years ago, I have been to more than 40 straight RAs and each one has had a distinct flavor. This one has to be that of vanilla, as smooth and sweet as any possible!

We elected a new NEA Director for Oregon--even though OEA-Retired members cannot vote in the election--our vote in that arena comes at the NEA-Retired meeting each year just prior to the NEA Representative Assembly, so in a way we are disenfranchised voters!

We worked through some tedious but necessary changes in Bylaws, Policies and Resolutions, plus a few New Business items. Now comes the harder part--putting our adopted Core Values and Goals into real action. Planning the activities around achieving both short- and long-term goals will mean that real efforts need to be made throughout the state to not only bring every member on board, but to include our staff as well.



OEA Director Paul Zastrow and other OEA-Retired delegates listen to debate during the Saturday afternoon session of OEA RA.

Photo by Ray Johnson

With new OEA Executive Director Richard Sanders' experience in the

arena as an organizer, as well as his enthusiasm taking this forward, I feel there is very little we can't accomplish, if we have the will to do so.

This will definitely mean that changes will be happening in the way OEA operates locally, regionally and on the state level. We know the economics will have a negative impact on everyone associated with education, that there will be fewer members due to budget cuts and that the tasks may seem insurmountable. Additionally, we have bargaining with both our OEA unions, the ASO and PSO, and employees deserve a fair and equitable contract reflecting our confidence in their abilities to get the job done.

That being said, it is time we as OEA-Retired members also look at what we do--how can we better serve member needs, both the retirees as well as our active brothers and sisters. If we think Wisconsin's troubles are half a country away, just look how closely we came to having changes in our own executive and legislative branches in Oregon. Then, follow up and look closely at some of the bills introduced this session, very much like those that have had traction in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and other states.

We collectively need to do a better job of monitoring the legislative process, from seeking good candidates, getting them elected and supporting them once in office. Become more than just a retiree but also an activist to keep Oregon good and even better!

One way is to donate more to our political action arena. OEA-PIE needs your dollars as well as your activism; especially during the legislative session.

Contact your elected state repre-

sentative and senator and let them know you will support them in positive legislation that is progressive and is good public policy, and will hold them accountable for votes that are not!

Challenging times call for imagination, dedication and action. I guarantee you that I shall serve as best I can to ensure that we do what is best for Oregon's future. OEA will be the voice for fair and progressive action and with your help there is little we cannot achieve.

Thanks for reelecting me to a second three-year term on the OEA Board.

Books, \$ keep rolling in

By Janet Jackson

There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all. Jacqueline Kennedy

At the OEA Representative Assembly, we invited delegates to bring a book for the OEA-Retired Literacy Project. We collected 289 books and \$95! The OEA Professional Staff Organization donated NEW books they purchased at Powell's to show support for the union workers there and the OEA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Caucus gave us a check for \$50 to purchase books.

Our first donation of 87 of those books was dropped off at the Tillamook County Library (a beautiful facility with a wonderful children's library) for OEA member Bruce Cooper who drives the Tillamook County Bookmobile. Bruce delivers books to four Tillamook County Head Start programs and plans to give a book to each child on his last visit in May. Many thanks to Bruce for helping us put books into the hands and homes of Oregon children.

If you know of a place in your community where we could donate books for children to take home, please contact me at 503-357-8753 or gogirl2@comcast.net and I'll be happy to make a contact.

PIE meets

By OEA-PIE Director June Buck

The February 11 meeting of the OEA People for Improvement of Education was full of some pretty depressing information. It seems like so much of anything these days is dealing with money issues. I keep straining my neck forward in hopes of seeing more light at the end of the tunnel -- then we have Wisconsin. We don't want to be the next Wisconsin, another reason our PIE funds are so very important! We must get pro-public education candidates elected!

PIE membership is down five percent and our funds are down three percent. We need to get our own retired members more involved in contributing to PIE funds. Only 12 percent of our retired members currently are involved and that's after some very hard work and efforts made by many of you a year ago. We did make progress, just not enough.

It would also be a good idea for those of us who can help, to get involved with your locals to help with their spring PIE Drives. The active members are struggling with bargaining, maintaining contracts and layoffs, not to mention trying to do their jobs and have a family life.

The state funding shortfall again is hitting public education drastically as we all know. Education employees will be doing the same jobs with \$3.5 billion fewer dollars -- that is for those employees who still have jobs.

