

# The Journal

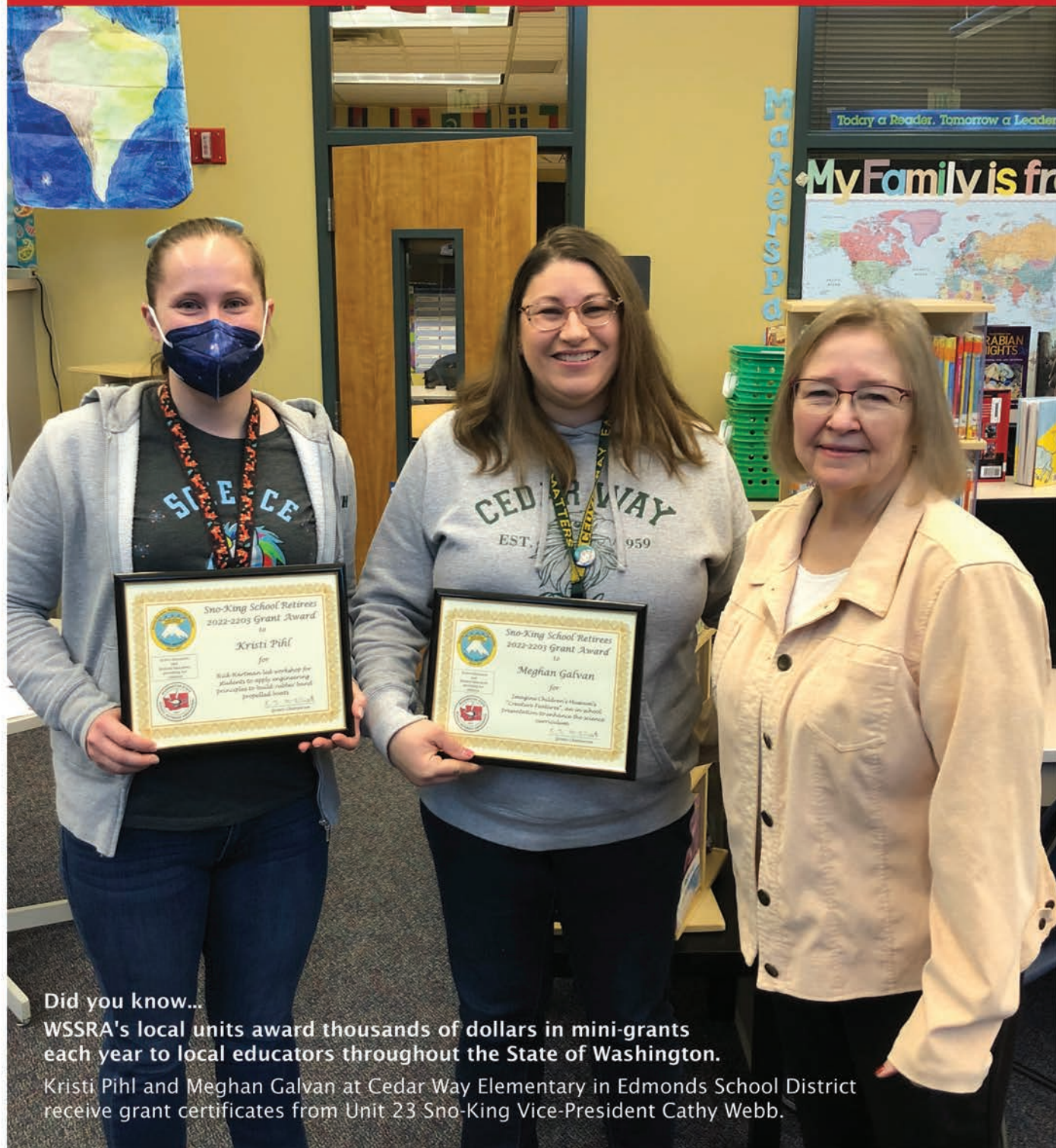
WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



MAY, JUNE 2023

VOLUME 76, ISSUE NO. 5



Did you know...

WSSRA's local units award thousands of dollars in mini-grants each year to local educators throughout the State of Washington.

Kristi Pihl and Meghan Galvan at Cedar Way Elementary in Edmonds School District receive grant certificates from Unit 23 Sno-King Vice-President Cathy Webb.



## WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the president*

### Our Journey



*by Brad Beal, president*

As I enter the last few months as your president, I want to reflect on change, which seems to be the only thing that has remained the same during the past few years. The pandemic's impact on our lives the last three years has brought about many changes. I've appreciated your patience with our organization as we have worked together to support WSSRA's vision to, "provide leadership and promote action relevant to all retired and active school personnel."

Change can be positive. Many of you have taken on the role of change agents within your unit, coordinating council or at the state level during these stressful times. Often the word change can create an atmosphere of anxiety for many in an organization. You have persevered, building relationships through your collaborative approaches, creating an atmosphere of trust.

We have transitioned from Zoom-only meetings to a hybrid format that has stretched our tech levels and endurance sitting in front of a screen for hours. Last April, the Council of Committees met on Zoom over a period of three, one-hour sessions which allowed committee members to hear from Membership, Health, and Retirement Planning. One major outcome was to better understand each other's needs. This allowed for more opportunities for collaboration. The feedback was positive and we're planning to follow the same model this year. Several committee members mentioned to me at the September convention that Zoom

allowed them to attend events without having to travel or the frustration of travel limitations.

Grassroots communication is essential. Over the last two years I've attended coordinating council meetings across the state via Zoom. Many were in the process of discussing strategies for member building incentives. I was encouraged to see units choosing a variety of approaches that work best in their local region. Using a hybrid format has allowed more opportunities for us to collaborate and make decisions in a timelier manner. We can be flexible and attentive to the needs of others to grow our membership.

The collaboration between the Scholarship Committee and Foundation is an example of progress. Within a matter of months, using Zoom, these committees were able to revise the scholarship application form and develop an electronic version of the form. The Foundation's support of this process allows more scholarships to be awarded by each region and expands the impact we have within the university setting. Zoom allowed the group to move quickly. A one-time scholarship is now available to students who will be student teaching or conducting an internship during the 2023-2024 academic year!

I used the word patience earlier in the article. In the process of making changes there will be unforeseen issues. We want to be able to use your feedback to better provide the most user-friendly approach possible. You have an opportunity to review changes at the Pasco convention in June.

I'm inspired by our members who have joined our leadership teams around the state. Please join us as a delegate, celebrating the work of our organization. "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it." – H.E. Luccock



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## THE JOURNAL

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#### JOURNAL INFORMATION

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

#### JOURNAL articles to:

Kristin Murphy, editor  
editor@wssra.org

#### Upcoming JOURNAL article deadlines:

**June 15, 2023**

for July/Aug./Sept. 2023 issue

**September 5, 2023**

for Oct./Nov./Dec. 2023 issue

## WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the executive director*

## Strength In Numbers



*by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director*

Membership and recruitment have been at the top of the WSSRA to-do list for the past several months. *Journal* articles on membership have appeared in the last few editions and recruitment incentives options have been updated for 2023-24. In addition, creative ideas for gaining new members have been shared widely among unit leaders and through our statewide Membership Committee led by chair Don Parks from Unit 29 Benton Franklin SRA.

Given that membership is always a top priority for WSSRA, why the extra emphasis on the topic recently? Basically, the answer is that we are attempting to emerge post-COVID with a plan to grow. COVID was not helpful to the organization's membership efforts. We lost 900 members from our pre-pandemic high point, primarily due to not replacing the 40 – 50 members who pass away every month.

