

ROSE Newsletter

Retired
Oregon School
Employees



Looking out for the rights and benefits of retired OSEA members

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Benefits of being a ROSE (Retired Oregon School Employees) member include OSEA life insurance, member discounts, OSEA publications, PERS information, training, events and social activities.

Help is Out There for High Drug Costs

Many seniors have Medicare insurance that covers prescription medication. But that does not always mean that seniors can afford the medicines their doctors prescribe for them.

More than one-third of seniors say that in the past year, their health insurance did not cover a drug prescribed by their doctor. Almost half of those went without the medication because they could not afford it. Healthcare costs are consuming more and more of seniors' discretionary income, not only in drug costs, but also higher deductibles, copayments and cost sharing.

About one in five seniors say they did not take their medication as prescribed at some point in the last year because of costs. This includes skipping doses, cutting pills in half or just not filling the prescription. Unfortunately, many didn't tell their doctor that they were having difficulty paying for their prescriptions and were not taking them as prescribed.

It is important to compare your Medicare Part D plans each year to find the coverage that best meets your individual needs, based on the specific drugs you



By **BONNIE LUISI**
Chair

take. As your prescriptions change, you may find that your plan does not cover the new prescription or that it is more expensive than before.

Here are a couple programs that may be of assistance to seniors which I found online. Check them out and see if you could benefit from them:

The Oregon Rx Card is a free statewide prescription

assistance program open to all uninsured or underinsured residents of Oregon. This free program provides up to 75 percent savings on generic and brand-name medications.

Social Security has a program called Extra Help that provides help with Medicare prescription drug costs. You can find that on the Social Security webpage, or just Google 'Extra Help.' There is an income limit on this program.

Fred Meyer, Target, BiMart, Walgreens and many other stores with pharmacies offer their own programs as well.

Please be responsible when taking your medications. If you need assistance, check out some of these programs. Make sure to discuss with your healthcare provider if you are taking your prescriptions differently than described.

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Letter from the Editor: Facing the Coronavirus Together, Safely

By **MERLENE MARTIN**
Vice President

As this edition of our ROSE newsletter arrives in your mailbox, Oregon and our nation are facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Every day we are receiving new information on the virus and ways to protect ourselves and our loved ones, so I will not focus on that in this space.

What I am going to say is that the ROSE Board is fully aware of this crisis. This issue reflects on Easter, usually a day that is filled with love, joy and faith. This year will be different, but those things

remain with us even in the worst circumstances. On page four of this newsletter is a story that I wrote about my Easters over the years and the importance of the holiday to my mother.

I spoke to my mom today and her heart is aching for more than one reason. She understands but is sad to know that Easter will most likely look very different from usual this year. You might be thinking and feeling the same.

I will tell you what I told my mother: “Mom, you can celebrate your faith in your home in your own way and it will be ok. A lot of congregations are providing their

services virtually. You should check to see if your church is.

“And as for the rest of the Easter Day celebration, it can be delayed and celebrated on another day. Dyed eggs look and taste the same on any day, right? Your love for your family and friends — and theirs for you — is with you and all of us. A day doesn’t define it; your heart, words and actions do.”

This is advice that I can share with each and every one of you. ROSE members, please be safe, use caution and don’t for a nanosecond think that it couldn’t happen to you, because it could.

Five Ways the Trump Budget Will Affect Seniors

From **AFT RETIREES**

The Trump administration has released its proposed 2021 budget. If passed, it would result in cuts to programs that millions of seniors rely on and make it harder for them to afford food, housing and healthcare. Here are five things in the Trump budget that will affect seniors:

1. The budget will reduce Medicare spending. Patients and doctors would be required to get pre-authorization from Medicare before performing certain procedures. The budget also cuts reimbursement rates for health providers, which would reduce payment to doctors and healthcare facilities for care. By cutting reimbursement rates, seniors could lose access to doctors they want to see.

2. The budget will cut funding

for disability programs. Trump’s budget includes a proposal to cut spending for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income by \$70 million over 10 years. A portion of that reduction would come from cutting the amount for retroactive benefits once someone is found to be disabled.

3. The budget will cut Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which will increase food insecurity for low-income seniors. Households with seniors currently get \$121 a month in SNAP benefits to help pay for groceries. The budget will cut nearly 30 percent from the program over the next decade. It will also raise the age for eligibility from 60 to 65, so people ages 60-64 would no longer qualify.

4. The budget will eliminate necessary social and community

services for seniors. Currently, the federal government provides states with the Social Security Block Grant to help them meet the needs of their most vulnerable populations. By eliminating this grant, the budget will cause communities to lose programs that help seniors stay in their homes, provide Meals on Wheels and prevent elder abuse.

5. The budget will cut Medicaid. Nearly seven million seniors rely on Medicaid to pay for nursing home care, long-term care services and other support not covered by Medicare. The president’s budget eliminates funding for states that expanded coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Millions of adults ages 50-64 who gained coverage through the expansion will lose it. In some cases, adult Medicaid recipients who don’t meet proposed work requirements could also lose coverage.

Oregon Legislature Ends Short Session Early; PERS Bills Die

By **JAY OSBORNE**
Secretary-Treasurer

The short Oregon legislative session ended before it was completed. All five PERS initiatives died, for now. Without much doubt, there will be a new or revised PERS initiative come next February when legislators come together for a full session. Senate Bill (SB) 1049, which passed last session, helped reduce the immediate crisis surrounding the system's debt. It would make more sense to see how things play out with the finances over the next few years than to try to tackle the PERS system during an election year.

