

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2020

VOLUME 74, ISSUE NO. 2



photo by Sawyer Vessey

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Busy Summer of Accomplishments



by Bob Duke, president

While summer can be a slow time for some organizations, WSSRA had a spectacular summer season. Our membership and professional staff produced important work products and made plans for virtual meetings to take place at the unit and coordinating council levels this fall.

Our "Community Service" booklet, published in July, shows the depth and impact of our members. As Dr. Burke points out in the introduction, WSSRA members are dedicated to giving back to our communities after retiring from a career of giving. I was surprised at the level of giving. Our membership accumulated 133,000 volunteer hours, gave \$135,000 in mini grants to local educators, and awarded \$276,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and student teachers. The booklet represents many hours of work by units across the state. It is an impressive read and will serve as a reminder that WSSRA members are engaged in our communities.

The "Women Who Made a Difference" booklet was published in August. It is an impressive document. The rich discussions that took place at the local units to select the women became a unifying activity for all involved. The women featured in the booklet, and their families, were honored to be included. The booklet is a powerful statement about WSSRA. Thanks to Karen Keller for her hard work to publish the booklet. Thanks also to the units and members who gave the project the dignity that it deserved.

During June, July, and August, WSSRA engaged in the candidate endorsement process. The five-step process involved hundreds of hours of work from members and our professional staff. In June, units were asked to submit feedback regarding legislators and candidates.

In July, the WSSR-PAC sent questionnaires to all legislators and candidates. Following the primary election, the PAC met to decide on recommendations for candidate contributions and endorsements. The endorsement recommendation list was sent to the WSSRA Legislative Committee for review and editing. The final recommendation list was sent to all WSSRA unit presidents and unit legislative chairs for review and feedback. At the August executive board meeting, the board voted on the final endorsement list. I was impressed by the seriousness of the process. Legislative Director Peter Diedrick stewarded the process. Individual WSSRA members might not agree with all of the endorsements or contributions. As Dr. Burke says, "We need to stay in our lane." Our lane for the endorsement and contribution process is narrow. The endorsements and WSSR-PAC contributions were made to legislators who supported our 3% COLA and protected our health benefit. Thanks to Peter and members of the committees who dedicated many hours to participate in the process.

As you can see, even in the time of shut down and distancing, this has been a busy summer of accomplishments for WSSRA. Thanks to each of you who committed your time and enthusiasm to these important projects.

Be well, be safe, and be kind.



WSSRA EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

President Robert Duke
253-677-4641
rwd98498@aol.com

President-Elect Bruce Boyer
360-939-0833
bnpboyer@msn.com

Immediate Past President Pam Francis
509-869-0934
pamkf4491@gmail.com

Secretary Eileen Wascisin
360-733-4067
ejmw@comcast.net

Treasurer Jim Hall
425-822-3227
hstamps1@frontier.com

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

NW 1 Kay Bishop
425-280-4252
k2sealites@comcast.net

NW 2 Don Bunker
253-838-4827
dbunker@seanet.com

SW 3 Jean Kinnaman
253-858-3426
jekinnaman@outlook.com

SW 4 Ronald Crawford
360-236-9305
ronaldwcrawford1@comcast.net

E 5 Larry Scholl
509-674-9352
larry.scholl43@gmail.com

E 6 Beverly Jagla
509-670-6102
beverlyjag@gmail.com

E 7 Les Francis
509-926-5021
lfrancis@whitworth.edu

E 8 Sharon Hoseley
509-758-6970
sah32@cableone.net

Historian Karen Keller

Parliamentarian Gene Forrester

Journal Editor Kristin Murphy

THE JOURNAL

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

Mailing: PO Box 5127
Lacey, WA 98509

Location: 4726 Pacific
Avenue SE
Lacey, WA 98503

360-413-5496

WSSRA.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Dr. Alan Burke
alan@wssra.org
360-413-5496, ext 118

ADDRESS CHANGES:

Michele Hunter
michele@wssra.org
360-413-5496, ext 116

JOURNAL INFORMATION

Published five times per year
by the Washington State School
Retirees' Association, a non-profit
since 1947.

The WSSRA Journal Policy
Board, WSSRA President and
WSSRA Executive Board assume
no responsibility for items ap-
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
Journal, in addition to records of
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, 2020
for Jan./Feb. 2021 issue

February 5, 2021
for Mar./Apr. 2021 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Continuing to Find Ways to Help In Our Communities



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

In a spring, summer, and now autumn dominated by the COVID-19 virus news and challenges, it is difficult to imagine what life will be like when we return to normal. But that will happen, if not by mid-winter certainly sometime in 2021. And then we can get back to what WSSRA does best: advocate for members and give to the community.

On the latter, it is important to remember that we give lots. In fact, during the 2019-20 school year, WSSRA units accumulated 133,000 hours of volunteer work, gave \$135,000 in mini-grants to educators in our local schools, and awarded \$276,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and student teachers.

Wow . . . that's a lot of giving!

Fortunately, summaries of 2019-20 community service projects, mini-grant awards, and scholarship amounts are memorialized in a "Community Service" booklet that is now posted on the WSSRA website and available in hard copy by request. Please take a look at the booklet. It is full of service ideas from our 30 units that can be used to generate interest in new or revised projects. It also reflects thousands of hours of volunteer help from members—all in the name of making our towns and cities better places to live.

Also in 2019-20, WSSRA Historian Karen Keller led a project that focused on a historical look-back at women who contributed to the betterment of society through volunteering. Those stories were provided by WSSRA units and compiled into a special "Women Who Made a Difference" publication that also is posted on the website and available in print format by request. The stories are amazing, and very appropriate as part of the 100th year celebration of women's suffrage.

Now, we move to 2020-21. Active educators need our help as they navigate the uncharted waters of online education. Already, some units are planning to partner with school districts to find ways to get internet access to needy kids, who, through no fault of their own, live in homes or apartments with poor connectivity or with families that lack the financial resources to support a monthly Wi-Fi subscription.

In addition, we have already heard stories of teachers who spent their summer planning online lessons that required purchasing a new set of learning materials that work in a Zoom environment. Those resources are not cheap, and more of them are needed. A fall mini-grant program might just be the ticket to fill those needs. Also, online volunteer tutoring opportunities are available in many districts.

As for non-school philanthropy, activities last spring like mask making, food delivery, and sending goodwill cards to those stranded in nursing homes can continue this fall. Many of our units have years of experience with implementing projects for the needy and dispossessed. Making them work in a COVID-19 environment will take some creative planning, but, knowing the history of member giving, we know that when there is a will, there is a way. We're looking forward to hearing about the success of those new-look projects that are scheduled for autumn roll out.

If 2019-20 was the year of the big give, then 2020-21 will be a big give also—but in a much different environment. Yes, it's time to get going with community service plans for the year! Thanks, as always, for your time, creativity, and generosity.

Legislative News

The Need for More Participation to Protect Retiree Benefits



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

A UNIQUE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

A colleague from another association recently sent me a note asking, “Peter, what in the world is this legislative session going to look like?” It is a good question. Will legislators have any in-person meetings? How bad will the budget be? Who will control the legislature and governor’s office? We do not have all the answers, but things are beginning to firm-up a little and WSSRA can offer some guidance.

OUR FIRST DIGITAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION

House and Senate administrators are currently developing a plan to create a safe working environment at the legislature. Three models are currently under consideration, in-person, digital, and a hybrid. In-person would include face masks, extra sanitation, and plexiglass partitions in cubicle areas. An all-digital legislative session would mean remote floor votes, Zoom lobbying and advocacy meetings, and online committee hearings. The hybrid option would bring some legislators on-site while leaving those with health concerns to work remotely.

The most likely scenario at this point is starting an online only legislative session in January and transitioning to the hybrid model in the spring. New medical interventions expected to be approved early in the year may allow legislators to function more normally towards the end of session. The January edition of *The Journal* will provide updated information on how an online legislature will function.