FYI in 2003, schools got 45 percent of the state budget and we thought it was bad then! In 2010, it was 38 percent and predicted to be 37 percent this year.

We must continue to support our pro-education candidates with the strength only dollars and feet on the ground can provide! It will be a while before the need for feet on the ground again, but the need for dollars is NOW! Please do what you can as far as contributing. I know I personally live on far less than when I was working, so I do understand the concept of a fixed income, but a

extra \$5 per month can make a huge difference. Please contact me for a PIE contribution form at 541-890-8335 or j.buck@charter.net.



OEA-PIE Director June Buck and OEA-Retired Vice President Marty Bronstein show off the OEA-PIE award for highest OEA-PIE contribution per member that was presented at the April OEA Representative Assembly. *Photo by Ray Johnson*

February Lobby Day was reviewed and committees were formed to review the PIE Handbook and to prepare for the 2012 PIE Convention.

Scams keep catching people

By Editor Ray Johnson

And they just keep coming. Scams, that is. With electronic capabilities, scams can more readily snare people. It becomes even more important to use diligence and common sense when looking at emails that arrive in your computer mailbox.

Just recently, I received one from the IRS, even with the official logo, saying that in reviewing my financials for the past year I was due a refund and should click on the website link to receive the refund.

It looked official and even said that it was illegal to provide incorrect information. Knowing that something was not right since I have never received an email from the IRS before, and the amount was different than what I was supposed to receive, I doublechecked with my accountant and he said that any contact from the IRS is done by mail, so I deleted it. Unfortunately, how many people

were suckered into this.

As mentioned in the last PrimeTimes, Oregon Attorney General John Kroger has a consumer protection Scam Alert, found at www.doj.state.or.us/finfraudscamalernet/work.shtml or just type in "scam alert oregon" in your search window to find it. At the site, you can sign up to receive the updates on the latest scams going on, such as:

- Fake Osama Bin Laden Footage
- Fake Japan Disaster Relief Charities
- Bogus Travel Emergency (from a friend or relative)
- Fake Debt Collection Scams (by phone)
He suggests:
 - be cautious of links from emails, social networking sites or Google searches. If the url and the search topic don't relate in some obvious way it's best to avoid it.
 - Pop-up ads related to popular internet searches commonly carry malware.
 - Do not be enticed by fake offers of "free" stuff, surveys or contests.
 - Never provide personal information through pop-up ads. If a website redirects you to download software or "codec" in order to view a video, stop! These are signs of a scam.
 - Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and perform a virus scan on a regular basis.

In relation to donation requests from organizations, their legitimacy and how they spend their donations can be checked out at either Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org) or the Better Business Bureau (bbb.org/charity).

As usual, if it sounds too good, it is.

Please write

When you make an address, phone or email change, remember to contact OEA Membership at 503-684-3300, 800-858-5505 or becky.nelson@oregoned.org.

We want to keep in contact with you but cannot when your contact information is not up-to-date.

PERS reform made change

By Bruce Adams

One of the elements of "PERS Reform" several years ago was a significant change in the PERS Board. The size of the Board was reduced to five members, only one of whom may be a rank-and-file PERS participant.

Thomas Grimsley, an OEA member from the Bethel School District, served in that position and he became vice-chair of the Board. When Thomas retired from the Board, Pat West was appointed to fill the vacancy. Pat is a retired Salem firefighter who has served as president of the Oregon Firefighters Association and has been very active in PERS issues.

I retired in 2003 at about the time the reforms became law and I began attending PERS Board meetings on behalf of OEA-Retired. The first thing I noticed was that, unlike the previous Board, the new Board has short meetings – sometimes as short as an hour-and-a-half! I think this tells a lot about the Board's role.

This Board clearly views its role as one of setting policy for the staff to carry out. When I say that the Board meetings are short, I do not mean to imply that this is the only time that members spend on the job; Board members also serve on committees and have other roles.

Much of what is discussed at meetings is of more direct interest to PERS employers than to PERS participants. There is always a report about the cost of running the system – the overhead. Also, the Board often reviews lengthy actuarial reports on expected income and obligations, the number of members likely to retire, etc. So the bad news is that they rarely take any action that has a direct impact on retirees. This is also the good news because we have a right to expect our benefits to continue unchanged, as promised.

It is clear to me that this Board wants to contain the PERS system, in terms of both cost and complexity.

They see their role as managing the system as the legislature has defined it, not changing it. They do submit proposals to the legislature. However, the proposals are usually about making the current system easier to manage and not about changing it.

