

The Journal

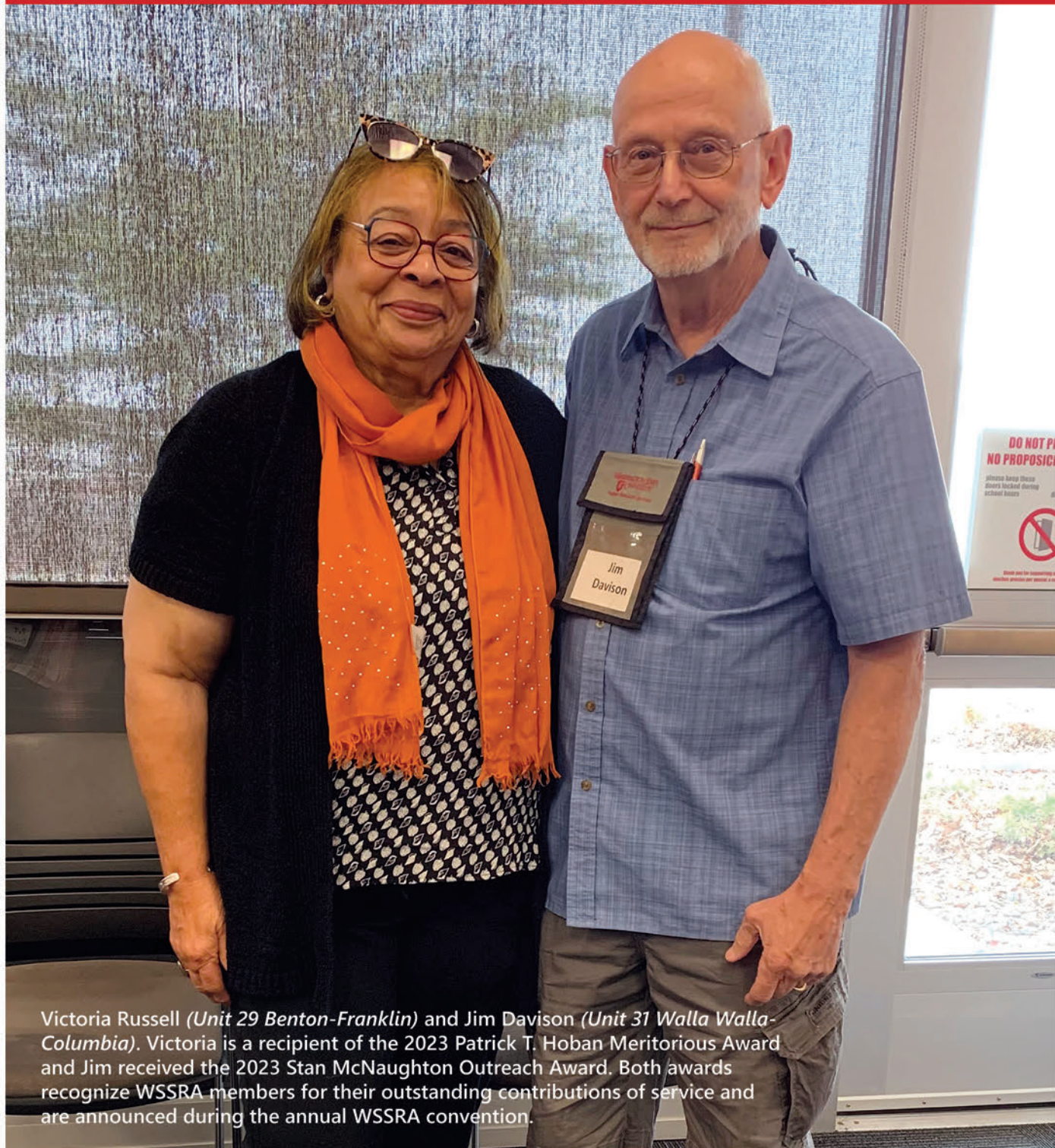
WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



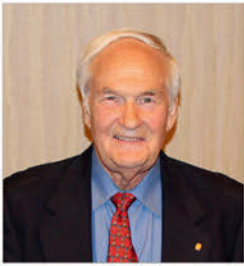
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2023

VOLUME 77, ISSUE NO. 2



Victoria Russell (Unit 29 Benton-Franklin) and Jim Davison (Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia). Victoria is a recipient of the 2023 Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award and Jim received the 2023 Stan McNaughton Outreach Award. Both awards recognize WSSRA members for their outstanding contributions of service and are announced during the annual WSSRA convention.

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

WSSRA Unit Rejuvenation



by Ron Crawford, president

Rejuvenation: Rejuvenation is an interesting word and can have several meanings such as renewal, revitalization, or recharging. If your unit needs one or more of the rejuvenation steps, we stand ready to assist. The first step is to contact Alan Burke at the WSSRA office to let him know what your unit's needs are. Whatever your needs are we stand ready to assist your unit with this process.

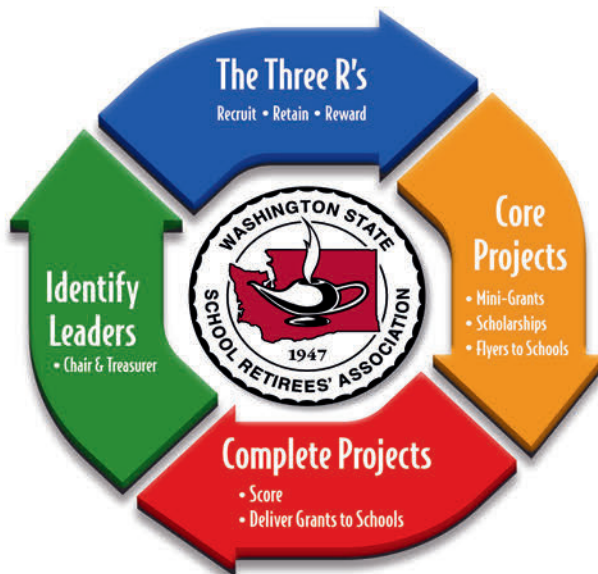
The steps to a complete unit renewal process might look like this:

Initial Meeting: The WSSRA staff sends out an invitation to members in your unit to attend a luncheon. The purpose of the luncheon is to work with unit leadership to find where you are and to assist with a couple of activities such as mini-grants or the scholarship program.

Follow-up work meeting: The purpose of the follow-up work meeting is to complete the mini-grant process and set up a delivery process to winning schools. It is suggested that you try to deliver grants to teachers at an afternoon faculty meeting. The other task at this meeting is to finalize the scholarship review process.

The three R's: The final step is what we call the three R's (**Recruit, Retain, and Reward**). Set up a meeting for the purpose of identifying key unit activities and potential members. Then start placing activities and members into committee positions and officer slots. Finally, establish a retaining and rewarding program to keep and honor members for their work with the unit.

Rejuvenation Renewal & Recharging



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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 no responsibility for items appearing 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, committees and units, is presented to promote the general welfare of WSSRA members and otherwise to fulfill the purposes of this association, as defined in Article II of the bylaws.