THE RECESSION & BUDGET CRISIS

The state’s economic situation has improved slightly since the July edition of *The Journal*. At that point, the state was expecting a \$9 billion tax revenue decrease over the next three years. Tax receipts over the summer have come in \$600 million over expectations. Many businesses reopened faster than the Revenue Forecast Council anticipated, so the September revenue forecast may contain better news than in the June forecast.

DEMOCRATS TO REMAIN IN CONTROL

The Democratic Party has controlled the legislature and the governor’s office for the past four years. They will continue to do so in the upcoming session. Democrats have a 57-41 majority in the House of Representatives and a 28-21 majority in the State Senate. Those numbers will probably not change very much in January. Republicans may pick up a couple of seats on the Pacific coast. Democrats could make some gains on the edges of Seattle’s suburbs.

One piece of intrigue retirees should be aware of is the uncertainty over who the next governor will be. Governor Inslee is expected to coast to victory over Republican gubernatorial candidate Loren Culp. However, should former Vice President Biden win the presidential election, it is widely expected that Governor Inslee will be appointed to an executive level federal energy or environmental post. With Lieutenant Governor Habib announcing that he is leaving politics to become a Jesuit priest,

**Visit [WSSRA.ORG](https://www.wssra.org)
click on “Legislative”**

**Information about legislative priorities,
contacting your legislators, session bill reports,
and the WSSRA Legislative Podcast**

the winner of the Lieutenant Governor's election could easily serve as Washington's governor next year.

WHAT WSSRA NEEDS TO DO

Whether in-person or online, school retirees will have their hands full next session. WSSRA's worst-case scenario is an elimination or reduction in retiree medical benefits to fill the budget deficit. It will be hard work protecting that benefit this year.

One positive point is that managing an online legislative session will allow for more retirees to participate in legislative meetings. The WSSRA legislative team is hoping to incorporate more members into those meetings throughout the session. It can be difficult to get those interested in advocacy to Olympia during the winter season, but the uniqueness of this legislative session may allow our retirees to participate in the political process more than ever. Our goal is to not only protect retiree benefits this session, but also set up a new lobbying model that will allow all WSSRA units to directly participate in the lobbying process.



2020 General Election Important Dates

October 16

Ballots mailed and will be accepted through November 3.

October 26

Last day to register to vote online or by mail.

November 3

Last day to register to vote in person at county auditor offices.

November 3 — Election Day

Ballots must be postmarked or deposited in an official ballot drop box by 8:00 p.m.

Address Changes or Voter Registration:
VoteWA.gov

Online Voter Guide and other election information: **www.sos.wa.gov**

Your local county auditor's office also provides information and assistance with voter registration, address changes, ballots, ballot drop box locations, candidates, and other election-related questions.

Please vote!

WSSRA Legislative Candidate Endorsements - 2020



2020 Candidate Endorsements

The WSSRA Executive Board in conjunction with the WSSRA Legislative Committee have voted to endorse the following candidates for the Washington State Legislature. 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. Endorsements are listed by WSSRA regions and districts.

NORTHWEST REGION 1

Skagit/Island/San Juan, Sno-Isle, Sno-King, Whatcom County

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
1	Derek Stanford (D)	Senate
1	Davina Duerr (D)	House, Pos. 1
1	Shelley Kloba (D)	House, Pos. 2
10	Helen Price Johnson (D)	Senate
10	Angie Homola (D)	House, Pos. 1
10	Dave Paul (D)	House, Pos. 2
21	Lillian Ortiz-Self (D)	House, Pos. 2
38	June Robinson (D)	Senate
38	Emily Wicks (D)	House, Pos. 1
38	Mike Sells (D)	House, Pos. 2
39	Claus Jones (D)	House, Pos. 1
39	Carolyn Eslick (R)	House, Pos. 2
40	Liz Lovelett (D)	Senate
40	Debra Lekanoff (D)	House, Pos. 1
40	Alex Ramel (D)	House, Pos. 2
42	Alicia Rule (D)	House, Pos. 1
42	Sharon Shewmake (D)	House, Pos. 2
44	John Lovick (D)	House, Pos. 1
44	April Berg (D)	House, Pos. 2

NORTHWEST REGION 2

Seattle area, Southwest King Co., East King Co., Renton/South King Co.

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
5	Bill Ramos (D)	House, Pos. 1
5	Lisa Callan (D)	House, Pos. 2
11	Bob Hasegawa (D)	Senate
30	Jamila Taylor (D)	House, Pos. 1
30	Jesse Johnson (D)	House, Pos. 2
31	Drew Stokesbary (R)	House, Pos. 1
32	Cindy Ryu (D)	House, Pos. 1
33	Tina Orwall (D)	House, Pos. 1
34	Eileen Cody (D)	House, Pos. 1
34	Joe Fitzgibbon (D)	House, Pos. 2
36	Noel Frame (D)	House, Pos. 1
37	Sharon Tomiko Santos (D)	House, Pos. 1
37	Kirsten Harris-Talley (D)	House, Pos. 2
41	Lisa Wellman (D)	Senate
41	Tana Senn (D)	House, Pos. 1
41	My-Linh Thai (D)	House, Pos. 2
43	Nicole Macri (D)	House, Pos. 1
43	Frank Chopp (D)	House, Pos. 2
45	Roger Goodman (D)	House, Pos. 1
45	Larry Springer (D)	House, Pos. 2
46	Gerry Pollet (D)	House, Pos. 1
46	Javier Valdez (D)	House, Pos. 2
47	Debra Entenman (D)	House, Pos. 1
47	Pat Sullivan (D)	House, Pos. 2
48	Vandana Slatter (D)	House, Pos. 1
48	Amy Walen (D)	House, Pos. 2



GOVERNOR: Jay Inslee (D)

Due to his efforts in saving the Plan 1 COLA this session, the WSSRA executive board voted to endorse Governor Jay Inslee's re-election campaign.

WSSRA Legislative Candidate Endorsements - 2020

SOUTHWEST REGION 3

Clallam Co., Jefferson Co., Kitsap Co., Mason Co., Pierce Co.

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
2	Andrew Barkis (R)	House, Pos. 1
2	J.T. Wilcox (R)	House, Pos. 2
23	Christine Rolfes (D)	Senate
23	Tarra Simmons (D)	House, Pos. 1
24	Kevin Van De Wege (D)	Senate
24	Mike Chapman (D)	House, Pos. 1
24	Steve Tharinger (D)	House, Pos. 2
25	Julie Door (D)	Senate
25	Kelly Chambers (R)	House, Pos. 1
25	Brian Duthie (D)	House, Pos. 2
26	Michelle Caldier (R)	House, Pos. 2
27	Laurie Jenkins (D)	House, Pos. 1
27	Jake Fey (D)	House, Pos. 2
28	T'wina Nobles (D)	Senate
28	Mari Leavitt (D)	House, Pos. 1
28	Dan Bronoske (D)	House, Pos. 2
29	Melanie Morgan (D)	House, Pos. 1
29	Steve Kirby (D)	House, Pos. 2
35	Dan Griffey (R)	House, Pos. 1
35	Drew MacEwan (R)	House, Pos. 2

SOUTHWEST REGION 4 *Grays Harbor/Pacific, Lewis Co., Lower Columbia, Thurston Co., SW Washington (Vancouver)*

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
17	Tanisha Harris (D)	House, Pos. 1
17	Paul Harris (R)	House, Pos. 2
18	Ann Rivers (R)	Senate
18	Donna Sinclair (D)	House, Pos. 2
19	Dean Takko (D)	Senate
19	Jim Walsh (R)	House, Pos. 1
19	Brian Blake (D)	House, Pos. 2
20	John Braun (R)	Senate
20	Peter Abbarno (R)	House, Pos. 1
20	Ed Orcutt (R)	House, Pos. 2
22	Sam Hunt (D)	Senate
22	Laurie Dolan (D)	House, Pos. 1
22	Jessica Bateman (D)	House, Pos. 2
49	Annette Cleveland (D)	Senate
49	Sharon Wylie (D)	House, Pos. 1
49	Monica Stonier (D)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGIONS 5 and 6

E5: Kittitas Co., Yakima Co., Columbia Gorge

E6: Chelan/Douglas, Columbia Basin, Okanogan Co.