Without tried-and-true recruitment activities like "Bring a Friend to Lunch" and sharing WSSRA information during faculty meeting mini-grant award presentations, we just couldn't keep up. With COVID halting on-site unit meetings and schools moving to Zoom for faculty meetings, we were not able to maintain the face-to-face interactions necessary for prospective members to feel a strong urge to join.

Why is a large membership important? For several reasons, the most important of which is the advocacy power that we have with legislators. Our organization exists primarily to promote K-12 retiree pensions and health care benefits. When we can bring to bear the power of a large numbers, legislators listen—at least in part because it is in their best interest to listen. Retirees vote in large numbers, something known by all in Olympia. Also, when we send out a request for email messages to be sent to local legislators, and 1,000 of our members immediately respond, the message is heard—loud and clear.

We need to keep our numbers up. 17,000 is a good number, but, no doubt, our power in Olympia would increase if membership grew to, say, 20,000. Or, we would have even more influence if we landed at 25,000.

So, how do we grow in an era when groups like ours, as well as traditional philanthropic/community service organizations like Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary are struggling to find new members? That is the question of our time, and one that we will address at the Pasco convention June 5 – 7.

To be sure, we know that certain events and activities work. The free lunch and mini-grant presentations described above are winners. So, too, are efforts to keep active educators engaged and interested through scheduling after-school webinars and meetings, and issuing frequent email updates designed specifically for those in the field who plan to retire.

Highlighting community service activities and scholarship opportunities always attracts educators. And WSSRA units do lots of community-based philanthropy! For teachers and support personnel who spend a career educating kids, it is a guarantee that they understand and value community service.

We will keep up the successful twice-yearly DRS "blind mailings" that contain information specifically directed at non-member retirees. AMBA funds most of the cost of those mailings, and that partner organization consistently attracts new members through their popular supplementary insurance programs.

But what else is out there that will attract new members? Let us know your ideas. Also, consider contacting a non-member former colleague who might be interested in joining. Invite them to the next unit luncheon and let them know how important it is to add their name to the 17,000+ WSSRA members fighting for fair pensions and health care benefits.



## Legislative News



## The Long 2023 Legislative Session



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

The end is nigh. As *The Journal* went to press, legislators were making final decisions on which bills to pass and what spending items to include in the state budget. It's been a long session, literally and figuratively. This was a 105-day budget writing session – next January's session will be a 60-day supplemental. Seventeen hundred bills have been sponsored by Washington state legislators since January. Several thousand amendments have been written.

This legislative session grew more problematic as it progressed. Initial estimates informed legislators they would have \$71 billion to spend this cycle – the current two-year budget is \$67 billion. As interest rates and economic pressures mounted, expected revenues were reduced. Then the newest banking crisis began to unfold. There is now financial anxiety and a desire to leave a more sizeable cushion in case there is a financial downturn during the legislative interim.

### PLAN 1 COLA

The odds of a TRS/PERS Plan 1 COLA look good. The current proposal is for a 3% COLA capped at \$110 per month. This is not locked in and WSSRA's advocacy team is still lobbying hard to make sure it is retained in the budget.

Retirees would have preferred an automatic annual COLA or one that matched this year's 8% inflation rate. Legislators were uninterested in addressing the issue in a holistic way this session. WSSRA will continue that fight into the interim and next session.

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

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

### MEDICAL BENEFITS (ALL PENSION PLANS)

The Governor, the State Health Care Authority, the House of Representatives, and the Senate are all on board with continuing the \$183 monthly Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit. This is good news. The benefit is noncontractual and must be reapproved every two years.

### PLAN 1 FUNDING

For years, retirees have advocated for the elimination of the TRS 1 and PERS 1 pension unfunded liability. Those funding gaps are one of the often-cited reasons for not restoring a permanent Plan 1 COLA. The current payment plan would have the TRS 1 and PERS 1 unfunded liabilities paid off by the year 2026. Payments would then cause the funded status to surge past over 150% in the 2030's. This is a scenario WSSRA endorses, but it understandably causes significant heartburn for legislators with budgeting responsibilities.

Legislators prefer a different scenario. Appropriators are trying to finesse the payment structure to provide 100% funding this decade and then smooth contributions so funding stays at 100% in the future. WSSRA believes those pension contribution savings should be used to fund an automatic COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. Many legislators disagree.

### TRS & SERS PLANS 2/3 ENHANCEMENTS

WSSRA is working on passage of two bills to improve and equalize benefits within TRS 2/3 and SERS 2/3. Both bills are technical and somewhat boring, but both will provide real benefits to retirees. House Bill 1008 equalizes PEBB deferral rights within Plans 2/3. If passed, this bill would allow all future retirees to defer their PEBB retiree insurance if they separate from service early without drawing a retirement. House Bill 1056 equalizes return-to-work rules so all retirees, even administrators and general government employees, will be able to work a minimum of 867 hours in retirement without jeopardizing their pension payments.

### CONCLUSION

By the time *The Journal* reaches your inbox, the legislative session will likely have adjourned. The summer edition will have the final report, however, for more timely information please check the WSSRA website ([wssra.org](https://wssra.org)) or the WSSRA Facebook page for the final session report. Both are updated every Friday during the legislative session.



## WSSR-PAC News



## Let's Strengthen Our PAC Power



by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president

Let's make our WSSR-PAC stronger by increasing your contributions to the PAC treasury. The more funds we have to give, the more support we can generate for the legislative campaigns of those who care about our retiree issues. We need supportive legislators to move our pension bills through the complicated process of bill passing in Olympia. The issue isn't a lack of state funds, but rather a lack of legislators' priorities when it comes to who reaps the benefits of state programs. The more legislators who view our programs as a priority, the better chance we have of succeeding.

Many of you have carried us, in times past, with your donations and we are truly grateful. However, we are encouraging everyone to dig even deeper as permanent COLA discussions heat up between now and the next legislative session. Although each of our pocketbooks is not equal, it is on "all our shoulders" to make a difference. You don't have to contribute a huge amount to make a difference. If each of us gives even a small amount – even \$1 – it really does add up. Legislators do take note of who is helping them.

Please use the contribution form at the bottom of this page. Just cut it out, or copy it and send it with your check to WSSR-PAC.

WSSR-PAC will have low-cost fundraisers during WSSRA's state convention in Pasco. A wine auction and member-made cards and crafts sale will be available.

I'm sorry to report the passing of the SW-4 PAC Board Representative, Mina Milligan. She also served on the WSSRA Legislative Committee. Mina will be greatly missed – happy heavenly trails to Mina.

Happy Trails to you all. Keep safe and stay healthy. Thank you for supporting WSSR-PAC.

### LOW COST FUNDRAISER FORM

1. **WSSR-PAC.ORG**
2. **Click on "Contribute Now"**
3. **Click on "Contribute"**
4. **Scroll down to Low Cost Fundraisers section**

*Questions - PAC Treasurer Lora Brabant*

## Support the WSSR-PAC — Contribute Today!

Contributor Name and Spouse (if applicable):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Unit #/Name:

In memory of  
(if any):

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Amount \$

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

**Mail Form & Contribution to:**

**WSSR-PAC**

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

**WSSR-PAC.ORG**

## Supporting Future Educators



## WSSR Foundation: Thank You for Supporting Scholarships



by Marianne Harvey, WSSR Foundation president

The WSSR Foundation and WSSRA Scholarship Committee are completing a year of collaboration updating and revamping the application process and scoring rubric for all scholarships offered by our organization. A heartfelt thanks goes to members who contributed to funding future educators in Washington either by donation, in remembrance of a member or through RMD distribution. Your involvement makes an important difference for our future educators.

A huge thank you goes to members who encouraged students to apply or read the forms submitted by 198 high school seniors—an increase of 142 more than in 2022. It is very gratifying to realize there are so many gifted students in Washington who are striving to become future educators. The two committees found it rewarding to bring scholarships into the twenty-first

century and rekindling interest in our philanthropic endeavors. The Neil Prescott student internship scholarships also saw increased interest with 54 applications, up from 20 in 2022.