JOURNAL articles to:

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editor@wssra.org

Upcoming JOURNAL article deadlines:

December 5, 2023
for Jan./Feb. 2024 issue

February 5, 2024
for Mar./Apr. 2024 issue

WSSRA At Work For You

A message from the executive director



WSSRA Webinars For You



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

As the 2023-24 school year begins, we wish all those employed in K-12 a productive and rewarding year. Teaching and classroom support was never easy, but today's challenges in many ways make educating kids more difficult than in the past. To help out, most of WSSRA's 30 local units offer mini-grants to support classroom programs. Active educators can contact their local unit or WSSRA for information about mini-grant availability.

In addition to local unit meetings, on the docket for the fall are several WSSRA-sponsored events that will be of interest to members. All these webinars will be recorded and posted on the WSSRA website for those with schedule conflicts.

On October 18 and 19, 4:30 pm on both days, our annual Pre-Retirement Webinar series will take place. On Wednesday, October 18, representatives from the Department of Retirement Systems and the Health Care Authority will present steps to take for a smooth transition from employment to retirement - ensuring that pension checks and health care needs are properly secured. On Thursday, October 19, the second half of the webinar series - VEBA and Social Security/Medicare - will complete basic training in the "Big Five" of retirement planning. These webinars, designed for active educators who are within five years of retiring, have been very popular with over 4,500 attending since 2020. Registration information is on WSSRA's website, wssra.org, under the "Webinars" tab.

On November 9 at 9:00 am, Beau Ruff and Joel Ockey from Cornerstone Wealth Strategies in Kennewick will present a webinar on estate planning. Many folks close to, or just beginning retirement, will have engaged in financial planning, but questions surrounding estate planning often are not addressed. Plan-

ning is crucial to assuring that late-retirement financial and health care support objectives are met. In June, Beau and Joel did a similar presentation at the WSSRA convention in Pasco that was highly reviewed. Registration information is on the WSSRA website, wssra.org, under "Webinars." Members will receive event information via email.

Also, previously recorded on September 26, Ellen Wolfhagen and Jean Bui from the Health Care Authority/PEBB presented a webinar on 2024 Medicare supplement rate changes and plan options. Uniform Medical Plan-Classic, by far the most popular Medicare supplement program, continues to increase in cost - reaching \$532 per month in 2024. The reasons for the increase, and descriptions of other PEBB options, were the focus of the webinar. See the WSSRA website (wssra.org, under "Webinars") for the recording of this webinar.

In addition to the events described above, we will be closely monitoring developments with the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP), the group that meets monthly off-session to analyze pension issues and make recommendations to the 2024 legislature for action. A recommendation from SCPP for a Plan 1 COLA is the gateway for the legislature to move a COLA bill in 2024. Those recommendations have resulted in one-year Plan 1 COLAs being awarded in 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2023. See Legislative Director Peter Diedrick's legislative update on page 4.

Again, welcome to the 2023-24 school year! Please register for any of the webinars that interest you, and please consider attending your local unit meeting. Community-based unit activities are the core of philanthropy at WSSRA. You can learn much more about community-giving by attending a unit luncheon.

Legislative News



Looking Ahead to 2024



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

A wonderful quote came my way this summer: “To be a successful lobbyist you only must be likeable, not necessarily talented. Talent certainly helps but isn’t required.” Fortunately, that rule does not apply to teaching!

Legislators – talented or not – are getting back to work. They are still in-district, but the professional staff is in Olympia preparing for the 2024 Legislative Session. There have been some important developments over the summer.

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) met in June, July, and September. That body seems poised to recommend a 3% Plan 1 COLA for 2024. The Committee is also scheduling time to study implementation of a permanent, automatic COLA for Plan 1. It’s well past time, but we applaud their decision to tackle the matter. Further action is expected at the October, November, and December SCPP meetings. Be on the lookout for Plan 1 COLA alerts over the next two months.

WSSRA is also developing legislation to enhance benefits for Plans 2/3 members, improve health benefits, address member dental issues. Those bill drafts should be ready for the public and legislators soon. Additional information will be in the next *Journal*.

Federal Update

WSSRA’s political action is almost exclusively geared at the Washington State Legislature; however, federal matters do arise from time-to-time. The Washington State Health Care Authority – the agency managing state retiree insurance – has put out a plea to Washington’s congressional delegation regarding subsidies for Medicare retiree insurance supplements. The way the Social Security Act is written, Medicare Advantage plans are eligible for more subsidies than traditional Medicare plans. The state has asked Congress to equalize those benefits. WSSRA is fully supporting this effort to drive down premium costs.

It is tough to get Congress moving. If you have the opportunity and care about this problem, please raise this issue with your member of Congress. Nothing will happen without citizen involvement.

As always, thank you for your participation and advocacy. The lobbying team can get the spotlight on your needs, but retiree participation is required to pass bills and change laws. Your voice is crucial to the success of all these measures.

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

Select Committee on Pension Policy

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) is comprised of 20 members including members of the legislature, members appointed by the Governor, and the directors of Department of Retirement Systems and the Office of Financial Management. The Committee typically meets during the interim, the time between legislative sessions, however special meetings may be scheduled. At a high-level, the work of the SCPP includes studying issues and policies affecting the state’s public employee retirement systems and making recommendations to the Legislature regarding changes. For more information, visit the Washington State Legislature webpage at leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/SCPP

WSSR-PAC News



Building Influence for 2024



by Louie Osmonovich WSSR-PAC president

Political successes in 2023 are being enjoyed by all present and future retirees.

Being successful in the legislative endeavor to obtain improved retiree benefits takes work and money. The work is done by **all** of us contacting our district legislators and **all** of us contributing to WSSR-PAC.

WSSR-PAC, with the help of the Legislative Committee, WSSRA staff, professional lobbyists, and individual member recommendations help us decide which lawmakers we should endorse. Our goal each year is to help candidates win elections so they might be more supportive of our retiree bills that are introduced in the next legislative session.

To be of any influence in the upcoming 2024 election, WSSR-PAC needs all the financial support you, as members, can contribute. This might make the difference whether a friend or a foe is elected. More friends in the legislature deciding on

future house and senate bills relating to our retirement and healthcare is a must.

The various ways to contribute to the WSSR-PAC include:

1. Direct individual contributions, using the form included on this page.
2. Automatic deduct process (contact our PAC Treasurer for details or online at WSSR-PAC.ORG).
3. Donate at unit and coordinating council "low-cost fundraiser" events.

Sadly, Mary Perkins, WSSR-PAC board member and long-time PAC supporter, our friend and colleague passed away recently. She not only supported us financially, but also with her commonsense suggestions for improving the process to move our PAC forward. We so enjoyed her energy and her magnetic and winsome personality. Mary will be sorely missed by our organization.

Support the WSSR-PAC — Contribute Today!

Contributor Name and Spouse (if applicable):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Unit #/Name:

Contribution Amount \$

In memory of
(if any):

Can we publish your name on the WSSR-PAC
Wall of Support list? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I certify that this contribution is not organized under the laws of and does not have its principal place of business in a foreign country. This contribution is not financed in any part by a foreign national, and foreign nationals were not involved in making decision regarding the contribution in any way.