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
12	Brad Hawkins (R)	Senate
12	Keith Goehner (R)	House, Pos. 1
12	Mike Steele (R)	House, Pos. 2
13	Tom Dent (R)	House, Pos. 1
13	Alex Ybarra (R)	House, Pos. 2
14	Curtis King (R)	Senate
14	Chris Corry (R)	House, Pos. 1
14	Gina Mosbrucker (R)	House, Pos. 2
15	Bruce Chandler (R)	House, Pos. 1
15	Jeremie Dufault (R)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGION 7

Pend Orielle Co., Spokane Area, Whitman Co.

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
3	Andy Billig (D)	Senate
3	Marcus Riccelli (D)	House, Pos. 1
3	Timm Ormsby (D)	House, Pos. 2
4	Mike Padden (R)	Senate
4	Bob McCaslin (R)	House, Pos. 1
6	Mike Volz (R)	House, Pos. 1
7	Jacquelin Maycumber (R)	House, Pos. 1
7	Joel Kretz (R)	House, Pos. 2
9	Mark Schoesler (R)	Senate
9	Mary Dye (R)	House, Pos. 1
9	Joe Schmick (R)	House, Pos. 2

EAST REGION 8

Asotin Co./Pomeroy, Benton/Franklin, Walla Walla/Columbia

District	Legislative Candidate	Position
8	Matt Boehnke (R)	House, Pos. 1
16	Danielle Garbe Reser (D)	Senate
16	Skyler Rude (R)	House, Pos. 2

Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: We Need Your Help!



by Paula Buck Nichols, WSSR Foundation chair

Thank you for your continued support of the WSSR Foundation. Our primary purpose is to provide college scholarships to high school seniors from across the state who are planning to pursue a career in education. Much of our funding to support this comes from our annual convention, which wasn't able to be held in-person this year. As a result, we are working very hard to raise funds in other ways. We need your help! Some suggestions are:

- 1) Make memorial donations.
- 2) Give a sum monthly or quarterly.
- 3) Encourage your unit to make donations.
- 4) Have a fund-raising event with proceeds going to the foundation.

As a member of WSSRA, you can contribute to the Foundation by completing the contribution form below or online at wssra.org. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and donations are tax deductible.

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 \$ _____

ONLINE FOUNDATION DONATION

wssra.org Foundation link > Donation Form

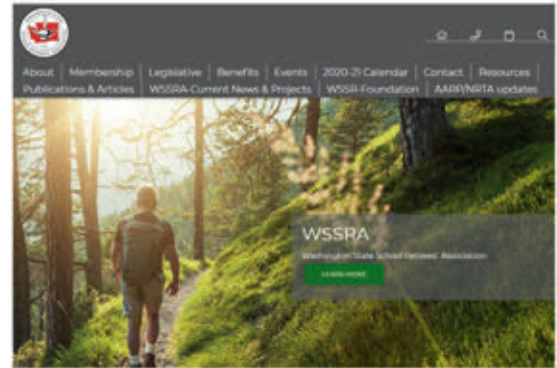
Foundation Contributors

Thomas Akerlund - in memory of Barbara Akerlund
 Rachel Almeleh - donation
 Lora Brabant - donation
 Doris Bucher - donation
 Sharon Dennis - donation
 Cynthia Endicott - donation
 William Gentz - donation
 James & Shirlee Hall - donation
 Norma Haney - donation
 Jim & Marianne Harvey - donation
 Mary Lou Krause - in memory of Philip Konkell
 Patricia MacGowan - donation
 Jo Ann Mansfield - in memory of Mary Louise Denny
 Valara Minear - donation
 Allison Morris - donation
 Louie & Sherry Osmonovich - in memory of Lloyd Olson
 Susan Painter - donation
 Ruth Parman - in honor of Pam Francis, in memory of Gilbert Thurston
 Gary Radliff - in memory of Alex Wasisco
 John Rogers - donation
 Pat Strand - donation, in memory of Wilma Stellingsworth
 Joan Titus - donation
 Ann Varkados - donation
 Gertrude Weston - donation
 Margaret Wharton - in memory of Barbara Stewart
 Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Robert Jaspers and Myrtle Parker
 East King SRA - donation, in memory of deceased members
 Kittitas Co. SRA - in memory of Darlene Cahill, David Gaer, Harold Lindstrom, Irma Smith, James M. Davis, Jeb Baldi, Lois Page, Pauline Kinghorn
 Lewis Co. SRA - in memory of Barbara J. Stewart and Gretchen Rotter
 Southwest King SRA - in memory of James Essman and John Pince
 Walla Walla/Columbia SRA - donation

WSSRA Website

**Check out the new
WSSRA website**

wssra.org



Partnering with AMBA, the website has a new look and tabs that make it easier to find articles or announcements of importance. Take a look at the Current News & Projects tab for video recordings on three recent interviews that were conducted with key pension-related agency leaders from HCA/PEBB/SEBB, DRS, and the State Investment Board. We'll add a fourth recording after the September 29 interview with State Actuary Matt Smith.

Also, see our two new publications: Women Who Made a Difference (WWMD), and the 2019-20 Community Service Booklet. Both are good reads and reflect what makes WSSRA special. The WWMD was the brainchild of WSSRA Historian Karen Keller and celebrates 100 years of women's suffrage by highlighting—through history—the accomplishments of 21 women from across the state. The Community Service Booklet provides summaries from our 30 units of service projects, mini-grants, and scholarships awarded in 2019-20.

In addition, we have added a new AARP/National Retired Teachers' Association tab that features announcements of upcoming webinars on topics of interest to seniors.

Finally, see the WSSRA-Foundation tab for updates and an appeal to give generously to our Foundation. The Foundation, and the WSSRA-PAC, are short funds compared to past years due to the cancelled convention. Please consider making a gift to both!

Plan 2/Plan 3 Corner



Actives: Medicare



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

Medicare is the nation's health coverage plan for those 65 years of age or older. People under 65 can qualify with certain disabilities. Medicare helps with the cost of most medical procedures but doesn't cover everything and is designed to pay for 80% of the "normal" costs of health treatments. Consequently, almost all retirees purchase a supplemental insurance package.

Supplements can be secured through the state's Health Care Authority (HCA) by choosing one of the programs sponsored by the Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB). However, K-12 retirees are not required to enroll in PEBB. For various reasons (e.g., military Tricare coverage, spousal coverage, or preference to use the private market), roughly 40% of retirees do not sign-up for PEBB programs.

Medicare registration is handled through the Social Security office. Medicare is different from Medicaid, the state-operated program that provides hospital and medical coverage to those with low income. It is possible to qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid. Both programs are not cheap. In 2017, \$706 billion was spent on Medicare and \$582 billion on Medicaid (\$358 billion was the federal share; the remainder a state responsibility).

Medicare has four major components: (1) Part A covers hospitalization and stays in skilled nursing homes; (2) Part B is outpatient care, doctor or health care provider fees, home health care, and durable medical equipment; (3) Part C is Medicare Advantage, or private insurance that covers everything on Part A and Part B, plus, in most cases, prescription drug costs; and (4) Part D which includes prescription drug plans.

All citizens of the USA qualify for Part A at no cost when reaching age 65 as long as the enrollee (or spouse) is eligible to receive Social Security. Anyone eligible for Part A qualifies for Part B by paying a monthly premium. Sign-ups for Part B occur in an initial enrollment period of seven months (three months before age 65 to four months after). Financial penalties are associated with missing the initial enrollment period, but are waived for those working past age 65 and enrolled in a group insurance program. The best and safest course of action is to always sign-up on or just before the 65th birthday.

