

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



MARCH, APRIL 2019

VOLUME 72, ISSUE NO. 4



Unit 23 Sno-King School Retirees (SKSR) recently participated in a service project assisting the Washington Kids in Transition organization (see article on page 17).

Pictured (left to right): Washington Kids in Transition Director Kim Gormley with Sno-King unit members Lynda Hughes, Donna Murrish, Jan Phillips, Pauline LaWarne, Virg Raytonm, Pat Cornwell, Jennifer Cobb.

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Become An Active Participant in WSSRA



by Linda Averill, Ph.D., president

Welcome Spring! As we enjoy the warmer weather and admire new growth on trees, green sprouts popping from the ground and buds appearing, it reminds us of Nature's growth cycle. We should be nurturing our WSSRA organization and helping it grow. As members, we can encourage former co-workers to join and explain that we advocate for retirement benefits of all public school employees. There is strength in numbers! Every member is important! Share our goals for Plans 1, 2, and 3 and provide prospective members with the WSSRA goals postcard. The postcards are available from the WSSRA office in Lacey. Invite your friends to a unit meeting and offer them a ride. One unit has adopted the slogan "Each One, Bring One." The personal contact is effective.

Another way to grow membership is through events that take place in the schools. If you are presenting mini-grants, scholarships, or awards at meetings, this is an opportunity to talk about WSSRA and offer the \$10 incentive. WSSRA Executive Director Dr. Burke has a five-minute speech he would be glad to share at any of these events. I urge you to invite him! Retirement seminars are another path to membership growth. The state Membership Committee and the WSSRA office can help you plan and organize a retirement seminar. They can put you in touch with units that have held very successful seminars. Perhaps there will be one in your area that you may want to attend and observe.

Many of you have seen the "M&M" Membership Matters design created by WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter. She can email it to you, it can be printed on labels, attached to candy packets and handed out at meetings and events.

Retaining members is just as important as gaining new ones. WSSRA tracks each unit's membership and provides lists of changes with codes to the membership chair and treasurer. For example, an "RQ" code means the person has requested to be dropped. Unit members can make a personal contact to encourage him/her to maintain membership. If the code says "Form," it can mean that the person is a retiree but hasn't begun drawing their pension and would need to become a cash member. *(It can also mean the member changed school districts and needs to sign a new form).* The unit membership committee or president can send a "Welcome to Retirement" letter highlighting unit meetings and events, and providing information on place, date/time, and any cost. Encourage their attendance and participation while reminding the person that since they aren't yet getting a DRS check, the dues are no longer being paid. Offer them the option of paying at a unit meeting or paying the state office directly. Be sure and give the office contact information and assure them that they can pay by check, credit, or debit cards. Again, personal contact is the best avenue for positive results.

Each of you is an important part of our organization and a part of the membership committee. I hope you will become an active participant in the recruitment and retention of members. With your help, your unit can grow significantly. Help your unit plant some seeds; recruit new members, retain those who are thinking of dropping, and watch your membership bloom.



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WSSRA At Work For You

THE JOURNAL
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JOURNAL INFORMATION

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Material appearing in The Journal, in addition to records of action by the board, councils, committees and units, is presented to promote the general welfare of WSSRA members and otherwise to fulfill the purposes of this association, as defined in Article II of the bylaws.

JOURNAL articles to:
 Kristin Murphy, editor
 editor@wssra.org

Upcoming JOURNAL
article deadlines

April 5, 2019
 for May/June 2019 issue

June 15, 2019
 for July/Aug./Sept. 2019 issue



A message from the executive director

Working For Current and Future Retirees



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

WSSRA is unusual in that it has two distinct groups of members who have different needs—especially on legislative matters. For Plan 1 folks, the overarching concern is the COLA, removed in 2011, improved by a one-time 1.5% increase in 2018, and always a top priority for the organization.

For those in Plan 2 and Plan 3 the agenda is different. An “up-to” 3% annual COLA is in current law, as is a pension funding system that is actuarially sound, covering over 90% of expected future costs. Of course, the top Plan 2/3 objective for WSSRA is in maintaining the COLA, which appears to be solid now, but always could be at risk during the next economic downturn.

For instance, in 2011 the legislature faced a funding crisis and chose Plan 1 retirees as the group (perhaps the easiest group!) to grab for fiscal relief. If history teaches us lessons, it doesn’t take a genius to predict that pensions will be a ripe legislative target for belt tightening when the next recession arrives. After the mess in 2011 we learned that, even when we lobby hard, there are no guarantees. We weren’t complacent then, are even less trusting now, and definitely can’t let our guard down in the future.

In addition to the Plan 1 COLA, we have several bills in the legislative “hopper” that would provide active employees and more recent Plan 2/3 retirees a number of benefits.

Specifically,

- House Bill 1132 (and its Senate companion, Senate Bill 5178) if passed, would reduce the age for full retirement (no actuarial deductions) for TRS and SERS employees from 62 to 60. Other groups (Public Safety—age 60, Police and Fire—age 53) have similar benefits.

- HB 1388/SB 5430 will allow retirees from age 62 to 65 to work as teachers, counselors, administrators, coaches, and in classified positions for up to 867 hours per year. Currently, only teachers have that benefit.
- HB 1409/SB 5414 will lift the cap on the number of accumulated sick leave days certificated and classified employees, upon retirement, can place into a tax-free VEBA account for medical expenses. The cap now is 180 days (converted at a one to four ratio, or 45 days salary). The proposed bill will raise the cap to a maximum of 260 days.

In addition, we are monitoring budget developments to assure that the current \$168 per month PEBB retiree subsidy is not reduced. That happened in the 2011 budget crunch (it dropped from \$183 to \$150 per month and stayed there until 2018), and always could be a target for a cut.

As an acknowledgement to our newest members—almost all of whom are in Plan 2 or Plan 3—we plan to provide a regular column in future Journal editions that will specifically highlight issues of importance for Plan 2 and Plan 3 members. These topics likely will be relevant for all members, but we want to pay particular interest to those of you who are active employees, or are facing big decisions going into the first years of hopefully what will be a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Of course, retiree “happiness” is closely connected to maintaining pension COLAs and assuring top-notch health care. At WSSRA, that’s what we strive to achieve every day.

Legislative News



Mid-Session Legislative Update



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

Every legislative session is unique and brings its own challenges. New legislators and issues change the debate and the tone. This year, approximately 20% of legislators are in their first session. Because there is a substantial learning curve in professional politics, they are learning their jobs.

Due to election gains, both chambers of the state legislature are in solid Democratic control. The State House of Representatives has 57 Democrats and 41 Republicans. The Senate has 28 Democrats and 21 Republicans.

Some issues de jour this session are homelessness, housing costs, mental health, and preserving the orca population. Many legislators are working hard on those issues. However, as is common in life, the things we want to do are not what life forces on us. What we want, and what we can afford are often in conflict. School expenses from the 2018 McCleary school legislation continue to rack up and are now forcing appropriators to spend additional resources on K-12 enhancements.

Electioneering has continued into the legislative session, Speaker Frank Chopp (D-Seattle) has announced his retirement from leadership effective at the end of session and a substantial amount of jockeying is taking place among House Democrats for the leadership race that is expected to ensue over the spring and summer. Also, Governor Inslee is mulling a run for President of the United States. He has not officially committed to running, but has spent the last month visiting early primary states and has been picking up campaign staff. Both developments have left some uncertainty hanging over the Capitol as well as opportunities for posturing.

WSSRA STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The WSSRA State Legislative Committee met in Olympia for the final week of January. They were able to lobby all of the state's 147 legislators. The Committee's entire effort is to advocate for bills and budget provisions that benefit current and future school retirees. They did a great job, and deserve a pat on the back. They will be back for a second round of lobbying this March.

