

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

Affiliated with the National Retired Teachers' Association (NRTA)—AARP's Educator Community



JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2019

VOLUME 73, ISSUE NO. 1



Clear Creek Falls
White Pass Scenic Byway (Yakima County)

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Keeping Our Retirement Alive, Growing, and Strong



by Pam Francis, president

Two of my very best teachers, Cathy and Suzanne, just retired and the school had a party at a local event center. These teachers could teach anyone, anywhere. We all know these kind of teachers - you may have been one! They lived and breathed relationships, that teachable moment, and most of all really, really liked all their students, even the high-risk takers. The kids knew the limits of how far they could push...we all know these students. They're the ones that we'll always remember and take pride in their achievements. They are the students that make good teachers great! Plans have been made by Cathy and Suzanne to go to breakfast this week with a few other friends. So, they can make more plans to go to the cabin, have lunch, etc. We have the rest of our lives to share many adventures.

My husband and I just returned from the annual WSSRA convention in Yakima, it was outstanding! Thank you to the Unit 34 Yakima members for your hospitality. Wonderful job, well done! The guest speaker was Mandy Manning, a Ferris High School teacher from Spokane. Mandy was the 2017 National Teacher of the Year! She spent a year touring Washington State sharing her insight and experiences. It was an honor to listen to her tell about the students in her class and of helping several refugees. As they learned English, Mandy learned sign language to help two deaf Syrian students learn a language for the first time.

My college experiences began at Central Washington University where I received a bachelor's degree and teaching certification. I went on to earn my master's degree and principal's certification from Gonzaga University.

My teaching experiences have been an adventure. I began in the elementary school in Wapato on an Indian reservation, and then

taught for three years in Yakima. From there, I moved on to teaching high school in Anchorage, Alaska, including teaching psychology to 7th – 12th grades at Service High School. There were 3,400 students, five principals, and a police officer. We had underground hallways connecting different buildings on campus, which was a blessing when it got to 35 degrees below zero. I really enjoyed my seven years in Alaska.

We moved to Vancouver, Washington where I was an elementary reading specialist for six years and helped develop a diagnostic reading program for K-6. In Walla Walla, I brought this program and shared it with other specialists. I did my principal's internship through Gonzaga before moving to Bethel School District as a Title One director, grants manager, and public relations officer. We moved to Spokane where I was an elementary principal in Idaho for eight years before moving to West Valley School District, in Spokane, as an elementary principal and then middle school principal. During my time there, I wrote a "Gear Up" grant for the district in 1997 and they are still using this program today. I also taught nights or weekends for Gonzaga University in Washington, Idaho, and Canada. My 45 years in education went by in a flash and I loved every bit of my career.

As I visit local units, I see a theme of "doers," with a list of accomplishments who want to enlist their friends in doing meaningful work. They may work at a food bank, volunteer for Meals on Wheels, work in a school library by reading to students, or helping younger students learn how to check out books, or put on a unit retirement conference for the employees of the district. Teachers are givers and don't know how to stop! We are the contemporary "Tom Sawyers!"



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JOURNAL articles to:

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**Upcoming JOURNAL
article deadlines**

September 5, 2019
for Oct./Nov./Dec. 2019 issue

December 5, 2019
for Jan./Feb. 2020 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Senior Property Tax Exemption Improvements



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

One of the important but overlooked bills that passed the legislature in 2019 provides additional property tax relief for senior citizens with lower incomes. The senior property tax exemption program has been on the books for some time, but it was significantly improved and now will reach many more senior taxpayers than it has in the past.

Basically, it works like this: Any senior over age 61 with household income of \$40,000 or less (with higher limits in more expensive counties, for example \$58,422 in King; \$50,347 in Clark; \$45,708 in Pierce; \$44,675 in Grant), may qualify for a reduction in property tax. "Income" is generally determined through the Adjusted Gross Income line on the most recent federal tax return. Of course, AGI includes all income sources so items like social security, DRS pension amount, part-time employment wages, and capital gains all count.

Once the income test is met, then an application is filled out and delivered to the county assessor. The assessors' office then processes the application and provides an answer, and hopefully a tax reduction notice, in a timely manner. The amount of the reduction depends on the amount of household income: the further households land below the \$40,000 mark (or higher in more expensive counties) the greater the reduction.

Essentially, the 2019 reforms changed the income threshold so that it is now based on 65% of the county median household income—or \$40,000, whichever is greater. Thus, King and Snohomish counties saw the biggest threshold increase.

Perhaps the major problem with the senior citizen property tax exemption program is getting the information to seniors who may qualify. That is where WSSRA can help out. Through publications like this, and perhaps by inviting the county assessor to make an exemption presentation at an upcoming unit meeting, our organization can spread the word and hopefully get more folks who qualify to apply.

And the trick is definitely in getting the word out. Assessors' offices have the information about the program, but they do not have the staffing capacity to reach out individually to senior property owners who may qualify for an exemption. They certainly do general outreach, but admit that their message doesn't get to everyone.

As the 2019 legislative session ended, we were all disappointed that the Plan 1 COLA bill died at the last minute. But not all of the recent news from Olympia was bad. The improved senior citizen property tax exemption rules will help many who struggle to make ends meet—assuming they apply!

Join the 18,000 members of WSSRA



Keeping our Retirement Alive, Growing and Strong!

It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.

Legislative News



2019 Session: Some Important Victories But More Work To Be Done



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

The 2019 Legislative Session was a mixed one for school retirees. Some important victories were achieved, but there were disappointments as well. The Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit was restored to its pre-recession peak of \$183 per month. Additionally, Plan 2 and Plan 3 retirees who retire before the age of 65 have the ability to work part time in schools without jeopardizing their pension check. WSSRA also joined in an effort with AARP Washington and King County Assessor John Wilson to help freeze your property taxes. But frustration was a common theme throughout the session too. For retirees, the major irritation came from the exclusion of the Select Committee on Pension Policy approved Plan 1 COLA from the final budget proposal.

PLAN 2/PLAN 3 CORNER

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

For Plan 2/3 retirees, the 2019 legislative session produced some good news. First, HB 1139, which opens post-retirement work restrictions for many K-12ers, was signed by the Governor and is effective for the 2019-20 school year.

Prior to HB 1139, Plan 2/3 retirees with 30 years or more of service who retired before the age of 65 were only able to teach up to 867 hours without seriously reducing their retirement check. Now, that privilege has been extended to retirees who want to coach, drive a bus, serve as a para-pro, cook, become a TOSA, counsel, do social work, or anything except serve as an administrator. Again, the limit is 867 hours per school year.

Second, the final budget increased the PEBB Medicare subsidy from \$168 to \$183 per month. That \$15 per month increase will help anyone who uses PEBB for his/her Medicare supplement and is applicable for all retirees—whether Plan 1, Plan 2 or Plan 3.

Legislators finished this session in the nick of time with several last-minute deals. The State constitution required legislators to finish the Regular Session at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, April 28th. They finished at 11:58 p.m. For the state budget written by Senator Rolfes and Representative Ormsby to work, both chambers had to agree on roughly \$1 billion in new taxes. Those votes happened late at night on the final weekend. In the end, legislators brought in new revenue from multiple sources. Roughly \$350 million came from new B&O taxes on services and technology companies, \$250 million from larger real estate fees on million-dollar homes, and \$130 million in new levies on financial institutions.

