

# The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2019

VOLUME 73, ISSUE NO. 2



Unit 15 Okanogan members, Penny Garrison and Marcelle LaGrou, encouraging attendees of the Omak School District benefits fair to join WSSRA.

## WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the president*

# Volunteer Your Time For WSSRA



*by Pam Francis, president*

It's a new school year and classrooms throughout Washington are starting the adventure. Those of you who have been or are educators or work in the schools know that it takes good management and great schedules. It also takes volunteers - those extra minds, hands, and their willingness to give their time and energy to assist the students, teachers, and local schools.

When I worked for Seth Woodard Elementary school in 1984 there was a program called SPICE which stands for Student - Parent - Interactive - Classroom - Environment. It was awesome! We generated the SPICE students from within Spokane area schools districts. The volunteers in the program worked in eight SPICE classrooms. Students received one-on-one assistance or small group instruction, after the classroom teacher taught the lesson.

As teachers were getting ready to design centers, lessons, and student assessments, they truly looked forward to having this extra help. SPICE parent volunteers became part of the school culture and we depended on their input, instruction, and fellowship. They would also help non-SPICE classrooms when they had time. The parents were eager to assist in the classroom. Some tasks were "one-on-one" and were crucial in determining each student's individual abilities and "readiness" to learn math, social studies, reading, etc.

Now, let's talk about WSSRA members volunteering in our community. After working in the educational field as a teacher, grants manager, Title I director, principal, and Gonzaga University adjunct teaching in Montana, Washington, and Canada, I have worked with many volunteers. These people are wonderful and give many hours to whatever position they are doing. Many places depend on volunteers: churches, daycares, student camps, public libraries, conferences, campgrounds, and rest

areas in need of coffee and cleanup. The list goes on and on.

We are at our best when we step-up to help another person, organization, or when we come together to work through a difficult situation, like a storm or flood. We always receive far more than we could imagine from volunteering:

- A sense of empowerment, pride, and accomplishment;
- Encourage and motivate more people to give their time, knowledge, resources, and kindness;
- A feeling of fulfillment;
- Build new relationships;
- Become involved in your community;
- Be more generous with your time.

I have a friend (a WSSRA member) who is always willing to help when needed. Last month she drove from Spokane to Beaverton, Oregon to sit with a friend's eighteen-month-old while her friend and husband went on vacation. My friend is a widow and this was a first for her. When she returned to Spokane, she gave me a call and said that all of her upper body muscles were aching and tired. She also received one of the best experiences of all times! She felt fulfilled and happy to have had such an experience. She is a delightful person who believes in giving.

Another member takes care of a lighthouse each summer. This is an unusual job but it gives the lighthouse keeper some time off. I think I would like to go with her.

Let's be conduits...the more you give the more you receive. We're at our best when we make a difference and contribute. Everyone has something to give, be it wisdom, love, or a variety of other things. We know that time is one of our most important commodities.



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**THE JOURNAL**  
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**JOURNAL INFORMATION**

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The WSSRA Journal Policy  
Board, WSSRA President and  
WSSRA Executive Board assume  
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pearing over the signature of  
any source. While every effort is  
made to check the accuracy of  
items accepted, articles cannot be  
reviewed for technical accuracy.

Material appearing in The  
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action by the board, councils, com-  
mittees and units, is presented to  
promote the general welfare of  
WSSRA members and otherwise  
to fulfill the purposes of this as-  
sociation, as defined in Article II  
of the bylaws.

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

**Upcoming JOURNAL  
article deadlines**

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

**February 5, 2020**  
for Mar./April 2020 issue

**WSSRA At Work For You**



*A message from the executive director*

## Focus on Health Care Costs in 2020



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

With the 2020 presidential campaign season already in full swing, there is no question that health care will be a hot political topic for the next 14 months. President Trump and his Republican colleagues have made no secret of their desire to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA or "Obamacare"). On the other hand, several of the leading Democratic presidential candidates advocate for a so-called single-payer model—essentially Medicare for all—similar to existing programs in Canada, Great Britain, and Norway.

Neither is likely to happen. From 2016 through 2018, when the Republicans enjoyed majorities in the Senate, House, and held the presidency, they couldn't find a way to get a kill-Obamacare bill to the president's desk. Now, with Democrats holding a healthy majority in the House, it is just about impossible to visualize a legislative pathway that would lead to any major modification to ACA—at least through the 2020 election.

As for the Democrats, the single-payer concept lacks universal support in their party and certainly is not favored by rank and file Republican House members. Moreover, even if such a proposal would make its way to the Senate, it is sure to be soundly defeated by the Republican majority in that body. In short, what we have now is what we are likely to have through at least 2020: a mixed system with the ACA covering those without employer-based or pre-Medicare retiree insurance. For those 65 or over with Medicare, supplemental programs through the government (like PEBB) or through private Medicare Advantage outlets will be the health care options of choice.

Yet, and unfortunately, the current ACA program still leaves almost 9% of Americans without any health insurance. That is not good. When that population becomes sick, they

typically go to a public hospital or emergency clinic for treatment - with the bill generally paid by the government, meaning all of us. That is why even the Democrats who like the ACA would prefer it to be improved so all could access it.

As for tackling the high cost of health care, the biggest reason that health insurance rates have gone up so much is the ever-increasing costs of prescription drugs. To be sure, WSSRA members who use the PEBB, for either their exclusive non-Medicare retiree health plan or as a Medicare supplement, understand that well as they pay their monthly insurance premium.

That begs the question: Why are drug prices rising so fast and what can be done to stop the increases? One legitimate reason for these increases is the cost of research and testing for new and more effective drugs. We get that, but don't appreciate drug manufacturers' resistance to accelerating the availability of generic equivalents or lowering the fees for drugs that have been around for a time and are not that expensive to produce.

To be sure, many fingers point to Big Pharma as the villain in this drama. Whatever, prescription drug prices continue to take up a larger and larger portion of overall health care costs. Several of the health care reform proposals that are being shopped around by presidential candidates deal with that issue, and should be of interest to all—especially those of us of retirement age who need prescription drugs to maintain our health.

Yes, it will be an interesting 2020 campaign, with health care—and the high costs of prescription drugs—as definite hot topics!

*Executive Director, continued on page 7*



## Legislative News



## The Economic and Revenue Environment



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

The fight for retirees and COLAs never happens in a vacuum. WSSRA has a narrow political focus as an organization, and that perspective can make it difficult to see the proverbial forest for the trees. With the legislative session four months away, what will the budget look like in January? Will money be available, or did the legislature spend every last penny? A budget shortage would certainly be a convenient excuse to let retirees' needs go unfunded again.

Global politics and economics play major roles in forecasting our tax revenue. Not coincidentally, Washington state's chief economist believes geopolitical uncertainty and export restrictive trade policies at the national level are currently the biggest threats to Washington's economy. Will Washingtonians buy new cars next year? Will the urban real estate boom continue? What in the world will oil prices do? Figuring those questions out now will tell us what type of reception WSSRA can expect from legislators in January.

Economic numbers are currently trending flat. Gross tax receipts are approximately \$86 million higher than expected for

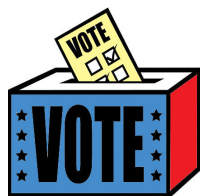
the summer and autumn of 2019 (more than plenty for a Plan 1 COLA). Warning signs abound, as the state appears to be well off its peak economic and revenue growth. Important numbers indicate the local unemployment rate has ticked up .2% to 4.7% (under 5% is considered healthy), Washington's international exports have decreased by 3.8%, and car sales are struggling. The state's overall Gross Domestic Product has increased by 5.7%, which explains the increased tax revenue. Oil prices are expected to dip further, which is bad news for Wall Street (pension investors) but good news for Main Street (pension spenders). It should be noted that this is the first neutral revenue forecast in about five years.