LEGISLATION TO WATCH

- **Plan 1 COLA.** WSSRA's request legislation, House Bill 1390 & Senate Bill 5400, are currently in the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committees. HB

1390 was heard in Appropriations on February 18th. Both bills would provide a 3% increase to pension benefits on the first \$25,000 in income.

- **Medical Benefits.** The Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit is reauthorized in the state budget proposals, which are not due to be out for several weeks. We are lobbying for a restoration of the \$183 monthly benefit that was reduced in 2011. House Bill 1085 & Senate Bill 5469 would increase that benefit to a flat 50% of the premium. HB 1085 & SB 5469 are currently in the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committees.
- **Plan 2 & 3 Early Retirement.** House Bill 1132 and Senate Bill 5178 would reduce the full retirement age in Plans 2 & 3 to age 60. The bills are in the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committees.
- **Full Month of Death.** The Department of Retirement Systems has sponsored legislation to change the way month of death pension payments are handled. Currently, the state pays the pension payment for the full month of death, then retroactively bills the family for pension repayment after the day of death. For instance, if a retiree passes on the 15th of the month, the state pays the full pension and then will bill the widow / widower for 16th through the 31st. House Bill 1414 and Senate Bill 5335 would allow DRS to simply pay the pension payment for the full month of death. WSSRA is fully supporting these bills.
- **A Few More:** WSSRA is working on bills to improve VEBA (health savings) benefits, make TRS/PERS/SERS 2 the default pension plan, improve post-retirement employment options for school employees, and to support the entire aging infrastructure that protects all senior citizens.

NEXT STEPS

We will notify you as important bills receive hearings. Sometime soon we will need your support in contacting or visiting your legislators. The committee cutoff deadline for the bills listed above is March 1st.

Please feel free to contact your legislators at any time and ask for their support. The legislative hotline number is (800) 562-6000. All legislator contact information is available at www.leg.wa.gov.

WSSR-PAC News



WSSR PAC: A Way to Help Our Friends



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

Twice during this legislative session WSSRA legislative team members will visit Olympia to urge senators and representatives to support legislation favorable to school retirees. WSSRA's contract lobbyists also meet frequently with legislators. Our secure retirement is dependent on access to legislative friends who understand our needs and who are willing to sponsor and work for bills that will help us.

The job of our political action committee is to give financial help to election campaigns of legislators who have helped us in the past and to campaigns of new legislative candidates who we believe are likely to help us in the future. Last summer we made donations to the campaigns of 20 candidates, 12 of whom (four senators and eight representatives) are now serving in Olympia. The WSSR-PAC Executive Board works hard to select candidates for contributions who support retiree concerns and who have a reasonable chance to win their election. Our timeline for choosing candidates is very short. Primary elections are the first week in August. Until we see the primary results we do not know for sure who will be on the ballot. While our policy is to give money only to candidates who look like they can win, we also like to contribute to close races where our contribution may have more significance. Of course, by contributing to a number of close races, our rate of choosing successful candidates is lower. One of our candidates lost by only 46 votes out of over 72,000 cast last November!

One of our PAC Executive Board's big challenges is to have all the information we need about candidates in races state-wide



Please support WSSR-PAC by making a contribution today!

Online at:
www.wssr-pac.org

Check Payable to: WSSR-PAC

Mail to: WSSR-PAC Treasurer
c/o Lora Brabant
125 West 11th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362-7709

when we make our selections for contributions and recommendations for endorsement that we make to WSSRA's executive board. This is where we are dependent on our WSSR-PAC board members from each coordinating council, on legislative committee chairs in each unit, and on politically aware members to tell us what they know about races in their districts. In the past, the August WSSRA board meeting has been the same week as our post-primary PAC executive committee meeting. There has been little time for PAC board members and WSSRA board members to consider PAC recommendations and let us know if they see problems before the endorsement list is sent to the *Journal* for publication. In order to give members on both boards more time to vet recommendations it has been decided that future WSSRA board meetings will be a week later in August.

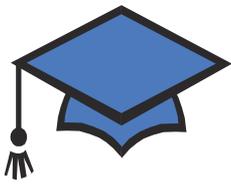
Support from our members has given the PAC the dollars needed to help elect friends of school retirees to both House and Senate. We can only help our legislative friends if members continue to contribute to the PAC. Our treasurer, Lora Brabant, has made it easy to contribute online at our PAC web site. She is also delighted to receive paper checks. Addresses for both are in the square with the red apple. And don't forget those low cost fundraisers at your monthly meetings. We are counting on our legislative friends to help us out and they need our help as well.

**WASHINGTON STATE
LEGISLATURE**

**TOLL-FREE HOTLINE:
1-800-562-6000**

WEBSITE: WWW.LEG.WA.GOV

Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Time to Start Your Baskets For Convention



by Ron Crawford, WSSR Foundation chair

As Mike Lanctot, former WSSR Foundation chair used to say, "It is time to get the hammers and saws going," for baskets and auction items for the state convention.

We ask that you put the basket and auction on your agenda at local units and coordinating council meetings. Someone asked me last week how many baskets should each unit bring? My thought is, bring as many as you want but two per unit is a good goal. The 2019 convention will be June 3-5 in Yakima and we look forward to seeing you there.

Basket donations help fund the scholarship program at the rate of \$2,500 per award. One scholarship recipient comes from each of the eight coordinating council regions. All high school seniors who are interested in pursuing a career in education may apply for the scholarship. More information is available at www.wssra.org.

The next Journal issue will include information about where to deliver baskets and silent auction items at the state convention site. Please let me know if you have any question concerning the basket and silent auction program. I can be reached at 360-236-9305 or e-mail, ronaldwcrawford1@comcast.net



DONATION FORM WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION 4726 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503-1216

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Donor Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

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

NOTE: If you would like the person notified of this gift, you must include their full name and address below.

Form with fields for In Honor, Memorial, Name, Person to be Notified, Address, City, State, Zip

Form with fields for In Honor, Memorial, Name, Person to be Notified, Address, City, State, Zip

Please check box if you would like to receive a receipt for your records. The WSSR-Foundation is a 501(c)(3) and donations are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Check \$ _____ # _____ Cash \$ _____

Supporting Future Educators

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- Rita Figlenski - in memory of Jim Leggett and Rick Nebeker
- Linda Gaines - in memory of Milaine McKay
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- Karen Keller - in memory of Jim Leggett and Rick Nebeker
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- Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Frances Mahar
- Skagit/Isle/San Juan REA - in memory of Charles Martin, Dorothy Latting, Jean Copeland, Terrance Schlosser
- Southwest King SRA - in memory of Carmen Malmanger and Wayne Ausen
- Spokane Area REA - in memory of deceased members
- Walla Walla/Columbia SRA - in memory of Rick Nebeker

ONLINE FOUNDATION DONATION

Did you know you can make an online donation to the WSSR Foundation? Donations can be a contribution, in honor or in memory of someone.

wssra.org

Foundation link, click on Donation Form

Making A Difference For A Student Teacher



Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia SRA awarded a scholarship to Ada Gonzalez to help with her student teaching.

 *by Gordon Taylor, Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia*

What difference does the scholarship make for a student teacher? Ada Gonzalez can tell you. “I had to quit my job as long term substitute in Spanish to begin student teaching, which meant I had no income. With the scholarship I was able to pay my tuition, provide for my children, and some for living expenses. Otherwise I would have had to interrupt my college program,” Ada explained. She received the Walla Walla-Columbia School Retirees Association Unit 31 scholarship of \$2,000 as she began her student teaching in Prescott, Washington. It was a long and bumpy road to get there, but she is now well on her way to becoming a teacher.

