

Greenlick and Swift Speakers at January meeting

The holidays are over and our lives will move back into a routine. We hope yours will include attendance at monthly AFT-Oregon Retiree meetings. Speakers at the January 18 meeting will be Representative Mitch Greenlick, who will discuss his new book, *Capitol Letters*. Greenlick has served in the Legislature since 2002 and has been a strong healthcare advocate.

Marcus Swift, recently appointed AFT-Oregon Director of Political and Legislative Affairs. Swift served as Political Organizer for AFT-Oregon before resigning to attend Law School. We are pleased to welcome him back.

AFT-Oregon Retirees meeting
 Wednesday, January 18, 2017
 11:00 a.m.
 Izzy's Restaurant
 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland

This meeting will be an opportunity to let one of our legislators and AFT-Oregon's Lobbyist know your thoughts on possible upcoming legislation, as the Oregon Legislature will be

going into session on February 1.

If there is another specific topic in which you are interested and would like to receive information on, contact Vice President Claudella Walland by email: cwalland@msn.com, or leave a message for her at the AFT-Oregon office, 971-888-5665.

We encourage you to attend monthly meetings. Invite your former co-workers to attend with you. If you have questions, contact Walland at the email or phone num-



Leanna Hakala and Paula Kingsbury deliver a cart of spa baskets donated by Kingsbury to Presents From Partners. See article on Page 4.

Holiday potluck enjoyed by all



Enjoying food and conversation: Everett and Val Jack, Louise Currin, Deanna Woods and Vicki Blevens.

Due to the "iffy" December weather, the group of retirees who gathered to spend some time their union retiree friends was lighter than usual. However, the food was good, the conversation lively, and some toys were gathered for the Presents From Partners party for children (PFP).

Thanks to Membership VP Claudella Walland's trains and race cars (made of candy) decorating the tables, some cash was also raised to purchase gift cards for PFP. Everyone pitched in to help set up and clean up and a good time was had by all!

The next "Union Friends" get-together will be the annual potluck picnic in July.

Social Security changes in 2017

The following information comes from the AARP Facebook page:

Benefits Increase Slightly

The program's 60 million beneficiaries will get 0.3 percent more in monthly benefits next year. Retired workers will see a \$5 bump on average, to \$1,360.

High Earners Pay More Taxes

The amount of earnings subject to Social Security tax in 2017 will increase to \$127,200, up from \$118,500 this year. This tax hike will affect about 12 million of the 173 million people paying into the system.

Retirement Age Inches Up

For people born between 1943 and 1954, full retirement age (FRA) is 66. Next year, the FRA will increase to 66 years and 2 months for people



New Year — New Agenda

By Louise Currin, President

Happy New Year to one and all! As Greg Monahan, our VP for Political Action stated, “We are all going to have to be diligent in protecting the union rights of our union family, and our earned retirement benefits.”

There have been rumors galore regarding Social Security and Medicare. The media has projected that it’s possible current retirees may not see cuts in their Social Security and Medicare, but future retirees will.

It is incumbent on us to fight for the continuation of these retirement benefit programs so our children and grandchildren can enjoy the same retirement security we have.

Activism on our part can take place in many ways. One is to call your legislators and let them know your displeasure for what is happening in Washington. Here is contact information for your Oregon elected federal officials:

- Senator Jeff Merkley: 503-326-3386
- Senator Ron Wyden: 503-326-7525
- Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici: 503-469-6010
- Congressman Earl Blumenauer: 503-231-2300
- Congressman Peter Defazio: 541-465-6732
- Congressman Greg Walden: Medford 541-776-4646; Bend 541-389-4408; LaGrande 1-624-2400; Washington, DC: 202-225-6730
- Congressman Kurt Schrader: 503-588-9100; Oregon City 503-557-1324

With the defeat of Measure 97, there may also be attacks once again on PERS. If this should happen here is the link to find your Oregon State Senator and Representative and their contact information:

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

President—Louise Currin

First Vice President—Deanna Woods

Secretary-Treasurer—Leanna Hakala

VP Membership Program —Claudella Walland

VP Legislative Activities— Greg Monahan

Parliamentarian —

See us on Facebook.