For most retirees, Part B will cost \$144.60 per month (2020 fee). That number increases if the retiree's adjusted gross income exceeds \$87,000 (\$174,000 for those filing a joint tax return).

After the Medicare sign-up, the next step is to choose a supplemental program. This article will focus on HCA/PEBB supplemental plans. As you might imagine, there are any number of private plans available in the marketplace with vendor representatives who are more than happy to help retirees compare their carrier's option with other programs in the private market and in PEBB.

PEBB offers three main supplemental programs: Uniform Medical Plan (UMP), the state-sponsored plan at \$320.54 per month for a single subscriber; Kaiser Permanente (\$174 per month); or Premiera Blue Cross (\$97.56 per month for Medicare Plan G plus approximately \$40 extra per month for prescription drug coverage). UMP and Kaiser include prescription drugs in their PEBB package.

Both Kaiser Permanente and Premiera Blue Cross are Part C "Advantage" plans that are buoyed by federal subsidies that are available in the private market. Uniform Medical, as a state operated plan, is "original" Medicare, not an Advantage program, and therefore is at a disadvantage when attempting to rate-match Kaiser or Premiera. However, in 2021 the HCA will offer a PEBB-sponsored Advantage plan with rates comparable to Kaiser and Premiera.

In addition, Uniform Medical offers worldwide coverage and, unlike Kaiser or Premiera, is not a Health Maintenance Organization or Preferred Provider Organization that limits medical visits to a pre-authorized panel of doctors or doctors' offices. Retirees are encouraged to study carefully the offerings of all of the PEBB providers before making a selection. To be sure, monthly fees are not everything. For those with pre-existing conditions or unusual health challenges, it is always a good idea to study carefully what is, and what is not, covered in the various supplemental plans.

Medicare, continued on page 11

Note: This is the fourth of a five-part series highlighting the "Big Five" of retirement planning—Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), the Health Care Authority/Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB), Social Security, Medicare and Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA). This month's topic is Medicare. Because of space limitations, this summary is necessarily broad.

For Your Health



Internet Health Information - The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly



by Ken Harvey, state health committee

Most likely, you would not go to a doctor practicing out of a van in a parking lot. I wouldn't. Yet we are often not as particular when it comes to online medical advice. In a July 2020 Pew Research survey, 80% of adult internet users reported searching for a health related topic online. The internet has a plethora of information on any topic imaginable and as you have probably experienced, a tsunami of misinformation.

How does one decide what information to believe? Websites can be designed to look very authoritative and "medical like" when their real purpose is to sell a product. With today's digital sophistication, it's hard to know the difference between solid and sketchy online medical information. Part of being a savvy information seeker is knowing how to analyze the quality of websites.

As you know, misinformation is everywhere, not just in medical fields. During a 2018 Snohomish County Master Gardener lecture, Washington State University professor, Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott shared what she uses to evaluate horticulture information. She refers to it as the CRAP method. CRAP is an acronym for questions to ask when evaluating published articles. Currency, Reliability, Authority, and Purpose are all elements used to decide if information is credible. Here are some things to look for:

Currency: Check when the website was last updated. It usually says at the bottom or sometimes at the top in the URL. (The URL is the "address" of the website and usually starts with "http" or "https.") Articles on websites usually have the date by the author. Depending on the topic, information can

become quickly obsolete. You wouldn't want to be getting information on chemotherapy from a 1990 source.

Reliability: What kind of information is on the website? Is it factual? Watch for phrases such as "I think" or "in my opinion," which could indicate it is less than science based. Charts, graphs, and supporting information are a plus but look-out for those that do not show a source. A list of references for an article goes a long way in establishing reliability.

Authority: Who created the website? Is the website a well-known source? Can you find more information about the author? Also, check to see how the internet address or URL ends, for example: ".gov" are government websites, ".edu" are higher education websites, and ".org" indicates a nonprofit. Websites that end in .com or .net are usually commercial websites and take a little more scrutiny to determine their accuracy.

Purpose: Why does the website exist? Is its purpose to inform? Typically, the purpose of websites containing .gov, .edu, and .org are usually to inform, though quality and ease of an individual website can still be a problem. If you need to scroll through several advertisements to get to the information you are looking for, then the purpose of that website is likely to generate advertising profit. It doesn't necessarily mean it contains bad information but one should be wary.

Also, check with your health provider for website recommendations. My provider, Kaiser, has a good website and references to other sites. Keeping the CRAP method in mind can help in becoming a smarter information consumer.

Medicare, continued from page 10

PEBB offers an open enrollment the month of November that provides retirees an opportunity to change plans. However, it is not possible to change out of PEBB to a non-PEBB provider and then back to PEBB. Once the decision is made to leave PEBB, it is irrevocable. In addition, the initial entry into PEBB (or a request for a deferral) must be made within 60 days of retirement. Missing that window will close the PEBB option for life.

Retirees with questions about rates and coverages are encouraged to go on the HCA/PEBB website (www.hca.wa.gov) or the main Medicare site (www.Medicare.gov). In addition, the state Insurance Commissioner's office has a statewide cadre of trained volunteers through the State Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) who can provide guidance on health insurance matters whether Medicare or Medicare supplements through the PEBB or private carriers. SHIBA reps can be contacted by calling 800-562-6900 or www.insurance.wa.gov/statewide-health-insurance-benefits-advisors-shiba

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Planning For Membership Building



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

WSSRA membership building was going strong until March 2020. I, for one, was proud of everyone's efforts and we were doing well. I think at one point, we actually broke past the 18,000 level. By now, with the progress we were making, we may have already reached 19,000. I hope that we all can keep a good hold on the relationships we built and activate them once again when we get the "go-ahead."

Now that school districts are getting started in some form, at least the administrators are once again in their offices and can take calls. Perhaps, by Thanksgiving or Christmas, we can start making appointments for staff meeting presentations in early 2021. I know each of us will proceed on that front, as it seems locally appropriate. Good luck and I encourage us all to stay safe while getting back in the "saddle" where possible.

In September, the State Membership Committee met via Zoom. We heard reports on how the two incentive programs led to the growth we were experiencing before the coronavirus limited activities. President Bob Duke proposed a statewide telephone/email blitz on one day (date to be determined) in order to invite actives and retirees to join us. We will hear more on these ideas soon.

Our membership levels, as of September 1, were holding mostly steady with total membership at 17,834, up from September 1, 2019 at 17,695. Our level of actives is at 4,505. On a yearly basis, we are still showing growth.

As we wait for our membership building activities to return to normal, please consider joining the WSSRA email list. Email

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/

Pacific

11-Lewis County

19-Renton-South King

25-Spokane

31-Walla Walla-

Pomeroy

06-Southwest King

12-Lower Columbia

20-Seattle

27-Pierce County

Columbia

02-Chelan/Douglas

07-Jefferson County

14-Mason County

21-Skagit/Island/San

28-Thurston County

32-Whatcom County

03-Clallam County

08-Kitsap County

15-Okanogan County

Juan

29-Benton-Franklin

33-Whitman County

04-Columbia Basin

09-Kittitas County

16-East King

22-Sno-Isle

30-Southwest Wash-

34-Yakima County

05-Grays Harbor/

10-Columbia Gorge

18-Pend Oreille

23-Sno-King

ington

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

is an inexpensive and quick way for us to communicate with members. At 6,568 email addresses on file in the office, that is still less than half the membership. We need to provide those in order to facilitate stronger presence with the Legislature when needed. If you haven't already, please share your email address with the state office. Go to wssra.org, scroll to the bottom of the page, and enter your information in the "Join Our Email List" spot.

I hope everyone enjoys the upcoming fall and winter seasons. Hopefully, we will be able to return to our normal lives, including face-to-face meeting with our friends and fellow members.