Fifty percent of the legislature is new and accustomed to having extra money to work with. Experienced lawmakers have seen flat and neutral revenue forecasts. Much of the current crop has not. Fifty or one hundred million dollars is enough to take on a couple of projects (like the Plan 1 COLA). It is not enough to create new social programs. That also assumes spending projections will be flat. One or two program overruns and \$100 million will disappear in a flash. So that is our task for 2020. Appropriators have admitted that some of WSSRA's top goals, including a COLA for Plan 1 members, were unfinished business last year. As an association, we need to make sure retirees are provided for before a recession or some other group claims that little bit of new cash.

### A SPECIAL NOTE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

**Ester Wilfong, co-chair of the WSSRA State Legislative Committee would like to pass on a special message:**

It is time to get organized. The 2019 General Election is November 5th, and we will have no impact as retirees if we do not do the bare minimum and put our ballots in the mail. On top of that, make



sure your friends and families are registered to vote. Democracy only works if we participate. Thank you.

### WSSRA ACTION E-MAILS

*Join the list today...*

**WSSRA.ORG**

**click on "Join Mail List"**

Join the email list for legislative updates and urgent action requests. Your email will not be shared.



## WSSR-PAC News



# WSSR PAC: Planning for Legislative Session and 2020 Elections



*by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president*

I would like to thank all who contributed to WSSR-PAC. I encourage continued financial support to help the PAC prepare for the big 2020 elections. There were very few contested legislative races for 2019, so no financial contributions were made this year.

A WSSRA Legislative Summit was held on September 5 in Cle Elum, which included WSSRA staff, legislative committee members, WSSR-PAC executive committee, and WSSRA professional lobbyists. The discussion focused on making strategic changes for approaching key legislators to call attention to their treatment of Plan 1 retirees as grossly unfair compared to all other state retiree groups. Although no concrete decisions were made at the meeting, the consensus among summit attendees was to try a different approach to convince state legislators to provide a fair COLA. WSSRA's lobbyists presented a proposed plan, which will be further examined by the legislative committee. The proposed plan may then be forwarded to the WSSRA executive board for consideration. The proposed plan details will be made available at a future date.

Thank you to all who contributed and helped raise funds in the last year. I really appreciated all the help raising PAC funds at the past/recent convention in Yakima. The sales and contributions were great!

The following is a list of the WSSR-PAC officers and board members. A PAC board member is appointed by the district coordinating council chair. Candidate recommendations for financial endorsement by unit members can be made through their district PAC board member or officer.

### **WSSR-PAC Board Members for 2019-2020**

Northwest 1: Tim Knopf, (425) 327-5352  
 Northwest 2: Rob Fletcher, (425) 392-6674  
 Southwest 3: Lora Brabant, (360) 670-5183  
 Southwest 4: Mina Milligan, (360) 694-6741  
 East 5: Louie Osmonovich, (509) 304-4793  
 East 6: Mary Perkins, (509) 884-7671  
 East 7: Jeff Hunter  
 East 8: David Randall, (509) 539-0684

### **WSSR-PAC Officers for 2019-2020**

President: Louie Osmonovich, (509) 304-4793  
 Vice President: Edith Ruby, (206) 632-9841  
 Secretary: Mary Wallon, (206) 285-1348  
 Treasurer: Lora Brabant, (360) 670-5183



### **2019 ELECTION WSSRA ENDORSEMENT**

The WSSRA Executive Board, in conjunction with the WSSRA Legislative Committee, voted to endorse the following candidate for the Washington State Legislature.

**Legislative District 13 Representative:**  
 (Ellensburg, Cle Elum, Moses Lake)  
**Alex Ybarra (R)**

Endorsement decisions were based upon each candidate's legislative voting record, their political positions on WSSRA's issues, and their openness to meeting with WSSRA members.



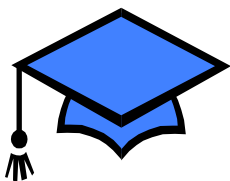
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WSSR-PAC  
by making a  
contribution today!**

**Online at:  
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**

## Supporting Future Educators



## WSSR Foundation: Scholarships Truly Change the Lives of Students



by Tom Anderson, WSSR Foundation chair

Being a member of the Washington State School Retirees' Association is an organization of which you can be very proud. The WSSR Foundation would like to remind you that as a former employee in the education profession in Washington, you can continue to contribute to our profession by donating to the WSSR Foundation. The Foundation provides scholarships annually to high school seniors planning to major in the field of education, or school-related field. Scholarships are also awarded to college students selected for student teaching or internships leading to professional certification.

If you would like to make a financial contribution to the WSSR scholarship program, donations can be made online by logging on to the WSSRA website and selecting the "Foundation" link and clicking on the "Donation Form." Know that your donation will be greatly appreciated. It has been said that giving is not about making a donation, it is about making a difference. Your generous support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of students earning a WSSRA scholarship.

Scholarships truly change the lives of students. A gift to the WSSR Foundation helps talented, deserving students continue their education. Your donation helps students stay in school and helps to make sure those students have the opportunity to fulfill their educational goals before entering the education profession.

In addition to scholarship donations received throughout the year, significant scholarship dollars are raised at the WSSRA convention and delegate assembly. Over \$8,000 is raised each year thanks to our individual members, local units, and coordinating councils who provide raffle baskets and silent auction items for our foundation fund-raising projects at the convention. The basket raffle drawings are great fun at the convention. This might be a very good year for you to get involved and help your local unit gather auction items for the next WSSRA convention. Your help and support will be greatly appreciated.

### DONATION FORM

#### WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION

PO Box 5127, Lacey, WA 98509

Please Print

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.

<input type="checkbox"/> In Honor	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial	\$ _____
Name _____		
Person to be Notified _____		
Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip _____

<input type="checkbox"/> In Honor	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Foundation Contributors

Gene & Vivian Forrester - scholarship  
 Charles & Norma Shelan - scholarship  
 Mary Bly - donation  
 Rita Figlenski - in memory of Bill Laws  
 Penny Garrison - in memory of Bill Laws  
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 Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Donald Grieb,  
 Ina Anderson, and Robert Collins  
 Renton/South King RSEA - in memory of Anacortea  
 Tacloy, Chelsey Hill, Donald Hodson, and Norman  
 Sargent  
 Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of Alan  
 Swanberg and Dona Hargrave  
 Southwest King SRA - in memory of Justine  
 Richards, Mavis Luksan, and Susan Luthy  
 Yakima County SRA - donation

## Online Donation to WSSR Foundation

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**

click on  
**FOUNDATION**  
 then click on  
**DONATION FORM**

*Executive Director, continued from page 3*

### **Clarification: Senior Property Tax Exemption**

My summer column on senior property tax exemptions generated several calls about the income declaration rules that are required in order to qualify for a tax reduction or exemption. The article implied that IRS Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is the number that the county assessor would use to determine whether a senior qualified for an exemption. That is not quite right. The law uses “gross income” as the determiner, which adds to AGI the 15% of social security income not taxed, any capital gains not accounted for in AGI, pension income not subject to federal tax, and the like. In addition, there are a set of non-IRS deductions that can reduce the gross income number. The senior/disabled property tax exemption application form and instructions—available on the Washington State Department of Revenue website ([dor.wa.gov](http://dor.wa.gov)) or on each county assessor’s website—provide proper guidance in completing the necessary forms.

### **SEBB - School Employees Benefits Board**

Several members have called questioning whether the implementation of the SEBB program in January will have any effect on retirees. The short answer is “no.” At this point, the SEBB—a statewide health insurance program for K-12 active employees—represents a major change for those currently working in the K-12 system, but not for retirees. Those of us in PEBB will not see anything but the normal pricing changes/increases in January. Also, remember that the legislatively approved \$15 per month increase in the PEBB Medicare subsidy also will go into effect January 1.