Editor, Val Jack

Contributors to this issue: Louise Currin, Leanna Hakala, Claudella Walland, Greg Monahan

Actively Retired in Oregon is printed quarterly by Classified Employees who are members of Portland Community College Federation of Classified Employees, AFT Local 3922.

www.oregonlegislature.gov.

Speaking of Oregon legislators, we are honored to have State Representative Mitch Greenlick, a member of AFT-Oregon Retirees, as the speaker at our January meeting. Rep. Greenlick has recently authored a book, *Capitol Letters*. He has been an advocate for health care during his tenure in the legislator. Please join us on January 18, 11:00 a.m. at Izzy’s, 122nd and Halsey

(Continued from page 1 — Social Security Changes)

born in 1955. This increase will continue each year, reaching 67 years for those born in 1960 or later.

Earn More Without Affecting Benefits

Taking retirement benefits early while still working can temporarily reduce your monthly check — depending on your annual income. In 2017, for every \$2 you earn above \$16,920, one dollar of benefits will be withheld. In the year you reach your full retirement age, \$1 of benefits will be withheld for every \$3 earned above \$44,880. Once you reach full retirement age, Social Security will recalculate your benefits to give you credit for those withholdings.

Goodbye to File and Suspend

Previously, you could claim your retirement benefit and then suspend it, allowing your spouse to receive benefits based on your record while your benefit continued to accrue. Some people were still able to do this for part of 2016, but no one can in 2017. (This new rule doesn’t affect divorced spouse’s benefits.)

Rise in Maximum Benefit

The most a worker retiring at full retirement age in 2017 will receive is \$2,687 per month, up \$48 from 2016

<http://www.aarp.org/work/social-security/info-2016/2017-social-security-changes-photo.html#slide1>

CALENDAR

Jan. 18 — 11 am: AFT-Oregon Retiree Meeting, Speakers: Rep. Mitch Greenlick, Marcus Swift, AFT-Oregon

Jan. 19—9 am-12 pm Oregon ARA, Oregon AFL-CIO Labor Center, 3645 SE 32nd, Ptdl.

Feb. 15 — AFT-Oregon Retiree Meeting, Speaker TBA

Mar. 15 — AFT-Oregon Retiree Meeting, Speaker, TBA

AFT Retiree Lunch meetings held at 11:00 a.m., Izzy’s, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland



Legislative Report

By Greg Monahan, Legislative Activities Vice President

What will surely be remembered as one of the most divisive and extraordinary elections in the nation's history is finally over. Donald Trump will be the next president of the United States, and that will pose a formidable challenge to unions throughout the nation as well as to anyone devoted to public education.

The new president-elect has named a Secretary of Labor who is opposed to organized Labor and an education secretary who does not believe in public education!

AFT National and its state feds and locals around the nation are already preparing strategies to protect the rights of workers throughout the country to organize and to fight for public education as this new, openly hostile federal administration comes to power.

Oregon's state elections proved far less harmful. Democrats in the Senate lost one seat (to a somewhat moderate Republican in Ashland) but maintained a 17-13 majority. The numbers for the Democratic majority in the Oregon House remained unchanged. The Democratic Leadership continues to be pro-education and pro-Labor, as does Governor Kate Brown, who is now an *elected* governor.

Unhappily, voters rejected Measure 97 that would have forced mostly out-of-state corporations to pay their fair share of the costs of state services.

They supported Measure 98, however, which boosts spending for certain aspects of public educa-

tion *without* any additional funding. As a result, a budget hole for 2017 originally estimated to be \$1.3 billion without Measure 98 will be as much as \$1.7 billion with it. The governor's new budget makes a heroic effort to protect education programs, but to do so, it must cut elsewhere, and also depends on revenue increases that will have a difficult time drawing necessary Republican support.

One bright spot is that the governor proposed NO new "PERS reforms," which, as you all know, have in the past been nothing more than code words for efforts to undermine public employee retiree benefits. Without substantial support from the governor, we think it unlikely that there will be more PERS cuts, but as the Oregon Legislature comes into session in the new year, the pressure of that massive budget hole will be substantial. PERS may come into the discussion.