The bulk of the new spending went to state employee contracts, improved healthcare benefits for K-12 classified employees, and mental health spending. The Governor's office negotiated new collective bargaining agreements for state employees which required over \$500 million in new revenue to complete. The legislature also agreed to pay full time health benefits to part time school employees, costing another \$500 million. Multi-million-dollar investments were also made in Western and Eastern State Hospitals, and funding was provided for a new network of community-based behavioral health clinics. As important as those payments are, they crowded out funding for other vital issues.

WSSRA's biggest disappointment was the exclusion of the Plan 1 COLA. The House budget proposal included both the COLA and the PEBB Medicare restoration. The Senate included neither. House members are keen on blaming the Senate. Senate members say there was not enough revenue to cover a COLA. The cost for the COLA was \$50 million in a \$52 billion-dollar budget that included billions in new tax revenue. The financial argument does not hold water. Please continue to press your legislators about this over the interim.

The Medicare Eligible Healthcare benefit was lowered from \$183 per month to \$150 per month in 2011. WSSRA is happy to report the restoration of this benefit. It will help to keep insurance prices flat next year. The restoration provides another \$12 million in funding to keep insurance costs down for retirees on PEBB Medicare supplemental plans.

Legislative News continued on page 9...

WSSR-PAC News



WSSR PAC: Who Are Our Friends?



by Edith Ruby, WSSR-PAC vice president and Mary Wallon, WSSR-PAC secretary

The WSSRA convention in June was a busy time for your PAC officers. We particularly enjoyed chatting with attendees at the PAC table. The contributions to our PAC fund were a big help as we continue to rebuild for the 2020 legislative elections. Last year, the PAC made contributions of \$23,000 to 20 candidates, which took most of our treasury. Legislative races are normally scheduled only in even-numbered years in our state. Two legislative districts do have contests this year to fill empty seats, but because candidates running have little track record on our issues the PAC is unlikely to make contributions. However, we need to continue to work to refill our treasury before the 2020 elections when all state representatives and half of our senators will be up for election.

The 2019 two-year budget setting session had small wins for school retirees, but fewer than we had hoped. Legislators increased the Medicare Eligible Insurance Benefit by \$15/month to restore it to its 2010 level, not a huge win considering substantial increases in medical insurance costs. Post-retirement work options for Plan 2 and 3 retirees were improved. A big disappointment was the Senate's refusal to approve a onetime 3% COLA for most Plan 1 retirees. While all legislators in the House supported the COLA bill, no Senate Democrat voted for it. The excuse of legislative "friends" is that there isn't enough money in our state's budget. Yet, this biennium the state is forecast to receive \$5 billion in new taxes and the one time COLA would cost only \$50 million. Clearly, needs of aging school retirees were not a priority for enough legislators.

The session left us wondering how we can become more effective in getting legislation passed that assures all school retirees a secure retirement. Who are our real legislative friends? What can we do to elect legislators who both advocate for us and insist during final budget negotiations that funds necessary to meet our retirement needs be in that budget?

The unanimous vote of House members for the 3% COLA shows that we have some real friends in Olympia. Our problem this year has been with a number of senators. Do we continue to recommend for endorsement and to contribute to legislators who, in the end, give us little but kind words? How aware are voters and even our own members that many legislators do not consider it their responsibility to meet the retirement needs of all longtime school employees?

One idea suggested at the convention is to use some PAC money to purchase ads on digital media to inform voters of legislators' voting records. For instance, which legislators have followed through on assurances that they will support a secure retirement for school employees who have spent their careers working for the state? And who found that this wasn't a high enough priority? Political advertising would be a different tactic for us, but candidate contributions alone have gained us too little.

Your PAC officers and board will spend this year considering options. We want to use the money contributed by members in the most effective way possible. In the meantime, we all need to do two things:

1. Contact legislators in our districts either personally or in writing. Tell them how disappointed we are that the legislature continues to do so little to meet school retiree financial needs despite our state's thriving economy
2. Contribute to WSSR-PAC, either by check or electronically via our website, and to local unit low cost fundraisers.



**Please support
WSSR-PAC
by making a
contribution today!**

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Mail to: WSSR-PAC Treasurer

c/o Lora Brabant

125 West 11th Street

Port Angeles, WA

98362-7709

2019 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Northwest 1



Tate Hutchins

Lynden High School
Central Washington University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Alex Ferrier

Western Washington University
*Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/
Internship Scholarship*



Tabitha Revak

Lynden High School
undecided
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*



Brittany Anderson

Arlington High School
Whitworth University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*

Northwest 2



Chloe Reynolds

Garfield High School
Western Washington University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Brian Lim

University of Washington
*Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/
Internship Scholarship*



Kyndra Rademacher

Enumclaw High School
Chapman University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*



Tyler Hopp

Kentlake High School
Northwest University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*

Southwest 3



Miriam Wonderly

Clallam Bay High School
Pacific Lutheran University or
University of Washington
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Hayley Rathburn

University of Puget Sound
*Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/
Internship Scholarship*



Madison Saiz

Port Angeles High School
Central Washington University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*



Ciarra Judson

Wilson High School
Pacific Lutheran University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*

Southwest 4



Megan Tosh

R.A. Long High School
undecided
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Sydney Pettit

Western Washington University
*Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/
Internship Scholarship*



Breann Jones

Vancouver Sch. of Arts & Academics
undecided
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*



Savannah Larson

A.G. West Black Hills High School
Utah State University
*Robert J. Handy Memorial
(PEMCO) Scholarship*

2019 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

East 5



Piper Lukas
Selah High School
George Fox University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Vanessa Colin
Central Washington University
Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship



Janessa Colburn
Trout Lake High School
Cedarville University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship



Emily Lockman
Columbia High School
University of Washington
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship

East 7



Danaca Colvin
Wilber-Crest High School
Eastern Washington University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Michael Watson
Whitworth University
Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship



Catherine Ahrendt
Lakeside High School
Eastern Washington University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship



Brett Bacon
Mead High School
Washington State University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship

East 6



Gabriella Navarro
Chelan High School
Gonzaga University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Madison Krogh
Moses Lake High School
Eastern Washington University
Neil D. Prescott Scholarship



Zach Dye
Central Washington University
Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship



Tyler Charlton
Manson High School
Washington State University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship



Madison Sherman
Cashmere High School
Western Washington University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship

East 8



Calla Hunt
Richland High School
Brigham Young University
WSSR-Foundation Scholarship



Benjamin Pettibone
Western Governors University
Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship



Jasmine Carringer
Clarkston High School
Washington State University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship



Kassidy Naef
Chiawana High School
Brigham Young University
Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Connecting With Future Members



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

Happy summer to all! While summer is a time for a breather, it is also a great time to begin planning for the coming fall, winter, and spring seasons. Participating in local school district benefits fairs, pre-retirement seminars, and any celebrations related to "back to school," all aid our continued efforts to get a few minutes on school staff meetings in order to present benefits of membership to active employees. Alan Burke and I are available to help with these efforts, and we will bring plenty of \$10 bills for new members.