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.**



**Your Health Matters**

## **An Update from Your Health Services Committee**



*by Jim Bumgarner, State Board Liason to the Health Services Committee, 2016 -2019*

One year after the brainstorming sessions at the Wenatchee Convention in 2018 regarding the four major elements for living a more fulfilled life - personal and social well-being, nutrition, exercise, and financial wellness - local units/regions have responded beautifully. New and renewed activities such as articles for newsletters, guest presentations on health, Tai Chai at meetings, regular walks, and others designed to increase members' life-fulfillment factors are being carried out across the association.

Here are some examples provided by your regional state health committee members:

NW 1 published articles on nearby safe and accessible walking paths, including the Everett Mall.

NW 2 published a series of four articles: Vision Problems, Shingles Vaccine, Positives of Potassium, and a review of the "Food Guides" from WWII to present day.

SW 3 regularly disseminates health information, and bookmarks have been shared outlining the ABC's of melanoma.

SW 4 presented, "Eating for Health," and supplied coats, socks and basic supplies to students in need; rides to luncheons for those who can no longer drive; and newsletter articles covering insurance, flu shots, shingles shots, Medicare and Social Security scams.

E5 started a walking group at the Valley Mall with its ending destination a coffee shop. They keep members apprised of the Yakima hospitals who encourage healthy living including a recent "Cooking for One" presentation.

E6 incorporated an exercise warm-up at their meetings, and have shared the 5 Wishes Program as well as hosted a SHIBA representative at a luncheon.

E7 hosted a naturopath, and October will be Health Focus Month where the luncheon will focus entirely on health related issues.

E8 provides monthly information reports at each luncheon regarding mental welfare, general health and socialization, Medicare and PEBB issues; and in Unit 29, Sam Derosa leads members in Tai Chai exercises at each luncheon.

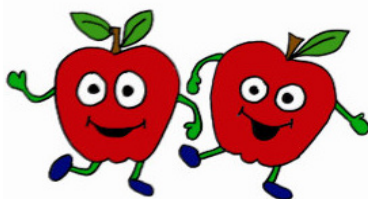
From WSSRA, the most recent four issues of *The Journal* have featured articles pertaining to healthy living from state Health Services Committee members, and Dr. Alan Burke. You can find them online at [wssra.org](http://wssra.org).

Maybe you have found some good ideas for your unit in this article so far, but if you take a look at the following compressed version of the four reports from 2018 WSSRA Convention in Wenatchee, you may find more!



**Sam Derosa leading Tai Chai exercises at a recent luncheon for Unit 29 Benton Franklin.**

## Your Health Matters



Please feel free to pick and choose, or expand, upon any and all:

### Personal and Social Well-Being

- Volunteer at school as readers, supervisors, etc.
- Set up visitations to members who are shut-ins
- Provide rides to meetings for the home-bound
- Interest group projects, such as: book-making, book clubs, Teddy Bear Teas, walkers, etc.
- Create social groups (cards, coffee, field trips, etc.)

### Exercise

- Emphasize regular exercise for sociability, good feelings, better sleep, and psychological lift
- 3-minute Tai Chi breaks during meetings
- Sign up exercise partners at meetings
- Volunteer to help those in need with yard work, grocery shopping, etc.
- Mall walkers
- Park further into parking lots

### Nutrition

- Organize field trips to cooking classes
- Utilize your local skill center culinary classes to present
- Emphasize healthy eating during the holidays
- Use YouTube as a source of healthy eating ideas
- Enlist a local expert to:
  - Set up food demos as luncheon presentation(s)
  - Present dietary information including special dietary information
  - Demo cooking for one ideas
  - Emphasize healthy eating during the holidays

### Financial Well-Being

- Utilize local experts to present on general themes of what to do and what not to do concerning retirement, investment clubs, stocks, lump sum or steady state additions to portfolios, etc.

Past-President, Dr. Curt Horne, spoke about the health of associations, clubs, etc., and how that health is directly tied to their ability to meet the needs of members. We presently have members ranging in age from pre-retirement to 90+ years. Are we doing all we can do to continue those things we are doing well to promote more full-filled lives for all our members? Is there more that we can do? There is no doubt.



The Health Services Committee is presently working on a survey to distribute to members in the coming weeks. The purpose of the survey will be to collect information pertaining to the four major elements for living a more fulfilled life: personal and social well-being, nutrition, exercise, and financial wellness. Collected data will hopefully assist the committee in its decision-making regarding the future direction of its services to all members. Data collected will be secure and anonymous. Watch for further announcements. Thank you.



## Plan 2/Plan 3 Corner



## Actives: Never Too Early to Plan for Your Retirement



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

When planning for retirement, five items belong in the “must do” category. We call those items the “Big Five” and they form the basis for WSSRA-sponsored retirement seminars that are offered at locations across the state. This article will provide a brief summary of each with subsequent *Journal* entries providing a more detailed look into each of the five.

1

### Washington Department of Retirement Systems (DRS)

DRS is the state agency responsible for determining pension payouts and distributing monthly checks.

The agency website has a complete list of the various retirement payout options, necessary forms, timelines, qualification criteria, and the like. Generally, the Plan 2/3 retirement age for a full (that is not actuarially reduced) retirement is 65, but for those with 30 years of service age 62 will do. Depending on years of service, retirement as early as age 55 is possible, but with a pension reduction of roughly 3% per year for every year before 65.

[drs.wa.gov](http://drs.wa.gov)

2

### Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB)

PEBB is operated within the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA). PEBB is the program that provides partially subsidized and state supported health insurance for retirees. For retirees under 65, PEBB has several options that require monthly payments. For example, a single subscriber might pay approximately \$650 - \$700 per month, while a subscriber with spouse/family could pay up to \$1,900 per month for health insurance. For Medicare eligible retirees, those fees drop considerably (\$100-\$300 for a single subscriber; \$200-\$500 for a family). Yes, health care is expensive and certainly is a reason that many workers wait until age 65 to retire. The PEBB health care options available to school retirees vary greatly in cost and coverage. It pays to do health care homework to assure the choice of an option that best fits individual or family needs. Finally, using the PEBB is not a requirement and many current Medicare retirees choose supplemental insurance outside of the PEBB.

[hca.wa.gov](http://hca.wa.gov)

3

### Social Security Administration (SSA)

SSA sponsors the federal government’s retirement plan for all American workers. Retirement age for Social Security ranges from 62 to 70 with larger monthly payouts for those who wait. So-called full retirement begins at age 67 for those born after 1960. Claiming Social Security before age 67 will result in a benefit reduction, and, by delaying past age 67, an eight percent per year increase will occur. Choosing when to begin receiving monthly Social Security checks is an important decision that properly is made after a full analysis of family circumstances, health, and personal financial status.

[ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov)

4

### Medicare

The nation’s health insurance for those 65 or older. The first thing to consider when signing up for Medicare is that the enrollment window normally starts three months before the 65th birthday. It is very important to file on time to avoid financial penalties for late sign-up. Medicare pays 80% of what they determine to be reasonable costs of health care, including inpatient and outpatient services. However, almost all Medicare eligible retirees pay for supplemental health insurance to cover the 20% that Medicare doesn’t cover, plus prescription drugs. Furthermore, Medicare frequently will determine that a procedure will be supported at a rate less than what a hospital or doctor charges, thus the need for supplemental insurance to cover the difference. Supplemental insurance is available through PEBB or through any number of vendors in the private market.