AFT-Oregon Retirees and AFT-Oregon as a whole will be active in this legislative session. What can you do? Be vigilant! Pay attention! Talk to your representatives and senators and let them know where you stand. Donate to the political activities of your union and other causes in which you believe! Statewide and nationally, it has never been more important for all of us—working and retired alike—to stand with our union sisters and brothers and resist those who would destroy the gains we and our forebears have sweated blood to gain. Solidarity isn't just something we sing about occasionally. It is how we will not only survive over the next four years but grow stronger!



AFT-Oregon Retirees Local 8035R

Notice of Nominations and Election for Alternates – AFT-Oregon Convention

April 21, 22 & 23, 2017

Portland Hilton, Portland OR

Nominations for Alternates to the AFT-Oregon Convention will take place February 15 at the General Meeting of AFT- Oregon Retirees, Local 8035R. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the February membership meeting at the date, time and place indicated below. Election will immediately follow nominations.

Date: Wednesday, February 15
Time: 11:00 AM
Place: Izzy's - Gateway
1307 NE 102nd Avenue, Portland, OR

Nominations may also be made in writing and must be received by Secretary Treasurer, Leanna Hakala 713 NE 16th Ct., Gresham, OR 97030 or flips8189@comcast.net prior to the meeting. As provided in the constitution all candidates for the convention must have been members of AFT-Oregon Retirees for at least one (1) year or their local union, or AFT-Oregon at the time of their retirement.

All members current with their dues are eligible to vote.

Presents from Partners — “It’s very heartwarming!”

“It makes me feel very good to know I’m helping out kids – and their parents!” said retiree Vicki Blevens when asked about her volunteer time at Presents From Partners. “It’s a special thing to do, very rewarding. It’s so much fun to see the kids’ faces light up like a Christmas tree at every little thing they choose.” She summed it up, “It’s very heartwarming.” Blevens, an OSEA retiree has been an AFT-Oregon member since her retirement.

Many AFT-Oregon Retirees again participated in one way or another, by helping make stockings, donating toys, or volunteering their time at the party. “It Takes a Village” not only to raise a child, but to make certain children who might not otherwise receive that special gift, or be able to give a special gift to their parent, experience the joy of Christmas. These are children from homeless families, laid-off families, families in medical crisis, and families tossed by Portland’s rental crisis.

Here are the statistics for this year’s party (even with bad weather):

- ◆ 450 children were served
- ◆ 200 parents were pleased
- ◆ 125 volunteers made this happen
- ◆ 1,500 toys were distributed
- ◆ 3 dozen unions participated

- ◆ 2 U-Haul trucks needed to move toys
- ◆ 13 community sponsors were involved
- ◆ 21 individuals serve on the Planning Committee

The party isn’t just about toys. Children and their parents have a wonderful lunch, meet Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, receive a book, and pick a gift for their parents, in addition to a stocking, and toys to go in it.

Claudella Walland says she has a great time volunteering at the party. “The children have such a great time picking their Christmas stocking. Their eyes light up when they find just the right one. By the end of the day, they’re tired but happy children!”

AFT-Oregon Retirees gives a Shout-Out to volunteers who cut and sewed 419 Christmas stockings this year: Louise Currin, Val Jack, Paula Kingsbury, Lucia Barnett, Leanna Hakala and Claudella Walland.



Deanna Woods (l) and Vicki Blevens wear their reindeer antlers proudly as they welcome children to the party.

Speakers Marcus Swift and
Rep. Mitch Greenlick
January 18, 2017

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

AFT, AFL-CIO
10228 SW Capitol Hwy.
Portland, OR 97219

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Actively Retired in Oregon

May 2017

Annual Meeting: New location, New time

Imagine her surprise when AFT-Oregon Retirees' Membership VP Claudella Walland stopped by Izzy's on NE 102nd for lunch and discovered the door was locked and a sign on the door "Lost our Lease."

Is this for real? AFT-Oregon Retirees had a meeting scheduled for this location on May 17. What to do? A new location was secured, thanks to our friends at the Oregon AFL-CIO. The location change necessitated a time change also, (10:00 a.m.) but the meeting will go on at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland.