Signature: _____

Mail Form & Contribution to:

WSSR-PAC

**125 West 11th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362**

WSSR-PAC.ORG

LOW COST FUNDRAISER FORM

WSSR-PAC.ORG > click on "Contribute Now" > Click on "Contribute" > Scroll down to Low Cost Fundraisers

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Connecting With Potential Members



by Alan Burke and Michele Hunter, WSSRA



Overall WSSRA membership numbers have stabilized from the expected COVID drop, leveling out at around 17,000. That number is roughly 900 lower than our pre-COVID high, a level that is predictable given the lack of on-site recruiting caused by moving unit meetings and faculty presentations to a virtual setting while the virus was spreading.

Fortunately, for the most part COVID restrictions are behind us with unit leaders reestablishing on-site meeting schedules. In addition, school faculty meetings are returning to traditional before- or after-school schedules with live (not virtual) audiences.

What that means is that we can return to tried and true membership activities that include “bring a friend to lunch” and seven-minute WSSRA information presentations during faculty meetings. The lunch invitation normally results in a free meal

for a non-member, a gesture that, combined with strong meeting programs, has significantly increased membership over the years. The lunch is not as important as the information and socialization a prospective member receives during the meeting. When retired educators learn who we are, what we do, and how we do it, they join!

Similarly, active teachers and support personnel appreciate learning about WSSRA in short faculty meeting presentations. As we all know, teachers are very busy but they don’t mind taking a few minutes to learn the basics of retirement planning. They also are relieved to learn that there is an organization “out there” that advocates 24/7 for retiree pension and health care benefits. Again, when active educators learn about our organization, many join on the spot.

As retirees who frequently socialize with former colleagues,

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 SCHOOL 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 dues and any future increases as voted by the membership from my monthly paycheck, or retirement benefit check, and to pay them monthly to WSSRA. Deductions will continue until WSSRA receives written notice of cancellation. Dues are not tax deductible.

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

Date _____ Signature _____

01–Clarkston/Asotin/ Pomeroy	Pacific	11–Lewis County	19–Southeast 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 or 360-413-5496, ext 116

you can help us to increase membership by encouraging K-12 friends to join. This immediately strengthens our advocacy power with legislators. Consider attending a unit meeting and bring a non-member colleague with you. Let unit leadership know that you are coming with a prospective member to make sure they are properly introduced and given access to a unit leader who can explain the benefits of WSSRA membership.

Also, make sure that your friend knows what the unit does to give back to the community. Mini-grants and scholarships are a good place to start. Retired educators are uniformly supportive of public schools, and equally supportive of helping educators and those who may want to become educators. Remember that all of WSSRA's local units generously support school programs and fund educator-prep scholarships!

As active educators, reach out to local unit leadership and find out about mini-grant programs. Then send an application link to colleagues and encourage them to apply. And, to be sure, apply for a grant yourself. Once the grant is awarded, contact your principal for a time at a faculty meeting when the grant can be presented and local unit leaders can spend five minutes talking about the benefits of joining WSSRA.

Increasing membership is a bedrock task of advocacy organizations like WSSRA. The ideas in this article are among many that, with proper planning, can bring in new members. If we all help out, we will grow and thrive – and bring even more Olympia-based power to assure that legislators know, value and support fair pensions and health care benefits for K-12 retirees.

WSSRA ON FACEBOOK: "Facebook/WSSRA"



Click LIKE to start following
WSSRA on Facebook.

Upcoming Webinars sponsored by WSSRA

Pre-Retirement Webinars

October 18 and 19
4:30 pm via Zoom



The WSSRA-sponsored fall series of pre-retirement webinars are set for **Wednesday, October 18 (DRS and HCA/PEBB)** and **Thursday, October 19 (Social Security, Medicare and VEBA)**. These webinars, designed for active educators between one and five years of retirement, have been very popular additions to the series of WSSRA-sponsored Zoom events the past three years.

[Register at WSSRA.ORG, webinars](https://www.wssra.org/webinars)

Estate Planning

Thursday, November 9
9:00am via Zoom

Beau Ruff and Joel Ockey from Cornerstone Wealth Strategies in Kennewick will present a webinar on estate planning. Many folks close to, or just beginning retirement, will have engaged in financial planning, but questions surrounding estate planning often are not addressed. And that planning is crucial to assuring that late-retirement financial and health care support objectives are met.

[Register at WSSRA.ORG, webinars](https://www.wssra.org/webinars)

2024 Health Plan Options and Medicare Supplement Rate Changes

Recorded Webinar - Available Now

The webinar was held on September 26 and featured Health Care Authority/PEBB staff presenting information about changes and options related to health plans and Medicare supplement rate changes. To view the recording, visit

[WSSRA.ORG, webinars](https://www.wssra.org/webinars)

Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Legacy of Philanthropy



by Ann Chenhall, WSSR Foundation president

We each have many ways to leave a legacy, sometimes through our students, student teachers, coaching or mentoring others. The Foundation looks back with gratitude to those who have donated during 2023. All donations allow us to offer support to our future educators and school professionals, student teachers, and interns through scholarships.

Scholarship amounts have increased! Each coordinating council will now award one scholarship for \$3,000 and one for \$2,000 for high school graduates majoring in an education field. Please be sure to share this information with students and high schools in your area. The Neil D. Prescott scholarships for student teachers/interns are now \$2,500 with two per each coordinating council.

As the calendar year closes, please consider contributing through your required minimum distribution (RMD) if you are over 72. The amount you must take can be divided between an amount directly sent to you and an amount you wish to donate to non-profit organizations. Please work with your financial advisor on the details. (See page 9 for more about RMD donations).

Another way to donate is through a legacy gift in your will. Your will can allow you to provide for the people and communities you value so they will always be supported. By including a legacy gift in your will, you can continue supporting education for years to come.

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 _____
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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

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Patricia Siggs - donation

Charles and Sandra Thompson - in memory of Barbara McIntyre

James and Charlene Turner - in memory of Mary Perkins

Claudia Weitz - in memory of Mary Perkins

Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Faye Davis, Mary Perkins, Dennis Peterson, Richard Zornes

Skagit/Island/San Juan REA - in memory of Kay (Merle) Brown, Mark Chatt, Linda Ellis, Donald Fosso, Terrance Grove, James Harvey, Jo Ann Knapp, Joan Melcher, John Pakusich, George Rector, Harry Sams, Marvin Seelye, James Sikkema, Christine Silves, Earl Steele, William Thompson

Sno-Isle SRA - in memory of Ella Haller, Ken Haller

Yakima County SRA - donation

WSSRA - donation

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

Many of us, who are 72 and older, annually face a requirement to convert a percentage of our tax-sheltered savings (IRS 403b, 401k, etc.) from tax-free to taxable assets. Of course, when the time comes to convert the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), the money becomes ordinary income and is subject to withholding regulations and, at the end of the year, federal income taxes.

That is, unless those monies are sent to an IRS 501(c)(3) charity. In this case, any amount (up to \$100,000) given directly to a charity is tax free, and any amount passed on to the retiree is taxable. If you are considering donating RMD proceeds to a charity, how about choosing the WSSR-Foundation? The Foundation supports what we all support – high school seniors interested in a career in education and student-teacher/interns. Their scholarships have aided hundreds over the years, and have been increased recently to reflect the realities of higher college costs and challenging teacher preparation expenses.

So, if you are faced with a RMD this year, please consider a donation to the WSSR-Foundation. Note: when making a RMD-to-Foundation donation, make sure that your financial institution sends the check directly to the WSSR-Foundation. Unfortunately, a check from a private donor to a 501(c)(3) charity is not considered tax-free by the IRS.



