

# 503 Retiree

## The Newsletter of the SEIU Retirees Local 001



### Retiree's 2018 Annual Meeting by Rosanne Richard

**Retirees gathered at the Keizer Civic Center for their annual meeting on Friday, November 16, 2018.**

There were about 32 members in attendance and President Barbara Casey led off the meeting with an icebreaker activity. Members were asked to name the first rock concert they ever attended. The answers were interesting and reflected the age and areas of the country folks hailed from. It resulted in a lively discussion.

From there we moved on to a political report with Len Norwitz highlighting the October victories as well as some of the challenges facing us in the next two years. On the State level, we are entering the legislative session with good

coalition members and are hoping to move issues around health care and fair housing.

We had hoped to hear about seniors and rent security from a guest speaker from the Community Alliance of Tenants, however the speaker was unable to attend. Hopefully we will receive this information at a later date. Destiny Caterers provided a delicious lunch and the afternoon began with a presentation from the Oregon Emergency Management Services on how to be prepared for future disasters. This has become a hot topic in recent years as predictions and speculation about earthquakes abound. Penny Ruff rounded out the agenda speaking about

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### Women's March Salem January 19, 2019 by Kathie Best

It's my belief that women can bridge the gap that divides the country. Coming together with others who feel strongly about issues that effect us all, and bringing that energy and effort to the streets, connects us with others and increases our visibility. It's something that cannot be experienced through other forms of activism. It truly lifts our spirits to march. It helps us experience a shared power.

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**Barbara Casey**

## Dear Retirees,

**Bring on spring!** It's snowing here in Portland as I write this. However the buds are on the trees and daffodils and tulips will start sprouting soon.

So, new beginnings. I'm happy to let you know our union will have a new building! We have outgrown our space

on Foster Road and have recently purchased a new building at 525 NE Oregon Street, and yes there is parking! It's close to Lloyd Center, the Public Services office building and the Convention Center.

Our International Union has begun a new program focusing on retirees called "Union Forever". This program will encourage retired union members to stay engaged after an active working life. Many recent retirees in other states do not have a Retiree Local to come home to and 700,000 SEIU members will be retiring in the next 5 years—a powerful force. Please check out the website [seiu.org/unionforever](http://seiu.org/unionforever) and like and follow.

Bargaining (over 90 % of our members' contracts are up for renewal) and the challenge (I sometimes hate the word "fight") for new revenue for Oregon is a continual struggle, but we are united in that struggle.

**Rally for Revenue is scheduled on Monday, MAY 20th in Salem at the Capitol. We'd like a strong Retiree turnout in order to support our active members and win strong contracts and adequate funding for our state services.**

Also, never new and always on our radar...PERS Please read our fact page and article on PERS and learn more at [www.keeporegonpromise.org](http://www.keeporegonpromise.org)

Thank you all for your continued membership in our local and in CAPE and for attending the annual meeting back in November. It was wonderful to reconnect with such incredible friends again.

Union Strong, Together We Rise.

**Barbara Casey, Statewide President, SEIU Local 001**

## Delbert "Deb" Lester Bolton

by Karla Marks

**For those of us who were fortunate to know Deb Bolton and work with him and his beautiful wife, Phyllis, over their many years of service in our union, we were saddened to lose him a year ago this month.**



We remember the leadership role he played when we transformed from an association (OSEA) to an international union (SEIU, OPEU

Local 503). He was the Statewide President at the time and had a steady hand in that effort. He encouraged others to take leadership positions and served from a position of sharing responsibility.

He was well respected. Jim Dyer, another former President who served just prior to Deb's term as President said this, "He was a gentle giant, genuinely caring for others and serving selflessly to better the lives of so many." He met his wife, Phyllis, of 52 years, at General Council and she told me about their love story recently, saying how she was attracted to him and that "apparently he was attracted to me too". They became the dynamic duo that served in so many ways in the ensuing years. Even when he went into a management role as an electrician at Oregon State Hospital, he kept his associate membership active.

Deb was very familiar with Robert's Rule of Order and kept me on track on several occasions when I presided over General Council. I would look out at him and he was nod yes or no and later give me a lesson on how to keep track of the order of the motion on the floor. He was a mentor and someone I came to rely on for guidance in so many ways. He touched so many lives and made such a difference in our union. Thank you, Deb. We all miss you.