[ssa.gov/benefits/medicare](http://ssa.gov/benefits/medicare)

5

### Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA)

VEBA is a state-approved Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) that allows active employees and retirees to place the dollar value of a portion of accumulated sick leave days into a tax-free account that can be used to cover health care costs. Normally, upon retirement employees place one-fourth of their sick leave balance into a VEBA fund that can



be used to pay for monthly health insurance costs or any unpaid hospital bills, doctor's charges or even long-term care insurance fees. Almost all of the state's school districts have established a VEBA program, and some allow VEBA to be started before retirement by allowing active employees with sick leave balances above 180 days to divert the dollar equivalent into VEBA—at a one to four ratio. The nice part of VEBA is definitely its tax-free status, saving retirees 20% or more over a simple sick leave cash out.

[veba.org](http://veba.org)

Again, we will be providing more detail about each of the “Big Five” in future *Journal* articles. Finally, reading about these topics is no substitute for gaining first-hand information about them. We suggest you attend one or more retirement planning sessions sponsored by WSSRA, your local district, or DRS.

**JOURNAL  
VIA E-MAIL**

**Go to...**

**WSSRA.ORG**

**and sign up  
today!**

## Connections - AARP

# AARP: Impact of Skyrocketing Drug Prices on Washingtonians

by Jason Erskine, AARP Washington



AARP Washington has released new state data and an infographic illustrating the impact of high prescription drug prices on Washington State residents, specifically those living with cancer, prediabetes or diabetes, and heart disease. AARP recently unveiled the infographic at the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) annual conference as part of AARP's nationwide *Stop Rx Greed* campaign to lower drug prices for all Americans.

While prescription drug prices continue skyrocketing, Americans are being forced to choose between filling life-saving medications or paying rent and buying food,” said AARP Advocacy Director Cathy MacCaul. “So far in 2019, 29 states have passed 46 new laws to rein in drug prices, including a measure to increase prescription drug pricing transparency here in Washington State. It’s critical that state and federal lawmakers continue this momentum to stop Rx greed.”

In 2016, 31% of Washingtonians stopped taking a prescription drug as prescribed due to cost. AARP is also highlighting recent price increases for select prescription drugs commonly used to treat cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Between 2012 and 2017, the retail price of:

- Revlimid, used to treat cancer, increased from \$147,413 per year to \$247,496 per year. In Washington, 708,455 people are living with cancer.
- Lantus, a form of insulin used to treat diabetes, increased from \$2,907 per year to \$4,702 per year. There are 601,364 people with diabetes in Washington.
- Aggrenox, a heart disease medication, increased from \$3,030 per year to \$5,930 per year. In Washington, 201,836 people have heart disease.

**To view the Washington State infographic, visit [www.aarp.org/rxstates](http://www.aarp.org/rxstates)**

**To learn more about AARP's Stop Rx Greed campaign, visit [www.aarp.org/rx](http://www.aarp.org/rx)**

**STOP <sup>Rx</sup>  
GREED**  
CUT DRUG PRICES NOW

## Membership: Strength In Numbers

### Membership Building Opportunities



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair



Hello to everyone from your State Membership Committee. Many seem glad that the usual summer heat held back a bit, along with the downturn in forest and range fires. I hope that everyone had an enjoyable summer.

WSSRA membership is up from a year ago - as of September 2019, membership stood at 17,695 members, as compared to a year ago when the count was 17,330 members. We seem to have reversed a downward trend of the past few years, which indicates a great effort by many for the stronger showing. In August, regrettably 28 members passed away. However, the number is lower than in other months of the year. Our condolences to the families of our departed folks.

Now is the time to be scheduling staff meetings in buildings and appearances at school district benefits fairs where available. Many of the latter are being scheduled later in the fall this year

due to enrollment changes for state programs. I would encourage local membership chairs to reach out to your local schools and districts.

We have recently asked all local units to choose membership incentive option 1 or 2. Option 1 is the traditional plan that offers local units with incentive funds for enrolling new members. Option 2 is the newer incentive program that involves giving a \$10 bill to the newly enrolled member on the spot. The Option 2 (\$10 bill program) needs to be done at an actual unit or WSSRA sponsored event (not casually at the grocery store or gas station). Option 1 provides incentive funds to the local unit for enrolling new members. If your local unit board has not made the decision between these two options, it is important to do so very soon and inform WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter of the unit's decision.

#### 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 PO BOX 5127, LACEY, WA 98509

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—Clarkston/Asotin/ Pomeroy	Pacific	11—Lewis County	19—Renton-South King	25—Spokane	31—Walla Walla- Columbia
02—Chelan/Douglas	06—Southwest King	12—Lower Columbia	20—Seattle	27—Pierce County	32—Whatcom County
03—Clallam County	07—Jefferson County	14—Mason County	21—Skagit/Island/San Juan	28—Thurston County	33—Whitman County
04—Columbia Basin	08—Kitsap County	15—Okanogan County	22—Sno-Isle	29—Benton-Franklin	34—Yakima County
05—Grays Harbor/	09—Kittitas County	16—East King	23—Sno-King	30—Southwest Wash- ington	
	10—Columbia Gorge	18—Pend Oreille			

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

If you use the \$10 bill incentive program, it is imperative to use the Membership Cash Incentive Voucher to report your activity. Michele would be happy to send you the form.

Finally, hats-off to our newly re-activated Unit 10, Columbia Gorge. In the past month, they increased from 8 to 18 members. Fantastic! In addition, hats-off to Unit 27 Pierce County, their membership number grew from 979 a year ago to 1,198 this month. Lots of great work went into that growth effort. Congratulations to Units 10 and 27.

The State Membership Committee met September 17 in Lacey. These and other items were discussed with committee members' input. Fall is here with all its opportunities for membership building. Let's Go!

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

## RETIREE RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

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

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



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FOR THE BEST**

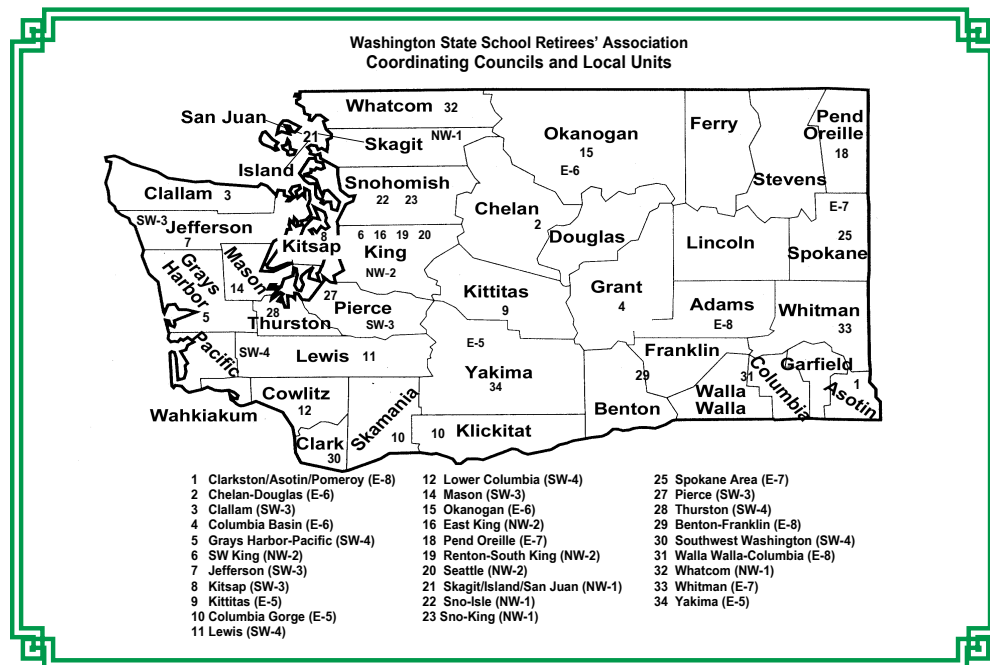
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## WSSRA Around The State

# What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



## NORTHWEST-1

### Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:

Unit 21 is off to an energized start this year. On August 12, the yearly board retreat was held to map out unit activities for this coming year. Membership will be the main focus this year. Membership chair **Barbara Robinson** will be assisted by **Joyce Moon**, **Diane Visten**, and **Lonnie Keown** among others, leading some new recruitment projects this year. The focus will be on signing up current teachers as well as those that are recently retired. Additionally, unit newsletters will include more timely information for those in Plans 2 and 3.