Senior Citizen Tax Exemption or Deferral Update



by Fred Yancey, WSSRA contract lobbyist

Are your taxes too high? How about utility costs? These all increase while seniors struggle living on a relatively fixed income. There is help available for qualified individuals. Washington state has some tax relief programs worth investigating.

There are two property tax programs that could provide some relief: senior citizens with lower income and senior disabled exemption. These programs defer payment on selected tax assessments. Each program is slightly different. They will, however, provide some relief as low-income seniors struggle to meet their needs. Under the deferral, all taxes are deferred, state and local. Also, at the time an applicant is granted an exemption, their assessed value is frozen unless the market value drops below the frozen value. (One pays on the lesser of the two values.)

Your county assessor administers the deferral programs and is responsible for determining if you meet the qualifications. Applications and supporting documents for each qualification are due at least 30 days before the tax is due. Contact your county assessor's office for the application materials. As a reminder, you must renew your deferral each year. (Your county assessor should send you a renewal notification if you applied the previous year.)

For an overview of the program, visit the Washington State Department of Revenue's website and view specific articles about property tax deferral programs:

dor.wa.gov

1. Go "Forms & Publications"
2. Choose Publications by Name
3. Go to the "P" list and under "Property Tax" and find the publication titles:

"Property Tax Deferral for Homeowners with Limited Income"

"Property Tax Deferral for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities"

(or, search the specific article title listed above in your browser, such as Google, Bing, or Edge)

The deferral program qualifications are based on age or disability, ownership, occupancy, and income. The lower the income, the greater the relief. County specific income thresholds can be found at:

dor.wa.gov/incomethresholds

This link is also available within the "Property Tax Deferral for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities" publication.

Your local county assessor's website also offers information about property tax deferral programs.

Keep in mind that a deferral based on income has to be paid back when the claimant's estate is settled. When repaying the deferral, you need to repay the amount deferred plus interest when any of the following triggering events happens:

- You transfer ownership of your property to someone else.
- You no longer permanently reside at the residence.
- Your property is condemned.
- You no longer maintain a fire and casualty insurance policy naming the Washington State Department of Revenue as a loss payee in an amount that is sufficient to protect the interest of the state, and the deferred amount exceeds 100% of your equity in only the land value.
- You die (unless your surviving spouse, domestic partner, heir, or devisee is at least 57 years old, meets the qualifications for the deferral, and files an application with the county assessor within 90 days of your death).

The senior disabled exemption is not a deferral and does not have to be paid back.

Help with Utility Bills: Contact your local utility company or provider for information about assistance with utility bill payments. For example, in the Olympia area, two programs are available:

- "Helping Neighbors" collects donations and partners with the Community Action Council to determine eligibility and issues a \$75 voucher twice a year.
- "Lifetime Rates" program helps qualified customers with a 50% discount of the standard rates for city utility services. Customers must be low-income and disable or low-income and over the age 62.

It's worth checking with your utility provider for similar programs.



OUTGROWN YOUR BENEFITS?

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- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long Term Care
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1.877.556.4582

myambabenefits.info/wssra

Washington State School Retirees' Association



For Your Health



Establishing Healthy Behaviors That Stick

by Lisa Hardesty, Ph.D., clinical psychologist, Mayo Clinic Health System
Article printed with permission from Mayo Clinic.

We've all made healthy resolutions or set goals with the best of intentions, only to see them fall short or break down completely over time. Living healthy is an excellent goal to aim for. Research and medical studies often promote the mental and physical benefits of a healthy lifestyle. So why do we still break our healthy promises when we know staying healthy helps us feel better?

Popular reasons why people give up their healthy behaviors include:

- **Staying healthy is complicated.** Whether a life-long goal or a temporary objective, staying motivated requires complex planning and follow-through. Establishing healthy behaviors that stick takes a different mindset and should not be undervalued.
- **Our toxic eating environment.** We face constant pressures from a multi-billion dollar marketing industry that bombards us with quick, cheap and tempting food options. No matter the medium, these highly targeted psychological messages leave us wondering if we are in charge of our own eating behaviors or, instead, simply being conditioned.
- **Our dislike of exercise.** Studies show that we overestimate how difficult exercise is. Often, we think physical exercise will be much worse than it really ends up being. As a result, we tend to give up before we even begin.

Tips to stay motivated

If you want to make your habits permanent, you need to:

- Practice.
- Anticipate lapses.
- Recover quickly.
- Practice positive self-talk.
- Create changes that are easy to continue over the long term.

Your thoughts determine how you feel about yourself, which in turn affects your behavior, mood, interactions with others and progress toward your goals. When you identify positive thoughts, make sure to practice them. Consider using the following path to help motivate your healthy behaviors:

Getting started:

- List the behaviors you feel are unhealthy.
- Develop positive and realistic goals for yourself.

- Identify why you want to meet this goal. What have you tried before?
- Select one of your identified behaviors you would like to change.
- Find multiple ways to remind yourself of your goal.
- Stay motivated!

Creating your plan of action:

- Brainstorm ways to change this behavior.
- Devise a plan to promote this strategy.
- Identify potential obstacles that could interfere with your goal.
- Set a date for when you want to achieve your goal.
- Identify your options for support.
- Stay motivated!

Reaching your goal:

- Throughout the journey, counter destructive thoughts with more constructive ones.
- When you reach the goal date, evaluate your success.
- Don't expect perfection.
- With your goal completed, consider what you need to do to maintain your change.
- When ready, select another goal and restart process.
- Stay motivated!

Don't let a lapse keep you from your goal

A lapse is a slight error, slip or discrete event most of us will face at some point during the journey. It's important to remember that a lapse is normal and doesn't always lead to a relapse. Relapse occurs when lapses string together and a person returns to his or her former state. Anticipate that a lapse can and will happen. Then, try and figure out what your trigger or triggers are for lapses. Common triggers that may cause a lapse include:

- The people in our lives
- The time of day
- Our emotions
- A difficult life event
- Social events
- Certain foods and visual cues

Remember the danger is not the slip but how you react to it.

article submitted by Jody Freepons, state health committee

Connections



AgeTech

by Marguerite Ro, AARP State Director

The challenges and opportunities around technology and family caregiving

Technology is a crucial component in most aspects of our lives, including caregiving. Whether it's virtual doctor appointments, medical alert systems, or managing the thermostats in our homes, there are a growing number of devices, web-based services and options to wade through. At the core of caregiving is ensuring the health and well-being of our loved ones. Are caregivers using technology in their caregiver role and how can technology support family caregiving?

In a recent 2022 AARP survey of U.S. Caregivers' Use of Technology, eight-in-ten adult caregivers reported using technology to assist with caregiving at least once per month, albeit with differences across age groups. Millennial and Gen X caregivers are more likely to use technology for caregiving assistance daily, whereas many Baby Boomer caregivers report never using technology in their caregiving role.