The WSSRA convention in Yakima concluded with breakout leadership sessions, including one highlighting membership. It was packed with timely and important content for anyone with their unit membership levels on their mind. I am feeling the need these days to do what we can to be relevant to those boomers and millennials fast approaching retirement. On the job and in their personal lives, these folks pretty much live on their electronic devices, including computers and phones. We had two "experts" on developing unit websites present to the session.

Jim Bumgarner, outgoing E8 representative, presented the unit website he developed (BlogSpot) for Benton Franklin Unit 29. It is a masterpiece and carries no fee with it. Debbie Burgess, of the WSSRA state office, described a website service provided to our association by a third-party vendor, for a small fee. Both Jim and Debbie are available by phone or email if anyone has questions about setting up a unit website. A number of units' websites are up and running and would no doubt be more than willing to share what they are doing. We also heard from Jake Henderson of AMBA regarding their efforts for WSSRA and their latest program offerings and improvements.

Michele Hunter, WSSRA membership coordinator, filled us in on the latest membership levels. We are ahead of June 1 of 2018 by almost 200 with more than 50 actives pending. We are making progress! Michele can provide assistance with any needed forms.

Have a great summer and let's kick things into gear in the fall. Thanks to everyone for stepping up and growing our membership.

WSSRA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Do you know a school retiree who should be a member? Clip this form and ask them to complete and return the form today!

DUES DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION FORM WASHINGTON STATE RETIREES' ASSOCIATION 4726 PACIFIC AVE SE, LACEY, WA 98503-1216

Please Print

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

SS Number _____ - _____ - _____ Home/Personal Email Address _____

Retirement Plan (CIRCLE) TRS1 TRS2 TRS3 PERS1 PERS2 PERS3 SERS2 SERS3

Name of WSSRA Unit (or school district last employed) _____

I authorize the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems to deduct the following dues and any future increases as voted by the membership, from my monthly retirement allowance and to pay such deduction to the Washington State School Retirees' Association.

Should I wish to cancel ensuing deductions I will send a written notification of cancellation to Washington State Department of Retirement Systems and WSSRA.

DUES DEDUCTION: \$7 per month or CASH DUES: \$84 per year

Date _____ Signature _____

01-Asotin-Pomeroy

06-Southwest King

12-Lower Columbia

20-Seattle

27-Pierce County

31-Walla Walla-

02-Chelan/Douglas

07-Jefferson County

14-Mason County

21-Skagit/Island/San

28-Thurston County

Columbia

03-Clallam County

08-Kitsap County

15-Okanogan County

Juan

29-Benton-Franklin

32-Whatcom County

04-Columbia Basin

09-Kittitas County

16-East King

22-Sno-Isle

30-Southwest Wash-

33-Whitman County

05-Grays Harbor/

10-Columbia Gorge

18-Pend Oreille

23-Sno-King

ington

34-Yakima County

Pacific

11-Lewis County

19-Renton-South King

25-Spokane

Contact WSSRA for membership information: Michele Hunter, michele@wssra.org or 360-413-5496, ext 116

Legislative News, *continued from page 4...*

Important improvements for Plan 2 & 3 retirees were also passed this year. In 2008, the state lowered the retirement age for Plan 2 & 3; however, that change came with one important caveat. Individuals who accepted the improved retirement benefits were banned from working in any state or local (DRS covered) employer until the age of 65. The legislation will allow those retirees to work part time in TRS / SERS covered school positions. It only excludes administrative positions.

Current law forces a strange predicament on some new school employees. New recruits are given 90 days to pick a pension plan. If they do not make a choice, they are defaulted into the hybrid Plan 3 at a 5% contribution rate for the duration of their K-12 employment. WSSRA believes those rules were misguided and was proud to co-sponsor SB 5360 with the Federation of State Employees that changed the default plan to Plan 2, the traditional pension plan. That drama is now over and starting in the year 2020, new employees will default into Plan 2.

There is excellent news to report in the world of senior citizen tax relief. The passage of SB 5160 will increase income thresholds for property tax freezes and exemptions. We believe that a large number of school retirees will now qualify for a freeze on future property tax increases. The exemption will be based on income and county of residence. It will be an important project for the WSSRA state office and local units to help retirees apply for their new property tax assistance. See the article on page 3 for more detail.

Two WSSRA bills got zero traction this past legislative session. We pursued legislation to make VEBA, a medical savings program, better. This bill had some unexpected costs to school districts and we will rework the legislation to make it budget neutral. The other would lower the full retirement age in Plans 2 & 3. This expensive proposal will take multiple sessions to pass. We have a bill in the system, and are now pursuing a fiscal note so we can understand the full measure of the cost to the state. The WSSRA lobbying team will continue to pursue both bills in the next legislative session.

The mission for the next few months is clear. There must be continued advocacy on the Plan 1 COLA for the 2020 legislative session. The current COLA bills in the system are still alive for next year. The other imperative is to help retirees sign up for their property tax exemption. That benefit will only be offered to qualified applicants. It is on us to help WSSRA members know that their property taxes needn't increase every year. This will take some work, but will be worth the effort.



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Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Supporting Future Educators



by Tom Anderson, WSSR Foundation chair

The WSSR Foundation proudly supports scholarships for future educators. The mission of the Foundation is to support quality public education by providing funding for eight college scholarships. The scholarships will be offered to outstanding high school students graduating in the spring. The Foundation is committed to \$2,500 scholarships, one scholarship for a senior in each of our eight state regions. In addition, in 2019, the Neil D. Prescott Foundation offered a \$2,500 scholarship as well. The scholarship recipients have an educational goal of graduating college and beginning a career as a public school educator. Please consider being a contributor of scholarship funds in support future educators. To quote Mr. Ben Franklin, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

Funding for the scholarships has primarily come from those attending the WSSRA convention, the basket-drawing program, silent auction, and contributions made during the year. We encourage members throughout the state to support the scholarship fundraiser by helping to provide basket and auction items for our fund-raising effort at the state convention. Convention attendees have always been very generous in supporting our fundraiser at the convention. During the June, 2019 convention almost \$8,200 was collected from the silent auction basket bidding event and the five separate basket drawings opportunities where 68 baskets were given away. It is a great deal of fun for everyone at the convention and the basket donations are greatly appreciated by everyone involved. Thank you donors.

continued on page 11...

DONATION FORM

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION

4726 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503-1216

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Donation \$ _____ In Honor \$ _____ In Memory \$ _____

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Person to be Notified _____

Address _____

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Cash \$ _____

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Margaret Wharton - in memory of Carolyn Horne

Grays Harbor/Pacific SRA - in honor of Margaret Wharton

Lewis County SRA - in memory of Clara Gilliland, Donna Rose Olsen, Lilis Nogler, Marlene Crawford, Robin K. Schmidt

Mason County SRA - in memory of Beverly Craig, Harold Wilson, Leland Rhodes, Neal Nogles, Sally Clayton

Okanogan County SRA - in memory of Dennis Neely, Tam Hutchinson, Theodore Pitts, William Grunst

Pierce County SRA - in memory of Carolyn Horne, Rick Nebeker, Stephen Mondau

Renton/South King RSEA - in memory of Joseph Brabant, Sheila Airis

Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of Alan Good, Berniece Leaf, Beverly Potter, Darrell Pearson, Leonard Hoover, Ned Face, William Blunt

Southwest King SRA - in memory of Georgetta Nupen

Yakima County SRA - donation

continued from page 10... In support of this important fundraiser each of the coordinating councils are asked to place this matter on their meeting agenda to encourage individual units to start preparing for baskets/auction items for the next convention. Your support and attention to this important and beneficial activity is greatly appreciated.