When Ada was in her early teens, her mother and four siblings moved to Broetje Orchards, and Ada enrolled in Prescott Middle School. She continued at Prescott schools until her graduation in 1999. Broetje Orchards awarded Ada a scholarship so she was able to continue her education for two and a half years at Columbia Basin Community College. Her education had to be interrupted so she, as a single mother, could provide for her children. Back to Broetje Orchards where Ada worked in the preschool program. She was later able to return to school to complete an AA degree in early childhood education and an AA in general education.

Her determination to become a teacher was renewed when Ada got a job as a para-pro in the Prescott School District. As Ada continued to work, she enrolled in an online program at Western Governors University to complete her teaching certification. Presently, Ada is doing her student teaching with Brett Mayberry, 2nd grade teacher in Prescott School District. Twenty years after high school graduation, Ada nears her goal of becoming a certificated teacher.

Ada expressed her gratitude for all the help along the way, especially for the timely help from the WWCSRA to complete her student teaching.

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Your Input is Needed for Membership



 by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

During this winter/spring part of the year, the time is ripe to develop staff meeting visits to present WSSRA and your local association in terms of classroom grants, scholarships for high school seniors committing to education, and our legislative program targeting proposed corrections to Plans 2/3 retirement qualification. We are also working toward restoration of the healthcare benefit, bringing it up to \$205/mo. These and more are hot button talking points to include while encouraging administrators to schedule a meeting, and while doing the actual presentation.

The Membership handbook is a treasure trove of how-to's for getting your "foot" in the door with school building and department leaders. There are sample letters you can revise in your own words and forms to use for expense reimbursement. Please remember that if you use the \$10 bill membership incentive

program, contact WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter for the tally/accounting form.

In a few weeks, WSSRA will conduct the annual Council of Committees meeting in Yakima. All service committee members will have a place at the table and need to attend. In order to prepare the right agenda for the Membership Leadership session at the June convention, I need input from all unit membership chairs. We will also get valuable input from our state membership coordinator and executive director. I cannot stress enough the importance of full committee attendance.

I am looking forward to a vital and important planning session in Yakima in April. Let Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter (see contact below) know you will attend. And remember:

**WHAT DO WE WANT? 10% GROWTH
WHEN DO WE WANT IT? NOW!**

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 | 14-Mason County | 21-Skagit/Island/San | 28-Thurston County | 32-Whatcom County |
| 02-Chelan/Douglas | 07-Jefferson County | 15-Okanogan County | Juan | 29-Benton-Franklin | 33-Whitman County |
| 03-Clallam County | 08-Kitsap County | 16-East King | 22-Sno-Isle | 30-Southwest Wash- | 34-Yakima County |
| 04-Columbia Basin | 09-Kittitas County | 18-Pend Oreille | 23-Sno-King | ington | |
| 05-Grays Harbor/
Pacific | 11-Lewis County | 19-Renton-South King | 25-Spokane | 31-Walla Walla- | |
| | 12-Lower Columbia | 20-Seattle | 27-Pierce County | Columbia | |

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

WSSRA History

WSSRA’s Historic Wooden Gavel

 *by Karen Keller, WSSRA historian*

Housed in the WSSRA archives is a wooden gavel of historic significance. In 1956, the widow of WSSRA Past-President William Weir, in remembrance of her husband, presented a gavel to the annual convention delegates. With Mrs. Weir’s permission, the handle was replaced (likely in 1957).

Mr. M. C. Olmstead, archivist for the Association began a diligent search to obtain pieces of wood from historic locations from around the state to complete the gavel and a box to enclose it. It seems that he knew what he wanted and was willing to make an exhaustive search.

Many of his letters and responses were saved. He asked for wood from Denny Hall at the UW, from a desk at either old Mercer or Denny Elementary, from the Pig War Block House on Whidbey Island, and from a pioneer cabin in Colville. All responses were negative. He even asked then US Senator Warren Magnuson for a piece of the US Capitol. The Senator’s reply indicated he would do what he could, but at that time there was no provision for this kind of donation. Eventually Mr. Olmstead did get some positive responses and was able to collect enough significant wood to complete the gavel project.

The gavel head is made from the oldest apple tree in the Northwest. Dr. John McLaughlin planted the tree at Fort Vancouver in 1825.



The gavel handle is from a fence rail, dating to 1830, from the Waiilatpu Mission of Dr. Marcus Whitman, located near present day Walla Walla.

The gavel block (*pictured at left*) is from the Old Fort Simcoe Blockhouse built in 1856. Donated by the Washington State Parks



Department, this wood is Ponderosa Pine. The adz marks on all four sides, show it was hand hewn. On the reverse side of the block you can see an original peg hole and a square iron nail.

The chest which houses the gavel completed perhaps a decade after the gavel was complete. Its sides and ends are original timber from St. Paul’s Mission established near Kettle Falls in 1845 by Fathers DeSmet and Raavalli.

The chest top and bottom are from an old log school house on Blakely Island, which was in used from 1890-1949.

Unfortunately, the name of the gavel maker has been lost to time, but the box was made by Deno A. Gaffi, Kelso High School Manual Arts teacher. There is some discussion in the documents about what the budget should be for the gavel project. The amount of \$30 was settled upon.

The gavel is fragile and not used today for routine business, only for special occasions. In 1989, WSSRA President Margaret Lapham wrote, “I wonder after caring so much about the historical significance of this gavel, if future members will care one bit about its history.” Yes, Margaret, we care.

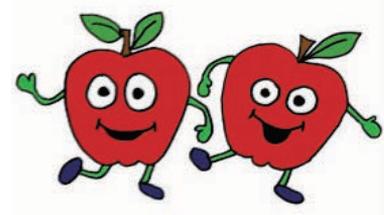
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For Your Health

Good Nutrition Is Essential



Good nutrition is essential for seniors. Too many retirees cut corners on meal purchase and preparation and pay for poor nutrition decisions with declining health and low-quality days. It doesn't have to be that way.

To help, participants who took part in a nutrition discussion last June at the Convention in Wenatchee came up with a number of ideas and programs that local units could consider when building meeting agendas or writing articles for newsletters. Among them were setting up a food demonstration event or arranging for a formal food preparation presentation by a local expert. Preparing low-cost and healthy meals requires organizational skills and planning, but is not an impossible task. Help from experts is of great assistance to members who just don't take the time to plan properly. And experts are helpful when addressing common health problems (like weight watching) that require special diets.

Order-out programs, like Blue Apron, can be a real hit with seniors, but often are costly and may result in leftover food. Again, experts can make suggestions for those who have the resources to let others do their meal planning. And experts aren't always those who work in restaurants. Leaders of local CTE (vocational) skill centers that teach high school kids how to prepare food properly are happy to share what they have learned about nutrition. Some units occasionally use local skill center nutrition centers for meeting sites. The meals the high school students prepare is always good—and nutritious.

Careful menu analysis is an undervalued skill. Professional dietitians are helpful in guiding seniors to look before they order. Careful calorie and ingredient checks are important, but take time. A quick look at meal composition, and listings of daily

needs percentages of protein, carbohydrates, and fats can be easily accomplished if approached in a checklist-like manner.

YouTube and television food shows are available daily, but seniors may need some hints about what to watch on TV, and how to navigate food websites and access important food-related YouTube videos. A presentation on the "how-to's" of using technology to improve eating habits can be an asset to members.

Portion control and how to manage leftovers is another area that is often overlooked and can lead to overeating and eating improperly. Excessive leftovers and too many cookies, cakes, donuts or candy lying around the house can lead to excessive snacking. Not good.

Anyone who uses Costco to purchase food knows first hand what can occur when too much food is purchased, or food comes in portions big enough to feed an eight-person family! Navigating stores like Costco is tricky for seniors.

Finally, units probably don't need to go past their members when seeking expertise about menu preparation. Sharing favorite recipes through presentations at meetings or publishing them in unit newsletters can provide endless good ideas about cooking and presenting food. The idea is to have local folks who have mastered the meal business share their tricks for preparing just enough healthy food for the one, two or three people who normally sit down for a typical meal.

