

Travel vicariously through January-February speakers

AFT-Oregon Retiree members Deanna Woods and Greg Monahan will share their travel adventures at the January and February membership meetings.

First Vice President Deanna Woods was a Portland Public Schools high school teacher and a member of PFCE, Local 111, for many years and is a Charter Member of AFT-Oregon Retirees. Woods has served as an instructor for the American Federation of Teachers national office for many years, conducting workshops

Meeting Time and Location:

- Jan. 16 — 10 am: Membership Meeting, Speaker, Deanna Woods, “Training teachers in Palestine”
 - Feb. 17— 10 am, Membership Meeting, Speaker, Greg Monahan, “Traveling and photographing Africa”
 - Mar. 19 — 10 am, Membership Meeting, Speaker TBA
- Meetings held at Oregon AFL-CIO
 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland
 (handicap accessible)

around the U.S. and the world.

One of her recent trips took her to Palestine to work with AFT teacher members there.

Legislative Activities Vice President Greg Monahan was a history professor at Eastern Oregon University and President of AAP, Local 6200. After retirement, he moved to Portland to be close

to his son and grandsons. Monahan has spent much of his time since retirement “seeing the world,” most recently Africa.

Come and bring a friend, stay active in the union movement and travel vicariously to Palestine and Africa through Woods’ and Monahan’s presentations.

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It takes an army

By Val Jack

It takes an Army of volunteers to create over 500 Christmas stockings to bring smiles to children’s faces at Presents From Partners Union Holiday Labor of Love Holiday Party. This event truly is a *Labor of Love!*

With the help of Labor’s Community Service Director Eryn Byram, this year AFT-Oregon Retirees reached out to other retiree groups to join with us in creating beautiful handmade stockings with all ages in mind.

The process started when my husband and I went shopping with Byram and her son for yards of fabric and bolts of ribbon while it was on sale right after Christmas 2017.

In April we held our first cut-out day. Byram set up the conference room and served lunch and retirees copied and shared patterns while scissors snipped fabric into stocking shapes and ribbon into lengths for trim for each stocking. On the sidelines sewing machines whirred and the process began. Throughout the year, we met three additional times. All together about 600 stockings were completed.

This is a project I get a lot out of personally. I have been active in all levels of AFT-Oregon activities for over 30 years. However, I now have to stay closer to home to care for my husband. This is something work on at home, and he enjoys going to the “sewing days” to watch the activity.

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Part of the stocking-cutting Army!



Happy New Year!

By Louise Currin, President

Happy New Year AFT-Oregon Retirees! I hope you enjoyed the holidays with family and friends.

AFT-Oregon Retirees participated in some great Fall/Winter events. In addition to regular member meetings we held our first *Happy Hour* at Sanford's at Lloyd Center. Participants had fun sharing upcoming holiday events and we all got to know each other a little better. We plan is to have more of these get-togethers so keep your eye on emails and mailboxes.

Our annual Union Friends Holiday Potluck was a great success. We had a great time enjoying each others company, lunching on food cooked by someone else, catching up, discussing our plans for the future and gave us a chance to reminisce about our working years and the things we miss about not working and all the things that we don't miss. It also gave us an opportunity to celebrate the November election victories.

Thank you to all who participated in Labor's Community Services Presents for Partners and the annual Holiday Party for needy families. Individual members donated toys for children and AFT-Oregon Retiree volunteers again made 500+ Christmas Stockings. In addition, we staffed the Christmas Stocking Station at the event and helped in other areas at the party as well.

We will be starting out this year with interesting speakers in January and February. First Vice President Deanna Woods will be sharing her experiences providing teacher training in Palestine as an AFT instructor, and Greg Monahan will be sharing his adventures of his recent trip to Africa.

If there is a program or topic you would like to see at a member meeting please contact me (louisecurrin@comcast.net) or Membership Program VP Claudella Walland (cwalland@msn.com).

AFT-Oregon Retirees, 10228 SW Capitol Hwy., Portland, OR 97219; 971-888-5665.

President—Louise Currin

First Vice President—Deanna Woods

Secretary-Treasurer—vacant

VP Membership Program —Claudella Walland

VP Legislative Activities— Greg Monahan

Parliamentarian —

See us on Facebook.

Editor, Val Jack

Contributors to this issue: Louise Currin, Greg Monahan, Deanna Woods

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Legislative Report

By Greg Monahan, Legislative Activities Vice President

November's elections were good news for unions in Oregon and around the country as Democrats swept to victory in the U.S. House of Representatives and achieved super-majorities in both the Oregon House and the Oregon Senate. That majority in the Senate is qualified just a little by the fact that Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) often votes with Republicans on tax and regulation issues.

With that qualification, however, it was an excellent election, made even better by the fact that newly elected Senator Rob Wagner will chair the Senate Education Committee. Wagner was once the Legislative Director for AFT-Oregon and remains a big supporter of our union as well as being deeply committed to improving education for Oregon students from pre-school to grad school. Oregon's students and teachers could not hope for a better champion in the Senate!