We are evaluating ways to create interest in the student teacher scholarships. In the past, funds have gone unclaimed in some geographic areas. In a two-year pilot program, the Foundation is testing if it would be beneficial to let the individual colleges decide who would receive the funds.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the convention in Pasco. Each unit should be planning to bring creative baskets that everyone will want to take home. Remember to include items for our popular silent auction – ideas could include fine dining, garden, free time, hobbies, art, etc. We are looking forward to seeing you in June.

### 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 _____		
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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



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 Southwest King SRA - in memory of Aldene Duchscherer, Mary Daley, Roger Meessen, Shirley Peace, Warren Levenhagen

## Honorary Lifetime Membership

Long-standing WSSRA members can be eligible to receive honorary membership. To meet the criteria for honorary membership, a member must have reached the age of 90 by June 30, have been a member of WSSRA for at least 20 years, and have been an actively contributing member. Unit presidents can submit nominations to the executive board for consideration. This year, the following individuals were awarded WSSRA Honorary Memberships:

**Lillian Clark**

Unit 28 Thurston County

**Alice Davis**

Unit 33 Whitman County

**Charles D. (Chuck) Pecha**

Unit 15 Okanogan County

**Frances Person**

Unit 30 SW Washington - Vancouver

**Margaret Snitzler**

Unit 30 SW Washington - Vancouver



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WSSRA – Washington State School Retirees' Association



## Membership: Strength In Numbers

### Boosting Membership



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair



Heading into the June convention in Pasco, we are showing a noticeable increase in WSSRA membership over the past few months. The big news is that we have once again crossed over the 17,000-member level. Membership building efforts have been paying off but there is more work to do. Good ideas have emerged from local units and WSSRA leadership.

As of April 1, our membership stood at 17,039. That's up from the March 2 level of 16,932 and it compares favorably with the 17,084 level of April 2, 2022. We are holding our own and that is good news, especially considering the downturn we endured during COVID. Thanks to all who are working diligently.

The April numbers include 12,055 automatic dues deduction members and 1,419 cash members. We had 35 deceased in the month of March. There are 7,505 member emails on file at the state office and we hope that number will go up in the future.

The state Membership committee met, via Zoom, on April 4 and

discussed the four membership recruitment ideas mentioned in the March/April issue of the *Journal*. The committee found the ideas to be favorable. The minutes are available at the state office.

The recruitment incentive ideas are now available to the units. The two incentive plans of the past few years are still available. Please contact the WSSRA office to inform Michele of your intent to utilize any or all of them.

For those attending the convention in Pasco in June, the Membership break-out session on Wednesday morning will include a discussion of recruitment ideas. Please bring your ideas - your input and suggestions are hereby solicited - and plan to share your thoughts.

The WSSRA Membership Committee stands ready to answer your questions and to provide supplies for your local unit to support your efforts. We wish everyone a warmer and pleasant spring and we hope to see you in Pasco in June.

### 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](mailto:michele@wssra.org) or 360-413-5496, ext 116



## For Your Health



## Dementia



by Myrna Muto (Unit 20 Seattle), state health committee

Some parts of aging are inevitable for most of us - various aches and pains, weakening muscles, and some age-related memory changes. Although forgetting the occasional word or misplacing an item or two is a common side effect of aging, Alzheimer's disease and similar dementias are not an inevitable part of aging. Many adults will live long lives without developing dementia. However, others begin to show symptoms, especially after age 65.

Dementia is a term used to describe impaired ability to remember, think, or make decisions that interfere with doing common, daily activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Along with age, other risk factors can include parents or siblings with dementia, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, and head injuries. Strokes or other issues with blood flow to the brain can also contribute or make symptoms worse. Ethnicity is also a factor. Older African Americans have twice the risk as whites. Hispanics are 1.5 times more likely. According to the CDC, of those at least 65 years of age, there is an estimated 5.0 million adults with dementia in 2014 and a projected 14 million by 2060.

Dementia's symptoms can vary widely from person to person. People can have problems with memory, attention, communication, reasoning, judgment, problem solving, and visual perception beyond typical age-related changes. Signs that may point to dementia include getting lost in a familiar neighborhood, forgetting the name of a close family member or friend, forgetting old memories, and not being able to complete tasks independently.

A healthcare provider should be consulted for concerns about memory and dementia. Your healthcare professional can test cognitive abilities, including memory, attention to detail, and problem solving. In addition, a physical exam, blood tests, and brain scans (such as CT or MRI) can help in making a determination.

Types of dementia include:

- Alzheimer's disease – the most common type of dementia, accounting for up to 80 percent of cases, is caused by specific changes in the brain. The most typical early symptom is trouble remembering recent events, such as a conversation that occurred minutes or hours ago. As the disease progresses, remembering distant memories becomes more difficult. Difficulty walking, talking, and personality changes can develop as well.
- Lewy body dementia – People with this type of dementia experience the typical memory loss symptoms but also have movement or balance problems, including stiffness or trembling. Many people also experience changes in alertness including daytime sleepiness, confusion, or staring spells. They may also have trouble sleeping at night or may experience hallucinations.
- Frontotemporal dementia – This type of dementia typically leads to changes in personality and behavior. People with this condition may behave inappropriately and have problems with language skills.
- Sometimes more than one type of dementia is present in the brain, especially after age 80.

Treatment of dementia depends on the underlying cause. Some cases of dementia may have a reversible underlying cause: side effects of medication, increased pressure in the brain, vitamin deficiency, and thyroid hormone imbalance. However, neurodegenerative dementias, like Alzheimer's disease, have no cure. There are medications available that can help protect the brain or manage symptoms such as anxiety or behavior changes.

Some things are out of our control – age, genetics, and family history can't be changed. However, leading a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise, healthy eating, and maintaining social contacts are positive steps to focus on as we age to help prevent certain diseases and reduce risk for cognitive decline.

*Adapted from the CDC's article, "About Dementia,"  
by the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program  
of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)





## WSSRA Convention 2023

# 2023 Convention Preview

**June 5 – 7, 2023 in Pasco, Washington at the Red Lion**

Finally, we are back to normal! After three years of no convention, or in 2022 a delayed September event, the 2023 Pasco Convention will return to our regular early-June dates. Members will gather at the Pasco Red Lion on June 5-7 for the 76th annual WSSRA convention and celebration.

It promises to be a top-notch event. With three keynoters, and an additional Wednesday morning leadership training session on the schedule, the agenda should offer something for every member. Plus, with celebratory events and acknowledgments occurring all three days, those who volunteered their services in unit or statewide activities will be given a well-deserved “thank you.”

### Keynote Speakers

- Monday afternoon – Dana Miles, Washington State Teacher of the Year from the state School for the Deaf in Vancouver, will provide the opening keynote. Dana, who is hearing impaired, will share the wonders of teaching students with hearing deficiencies, as well as provide an overview on how teachers can work effectively with students who encounter this unique challenge.
- Tuesday morning – Amina Makhdoom, from Fresnel Consulting and a frequent presenter for National Retired Teacher Association affiliates, will lead us through an exercise that will provide insights and a plan for gaining, keeping and energizing new members. All of us encounter challenges with membership, and this session will be focused solely on addressing that problem.
- Wednesday morning – Mike Pellicciotti, Washington State Treasurer, will speak about the Treasurer’s office role in pension matters and discuss concerns about assuring retirement security outside of the pension system. Treasurer Pellicciotti is a former assistant attorney general who served as a state representative from the Federal Way area.