Editor Note: This is the third in a series of health-related articles that emanated from attendee discussions at the 2018 WSSRA Convention in Wenatchee.

JOURNAL AVAILABLE VIA E-MAIL

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Go to... www.WSSRA.ORG and sign up today!

The Importance of Personal/Social Well Being for Your Health



by Jennifer Ideker, health committee member

The definition of healthy has expanded to social, emotional, and environmental well being, as well as physical, according to research studies by Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yale Medical Group, Stanford Center on Longevity, and among many others. The research reveals that social interaction is especially important for older adults because it helps keep mental and physical health in peak condition and boosts the immune system. This enables one to fight-off colds, flu, and other illnesses. In addition, socially connected older adults have lower blood pressure, decreased risk of depression, and potentially a lessened risk of Alzheimer, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and some cancers. Social interaction also keeps your brain active!

There are several suggestions for developing personal and social well being for your health. At the top of the list is belonging to WSSRA! Go to the unit and state meetings! Enjoy the many programs and social interaction! Survey your unit members to determine interests for future programs. A wine tasting party was even mentioned at the state brain-storming session! Join other clubs, organizations, and social groups in the community or create your own social group according to your interests.

The Stanford Center for Longevity research shows that volunteer service at schools with young people is associated with better physical health and cognitive performance for older adults, even extending life. Volunteering gives older adults a sense of purpose and emotional satisfaction, which in turn promotes optimism and overall health. The benefits flow both ways. Research shows that the children working with older adults are more successful later in life as well as gaining more empathy and understanding of the elderly.

To find other volunteer opportunities in your area, visit the website at VolunteerMatch.org.

Remember to keep in contact with friends! Help when you can, such as providing rides for the homebound or visiting shut-ins, and have fun doing it! It is good for your health!



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WSSRA Connections



Seeking Love Online? Be Careful to Protect Your Heart and Money

by Jason Erskine, AARP Washington

With Valentine's Day just in our rearview mirrors, millions of Americans are meeting others on matchmaking websites, dating apps and social media. Unfortunately, not all those new connections are meant to be, as 37-percent of Washington residents polled in a new AARP survey (aarp.org/onlineromancescams) reported that they, a family member or a friend have encountered attempted financial scams while seeking friendship or a love interest online.

To help empower people to take steps to protect themselves and their family members, the AARP Fraud Watch Network has launched an educational campaign to raise awareness of online-based relationship fraud schemes.

The idea of going online to broaden one's social networks continues to gain in popularity. More than half (56-percent) of Washington adults have used the Internet to find new friends, dates and/or romantic partners, according to the AARP survey. But scammers also use the dating sites, apps and social media. The AARP survey found that 18-percent of state residents have either been victimized by an online relationship scam or know someone who was. More troubling, a significant number of victims (64%) reported suffering a negative effect on their physical and/or emotional health.

"Many of us, along with our family members, have successfully made new friends or even established deeper relationships online," says AARP State Director Doug Shadel. "But as with every other aspect of life these days, you must be aware that the criminal element lurks there also. Our message is: protect your heart – and your money."

The AARP educational campaign includes advertising, webinars, podcasts, videos and tip sheets, all available at aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork. Each of the campaign's content elements

urge consumers to recognize the warning signs that their online suitor may actually be a fraudster:

- They profess love too quickly.
- The person immediately wants to leave the dating website and communicate with you through email or instant messaging.
- Your new romantic interest sends you a picture that looks more like a model from a fashion magazine than an ordinary snapshot.



More than one-third of Washington adults confirm first-hand accounts of relationship scams.

- He or she repeatedly promises to meet you in person but always seems to come up with an excuse to cancel.
- They make a request for money for any of a variety of reasons: travel, medical emergencies, visas or other official documents, or losses from a financial setback. Nineteen-percent of respondents in AARP Washington's survey said a friend or romantic partner whom they have only met online has asked them to help them financially in some way.

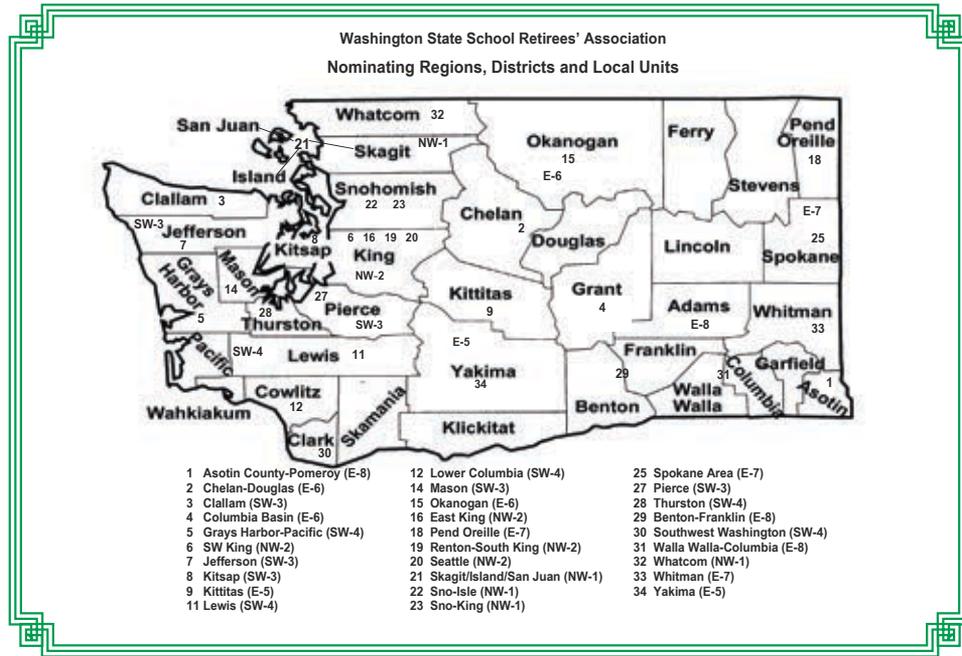
The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center reports there were 15,000 victims of confidence fraud/romance fraud in 2017, with more than half over age 50. Financial losses in these scams totaled \$220 million in 2016, according to the Federal Trade Commission.

The AARP Fraud Watch Network was launched in 2013 as a free resource for people of all ages. Consumers may sign up for "Watchdog Alert" emails that deliver information about scams, or call a free helpline at 877-908-3360 to speak with staff and volunteers trained in fraud counseling. The Fraud Watch Network website provides information about fraud and scams, prevention tips from experts, an interactive scam-tracking map, fun educational quizzes and access to AARP's hit podcast series, *The Perfect Scam*.

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the districts



NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: After a successful annual holiday luncheon, the unit's board took some time to be with family and friends over the holidays. In January, several members were busy getting ready for the WSSRA lobbying efforts for this legislative session. A big thanks to all unit members who wrote their stories about how a lack of a COLA has affected them over these years. These stories were shared with the legislators and do make a difference.

On March 8, the unit hosted the annual retirement seminar, held this year at the Burlington Public Library.

WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** led off the evening with his usual gusto for helping with new member enrollment efforts. The unit is grateful for his willingness to drive to the event. Speakers were Eric Mathieu, a retirement plan counselor for Washington and Janie Lane and Jeff Dixon, specialists with the Washington State Health Care Authority.

On March 23, the unit will hold a general membership lunch meeting with the main speaker being Sandra Vea, a school counselor in the Mukilteo School District. Her book, *Masao: A Nisei Soldier's Secret and Heroic Role in WW II*, deals with a Japanese/American man named Masao Abe and his

family and their experiences during the family's internment and his deployment in the U.S. army to the Philippines during WWII. This is also good reminder of how other immigrants have been treated in our country. Guests from other units are welcome to attend this luncheon.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle: Sno-Isle Unit 22 received a big thank-you for the generous donation of toys and over \$1,000 to help with the Everett Christmas House.