Please note that financial contributions can take place throughout the year to support the scholarship program. Last year, approximately \$2,000 came in through this process. You may know someone who is in a position, financially, to contribute to our scholarship fund. Pass the word.

In addition to the WSSR Foundation scholarships, the Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship program will be offered again this year. The scholarship will be \$1,000 for each of the eight regions in the state and is for college students intending to do their student teaching/internship this next year.

For Your Health

Be Healthy, Eat Fresh



by Susan Hickok and Karen Schafer, unit 4
photos by Susan Hickok

Most of us are old enough to remember that old saying, "You are what you eat!" So, would you rather be fresh or processed? We all know that eating fresh produce is better for us than processed foods and this is the time of year when we have access to a lot of locally grown fruits and vegetables.



Chances are you have access to a local farmer's market or a fruit stand. Buying local supports your neighbors and your area. It saves fuel from big trucks and ships transporting produce from distances. You can check with your vendor on their growing practices, assuring yourself that you will not be ingesting harmful sprays and chemicals. If you are unsure of the location of a farmer's market near you, check your local newspaper or radio station. Also, check online at:



wafarmersmarkets.org

click on Consumer Education
click on Find a Farmers Market

For even fresher produce, try growing vegetable and fruits on your own. If you do not have room for a full garden, try patio containers. Tomatoes, lettuce, and strawberries, among other things, are easy to grow in containers if you do not have space for a garden. Don't forget fresh herbs. Herbs also grow well in containers, gardens, or even in your flowerbeds. The internet is full of ideas, use a search term such as "container gardening" online to find tips and inspiration. Another resource is Pinterest (website or mobile device app), which is full of creative, and often inexpensive, ideas for container gardening. Not only does your own garden provide you with fresh produce, you are also healthier by being outside and exercising while you are attending your plants. Remember - be healthy, eat fresh.



Strive to be your freshest all summer long. Remember, "You are what you eat!"

WSSRA Convention 2019

WSSRA 72nd Annual Convention and Delegate Assembly

June 3 - 5, 2019 in Yakima, Washington

Photo credits: Peter Diedrick, Karen Keller, Kristin Murphy

Thanks to all who attended the WSSRA's 72nd Annual Convention in Yakima June 3-5. The event was a great success, with over 250 delegates and guests taking in the keynote address, attending leadership training sessions, and doing the work of the organization through Delegate Assembly. In addition, the scholarship awards luncheon, Monday night awards banquet, and Tuesday evening installation banquet and social were enjoyed by all.

President Linda Averill presided over the festivities, concluding a very busy year that took her all over the state visiting local units, Coordinating Councils, and committee meetings.

Keynoter Mandy Manning got the Convention off to a great start with her message about what teaching provides for kids and what kids provide for teachers. Ms. Manning, who traveled all across the nation this year as USA Teacher of the Year, reminded everyone about the importance of teaching and absolute necessity of building a vibrant, enthusiastic, and effective teaching force.

Thanks especially to the Convention planning committee, and volunteers from the Yakima SRA and NW 2 for doing the heavy lifting to make sure the event went off without a hitch. Committee members Kathi Fletcher, Norma Haney, Denise Perkins, Nick and Kathy Schultz (Yakima), plus Sue Perez, Don Bunker, Robyn Stroben, and Rachel Almeleh (NW 2) are congratulated for a job well done.

During Delegate Assembly, the attending members acted on one Bylaw change. Beginning this school year, Coordinating Councils can choose between having the traditional three annual meetings, or reduce the number to two. In many parts of the state, winter travel is problematic. The Bylaw change will allow those Councils a choice of skipping the winter meeting.

We'll see you next year, June 8 - 10 in Pasco, for the 73rd Annual WSSRA Convention!



Pictured top left: Yakima Nation Warriors Color Guard opens the 2019 WSSRA Convention and Delegate Assembly. **Pictured top right:** Celebration of Life bouquet honoring members who passed away this year.

Pictured above: WSSRA past presidents, including (standing, left to right): Mary Perkins, Lois Sheppard-Gerig, Bill Marvin, Edie Moersch, Curt Horne, Richard Anderson, Don Rifenberg, Louis Osmonovich, Nick Schultz. (seated, left to right): Barbara Landrock, Gene Forrester.



Pictured at left: Unit 25 Spokane members Bill Marvin and Brad Beal with 2017 National Teacher of the Year Mandy Manning, from Spokane, who served as keynote speaker for the 2019 WSSRA Convention. **Pictured at right:** E5 Representative Norma Haney and Past-President Linda Averill.

WSSRA Convention 2019



2019-20 WSSRA Executive Board

(seated, l to r) Kay Bishop (NW1), Don Bunker (NW2), Diane Blair (SW3), Ron Crawford (SW4), Norma Haney (E5), Beverly Jagla (E6), Les Francis (E7), Sharon Hoseley (E8). (standing, l to r) Eileen Wascisin (secretary), Linda Averill (past president), Bob Duke (president-elect), Jim Hall (treasurer), Pam Francis (president), Karen Keller (historian), Alan Burke (executive director). Not pictured: Gene Forrester (parliamentarian), Kristin Murphy (Journal editor)



Basket Winners!

Clarence Blaine (Unit 12 Lower Columbia), Shirley Joplin (Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific)



Basket Winners!

Jim Briggs (Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia), Cathy Murphy (Unit 9 Kittitas County)



Thank
You!



Linda Averill,
2018-19 WSSRA President

COMMUNICATION PAVES THE WAY



WSSRA Convention 2019

**An awards banquet was held on Monday, June 3 during the 2019 WSSRA Convention.
Two members were honored with the association's highest recognition.**

Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award

The Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award is presented to a member of WSSRA who volunteered their time for fulfillment of WSSRA goals, achieved beyond the norm in the performance and charged responsibilities of their duties, and have inspired and encouraged fellow constituents in their performance to achieve WSSRA goals.

Barbara Robinson

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan

Barbara Robinson is part dynamo, part idea person, and part leader! She was Unit 21 co-president for four years, and was on numerous unit level committees before her presidency. Her passion is membership where she has recruited dozens of new members and serves on the WSSRA State Membership Committee. As if that were not enough, Barbara also has served on the State Legislative Committee and is an active volunteer lobbyist on behalf of school retirees. Every November, she coordinates an election forum with the League of Women Voters.



Nick Schultz

Unit 34 Yakima County

The Stan McNaughton Outreach Award is presented to a WSSRA member who volunteers their time beyond the goals of WSSRA to enhance the lives of community members and has improved the quality of life in their community, and in doing so has improved the image of WSSRA.

Nick's community service has been prolific within and outside of WSSRA. Most retirees know him from his time as a WSSRA state committee chair, E5/E6 Coordinating Council Chair, and 2013-14 WSSRA state president. Outside the school retiree organization, Nick works with the March of Dimes, eagle scout candidates, community ministries, and as president of the Central Washington Agricultural Museum. He is well known and loved in the Yakima community.



