



OREGON RETIRED EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION CHALKBOARD

The OREA Newsletter

2026 Spring Issue

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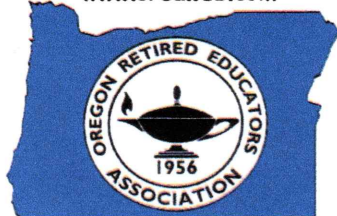
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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Once again, spring has sprung and we are approaching the early days of summer. Students are preparing for graduation to the next step in their lives, may it be challenging, successful and rewarding for their future. For those of us who have lived through many of these cycles, there is a continuity yet a uniqueness for each one, most usually in small ways. But when the big ones hit, look out!



This year was a big one for me. I was diagnosed with cancer.

I have one more chemotherapy session in June with radiation to follow.

When I was first told, I did a lot of praying and came to a serenity about leaving it in God's hands. I read an article that said turkey tail mushrooms helped with strengthening the immune system with certain cancers and began taking a supplement with it as soon as possible. I believe it has helped me immensely. I have tolerated the chemo well. I have also followed all the doctor's orders. I have amazing support from my sister, my family, my friends and my church community. So, it has become a blessing to treasure.

At one point in the past 16 years, I bought a cancer policy from our AMBA benefits as well as a heart attack/stroke policy. There were times when I grumbled about paying for it, but when I filed a claim for the cancer diagnosis and received a check in the mail, it changed my whole attitude. It has also taken a lot of the worry out of traveling to Bend for my medical care. Another blessing!

I hope this hasn't been a depressing read for you, but it is what is on my mind right now and seems to be easiest to share. I am doing very well most days, almost embarrassingly so. I am keeping up with most of my previous activities. I am enjoying the baby birds outside my window, the warm glow of the spring sun and thoughts of all of you enjoying the burgeoning of our life cycles in this season of growth. May your days be filled with sunshine and joy!

Bonita Fillmore, State President

2026 OREA Convention

We hope you are planning to attend the 2026 OREA State Convention to be held in Independence on September 30, 2026 (full day) and October 1, 2026 (half day). Unit 2 (Salem) is busy planning the speakers, entertainment and sightseeing events and all of their planning will be revealed in our July State Convention Chalkboard.



You can begin your trip now. Make your hotel reservations at the Independence Hotel (201 Osprey Lane) where rooms for convention attendees have been reserved. The room cost will be \$139/night plus 10.5% tax - single, king or double queen rate. A breakfast buffet is included. Booking can be done on-line through the link (<https://www.reservationdesk.com/hotel>) or by phone (866-245-4823).

The historic town of Independence will be beautiful as we are pushing into fall. Don't miss this opportunity to network with OREA members from around the state, hear inspiring speakers and catch some of that fall beauty!

AMBA

Hello Oregon Retired Educators members,

Today I want to write about something many people avoid thinking about, but something that can have a tremendous impact on both your finances and your quality of life: long-term care and in-home care planning.

Many people spend years making sure they have excellent medical coverage, dental coverage, or prescription coverage, yet they overlook one of the biggest financial and emotional risks they may ever face - the need for assistance at home or long-term care services as they age.

The reality is that Medicare does not cover long-term care. While Medicare may provide limited home health care services for a short period of time, it does not cover ongoing custodial care, homemaker services, or assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation, or companionship. These are often the very services people need most in order to remain safely and comfortable in their own homes.

Without proper planning, the cost of care can quickly become overwhelming and may place a significant burden on both you and your family. Unfortunately, many people do not realize these gaps in coverage until a health crisis occurs.

That is why it is so important to plan ahead and understand your options before care is needed. Having the right protection in place can help preserve your savings, maintain your independence, and provide peace of mind for both you and your loved ones.

If you would like to learn more about long-term care or short-term in-home care plans, I would be happy to speak with you and answer your questions. As your AMBA representative, I am here to help you review your options and assist you with your insurance needs.



Submitted by Heidi DeCorte

Senior Benefits Advisor, located in Central Oregon, Phone: 541-329-3618, calls only
Services provided in the following states: HI, OR, PA, VA WA, WV www.Amba.info

OREA Memorial Fund

The OREA Memorial Fund provides an opportunity for OREA units and individuals to honor the passing and memory of members, relatives and friends.