In terms of technology, caregivers under age 65 were more likely to say they were extremely or more comfortable with using smart phones, the Internet, and computers than those over 65. Less than half of caregivers over 65 reported being comfortable with those devices. There is less comfort across all ages with the use of in-home technologies such as Siri, Alexa, or Google Assistant.



image: 123RF

Caregivers use their phones and Internet to find support and services such as food deliveries, prescription refills, and ordering household supplies. Also popular are how-to and educational videos on topics such as home repairs. Over the pandemic, videoconferencing and webinars were important tools to stay connected and informed. AARP Washington (www.aarp.org/wa) continues to hold many online and virtual events, including the popular "Fraud Watch Friday" events where folks can bring their questions about frauds and scams.

Clearly, there are many benefits and challenges related to technology for caregivers and their loved ones. Having information right at one's fingertips can be helpful, be it medical records or care plans. For family caregivers who live at a distance from their loved ones, being able to communicate by video and ascertain what is happening in real time is a major benefit of today's smartphones and monitoring devices. New devices that help detect falls or programs that can provide daily medication reminders support older loved ones to live independently and age in place. And devices that allow individuals to identify who is calling or who is at the front door can help older adults feel more secure in their homes.

Of course, issues of access to technology and broadband, the need for user-friendly devices, data privacy, and cybersecurity are critical topics to be addressed with older technology users in mind. Programs such as Senior Planet from AARP (seniorplanet.org) are working to ensure that older adults are included in the digital revolution by providing education and training on how to use apps like Instagram, MyChart, or Zoom.

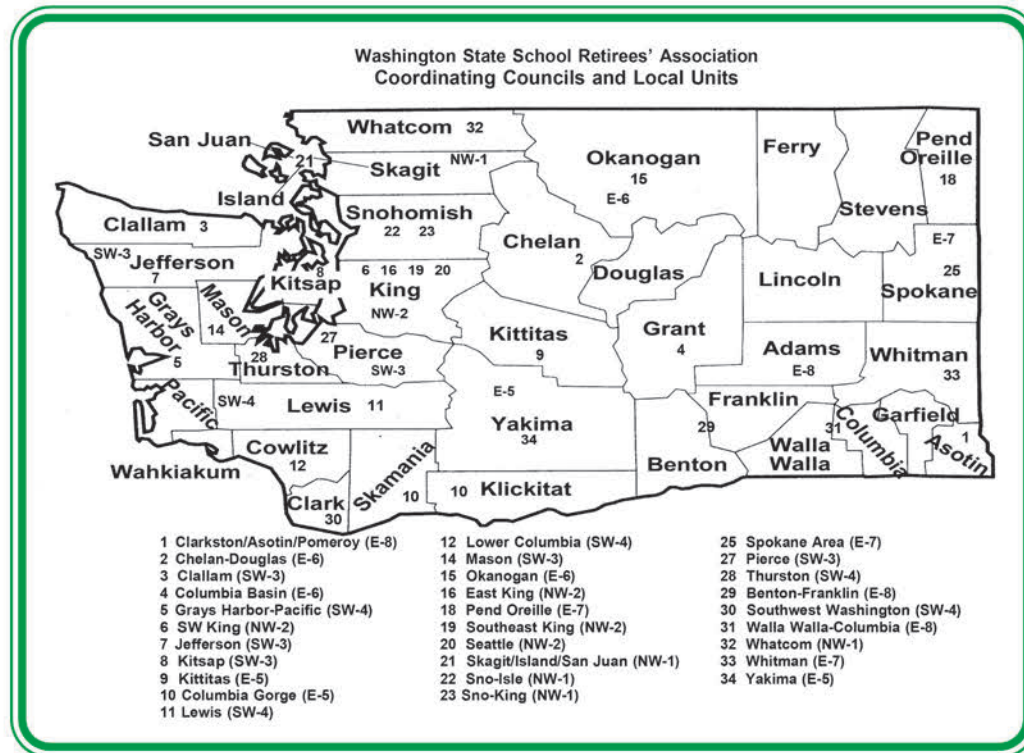
The power of technology is immense. The challenge is how to ensure that advancements in technology support the well-being of us all as we age, including support for family caregiving. Given that we have over 820,000 family caregivers in Washington providing 770 million hours of care a year, the opportunity is now.

For more information, visit
aarp.org/caregiverswa

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 board members spent a lovely August afternoon on the deck of **Diane Visten's** home overlooking Utsalady Bay planning the unit's fall events. New members **Virginia Meindl**, **Donna Smith**, and **Colleen Turk** joined the team. Unit 21 now has an active and full board working together to gain members, award mini-grants, and keep legislators alert to retiree issues. Plans for an October 12 mini workshop on retirement issues with **Bill DeHon** hosting at Samish Elementary in the

Sedro Woolley School District were discussed. **Diane Visten** is seeking a great venue for the unit's holiday luncheon, which will be held on the first Saturday in December. October dates were chosen for offering mini-grants to all the schools in the unit's area. **Kathy Caldwell** talked about her plans to hold coffee times for friends and co-workers to gain new members.

The unit's new newsletter editor produced a September newsletter with articles provided by the board on health insurance updates, legislative news, and a bit of news on scholarships.

The summer was fabulous, and a busy fall is ahead with the unit's first co-council meeting on October 2nd.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Sno-Isle 22 enjoyed a pizza party for their welcome back event. Members shared what they had been up to since the last gathering. Pizza, salad, and dessert were the fare as well as great conversation. Input was gathered about future events.

In August, many members attended the memorial service for longtime member, **Jim Harvey**.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

The unit's annual picnic was held at Edmonds City Park in July with 41 attendees. WSSRA President **Ron Crawford** shared current information about WSSRA. WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** installed the unit's continuing officers. Fifteen long-serving SKSR board members received a thank-you Starbucks card. Three of the unit's mini-grant awardees, **Cincy Ebisu**, **Matt Grover**, and **Susan Sellers** talked about how they were using the money they received.

The board met for an annual planning retreat in August. There was much discussion as to what types of activities to schedule for this coming year. After the discussion, a decision was made to defer to a committee to make further suggestions during the September board meeting.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

Unit 6 has survived the summer and wishes to invite the unit's active members to assist in recruiting new members. If you are able, and it is possible in your buildings, please consider distributing information about joining WSSRA and supporting the continued lobbying effort in Olympia concerning retirement issues, as well as to also continue to of-

WSSRA Around The State

fer mini-grants. If interested, Unit President **Bill Tracy** can deliver information packets and enrollment forms to you at your individual building or at an agreed upon site.

For those already retired, please respond about future lunchtime meetings - Tuesday, November 21 and/or December 19 are available for a good time to meet at 11:30am at Burien Round Table Pizza. Any response will be appreciated.

Unit 16 East King:

East-King's unit officers have served for many years. They are Co-Presidents **Carolyn and Robert Fletcher**, Treasurer **Jim Hall**, Secretary **Shirlee Hall**, Membership Chair **Pat Jovag**, and Legislative Chair **Jeani Goodrich**. They met three times over the summer to discuss, work on, and then confirm picnic and luncheon plans for the year. After the enjoyable picnic at Juanita Beach Park and a nice lunch at the Olive Garden intended to draw more member involvement in unit business, the rest of the programs were announced.

October's presentation rated high points on a member survey of desired programs to book. As a result, Eastside Audubon was asked to recommend someone from their photography group who could

share slides of Washington birds. John Spilker, the leader of the group, will be doing the highly-anticipated presentation.