With SB 1049 pending the outcome of a lawsuit in the Oregon Supreme Court, this seems like a good opportunity to re-introduce

you to Oregon PERS Retirees, Inc. (OPRI).

Who We Are: OPRI is the state's largest organization existing solely to protect the rights and benefits of Oregon's retired public employees. We serve retirees by monitoring PERS disbursements, advocating at the Legislature and, when necessary, defending retirees in court. Our battle-tested team at Public Affairs Counsel is working to block any attempts at PERS cuts before they develop.

OPRI History: OPRI began in 1991 in an effort to protect the interests of public employee retirees. The three original directors were retired state forester Bill Holtsclaw, retired state highway construction engineer Chuck Fredrickson and retired Oregon State Assistant Attorney General Jack Sollis. Their

goal was to provide information on the activities of the Legislature and courts that impact retirees and their benefits. OPRI has grown to represent thousands of members across the state. Our lobbying efforts ensure that retirees have a voice in the Capitol. OPRI is a member of the PERS Coalition.

Become a Member! When you join OPRI, you are joining together with thousands of others to protect retirement security. Your membership dues of \$20 per year, or \$200 lifetime, help us protect your benefits against cuts from the state government. We will keep you informed of important legislative updates, ways to get involved and proposed legislation through our updates and newsletters. Call 503-363-7084 to sign up.

For the Kids, ROSE Member Works Through Retirement

Although she is in the 13th year of retirement, Gretchen Elliot substitutes as a kitchen technician for Eugene 4J School District nearly every day of the school year.

Gretchen is proud to say she has worked in kitchens her entire adult life, starting in a hotel in Spokane, Wash., just three days after graduating high school. After getting married and starting a family, Gretchen began working in schools so that she could have the same schedule as her kids.

Gretchen and her family eventually relocated to Santa Clara, Ore., and she began working with the Eugene School District, home of OSEA's Eugene Chapter 1.

Although she did not immediately join the union, after a few years, "I saw what they were doing, what they were working towards," says Gretchen. "They were working for me and I knew I had to be a part of it." She became an OSEA member and never looked back.

Over the course of a 30-year career, Gretchen worked as a kitchen tech and later a kitchen coordinator, responsible for ordering supplies and ensuring that her school cafeteria ran smoothly.

Gretchen retired in 2008 and became an active ROSE member. Almost immediately, she began working as a substitute. Until the 2019-20 school year was cut short



by the coronavirus pandemic, she had worked all but six days in the kitchens of various Eugene elementary schools. "I do it for the kids," she says.

What Easter Means to Me

By MERLENE MARTIN

Vice President

When I was young, my family was not religious, so we did not celebrate Easter the way many do. However, it was always a special day for me. In photographs of my family when I was young, my sisters and I wore dresses with matching bonnets and fancy shoes with ruffled socks. My brother wore shorts, matching suspenders and a bowtie. Of course, we all had Easter baskets.

My dad belonged to the Jaycees, a local service organization. Each year they hosted a huge Easter egg hunt for the community. My parents and others cooked and dyed hundreds of eggs. My dad would get up early to hide the eggs and guard the area until the hunt began. It was a great time in so many ways!

Later, there were always gatherings with family and friends. There was great food and lots of deviled eggs from the egg dying mishaps. We had yard games and Easter egg hunts for the children with golden eggs that held special prizes.

Then I grew up. I found myself married with a beautiful baby girl, and then two. I followed my mother's example and dressed my daughters in spring

dresses and bonnets. My mom was now married to my papa. Each and every year, to this day, they host an Easter egg hunt. Kids hunt for eggs in the front yard and the adults gather in the back. And yes, there are Easter baskets for all! The family now consists of kids, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and their families, all from two families merged into one. The baskets have changed and become a lot simpler over the years, but the love and thoughtfulness is still the same.

After moving to Oregon, we were unable to celebrate Easter with the family, but to this day my mom sends our baskets in the mail.

For the past several years, I have felt the need to share Easter with my mom as it is so important to her. When I tell her that Jesse and I are coming, her reaction is always the same: a bit of a gasp, tears making it difficult to talk, then such joy that I can feel her smile and heartbeat from 600 miles away. Then we talk about what she is planning to serve and how the heck she is going to seat that many.

Easter is so meaningful to my wonderful mother, and I love her so much that 600 miles seems like just a hop and a skip away.

However you celebrate, have a happy Easter!

A Member's Union
OSEA
AFT Local 6732

Calendar

Please note that the ROSE meeting originally scheduled for April 16 has been cancelled.

June 25-27 – OSEA Conference 2020

ROSE Recipe: Carrot Cake

This recipe came from former Portland TV news reporter Robin Chapman many years ago. For Easter, I have made it into cupcakes with toasted coconut 'nests' and small candy eggs nestled on top.

Cake:

2 cups granulated sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
3 cups grated carrot

Sift and mix together sugar, flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon.

Combine the oil and eggs. Add the wet ingredients to the dry, beating well. Stir in carrots. Divide the batter in two nine-inch cake tins and bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

Frosting:

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 lb. powdered sugar
1 tsp. almond extract

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl and beat well. Spread between the layers and on top of cooled cake. Store the frosted cake in the refrigerator and remove 30 minutes before serving.

– *Everice Moro*