Unit 22 gathered for a lunch event in February and had a presentation by Jane Crawford about the Sno-Isle library system. Attendees learned inside secrets and how to get

the most from a top-notch library system.

On February 28, Sno-Isle hosted a well-attended retirement seminar. Once again, it proved to be a great way to find new members.

March's lunch event found Unit 22 celebrating the 30 classroom grants that were given. Thirty members received \$400 and for the first time 25 \$100 grants were awarded to non-members. Attendees were able to see the varied uses that school employees put the money to work helping kids. One group of five teachers pooled their money together to help with a field trip to Tillicum Village on Blake Island - a trip that would not have been possible without Sno-Isle help. Local superintendents were also invited to this event so they could see how the unit is helping their districts.

As always, the lunches are catered and only \$5 a person.

Unit 23 Sno-King: The February general meeting featured Chris Fulford, Lynndale Elementary Principal who brought the group up to date on how report cards are generated for the students. Felix Benel, Humanities Washington, gave a talk about the different unusual weather situations that Washington State has experienced. Unit members are looking forward

WSSRA Around The State

Remembering

Rick Nebeker

WSSRA President, 2016-2017



Rick Nebeker, WSSRA president in 2016-17, passed away recently after a 14-month battle with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease).

Rick spent the vast majority of his life in Walla Walla, first as a student (WWHS,

Class of 1973) and then as a teacher and principal until his retirement in 2008. Rick earned his Bachelors of Arts at the University of Washington (1977) and Masters from Lewis and Clark College (1989). He began teaching elementary school in Walla Walla in 1977 and served as the principal of Edison Elementary (1990-93) and Prospect Point Elementary (1994-2008). Notably, Rick's area of expertise was in the all-important topic of reading instruction.

In addition to his public school work, Rick served as a college instructor for Washington State University preparing future educators for employment in K-12 schools. Rick loved to travel, with Russia included in several European destinations that he visited. The Oregon coast and Arizona were his favorite state-side destinations.

At WSSRA, Rick was active in the Walla Walla Columbia SRA from his retirement through this past year. As WSSRA president, Rick aggressively moved the association toward attracting new members through emphasizing programs designed to support Plan 2 and Plan 3 active employees and recent retirees.

Rick is survived by his mother Alice Reithmayr, his sister Vickie Erickson, and numerous step-siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. He leaves behind a legacy of service that we all can admire. He was kind, diligent, bright, organized, and helpful. He will be sorely missed.

to the annual field trip, which will be a visit to the University of Washington Crew facility.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

In January, the unit gathering was entertained by **Dr. Alan Burke's** explanations of what is critical in Olympia this session. He detailed how the PEBB (Public Employees Benefits Board) health plan may morph into SEBB (School Employees Benefits Board) plan, possibly in 2020. It is a work in progress with monthly meetings open to the public or online at the Health Care Authority headquarters in Olympia. A significant issue is that SEBB may cost \$900 million to start up. **Dr. Burke** also demonstrated his seven-minute membership speech with easy to understand visuals about the potential opportunity for Plan 2 and Plan 3 folks who could benefit from an ERF (Early Retirement Factor) that would allow them to retire at age 60, if passed.

The first round of teacher and para-educator grants netted 24 grants with the rewards totaling \$4,965. The unit attempts to present the grant winners' checks at faculty meetings, or at least, try to meet with the principal who will then present the check.

Southwest King unit will sponsor Nick Bond, a climatologist with Washington

State, who will speak on the topic, "Are Salmon Doomed? Hatching a Plan to Save a Northwest Icon." Mr. Bond is with the speakers' bureau of Humanities Washington. If you would like attend this event, it will be Monday, March 18 at 10:00am at Wesley Terrace, 816 S 216th Street, in Des Moines (parking is in front or behind the building).

Unit 16 East King:

East-King members were deeply moved by their February speaker's presentation. Diana Goodrich, co-director of the non-profit Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest, shared the history of the seven captive chimpanzees that have lived at the Cle Elum sanctuary since 2008. For years, they have lived in a windowless basement lab that rented them out for research. Although chimpanzees can live to 60, few do, because of the abuse they have had to endure.

Goodrich and her team hope to provide for up to 15 more chimps and they have purchased more land and plan to add a veterinary clinic and a second indoor-outdoor area. For now, they have also added cows to eat the grasses that grow on their property. They hope to cut back on the possibility of wildfires getting to them.

Goodrich estimates that most former research chimpanzees will be gone by 2040. She and her team, therefore, are

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: Members Barbara Robinson and Diane Visten lobbying in Olympia in January.

considering taking in research monkeys in the future.

In March, East-King’s speaker will explain “Farmer Frog,” a STEM-based curriculum that teaches farming and its inter-connectedness to many disciplines. The K-12 grade curriculum is based on a hands-on learning system rooted in agriculture that has educators integrate their classroom subjects into their work with school gardens.

Paige Denison will talk in April about her work with evidence-based health programs for Sound Generations. She will share the importance of belonging to a group, especially one like WSSRA, that contributes to the field of education, educators, and youngsters.

Unit 20 Seattle:
Unit 20 has awarded a number of grants for Seattle educators for unreimbursed expenses. The program, called S.E.E.D., offers grants up to \$500 for unit members and up to \$200, once only, for non-members. **Sharon Green** remains in charge of the grant program. Applications for these grants appear on the unit website: www.seattlesra.org.

The February luncheon speaker was **Anila Goldie**, who discussed her teaching and living experience in Sudan where she stayed for two years. Her book on the subject is titled, *The Problem Is Not Available*. **Ms. Goldie**, a member of the

Seattle Unit, has had a variety of teaching experiences in the Northwest as well.

The Community Services Committee, headed by **Marilynn Miller**, continues to collect apparel and non-perishable food for donations to the West Seattle Food Bank, The Compass Center, and for Operation Nightwatch.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam Co.:
Clallam County School Retirees’ Association met at Joshua’s Restaurant in Port Angeles on January 15. The guest speaker was local author Teresa Schoeffel-Lingvall. She spoke about the history of the Olympic Hot Springs (the subject of her book) from 1907 to 1966 when Olympic National Park took possession of the resort and subsequently removed all buildings. She shared memorabilia and a DVD with many photos.

On January 22, a few members met to choose mini-grant recipients. This year there are 12 recipients from eight schools representing five school districts. Mini-grant amounts range from \$150 to \$650 for a total of \$4,966 awarded. Funds are provided by the Isabelle Whitfield, Eleanor Naddy, and Donald Naddy funds, and the local unit. Clallam County School Retirees’ Association oversees distributions from the extra accounts.

For the February 15 meeting,

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 27 Pierce County: Newly elected State Representative Mari Leavitt (28th District) (center) with Pierce County SRA members Diane Blair and Bob Duke. Representative Leavitt sponsored HB1390 concerning Plan 1 COLA.

the guest speaker was Karen Goschen from the Port of Port Angeles. She provided information about economic development and port projects.

Unit 7 Jefferson County:

The unit is off to another good start with mini-grants awarded to educators in Port Townsend, Chimacum, and Quilcene School Districts, totaling about \$3,500. **Lois Sherwood**, mini-grant chair, with **Diane Frame** helping, both did a great job getting applications out to the schools. This grant program also shows the needs of teachers and the many programs they provide at all levels. The next meeting will feature information about the legislative session from **Jean Camfield**, unit legislative chair. Please come to each meeting, you won't all be asked to be a speaker or an officer!