### Break-out Sessions

- On Monday afternoon, Ellen Wolfhagen, Senior Accounts Manager, and Jean Bui, Deputy Director of the Employee and Retirees Benefit Division, both of the state Health Care Authority, will provide an update on PEBB Medicare supplement plans. This session will provide the latest on possible 2024 increases in the Uniform Medical Plan (Classic) program, and coverage/cost comparisons with other PEBB plans.
- Also, on Monday afternoon (at the same time), Historian Karen Keller will join with Legislative Director Peter Diedrick and Executive Director Alan Burke on a 75-year look-back to WSSRA history and accomplishments.
- Wednesday morning will be devoted to the traditional set of leadership training sessions, with an added option featuring Pasco School District Superintendent Michelle Whitney presenting on current classroom teaching trends.

Of course, the convention will be filled with opportunities for social interaction and will include times to celebrate unit achievements in 2022-23, acknowledge the work of WSSRA leadership at the state and local level, pay homage to those who have passed away, and complete the leadership transition from 2022-23 President Brad Beal to 2023-24 President Ron Crawford.

Registration material is posted the website (WSSRA.org). Please contact your local unit president for information about delegate selection. Delegate Assembly will be held on Tuesday for the purposes of considering bylaw amendments (see pages 13-15) and consideration of the 2023-24 budget. Participation in Delegate Assembly is encouraged, but non-delegates are welcome to attend the convention. We’ll see you in Pasco on June 5-7, 2023!

### Convention At-A-Glance

#### MONDAY *(afternoon and evening)*

- Session Options: HCA/PEBB, WSSRA History, Estate Planning
- Afternoon Keynote – Dana Miles
- Pre-Convention Hearing
- Dinner and Awards Banquet

#### TUESDAY

- Opening Ceremonies
- Morning Keynote – Amina Makhdoom
- Celebration of Life
- Scholarship Luncheon
- Delegate Assembly
- Legislative/WSSR-PAC workshop
- Coordinating Council meetings
- Dinner Banquet and Evening Social

#### WEDNESDAY *(morning only)*

- Breakfast Keynote – State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti
- Leadership Meetings *(unit presidents and vice presidents, membership, unit treasurers, legislative, unit secretaries, health services, retirement planning)*
- Dr. Michelle Whitney, “What’s New in the Classroom”



## WSSRA Convention 2023

### Welcome to the Tri-Cities



*by Victoria Russell and Dottie Stevens co-presidents of Unit 29 Benton/Franklin and convention planning committee members*

Three major reasons to visit the Tri-Cities (Richland, Pasco, and Kennewick) now are the weather, wine, and fun! The sun shines most days here, thanks to the Tri-Cities' quasi-desert climate. If you hit any of the numerous recreation areas, you will experience a unique terrain shaped by Ice Age floods more than 15,000 years ago. Our areas are located at the confluence of three rivers – the Columbia, Snake, and Yakima, leading the Tri-Cities as being a great place to enjoy the various water activities such as a luxury cruise down the Columbia or just a chance to dip your toes in.

Love wine? The Tri-Cities are located at 46 degrees north, the same latitude as famous wine regions in Europe and are framed by six of the twenty American Viticulture Areas in Washington. There are more than 200 wineries within a 50-mile radius, even more reason to visit.

Come discover Kennewick's Historic Waterfront, Clover Island and lighthouse, a Columbia River destination, old Kennewick downtown and the Public Market for shopping, and the beautiful Columbia Park, Franklin County Museum and Aviation Museum

and of course our wineries, Badger Mountain/Powers Market (organic wines, too), and Farmhand.

Pasco, a city named by a Northern Pacific Railroad engineer, provides Sacajawea State Park where Lewis and Clark spent time and the hands-on Museum, Farmer's Market (May-Oct), Franklin County Museum, Bechtel National Planetarium and Ice Harbor Dam. The convention will be held right across the street from Columbia Basin Community College.

Nestled on the shores of the Columbia and Yakima Rivers, is Richland. It is an outdoor enthusiast's haven and city life. You'll enjoy The Reach Museum for the city's history, Howard Amon Park and Allied Art Gallery, natural preserves, the three major wineries on Tulip Lane (J. Bookwalter, Barnard and Taverna Tagaris) and many others plus numerous golf courses.

We look forward to your visit to the Tri-Cities on June 5-7, 2023 at the Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center, 2525 N. 20th Avenue, Pasco, WA 99301. You will enjoy a change of pace, sunshine, relaxation, and wine, if you like. We are excited to see our fellow WSSRA members in the Tri-Cities.

## 2023 Delegate Assembly — Candidate Statements



### Kay Bishop for President-Elect 2023-24

I'm Kay Bishop from NW1. As District Representative for the past five years, I feel I'm beginning to have a better understanding of WSSRA and its mission. Having joined as an active teacher in the 1990's, retired from the classroom since 2004, and now supervising student teachers for the past 18 years, I have come to realize how valuable WSSRA can be to all our school retirees. Regardless of your career

area - classified or certified, our organization is critical to the health of your retirement. So much good has been done over the past several years; it's time to stop begging! I'm asking you to help me to shine the light as we guide those of us who are retired, and welcome those joining our ranks, as we continue to inform our legislators of just how important we still are to the lives of our students - past, present, and future.



## WSSRA Convention 2023 — Delegate Assembly

### Candidate Statements



**Ken Harvey**  
for Northwest 1  
District Representative

I wanted to be an educator since kindergarten when I fell in love with my teacher.

Even though she got married that year my desire to be a teacher did not fade. I started my career in a one room school in North Dakota with six students ranging from first to eighth grade. After returning to Washington, I taught elementary grades in the Everett School District for 36 years.

When I retired in 2015, I enjoyed all the extra time to pursue hobbies such as gardening but still something was missing. I missed being around people. Finally, I attended lunch events at my local WEA-retired and, also WSSRA. Sno-Isle Unit 22 had better lunches and the rest is history.

I've served as president of Unit 22 for a number of years. I have also been the chair of the Health Committee. I am proud of the community work and support for education that our individual units do across the state as well as the advocacy for retirees at the state level.

My husband, David, and I enjoy traveling and spending time with my two grandchildren and our dog Jack.



**Cathy Stordeur**  
for Southwest 3  
District Representative

I was a change of career teacher who taught Chemistry and Advanced Placement Chemistry for 18 years in the Richland School District (and, I still miss being in the classroom.) I joined Clallam County School Retirees (CCSRA) as soon as I connected with the unit in my soon-to-be-home after I retired in 2016. We moved to Joyce, west of Port Angeles, in 2019 and are completing our forever home here. I am currently serving as vice-president of CCSRA and I have attended SW-3 meetings since I first joined. I've also attended several state conventions and enjoy meeting members from other areas and reconnecting with friends from my teaching days in the Tri-Cities. I am eager to help the units in our district come back from the COVID disruptions.



**Shirlee Jellum**  
for East 5 District  
Representative

I retired in 2015 after teaching English and Spanish for thirty years at the secondary level in the White Salmon School District.

Since 2018, I have been the president of the newly-formed Unit 10 Columbia Gorge School Retirees Association. I have also served on the State Membership Committee and look forward to serving as the E-5 District Representative. In addition, I am a board member of Soroptimist International Mt. Adams, the Klickitat County Democratic Party, and the New Dungeness Lighthouse Association. When not working in my orchard or garden, I enjoy traveling, backpacking, winemaking, and writing.



**Linda Marler**  
for WSSR Foundation Trustee  
(east)

I graduated from Vallivue High School in Caldwell, Idaho, and then went north to the University of Idaho for my bachelor's and master's degrees in family and consumer sciences. I taught for 38 years in LaCrosse, St. John, and Colfax public schools and nine years at All Saints Catholic School in Spokane.