November will bring another high-point recipient from the unit's survey. Christopher Jarmick, the owner of Kirkland's BookTree bookstore, will return to talk about a variety of books he would recommend. Members appreciate being able to buy books at the time as gifts or for themselves.

Everyone looks forward to the unit's silent auction. December is the time to bring an unused item and pick up an item that will get used. This year's auction will be enhanced by accompanying music provided by Tatiana Boggs, the former choir director at Juanita High School. The proceeds from the auction will go towards the unit's annual mid-year \$1,000 donation to one district school that has a need for warm jackets and school supplies for students.

Unit 19 Southeast King:

After a two-month hiatus, Southeast King had a board planning meeting at brunch in the Village Concepts on August 22. During the meeting, Unit Treasurer **Robin Stroben** gave board members copies of the proposed budget for 2023-2024 which will be voted on later. Also, programs

and places for meetings in September, October, and November 2023 were discussed.

Unit 19 has a new project - the members are collecting canned food for Vine-Maple Place, a homeless shelter for women with children, in Kent. Southeast King is also giving mini-grants and scholarships to school employees in the Auburn School District.

On September 12, 2023, the Southeast King membership meeting was in the Renton Village Concepts. Light refreshments were provided by Village Concepts and served at noon. Lance Rhoades, a

movie historian, took the members behind the scenes of the famous movie, "Singin' the Rain."

On October 3, 2023, the Southeast King membership meeting was in the Renton Village Concepts. Humanities WA provided the presentation on the topic, "The River that Made Seattle (Duwamish) native and immigrant history," a book written by local author B.J. Cummings.

On November 9, 2023 (*note the change of meeting date*), Unit 19 members will tour the King County Elections headquarters in Renton.

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

Marguerite Ro, Washington state director

Senior Citizens' Lobby

360-754-0207

WASENIORLOBBY.ORG

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 29 Benton/Franklin: Elizabeth Jansen, Finley Elementary teacher, with Principal Pam Kinne, receiving her surprise grant for "Stop the Summer Slide" on the last day of school.

Unit 20 Seattle:

Unit 20 (Seattle) plans to have its next luncheon meeting on October 5 in the Cascade Room at the Mountaineers' Club in Seattle's Magnuson Park. The gathering will start at about 11:30 and feature a Red Box meal prepared by Le-Fournil Bakery. The speaker will be Richard Heisler discussing fascinating aspects of Seattle's Civil War history. Mr. Heisler has researched the backgrounds of Civil War veterans who are buried in the Grand Army of the Republic's graveyard on Seattle's Capitol Hill. Contact **Pat Cygan** by email at rcygan@earthlink.net to reserve a space and make luncheon choices.

Unit 20 will also begin offering new members who sign up to join WSSRA and SSRA within this school year a one-time six-month free membership, therefore paying \$42 instead of \$84 for their first year of membership. To make this work, their membership applications will need to be sent to **Michele Hunter**, WSSRA membership coordinator, who will submit the membership applications after six months of free membership to either the Seattle District payroll department (for current district employees) or to the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems (for the district's retirees). Applicants must contact WSSRA Mem-

bership Coordinator, **Michele Hunter** for a membership application. Mail requests to her at WSSRA, PO Box 5127, Lacey, WA 98509 or contact SSRA's Membership Chair **Julee Newhart** by email at jneuhart@comcast.net or **Pat Cygan** at rcygan@earthlink.net.

SSRA's latest newsletter for August-September, "The Bulletin," contained an application for S.E.E.D. Grants (mini-grants for those presently working in Seattle Public Schools). Grants are \$200 one-time-only for non-members or up to \$500 each year for members. **John Thorp** is the unit's new mini-grant chair and will be handling these applications. Contact information is on the application form.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam County:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) executive board members met at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on August 15 to discuss plans for the upcoming year, including plans for mini-grants and scholarships.

On August 19, eleven CCSRA volunteers helped distribute 780 backpacks full of school supplies to local families. The event was held at Jefferson Elementary School in Port Angeles.

The first general meeting was held on September 19 at Joshua's Restaurant. Rev. Dr. Matt Paul gave a presentation about his trip to Israel.

CCSRA continues to collect new and gently used books for several agencies in the county. The books will be distributed in the spring.

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

Kitsap Unit 8 is excited to be back to visiting with members who come to luncheons. Upcoming unit gatherings are in the unit member newsletter. We would love to see you.

The unit's September meeting was held at **Craig and Cheryl Miller's** house. The gathering was a combination of a picnic and first meeting of the year. Unit members over 80 years old were honored at the get-together.

The unit's second luncheon is a trip to the Suquamish Indian Museum. The trip will include a guided tour and then a luncheon at a local restaurant. For those attending, remember to bring hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves. The unit is collecting those items for donation.

Please contact any unit officer with questions – information is in the unit newsletter. If you aren't receiving a unit newsletter, please contact **Patty Marz** at 360-813-1538 and leave a message with your mailing address. Thanks for

WSSRA Around The State

your support of Kitsap School Retirees Association Unit!

Unit 14 Mason County:

Unit 14 Mason County continued in-person monthly meetings through the summer, with a Zoom option available. Members enjoy meeting at a local restaurant back room for socializing, good food, and inspirational speakers.

The unit was honored to have two outstanding community and state leaders at the August 1, 2023 meeting. State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti spoke about the role of the state treasury in securing the retirement plans for state workers, among the efforts to keep the state credit rating at AAA status. Mason County Superior Court Judge Cadine Ferguson-Brown spoke of initiatives she is working on with the local YMCA to bring a nationally recognized program to Mason County. Students of all ages would receive education about the court system, with competition opportunities offered to high school students. She also addressed questions from members about the juvenile court system. Members were engaged with the inspiring presentations of both speakers.

Bonnie Rice, unit secretary and grants chair, presented the reports from the ten mini-grant projects funded in the school districts in Mason

County, at the September 5, 2023 unit meeting. Five of the seven school districts in Mason County received grants. The projects improved the quality of instruction. The members voted to continue funding grants again for the 2023-24 school year. The applications have been distributed to all seven school districts in the county.

The unit will continue to develop relationships with the two state representatives and state senator to express the members' concerns for retirement security and the role the state budget has in a comfortable income for retired school employees.

Unit 27 Pierce County:

*A message from **Bob Duke**, unit president:* "At the unit's annual picnic I was again in awe of the happy spirit and demeanor of our members. Happy people seek to be around happy people. Looking into happiness I came across articles which focused on what we all know intuitively. Happiness is about being in the moment. Being present, at peace and content with those around you and what you are doing is an important part of happiness. Happiness emanates through PCSRA. The way members jump in to help, value each other's presence, and engage in conversations is a sign that ours is a happy

organization. The happiness which characterizes our organization reflects members that strive to experience a state of well-being, peace, contentment in their lives, and in our organization. True happiness is found by living in the present moment. Members attending our meetings and activities do so in the present. **Jean Kinnaman**, our wonderful Health Services chair encouraged us to look for awe each day in common things. Being in awe throughout the day has made a difference in my life. It is easy to find awesome things if one is in the present and sees awe in small things. Being in awe is a happy state.

Please visit us at WSSRA.ORG

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 15 Okanogan County: Penny Garrison (left) and Marcelle LaGrou (right) at the Omak School District's Benefits Fair. The theme was "tropical paradise."