Election of Officers will occur at this meeting. Candidates for office will be nominated from the floor and

New Time and Location:
AFT-Oregon Retirees Annual Meeting
Wednesday, May 17 2017
10:00 a.m.
Oregon AFL-CIO
3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland

elected following the nomination. Newly-elected officers will serve two year terms.

Following are the officers to be elected, and the person currently serving in the position: President (Louise Currin), First Vice President (Deanna Woods), Secretary-

Treasurer (Leanna Hakala), Vice President Membership Program (Claudella Walland) and Vice President Legislative (Greg Monahan). You are encouraged to attend this meeting and be a part of the annual meeting.

If you have questions, or suggestions for speakers at future meetings, contact Vice President Claudella Walland by email: cwalland@msn.com, or leave a message for her at the AFT-Oregon office, 971-888-5665.

On the inside:

From the President	2
Legislative Report: Greg Monahan	2
Limited list of Trump White House and GOP Positions and actions	3
Union shopping options	4
Calendar	4

Sen. Merkley's staff meet with AFT-Oregon Retirees

Senator Jeff Merkley's staff members Dan Mahr, Labor Liaison and Stacey Jochimsen, Constituent Services Representative, attended the AFT-Oregon Retirees' April 19 meeting to update them on the Senator's activities. Mahr was previously with Working America, the political organizing arm of the AFL-CIO with a membership of non-union individuals. Jochimsen's concentration is on issues and questions related to Medicare, Social Security, disabilities and other healthcare issues.

Following is a recap of their report on "where things are" in Congress and the White House:

- About 80% of necessary roles in the Trump Administration (Cabinet positions, etc.) are not yet filled.
- Issues over funding the government. (Since the meeting, this issue has been resolved for the present time. It will come up again in the Fall.) The last time the government was shut down due to funding was in 2012 when the GOP shut it down.
- Additional fight over the budget. Big cuts in the Trump budget on almost all discretionary spending except the military.
- The good news is that people like Senator Merkley, are upbeat and in "fight" mode. His Town Hall meetings are going well. All have had more attendees than expected, one with an attendance of 3,000.
- Things WE can do: attend rallies, call legislators, encourage others to do likewise. Work at the local level (your political party, your union, etc.) on issues important to you.
- The challenge is to keep the momentum going in preparation for 2018 and beyond.
- There are big concerns about the extreme GOP members still in Congress, especially in the House.

Everyone is encouraged to keep the lines of communication open with their Senators and Representative in Washington, D.C. Be aware and knowledgeable about what's happening.



May elections

By Louise Currin, President

It is spring again even if we have seen little evidence of the fact. There have been lots of blossoms, but they have been late and short lived because of

our cold, wet, and windy spring weather. But I do have hope for warmer days and better times.

There is new hope on the horizon with the May elections. Even though there are not competitive legislative and congressional elections, there are elections for local board and ballot measures. In my area there are school and park board elections and a measure regarding public safety. These elections are important, and they do govern and affect our day-to-day lives. Do your research and vote for those who best represent your union values.

I had the honor again this year of representing you at the AFT Oregon Convention in Portland. As well as continuing to pass resolutions regarding collective bargaining and workplace safety, this year we debated the high cost of rents and the challenges that charter schools pose for our families and former co-workers and the challenges of detecting falsehoods in the media.

As a reminder, we will be electing officers next week at our annual meeting. Please come and be part of the process.

“Summer is not obligatory. We can start an infernally hard jigsaw puzzle in June with the knowledge that, if there are enough rainy days, we may just finish it by Labor Day, but if not, there’s no harm, no penalty. We may have better things to do.” — *Nancy Gibbs, American Journalist born in 1960.*

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Legislative Report

By Greg Monahan, Legislative Activities Vice President

It has been a very busy, if not particularly productive, legislative session

so far. First, the good news: there are no attacks coming on PERS retirees. Even those who want to reduce benefits for future retirees understand that the courts have pretty well closed the door to any efforts to reduce the benefits of those already retired.

No doubt, the increasing financial clout and political activism of OPRI (Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc) has had an impact there. Of course, that does not mean that Republicans (and especially Senator Tim Knopp) are not still attempting to cut the benefits of future retirees.