Outside of school, I was coordinator of religious education at my church for fifteen years. I have served 18 years on the Whitman Hospital Foundation Board, including as secretary, vice president, and president. I've served six years on the WSU Foundation Board, seven years as president of Nu Chapter of Delta Gamma House Corporation Board at the University of Idaho, and I'm currently on the external Family Consumer Sciences advisory board at the University of Idaho. I am completing three years as president of Athenaeum Club in Colfax, founded as a literary society and probably the oldest women's club in Washington.

I joined our Whitman County Unit of WSSRA shortly after I retired in 2009, and I am now serving as president, trying to fill the shoes of the wonderful Alice Davis. I have been a scholarship reader a number of times. I am now the E-7 representative and serve on the Scholarship committee.

Our organization is blessed with members from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests who understand the importance of our mission. It is an honor to know and work with them.



**WSSRA Convention 2023 — Delegate Assembly****2023 WSSRA Bylaw Amendment Proposals**

The WSSRA Rules and Resolutions Committee met November 16-17, 2022 to review and recommend changes to the organization's Bylaws. The Rules and Resolution Committee sent four recommendations to the WSSRA Executive Board who voted a DO PASS on each. The Rules and Resolutions Committee met on February 28, 2023 and approved the following recommendations be returned to the WSSRA Executive Board for a final vote before moving forward to the June 6, 2023 Delegate Assembly for a final vote.

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2023-01****General Amendment Changes**

**Delete the following throughout the Bylaws document:**

- Executive Committee
- Parliamentarian

**Rationale:**

- Executive Committee is being deleted as it is non-functioning. Executive Board members are able to meet in person or online any time an issue needs to be addressed, rather than leaving matters to only three people.
- Parliamentarian is being revised to read that the Secretary is Parliamentarian during Executive Board meetings with a Professional Registered Parliamentarian contracted for Delegate Assemblies. It is cost prohibitive to find a Parliamentarian to serve at Executive Board meetings; however, it is of importance that a Parliamentarian be contracted for Delegate Assembly.

**Recommendations:**

- The Rules and Resolution Committee recommends a DO PASS
- The WSSRA Executive Board recommends a DO PASS

**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2023-02****Article II - Purposes**

**Replace current language in Article II Purposes and replace with proposed amendment language for Article II**

**Rationale:**

Current practice is that the Purposes statements are listed in the Bylaws while the Vision and Mission statements are listed on the back page of the *Journal*. To implement a more concise and clear statement, the Rules and Resolutions Committee believes that the Vision and Mission Statements should be in the Bylaws.

**Recommendations:**

- The Rules and Resolution Committee recommends a DO PASS
- The WSSRA Executive Board recommends a DO PASS

*continued on page 14...*



## WSSRA Convention 2023 — Delegate Assembly

### PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2023-02, Article II - Purposes Continued...

#### **CURRENT BYLAW READS:**

##### ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

The purposes of this non-profit Association are to promote the general welfare of its members while continuing promotion of public education and good citizenship according to the following:

A. Educate individual retirees in subjects useful in:

1. Promoting their general welfare (economical, physical, psychological).
2. Improving their life after retirement.
3. Alerting them to problems affecting health, welfare, and economic concerns.
4. Preparation for retirement of both active school employees and school retirees by conducting and/or assisting with retirement planning workshops.
5. Training leaders.
6. Informing the general public of the needs of retired educators.

B. Support:

1. Education of all students in the State of Washington.
2. Continue education of mature adults.
3. Encourage school retirees to maintain their identity with the active education profession through volunteer activities associated with active education.

C. Promote group and individual involvement in community affairs.

D. Help needy school retirees in locating sources of assistance.

E. Accept bequests, contributions, grants, other income, and items of value; and to disburse revenue there from in furtherance of these purposes; and to set foundations or other systems to accomplish them.

#### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT (IF ADOPTED, THE ARTICLE WOULD READ AS FOLLOWS):**

##### ARTICLE II – PURPOSES/VISION/MISSION

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

The Association's vision provides leadership and promotes 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.



## WSSRA Convention 2023 — Delegate Assembly

### PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2023-03

#### Article V - ~~Executive Committee~~ Executive Board, Section 2

Article V - Section 2 Current Language	Article V - Section 2 Proposed Amendment <i>(yellow/underline)</i>	If Amendment Adopted, Article V - Section 2 will state:
<p>One District Representative shall be elected at the Delegate Assembly by the Delegates from the respective Coordinating Council District, and he/she shall be a Member of a Local Unit included in the respective District he/she/ represents. The term of office shall be three (3) years. District Representatives shall be limited to serve one term. Exception: filling an unexpired term.</p>	<p>One District Representative shall be elected at the Delegate Assembly by the Delegates from the respective Coordinating Council District, and he/she shall be a Member of a Local Unit included in the respective District he/she/ represents. The term of office shall be three (3) years. District Representatives shall be limited to serve one term. Exceptions: filling an unexpired term, <u>or after three (3) years of not holding an office, a former District Representative may serve a new turn.</u></p>	<p>One District Representative shall be elected at the Delegate Assembly by the Delegates from the respective Coordinating Council District, and he/she shall be a Member of a Local Unit included in the respective District he/she/ represents. The term of office shall be three (3) years. District Representatives shall be limited to serve one term. Exceptions: filling an unexpired term, or after three (3) years of not holding an office, a former District Representative may serve a new turn.</p>

#### Rationale:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to find members to fill WSSRA positions. With a three-year gap, a district representative who served previously, may fill an open unfilled slot (new term).

#### Recommendations:

- The Rules and Resolution Committee recommends a DO PASS
- The WSSRA Executive Board recommends a DO PASS

### PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT 2023-04

#### Article V - ~~Executive Committee~~ Executive Board

#### Add SECTION 2.K. to Article V of the Bylaws

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT (IF ADOPTED, THE SUBSECTION WOULD READ AS FOLLOWS):

K. All District Representatives shall serve as members of the WSSRA State Scholarship Committee.

#### Rationale:

Current practice has been that three district representatives comprise the Scholarship Committee. Due to virtual meeting ability, all district representatives can meet to discuss and to make decisions on scholarship procedures. An eight (8) member committee can do a more thorough review of the entire scholarship process; hence, all representatives are fully aware of guidelines and timelines immediately.

#### Recommendations:

- The Rules and Resolution Committee recommends a DO PASS
- The WSSRA Executive Board recommends a DO PASS



## Connections

## New Report Highlights Increasing Cost of Family Caregiving



by Cathy MacCaul, AARP

Family caregivers provide needed day-to-day support and services and manage complex care tasks for adults with chronic, disabling, or serious health conditions. In addition to helping with self-care or other everyday activities and giving emotional and social support, family caregivers handle complex medical and nursing tasks at home, like performing wound care, giving injections, and managing medical equipment.

In Washington, the unpaid care provided by these 820,000 silent saviors is valued at \$16.8 billion, according to new state data available in AARP's latest Valuing the Invaluable report. This is a \$4.8 billion increase in unpaid contributions since the last report was released in 2019.

The share of available family caregivers is projected to continue shrinking relative to the number of older adults who will potentially need long-term care. By 2034, adults aged 65 and older will outnumber children under the age of 18 for the first

time. In addition, family caregivers will continue to face the dual demands of employment and caregiving responsibilities, which often include caring for an older adult and children simultaneously.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the realities of the caregiving experience. Family caregivers and their care recipients lost access to paid care support due to program closures and staff shortages, experienced isolation and loneliness, and struggled with financial losses in income, housing, and food security. In addition, almost 40% of family caregivers increased their care hours. In fact, for working family caregivers, it was the equivalent of taking on a part-time job.