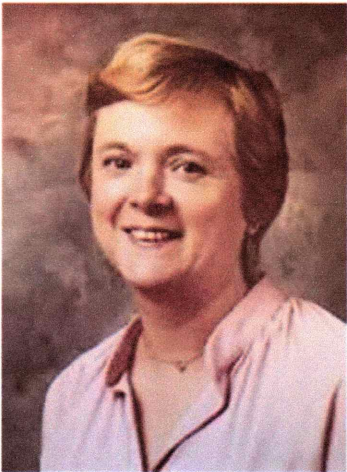
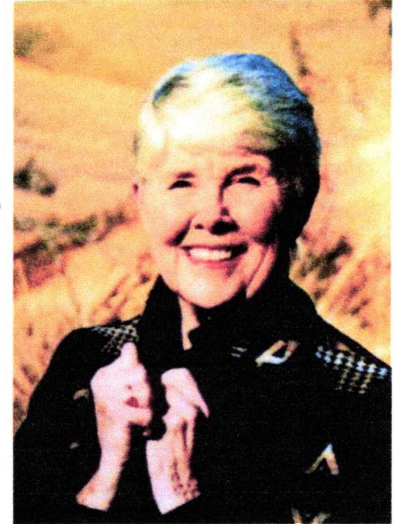
Mary Ethelyn Deutz was born in 1937 in Minnesota. She spent her early years in Marshall and graduated from St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she made many treasured friends. She was a top student from kindergarten through her Master's degree. Reading was always a favorite form of relaxation.

Mary and Ron Deutz were married for 65 years, though the lifelong loving relationship began even earlier. Ron's favorite song to remember her by is "I Could Have Danced All Night," for they loved to dance. The many years together were often an adventure - a fishing resort in Canada, a big move to Oregon, raising four children, trips to Minnesota to visit family, camping, and then in retirement years, travel to France, Italy, Ireland and other countries.

Mary taught at grade schools in La Grande and Pendleton and so enjoyed her teaching friends. She was often stopped in the grocery store by former students wanting to say hello. She also filled her time decorating their home, sewing kids' clothes, knitting and painting. She loved her quilting projects and her quilting friends. Her quilts decorate the beds of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Friends and family were her priority. Birthday celebrations weren't missed. School sporting events were attended and the Christmas cards were always cute. Her coffee group, along with so many others, will miss her dearly. She was treasured for her devotion, quick wit, kindness and deep intelligence.

Mary passed away on December 8, 2025.



Ruth Ann Harnsberger Christensen Monette, a lifelong resident of Salem, Oregon passed away on December 20, 2025 at the age of 85. Born in November 1940, Ruth dedicated her life to her family, her students, and the beautification of her community.

Ruth retired after a distinguished 30-year career as an educator with the Salem-Keizer School District, where she shaped the lives of countless local youth. Following her retirement, she remained deeply involved in the community through various volunteer programs, always seeking ways to give back to the city she called home.

An enthusiast of the natural world, Ruth was known for her vibrant garden and her steadfast commitment to the environment as an avid recycler. Within her family, she was the cherished "go-to" historian, holding the stories and legacy of her ancestors for future generations.

She is survived by her husband of 43 years, Roger Monette; her son, Gregory Christensen; her daughter, Victoria Christensen; three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

To honor the memory of OREA unit members, family and friends, please send a photo and short biography of the individual to Darlene Cook (see front of Chalkboard for contact info). Contributions may also be made in their honor.

The Memorial Fund is a 501(c)(3) and all donations may be tax deductible.

Criterion Schoolhouse

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Criterion Schoolhouse being moved 200 miles from the Maupin area to the Oregon State Fairgrounds. OREA and friends have been instrumental in preserving and restoring this valuable historical treasure.