PERS issues will, of course, pop up again in the 2019 Legislative session as they have in past sessions, but the likelihood that there will be any attacks on those already retired is considered extremely small. That said, there most definitely will be efforts to curtail the benefits of our friends and family members still working.

Oregon business organizations have already made clear that they want to place all new hires in stingy 401-K contribution plans going forward, and while the potential success of such efforts appears slight given the political make-up of the Legislature, other ideas, especially regarding the "6% pickup," will be on the table.

AFT and other unions in the PERS Coalition will be watching these developments carefully to ensure that the state does not balance its budget on the backs of hard-working state employees.

Whether the new Democratic majorities can finally repair Oregon's chronically broken revenue system remains to be seen. Big businesses continue to bear a microscopically small portion of the general tax burden in the state and have successfully fought off citizen efforts to right that balance. Without that fix, the state's budget picture for the next biennium is not healthy, so we should all encourage our senators and representatives, regardless of political party, to put their heads together and bring sanity to our crazy tax system!

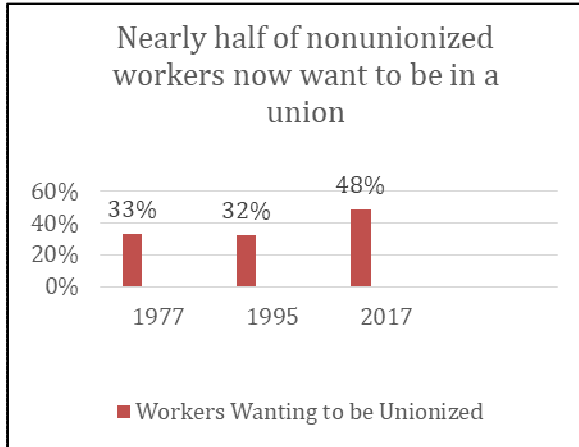
As always, I would encourage you all to stay aware, stay educated, and stay active! Your voice can and will be heard in Salem, provided you are willing to yell loud enough!



Good news for Unions in 2019

By Deanna Woods, First Vice President

When the Koch-brothers won the Janus case before the Supreme Court to kill Fair Share, many in America wondered what effect it and other billionaires' far-right attacks on unions would have. The good news? **More Americans than ever say they would like to join a union.**



The 2017 data were derived from a nationally representative survey of 3,915 people MIT researchers conducted with the National Opinion Research Corporation.

Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND Source: [MIT 2017 Worker Voice Project](#) [Get the data](#)

PBS (2018) noted that the “scale of this change indicates that 58 million American workers would want to join” if they could, a number 4 times higher than the current US membership!

Why do they want a union? Studies like those of the MIT 2017 Worker Voice Project show they want a say on the job., respect, protection from harassment, the ability to solve problems, time to do their jobs right, the ability to organize their schedules for maximum quality, and better compensation and benefits.



AFT-Oregon Retirees members in front of the stocking table at the Labor of Love Holiday Party: Leanna Hakala, Louise Currin, Deanna Woods and Vicki Blevens.

REACHING NON-UNIONIZED AMERICANS - HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

More good news is that unions have actually increased their membership after the Janus decision. AFT-Oregon and others across the US have worked to inform members of the benefits of unions. Many Fair Share members decided they didn't want to lose the rights and benefits that unions provide.

Right now, fewer than 1% of Americans see organizing drives at their workplaces. But you have probably seen an uptick in union organizing among everyone from Starbucks baristas to South Florida tomato pickers. Unions are growing more active.

Retiree Union Power = Your Power

As retirees and union members, you and your fellow members can make a *powerful* difference:

- **Advocate for better labor laws!** Email, call and leave a message, visit, or write a letter to your Congress members. They need to know what *you* support, so they know they have your backing when they stand up for unions. They need to know you are watching.
- **Fight misinformation and the lack of factual information!** Ask questions and share the answers with those you know. You have skills in discerning fact from fiction that many don't have. Also, your union (local, state, and national) has resources you can tap – call or email us!
- **Encourage people to join/support a union! Be as active as you can!** United, we have the power to make America better than it was even before. As a union member, you can make the difference!

UNITED, WE STAND.

History is clear: the more members unions have, the larger is America's middle class and the smaller the gap between rich and poor.

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We plan to start the process with a cut-out day sometime in March so watch for information on our Facebook page. If you would like to be notified, send a message to me or to President Currin, either through the Facebook page or email:

(valeriaj@comcast.net or louisecurrin@comcast.net).

Thanks to the Army of volunteers: Becky Wright, Louise Currin, Debbi Covert, Janice Byram, Christine, Karen Bloker, Greg Monahan, Leanna Hakala, Deanna Woods, Vicki Blevens, Claudella Walland, Paula Kingsbury, Everice Moro, Andrea Matthews, Marjie Chambers, Debbie Corning and countless others who donated fabric, trims or money.



“Elf” Greg Monahan sporting his reindeer antlers helps at the Labor of Love Holiday Party.

Following the Union Friends Holiday Potluck, Claudella Walland, Louise Currin, Everice Moro, Debbi Covert and Greg Monahan with some of the toys contributed to the Labor of Love Holiday Party.



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