

# OREGONIZER

Celebrating the Membership of the Oregon Chapter of IAWP

## Veteran Representatives, Heroes Again

"This is a very rewarding job, but it can put a strain on you if you're not careful."

- Dennis Durfee

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By Paté, Benefits Section

These words were sent to me via e-mail from a devoted veteran representative by the name of Dennis. Dennis works at the WorkSource Oregon Salem Center helping disabled veterans find good, living wage jobs after their careers in the service end. He also helps veterans' family members who are eligible for services. These veteran representatives provide services such as: vocational guidance, resume/application assistance, linkage to promote employment opportunities, job development, tax credit eligibility determination, referrals to jobs, training, and/or supportive services; information on federal contract/government employment opportunities, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and computer/internet assistance. These are part of their job duties, but they go above and beyond and this article is to tell you how.

I talked with Dennis about veteran representative services. I wanted to understand this program from a personal touch, by people who are/were in the thick of things. When the federal government's budget overview was released and I saw veteran representative jobs were on the cutting block, I became concerned, as many of my coworkers did considering the Afghanistan and Iraq occupations in which the United States is involved. This is why I decided to find out what these positions are offering our military personnel.

I never really paid any attention to military matters. Although my father volunteered and served in WWII as a navigator for the Air Force, my family upbringing wasn't geared toward a military career. My tender years were spent in the decade of the Vietnam War, Watergate, police brutality, hippies, Chicago Seven, peace and love, not fight and die. I was too young to understand the implication or gravity of these events. I remember my family discussing it at the dinner table, expressing different points of view, making jokes about bugs in the White House and the constant feed from the TV news of our soldiers in harm's way.

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### Upcoming Events:

May 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Oregon  
Chapter Educational  
Institute, Hood River

June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>  
International Educational  
Institute, Boise Idaho.

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## Capital Subchapter Carousel Event Fun For Family Too

Capital Subchapter member Judy Mattos's sister recently wrote in about her experience with the annual carousel event.



IAWP Members Tracy Olander and Eric Villegas tame the wild beasts before children ride.

"I think the annual carousel event has a lot of benefits. It is not only an opportunity for co-workers to get together in a social setting and learn more about each other, it is also a time when adults can be kids again riding the carousel. And their kids and grandkids can have a fun time with the adults. I know at least one little boy who started out afraid to ride the carousel and because of the numerous opportunities to ride in one evening, progressed from the covered wagon seat to the small stationary pony to a bigger stationary horse. The next year, he progressed from a stationary horse to a moving horse. Without this opportunity, he probably would still be afraid to ride. Conquering his fear of the carousel has given him confidence to try other things that he was afraid of.

There is something very enjoyable about watching people young and old having fun on a carousel, so even adults who don't ride can have fun at this event."

E-mail in by Marsha Heeter - Family Member who's attended the Carousel Event the last two years.

## Pictures of Spring at the Capital

Photographs by Tracy Olander - March 2007



## Congratulations!

The Oregon Chapter Executive Board extends its appreciation to all of the **NOMINATORS** and **NOMINEES** who submitted awards this year. The following individuals were nominated for an award: (In no particular order):

Amador Aguirre, Bryant Campbell, Vince Buchheit, Charlene Grafton, Christina Aranda, Cindy Nelson, Dale Kenyon, Dave Jones, David Brydson, Dennis Brophy, Dennis Durfee, DJ Ramos, Elise Northrop, Florence Kim, George Berriman, John Concepcion, Joyce Hayford, Kurt Carlsen, Lonnie Martinez, Jill Read, Stacie Read, Russ McBride, Scott Wells, Sem Hernandez, Sherry Pfaff, Tina Swogger, Patty Tipton, Tom Byerley, Sam Flanagan, Velva Warden, Pam Ferrara, Cindy Redick, Kelly Duffield, and Scott Zentz.



## Heroes Again (continued from page 1)

Now it would appear our veterans might be losing people they can connect with, who understand how it feels to come out of a conflict and try to fit into civilian society and to try and find a good job. That's what Dennis and his comrades do. You might be thinking, how is it that our veterans cannot find a job? Many veterans who are discharged after service have barriers to finding work and are not always "job ready," and these veterans are referred to Dennis and other great employees for further help. These are some of the reasons why they may not be job ready: securing housing, food, clothes, transportation, psychological disorders, especially PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

Dennis told me he doesn't look at this as just being a job for him, it's a mission because the need is so great and there just aren't enough hours in the day to do everything he wants to do. It seems as though his phone never stops ringing or there is never an empty chair by his desk, but he doesn't mind. He loves being a veteran representative.

I talked with Cliff, another veteran representative in Albany, and he told me that he is currently working with a half dozen Veterans who are either homeless or in imminent risk of becoming homeless. He has extensive knowledge of his area for helping these people and some of these resources include the whole WorkSource Oregon team, local faith-based organizations, and veterans programs, both from the federal government and the state of Oregon. Cliff says much gratitude is given to organizations like Veterans Service Organizations, in particular Willamette Chapter 17 of the Disabled American Veterans. This local chapter consistently provides approximately \$9,000 per year that directly assists needy veterans. However, that \$9,000 is in jeopardy in the coming year.