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

President **Doris Bucher** went to Bainbridge High School and handed out two mini-grants to Elaine Hanson for headphones for her special education class for the speech to text program, and Michael Holloway for attending the National Conference of Social Studies in Chicago, Illinois. The mini-grants were for \$300 each.

In February, eight unit members met with legislators from local districts to encourage them to work on retiree issues related to Plans 1, 2, and 3. Unit legislative committee members are working to get improvements in all the plans and met with WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diederick** and state legislators. This was the unit's first trip to Olympia as an organization.

Upcoming unit activities and

meetings will include: Suzanne from Steadman Bees (February); Lane Dowell will explain the Semanick Foundation (March); Willa Eades of Whole Heart Accessories will show semi-precious stones (April); tour Elanden Gardens (May); visit McCormick Woods (June).

Unit 27 Pierce County:

The Pierce County unit was excited to welcome new members to recent buffet luncheons. February's program featured "The Five Wishes," presented by **Evonne Howard**, PCSRA member. Attendees received the easy-to-use document for outlining one's wishes for treatment if one is seriously ill. It was written with the help of the American Bar Association's Commission on Law and Aging.

PCSRA's new commitment this year has been visiting schools to speak about protecting and preserving retirement benefits and inviting staff to join WSSRA. "Active" teachers have reported the information important and revealing and have responded by becoming members. The \$10 joining incentive (and school district) Automatic Dues Deduction proved helpful.

Fred Oldfield, noted Western artist, is the subject of the next unit meeting on Thursday, April 18. Oldfield's daughter, JoElla Oldfield, from the Fred Oldfield Western Heritage and Arts Center at the Washington State Fairgrounds in Puyallup, will be the speaker. All are invited to join at noon at LaQuinta Inn in Tacoma for a wonderful buffet luncheon.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor Pacific:

The January meeting of Grays Harbor Pacific Unit was held at Ocean Palace restaurant with guest, WSSRA President **Linda Averill**. At a future gathering, **Linda** will provide the latest information about AMBA, once she returns from her visit to their headquarters in Texas.

'Thinking of You' cards were distributed so that everyone could write a note to someone who needed a friendly, cheerful message.

Blanche Campbell, the unit's non-stop knitter, had 160 knit-

WSSRA Around The State

ted hats ready to go in early February. They were delivered to Beacon and Simpson elementary schools in Montesano and to Satsop school. The children were delighted! Each school also received a bag of school supplies.

Bill Carter gave the legislative report. He discussed two new bills that have been introduced: HB 1390 and SB 5400. It is important to stay

tuned into what the legislature is doing, and reading WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick**'s article in each *Journal* will help all of us to stay informed.

Unit 11 Lewis County: The Lewis County School Retirees', which was formed in 1950, has a collection of scrapbooks containing the history of the unit. This collec-

tion was donated in January to the Lewis County Historical Museum in Chehalis.

Starting in September 2018, luncheon meetings have been using a new format: no program, each attendee orders from a menu, pays directly to the restaurant, minimum business announcements. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Unit 12 Lower Columbia: The December program featured the middle school choral group from St. Rose School. They had a wonderful variety of music. The program featured the talent of several students who played the piano or guitar. Residents of Somerset Apartments were invited to join the gathering. The students brought Christmas cheer to all.

Unit Spotlight -- Unit 23 Sno-King

by Jim Siscel, Unit 23 president

Fourteen Sno-King School Retirees (SKSR) members participated in a service project assisting the Washington Kids in Transition organization. They bagged approximately 2,000 snack food bags in 90 minutes in January. The snack bags contain a salty item, a sweet item, and a granola bar. These bags for homeless students provide some food that the students may not have access to until they return to school the following day. They receive the bags on 13 dedicated school buses that transport them to the place where they will spend the night. SKSR members donated \$770 dollars to purchase these snack items.

Unit member, Judy Hewitt comments that, "This particular community service project is one that is near and dear to teachers' hearts because they know how important nutrition and general well-being are to their students' ability to learn. Although we are retired, we educators never lose the desire to make the world a better place for students, and this is one way that we can accomplice that collectively." Another unit member, Marilyn Irwin, commented, "I'm staggered by the large and growing need in the Edmonds School District. So many people are



working hard to turn the trend toward homelessness around but no progress is being made. The number keeps increasing. Although we did a teeny-tiny bit to put a short-term band-aid on the problem this Saturday, dramatic, all-encompassing changes are needed to solve the homeless problem. I'm hopeful our participation was a value to some child's life, and I'm sure in a small way it was. Our participation was equally valuable to each of us who were working. We were educated about the homeless children's numbers and needs in Edmonds School District and, of course, people feel good when they are helpful. Isn't that one of the reasons we were teachers?"

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Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Columbia Basin member Pat Simmons, left, delivered a grant to Cynthia Swan, center. Principal Cheri Ward, of Park Orchard Elementary School in Moses Lake, is on the right.

The January program was presented by unit member **Bob Koenig**. **Bob** told about his dad turning the family land into a playground and park for the neighborhood children. His dad made a softball field, a bike path, a go-cart track, a mini farm, as well as, the playground and picnic area. Every child was welcomed. **Bob** is known in the area as the Lego robot man. He volunteers to teach robot skills to local children.

Unit treasurer **Mary Lou Salberg** processed twenty mini-grants. One grant was for a track district championship banner for Monticello Middle School. Another was for a local social studies teacher who wanted world atlas and map books. Another grant was for a set of Scholastic newspapers for teaching reading comprehension. Other grants were for phonic games, supplies for

a sewing group that is making a quilt for hospice, and Hour of Code, a computer science program, for a K-5 class.

Giving out mini-grants to teachers across the area is one of unit member's favorite activities. Members look forward to hearing from the teachers as they talk about the results of using the materials in their classrooms.

Unit 28 Thurston County: Unit 28 has been busy! The unit presented sixteen mini-grants to middle school and high school staff for some exciting projects. For instance, member **Mark Sloan** (North Thurston High School) will purchase instruments to monitor and evaluate nutrient levels in plants, resulting in a stronger crop. Another member, **Kevan Hagen**, (Bush Middle School) will be able to

have a professional storyteller work with his Storytelling elective class, discussing how to use voice, gestures, and emotions to enhance a story. At Rochester Middle School, Megan Miller will use her grant to purchase a class set of calculators. Other recipients include: Adriana Caviades, **Tim Marshall** (member), Allison Provenza, **Heath Owens** (member), Madelynne Koehler, and Jessica Green from North Thurston Public Schools; Cameron Chittick, Rochester School District; Gary Clinton, Rebecca Bingham, Deanna Lucini, and Amy Lanteigne, Yelm Community Schools; Kevin Powers, New Market Skills Center; Amber Zieske, Olympia School District. The unit awarded a total of \$3,954. Elementary mini-grants totaling \$6,200 were awarded in October.

Community Service Chair **Sally Jones** has been busy counting socks for the Little Red Schoolhouse, a local organization that collects and distributes clothing and school supplies, free of charge, to needy children in Thurston County. The unit goal is to donate 600 pairs this year. To date, members have collected 294 pairs at monthly luncheons.

Several members volunteered at the Thurston County Food Bank distribution center in January. **Ann Chenhall**, **Judy Hollar**, and **Sally Jones** sorted food for the FORKids Program, which provides weekend food bags for students in local schools.

The unit continues to support the local community with donations as well. Unit 28 recently donated \$1,739 to the Salvation Army and \$2,164 to the Thurston County Food Bank.

Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):

At the January 24 monthly gathering, the unit received a huge "Thank you!" from guest speaker, Melinda Cannell, for the \$1,000 scholarship to the Vancouver School District Foundation. She shared how contributions ensure students' wellness, success, and opportunities. She also spoke of existing barriers, including half of district students live in poverty, many are eligible for free/reduced meals, at least 1,000 students are homeless, and 20% of district students are chronically absent. Melinda spoke of a local school's pilot program which is now being implemented at 18 local schools and receiving national recognition! She said data shows that graduation rates rose from 64% to 85%! This alone encourages the unit's continuing support.