Also on August 12, the unit co-hosted, with the League of Women Voters, a community event with two representatives from the 10th Legislative District. Representative Norma Smith (R) and Dave Paul (D) were the featured guests. They talked about how they worked across the aisle during the last legislative session on issues where they share similar views, such as mental health. Creating opportunities like this in a collaborative manner, and other contacts with legislators, will help continue to develop a better working relationship with them.

On August 19, the unit also co-hosted a public meeting, with the League of Women Voters, concerning homeless-

ness and our schools. Representatives from several local school districts shared their perspectives on this important topic and how the federally mandated McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is impacting schools and their resources. Over 110 people attended, which attests to public interest in this topic.

### Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Sno-Isle Unit 22 gathered for their first meeting of the year on September 17. A sizable group listened to educator and author Sandra Veal. Her wonderful book, *Rising Son*, tells the remarkable story of her dear friend, Masao Abe, a Japanese American who served in a top-secret team during World War II. After

the enthralling talk, members enjoyed great conversation during a catered lunch for only \$5.

Sno-Isle is proud of one of their scholarship recipients, Riley Hougan, as he starts his last year in college. He keeps in touch regularly on his progress.

### Unit 23 Sno-King:

At Unit 23's April scholarship luncheon, **Linda Fitzgerald** announced this year's four recipients: Amanda Dorgan, Lynnwood High School; Shannon Rhodes, Shorecrest High School; Amanda Stanley, Lynnwood High School; Nomin Ulziisaikhan, Meadowdale High School. **Keith Lindaas** reported the successes of several of the unit's previous recipients.

In May, the unit enjoyed the annual joint meeting with Unit 22 Sno-Isle. The speaker, Gloria Kawabori, spoke of her experiences as a young child growing up in a Japanese internment camp in Utah during World War II.

**Cheryl Bower**, **Barbara Berg**, **Aaron Feik**, **Roberta Hawkins**, **Tom Hawkins**, **Evelyn Nordeen**, **Jan Phillips**, **Virg Rayton**, and **Jim Sissel** attended the WSSRA Convention in Yakima during June.

In July, unit members gathered for the annual picnic at Edmonds City Park. The

## WSSRA Around The State

weather started out rather cool, but by lunchtime, it was comfortable. NW-1 Board Representative **Kay Bishop** installed the unit officers for next year: Vice-President **Roberta Hawkins**, Secretary **Jan Phillips**, and Treasurer **Tom Hawkins**. Since no one volunteered to be unit president, individual board members will be taking responsibility for one month's activities. Also, during the gathering, six of the unit's active teachers (**Sara Allsop-Fine**, **Diane Hertzberg**, **Mark Mayberry**, **Penelope Nichols**, **Nanette Peppin**, and **Amy Rust**) shared how they used mini-grant funds received last school year. WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** gave a brief update on the results of the completed legislative session.

In August, unit board members held their annual retreat to plan activities through July 2020. Also during the meeting, a policy change was approved concerning grants for active educators. A member attending unit activities will write a report of the activity for the *Bulletin*.

### **Unit 32 Whatcom County:**

On August 5, the WCSRA Board met and made plans for the year. The major goal of Unit 32 for this upcoming year is to get more people involved in the leadership of the unit.

On September 19, members had the opportunity to meet those running for office in Whatcom County at the Bellingham Golf and Country Club. The 40th District can-

didates were Elizabeth (Liz) Lovelett (due to a scheduling conflict, Anna Johnson, her campaign chair, represented her) and Daniel Miller. Whatcom County Executive candidates were Tony Larson (due to a scheduling conflict he was represented by Kennedy Bray) and Satpal Sidhu. County Council at Large candidates Carol Frazey and David Ramirez both attended. Each candidate gave an overview of their priorities and was available for questions and answers from members.

## NORTHWEST-2

### **Unit 6 Southwest King:**

Join Southwest King School Retirees Unit 6 for the last two luncheon meetings of 2019 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church at 19030 8th Ave. South in SeaTac, WA 98148! Lunch is served at 11:45 a.m. and program follows about 12:15 p.m.

Program for October 28: Tyler Lively, CFP, from the Society for Financial Awareness, (a non-profit public benefit corporation.) There will be a program on financial concerns for retirees. He has taught classes internationally. This is not a sales event.

Program for November 25: Come be inspired by Denise Frakes with her clutter clearing ideas for enjoying your day as you make your home sparkle. She has nearly 30

years of stories, which she relates, with humor. You will go home ready to take on those household tasks that need to be done. Visit [denisefrakes.com](http://denisefrakes.com) for more information.

### **Unit 16 East King:**

A much-anticipated program greeted East-King members at Madison House in Kirkland in September. Karen Treiger from the Holocaust Center for Humanity told the harrowing and moving story of the survival of her Polish in-laws, Esther and Sam Goldberg. After Sam escaped Treblinka, a Nazi death camp, he met Esther in the nearby forest. The two then hid with the help of a non-Jewish family. In 2016, the Treiger family traveled to Poland to meet and thank the children of the people who had sheltered them.

In October, unit members are looking forward to hearing from Jeff Brown, a wildlife naturalist at PAWS. Since 1981, the Center has cared for more than 128,000 wild animals so that they could be safely returned to the wild. Jeff will share a video showing some of the work they do and will talk about what you can do if you find an injured or orphaned wild animal.

Christopher Jarmick from Book Tree in Kirkland will come again in November to present favorite book choices for attendees to consider for purchase.



**Unit 22 Sno-Isle: Scholarship recipient, Riley Hougan, thanks members of Unit 22 Sno-Isle for their continued support in his quest to become a teacher.**

## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 20 Seattle:**  
**Former Seattle**  
**Public Schools**  
**teacher, Anila**  
**Goldie, recently**  
**spoke to a unit**  
**gathering about her**  
**experiences living**  
**and teaching in**  
**Sudan.**

The annual silent auction will take place again this December with proceeds going to student needs. Members are always generous with their item offerings and their bids. Many a treasure finds a happy new home and much is raised for a good cause!

**Unit 19 Renton/South King:** Renton-South King held their September luncheon meeting at Lakeshore Retirement Home in Renton on September 10. The guest speaker, Teenie Dillinger, president of the Des Moines Garden Club addressed environmental issues and estuaries.

The October meeting for Unit 19 members was at Renton First United Methodist Church on October 1. An AARP representative gave a presentation to the members on protecting themselves from fraud and identity theft. It

was interesting and valuable information for the members.

On November 5, Renton-South King will have their meeting at the Chateau in Renton. The guest speaker will be Mayumi Tsutakawa, from Humanities Washington, who will present in honor of the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, "Washington's Undiscovered Feminists."

On December 3, the unit will gather for a luncheon at Lakeshore Retirement. The topic for this meeting is a musical mystery.

Renton-South King members are also working on a new project, "Random Acts of Kindness." Teachers who apply are given small gift certificates to be used for supplies. This year, mini-grants from Unit 19 will be given to teachers in the Enumclaw School District.

### **Unit 20 Seattle:**

The September 3 luncheon featured **Anila Goldie** as speaker. She discussed her two years living and teaching in Sudan. She recounted a few of her stories from her book about the experience called, *The Problem Is Not Available*. (**Anila** formerly taught in Seattle Public Schools.)

The October luncheon speaker will include Denise Juneau, superintendent of Seattle Public Schools, and **Alan Burke**, executive director of WSSRA.

**Pat Cygan**, SSRA president, made a plea at the recent luncheon for new volunteers for various positions on the SSRA board.