As singer Roger Miller wrote in 1965: "You can't roller skate in a buffalo herd. You can take a shower in a parakeet cage. You can't go swimming in a baseball glove. You can't drive around with a tiger in your car. You can't go fishing in a watermelon patch. But you can be happy if you've a mind too. All you gotta do is put your mind to it. Knuckle down, buckle down. Do it. Do it. Do it."

PCSRA is blessed with happy people who put their mind to

it. As Leo Tolstoy said, "If you want to be happy, be." Being a member of PCSRA makes me happy."

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties: The unit is happy to still be sending funds to the Ocosta School District for their Lunch Buddy program. It is a worthy cause and is much appreciated.

Four student scholarships were awarded from the Robert J. Handy, WSSR Foundation, and Gene Forrester Memorial scholarships. In addition, there were two winners receiving the Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship scholarships. Scholarship awards have been distributed to the students, for a total of \$3,000. We wish them the very best.

The unit's fall meeting will be held on October 18 in Montesano.

Unit 5 is looking forward to a great year while supporting local students.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

In unanimous agreement, during a special summer meeting, it was decided that one action during the coming year will be the coordination between the membership committee and the mini-grant committee. Mini-grant applicants (who are not members) will be encouraged to become a member on the mini-grant application which will provide them with a \$200 additional mini-grant reward as well as six months of free dues. This coordinated effort will be headed by membership chair **Dorn Barr**, and by the elementary mini-grant committee of **Patti Columbo**, **Nancy Zabel**, **Lori Jones**, and **Sue Koch**. **Karen Keller** chairs the high school mini-grant committee.

In another action, it has been decided that a \$20 gift card will be presented to anyone joining WSSRA online or by paper application. TCSRA treasurer will purchase the gift cards out of unit funds (to be reimbursed by WSSRA) and will have them available on request to members of the board so that the card can be handed out when joining. The name of the new member will be given to the membership chair to ensure the unit gets credit.

Other ideas included attending community events and setting up a tent with information about TCSRA as well as registration support. The entire board is encouraged to keep registration applications handy and look out for retired teachers when they attend any community gathering. Unit president **Sue Shannon** said, "Unit 28 is participating in all WSSRA membership incentive options for 2023-24 because benefits of membership are valuable for active and retired school employees."

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:

The KCSRA board met recently to plan for fall activities and members should have received a newsletter telling them of those plans.

The unit is saying goodbye to **Remi Davis**, unit treasurer for several years as she is relocat-

WSSRA Around The State

ing to be closer to family. The unit thanks her and wishes her well. Agreeing to be the new unit treasurer is **Dahl Trapeur** of Cle Elum. Other officers will remain for this year.

The board hopes that the planned programs and a free lunch will draw members. The first meeting of the fall was on Tuesday, September 19 at the Rosewood Community Club House with a picnic lunch. The program featured a local representative of Habitat sharing information about local efforts to help seniors stay in their own homes as they age.

On October 17 at 12 noon, the group will meet at the Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum. Lunch will be served by the Center. Local SHIBA medical insurance person Katherine Stephensen will present the program. Before lunch and open to all, she will present a SHIBA workshop at 10:00 am at the Center.

The November 21 meeting will be at Rosewood at 12 noon. A fall meal of soup and other good foods will be served. A program including music presented by local students is being planned.

Grant Chair **Tim Bow** will be distributing grant information later in the fall and he and Unit President **Louie Osmonovich** hopes to conduct a membership drive at the same time.

Unit 10 Columbia Gorge: CGSRA Unit 10 member, Lori Owen, will begin official duties as the unit's new vice-president at the October 24 general meeting. Special guest **Peter Diedrick** will provide a 2023-24 legislative update, and mini-grant recipients will share follow-up reports of their classroom projects. Plans are being made for the Winter Warmth community service event and membership recruitment in local schools.

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

The Yakima County SRA gathered for lunch on August 7, at the home of **Nick and Kathy Schultz**. It was good to get together informally and to refresh for a new school year.

The unit's first board meeting was September 11. The budget was finalized, programs were planned, and there was a lengthy discussion about the unit's declining membership. Membership numbers are dwindling, and current

members are concerned about enrolling new members. It is becoming very challenging.

Upcoming programs for the unit's general meetings look to be very interesting. This year's meeting programs will feature a travel agent, a local author, a master gardener, musical group, local Job Corp coordinator, a local hiking group. The final meeting of the year, in May, will be a catered lunch with Bingo and cash prizes.

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: WA 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

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WSSRA Around The State



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: The unit's annual Hallelujah Luncheon was held on August 30 at the Pillar Rock Grill in Moses Lake. Each year, unit members gather on the first day of school to celebrate the fact that they are retired! Pictured (*left to right*) Lanita Pomeroy, Laurel Skaug, Sue Mabry, Barb and Roger Stanford, Twila Herrin, Sue Beall, Shirley Vincent, Robin Childress, Karen Schafer, Gayle Talbot, Janet Jarman (*hidden*), Bev Shelton, Barb Franz, Jill Skaug, Judy Dagnon, Glenda, and Bill Anderson.

The unit is awarding \$12,000 in mini-grants this fall. The application will be in the unit's October and November newsletter. The mini-grant application deadline is November 13. The winners will be announced in December.

The E5-E6 Coordinating Council meets October 11 in Wenatchee with brunch at the Wenatchee Country Club. Those attending always look forward to meeting and sharing information.

The unit's webmaster died unexpectedly in May. Ken Kohnhorst was the webmaster for many years. The unit was in the process of moving to a new local webmaster when

this happened. As a result, the unit's website will need to change the domain name and will maintain the documentation.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

Unit 2 met in August for a summer board meeting. It was well attended and member, **Kathy Langevin**, was welcomed onto the board. The 2023-24 budget was presented and approved. **Sue Kane**, the unit's administrative assistant, explained in detail all aspects of the budget. The unit's first membership meeting will be in October at the Senior Center in Wenatchee.

The unit budgeted for a new program this year called, "Unlimited Projects" or "UP!" Members will be able to apply for funds to start "interest based" projects for members and potential members. (Some ideas include walking/hiking groups, school-based projects, book clubs, volunteering in the community, group trips, road clean-ups, etc.) The ideas are "unlimited!"

Recently, CDSRA contributed to the newly remodeled "Coyote's Corner" for children at the NCW Museum & Cultural Center and the unit's name is now on the door. The unit was invited to their grand opening. The unit also voted to continue sponsoring "Every

Kid at the PAC" with a \$1,000 grant. Specifically, the unit will sponsor "The Dinosaur Show." Students are bussed in from schools throughout the area; for some, it is their first chance to see a live production. Unit members are also encouraged to attend. A new grant that the unit recently approved will help provide scholarships for "Stage Kids" musical theatre classes to students who normally would not be able to afford to attend.

The CDSRA table was a hit at this year's NCESD's "STEM Summit." Teachers and para-educators from the area came by to say "Hi!" and enter to win some fabulous Jones wine. Current members of CDSRA were entered into a special wine drawing and brand-new members (13!) entered a very special drawing. New members were also given a coffee card and a mini-grant application. It was an extremely successful event!

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

The members of Columbia Basin Unit 4 have been winding down their summer activities and gearing up for the new school year.