"Family caregivers play a vital role in Washington's health care system, whether they care for someone at home, coordinate home health care, or help care for someone who lives in a nursing home," said Marguerite Ro, AARP Washington State Director. "We want to make sure all family caregivers have the financial, emotional and social support they need, because the care they provide is invaluable both to those receiving it and to their community."

Valuing the Invaluable highlights trends in family caregiving, explores the growing scope and complexity of family caregiving, and discusses actions needed to address the financial, social, and emotional challenges of caring for parents, spouses, and other loved ones.

AARP Washington supports family caregivers and the loved ones who depend on them for care. For example, AARP Washington helped usher in the WA Cares program which provides funds to pay a family caregiver, which can help an estimated one in four workers who have left the workforce for caregiving responsibilities. These unpaid caregivers often deplete their financial resources, spending up to 26% of their own money on caregiving activities.

Read the full report for national and state-by-state data on the economic value of unpaid care by family and friends by visiting [www.aarp.org/valuing](http://www.aarp.org/valuing)

Resources and information on family caregiving are available at [aarp.org/caregiving](http://aarp.org/caregiving).

### 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

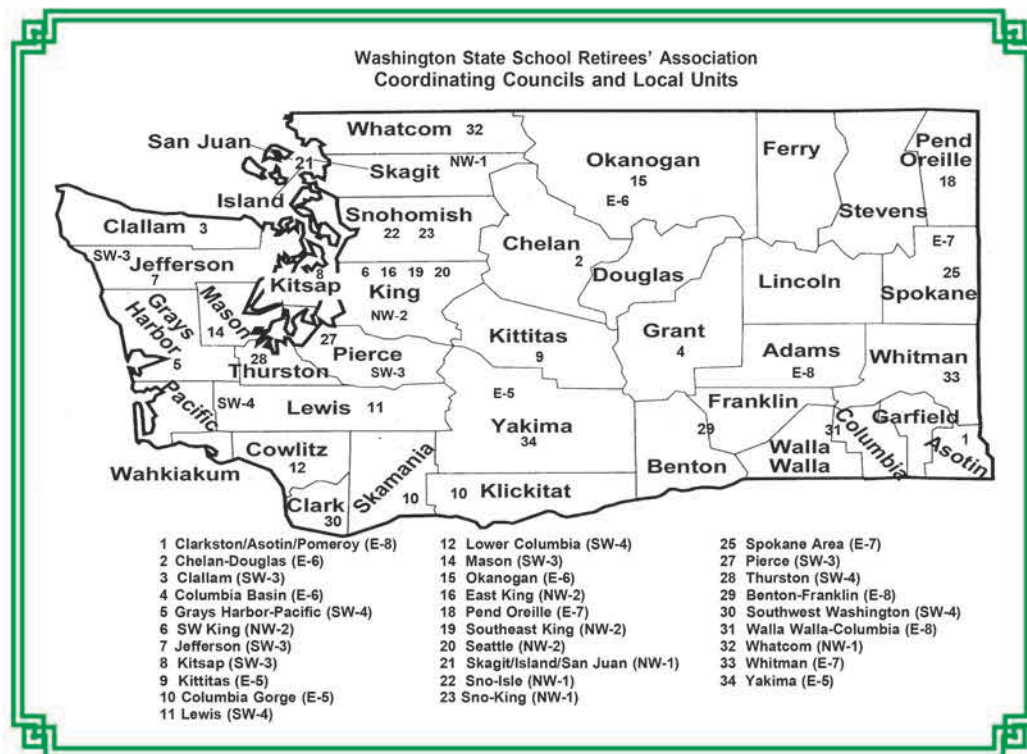
**Senior Citizens' Lobby**  
360-754-0207      WASENIORLOBBY.ORG



## WSSRA Around The State

## What's happening in...

## From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



## NORTHWEST-1

**Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:** Skagit, Island, San Juan Unit 21 board members have had a busy few months. Unit 21 offered a workshop for Clear Lake Elementary in the Sedro Woolley School District that provided important retirement information. **Bill DeHon** answered many questions and concerns of the 25 staff. **Bill** will return, as requested by the staff, to continue to cover the questions asked.

On March 18, board members held an informal lunch

at Skagit Acres to encourage members to become more active. Seasoned members, **Kathy and Robert Reim** attended and newly active member **Kathy Caldwell** brought in a new member to the unit. Attendees enjoyed a great lunch and ideas were discussed about recruiting new people to the unit. It was an encouraging start to a spring membership drive. Each person got to take home a new pansy to plant in their garden, which could serve as a reminder to become more active in unit activities.

The important goal this time of year is the quest for legisla-

tive support for Plan 1 COLA plus the further options for Plan 2 and 3 members to have equal access retirement plan choices. **Bruce Boyer, Diane Visten, and Barbara Robinson**, the unit legislative team spent three days in Olympia in March. They visited legislators from the 10th, 39th, 40th and 42nd legislative districts to speak about the important legislative goals for WSSRA members. Time spent visiting legislators, writing letters and emails to legislators is a critical step to reaching those goals. The unit is fortunate to have legislative buddies that write, plus the board actively contacts legislators during the

session and throughout the year. Several unit members also attended the town hall meetings that local legislators held for their communities.

Plans are underway to invite members to attend the WSSRA Convention in Pasco this coming June. The Unit 21 board is also planning a board meeting to include newly active members to join in May.

**Unit 22 Sno-Isle:**

Sno-Isle had a luncheon in May to celebrate the four students who are attending college thanks to the unit's scholarships. The lunch was hosted by the board and money raised from the suggested \$15 meal donation went to the scholarship fund. It was also a time to honor long-time WSSRA member **Mary Ann Karber** who was turning 100.

**Unit 23 Sno-King:**

In February, the unit meeting featured the annual Humanities Washington speaker coordinated by **Roberta Hawkins**. Thirty-nine attendees listened to an outstanding program about the eruption of Mount St. Helens and what has happened in the last 40 years. It was nice having an in-person presentation versus the Zoom presentations held during the last two years.

The unit completed presenting \$10,374 in grants to 36 of ac-



## WSSRA Around The State

tive unit members. Being able to get back into buildings to present the grants gained the unit 35 new active members.

In March, the unit supported four Thursdays of retirement seminars sponsored by Edmonds School District.

Eighteen members and friends took the first unit field trip in three years to the Seattle Asian Art Museum with a docent-led tour. **Karen McElliot** made the arrangements for the tour.

The unit is very happy that one of their recent Shoreline retirees, **Jennifer Altena**,

volunteered to become the unit's new treasurer. **Tom Hawkins**, current treasurer, will be retiring after serving for seven years.

### **Unit 32 Whatcom Co.:**

WCSRA Unit 32 held its first in-person event on March 23, 2023, at the Bellingham Golf and Country Club. Free lunch was offered for those in attendance. Although the turnout was less than expected, those that came were enthusiastic and interested in helping. **Eileen Wascisin** updated members of happenings at the state level and answered questions.

The Unit recognized **David Simonson** with a gift card in honor of his service as unit treasurer for close to 20 years.

The WCSRA board will be making a final decision, at their next board meeting, on changing unit events from every other month to 3-4 times per year. The board will also decide whether to change the newsletter frequency to four times per year.

Most unit board members have led the unit for more than ten years. Some board members are increasingly dealing with health concerns or other life-changing events which makes serving on the board more challenging than in years past. Although current board members are willing to continue to help, it is time for others to step up and get involved. A couple of members have volunteered to step up to the plate, but more are needed to keep the unit moving forward.

address for this free event is 2525 S. 336th St. Federal Way, 98001 (a block south of the former Weyerhaeuser Headquarters property). The Pacific Bonsai Garden is adjacent to it. Unit and coordinating council attendees will meet at 2:00 pm by the extremely rare Blue Poppy field for a group picture. For more information, visit [RhodyGarden.org](http://RhodyGarden.org), click on Events, then Blue Poppy Day. Hope to see you there!