AFT and its partners in the PERS Coalition are working to prevent such attacks, and I recommend the Coalition website to all of you

(www.keeporegonspromise.org). It’s very good.

Otherwise, the big issue in this year’s session remains the large \$1.8 billion budget hole. Certainly, PERS costs play a role in that, but so do steadily increasing healthcare costs. Hospitals have volunteered to tax themselves to help cover at least some of that deficit, but there will still be pressures ahead, and many state services could yet see cuts that would impact many of us directly. Democrats want to find ways to increase revenues (especially in business taxes), but the odds of getting Republican buy-in on those plans remain low.

Republicans do want to improve roads, and this legislature will almost certainly pass the first transportation package in quite a while. There is a huge backlog of maintenance to the state’s transportation infrastructure. That will mean an increase in the gas tax, estimated right now to be around ten cents per gallon.

Roads and public systems are in such bad shape that it would actually take a 51 cent increase to get the massive job done immediately, but that’s definitely not going to happen! That said, everyone reading this piece should brace themselves for an increase in gas taxes “down the road.”

As always, I encourage all of you reading this to stay involved. Call or write your state representative or senator and let them know what you think! Copy this link to find their addresses: <http://www.oregonir.org/how-contact-oregon-state-legislators>



A limited list of Trump White House and GOP positions and actions

By Deanna Woods, First Vice President

The GOP trends (both in Congress and the White House) focus on cuts in social programs, from Meals on Wheels to Social Security. Also proposed: cut environment protections; deregulate Wall Street; defund research; cut arts; privatize education.

Proposed WH Program 100% Budget Cuts	Proposed Department/Agency Cuts
Public Broadcasting (NPR, PBS)	Health & Human Services (18%)
Amtrak (220 stations to close)	Education (14%), Justice (21%), NASA (1%)
Legal Services Corporation (helps poor)	Housing & Urban Development (12%)
Community Development, Affordable Housing	Energy (6%), Agriculture (21%), &
Appalachian Regional Commission	State (29%)
National Endowments for Arts & Humanities	Treasury (4%), Interior (12%)
Institute, Museum & Library Services	Labor (21%), Transportation (13%)
USDA Water & Wastewater loans & grants	National Institutes of Health (20%+)
Low-Income Energy Assistance (heating)	Center for Disease Control (12%)
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration	Environmental Protection Agency (31%) –
	Commerce (16%)
Proposed WH Program Partial Budget Cuts	US Army Corps of Engineers (16.3%)
HIV Research, Clean Power Plan	
AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, Pell Grants	GOP, Trump Positions (* = now law)
Clean Power Plan	Pass national right-to-work law
FEMA (11%), Coast Guard (14%), TSA (11%)	Cut heating assistance to poor, elderly
UN climate change programs	Eliminate Social Security payroll tax
Office of National Drug Control	Promote & fund private, for-profit schools
Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food assistance; Meals on Wheels	Allow coal mining in national parks and wildlife refuges
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp.	<i>Cut taxes on the wealthy</i>
	<i>Increase military by 10%</i>
Executive Orders	<i>Increase VA by 6%</i>
Travel ban (now declared illegal by courts)	Rollback of Dodd-Frank
Freezing regulations until he's seen them	Allow seriously mentally ill to own guns*
Re-starting Keystone pipeline (Russian steel)	End all actions to address climate change
Reorganizing Security Council, Exec Branch	Sell/privatize national parks and lands
Deport immigrants (not restricted to criminals)	Legalize killing of hibernating bears & cubs*
Construction of border wall (to be funded through domestic program & agency cuts)	Allow ISP providers to sell your private information without your consent
Block 2016 Fiduciary Rule prohibiting retirement advisers from serving their interests over clients'	Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid (privatizing or giving vouchers with caps)
Block energy efficiency standards (9 states suing to stop the block)	States can w/hold federal funds from Planned Parenthood*
Revoked <i>Fair Pay & Safe Workplace</i> protections for women	Stop monitoring of white supremacists, neo-Nazis. Monitor only Muslims

Union Friends Potluck Picnic

The annual Union Friends Potluck Picnic is scheduled for July 13, 11:30 a.m. at the Walland's home, 3332 NE Fremont Dr., Portland.