**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
Jim Ko, state president
Doug Shadel, Washington state director

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



**RELAX.
HELP IS ON THE WAY.**

**24/7 MEDICAL AIR, HELICOPTER
AND GROUND TRANSPORT
AVAILABLE WORLDWIDE.**

Wipe out in the Alps? Heat stroke in Tunisia? All is fine. Medical Air Services Association (MASA) provides life-saving emergency assistance from home or anywhere in the world—24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Coverage includes:

- Emergency air & ground transportation
- Escort, family, minor children, & grandchildren transportation
- Organ retrieval, vehicle return & more

Learn more: 1-800-258-7041

myambabenefits.info/wssra



**PREPARE
FOR THE BEST**

AMBA
ASSOCIATION MEMBER BENEFITS ADVISORS

WSSR-PAC News



WSSR PAC: Zooming Ahead



by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president

On behalf of the WSSR-PAC executive board and district board members, I want to thank the WSSRA members who continue to contribute financially through your individual donations and low-cost fundraisers. Without your continued support, we would not be a viable force in our efforts to maintain the effectiveness of WSSR-PAC influence with legislators. We need to maintain the retirement benefits needed to live a healthy dignified senior life.

Despite challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, WSSR-PAC moved forward successfully this election year. Our virtual meetings, set up by our WSSRA office staff, were a big help, but I sure miss the personal contacts of our meetings before this pandemic. Hopefully, we can get back to normal in the near future. I thought our Zoom PAC meeting went well, and we were able to get our legislator endorsement process completed. Many thanks to Peter Diedrick for setting up our virtual meeting. In addition, I would like to thank PAC district board members and WSSRA unit members who recommended potential legislators for us to consider endorsing. Their research and input were very helpful with the selection process. To see the list of legislators WSSR-PAC supported financially, go to the WSSR-PAC website. Thanks to all members who participated in the virtual PAC meeting on August 11. I hope that we will be able to have our regular annual PAC membership meeting at the 2021 WSSRA Convention in Pasco.

This 2020 election year, your WSSR-PAC gave a record amount of \$26,500 in contributions. Those PAC contributions to supportive legislators ranged from \$250 to \$2,000. The larger amounts were to candidates who were mainly responsible for supporting the passage of the COLA and PEBB Medicare subsidy increase. After making the candidate contributions for the 2020 election, our PAC treasury balance is greatly reduced, except for a small cash reserve for PAC office operating expenses.

To prepare for the next election battle, we need every WSSRA member's help in re-supplying our PAC treasury so we will be ready to help candidates favorable to retiree concerns. Please write your check payable to WSSR-PAC, and send it to Lora Brabant, WSSR-PAC treasurer (see box below). You may also contribute electronically by going to the PAC website where you can make a one-time donation or sign-up for monthly contributions.



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

Online: 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

I believe our WSSR-PAC is becoming more effective and noticed by our lawmakers each year. We are receiving more positive responses on the questionnaire form that pertain to our pension issues. Some comments even indicated that Plan 1 TRS and PRS should receive permanent retirement benefits similar to all other state retiree programs. Sounds fair to me.

Thank you all for your help.
Stay safe and healthy.

Connections



AARP Calls on Candidates to Protect Voters 50+

by Cathy MacCaul, AARP Washington Advocacy Director

As voters prepare to cast their ballots in the November Election, AARP is committed to helping older Americans exercise their right to vote safely while holding candidates accountable on key issues.

In August, AARP launched **Protect Voters 50+**, which demands action from politicians to ensure that 50+ Americans – from working parents to family caregivers to seniors in nursing homes – can vote safely. AARP is urging candidates to talk about the issues that matter to 50+ voters – like strengthening Social Security and Medicare and protecting the economic health of older adults.

Strengthen Social Security

Washington State is home to more than 1.3 million Social Security beneficiaries – 18% of which rely on those funds for 90% or more of their income. As you consider a candidate, here are AARP's priorities for the Social Security program:

- Achieving long-term security and solvency. Social Security should be protected not only for current retirees but for future generations of Americans.
- Ensuring protections for those most in need. Any reforms should guarantee adequate benefits for those most reliant on Social Security and those who would have trouble postponing retirement
- Recognizing the value of Social Security's core elements. Social Security provides benefits that Americans earn through their working lives, and the program should be financed to ensure long-term adequacy and solvency.

Protect and Strengthen Medicare

Medicare provides affordable health care for 1.2 million Washingtonians. Hardworking Americans pay into the program their entire working lives and are guaranteed benefits that help make health care accessible and affordable. Lowering costs and improving the efficiency and value of health care spending is especially crucial for Medicare, as the number of nationwide enrollees is expected to grow to 80 million by 2030. As you consider a candidate, keep in mind some of AARP's priorities for the Medicare program:

- Maintain affordable benefits that meet the needs of Medi-

care enrollees. This includes allowing Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs, ensuring affordable premiums and cost-sharing, as well as exploring ways to expand coverage to important services like dental care and hearing aids.

- Ensure all people with Medicare have access to a choice of high-quality health care providers sufficient to meet their needs.
- Sustain Medicare for the future by reducing waste, fraud, and abuse and making sure that its resources are spent wisely.

Secure the Economic Health of Americans 50+

In 2019, workers over 50 made up nearly a third (31.7%) of Washington's workforce. Sadly, the unemployment rate for older workers this year reached the highest on record since the federal government began tracking it in 1948. The COVID-19 pandemic is making it even more difficult for Americans 50-plus to keep and find jobs. That's why AARP is demanding action from our elected officials to protect the health and financial security of voters 50-plus. AARP would like candidates to address the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

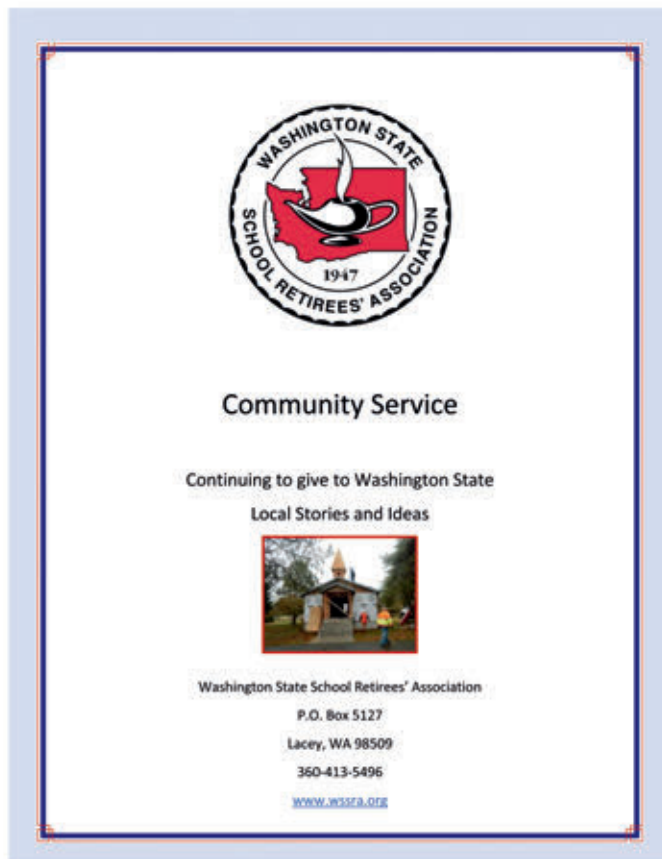
- Congress should extend emergency unemployment benefits, including additional categories of eligibility and additional benefit amounts, until the pandemic and its economic effects end.
- State and federal lawmakers should provide additional support, including tax credits, to caregivers – 828,000 here in Washington - many of whom are spending more time caring for family members because of the pandemic.
- Ensure that employers do not discriminate against older workers in hiring them back after the pandemic.