**Edith Ruby, Mary Wallon, and Patricia MacGowan** (SSRA's Legislative Committee) announced at the luncheon that members need to get in touch with legislators early and express concerns, particularly about bringing back the COLA for TRS 1 retirees.

## SOUTHWEST-3

### **Unit 3 Clallam Co.:**

Clallam County School Retirees' Association held the annual potluck picnic at the 4-Seasons Ranch Clubhouse in Port Angeles on June 18. New WSSRA President **Pam Francis** and her husband, **Les**, attended and were introduced.

On August 20, the executive board met to work on plans for the new year. Three members were at the Sequim School District benefits fair on August 26 to share information about WSSRA and CCSRA and the mini grant program with many staff members. A few members attended the Port Angeles School District benefits fair on August 28 and provided information for them as well.

The first general meeting of the year was held at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on September 17. The featured speaker was Dean Butterworth, Outreach and Education Specialist of Olympic National Park. After the meeting, those interested were invited to visit the park visitor center.

### **Unit 8 Kitsap County:**

It will be a busy year for Unit 8 Kitsap. Unit officers for the year are President **Doris Bucher**, Vice President **Craig Miller**, Treasurer **Allison Morris**, and Secretary **Patty Marz**.

The September unit meeting featured a party honoring all members over 80 years of age. Ron Cleveland, a master gardener, talked about rain gardens.

In October, Josh Farley will give a talk about his "Story Walks" and what he does to let us know about interesting and historical places in Kitsap



## WSSRA Around The State

County. It is a great honor to have him speak to unit.

Unit 8 will not have a meeting in November but will meet in December for the annual Christmas celebration. Unit members donate hats, gloves, and winter clothing to the Kitsap Resource Center, as well as Christmas gifts. This is done by unit members to help the community in general. Donations by unit members are very much appreciated.

### ***Unit 27 Pierce County:***

Pierce County is all systems “go” planning for the annual “Legislative Meet and Greet” on Tuesday, October 15 where members and friends can visit with legislators from all ten area legislative districts. This is an opportunity to build relationships and speak with legislators about retirees’ issues. Please come to LaQuinta Inn, near the Tacoma Dome, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and show, by attending, the importance of school employees’ priorities. Enjoy the catered snacks: cookies and coffee, cheese and fruit (no-host wine available). Bring your friends! The event is scheduled so that teachers can attend after the end of the school day. Admission is \$5.

A summer highlight for members was an August annual potluck picnic at Clark’s Creek South Park in Puyallup. The September 19 meeting featured **Dr. Alan**

**Burke**, WSSRA executive director, who gave an update on past and future legislation challenges. Unit 27 has experienced growing involvement following the WSSRA Convention in June and anticipates the coming year with enthusiasm.

Pierce County invites all to upcoming unit meetings at LaQuinta at 12:00 noon for a lovely buffet lunch for only \$12 (subsidized price includes tax and gratuity). The November 21 meeting features Dennis Foster from Enhanced Vision who will speak about aids for people experiencing vision loss. The December 12 meeting offers a lighthearted “History of Hats,” along with some modeling. Come join this fun group!

## SOUTHWEST-4

***Unit 5 Grays Harbor Pacific:*** The first fall meeting for Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific was held September 25 in South Bend with **Bertha Koplitz** and **Linda Karjala** as hosts. The group toured the historic Carnegie Library and had lunch and meeting at the Lutheran Church.

Unit members are continuing the project of buying books in memory of deceased members and donating them to the library of the school at which he or she worked. Two books were recently given to

Emerson and Central schools, both in Hoquiam. The books are always very much appreciated by the librarians and the students.

The unit’s Ocosta “Weekend Brunch Bunch” also continues. Four meals and snacks are sent home in backpacks on Fridays for those who do not have enough food for the weekends. The meals are for K-12. The unit contributes financially for this project.

Unit 5 members are currently deciding on the project for “Make a Difference Day” in October.

Another ongoing activity that unit members enjoy doing is writing “thinking of you” notes to those who have difficulty getting out to meetings.

Being remembered by friends is comforting to them, and something we should do often.

Unit members who attend the meetings enjoy the programs and being together. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend and enjoy these afternoon unit gatherings.

### ***Unit 11 Lewis County:***

An annual planning session was held at the home of **Margaret Wharton** and **Bob Broostrom** in August to discuss plans and activities for the coming year. **Sharon Blair** will continue as secretary, **Jean Barner** will serve as treasurer and **Margaret Wharton** has assumed the role of contact/coordinator. It was decided to increase the amounts of mini-grants



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## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver): Unit Summer BBQ and Meet Up. Pictured, at left, Marty Erickson (host) and Despo Varkados (chef). At right, attendees enjoying food and socializing.**

awarded by the unit this year and continue to fund worthy scholarship applicants as well as the endowment to Centralia College and giving to several community charitable organizations.

The unit will also focus on active memberships and encouraging new leadership.

The first meeting of the year was held September 16 at Dawn's Delectables, which is where unit meetings will continue to be held for the coming year. It was a time of welcoming and providing information regarding WSSRA's goals and local unit plans.

**Unit 28 Thurston County:** The unit had a meeting of officers and standing committee chairs at the end of August to

prepare for the year. They discussed the unit's mission, the unit's vision, and job descriptions with suggestions to bring back to the general membership. A highlight of the meeting was a CPR and AED training presented by the Tumwater Fire Department. Members had the opportunity to practice the life saving techniques and to earn their card, certifying they had completed the training.

The August meeting included unit president **Pat Slosson** accepting a plaque recognizing the unit for having the most new members of any unit over the past year.

Unit 28 celebrated the unit's 65th birthday at the first meeting of the year. The celebration included a large birthday cake and decorations fitting

the occasion. The guest presenter was local historian and long-time radio personality, Don Trosper. Don's presentation on the history of Thurston County included many historical photographs. The presentation was much appreciated and enjoyed by all.

### **Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):**

**Marty and Annette Erickson** hosted a delicious BBQ in their backyard. It was a great site with board members really participating and enjoying it. President **Jeanie Anderson** thanked the members who attended the June WSSRA Convention in Yakima: **Linda Bannon, Mina Milligan, Fran Person, Waneta Filbin, Margaret Snitzler, and Despo Varkados**. Convention attendees, in turn, expressed

delight with the presentations, especially, media. They were also impressed with the outstanding accomplishments of those winning the Stan McNaughton and Pat Hoban Awards.

Visit the unit's new website, [www.wssra-units.org/southwest-unit30](http://www.wssra-units.org/southwest-unit30). Please share information with colleagues, encourage board membership, share mini-grant information, and encourage attendance at monthly luncheons.

President **Jeanie Anderson** lauded **Mina Milligan** for initiating the unit website, and keeping it current with postings. Introducing the site is a charming logo of Fort Vancouver, followed with valuable information about SWWSRA.

The group discussed the mini-grant form and the challenge of getting the information in to school employees. It can be difficult to get into school and spread the word about the mini-grants. Public school employees in Clark County may submit their applications, up to \$300, to finance an activity and purchase materials, for student learning enhancement, by November 4, 2019. The application form is on Unit 30's web site: [www.wssra-units.org/southwest-unit30/mini-grant-form](http://www.wssra-units.org/southwest-unit30/mini-grant-form)

Unit 30 is proud to provide thousands of dollars in scholarships and funds to Ridgefield Schools, Vancouver,

## WSSRA Around The State

Battle Ground, and Evergreen Foundations, Stevenson/Carlson Superintendent Fund, Clark College Continuing Scholarships, Clark College Doris Troxel Supplement Scholarship, and WSSRA scholarships.

Unit 30's September 26 luncheon meeting was held at The Spaghetti Factory, in Vancouver. Legislators from the 17th, 18th, and 49th districts were invited to speak.