Everyone is encouraged to attend, bring your spouse, or a former co-worker. Have some fun and share food with other retirees.

Bring a salad, hors d'oeuvres, main dish or dessert to share with everyone, as well as a lawn chair for yourself, and be prepared for a fun, relaxing time. We look forward to seeing you there!

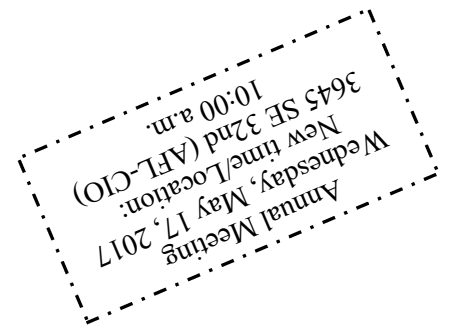
CALENDAR

- May 17 — 10 am: AFT-Oregon Annual Meeting, Election of Officers
 - June. 21— 10 am, AFT-Oregon Retiree Meeting, Oregon AFL-CIO, Speaker TBA
 - July 13 — Union Friends Potluck Picnic at the Walland's home, 3332 NE Fremont Drive, Portland, Oregon
 - August — No Meeting
- NOTE: May and June meetings will be held at the Oregon AFL-CIO, 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland

Union-made shopping

Shopping for your home, for a party or a gift? Look for something union-made. How can you make sure you are looking at "union-made?" On your mobile device, you can receive union-made shopping lists!

- ◆ Text **AIRLINE** to 22555 for union-friendly airlines
- ◆ Text **APPLIANCE** to 22555 for union-made appliances
- ◆ Text **BEER** to 22555 for union-made beer
- ◆ Text **CARS** to 22555 for union-made vehicles
- ◆ Text **CANDY** to 22555 for union-made candy
- ◆ Text **GIFT** to 22555 for union-made manufacturers for wedding gifts
- ◆ Text **HOTEL** to 22555 for union-friendly hotels
- ◆ Text **PETS** to 22555 for union-made pet products
- ◆ Text **TOYS** to 22555 for union-made toys
- ◆ Text **WINE** to 22555 for union-made wine



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Actively Retired in Oregon

September 2017

Merkley staff to address AFT-Oregon Retirees

In the last newsletter, we informed you that AFT-Oregon Retirees' meeting location was changed. Retirees will continue to meet at the new location, the Oregon AFL-CIO, 3645 SE 32nd Ave. in Portland. This change was necessitated by the closure of Izzy's Restaurant.

Senator Jeff Merkley's Labor Liaison, Dan Mahr will talk with retirees at the meeting on Wednesday, September 20 at 10:00 a.m. Light refreshments will be served.

Officers were elected for two-year terms beginning July 1, 2017, at the May meeting. Incumbent officers

New Meeting Time and Location:
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Wednesday, May 17 2017
10:00 a.m.
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were nominated and re-elected as follows: President, Louise Currin; First Vice President, Deanna Woods; Secretary-Treasurer, Leanna Hakala; Vice President Membership

Program, Claudella Walland and Vice President Legislative Activities, Greg Monahan.

If you are newly-retired, start the fall off right by attending an AFT-Oregon Retiree meeting. If you have questions, or suggestions for speakers at future meetings, contact Vice President Claudella Walland by email: cwalland@msn.com, or leave a message for her at the AFT-Oregon office, 971-888-5665.

Labor can not stand still. It must not retreat. It must go on, or go under.—Harry Bridges

On the inside:

From the President	2
Legislative Report: Greg Monahan	2
Getting past the eclipse	3
Retirees beware Medicare fraud	4
Calendar	4

Union Friends Picnic; Good food, good friends



The crowd was small but the food and conversation were both good at the annual Union Friends Picnic. Held in lieu of a membership meeting in August, the picnic was moved to the backyard of VP Claudella Walland.

The Union Friends Holiday Potluck is one of two yearly gatherings that pull together retirees from many unions. Bonding over food is a long American and union tradition. Join other retirees on December 6 for the Holiday Potluck, which will be held at the Oregon AFL-CIO, 3645 SE 32nd Ave. in Portland.