2019 Hoban Meritorious Nominees

Tina Underdahl, Barbara Robinson, Donald Parks, Fran Person, Heather Gurley, Joan Helm, Sue Battin, Karen Keller

not pictured: Sharon Hoseley, Karen Mahan

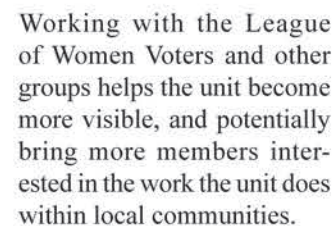


2019 McNaughton Outreach Nominees

Cynthia Endicott, Les Francis, Sharon Hoseley, Timothy Knopf, Nick Schultz, Patricia MacGowan, Ardith Eakin, Sue Perez, Walt Gobel

not pictured: Billie Williams, Marty Erickson

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



Ten members of Unit 22 attended the WSSRA convention in Yakima this year. The delegation had a wonderful time exploring the "Palm Springs" of Washington and found much inspiration as

WSSRA Around The State

they planned the upcoming year. Unit 22 also enjoyed cheering for longtime member and leader, **Linda Averill**, as she finished her term as WSSRA president.

Delegates took time to discuss the past year's lunch events, including:

- Genealogy and how to trace your roots.
- Candidate meet and greet- In a luncheon led by Unit 22's **Tim Knopf**, candidates from local districts spoke and then sat down with small groups to hear concerns.
- An annual luncheon to support Christmas House located in Everett and providing items to make local qualifying family's Christmas' brighter. Enough toys were donated to fill the back of a pickup and \$1,200 cash was presented.

- A well attended retirement seminar, in which a significant amount of new members joined.

- The annual scholarship banquet featured a slideshow presenting how \$12,500 in school grants benefited students.

- Two scholarships of \$2,000 each to very deserving students planning to enter education.

- How the library is more than just a place to get books.

- The year ended with an annual get-together with Sno-King Unit 23.

Sno-Isle Unit 22's membership has grown once again this year and the hope is to hit 1,000 members in the coming year with incentive programs.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

On April 4, Unit 23 held the annual scholarship award luncheon. **Linda Fitzgerald** announced the current recipients from Shoreline and Edmonds school districts. Co-chair **Keith Lindaas** spoke about several of the renewing scholarship recipients. Also, during the gathering, Shoreline Syre principal **Michelle Carroll** talked about her journey in education from becoming a teacher to becoming a principal. The 6th grade honor choir provided vocal musical selections from Syre led by **Robyn Clapper**.

The May unit meeting was the annual joint meeting with Sno-Isle School Retirees' Association at Le Bistro Restaurant at Sno-Isle Technical Skills Center. The culinary arts students served a wonderful luncheon. Speaker Gloria Kawabori told the story of her family's internment during WWII. **Dr. Alan Burke** gave an update on the end of the legislative session. **Linda Fitzgerald** received the AARP Community Service Award for 20+ years as one of the scholarship chairs. **Evie Nordeen** was presented with a certificate for her many years as unit Sunshine person. Next year's unit officers include Vice-President **Roberta Hawkins**, Secretary **Jan Phillips**, and Treasurer **Tom Hawkins**. The board will share the president position on a monthly basis.

Unit 32 Whatcom County:

At the March 21 unit event, WSSRA had Joe Nolting, coordinator of Kids Need Books (KNB). He provides a great service to the Whatcom County community. Mr. Nolting is a retired teacher who taught middle school in Alaska for 30 years and is passionate about reading and literacy. Joe volunteers as coordinator of a core group of volunteers. The KNB program gives books to children of low-income families and over the years KNB has handed out over 60,000 books.

The May 16 unit gathering featured Cari Griffith, who was instrumental in bringing the Family Promise program to Whatcom County. Under the umbrella of the Interfaith Coalition, Family Promise provides support for homeless families and helps them to get established in the community.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

Southwest King School Retirees' Association has two newsletters scheduled for next year that will include meeting information. One will be mailed in September and another in January.

The remainder of the 2019 meetings will be during the fourth Monday of September, October, and November. In 2020, the unit will meet from February to May.



Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: Unit members enjoying the WSSRA convention, (seated, l to r) Barbara Robinson, Barbara Landrock, Joanne Jones, (standing, l to r) Bruce Boyer and Diane Visten.

WSSRA Around The State


Unit 8 Kitsap County: In May, unit members visited Elandan Gardens in Bremerton.

(l to r) **Sandy Deason, Allison Morris, Doris Bucher, Craig Miller, Cheryl Miller, Faith McCarn, Joan Lingfelter.**

On Monday, September 23, the unit meeting will feature a Tai Chi presentation by board member, **Kerry Lohr**. Here is a quote from her regarding the program, "I do several styles, but usually start people with Sun (pronounced soon) as it has a more upright stance, and agile foot movements which in turn help with balance and fall prevention. Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention has been recognized by the CDC as well as organizations around the world for helping practitioners." The September 23 meeting will start at 11:30 a.m. at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 19030 8th Ave. S, SeaTac, WA 98148.

Unit 16 East King:

Summer will include several gatherings for the members of East-King's executive board. The group plans to hold one meeting to discuss what in-

dividuals gleaned from the WSSRA convention in Yakima. Time will also be spent on reviewing the year.

Program planning will be on the agenda for the team's second meeting. Possible speakers will be considered and tentatively scheduled. Board members will volunteer to contact and confirm those individuals. Picnic plans will be reviewed at that time, too.

On August 2, the annual potluck picnic will be held at **Ed Monroe's** home. Mini-grant recipients and local legislators will be invited. Member **Nancy Peterson** and her friend Jay Finkelstein have been invited again to entertain members with their popular music pieces.

In late August, the executive board will convene again to confirm programs. Schedule cards will be printed to hand

out to members and prospective members as well as the wonderful staff at Madison House in Kirkland where East-King's luncheons are held.

Unit 19 Renton/South King: On May 7, at Renton United Methodist Church, guest speaker Andrea Shirey gave the Renton-South King members several hints on how to declutter their homes.

This year, eight delegates: **Rachel Almeleh, Joan Frank, Joan Morgenstern, Susanne Perez, Eleanor Raschkow, Susan Scholtes, Robin Stroben, and Tina Underdahl** attended the WSSRA convention in Yakima. Unit 19 helped NW 2 coordinating council and Unit 34 - Yakima with activities at the convention such as table decorations, Celebration of Life, meal tickets, and registration table. All of the unit delegates found the convention to be educational with valuable information to be shared with Renton-South King members. **Susan Scholtes** was the only delegate from Unit 19 to win a raffle basket and she won two.

On June 11, Renton-South King had their luncheon and last meeting for the summer at Fairwood Golf & Country Club. Guest speaker Kris Ripley, a master gardener, showed unit members how to plant flowers in a pot and offered other gardening tips. **Joan Morgenstern** won the door prize - a beautiful pot of flowers.

On August 13, the Renton-South King executive board will have a potluck and planning meeting for 2019-2020 at **Rachel Almeleh's** home.

Unit 20 Seattle:

Unit 20 had the highest attendance for a luncheon/meeting in years on April 9 when the featured speaker was nationally famous political cartoonist David Horsey.