For more than 60 years, AARP has been the champion of the 50+. Join us in calling on every candidate to Protect Voters 50+ – visit aarp.org/election2020 today! But don't stop there; share the website with your friends and family to get them involved as well and help us spread the word even further. Together, we can make the voice of the 50+ voter heard!

Two New WSSRA Booklets

WSSRA recently produced two new booklets to share with you. The booklets are viewable on the WSSRA website. Printed copies are also available upon request.

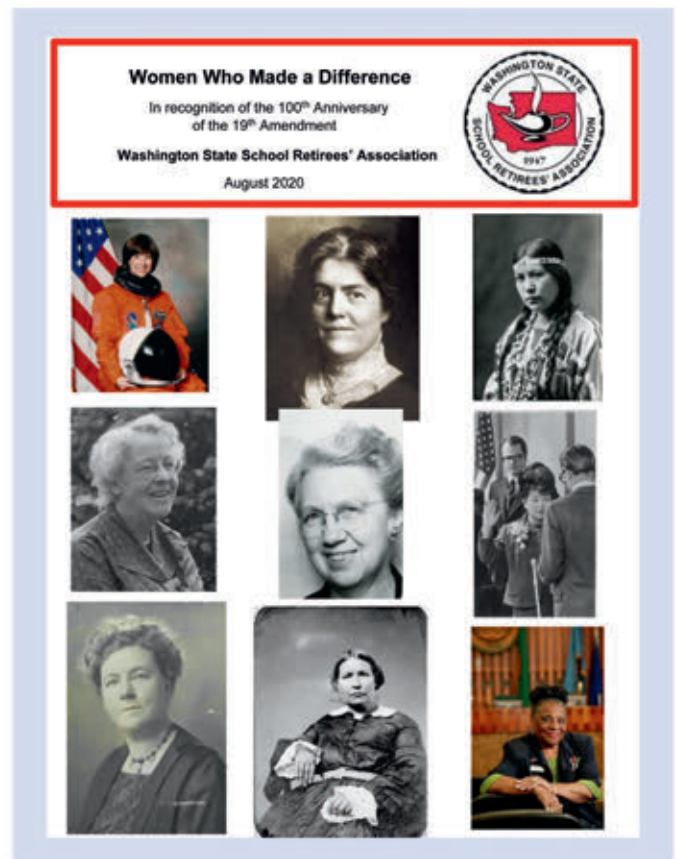
Explore the stories and ideas in these booklets today.



Community Service

*Continuing to give to Washington State
Local Stories and Ideas*

During the last year, WSSRA members accumulated 133,000 volunteer hours, awarded \$135,000 in mini-grants to local educators, and granted \$276,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and student teachers! The booklet describes the many community service projects, mini-grants, and scholarships provided by the 17,900 members of WSSRA during 2019-20.



Women Who Made A Difference

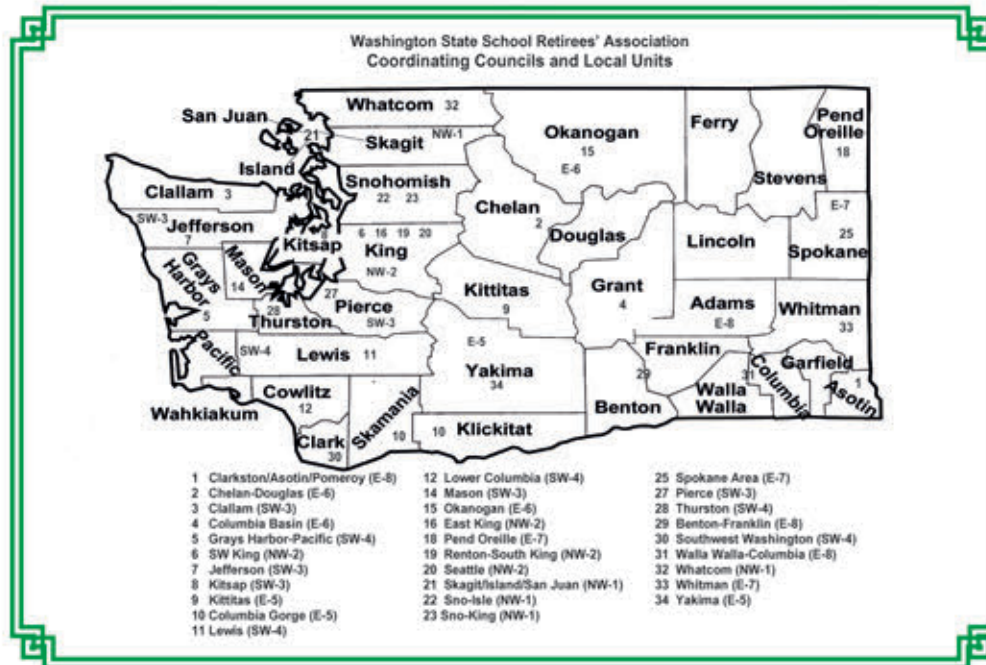
Get ready to be inspired! In recognition of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's suffrage, WSSRA Historian Karen Keller challenged all WSSRA local units to provide a story of a woman who made a difference in their area. This booklet is a compilation of the stories highlighting these remarkable women.

View online at wssra.org, click on "Publications & Articles"

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



Note: Given the public health concerns caused by the coronavirus pandemic, most WSSRA units have been unable to meet in-person for several months. As we look forward to a time when WSSRA members can safely gather for meetings, luncheons, field-trips, volunteering, etc., please explore ways to stay connected, such as online (such as Zoom), by email, or phone.

NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:

The Unit 21 board met via Zoom on August 21 and made plans for this coming year. Some of the upcoming activities will be to:

1. Do a candidate virtual forum for legislative candidates in the local area. This will be recorded and available for members to see at the WSSRA unit site by mid-October to help them when voting this

year. A big thanks to **Peter Diedrick** and **Alan Burke** for their assistance.

2. Assist local school districts this coming year with mini-grant funds. With local districts not starting in buildings, there are new needs for staff and students.

3. Host virtual meetings this year with speakers from the area. One of the speakers will be **Bill De Hon**, a local member, who will talk about issues that affect our finances.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Sno-Isle 22's board met in late August to plan for a most unusual year. The board approved an increase in the number of grants by ten bringing the total number to forty \$400 grants to members. Sno-Isle also offers ten \$100 grants to nonmembers. The grants will be awarded much earlier this year to help teachers deal with remote learning. Since members will not be visiting schools to talk about the grants, Facebook will be used

to spread the word, as well as the newsletter, the Unit's website, and electronic mailings.

The board also voted to continue awarding two \$2,500 scholarships.

Sno-Isle's plan is to have four meetings this year. One of them will be a legislative meeting over Zoom hosted by **Tim Knopf**. The rest of the meetings will be announced as the year goes on, perhaps some in-person lunch events later in the year.

Sno-Isle board will continue to meet once a month.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

The Unit 23 board met the second week of September via Zoom to plan for the upcoming year. The board decided to cancel unit activities through December of this year and planned for normal activities in 2021. As those dates get closer, decisions will be made as to whether or not it will be safe to have them.

Communications with unit members continues with the bi-monthly, "Bulletin," and emails as required.

Jim Siscel and his wife **Andrea** were featured in the *Sunday Seattle Times* with an article about their travels to 323 different baseball fields since 2002. **Jim** was also featured virtually during a Seattle Mariners game for his

WSSRA Around The State

25 years as a season ticket holder and 26 years of Air Force military service.

Some unit members are getting take-out meals from the local meeting caterer, Chef Dane, to help support them during this trying time for caterers and restaurants.