## United for a Better Oregon: It's time to invest in Oregon's future

On Monday, May 20th, thousands of our members and allies will rally and march to the State Capitol to demand that legislators use 2019 as an opportunity to make a game-changing investment. We are United for a Better Oregon! Go to this website for more info and sign up to attend: <https://seiu503.tfaforms.net/269>

### Oregon needs additional revenue to provide quality public services

- By making significant investments we can stop pitting quality education for our children against quality services for other vulnerable populations like seniors and people with disabilities.
- The status quo has left essential infrastructure like protecting our streams, providing a quality education, and maintaining a workforce to provide support to our most vulnerable chronically underfunded for decades.
- It's time for legislators to make game-changing investments in public services.

### We can add quality to the services our members provide by investing in education.

- Despite a thriving economy, budget cuts from the Great Recession still leave agencies like DHS and our higher education system forced to do more with less.
- Low-income Oregonians, vulnerable families, and people with disabilities deserve quality care that recognizes their dignity and reflects our values as Oregonians.
- Education accounts for nearly 40% of Oregon's state funding and is still underfunded. Investing in strong public schools will help to support those served by and working in all public services.
- Additional revenue will help provide a quality education for our kids while making more resources available for other vital, underfunded services our members provide.

### Legislators have an opportunity to make game-changing investments in public services

- SEIU 503 has joined with other organizations to research and discuss the fairest, most equitable

means to generate billions of dollars in new revenue to fund our schools, health care, and social safety net.

- In a historic first, Oregon businesses have come to the table willing to discuss raising additional revenue without cuts to employee compensation.
- On March 7th, the Oregon Legislature released a proposed budget that reflects how agencies could be funded with existing revenue. Without new revenue, this budget would mean further cuts to essential services, including 900 teachers losing their jobs.
- The message is loud and clear: we must raise significant additional revenue to provide children, seniors, and people with disabilities with the quality care they deserve.

### Responding to the business communities

**questions about PERS.** *The business community is saying that new revenue won't improve services because it will just be gobbled up by PERS.*

- That's just not true.
- The legislature has dedicated a whole subcommittee to crafting a revenue package that will be fair and equitable, raise significant revenue, and ensure that it goes into our schools. This, in turn, relieves pressure on the rest of the budget. This is being done in a deliberate, transparent, and thoughtful way.
- This narrative is nothing new. This is yet another attempt by niche, far-right businesses that want to obstruct any progress on long-overdue investments in our public services. Just like in 2017 and years past, they are hoping that muddying the conversation will allow them to continue paying some of the lowest taxes in the country. This is just another attempt to run out the clock.
- Not surprisingly, every one of the Business Communities "PERS solutions" would put the burden of balancing the budget on working people – while big corporations and the rich continue shirking their responsibility to pay their fair share.
- Teachers, nurses, firefighters and other public employees have shouldered the burden of past budget problems. Now it's time for big corporations and the rich to do their part.

## Dave Wells – A salute to a SEIU 503 Giant by Barbara Casey



**I first met Dave Wells, newly retired from The Forestry Service, Tillamook, at the 2002 General Council.** He was speaking to his resolution to have our union send out a greeting card on each member's birthday. As he spoke to what I first thought as trivial, I realized Dave wanted to promote a sense

of community and family; that we matter to each other. The resolution failed, maybe a missed opportunity to connect, but Dave continued to impress me with his quiet, thoughtful dignity and commitment. I posed a few questions for Dave so we could all get to know him better.

**His early years:** Dave grew up in Renton, Washington. He always walked to school. He could have taken the school bus, but he liked the hikes and the woods that surrounded him. He loved to explore nature and the trees each season.

It was a natural path for Dave to enroll in the University of Washington majoring in Forestry. Even weekends and school breaks were spent furthering his knowledge of the land and whetting his desire to help his community by planting trees and working with experimental forestry programs. After graduating in 1978, he immediately began his 40-year career as a Forester with the State of Oregon.

**Why I joined the retiree local:** "That's simple, a social connection for mental health and stronger together for financial health."

**Most proud union moment:** "There were a lot of big picture union moments that I am very proud of and cherish but the one that sticks with me is in 1995 when we went on strike. As a newly minted steward, I was helping to organize my worksite around fair pay and no take backs. My co-workers were all older than I was at the time, but when I explained what we were up against and passed around the pledge card, everyone signed. The following Monday we were on strike and for the rest of our lives, changed. We understood the power of solidarity."

**How I got involved:** "Going to a meeting and hearing the words 'the world is run by those who show up'. I have not stopped showing up yet. The other was reading the book Organizational America. This book describes that the way we get things completed is in groups. I wanted my work for the State of Oregon to be a lifetime career and for that to happen, I needed a fair wage and benefits. Getting involved with SEIU was a natural vehicle to advocate for that."