The May unit luncheon also had a large gathering as it featured actress/historian Debbie Dimitre, who portrayed the first female mayor of Seattle (Bertha Landes, who took office in 1926).

Patricia MacGowan, SSRA scholarship chair, announced winners of SSRA scholarships both for high school graduates planning for careers in education and for college students about to do their internships (student teaching). This is the third year SSRA has offered internship scholarships--now offering four at \$5,000 each.

Sharon Green, who leads the unit mini-grant committee, announced that the unit gave out more grants than in the last five years, \$500 per year for unit members and \$200 one-time-only for non-members.

Also, in May, SSRA held a retreat, concentrating on increasing membership and plans for next year.

WSSRA Around The State

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam Co.:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association met at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on April 17. The guest speaker was Luanne Hinkle, executive director of the Olympic Peninsula Humane Society. She talked about expansion projects, fundraisers, and told several stories about animal rescues.

An election of officers was held. The officers for the 2019 - 2020 year will be **Lora Brabant**, president; **Beverly Brown**, vice-president; **Linda**

Boyd, secretary; and **Arlene Morganroth**, treasurer.

The officers were installed during the CCSRA May 21 meeting. The guest speaker was Melissa Williams, executive director of the Feiro Marine Life Center in Port Angeles. She spoke about various educational and research partnerships and about plans for a new building next to the upcoming Port Angeles Waterfront Center.

The annual potluck picnic was held at the 4-Seasons Ranch Clubhouse in Port Angeles on June 18.

The first meeting in the fall will be on September 17. WSSRA president **Pam Francis** is an invited guest.

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

In May, Unit 8 Kitsap County went to Elandan Gardens in Bremerton. It was a beautiful surprise. There are many things to see and the grounds are magnificent. The store has many interesting things to buy. One of the owners gave a lecture to the group before they set out to explore the grounds. All had a great day.

Unit 8 Kitsap County took nine members to the WSSRA convention this year. Unit delegates enjoyed themselves and learned many new things. WSSRA organization and presentations were outstanding as usual. Attendees all enjoy going and learning new things. **Kevin Chase** thanked **Craig Miller** who had been his FFA teacher for improving his speaking ability and giving him leadership training in high school. It was a special moment for **Craig** and the unit. **Craig** had replaced **Kevin's** dad as agricultural teacher.

Details on the unit summer picnic will be announced later. Enjoy your summer!

Unit 27 Pierce County:

The WSSRA convention was exciting for Pierce County this year for many reasons. Unit 27 received the Unit of Highest Distinction award,

Unit 27's own **Bob Duke** was installed as WSSRA president-elect, and a record number of Pierce County delegates attended! A highlight was a team building social hour where Unit 27 members brainstormed, socialized, and volunteered their favorite areas of participation for the coming year.

Summer Picnic Alert! All are invited to the annual summer potluck picnic on Thursday, August 1 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A special welcome to over 200 new "active" (still working) members! Bring a favorite potluck dish - beverages, plates, and utensils provided. Come discover beautiful Clark's Creek South Park in Puyallup located at 1700 12th Avenue SW, Puyallup.

What happened during the last legislative session in Olympia and how does that affect retiree pensions? Don't miss hearing **Dr. Alan Burke**, WSSRA Executive Director, who will update all at the September 19 luncheon meeting at LaQuinta Inn in Tacoma at 12:00 noon. Join PCSRA at the lovely buffet lunch, a treat for only \$12. A special welcome to new attendees and guests!

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor Pa-

cific: Unit 5's May meeting was held at the Fishin' Hole restaurant in Montesano. As it was the last meeting until September, there was no formal program in order to

RETIREE RESOURCES

WA Dept. of Retirement Systems (TRS, PRS)
1-800-547-6657 WWW.DRS.WA.GOV

PEBB and Health Care Authority
(health insurance)
1-800-200-1004 WWW.PEBB.HCA.WA.GOV

SHIBA - Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors 1-800-562-6900
WWW.INSURANCE.WA.GOV/SHIBA

Social Security Administration (SSA)
1-800-325-0778 WWW.SSA.GOV

AARP Washington Office
1-866-227-7457 WWW.AARP.ORG
Mike Tucker, state president
Doug Shadel, Washington state director

Senior Citizens' Lobby
360-754-0207 WWW.WASENIORLOBBY.ORG
WSSRA Liaison: Gene Forrester

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 20 Seattle: Editorial Cartoonist David Horsey, nationally syndicated and longtime cartoonist for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, was the featured guest at the unit's April meeting. Pictured with David are members Sharon Green and Roxanne Trees.

allow more time to visit with each other. The Outreach basket was passed around for donations to the Ocosta weekend backpack food program. This program sends enough food for two breakfasts, two lunches, and two snacks for families who need some help making it through the weekend. Also from Outreach, two more books were donated to the Aberdeen High School library, in memory of **Pat Wilhelms** and **Jim Leggett**. Also, a book was given to the Ocean Shores Public Library in memory of **Larry Woodwick**. Decorative memorial bookplates are placed inside the cover of each book with the necessary information. During the meeting, the group wrote "thinking of you" cards to several people who needed a cheerful reminder that they are thought of and loved.

All unit members are encouraged to mark September 25 on their calendars as a reminder of the next unit meeting. Have a wonderful summer!

Unit 11 Lewis County:

Discussion and evaluation of the reduced structure of meetings and their leadership along with a venue change in luncheon location were a focus of May's meeting for Lewis County Unit 11. **Philip Meany**, who had served as president for three years and graciously agreed to be the contact/coordinator this past year, asked to step down. **Jean Barner**, treasurer for a number of years, had hoped to be replaced but nobody offered to serve in either position. **Margaret Wharton** will take over the contact/coordinator and **Jean** will

continue as treasurer in order for the unit to remain viable. **Sharon Blair** will remain as secretary. Dawn's Delectables will continue to be the unit meeting location since everyone seemed to enjoy it.

A memorial tribute was held to honor members who passed away this year.

Unit delegates attending the WSSRA convention include: **Jean Barner**, **Bob Broostrom**, **Martha Glanz**, **Philip Meany**, **Carolyn Stella**, and **Margaret Wharton**.

Unit 12 Lower Columbia:

In April, Officer Cindy Turpen, from the Longview Police Department, spoke to members about senior safety, security, and the Block Watch program. Officer Turpen is the police department's community liaison. Her talk was very informative, as was the question and answer time.

The unit's annual May banquet was enjoyed by all. Two high school seniors were honored with scholarships to help with their plans of becoming teachers. St. Rose choral group entertained the group with selections from the musical, "Mary Poppins." They are a favorite local children's group. Joel Govehnik, director of the Cowlitz County Historical Museum, shared unusual, little known facts about some articles found in the museum's collection. Member **Mary Anne Gennette** arranged the flowers decorating the tables. She has

been a part of the planning for the banquet for many years.

Clarence and Donna Blaine, **Mary Lou Salberg**, and **David and Carol Holcomb** were the unit representatives at the WSSRA convention. They will give their report during the September meeting at Somerset Retirement Apartments.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

Unit 28 will be celebrating the unit's 65th birthday at the unit's first meeting of the year on September 20. Guest speaker will be Tumwater historian and local radio personality, Don Trosper.