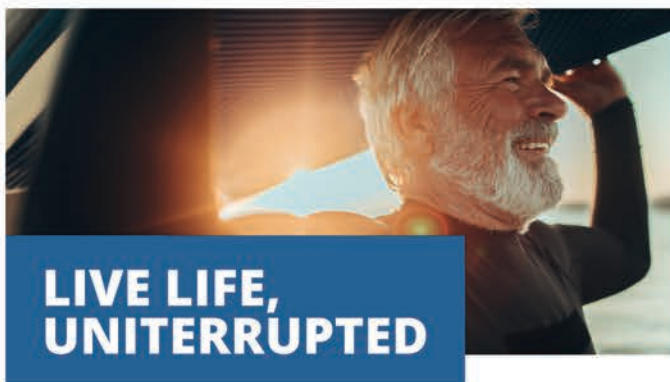
The unit continues to receive thank you messages from recipients of mini-grants. Some of the notes come with pictures of the students enjoying the new items or books in their classrooms.

The unit is looking forward to providing input for the college scholarships and perhaps adding to the funding for those in the unit's four school districts that applied but did not receive state scholarships.

### **Unit 19 Southeast King:**

Unit 19, Southeast King School Retirees' Association, held its first general meeting of 2023 on March 7. Members enjoyed Art Dolan's presentation of "Women of the American Revolution" via Zoom.

Several board members toured Vine Maple Place on Saturday March 11. Vine Maple is one of the charitable organizations Unit 19 supports. Their vision is to end family homelessness



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WSSRA - Washington State School Retirees' Association



## NORTHWEST-2

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

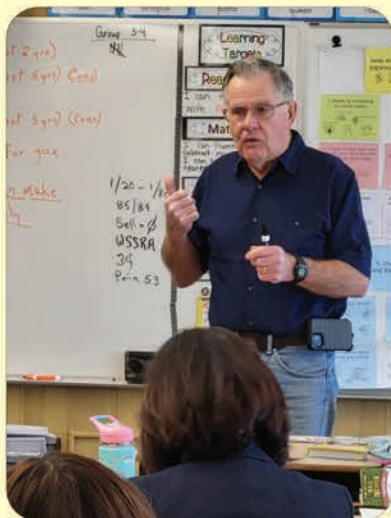
The unit will be going to the free Blue Poppy Day on Saturday, May 20 at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, the world's largest collection of Rhododendron species. The unit's winter newsletter offered additional details of the event. All the NW-2 coordinating council are welcome to attend. The



## WSSRA Around The State

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

Bill DeHon presenting retirement information to the Clear Lake School staff in the Sedro Woolley School District. About 25 staff attended and had many important questions that Bill was able to discuss with them. Unit 21 is offering these mini retirement workshops to the local school buildings.



in South King County, resulting in healthier communities where every child and parent has a stable home to grow and thrive.

On April 4, Dylan High, executive director of the Kent Historical Museum at Bereiter House, provided members with a history of early Kent, Washington, and a private tour of the historic Bereiter House. Light refreshments were served after the tour in the formal dining area and Unit 19 gained two new members at the event.

In May, Unit 19 member, **Melodi Keyes**, will present information on hula dancing and give a demonstration to members at Village Concepts of Fairwood.

**Unit 20 Seattle:**

During a January Zoom meeting, the Seattle unit's board voted to try to increase unit membership in both SSRA and WSSRA by producing and mailing extra copies of the unit next newsletter, "The Bulletin," to each of the Seattle District's hundred or so schools. The newsletter will include an application for the unit's classroom mini-grants known as S.E.E.D. Classroom Grants. The hope is that more SSRA members, as well as non-members, might apply for one. Members are entitled to apply for a S.E.E.D. Grant of up to \$500 each school year; non-members may apply for a one-time-only grant of up to \$200. These typically boost unit membership. **Edith Ruby** and **Julee Neuhart** spent ex-

tra time mailing the additional newsletters to local schools.

SSRA's **Edith Ruby**, **Mary Wallon**, and **Patricia MacGowan**, along with other WSSRA lobbying team members, spent time in Olympia during the long legislative session lobbying on behalf of WSSRA members. Association members are very grateful for all their lobbying efforts with Washington State's legislators (and their staff) to advance WSSRA's legislative goals to benefit WSSRA members and the public education community.

SSRA's board has done some long-range planning for the next "in-person" SSRA members' luncheon meeting. The event was held on May 4 in

the Cascade Room of the Mountaineers' facility on Sand Point Way Northeast in Seattle. The speaker was Lance Rhoades, and he shared his insights on the durability and popularity of the "Star Wars" films.

Several SSRA unit board members attended the first in-person NW-2 Coordinating Council meeting on February 24 at a Southcenter area retirement facility. Attendees spent a lot of time sharing how each unit is working to increase membership in the local units and WSSRA. Updates were given on the WSSR-Foundation's 2023 scholarships from Scholarship Chair **Patricia MacGowan** and others in attendance.

**Please visit us at...**

**WSSRA.ORG**



## WSSRA Around The State



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

Unit members spent time in Olympia during the 2023 legislative session discussing retiree concerns with legislators from the region.

(pictured left) Bruce Boyer, State Representative Clyde Shavers (10th legislative district), Diane Visten, and Barbara Robinson.

(pictured right) Diane Visten, Barbara Robinson, State Representative Debra Lekanoff (40th legislative district), and Bruce Boyer.



use the Zoom option to join the meetings. The meetings are held in a separate room of a local Shelton restaurant and are on the first Tuesday of each month from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Each meeting includes an update on legislative action and school issues. A guest speaker is invited to each meeting, but occasionally can't attend.

The guest speakers scheduled for the March and April meetings couldn't attend. The Sheriff's Office was invited, but work duties prevented attendance. **Bonnie Rice**, unit secretary and grants chair, presented the reports of two completed mini-grant projects. The recipients of the mini-grants will be invited to attend the June 27, 2023 unit meeting to join the members for lunch and present their projects. The meeting date was moved since the WSSRA convention is during the usual meeting date and the July 4 meeting falls on a holiday, and teachers are out of school at the end of June.

**Tedd and Peg Davis** will use \$250 to prepare a basket to auction at the WSSRA convention. So far, **Eileen Perfrement** is the only member attending the convention. She will deliver the basket.

**Eileen and Tedd** attended the SW-3 Coordinating Council meetings, as well as the scholarship readers meeting. Two scholarship applications were received from students in the

## SOUTHWEST-3

### Unit 3 Clallam County:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) met at the Clallam County Genealogical Society in Port Angeles on March 21. The taco luncheon was catered by Little Devil's Lunchbox. Roberta Griset, who spoke at the meeting in February, gave a tour of the facility and invited people to use the facility to do research. A few people shared stories of family history they had discovered.

On April 18, in keeping with the genealogy research theme, David Brownell, director of

the North Olympic History Center, gave a presentation entitled, "Getting Started as a Family Archivist." He prepared kits to help which were available for purchase. The meeting was held at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles.

The meeting on May 16 was also at Joshua's. Representatives from the new Field Arts and Events Center in Port Angeles, which is scheduled to open in late July, spoke about the venue and what will be available there.

Port Angeles School District recognized CCSRA at their March school board meeting.

This year CCSRA is distributing over 1,000 books to a few organizations in the county including First Step in Port Angeles, Head Start in Sequim, and Crescent School District in Joyce.