Food helps

By Director At Large Judy Richards

House Continuing Resolution 36 has been introduced by state Representatives Peter Buckley, Alan Bates and Sal Esquivel, from Southern Oregon in the Oregon legislature.

This resolution recognizes the volunteer efforts of Ashland, Talent and Medford's food project. The food project started in Ashland in 2008 to encourage regular, ongoing donations to the Ashland Emergency Food Bank and was expanded then to Talent, Medford and Phoenix.

In the last two years the food project has collected 225,000 pounds of food for local food banks. Just recently our governor's girlfriend, Cylvia Hayes, came to observe and help pick up food in Ashland. She will be talking about this collection system in speeches around the state and will put it on her website.

The idea is simple. Donors put food in bright green bags every other month. A person who lives in a neighborhood calls a "Neighborhood Coordinator" to pick up the bags and deliver them to a local food pantry. A connection between neighbors occurs when the person is being asked to participate and, also, when the bags are picked up.

Many of the neighbors on my pickup route come out when I arrive and visit for a couple of minutes. The idea is that neighbors who have, help neighbors who don't.

This easy to join, easy to participate every-other-month food collection system is starting to solve seasonal food shortage issues. Instead of food pantry shelves only being full during the holidays now they are full year round.

I have been involved with the Talent Food Project for a year now

and it is one of the most satisfying volunteer activities I have ever been involved in.

PAT-R to hear senior issues

By Marleen Wallingford

The next General Meeting of PAT-Retired will 9:30 am at the PAT office June 9. Lisa Ellington will speak about recent health care legislation and how it affects seniors. This will be the last meeting of the year.

We had five General Meetings this year with topics that ranged from estate planning to book talks. And, we started having a breakfast every other month at different local restaurants.

Our activities coordinator, Jane Morgan, has planned tours of the Pittock Mansion, Maryhill Museum, the Portland Convention Center and local water treatment facilities. We also have supported local ballot measures and help canvass for candidates. As retirees, we want to continue to support our local community.

We will begin next year with the PAT Picnic in September. If you live in the Portland area, please consider joining your fellow OEA-Retired members. Contact me at 503-526-1340 or marleenwong@gmail.com.

Member writes book on Japan

Patricia Reck, an OEA-Retired member from Central Oregon, has published a book, that chronicles her three years in Japan.

Written under her maiden name, P. Amalie Turner, "A Japanese Journey: Alone in the Land of the Rising Sun," is a nonfiction, travel essay/memoir about her being the head mistress of a language school, then administrator of a private school for handicapped children, and finally as the "token Yankee" at a prestigious Tokyo British School teaching kindergarten.

The book is at Barnes and Noble or hitoridepress.com.

Newspaper prints letter

By Richard Phay

Parts of the following Letter to the Editor, by me, was published in the Central Oregon and Bend Bulletin newspapers in May.

(Editor's note: The letter has been edited for length.)

To the Editor:

I recently attended a town hall meeting featuring my local representative (Rep. Mike McLain) to Salem. As a fiscal conservative, he espoused being pro jobs, called for deregulation and rejected any new taxes.

With regard to education he favored school choices and opposed teacher tenure. Unfortunately, "pro jobs" is code for doing anything that will benefit businesses/corporations, specifically deregulating and not taxing them. "No new taxes" is code for not taxing businesses/corporations or the wealthy, something the vast majority of ordinary folks favor. "School choice" is code for privatizing public schools and "eliminating teacher tenure" is code for breaking the teachers' union.

As for the representative's position on creating jobs, he fails to recognize the fact that Oregon's present fiscal problems are the result of the state and national recession we are presently suffering, a condition partially caused by the very policies he favors -- decreased taxation and deregulation of business/corporations.

As for his assault on Oregon's schools, he blames our teachers for the state's budget shortfall, emphasizing that their total compensation package is far too high. However, the truth is teachers' compensation packages do not come close when compared with equally qualified white collar professionals. In fact, Crook County teachers and teachers across the state have taken significant reductions in their compensation packages over the past three school years, a virtual tax not asked of any others in the community. Also, teach-

ers' compensation packages were fiscally sound for the state when the economy was healthy.

As for tenure, the concept came into being many, many years ago because of the practice of school administrators "letting teachers go" after four or five years of experience, when their meager wages at that time began to slowly grow, being told that their position would be posted as a beginning teacher position and they could apply for the position if they wished, thus having to start anew on the salary schedule.