The unit sent seventeen members to the annual WSSRA convention in Yakima. The weather was very hot but thankfully, the air conditioning was working in the convention center. Many unit members took part in the silent auction and several others won Foundation baskets. In addition to the delegate assembly, most members also attended breakout sessions that included such topics as bringing in and keeping new members, website management and development, community service, and social media/communications.

The unit is having a meeting of officers and standing committee chairs at the end of August to prepare for the year. They will be discussing the unit's mission, communication with new and existing

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 15 Okanogan: Mini-grant winner **Michele Fancher** teaches middle school English/ Language Arts and incorporates poetry and stories with math and art. The string art shown was made with old transparencies on which the kids wrote and colored.

members, job descriptions, and items generated from the convention.

Newly elected vice president **Ray Colombo** got the opportunity to go to two North Thurston schools and observe the presentations to the staffs by **Karen Keller**, **Lorene Rang**, and WSSRA executive director **Alan Burke** as they were able to bring in many new members.

Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):

Thirty-three members and three guests attended the unit's May 24 luncheon program, entitled "Thanks and Remembrance." Members were recognized for their contributions and a remembrance ceremony was held for members who passed away during the year. Musicians Ron and Donna Frasier provided music throughout the meeting. They chose the theme, "heroes," for their musical selections.

Unit President **Jeanie Anderson** recognized and thanked unit heroes, including:

- **Margaret Snitzler**, for her extraordinary work in updating the new directory.
- **Sherry Boose**, for her work coordinating Foundation baskets for many WSSRA conventions.
- **Mina Milligan**, unit secretary, for creating and managing the unit website, along with all of her other (hero) work.
- **Gerry Jarvis**, long-time hero, received a giant thank you for all of her accomplishments. She also received her honorary lifetime membership. However, she will remain in work mode, taking over as program chair!

A special treat was welcoming WSSRA President **Linda Averill** as she installed the 2019-20 unit officers. **Jeanie Anderson**, president; **Wanita Filbin**, vice-president; **Mina Milligan**, secretary, and **Marty Erickson**, treasurer.

It was a delight to welcome **Don Rifenbery**, former WSSRA president, and past president of Unit 30. **Don** will always be revered for his total dedication and the recruitment of so many new members. **Don** now lives in Gig Harbor, but keeps in contact and loves to return for visits.

For the Remembrance Ceremony, the song, "Gonna Build a Mountain," set the scene. **Jane Madden** read the verse, "To laugh much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to leave the world a better place: To know even one life breathed easier because of you have lived.... This is to have succeeded." As each name was read, a beautiful rose was placed and a chime sounded in memory of each honored member: Myrna Pearson, Dollie Beers, Mae Ellen Moore, Janie Say, Karen Scheels, Zoe Carlisle, Robert Warren, Jack Beauchamp, Timothy Haney, Elizabeth Kight, Gloria Morrow, Ann Oertli, Lucille Carter, Bobby Lassley, Dorothy New. A life well lived leaves a beautiful bouquet of memories and a legacy for the future. The group sang, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and "Let There be Peace on Earth" to conclude the ceremony.

Linda Bannon and **Mina Milligan** spoke highly of the WSSRA convention. They were impressed with the opening ceremony, all of the meaningful and inspirational meetings, and the entertain-

ment. **Wanita Filbin**, **Fran Person**, **Margaret Snitzler**, and **Despo Varkados** also represented Unit 30 at the convention.

EAST-5

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

Unit 34 "worker bees" are tired. They were very involved in the WSSRA convention in June. **Nick** and **Kathy Schultz** were convention co-chairs and enlisted the help of many from the Yakima County unit.

The board will meet in August for lunch and planning for the upcoming year. The 2019-2020 year will be conducted under the co-presidency of **Nick** and **Kathy Schultz**, with **Millie Stenehjem** as their "shadow." **Millie** will then be president for the 2020-2021 year. That is what we are all about, teaching and learning.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

The April unit meeting included introduction of the Wenatchee Apple Blossom Royalty. The three girls spoke about their activities and future college plans. What an inspiring group! They certainly possess brains and beauty. Entertainment was provided by the Wenatchee Applettes Drill Team who wanted to thank the unit for supporting their program.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Members Susan Hickok, Karen Schafer, Louis Logan, Helen Preston, Shirley Vincent, Gayle Talbot and Suzie Wilkinson recently took a day hike along the Columbia River.

Dr. Alan Burke, WSSRA executive director, was the featured speaker and did a fine job of explaining what was happening in Olympia concerning retirement issues. He urged everyone to continue to contact legislators with concerns.

Unit 2 was honored by the Wenatchee School District for their service to children and the community. The unit continues to support local schools through special programs, "Every Kid," at the Performing Arts Center (EKAP), STEM projects, Wenatchee High School AppleEttles, Foothills Middle School robotics team, clothing for low income students, and assistance to the Grace House and Haven of Hope.

Eight unit members attended the E5-E6 Coordinating Council meeting in Ellensburg on April 10 and enjoyed see-

ing friends and hearing reports from state committees.

Unit officers for next year include: Co-presidents **Kriss Crilly** and **Beverly Jagla**, Vice-President **Marie Buckner**, Secretary **Shirley Schreiber**, Co-treasurers **Jan Ottosen** and **Christi DeKraai**. All committees are active and planning for future work. The unit is supporting the ESD STEM Summit teacher training and program by donating \$900 in sponsorships and giving \$200, so first graders in Rock Island can each receive their own book for the summer and celebrate reading with an ice cream party.

The May meeting featured Terry Valdez, who provided an update on the revitalization of South Wenatchee, specifically the work being done with the community on Methow Park. He also explained the plans for a charter

school that is planning to open in Wenatchee in the future. It was a most informative meeting.

Sixteen delegates attended the WSSRA convention in Yakima. A summer picnic after convention was held to wrap up the year and honor those who have helped in the various programs. Special recognition was given to member, **Brian Flones**, retiring Wenatchee School District superintendent, for his support of unit programs.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Summer time and the livin' is...busy for Columbia Basin members! Seven retirees spent a recent day on a hike along the Columbia River, enjoying the beautiful scenery and stopping at the Wanapum Museum for lunch and a tour of the wonderful collection of Native items. **Susan Hickok, Helen Preston, Louis Logan,**

Suzie Wilkinson, Gayle Talbot, Shirley Vincent, and Karen Schafer went on this easy and fun two-mile trip.

The last monthly luncheon of the school year was held on May 28 at Pillar Rock Grill. State Representative Tom Dent, Legislative District 13, was the invited speaker. He gave members an update on the recently completed state legislative session, answered questions, and stressed the importance of staying informed on issues and in contacting him and other legislators by email with opinions and concerns.

Eight members recently got together to assemble book bags for the CBSRA project, "Books for Babies," which will be given to every baby born at two local hospitals. After putting together several hundred of these bags, a potluck lunch was enjoyed by these hard workers: **Pat Simmons, Bill Anderson,**



Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific: Aberdeen High School Librarian Julie McKay receiving books donated by the unit in memory of two recently deceased members of Unit 5.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 1 Asotin/Pomeroy: Unit members at the WSSRA convention - (seated, l to r) Sheryl Andrews, Allison Hays, Jerry Hendrickson, Sharon Hoseley, and (standing, l to r) Judie Hanley, Kay Andersen, Connie Cohmer.