The restoration and preservation work has taken ten years and \$86,000 to reach completion. By this year's state fair, the following work will have been completed:

- Replace the roof.
- Complete window restoration.
- Bell tower stabilization.
- Gutter installation.
- Replace 1/3 of the exterior siding.
- Painting the exterior.
- Replace the ADA ramp.
- Update the front porch.
- Cap and repoint the chimney.
- Redo the landing area and install a French drain.
- Miscellaneous emergency repairs.

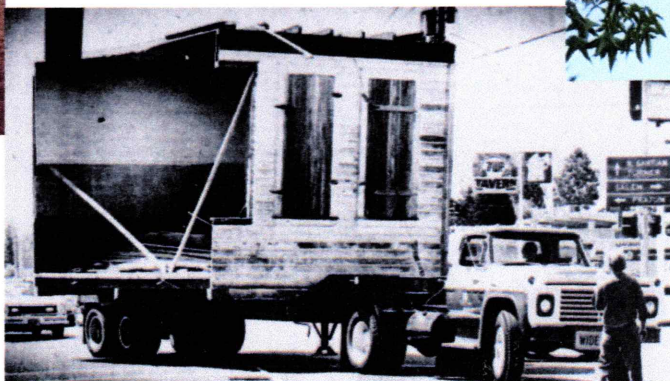


Funding for the project has come from private donations, grants from the Siletz Tribe, grants from the Schwarz Family Foundation, a grant from the Country School Association of America, a grant from OREA Unit 1, as well as from the State OREA and individual OREA units.

Over the past ten years, our members have played the lead role in not only restoring the Criterion, but also welcoming visitors during the state fair. Each year, at least 66 volunteers have to be rounded-up to host thousands of visitors to the Criterion. As our volunteers age, fewer persons are able and/or willing to act as docents. Last year, the schoolhouse had to be closed during those times when volunteers were not available. Therefore, for this year's fair, the hours of operation have been cut by two hours as well as the shifts reduced from three hours to two. Persons interested in volunteering need to contact Carla Mundt at 541-967-1294 ASAP!

A special shout-out goes to our Save the Criterion Schoolhouse Committee. Currently, our committee consists of Carla Mundt, Carolyn Hutton, Robin Bodey, Ray Bodey, Matt Falby, Jan Eck and Pat Eck.

Submitted by Pat Eck



Unit News

Unit 1 (Portland)

Members of OREA Unit 1 unanimously approved a grant of \$35,000 towards funding the final restoration of the Criterion Schoolhouse. This year is the 50th anniversary of the Criterion begin relocated from the Maupin area to the State Fairgrounds in Salem.

Our members have been busy volunteering at Schoolhouse Supplies and at the Artist Mentorship Program. For fun, members and friends have been going on van excursions. The next trip is to the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in McMinnville (pictured right). The Third Annual All-Member Birthday Party will be in August.

Member Georgeann Wingerson has been recuperating from major surgery. During this time, she has been calling other members to get their birthdates as well as to gain their insight into what they think of OREA Unit 1. Her husband, Curt, has been helping put this useful information into a spreadsheet for future use.



Submitted by Pat Eck

Unit 2 (Salem)

OREA Unit 2 has chosen five scholarship recipients for the 2026 Scholars Team! Each scholarship is sponsored and funded by OREA Unit 2 members. Additional community support comes from Roth Benefit Education Foundation, Marion and Polk Schools Credit Union (MAPS), and scholarship-focused businesses and individuals who have now used our newly formed donation QR code form. Membership growth and community support remain our focus.

Our 2026 scholars are among the brightest, most talented and dedicated students to begin their college careers in our Salem-Keizer District. Each year, students at two of our district high schools are invited to apply for the awards. West Salem High School and Roberts High School were invited to apply this year. Student scholars each received \$1500.



The 2026 OREA Unit 2 Scholars Team:

Hayward Memorial Scholarship to Ellis Deister (WSHS)

Haverkate STEM Scholarship to Allison Meng (WSHS)

Presidential Scholarship to Andrew Lovely (WSHS)

Ruth Aydelott Memorial Scholarship to Kiara Bailey (Roberts High School)

Scholarship Selection Committee to Carson Colello (WSHS)

Official announcements were made at the local high schools. A luncheon to celebrate and honor each scholar was held May 15th. Community members, school district personnel, scholars, and families were present.