The October 24 unit luncheon meeting will be held at the

usual site, Cascadia Technical Academy, in Vancouver. There will be a Native American presentation.

The festive December luncheon meeting will be Thursday, December 11 at Cascadia Technical Academy. Darcy Schmitt's Jazz Ensemble will perform. Darcy loves to bring her musicians to entertain at the Christmas meet-up...and the unit continues to invite them. This must be the fifth year!

### EAST-5

#### ***Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:***

Fall activities are underway for Unit 9 Kittitas County. The September meeting was a "picnic" lunch at the Rosewood Adult Activity Center in Ellensburg with a program presented by representatives of the local Audubon Society. Also, during the meeting, the names of those local educators and those associated with education who have passed since May 2018 were recognized. Each year a children's book is selected and copies gifted to the four county libraries in their memory.

Another fall activity was the preparation and distribution of "Welcome" gift bags to all new hires in Kittitas County schools. The bags contained Chamber of Commerce information about the county, the colorful Association leaflet and membership info, and other goodies. The plan is to spread the word about the local unit and WSSRA. The unit also plans to target active members with grant information this fall and make \$200 grants available to 18 members and \$100 grants to non-members who might apply. The unit expects to reach out to other active school personnel during the year to thank them.

The unit will meet on Tuesday, October 15, at noon at the Putnam Centennial Senior Center in Cle Elum. All

luncheons this year are free to members and their guests. State association guests are expected.

On November 19, the unit will be back at the Rosewood Activity Center for luncheon, meeting, and a program of music from the Ellensburg School District.

The first meeting of 2020 is schedule for February 18, in Ellensburg.

#### ***Unit 34 Yakima Co.:***

Unit 34 Yakima County Executive Board was greeted at **Kathy Fletcher's** home with an offer of a selection of drinks prepared by "bartender" **Carolyn Wilson** and a delicious luncheon prepared by **Kathy** and Costco! A casual business meeting followed with discussion of budget and potential programs for the 2019-2020 led by Copresidents **Nick and Kathy Schultz**. Preparations being made will be for informative programs, fun activities, and fundraising for scholarships and community support.

### EAST-6

#### ***Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:***

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas' summer started with a fun-filled potluck picnic in June. The Pioneer Middle School Mariachi dancers provided entertainment. Their director,



**Unit 9 Kittitas: Mary Christensen and Louie Osmonovich with the Welcome Back gift bags for new hires in the Kittitas County School District.**



## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 15 Okanogan: Kasey Nelson, Tonasket, receives a scholarship check from OCSRA Scholarship Trustees Dr. Richard Johnson and Donna Sanford. Kasey is an Eastern Washington University junior, majoring in elementary education.**

Noemi Bazan, explained how important this program is for the Latina girls. It helps them build self-esteem and pride in their culture. It is a positive experience of belonging to a group. The unit helped pay for their costumes.

**Travis Kane**, a unit grant recipient, shared the work of his “Maker Space” STEM program for 1st-7th grade students. It is amazing what they can produce using minimal materials, problem solving skills, and teamwork!

In August, the summer board meeting took place to plan next year’s activities, pro-

grams, and approve the unit budget. Unit 2 continues to support “Small Miracles,” a program to feed children who are on free and reduced lunch during the summer.

A fund for “Leadership Training” has been established which will hopefully help attract members for leadership positions in the unit.

**Marie Buckner, Sharon Salley, JoAnn Lewis, and Mary King** attended the DRS seminar in Wenatchee and handed out membership information.

**Mary Perkins, Sue Kane, Jan Ottosen, Marie Buck-**

**ner, and Mary King** participated in the STEM Summit in Wenatchee. The unit donated money to the conference and the unit logo was displayed on the promotional materials as well as the conference tee shirts. The unit’s well-received raffle gift also made the organization visible and attractive to new members.

### ***Unit 4 Columbia Basin:***

Columbia Basin Unit 4 met for their annual “Hallelujah Luncheon” on Wednesday, August 28, which was also the first day of school! Twenty-three retirees attended the get-together, where they were entertained by local musicians and enjoyed catching up with friends and former colleagues.

Officers for the 2019-2020 school year were announced, they are Co-Presidents **Lois Palek** and **Karen Schafer**, Vice-President **Susan Hickok**, Secretary **Helen Preston**, Treasurer **Bev Shelton**. Chairpersons for the Unit 4 committees were also announced. They are as follows: Membership - **Wanda Harrison** and **Susan Hickok**, Teacher Grants - **Pat Simmons** and **Susan Hickok**, Books for Babies - **Marylly Martin** (Samaritan Hospital) and **Helen Preston** (Othello Hospital), Retirement - **Karen Schafer** and **Gayle Talbot**, Health - **Susan Hickok** and **Marylly Martin**, Student Teacher Scholarships - **Wanda Harrison** and **Helen**

**Preston**, Programs - **Pat Simmons**, Legislature-**Bev Shelton** and **Audrian Huff**, Journal articles - **Karen Schafer**, Newsletter - **Helen Preston**, Facebook - **Gayle Talbot**, Sunshine Committee - **Linda Bishop**, Historian - **Nancy Nishida**. Members attending the luncheon signed up to help on the various committees.

The membership committee has begun attending benefit fairs at area school districts. **Wanda Harrison, Karen Schafer, and Gayle Talbot** went to the Quincy School District fair on September 5.

The Books for Babies committee met recently to assemble bags containing books, along with ideas for new parents on how to use books with infants. The book bags were then delivered to local hospitals for distribution to every baby born in our area.

Committee chairperson, **Pat Simmons**, has announced program topics for the coming months. They are as follows: September - Driving Over Age 55, October - History of the English Language, November - Salvation Army representative.

### ***Unit 15 Okanogan:***

June is normally unit vacation time; however, a special meeting of all members was called at Okanogan’s Cariboo Inn this summer to finalize 2019 – 2020 programs and commit-



## WSSRA Around The State

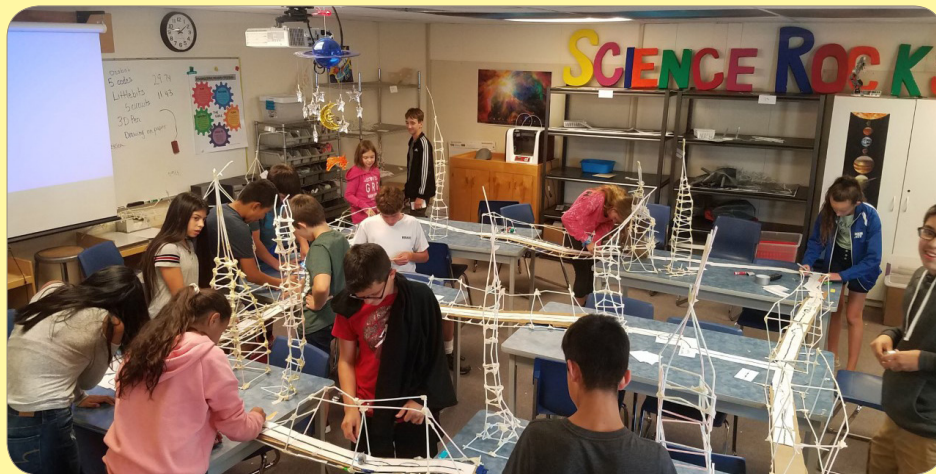
tees. It was established that a sound system is needed for meetings.

While it had not been planned, Kasey Nelson (student at EWU) and her mother were able to stop by and receive Kasey's \$1,500 check for being the 2018-2019 OC-SRA scholarship winner. The award is granted annually to a college student pursuing a degree leading to a career in education. The 2019-2020 application deadline is May 1.

July found **Ida Laurie**, **Sibyl Gibson**, and **Homer Hedington** completing the unit treasury review.