A "Teacher of the Year" finalist spoke at the February meeting. Also in February, Unit President **Jeanie Anderson**, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to the Evergreen School District. The unit thanks **Wanita Filbin**, for initiating these scholarship efforts, and **Marty Erickson** for his ongoing Foundation Scholarships to Clark College.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 8 Kitsap County: President Doris Bucher (right) presenting a mini-grant to Elaine Hanson (left), Bainbridge High School. The grant will help fund headphones for a speech to text program used in Ms. Hanson’s special education class.

The unit is excited and thankful to **Mina Milligan**, hard-working unit secretary, who has put the Unit 30 web site on her agenda. She presented a great logo, design, and plan at a recent board meeting, which was deeply appreciated and quickly accepted.

Wanita Filbin, mini-grant chair, has sent out the grants. The award dollars were increased this year and recipients will be even more delighted!

Margaret Snitzler will soon present the unit’s new membership directory.

The unit will hold a retirement seminar on March 7, 2019. Members appreciate WSSRA Executive Director **Dr. Alan**

Burke’s efforts for selecting a great site, and engaging speakers for potential WSSRA members.

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:

The February 19 luncheon meeting of KCRSA, held at Rosewood Adult Living Clubhouse, featured a presentation about the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. This is a nonprofit, community group dedicated to restoring wild populations of salmon and steelhead. This group identifies restoration projects, secures project funding, and coordinates the work. The Mid-Columbia region includes the Yakima,

Klickitat, White Salmon and Wind River watersheds and smaller tributaries in Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat, Benton, and Skamania counties. The Fisheries Group depends on volunteer services and financial support from individuals and interested parties. The Kittitas County group is especially active and last summer they hosted 12 students in ecology programs from CWU who needed an internship experience. It is interesting to learn of the Fisheries Group and the work they do.

The next meeting will be April 16 at the Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum with lunch served by the center staff. It is planned to have a presentation centered on living in the forest interface and how the fire season impacts that lifestyle but also how the entire county is affected. The unit alternates

meetings in Ellensburg with meetings in Cle Elum to accommodate the many “upper county” retirees who belong to the KCSRA.

The final meeting of the “school year” will be May 21 at the Rosewood Clubhouse in Ellensburg. The unit will be setting new goals and seeking interested members to help the unit achieve them.

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

Yakima County, Unit 34, celebrated Women’s Heart Health month by wearing red and listening to an excellent program speaker, Sandra Linder Vogel, RN. Sandi is a recently retired cardiac nurse therapist with extensive nursing experience (39 years!). She helped the YCSRA attendees better understand blood pressure guidelines,



Unit 28 Thurston County: (left to right) Ann Chenhall, Judy Hollar, and Sally Jones volunteering at the Thurston County Food Bank.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 28 Thurston County: Ron Crawford (left) presents a mini-grant to member Kevan Hagen (right) at Bush Middle School, Tumwater School District. Mr. Hagen will use the grant for his story-telling class.

medications, exercise guidelines for balance and strength, walking programs, signs of heart attacks and strokes and the new “hands only” CPR. She also provided handouts for review and further reference. Attendees left the unit meeting better equipped to understand signs of heart distress, and more aware of how to live a lifestyle that takes care of our precious “pump.”

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas: November’s program included a visit from WSSRA President **Linda Averill**, with greetings from the central office. Members were encouraged to work hard on membership, especially those active members who have

just retired but are not getting retirement pay yet. **Rita Figlenski**, E-6 board representative, shared information on state scholarships and other important work that is being done on the state level. A wonderful presentation was given by, “Team FBI,” a girl’s robotic team from Foothills Middle School in Wenatchee. This national award-winning team shared their work, research, and experiences in creating a heart enhancing robotic. What an inspiration they were!

The December unit meeting was a festive time. Attendees heard about all the community projects that Chelan-Douglas unit supports with donations that top \$5,000! The unit also funded 24 grants for active members that totaled \$4,500. A beautiful musical

program was provided by the Eastmont High School Jazz Choir and member, Mary Sanders, serenading on the piano. The gift bazaar brought in approximately \$200 for the WSSR-PAC. Everyone had a festive time, full of Christmas spirit.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Members of Unit 4 have enjoyed visiting several area schools to award twenty-one grants to local teachers, to assist them with various classroom and community projects. The unit has also awarded scholarships to six student teachers in the area, which help with some expenses they incur while learning and working in local schools. The E-5/E-6 Coordinating Council meeting was held on February 13 in Moses Lake. Unit 4 hosted this meeting at the Pillar Rock Grill.

The Columbia Basin Unit’s “Books for Babies” program recently delivered 100 books to Samaritan Hospital in Moses Lake. Each baby born there receives a book, along with ideas for how parents can use them with infants.

The unit recently donated \$500 to the Big Bend Community College Foundation, which uses the funds to provide scholarships, staff development, and assistance with various other projects.

During the Christmas season, several of unit members volunteered to be bell-ringers

for Salvation Army. Folks brought in \$400 for this worthy community organization!

Unit 15 Okanogan:

January saw Unit 15 coming back to life after its winter sojourn. Jon Wyss, who handles all government work for Gebbers Farms Brewster, one of the biggest contiguous apple orchards in the world, gave perspectives of the global impact of trade on agriculture. Aid was voted to the following OCSRA Active Members: **Scott Olson**, Tonasket, \$200 for a chess club; **Joy Wilson**, Omak High School, \$200 for Top Chef; and **Zach Spaet**, Okanogan High School, \$100 in support of a “Shoe That Grows” FBLA project.

February’s meeting featured “Safe Driving for Seniors” by the Washington State Patrol. **Jennie Hedington**, **Carol Payne**, and **Rita Figlenski** spearheaded the group’s Friday, March 22 social celebrating Washington State School Retirees’ Week designated by Governor Jay Inslee. Unit members will meet at the Cariboo in Okanogan for food, fun, and frivolity.

April will see the group on a field trip to lunch at Whistler’s Family Restaurant in Tonasket followed by a visit to the elementary school for a “Boomwhackers” musical presentation. The group will then tour the school’s gardens. OCSRA has helped support both school projects.

WSSRA Around The State

EAST-7

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

E-7 district is composed of the following three local units: Pend Oreille, Unit 18, Spokane Area Unit 25, and Whitman County Unit 33. The service area comprises 14,026 sq. miles, 59 public school districts, and 99,752 students. While the service area is large, there are only 7.1 students per square mile.

The units in E-7 sponsor an annual conference, “Help Maximizing Your Retirement 4.0,” which has nearly 500 participants each year and is hosted at West Valley High School. This year, the conference will be on Saturday, April 27, 2019. While the conference is free, each participant is asked to donate \$5 to the Scholarship fund.

At the conference, membership is a major focus with **Cookie Billups, Pam Francis,** and WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** leading the enrollment effort. The goal is to gain about 50 new members.

John Young led Spokane Area Unit in its participation in Spokane School Districts Benefit’s fair, which attracted more than 400 school employees in November.

Kathy & John Albi, Pam Francis, and **Pat Anderson** are working hard during an active and long legislative session.

All of the 59 school districts superintendents and high school principals and counselors have been contacted and each of the universities (Whitworth, Eastern Washington, Washington State, and Gonzaga) have been contacted regarding the scholarships to be granted in March 2019. The Spokane Unit has set aside \$5,000 for scholarships to be awarded. The other units are also considering donating funds. The locally funded scholarships place more emphasis on need and less on SAT and GPA.

Fifteen leaders from the three units in E-7 have volunteered to be readers of the scholarship applications in March.