OREA Unit 2 also honored one of our elementary schools at the luncheon. Washington Elementary in Salem received school supplies from Unit 2 members in February. We created an art appreciation award for the fourth-grade classroom that participated. All student art pieces were on the tables and the selected winners, parents and staff members were guests at the Scholars Luncheon. We honor our members and are grateful for their support.

Submitted by Val Luukinen, President OREA Unit 2

Unit News

Unit 34 (King City)

Helping a teen plan for college or take the first steps toward a career has an element of excitement to it for all involved. Members of OREA Unit 34 find they can all experience that feeling through their efforts to raise funds for scholarships each year.

On May 7th, the unit awarded four \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from Tigard and Tualatin High Schools. This is the first time Unit 34 has been able to assist four students in one year. In addition to fundraising, members have served on the Scholarship Committee, meeting with school staff and counselors to publicize the scholarships, design and accept applications and interview students.

Fundraising is on our minds all year. This year, we have raised monies through a silent auction, bottle auction, and small monthly opportunities, including selling donated items such as puzzles and books, and paying for the chance to share "Boasts and Brags" (events and milestones in our personal lives) at general meetings. Some funds were left over from a very successful garage sale last year.

Even the smallest donations add up! This year's scholarship fund was especially successful because of large donations from two members who are dedicated to funding awards for vocational training programs. Two of this year's grants were given to students headed to vocational training programs. The four recipients were recognized at our unit's May meeting.

Presenting four scholarships brings, to our unit, the feeling of privilege and pride of accomplishment as we help students build their futures.



Submitted by Pam Mitchell, Unit 34 Secretary

Unit 9 (Pendleton)

Los Chilaquiles provided a great venue and menu for Unit 9's Cinco de Mayo meeting! The program was a tour of Barhyte's Specialty Food, a family-owned food company in Pendleton known for gourmet condiments like mustard, marinades and sauces. They have a long history, rooted in a family recipe from Germany, and have grown from a deli to a manufacturer with products sold across the U.S. and internationally. Brands include Saucy Mama, Willamette Valley Mustard, Haus Barhyte and Suzie's Organics, as well as private label partners.



The "blue bonnet" folks were part of the tour group!

Submitted by Lona Odom

Unit News

Unit 5 (Klamath County)

OREA Unit 5 recently visited our local Senior Center for a presentation on the exercise programs that are offered during the week sponsored by grants. The Center has its own geriatric physical therapist, Anne Davenport, as its Health Promotion Services Program Manager who spoke to us about the classes.

One of the classes offered is Better Bones & Balance. This is an evidence-based exercise program developed by Oregon State University Extension Service to reduce fall risk and improve overall strength and independence. The program combines lower-body strength training, balance exercises, and functional movement to help participants safely stay active and confident.



**Better Bones
& Balance®**
exercise for lifetime health

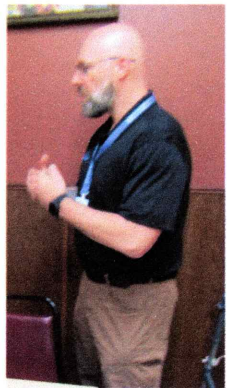
Classes are designed to progressively build strength and balance over time, with the primary goal of preventing falls - one of the leading causes of injury in older adults. While improvements in bone health can occur with long-term participation, the immediate focus is on improving stability, mobility, and safety in daily life.

Several of the members then stayed for lunch to experience the meals served during the week.

Submitted by Kathleen Walker-Henderson, Unit 5 President

Unit 21 (Union County)

Operations Manager for the Union County Senior Center, Tony Carman, was a recent guest for OREA Unit 21. Carmen expressed excitement for the position and outlined many of the programs available at the center for all ages. He stated that the exercise classes have become very popular and well-attended. The lunch meals are served five days a week and according to Carmen, are a social opportunity as well. "Coming together is very important," he noted. The volunteer staff also serves Meals on Wheels, available for those who may not be able to attend. Programs of interest such as heating and air conditioning opportunities, rental assistance or local transit system services have all been included for those interested. Information on medical assistance is part of services offered. Medical equipment, such as walkers or wheelchairs, is available. There are craft groups, housing rehabilitation, weatherization of houses, food pantry and more.