Unit 32 Whatcom County: Unit 32 Whatcom County has had an overall quiet summer due to the pandemic. The WCSRA Board met via Zoom on June 12 and August 7 to make plans for the upcoming year. A meeting held on September 4, via Zoom, finalized those ideas. The unit goal for

this year is to benefit those in need the most during this pandemic (schools (teachers/students) and community). From those meetings came plans to donate \$300 per month (on a rotating basis) to six community food banks. The unit will also assist local schools and the Whatcom County library system called ConnectED, which is a partnership between the Whatcom County Library System and all Whatcom County school districts and Lummi Nation School. Information is available at <https://www.wcls.org/connected>. The county library service and school needs may be used in addition to or replace mini grants for the 2020-21 year.

The unit plans to meet with the general membership via Zoom or face-to-face five times this year, in addition to unit board meetings. Programs planned for 2020-21 are school personnel to explain how online teaching is operating in their district, genealogy, health care speaker, Whatcom County projects speaker.

and was the unit's president for one year. He has been a long-time attendee at NWII Coordinating Council meetings and WSSRA conventions. He has also served on the State Health Committee.

Ed Monroe taught for close to forty years, thirty of them for the Bellevue School District. Besides subbing as a counselor and teacher in the Bellevue School District after retirement, **Ed** served on his neighborhood board where he worked on their yearly programs, as well as doing volunteer work at his church.

East-King's executive board members met, via Zoom, in August. After a discussion of **Alan Burke's** report on board ideas regarding "member engagement," the group decided to look into doing unit meetings via Zoom, contacting last spring's cancelled speakers as well as legislators to see if they were interested in doing Zoom presentations, continuing newsletter publications, and communicating personally with those who attended last year's unit luncheons. **Pat Jovag** offered to call those individuals and check on their welfare as well as ask about their access to, and interest in, using Zoom. **Pat, Carolyn Fletcher, Jeani Godrich, and Shirlee Hall** all volunteered to send 'Thinking of You' cards to those on the list as well.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 16 East-King:

This last June, East-King's **Ed Monroe** was granted honorary membership to WSSRA. **Ed** has been an East-King board member for numerous years, served as vice president

**Support Future
Educators**

**Make a Donation
to the
WSSR Foundation
TODAY**

Did you know you can make an
online donation to the
WSSR Foundation?

wssra.org

click on

FOUNDATION

then click on

DONATION FORM

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 27 Pierce County: Members have collected more than 300 empty pill bottles. They fill the empty bottles with personal hygiene items, such as shampoo, lotion, or soap. The bottles are then distributed to local homeless shelters.

Unit 20 Seattle:

SSRA has cancelled its luncheon meetings for the rest of this calendar year due to the coronavirus. The unit continues to communicate with members by issuing a summer edition of the unit newsletter, "The Bulletin," by mail, and on the unit website, www.seattlesra.org. The recent SSRA board meeting via Zoom (set-up by **Tara Teitzel** of WSSRA).

The Seattle unit continues to offer mini-grants through their S.E.E.D. program, which is now chaired by **Kathy Purcell**. Applications for

the grants are available on the SSRA website, www.seattlesra.org

Patricia MacGowan, SSRA Scholarship Committee chair and recipient of WSSRA's Stan McNaughton Outreach Award, announced winners of scholarships to high school graduates going on to post-secondary schooling in preparation for careers in education. Winners of SSRA's Internship Scholarships will be announced soon.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

The unit luncheon schedule has been mailed to members. Unit programs have been tentatively scheduled for the year knowing that they may change because of regulations due to the COVID-19 virus. If you are planning on coming to a meeting, please let **Doris Bucher** (grammy1492@yahoo.com) or **Patty Marz** (peppermintpatty@comcast.net) know so we can inform you of any changes. Hopefully, all unit meetings will be able to be held this year.

Each October, unit members gather and donate hats, gloves or mittens and scarves for men, women, and children to Kitsap Community Resources. If the unit meeting is cancelled, please contact **Patty Marz** and she will make arrangements to pick-up your donations from you.

December is the unit's annual Christmas Party at Ambrosia. Hopefully, all can make it and are welcome in the season. Remember that this is the time to bring unwrapped toys, clothes, and/or books that will be donated to Kitsap Community Resource Center. Also, bring donations of baked goods, craft items and other items that can be purchased, proceeds go to the unit scholarship fund. If you would like to make a donation but are unable to attend in December, please contact **Patty Marz** to

arrange for pick up of items at your house.

This has been a trying period for many of you. If you need anything, please call **Patty Marz**, **Doris Bucher**, or any unit officer. Your unit leadership is here to help! You are all important to us and we feel we should work together. Looking forward to seeing you in the future.

Mini-grants will be awarded to staff at Central Kitsap School District this year. Six finalists will be chosen on October 22, 2020. The unit's mini-grant committee is looking forward to reading the grant applications.

Unit 27 Pierce County:

Unit 27 has successfully transitioned to online meetings for board and membership meetings this fall. Washington State Librarian Carolyn Petersen presented, "20 Books in 20 Minutes," previewing both fiction and non-fiction books for enriching our lives during the pandemic. In fact, Carolyn's technical advisor met with members, via Zoom, the day before the meeting in order to practice/troubleshoot access to Zoom.

Mini-grants have been offered this fall to Pierce County educators in order to support their online instructional efforts. PCSRA is anticipating receiving many creative and worthwhile applications.

WSSRA Around The State

The Pierce County unit continues to collect empty pill bottles, which will be filled with needed hygiene products (shampoo, lotion, soap, etc.). The filled bottles will be distributed to the area's homeless population through a local charity.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor-Pacific: The first unit meeting of the fall was held September 23. Attendees were all happy to see each other again, and except for a short business meeting, most of the time was

spent listening to those who had been on trips or had other new experiences.

Those who had passed on since the unit last met were remembered. Those who were close spoke about them. Books in memory of unit members who passed will be placed in the school libraries of the school where each one worked. **Pat Lanning** makes very attractive bookplates to put in the books.

Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific continues to contribute financially to the Ocosta food program for families who have difficulty having enough food on the weekend.

The one-year Grays Harbor College scholarship for a sophomore in Education will also continue. Hopefully, additional projects will be suggested at upcoming meetings, so that members will be able to assist the local communities in other ways.

Unit 11 Lewis County:

Lewis County Unit 11 continues to be mostly hibernating but is putting out a newsletter to give a brief update and to send out applications for mini-grants. The unit is looking into any opportunities that the unit might assist the community and fellow educators. Members are so grateful for the outstanding WSSRA staff and the *Journal* for keeping members informed and connected.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

Unit 28 continues to work around the stay at home order by doing business via e-mail, phone, text, newsletters, and Zoom meetings. The challenge of communicating to all members of Unit 28 has been a concern. The executive board has found a way to resume Unit 28's monthly mailings of the "Bits & Pieces" newsletter without putting the mailing committee or individuals at risk. The printed "Bits & Pieces" newsletter will resume starting with the October issue.

The unit is still collecting email addresses. If you need to submit yours, go to the WSSRA website (www.wssra.org) to complete the simple form at the bottom of the homepage.

Unit 28 is exploring innovative and creative ways to continue serving the local communities, as well as providing teachers with mini-grants.

Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Unit 30 has not had the opportunity to be functional. Because Clark County is only in phase 2, all meeting places that would normally allow more than 30 people now only allow five guests or less, and are limited to members of the same household.

The virtual 2020 annual convention was well presented and valued by those attending. SWWSRA would like to thank those astounding people who so persistently put this together and made it work.

When Unit 30 started, it included presentations of activities by members. Topics have expanded to include speakers on local, county, and Washington State issues, particularly during legislative sessions. These speakers are always appreciated at unit luncheons this time of year and will be missed.



WSSRA ON FACEBOOK:
"Facebook/WSSRA"
 Click LIKE to start following
 WSSRA on Facebook.

WSSRA Around The State

Outreach programs have expanded over the years. A scholarship fund, established through the efforts of past-president **Virginia Fitzgerald** (1997-1999) provides a grant to a Clark College student entering the education field. Through the efforts of **Betty Robinson**, mini-grants are given to active teachers for classroom projects. Monthly contributions of food and cash help the North County Food Bank. Many retirees have devoted time to volunteering at service agencies and schools where they are welcomed for their willingness to share their time and talent. Unit 30 wishes everyone good health.