**What I got from SEIU:** "A fair wage and benefits was important but there was more. My job as a Field Forester was great, driving a truck and walking in the woods, but to really contribute to the community I needed more skills than that. SEIU helped me more than any other place to develop them; leadership, accountability, being politically active and listening to solve problems.

- I learned interviewing skills as a member of Staff Screening
- I learned leadership by being a Steward and taking on leadership roles within our Sub-local
- I got acquainted with our elected leaders, and began helping them get elected by door knocking and phone banking
- I learned what fairness looks like in bargaining and that SEIU believes in it."

**Best Moments at work:** "Probably the biggest, against all odds, was keeping the Central/ Eastern Oregon town of Monument from burning up. I was part of the Forestry Team in 2002 fighting that fire. It was tough. Other big moments: over a 40-year career in the Tillamook State Forest, watching it grow and participating in its management. Within that period the big flood of 1996 that wiped out roads and changed stream courses and the hurricane force winds of 2007 that knocked down trees."

Now in retirement, Dave continues as a Consultant Forester working in Tillamook, Lincoln and Clatsop counties and served as the volunteer chair of the Tillamook Bay Watershed Council as well as other committees. He is also working with the OSU Extension Service. He is a very busy and valued member of his community and SEIU 503.

Thank you, David Wells, for all you do!

## John Hawkins Awarded the Garner Pool Award by Linda Burgin

February 20, 2019, John Hawkins was presented with the Garner Pool Distinguished Lifetime Service Award by the Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Council Chair, Jim Gourley.

Jim surprised John with a plaque stating: "In honor of your lifetime of dedication and years of service and in appreciation of your leadership. Everyday given to us is an opportunity to help others." In Solidarity, Linn Benton Lincoln Central Labor Council. "

It was a fun evening; complete with good friends, great stories, German Spetzel and lots of fruit pies. John's wife, Ann, was also presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

SEIU 503 President Steve Demarest presented an award honoring John's service for his many years as Chair of the General Council Credentials Committee ("Mr. President, we have a quorum!"), and also for serving as Elections Committee Chair. Maureen Crawford presented John with gift cards and a bag of SEIU swag.

John Hawkins has been a regular at many rallies, using his voice to advocate for things he cared about. Attending a rally on the Capitol steps a few years ago, I saw John and asked him to hold the SEIU banner while I took a break. He took the banner, but when I returned, he politely informed me that he was there to lobby for Single Payer Health Care!

John, who retired 16 years ago (at age 57) as a Juvenile Probation Officer for the Linn County Juvenile Department, has literally forged a whole 2nd career in volunteering his time to worthy causes. In addition to volunteering for our Union, John also volunteers at:

- Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Board Director/Member—20 years
- Worker Investment Board Member, Northwest Oregon Works—3 years
- Benton County Democratic Precinct Committee Person—1 year



- Meals on Wheels—16 years
- Folding Floozies—church newsletter/bulletin folders—16 years
- Interfaith Healthcare Network—3 years
- UCC Corvallis Healthcare Ministry Committee—3 years
- Mid-Valley Healthcare Advocates Member, 5 years

John also helps set up weekly meals for homeless people at the Evangelical Church, and he has also been seen singing with the Raging Grannies at rallies!

**Hats off to John and to all our members who volunteer in their communities and for our Union! Thanks for making a big difference!**

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## Health Care For All Oregon by Karla Marks

**Our union has been a proud member and supporter of HCAO for many years, standing up for universal health care and shining a light on all of the injustices of America's health care system.**

One of our most visible and vocal leaders in HCAO is retiree and long time union activist, Wes Brain. I chatted with him recently and participated in part of the HCAO Lobby Day on April 1 here in Salem.

HCAO is currently working on a SB770, which will establish the "Universal Health Care Commission" to develop findings and recommendations regarding implementing an equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high quality and publicly funded health care system for everyone residing in Oregon based on a single payer model."

About 160 enthusiastic participants showed up at the Lobby Day and stormed the Capitol. I must admit the excitement was contagious. Health care is such an important issue that touches every American's life.

If you want to learn more about SB 770 and track its progress, you can contact Wes Brain at [brain@mind.net](mailto:brain@mind.net) or Michael Sorenson at [directo@hcao.org](mailto:directo@hcao.org)

Wes told me about so many things going on at HCAO. As a Board member, he is responsible for recruiting new Board members. He works closely with Sandra Coyner and Laurie Hogland to help build chapters in other areas in the state. They have created a database of 33,000 supporters trying to inoculate people to the onslaught of negative messaging around HCAO that comes from the medical, pharma and insurance industrial complex.