Unit 18 Pend Oreille Presidents **Dave Meyers** and **Sandy Ellersick** have announced the distribution of mini-grant applications, which will be awarded at \$200 each.

Charlotte Schelling and **Marilyn Richards** are busy preparing the May luncheon where scholarship recipients and their parents will be recognized.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Asotin-Pomeroy:

Unit 1 held their annual Christmas luncheon and auction in December with a great turnout of 28 members and 24 guests. The auction raised more money than ever before! All the money goes toward

scholarships and teacher mini-grants. The gathering had so many guests attend as the unit put in extra effort to reach out and invite local school secretaries and office staff to attend. Secretaries and office staff are always the ones “manning the office” when administrators and teachers are called away. Therefore, the unit’s outreach was to personally invite them to be honored guests at the luncheon. After clearing it with the administrations, personal invitations were sent out. Members got busy making small gifts for them (thank you **Penny Bosley** and **Gail Edwards**). The gifts were presented with a short poem

acknowledging their “behind the scenes” work. Attendees had fun at the auction with laughs and good food.

The February program was from the University of Idaho Extension Office, Karen Richel. She presented information about “digital footprint.” March will find unit members learning about Alzheimer’s prevention and awareness with a book review from member, **Bonnie Hill**.

Unit scholarship committee chair, **Bonnie Hill**, has spearheaded a new scholarship application, which is more thorough. The unit is looking



Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver): (left to right) **Marty Erickson, Melinda Cannell, Jeanie Anderson, Wanita Filbin.** Ms. Cannell was the guest speaker at a recent unit gathering. She thanked the unit for the \$1,000 scholarship to the Vancouver School District Foundation and shared how contributions benefit local students.

Unit Spotlight

Unit 1 Asotin-Pomeroy



Kay Andersen, unit president, has a musical background and wanted the members of her unit to benefit from getting involved with music in some way. Her opportunity came at the last meeting of the year when the AV equipment stalled and she needed to think of something fast. She did what any teacher does and went with one of her strengths, music. The group proceeded to have a sing-along, which was promptly followed by making plans to sing at local nursing and retirement homes.

The group chose easy listening and familiar songs to appeal to the audience and performers alike. Practices were scheduled and the group began to take shape. After practicing the song, "Try a Little Kindness," the group came up with the idea to go out and shake hands with the audience while singing the song. They also added, touching shoulders, smiling, and making eye contact with their audiences and the "Kindness Connection" was born! The practices are casual and fun. At Christmas time, the group took their Christmas caroling inside the halls of the Veteran's Home and Prestige Care Center. Some of their residents even joined in on the fun.

Music can make a real impact on people. All of us know that music can relieve boredom and make us move our bodies. It can bring back happy memories, which helps us not dwell on unhappy memories. Sometimes music can calm us down and make us happier. It also is an easy, fun way to interact with others. The benefits go both ways as the performers enjoy the experience as much as the audience. Spread a little kindness with song, you'll be glad you did! --by Kay Anderson, Unit 1



forward to offering these to the three local high schools this spring.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

January brought the second meeting of E-8, held in Waitsburg. Members from Asotin/Pomeroy, Walla Walla/Waitsburg, and Tri-Cities attended. The January luncheon featured a superintendents' panel, which included Pasco Superintendent **Michelle Whitney**, Kennewick Superintendent **Dave Bond**, and from Richland School District, retiring Superintendent **Rick Schulte** and incoming Superintendent **Nicole MacTavish**. The presentations focused on a bond and levy elections in Kennewick and current projects in Pasco and Richland.

Also at the January luncheon was the mid-year collection of school supplies for SHAKE (Seniors Helping All Kids' Education).

The February gathering featured Mike Brown of Western Governors University (WGU). WGU was created by a group of state governors from western states, as an innovative solution to their states' demand for high quality, outcomes-oriented higher education. The online courses are designed in partnership with leading employers. WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** also briefly addressed attendees.

Members continue to communicate with the legislators, invite new members, and carry on the work of the unit. **Diana Baker**, directory chairperson, delivered the unit directories.

Current/future program information and news can be found on the webpage <http://bfsraunit29.blogspot.com/> and in the monthly newsletter. All luncheons will be held at the CG Public House and Catering, 9221 W. Clearwater Ave, Kennewick.

ADDRESS CHANGES

PLEASE NOTIFY:

Membership Coordinator:
Michele Hunter
michele@wssra.org

Phone: 360-413-5496, ext 116

**WSSRA, 4726 Pacific Ave SE,
Lacey WA 98503**

WSSRA Around The State

Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia: Many people gathered in Walla Walla early in January to celebrate and remember the life of **Rick Nebeker**, a well-known WSSRA leader at the state and local level. **Rick** will be missed.

The January luncheon program was a double-feature about Junior Achievement and a local scholarship fund supported by the Teddy Bear Tea. **Nancy Brown** explained

the 100-year partnership of Junior Achievement with local schools. Community volunteers from many different professions use the Junior Achievement K-12 curriculum to help students develop work related skills, often through hands-on experience, to make a connection from school to the outside economic world.

Joan Helm, presented the second of the program double-

feature. In 1980, the Unit 31 scholarship fund started with a \$20 donation. Two years later, the growing fund enabled awarding of two \$200 scholarships to student teachers. The fund continued to grow over the years though various donations and projects. In 2007, Unit 31 decided to abandon yard sales and other activities and try a "Teddy Bear Tea" to raise money for the scholarship fund. Each year, the Teddy Bear Tea has grown to

become a community event. This year, on the last Saturday in February, another successful Teddy Bear Tea was attended by young and old and all those in between, a truly celebrated the event. The fees and sales adds to the unit scholarship fund, and enables Unit 31 to provide two \$2,000 awards to the winners who are doing student teaching the following year.

WSSRA Convention 2019

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The 2019 WSSRA Convention and Delegate Assembly is June 3-5, 2019 in Yakima, Washington. This year will feature a Hobby Display Room for members to share their talents with others (see registration form below).

As a service project at convention, the registration table will be collecting "BoxTops" and travel-size toiletries to donate to local organizations in Yakima. Start saving yours now and bring them to Yakima (or send them with any unit delegate).

Look for more information on 2019 WSSRA Convention and Delegate Assembly in the next Journal.

2019 CONVENTION HOBBY DISPLAY REGISTRATION

SHOW YOUR HOBBY AT THE 2019 WSSRA CONVENTION. If you are a hobby enthusiast, you are invited to share your talent with convention attendees. The display room is large enough to accomdate anything from a restored automobile to a collection of thimbles. The Hobby Room will be attended at all open times during the convention and the doors locked during meetings, however, WSSRA will not be responsible for any loss or damage. See you in Yakima!

Name: _____ Unit # _____

Address: _____

Phone (cell and/or home): _____

Email: _____

Brief Description of Entry: _____

Approximate Size: _____ Approx. Value: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THIS HOBBY DISPLAY REGISTRATION FORM BY MAY 20, 2019

QUESTIONS: Contact Judy Markham (Unit 34, Yakima)

Cell: 509-833-0420 or Home: 509-457-6852 Email: Toppmarks@gmail.com

MAIL REGISTRATION TO: Judith Markham, 300 Alps Road Unit 1012, Moxee, WA 98936

Would you be willing to work a security shift in the hobby room?

Circle time preferred:

MONDAY, JUNE 3

9:30am-11:30am

11:30am-1:30pm

1:30pm-3:30pm

3:30pm-5:30pm

TUESDAY, JUNE 4

9:30am-11:30am

1:30pm-3:00pm

3:00pm-4:30pm



The **Journal**
 Washington State School Retirees' Association
 4726 Pacific Avenue SE • Lacey WA 98503

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Ask a friend to join us



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.

Vision

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

Don't delay – ask today

You'll find inside...

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