August saw **Marcelle La-Grou**, unit membership chair, and **Penny Garrison**, unit treasurer, in Wenatchee exhibiting and collecting memberships of six actives at a North Central Washington ESD STEM Summit, which boasted 289 teacher attendees plus vendors and presenters. NCESD covers all of E6—Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, and Grant Counties.

Omak School District hosted a benefits fair on August 26 for the 2019-2020 staff. OCSRA had a table with two active membership recruiters, **Penny Garrison** and **Marcelle La-Grou**. The unit held a drawing for gift certificates to a local restaurant for attendees visiting its table.



**Unit 2 Chelan/ Douglas: Travis Kane, a unit grant recipient, shared the work of his "Maker Space" STEM program for 1st-7th grade students. It is amazing what they can produce using minimal materials, problem solving skills, and teamwork!**

### EAST-7

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

The three units of E7, Whitman County, Pend Oreille County, and Spokane Area held their fourth annual, "Help Maximizing Your Retirement 4.0," conference at West Valley High School in April. The conference committee prepared for 500 participants and had high expectations. While the conference went well, there were less than 300 participants and the committee was at a loss as to what to do with all the extra materials, as were the exhibitors who had paid \$300 for a space in the exhibit area. The post-

conference analysis showed that there were very few participants from Spokane and Mead School Districts. Stacy Rundle of DRS has reported a downturn at the various seminars throughout the state as well. Why?

In May, the conference committee met and expressed their frustration with a motion not to hold a retirement planning conference in the spring of 2020. The motion failed by a tie vote. The committee met again in August, and again expressed their frustration and considered the same motion "not to hold a conference in April 2020." This time the motion passed. The committee expressed a desire to hold

a retirement seminar with DRS and PEBB and a focus on AMBA and its services. Therefore, the 2020 retirement seminar is being planned and will be different from previous events (no exhibits and no breakout sessions). Also, donations to the scholarship fund will be increased.

Even though the conference had low attendance, its 34 new members generated enough general funds to honor two recipients of SAREA's PAW Award. One recipient is an education major at Gonzaga University whom will graduate in June of 2020. The second award went to a senior in Sprague School District with Whitman County contributing

## WSSRA Around The State

\$200 toward that award and Spokane Area added \$800.

**John Young**, chair of the SAREA Foundation found \$300 in the Foundation's budget to award to a college student to pay for some of the \$700 in testing requirements of the State of Washington. The E7 Representative, **Les Francis**, went to work with Dr. Randy Michaelis, Dean of the School of Education at Whitworth College in Spokane. The School of Education at Whitworth generated a list of all the testing and

administrative requirements all of which must be paid for by the candidate.

### EAST-8

#### ***Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy:***

Unit 1 has been busy this summer planning for programs and meetings that began in September. All unit meetings are held at the Quality Inn with a special menu at \$15 per person. Some new lunch

offerings have been negotiated for upcoming meetings and unit leadership is excited to share.

The executive committee met three times this summer including attending the summer convention. A variety of programs will be offered to members that are able to attend meetings including topics such as, robotics, raptors, Antarctica, old schools in the area, and how to de-clutter. Members are urged to bring friends to unit programs because they are educational and entertaining.

The Membership Committee has been hard at work and, in a span of a week, enrolled six new members! Four are from Pomeroy School District and two from the Clarkston School District. Good job to **Bonnie Hill, Kay Andersen, Connie Cohmer, Allison Hays, Sheryl Andrews, Kathi Meshishnek, and Judy Hanley** for planning and making this happen!

WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** is coming to speak at the first meeting. WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick** will speak at the second meeting.



### Prepare Your Car for the Coming Months

*by Don Bunger, unit 6 Southwest King*

As we enter the fall and winter months and driving can often be in dark, rainy, or snowy conditions, here are a few ideas to prepare your car for the coming months...

Replace your wiper blades - many auto supply stores will mount new blades free. Use windshield washer fluid to clean your wiper blades a couple of times a year.

Remove the dirty build-up on the inside of your windshield and car windows with a paper towel that has an glass wipe tissue inside of it (I like to use Armorall). The formula on the wet paper does the scrubbing and the dry paper towel finishes the job. Beware of window coatings as they can invite fogging.

Calibrate motorized rearview door mirrors by adjusting them to show a small slice of each rear fender. Payoff? It reduces the width of the blind spot.

Restore your U.V. damaged opaque plastic headlight covers to clear status with elbow grease. Use a solution specially made for this, I like to use Sylvania Restoration Kit. The secret for success is to store the car in the garage for a night after applying, to let the clear coat cure completely. Also, make sure you wear the gloves provided. You'll be surprised how your night vision improves!

The unit has a new idea to bring in some money for a PAC donation and are hoping it will be successful. The yearbooks were handed out at the September meeting and the fall newsletter will be in the mail. Things are ready to roll at Unit 1!

#### ***Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:***

Welcome to BFSRA's 2019-2020 year! BFSRA began with the August Welcome Back Luncheon, at the Red Lion, Pasco. President **Victoria Russell** welcomed members, visitors, and guests. Officers and executive board were introduced and announcements made. Find the 2019-2020 program and meal choices posted on the blog and printed in the September newsletter.

## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: “Selfie”**  
(left to right) Unit President Kay Andersen,  
Vice-President Judy Hanley, Treasurer Sheryl  
Andrews, Membership Committee Chair  
Allison Hays.

As a community service project, members brought school items for SHAKE, (Seniors Helping All Kids' Education), thanks to **Maureen Bell**.

Membership recruitment is top priority. Membership Chair **Don Parks** arranged for BFSRA members to attend benefits fairs in Kennewick, Pasco, and Richland school districts to promote BFSRA and enroll new members. The \$10 incentive for new members proved useful for recruitment.

State Senator Maureen Walsh, (16th legislative district), Senator Sharon Brown (8th legislative district) and WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick** presented a program

on legislative issues at the September luncheon meeting.

With fitness in mind, the October luncheon meeting will be “Fitness, Yoga with instructor from Yoga Community.”

Current/future program information and news can be found on the webpage <http://bfsraunit29.blogspot.com/> and in the monthly newsletter.

All unit luncheons will be held at the Pasco Red Lion, 2525 N. 20th, Pasco.

**Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia:** Unit 31 began the year with President **Paula Nichols**, a full slate of committee chairs, and activity

directors, plus three members serving on state committees. A planning meeting in August finalized some early fall luncheon programs and suggested tentative options for later programs. In prior years, the retirement seminar was held in March. Some members attend the seminar several years before retirement to better understand and prepare for the process. To facilitate and encourage early planning, the board approved moving the retirement seminar forward from March to October. Other fall activities include distribution of “goodie bags” and awarding of 20 mini-grants to active members in area schools.

**Allen Kopf**, historian for Unit 31, searched the archives and minutes of previous meetings to develop a history of the Walla Walla-Columbia scholarship fund. In 1982,

**Pete Hansen**, president of the local unit recommended that a scholarship fund be established to award high school graduates from Walla Walla and Columbia Counties who are engaged in student teaching. **Pete** pulled out of his pocket a \$20 dollar bill to begin the fund. The unit began scholarships of \$250 to two winners the following year. Over the years, with various fund-raising activities, the scholarship increased to allow grants of \$300, \$700, \$800, and \$1,000. Currently, with a sustaining fund, Unit 31 awards two student teachers grants of \$2,000 each. The awards are now available to student teachers and those doing an internship (such as speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists) in an educational setting for initial certification.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

*Please Notify:*

**Membership Coordinator:**  
**Michele Hunter**  
**[michele@wssra.org](mailto:michele@wssra.org)**

**Phone: 360-413-5496, ext 116**

**WSSRA, PO Box 5127**  
**Lacey WA 98509**





Change Service Requested

# Ask a friend to join us



**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

*You'll find inside...*

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