Five members recently took a field trip to the Old Hotel in Othello, where they enjoyed an informative tour of the old building, which is now a museum that contains many interesting items from the past. After the tour, they ate

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lunch together at Ironworks Restaurant, also in Othello.

In July, Co-President **Helen Preston** delivered packets of Books for Babies to two area hospitals.

The annual Hallelujah Luncheon was held on the first day of school, August 30. Eighteen happily retired CBSRA members attended the fun event at Pillar Rock Grill, in Moses Lake. Co-President **Lanita Pomeroy** presented a slide show featuring many wonderful memories of past unit events.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

July saw a treasury review committee, including members **Barbara Christensen, Richard Johnson, and Sherry Pitts**, sitting down with Treasurer **Penny Garrison's** records and books for the unit's annual treasury review. August found **Marcelle LaGrou** and **Penny Garrison** recruiting new members at the Omak School District's benefits fair. The two chatted

with current and potential members handing out membership forms as well as mini-grant applications to current actives. Fall grants of \$300 will be awarded at the October 27 meeting.

Plans have been made for the unit to meet this fall at the Community Presbyterian Church of Omak. Meeting times returned to 11:00 a.m. featuring a soup and sandwich luncheon by members, **Bob, and Janet Shacklett**. The November social has been canceled for this year and meetings will resume in January at a spot to be determined by membership.

EAST-7

Unit 25 Spokane Area:

SAREA had its first board meeting for the upcoming year on August 23, in **Marilyn Richard's** beautiful back yard. All in attendance agreed it was very productive. The unit is striving to increase membership by holding events filled



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Unit Co-President Helen Preston (center) presenting Books for Babies packets to Othello Hospital staff.

with fun, great company, and good food!

The unit gathered for a picnic on September 27 at Mirabeau Park. All members were invited and encouraged to bring a new member. Starbucks gift cards were given for all members who brought a guest and their guests if they join SAREA. The picnic included games with prizes

and a drawing for a corn hole game. Lunch was provided by SAREA.

The unit's general meeting will be held on October 11 with guest speaker Sue Webber. Sue will address what's new for 2023-24 health insurance plans.

The unit is looking forward to the holiday luncheon at CenterPlace on December 6.



More than one *Journal* in your mailbox?

The *Journal* comes out five times each year. WSSRA's longstanding practice is to send a copy of the *Journal* to every member. For those households with more than one member, multiple copies are sent to the same address - one for each member.

If this scenario applies to you and your spouse/ roommate and you would prefer to receive only one copy per household, please contact WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter, michele@wssra.org or 360-413-5496, ext. 116.

WSSRA Around The State

Unit 33 Whitman Co.:

Lu Luhring, unit treasurer, and **Linda Marler**, unit president, attended the WSSRA convention in Pasco. **Linda** was elected to the WSSR Foundation board at convention. Since she is the E-7 board representative for one more year, she will be a non-voting Foundation board member.

The Unit 33 executive board met to report on convention, legislative action, and updates on medical insurance for the coming year. The unit's November meeting will be held in Colfax.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy:

The unit's September meeting was held at Jollymore's Restaurant in Lewiston. The restaurant has graciously allowed the unit to hold meetings in their event room and attendees can order off the menu. The venue fits the unit's needs perfectly. The program was information on the Asotin County Library Foundation and their current projects and upcoming events.

Unit Membership Chair **Allison Hays** and Unit President **Kay Andersen** attended a new hires meeting for the Clarkston School District and

signed up two new members. The unit plans to attend staff meetings of the schools they couldn't get to last school year. The unit also sent out flyers welcoming school staffs back to school and inviting them to join WSSRA, which can help save them a "mint" and, naturally, a mint was glued to each one.

Gail Curtis is working on activating the unit's calling committee. **Allison Hays** is sending out meeting reminder postcards. The unit's Facebook page doesn't get many hits but hope to someday.

A work party was held at the public library where unit

members stamped, folded, and sealed letters to unit members asking for donations for the unit's scholarship fund. The unit's numbers are small and don't generate much money, so it is tough to get good results from selling items to each other. So, the unit is trying a new tactic with the scholarship donation letters. Fingers crossed!

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

The August luncheon was an indoor picnic with line dancing and music accompaniment by member **Vickie Evans**. School supplies were collected for SHAKE (Seniors Helping all Kids Education).



NAEP is hiring

In-school data collectors are needed for national assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12, January 29–March 8, 2024.

Enter your contact information at <http://www.WorkNAEP.com> to be notified once applications are available.

Westat: EOE, including disability/veterans



NAEP

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 29 Benton/Franklin: Luncheon basket winner Kim Trusty with Unit President Dottie Stevens.

Four baskets were given away to attendees from member **Jan Fraley**. She has been doing this consistently at luncheons and it is a highlight at luncheons.

School district benefits fairs were held in Pasco and Richland with BFSRA members in attendance to share WSSRA's work for all educators. Membership Chair **Don Parks** was there signing up new actives for Unit 29.

Unit mini-grants have become popular again mainly with elementary teachers. The unit receives requests throughout the entire school year. Some will be carried over and granted in September. A few of the last grants requested went to Finley Elementary. One was

for "Stop the Summer Slide" (summer packs of books and materials) from Elizabeth Jansen. The grants are up to \$300. A picture was taken of Elizabeth and her Principal **Pam Kinne**. Principals are frequently involved in the delivery of grants, a surprise for educators and students, they always cheer, it is about them.

Upcoming unit programs:

October – STEM integration in schools with STEM Executive Director, Deb Bowen

November – Toy Drive for the Salvation Army and Holiday Celebration with "Mary Lou and Stevie."

Current and future program information can be found on the unit webpage: <http://bfs-raunit29.blogspot.com>

Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia: Unit 31 board members met in August to prepare for the upcoming year. Date and times for the luncheons were announced and approved. Board members gave ideas for programs and a tentative selection was presented.

September 11 – Superintendent **Wade Smith** from the Walla Walla School District informed members about the upcoming facilities bond.

October 9 – Legislators from the area will update members on issues relevant to them.

November 13 – Mini-grant drawings and presentation on resources for seniors in the area. The Walla Walla Senior Center will present.

December 11 – Book drive and Christmas program.

January 8 – Presentation on protecting members from scammers and identify theft.

February 1 – Speaker on gardening and preparing your garden for spring.

March 11 – Unified Sports presentation.

April 8 – Election of officers and mini-grant presentations.

May 13 – Installation of officers, scholarship recipients, memorial service.

The goals for Unit 31 for the 2023-24 year are 1) increase membership, 2) develop ideas on a community project the unit members can be involved in and, 3) members volunteering - forms will be available at luncheons to fill out indicating where and what volunteering is done.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please Notify:

**Membership Coordinator
Michele Hunter**

michele@wssra.org

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Please Note: If your household receives more than one copy of the Journal in the mail each time, if you prefer to receive just one copy per household, please contact Michele Hunter (contact info above).



The Journal

Washington State School Retirees' Association
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Washington State School Retirees' Association

Vision — Mission — Purpose

WSSRA, a non-profit Association, is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and improving the benefits of educational retirees.

The Association's Vision will provide leadership and promote action relevant to all retired and active school personnel.

The Association's Mission 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.

Ask a friend to join us today...

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