Above: OSEA Retirees Bonnie Luisi and Jay Osborne visit. Left: Everett Jack (Val Jack's husband) and AFT-Oregon Retirees' President Louise Currin.



Back to school

By Louise Currin, President

Even though I am retired school employee, September still signals the beginning and preparation for a new year and new beginnings.

Your retiree board is preparing programs that we hope will be of interest to you. We are considering trying new things such as field trip activities as well as informational meetings with speakers. We will be sending a survey in the near future to get your input on the types of activities you might enjoy.

Even though there is not a major election this fall, it is important to stay tuned to the political world. Social Security, Medicare and pension reform continue to be of concern to retirees. We will keep you updated on these issues through our newsletter.

We also regularly post informative articles on our Facebook page regarding these issues. Please go to our FB page and check it out; while you are there “like” us. Of course, follow up by contacting your legislators expressing your position on senior issues.

If you have time to commit and want to connect with the community, consider volunteering at your local school. You can contact schools or districts directly or you Google organizations such as Chess for Success or SMART (Start Making a Reader Today).

Have a great fall,

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

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Legislative Report

By Greg Monahan, Legislative Activities Vice President

The long 2017 session of the Legislature finally ended in July. Thankfully, there were no more attacks on retiree benefits; that ship seems to have sailed. Yet, while those who have retired were fairly safe, there was still a lot of talk about cutting the benefits of our friends and colleagues who are still working and not yet retired. In the end, however, I am happy to report that no such attacks passed the Democratically-controlled House and Senate.

Representatives and Senators did, however, face substantial challenges, the greatest of which was the projected \$1.8 billion budget hole caused in part by PERS costs, but also by increases in health care and other costs. Many groups, including AFT, pushed hard for tax reform that would finally move Oregon off of the bottom in business taxes and force large corporations like Walmart and McDonalds to pay their fair share. But even though the business associations had talked about agreeing to such increases, in the end they refused to walk the walk, and no such tax reform took place.

Luckily, the continuing economic expansion made the May revenue forecast brighter, shrinking the hole somewhat, and hospitals agreed to a provider tax increase that would be offset by federal payments, providing the state with an additional \$800 million in revenue. That, combined with closing a business tax loophole, helped the Legislature close the gap; however it did nothing for future budget holes, which are likely to be much bigger than this one, especially if the nation’s economy suffers a recession.

The Legislature did finally enact a Transportation Package for the first time in several years. This will result in slightly higher gasoline taxes and registration fees, and will help the state begin the long process of improving its crumbling transportation infrastructure. Included in the package was the possibility of turning parts of I-5 and I-205 into toll roads in order to widen both at critical points. Whether Oregonians will tolerate that idea when it finally comes time to implement it remains to be seen!

On the whole, then, it was a mixed session. No great damage was done, but no great achievements

(Continued on page 3)



Getting past the eclipse

By Deanna Woods, First Vice President

Now that we're now almost nine months into the new administration, the question is what's happening? So here's a bit of light on things at the national level, a quick summary of verifiable facts so you can keep on top of the issues for activism.

- **Charlottesville.** Polls show the majority of Americans are concerned about Trump's "on both sides" responses to the events there. Only 28% approve of his stances.
- Unlike previous administrations, **Trump's administration will not monitor white supremacists** and other white domestic terrorists; they will focus solely on Islamic terrorists.
- **The Secret Service is totally out of funds** to protect Trump and his family. Almost-weekly trips to Trump properties, family vacations, and business trips have used up all of the funding, and there is no money to pay the agents after 9/30.
- **Several advisory committees have disbanded**, many by the decision of the members: Climate Change Advisory, Arts & Humanities Committee, Manufacturing Council, Business Council. The planned Infrastructure Advisory was abandoned.
- **Trump is on pace to spend more in one year on travel** (weekend trips to his properties, etc.) than Obama did in eight years.
- **Trump has reportedly decided not to withhold subsidies for the ACA.** The CBO has calculated that if he were to withhold them, premiums will rise 20%.
- **Trump has scrapped Obama's protections against wage theft and failure to pay overtime.** Trump scrapped several requirements helping employees.
- **Unfilled positions are still in the hundreds, including ambassadorships**, top positions in the State Department, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Treasury, Centers for Disease Control, and so on. Nominations by the White House have been very slow in coming. Many departments are being cut.
- **Rollback of environmental protections** involves privatizing national parks, opening them up for drilling; allowing toxic waste to be dumped into streams and rivers; promoting fossil fuels like coal at the expense of green energy. Most developed nations are moving to green energy.