If we want the best of the best to teach our children, then we should apply the same conservative business philosophy to teachers as is applied to corporate America, entice the best people by offering extremely high salary, bonuses and fringe benefits.

Firing a few poor teachers is not a solution; it is a political campaign slogan. And the greatest of campaign slogans make very poor solutions for complex problems. Also, being fiscally conservative is not synonymous with being fiscally responsible.

I wish to encourage our decision makers in Salem to set aside their dogmatic, carved-in-stone campaign positions in order to find open-minded solutions to our real problems.

Salem area plans events

By Paul Schutz

By the time you read this, the Salem Area Chapter of Retired Educators will have attended OEA Representative Assembly, attended several local UniServ meetings, counted ballots for a local election and enjoyed some First Tuesday Breakfasts.

Soon, we will be selecting student achievement winners, attend a retirement dinner for Salem educators and continue our support for local educators and children during these difficult times.

Our June Speakers' Breakfast, 10 am (or 9 am to carpool from Salem

UniServ office), June 20, has turned into a tour of the Oregon Gardens, followed by lunch. We will take a riding tour of the Garden with lunch at the Garden's hotel.

Be sure to RSVP to 503-370- 9208 or ztuhcs@yahoo.com by June 12. Come join us! You are welcome to bring friends, too.

Also, remember to hold the first day of school for Salem at 10 am, September 6, for our Duty Free Lunch Back to School Potluck to be held at Minto Brown Park. Drinks, chicken, place settings and good conversation will be provided.

You are asked to bring salad, dessert, beans, bread or something for all to enjoy. There is room for hikers, bikers, games and, of course, I'll bring Hill Billy Golf. We will eat at noon. Again, contact me.

NCLB suit rejected

In February, the Associated Press reported that the U.S. Supreme Court had decided against hearing Connecticut's challenge to No Child Left Behind, ending the state's six-year suit over payment for increased student testing under the law.

Connecticut was the first state to challenge NCLB, which requires yearly standardized tests for children in grades three through eight. Connecticut had tested students in grades four, six, and eight before 2002. The state sought a change in testing rules or federal coverage of extra testing costs, which add up to millions of dollars.

The high court's decision came after a federal judge and the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New York both agreed in rulings that the lawsuit was premature.

In 2006, the Connecticut State Conference of the NAACP received a federal judge's permission to intervene in the suit, arguing the state was suing with money that could be used for other purposes. They also worried that voiding the law could set a precedent for circumventing many civil rights laws.



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Best movies for 2010

If you are a movie buff, the AARP magazine recently released its best 2010 movies for grownups so you can compare to your 'best' for 2010 or check out ones that you may have missed.

With DVDs coming out shortly after the official release of a movie, it is now much easier to rent sooner or even see them on television earlier.

Here is the selection: The King's Speech, Another Year, Casino Jack, City Island, The Company Men, Get Low, The Kids Are All Right, Letters to Juliet, Red and Secretariat.

US pursues wrong tack

As reported in the Public Education Network Weekly NewsBlast, a guest on The Washington Post's Answer Sheet blog, Linda Darling-Hammond,

says that the recent and first-ever International Summit on Teaching, convened in New York City, showed "more clearly than ever that the United States has been pursuing an approach to teaching almost diametrically opposed to that pursued by the highest-achieving nations."

The summit gathered government officials and union leaders from 16 nations, and the contrast in attitude toward teaching between international participants and Americans "could not have been more stark." Officials from countries like Finland and Singapore described building a high-performing teaching profession by enabling all teachers to enter high-quality preparation programs, generally at the masters' degree level, where they receive a salary while they prepare.

In these programs, teaching students learn research-based strategies and train with experts in model schools attached to their universities. They then enter a well-paid profession -- in Singapore earning as much as beginning doctors -- where they

are supported by mentor teachers and have 15 or more hours a week to work and learn together.

Schools are equitably funded and have the latest in technology and materials. If we are ever to regain our educational standing in the world, writes Darling-Hammond, our leaders must be willing to take a step toward taking teaching seriously.

Read more at www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/darling-hammond-us-vs-highest-achieving-nations-in-education/2011/03/22/ABkNeaCB_blog.html.

To sign up to receive Weekly NewsBlast, go to www.publiceducation.org/newsblast_current.asp.

Thought for the Day

How many times is it appropriate to say "What?" before you just nod and smile because you still did not hear or understand a word they said.