Glenda Anderson, Judy Dagnon, Susan Hickok, Helen Preston, Louis Logan and Marylu Martin.

Several of the Columbia Basin members attended the WSSRA convention in Yakima. **Wanda Harrison, Susan Hickok, Linda Bishop, Helen Preston, and Pat Simmons** represented Unit 4. They reported that the convention was very informative and enjoyable. They came back with some great ideas to share with the other members. As an added bonus of attending, **Wanda** and **Susan** ran into two of their former students, a mother and daughter (Madison Krogh, who is also the recipient of one of the WSSRA state scholarships). What a coincidence!

Unit 15 Okanogan:

May's OCSRA meeting found members deciding on a change of venue for next year's general meetings to

the Cariboo Inn, Okanogan. General meetings are held on the last Friday of September, October, January, February, March, April, and May.

Jennie Hedington announced this year's scholarship has been awarded to Casey Nelson of Tonasket who attends Eastern Washington University majoring in education.

The group celebrated, with balloons, pictures, and cake, the achievements of members **William (Bill) Laws** and **Colleen Pock** to whom the WSSRA Board has granted honorary lifetime membership. To be considered for that honor, a member must have reached a 90th birthday and have been an active, contributing member for 20 years. In addition, the group presented out-going unit president, **Marcelle LaGrou**, with a gift card to a local restaurant. Treasurer **Penny Garrison** presented a tentative 2019-2020 budget, which the group approved.

Four members attended WSSRA convention in Yakima in June—**Marcelle LaGrou, Jennie Hedington, Penny Garrison, and Rita Figlen-ski**. Lyn Hruska, of Omak's Needlelyn Time, once again donated one of her much sought-after handbags for the WSSRA Foundation's silent auction.

The unit will have a membership table in Wenatchee, in August, at the STEM Conference; and in Omak, at the school district's benefits fair.

EAST-7

Unit 18 Pend Oreille Co., Unit 25 Spokane Area, Unit 33 Whitman Co.:

On April 27, the fourth annual "Help Maximizing Your Retirement 4.0" was held at West Valley (Spokane) High School sponsored by Units 18, 25 and 33 of the E7 Coordinating Council. Nearly 300 participants attended this year, which was lower than expected (and about 100 less than the previous year). The drop in attendance may be related to local school district salary increases and budget forecasts, which may be causing some to delay retirement, by a few years. The conference committee will be meeting to discuss changes to future retirement seminar events.

Thirty-four new members were enrolled at the event, thanks to the efforts of **Cookie**

Billups, Bill Marvin, Alan Burke, Linda Averill, and others from the membership committee.

Even with the low attendance at the conference, **Kathy Beal**, Unit 25 treasurer reported that the effort raised \$2,000 in PAW scholarship funds, including \$200 donated by Unit 33 Whitman County. The scholarship will be awarded in August.

Information derived from the WSSRA convention has resulted in **Jeff Burgess** joining the conference committee with the possibility of AMBA providing conference liability insurance and management of Unit 25's (Spokane Area) web site.

All committee members have left on summer vacation.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Asotin-Pomeroy:

Unit 1 was excited to hand out eight \$500 scholarships this year. One was from Pomeroy School District, three from the Asotin School District, and four from the Clarkston School District. Recipients were invited to the May unit meeting and introduced to members. **Jasmine Carringer**, from Clarkston, not only received a unit scholarship but also received a Robert J. Handy scholarship as well, a pleasant surprise for unit members.

WSSRA Around The State

Seven unit delegates attended the WSSRA convention in Yakima. **Sheryl Andrews** and **Sharon Hoseley** won baskets. Attendees picked-up many ideas to plan for the upcoming year. The memorial service was especially impressive at the convention this year. Also, Unit 1 member, **Sharon Hoseley**, was installed as E-8 representative. The unit is very proud of her!

Clarkston School District has a new superintendent and Unit 1 is planning to have a "meet and greet" in hopes of beginning a long and good working relationship, similar to that of the previous administration. Plans are also in the works for a unit function at the Pataha Flour Mill near Pomeroy. A visit from the Raptor Club from Washington State University is being planned for an upcoming program. There are many other ideas swirling around and unit leaders plan to spend the summer thinking about which ones to pursue. Summer vacation is here!

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

The April unit luncheon included entertainment by the Three Rivers Saxtette Quartet, led by Dave Clark. Local scholarship recipients attended with introductions by E-8 Representative, **Jim Bumgarner**.

WSSRA President, **Linda Averill**, installed BFSRA's newly elected officers at the May luncheon. 2019-2020 officers include **Victoria Rus-**

sell, president; **Elizabeth Friedrich**, president-elect; **Lew Edming**, secretary; and **Marlys Mayer**, treasurer. Past President **Dottie Stevens** will continue on the board. **Dr. Alan Burke**, Executive Director of WSSRA, also attended the May luncheon and spoke about legislative actions in Olympia. Membership chair, **Don Parks** reported as of May 1, BFSRA stood at 811 as compared with 798 a year ago. The meeting concluded with a Celebration of Life, 23 members were remembered.

This year, four student teachers / interns from the E-8 Coordinating Council region were chosen to receive scholarships from WSSRA. A committee led by E-8 Representative, **Jim Bumgarner**, read the applications. The third and final E-8 meeting was hosted by BFSRA in Kennewick. WSSRA Executive Director, **Alan Burke**, was present, talked about legislative actions in Olympia, and answered questions about the candidate endorsement process.

BFSRA was well represented at the WSSRA convention in June in Yakima. Of the 18 delegates allowed, 11 attended. **Dottie Stevens**, BFSRA president, had the honor again of announcing the Foundation basket winners.

Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia: Unit 31 luncheons are well attended not only because of the good food and



Unit 30 SW Washington/Vancouver: Sherry Boose (left) was recently recognized by her unit for her years of service creating Foundation baskets. Gerry Jarvis (right) received her honorary lifetime membership for service to the association and for turning 90. Gerry is still going strong as the unit's program chair!

social contacts, but because of the variety of excellent programs. March was no exception. Phillip Smith and Katheryn Dement, from the Sleep Disorders Center, described the stages of sleep and the importance of quality sleep for general health. With images of electroencephalographs, which measure brain wave activity, Phillip could identify the moment a person fell asleep, the stages of sleep, and the times of disturbance.

The brain is very active during sleep.

The April program was a double-header with a presentation of the mini-grant awards and election of officers. Deceased members were remembered with a ceremony during the May meeting. Then the big WSSRA convention in June with eleven delegates from Unit 31 being energized to accomplish the Association goals of next year.

ADDRESS CHANGES

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Vision

WSSRA will provide leadership
and promote action relevant
to all retired and active school personnel.

Washington State School Retirees' Association
*Dedicated to preserving, protecting and improving
the benefits of educational retirees.*

The mission of WSSRA is to...

- develop, propose and implement action that will benefit all school retirees.
- propose legislation and legislative action that will enhance school retirees' lives.
- provide the support necessary to strengthen local units of WSSRA.
- foster involvement by school retirees in educational and community activities and organizations.
- communicate to local units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP and other entities that affect retired school personnel.
- represent all present and future Washington state school retirees, both classified and certificated.

Don't delay – ask today

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