GOOD NEWS

- **Puerto Rico teachers** have voted to affiliate with AFT!
- AFT is working with a variety of groups to **protect Social Security and Medicare.**
- Pushback against privatizing public schools is coming from all sides. Not just AFT and other unions.
- **Many states are picking up on environmental protections** as the federal agencies are losing staff and funding. Many large corporations are objecting to elimination of environmental protections.
- **Gerrymandering** in several red states has been overturned by courts. The Supreme Court is planning to take up the case of gerrymandering in the near future. At least one group, under Holder and Obama, are challenging gerrymandering.
- **Gallup poll shows increased support for public schools.**
- **AFT and AFT locals are challenging several states' efforts to cut pensions.** We are also building coalitions with state treasurers, large Wall Street firms and unions to expand retirement security. (See AFT website.)



(Continued from page 2 - Legislative Report)

occurred either. Businesses in the state remain criminally under-taxed, resulting in revenues that will continue to lag behind costs. Future sessions will have to deal with that problem, and we will all have to stay vigilant to make sure they do it in a manner that is fair and equitable to all of us. So, stay tuned and stay active!

Lest we forget:

The history of America has been largely created by the deeds of its working people and their organizations--there is scarcely an issue that is not influenced by labor's organized efforts or lack of them.—

William Cahn, Labor historian

Retirees beware Medicare fraud

Retirees are encouraged to be aware of Medicare fraud and security changes coming to Medicare cards soon.

Rampant fraud. Medicare fraud is rampant and a disgrace. A 2017 Identity Fraud Study released by Javelin Strategy & Research indicated \$16 billion was stolen from 15.4 million US consumers in 2016, a 13.1 million increase from two years ago, with seniors being the most vulnerable. A fraudster places a call to a prospective victim and asks for Medicare numbers and other information and fraud is possible.

A change is coming to Medicare and people need to be prepared. Medicare beneficiaries need to protect their card and not give any of their personal information to strangers.

New Medicare ID. To help prevent fraud and identity theft, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) was passed April 16, 2015, requiring removal of the Social Security Number from the Medicare card. Beneficiaries will be mailed a new card with an exclusive Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) sometime after April 1, 2018.

Fraudulent Phone Calls. Fraudsters will likely

make phone calls, pretending to be from the IRS, Medicare, or SSA, asking to verify important personal information such as complete name, address and birth dates. Their stated reason for calling is to ensure members get their new cards right away so benefits will not be discontinued or delayed.

Medicare beneficiaries should not talk to any person pretending to be from a federal agency such as IRS, Medicare or SSA. These agencies communicate in writing.

Medicare cards should be protected, whether the existing card or the new one and personal information should not be given to strangers.

A record should also be kept of dates and treatments received and then compared with statements received from Medicare or insurers to make certain they match.

All retirees should protect themselves and others from identity fraud.

This information is reprinted from a posting on the AFT-Oregon Retirees Facebook page. Read more: <http://usa.inquirer.net/6114/seniors-told-beware-fraud-medicare-changes-card-id-system#ixzz4qoYOGy3S>



More Union Friends Picnic pictures.

Left: AFT-Oregon President David Rives contemplates which he should choose from the available salad offerings.

Right: Past President Val Jack arranges items on the beverage table while First Vice President Deanna Woods checks out the variety of beverages.



CALENDAR

Sept 20 — 10 am: Membership Meeting, Speaker Dan Mahr, Sen. Merkley's Labor Liaison

Oct. 18 — 10 am, Membership Meeting, Speaker TBA

Nov. 15 — 10 am, Membership Meeting, Speaker TBA

Dec. 6 — 11:30 am, Union Friends Holiday Potluck,.

NOTE: All meetings and Potluck will be held at the Oregon AFL-CIO, 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland

Save the date!
Union Friends Potluck
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2017
3645 SE 32nd (AFL-CIO) 11:30 a.m.