Carman stated that he left a 30-year career because he wanted to put his time and talents into something that makes a difference. He lauded the volunteers, saying the center could not run without the many people who volunteer assistance. "Everyone needs to be treated with dignity and respect."

A new slate of officers (pictured right) was elected at the meeting. The officers include President - John Preston, Co-Vice Presidents - Anne Rodriguez and Doyle Slater, Secretary - Susan Eddy (not pictured), and Treasurer - Carol Kroll.

The unit expressed appreciation to outgoing officers (pictured below), Gerald and Mary Hopkins.



Submitted by Dr. Gerald Hopkins, Unit 21 President

Unit News

Unit 13 (Central Oregon)

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, our March guest speaker was Jill Gentry, State First Vice-Regent, Oregon State Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). She talked about the history of the DAR, founded in 1890 (Oregon Chapter organized in 1914), and how to qualify to become a member.

At our May meeting, we celebrated the anniversary by dressing in red, white and blue and serving lunch using cups, plates and napkins designed with the theme. Our monthly "brain game" was the Declaration of Independence - a 20-questions quiz.

Some of our members will be walking in the 4th of July parade in Redmond.



Submitted by Cathleen Lemke-Wallace, President/Secretary of Unit 13

Community Service Awards

The OREA Executive Board has decided to make some changes in the Community Service recognition this year. We will recognize all OREA members who have volunteered from August 1, 2025 to July 31, 2026 based on the number of hours they have accumulated. We will not have a "winner" for the most literacy and other volunteering categories, but recognize each OREA member who has done any volunteering. The following is the breakdown:

Golden Apple Awards (literacy-based volunteering):	Gold Level	200+ hours
	Silver Level	101-199 hours
	Bronze Level	1-100 hours

Star Award (all other volunteering):	Gold Level	1,000+ hours
	Silver Level	500-999 hours
	Bronze Level	1-499 hours

We hope this will encourage all OREA members, throughout the state to keep track of their volunteer hours and report them to the person in your unit who accumulates that information. They, in turn, report their OREA unit members' individual hours to Deb Scaravilli, Community Service State Coordinator (contact info on first page of Chalkboard).

Another change will be involving the Bell Ringer Award. Typically, each unit prepares a poster and reports on one of their projects during the state convention. This year, any unit that has done a new project is encouraged to present that information at the state convention. We are looking for any innovative projects that might inspire the other units in the state.

Submitted by Deb Scaravilli, OREA State Vice-President

State Incentive Program

The Executive Board approved again this year to provide monetary assistance to all units to continue and grow their involvement in both state and local activities. The Board will again offer \$10,000 that will be available for distribution to local units each year.

There are several criteria that will serve as a guideline to determine how much each unit receives. The more active a unit is in meeting those criteria in both state and local activities, the more money it will receive.



There will be two ways local units would be able to obtain money from the state:

1. The amount of activity in both local and state activities.
2. Hosting the annual convention.

Three criteria will be used to determine how much money each unit will receive:

1. The percentage of State OREA members attending the annual convention relative to that unit's total paying membership.
2. The percentage increase in State OREA paid membership.
3. The unit's total reported volunteer hours compared to the total state hours.

The second way for a unit to receive funds from the State OREA would be to host the annual convention. \$2,000 will be given to the local unit for the time and effort required to plan, organize, and put on the state convention. This amount will be given to the hosting unit for their use.

Last year results are as follows:

Unit 21 (Union County)	\$2,400
Unit 1 (Portland)	\$1,500
Unit 34 (King City)	\$1,500
Unit 9 (Pendleton)	\$1,300
Unit 13 (Central Oregon)	\$1,100
Unit 5 (Klamath County)	\$1,100
Unit 2 (Salem)	\$800
Unit 20 (Mid-Columbia)	\$300

As long as a unit has activity in one or more of the listed criteria, it will receive money. It's up to each unit how much!

Vic Scaravilli
State Treasurer