You can join HCAO on their web site, [hcao.org](http://hcao.org) and click on a statement of support on one of these committees:

- Mobilization Committee
- Membership Committee
- Union Caucus
- Faith Caucus
- Legislative
- Nominations and Recruitment

Wes states his enthusiasm is based on knowing that "the train is headed down the track, the steam is building in the boiler and nobody is going to stop us from providing health care to everyone."

## **Business Group Launch Site to Draw Support for PERS “Reforms”**

by Barbara Casey

**As reported in The Oregonian (3/3/19), business groups frustrated around Oregon’s PERS system are looking to build a coalition to push for ‘money savings reform’ either at the Legislature or at the ballot box.**

A website has been launched ([PERSolutions.org](http://PERSolutions.org)) outlining what backers believe are “seven sensible PERS solutions”. It also asks visitors to join the pro-reform coalition.

There are always efforts being made but this year a new twist is the prospect of bringing pension reform to the ballot. Personally, it is very disappointing to see Tim Nesbitt, a former SEIU labor leader, as the consultant to these business groups.

Some of these ideas are familiar: employee cost-sharing, equalizing pension benefits for older and younger workers, and capping benefits at a fixed amount. Most involve a cut to total compensation.

According to Melissa Unger, our SEIU 503 Executive Director, we have our own website ([keeporegonpromise.org](http://keeporegonpromise.org)) that tells the stories of public employees and why the current pension plan is such a valuable tool for the state. Businesses continue to act like this is just a funding problem, not something that impacts 300,000 Oregonians, including people who literally put their lives on the line to serve and protect us.

According to Nesbitt, “the only promise public employees ever had” was that they were entitled to a pension 50% of their final salary after 30 years. We agree with keeping the basic pension promise, we are trying to correct the excess”.

With more and more Retirees falling into poverty in their later years and with half our own members, our care providers who have no pension, we have to be vigilant and follow these and other efforts to undermine our retirement security.

## **In Memorium**

Our sympathies go out to the families of each individual listed here. These people are treasured friends and family who made a difference by owning our union and working to make a difference for all working families.

Robert Barko  
Mary Blanche  
Deb (Delbert) Bolton  
Norman Cobb  
Don Culp  
Bernadine Ditter  
Marlene Fleischman  
David France  
Rinaldo Fratangelo

Ann Gibson  
Walter Goodin  
Lyfie ‘Joan’ Holgate  
Gary Jarman  
Mary Kossman  
Lorinda Macomber  
Sharon Martin  
Elizabeth McDonald  
Betty Newman

Bob Novick  
Mike Pageler  
Mary Schaell  
Thomas Simons  
Betty Weaver  
Ron Wiggins  
Freda Williams

## Womens March Salem continued from cover...

I was inspired to help plan and participate in WMS after participating in the 2017 Woman's March and seeing firsthand the impact it had on the 2018 elections. Giving women and a very diverse group of those who support women's issues, including the LGBTQ community, an opportunity to make our voices heard is so important and so invigorating.

The variety of speakers at this year's rally promoted intersectionality and engaged many different demographics in the Salem community and surrounding areas. We continue to have more in common with one another than that which divides us. Building on our commonality will inevitably have the desired outcome we're seeking. We are stronger together.

To our many community partners who set up booths at this year's rally, you helped create an atmosphere of sharing. You were helpful and informative. We must also give a nod to the awesome food trucks that made this event so much better. You can't beat hot drinks and hot food on a cold morning.

It's my hope that everyone turns out for this event in 2020, whether it's through helping with the planning and implementation of the March and Rally, or through participation the day of, we invite you to join us for the Women's March Salem next year. Everyone is welcome! For more information on getting involved, contact Kathie at [kathie.best503@gmail.com](mailto:kathie.best503@gmail.com).

## Retiree's 2018 Annual Meeting continued from cover...

Oregon Careworks and how retirees can be active in organizing new members.

The meeting ended with a short discussion on suggestions for future agendas. A committee (Linda Burgin, Dawn Morgan, Catherine S, Denise B, Donna S and Mary Ann T) was established to make recommendations for how to select those who would be named to the Retirees Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was a resolution written and submitted by the Eugene retirees and approved by the last General Council. It is now up to our local to establish the parameters for inductees.

A big thanks to Barbara Casey, SEIU 503 staff and everyone who helped organized this event. The location was great, the food was outstanding and the attendance made for an enjoyable meeting.