Yvonne, a veteran representative also in Albany, tells me of situations that veterans find themselves in returning from their tour of duty or veterans who have been in other engagements. The younger veterans feel they have no transferable skills from their past positions or their military positions hold any relevance in the civilian workforce. The older veterans feel due to their age and/or disability they no longer can perform many of the jobs they had when they were younger. Yvonne shows those veterans that they do have skills. This is where Yvonne and others like her can step in. She works closely with employers in Linn and Benton Counties to maximize opportunities for the veteran population. Part of a veteran representative's job is to network with community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and other veteran organizations.

Before I was thinking, "big deal," a lot of people I know help out in all sorts of ways. I help out, churches help out, my place of employment helps out with various charity events throughout the year, why is this so special? Now I can answer that. I think it's a rarity in our world today when we can actually see works of wonder in process. Veteran representatives are those works of wonder. They are intricately engaged and have compassion beyond their jobs. Veteran representatives are the people who they help, they have been in like circumstances and they fit in customers' shoes.

If you are a veteran, an employer, or an interested citizen and want more information, please visit Oregon's veteran services website: [http://www.oregon.gov/EMPLOY/COMM/news/veterans\\_services.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/EMPLOY/COMM/news/veterans_services.shtml)





Best Western Hood River Inn and Mt. Hood

## See You in Hood River

Oregon Chapter's Annual Education Institute is being held in Hood River, Oregon at the Hood River Inn on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>.

The evening of May 16 will be the President's Reception which is a great opportunity to network and meet other Members. The two day educational institute will be Thursday, May 17, and Friday, May 18. Highlights include the Awards Luncheon on Thursday, where we will recognize the achievements and hard work of our co-workers. The IAWP Oregon Chapter annual business meeting and oath of office given to new officers and chairs will be on Friday.

The Best Western Hood River Inn on the Columbia River is the host hotel. A block of rooms has been reserved at a special conference room rate at \$85 per night plus tax. This includes King, Double Queen, and Queen Bed accommodations. The special rate will not last and you are encouraged to make your reservations now. Please mention IAWP to secure this attractive and discounted rate. The hotel may be reached for reservations by calling 1-800-828-7873 or by e-mail at [reservations@hoodriverinn.com](mailto:reservations@hoodriverinn.com).

## Ride Share, Room Share

Need a room at an IAWP event? Have a room to share at an IAWP event? Need a ride to an IAWP event? Can you give a ride to an IAWP event? OK then, go to the Oregon Chapter web site and connect with members who can help. <http://www.OregonIAWP.org/RideAndRoomShare.aspx>

To get on the list, e-mail the following information to [iawp.iawp@state.or.us](mailto:iawp.iawp@state.or.us):

### Please include:

- 1) Your Name
- 2) The event
- 3) Are you looking for a ride, do you have a ride to offer, are you looking for a room, do you need a roommate?
- 4) How can people get a hold of you
- 5) Details or other comments (ie: Leaving from Salem. Have 2 king size beds. Need leather seats and AC.)

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### THINGS TO KNOW:

According to the American Small Business Administration, small businesses and entrepreneurs account for 99.9% of the over 25.8 million businesses in the United States.

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Crater Subchapter Members and friends (l-r): Charlene Grafton, Chris Rahn, Debbie Reid, Ainoura Oussenbec, Leslie Lang.

## Crater Brings Cheer

Members and friends of the Crater Subchapter presented gifts to the Weaver House, an adult group home, in December. The Crater Subchapter makes an effort to include outreach as part of their IAWP activities. In fact, the Crater Subchapter regularly holds civic-minded activities and have supported the residents at the Weaver House for many years in a row.

Chris Rahn (pictured) says that the...“sheer joy in seeing how much our visits give a positive impact on the residents and operators...” is one of the reasons that the Crater Subchapter does this early activity. “All truly look forward to our yearly visit.”



## Update Your Information with IAWP

Change happens. Please keep us up to date on your changes including your name, address, work location, job title, etc, so that we can keep you informed on all activities of the local and international IAWP. If you are promoted to management, want to change the way your dues are paid, or any other changes in membership, use the new Membership Change Form available on the website at:

<http://oregoniawp.org/membership.aspx>

## What a Bunch of Scholars

Congratulations to the following members who have received a scholarship from the Oregon Chapter to attend the annual Educational Institute in Hood River:

Gary Durbin, Charlene Grafton, Mark Hoefler, Nancy Imber, Lonnie Martinez, Tracy Olander, Greg Pelton, Daniel Quinones, Tina Swogger, and Barbee Williams.

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### Want Milk?

Milk was selected in 1997 as the state beverage. The legislature recognized that milk production and the manufacture of dairy products are major contributors to the economic well-being of Oregon agriculture.

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## Next Issue:

- Information from the May Executive Board meeting
- Educational Institute Overviews
- Technology Corner Tips
- Information from the Subchapters
- Articles from our fellow members

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## Writers Needed

**Requires:** Interest in journalism or education or any equivalent combination of experience and/or training. Knowledge of English, spelling, grammar and punctuation, journalistic writing and editing procedures and skill in the use of Microsoft Word preferred.

**Duties:** Write articles and features based on research and interviews; conceive ideas for content; arrange for content from other sources; and select and edit photos and artwork to benefit the educational and professional interests of Oregon Chapter IAWP members.

**Pay:** The gratitude and admiration of your fellow Oregon Chapter IAWP members and the joy of seeing your name in print.

**How to Apply:** Submit articles or express interest by e-mail to Greg Pelton at [Gregory.M.Pelton@state.or.us](mailto:Gregory.M.Pelton@state.or.us).

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