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:

Although Unit 9 Kittitas has not met since March, the board did meet in August to make some plans and decisions. Recently, a newsletter was sent to all unit members including those who are actively teaching to express appreciation for their continued membership. The membership dues revenue allows the unit to give classroom grants, which are expected to fund again this year.

With no additional expenses for meetings and no delegates to support to convention, the unit board decided to donate to local needs including the following:

Lloyd Olson Scholarship fund which supports a graduating Cle Elum student who plans to attend college or trade school with the intent of furthering their education.

Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN), which provides outdoor environmental camps for 4th graders in the Ellensburg School District.

FISH Food Pantry, which serves Kittitas county residents by making food available to those who need help in providing for their families.

Unit members are urged to read the *Journal* to keep informed of healthcare and pension legislative action, to stay well and be positive about the future of education in the country and the world.

Join the WSSRA Email List

Now, more than ever, technology has become a critical way to connect with people and stay informed.

Email is a simple, quick, and inexpensive way for WSSRA to connect with members.

Join the email list in 3 easy steps:

1. **WSSRA.org**
2. **Scroll to bottom of the page**
3. **Join Our Email List**

Connect and Stay Informed...

- Legislative updates
- Zoom events
- Unit happenings
- and, more!

WSSRA does not share email addresses outside the association.

Join our email list!

* Email

* First Name

* Last Name

By submitting this form, you are consenting to receive marketing emails from: VIA STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 5127, LACEY, WA, 98509, US. <http://www.wssra.org>. You can revoke your consent to receive emails at any time by using the [SafeUnsubscribe!](#) link, found at the bottom of every email. [Emails are serviced by Constant Contact.](#)

Submit

Constant Contact

©2020 Association and AMBA. All Right Reserved

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

The CDSRA summer meeting was the first time the board was able to gather since March. It was held in a safe, masked, outside environment, and the fellowship was very enjoyable. The budget was set for the coming year. Then money was allocated for upcoming special projects:

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Unit board members gathered at a local park to hold a socially-distanced board meeting in September.

past years made them perfect recipients for this honor. In nine years, they have nearly doubled unit membership! What a marvelous team; Chelan/Douglas is so fortunate to have them in their unit.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Columbia Basin Unit 4 held a board meeting recently at a local park. Those present were Co-Presidents **Helen Preston** and **Lanita Pomeroy**, Treasurer **Bev Shelton**, **Wanda Harrison**, **Susan Hickok**, **Pat Simmons**, **Lois Palek**, **Nancy Nishida**, and **Karen Schafer**. Social distancing was observed, and masks were worn, as plans for the coming year were discussed.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

Penny Garrison, OCSRA Retirement Committee chair, has been hard at work setting a fall 2020 retirement seminar into motion with the Associates of Financial Alternatives, Wenatchee. Prior to the 4 p.m. Wednesday, October 21 workshop, email invitations were sent to school district business managers affording OCSRA members the ability to obtain the seminar log-in/password information for the Zoom meeting.

Carol Payne and her committee have disseminated 2020 grant information to OCSRA active members.

\$500 to Small Miracles to provide lunches to children in need this summer. This was especially appreciated since the numbers of children requesting help significantly increased this summer. It was also decided to set aside \$1,000 for this program for next year.

\$2,500 to Serve Wenatchee Valley for their annual back-to-school project. This will help outfit 100 needy children in our valley.

\$1,000 to Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center to help them provide virtual field trips for students.

\$150 to Cashmere Museum and Pioneer Village.

A total of \$1,000 to the homeless programs in the NCW area. (Cashmere, Cascade, Eastmont, Entiat, Orondo, Waterville & Wenatchee).

\$1,000 was set aside to the "Every Kid At the PAC" (EKAP) program when it starts up again. This program allows student to attend a live performance at the Performing Arts Center (PAC).

\$1,500 was also set aside to revive the "Pangborn Project" for Eastmont 3rd graders. **Deb Lacy** was very involved

in this project a number of years ago. The project teaches students about the first flight across the Pacific by Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon using interesting STEAM oriented activities. A project is being developed that could be used by teachers virtually this fall or hopefully presented with CDSRA volunteers in the spring. This will depend upon the opening of schools and safety for our members.

The highlight of the meeting was congratulating **Sharon Salley** and **JoAnn Lewis** for their Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award. Their outstanding membership work over the

WSSRA Around The State

Maralee Bowling, OCSRA newsletter chair, distributed the unit's fall newsletter to all OCSRA members. However, at least nine were returned because of incorrect address information. Just a reminder to all who may have switched school districts or have a new home address, please send **Maralee** the updated information (mjbowling39@gmail.com).

Because of the illness of a member, OCSRA is seeking a third member to its Scholarship Trustee board. Acting separately from OCSRA, the board meets once yearly with Edward Jones representatives to discuss/move funds of the independent OCSRA scholarship account. In addition, the board determines the annual amount awarded to the unit's scholarship recipient.

Face-to-face unit activities are on hold for the time being. Please email Unit President **Rita Figlenski** with any questions (ritafig2@gmail.com).

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: Unit 1 has been busy preparing for another great year even under the obvious COVID-19 restraints. Handwritten congratulations letters were sent to Unit 1 school employees that retired in May. Included was an invitation to attend this

year's upcoming meetings and programs.

Plans are underway to provide 20 teacher mini-grants, as well as graduating senior scholarships in the spring of 2021. A benefit to living in a rural area is much smaller numbers to work with than many of the other units in the state.

The unit executive board met two times over the summer and shared some great ideas for this year. The September meeting was held in the Asotin City Park in the outdoor picnic area. Weather and members cooperated and it was very successful. Bingo and a trivia challenge were fun to share. Changes were made to upcoming meetings and to the annual scholarship auction due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Unit members look forward to recruiting new members through Zoom meetings, treats, and connections with actively teaching members.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

Benton Franklin, Unit 29, continues to conduct business via Zoom under the leadership of Unit President **Victoria Russell**. The monthly luncheon meetings have been put on hold with the anticipation that soon membership luncheons can be held in person. All contracts with food service and program presenta-

tions were notified to wait until further notice. With the absence of monthly membership meetings, members are encouraged to give financial support to the WSSR-PAC and scholarship funds.

In June, delegates attended the 73rd annual virtual mini state convention where business was conducted in a short, concise, two-hour block. BFSRA, originally scheduled to host the 2020 state convention, will host the 2021 convention in Pasco.

The legislative and PAC committee members, **Elaine Banks, Jim and AJ Foster, Alice Allison, and Dave Randall** presented recommendations for endorsements and monetary contributions to candidates in the Legislative Districts of 8, 9, and 16. In agreement with E-8, the recommendations were delivered to the WSSR-PAC board and to the WSSRA executive

board for consideration and approval.

Tom Callahan, scholarship chair, is in contact with the universities where BFSRA contributes to their scholarship programs. Universities included are CWU, EWU, WSU-Tri-Cities, and Heritage University at CBC.

Membership now has almost 900 members. Chair **Don Parks** ponders ideas to provide opportunities to invite potential members.

Newsletter editor, **Helen Bruggeman**, published a mail-out newsletter in August and the remaining monthly newsletters are emailed.

Current/future program information and news can be found on the webpage and in the monthly newsletter. WSSRA information can be found at WSSRA.org.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please Notify:

Membership Coordinator:
Michele Hunter
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...

AMBA.....	13	Foundation	8	President's message	2
AARP.....	15	Health	11	Retiree Resources.....	13
Booklets	16	Legislative News.....	4	Website.....	9
Executive Director's message....	3	Membership	12	WSSR-PAC	14
Endorsements.....	6	Plan 2/Plan 3 Corner	10	WSSRA Around The State.....	17