### Unit 14 Mason County:

The Unit continues to meet on a hybrid model when possible. The WSSRA Zoom connections were all being used for the April 4, 2023, meeting, so that one was in-person only. Generally, a Zoom connection is open for the unit's use. The remote members and state officials who do not live near the meeting place often



## WSSRA Around The State

county but were not selected. The Mason County unit members decided to support the two students, both from North Mason High School. Olivia Arden will receive a \$2,000 unit scholarship, and Sara Pruitt will receive a \$1,000 unit scholarship. The unit is pleased to support future teachers from the county.

### SOUTHWEST-4

**Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties:** It is with great sadness that Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific reports the loss of three long-time members of the group - **Pat Lanning, Marge Leggett,** and **Rosalie Prante.** They all held unit offices over the years and donated many hours supporting public schools and teachers. A monetary gift was sent to the WSSR Foundation as a memorial for each of them. The unit will also be providing books to school libraries at which each of these

hardworking ladies taught. They will be sorely missed.

Unit 5 participated in reading and scoring the first round of Robert J. Handy/WSSR Foundation scholarship applications from students residing in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties. Round two included the top ten from around the state which were read and scored. Those results were sent forward. The top scorers were then reviewed on April 26 at the Unit 5 regular meeting, at The Fishin' Hole restaurant at noon, in Montesano. The finalists were chosen at that time.

The group awarded a \$1,600 scholarship to Grays Harbor College for a graduating student in the educational field. The unit donated \$1,542.69 for books in the Lending Library, to help student teachers.

The unit continues to support the Lunch Buddy program for Ocosta students, which is much appreciated.



**Unit 19 Southeast King:** Unit Co-President Rachel Almeleh standing in front of the Tahoma School District main office holding the proclamation signed by Governor Inslee in honor of School Retirees' Appreciation Week.

The unit has much appreciation for all the help from WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke**, WSSRA President-Elect **Ron Crawford**, SW-4 Representative **Gail Feagins**, Membership Coordinator **Michele Hunter** and all the office staff for all they do to hold Unit 5 together.

remember and honor members who passed away this year.

After months of challenging work, a committee consisting of **Ann Chenhall, Will Gentz, Pat Slosson, Sue Shannon,** and **Sharon Dennis**, presented the updated Bylaws to the unit members for ratification. And yes, the vote was positive.

#### **Unit 28 Thurston County:**

The May luncheon was the final of this year. WSSRA President-elect **Ron Crawford** installed the 2023-2024 officers: President **Sue Shannon**, Treasurer **Will Gentz**, Membership Treasurer **ZiNita Carrell** were all re-elected. Newly elected are President-elect **Patty Gee** and Secretary **Lorene Rang**. The luncheon also included a memorial to

The Unit is proud to nominate **Keitha Bryson** for the Stan McNaughton Outreach Award and **Ann Chenhall** for the Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award.

It is off to convention and then the summer work begins. The treasurer will have an audit, the annual directory will be designed and printed, and



**Unit 6 Southwest King:** On May 20, join unit members at the free Blue Poppy Day at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, next to the Pacific Bonsai Garden in Federal Way.



## WSSRA Around The State

luncheon programs will be planned. President **Sue Shannon** is planning her agenda and goals for the coming year which will be the topics at a summer board retreat.

### EAST-5

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

The unit met in February at Rosewood in Ellensburg. **Larry Scholl**, E-5 District Representative, gave an up-

date on activities with the state board. He described the financial stability of the WSSRA due to good financial investments. This stability permits a supporting staff and outstanding lobbying efforts so WSSRA can be effective. He also updated those in attendance about current legislative efforts.

**Tim Bow**, grant chair, distributed summaries of grant activity this year. As has been the custom, member grants

of \$200 were granted to eight educators, non-member grants of \$100 were awarded to 34 educators. This effort has resulted in a few new members. Requests came from schools in Cle Elum, Easton, Ellensburg and from elementary and secondary schools. The funds were used for classroom and curriculum enhancement.

The April 18 meeting was held at the Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum. Legislative issues were discussed. The final

meeting of the school year is planned for May 16 at Rosewood. The program may be about the 100th anniversary of the Ellensburg Rodeo.

#### *Unit 10 Columbia Gorge.:*

Unit 10 awarded three mini-grants to highly deserving teachers. Grant monies will be used for art supplies to make murals, science kits, and materials/resources for the STEM curriculum.

Several members of Unit 10 participated in the White Salmon/Bingen Community Clean-Up on April 21-22. This annual event is a lively community affair that collects and distributes bicycles, recycles usable household items, disposes of old electronics, appliances and hazardous waste, and supports Second Hand Rose, a used clothing store in Bingen.

Unit President **Shirlee Jelum** sent personal letters to unit members inviting them to provide emails and actively participate in meetings and community service events. The unit also recognized retirees in regional schools with gift cards and invitations to join the organization.

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

Attendees of the April 2 Yakima unit meeting were presented with a very special treat when the Yakima County Sheriff's Department K-9 offi-

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## WSSRA Around The State

cers presented an exciting program. Patrol Dog Simco is an experienced bad guy catcher. After introductions which included allowing everyone a chance to pet him, Simco demonstrated his ability to contain a large man by grabbing the "bad guy's" protected arm. A 90-pound German Shepherd presents formidable assistance for officers. Thank you to **Larry Scholl** for making this program happen.

The Yakima unit would like to thank cellist **Kathy Dyblie**. She and her cello lead the unit in the "Star Spangled Banner" before every meeting.

The co-president system for YCSRA has been successful this year. Board members have taken turns running unit meetings.

### EAST-6

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

Unit 2 continued to meet in the new location, Residence Inn, and were pleased with the service and lunch. The unit has received many thank-you notes and pictures from mini-grant and community grant recipients. The unit even received some free tickets to the Mariachi Festival, an exciting event coming to Wenatchee. Several members attended the "Twincussion" concert at the performing arts center and they greeted students as they attended the production that the CDSRA group sponsored. Members attending the evening performance also received a round of applause.

The 2023-24-unit officers are:  
Co-Vice Presidents **Marie**



**Unit 4 Columbia Basin:** A recent unit luncheon featuring presentation by Audubon Society. Left to right around the table: Margaret Schiffner, speaker; Lois Palek, Linda Bishop, Bev Shelton, Sue Beall, Barb and Roger Stanford, Bill and Glenda Anderson, Debbie Sandmann, Susan Hickok, Shirley Vincent, Helen Preston, Lanita Pomeroy, Pat Simmons, and Gayle Talbot. Karen Schafer and Louis Logan are at the back table.



**Unit 15 Okanogan:** A recent unit meeting featured a presentation from DNR representatives about how to protect homes and properties from wildfires.

**Buckner** and **Mary King**, Co-Secretaries **Jan Ottosen** and **Christi DeKraai**, Treasurer **Sue Kane**. At each meeting, a board member will run the board meeting and general meeting. **Sue Kane** is the executive assistant. The unit nominated **Terry Sloan** for the McNaughten Award and **Kriss Crilly** for the Hoban Award.

The February program featured Beth Statler from Hand in Hand Immigration Service. This organization's mission is to assist, motivate and empower legal immigrants and their families to obtain U.S. citizenship. The program

would love more volunteers. CDSRA also delivered bedding to Grace House, a place for homeless women and children.

Seven members attended the E5/E6 Coordinating Council Zoom meeting on February 22, 2023. Useful information and project ideas were presented.

#### *Unit 4 Columbia Basin:*

Columbia Basin Unit 4 has been busy, as usual, with meetings, luncheons, and outings. The February monthly luncheon at Pillar Rock Grill, in Moses Lake, was attended



## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 4 Columbia Basin:** Unit members recently took a field trip to the Moses Lake Museum and Art Center, followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Pictured: (left to right) Gail Pinkerton, Barb Franz, Helen Preston, Shirley Vincent, Gayle Talbot, Glenda Anderson, and Lanita Pomeroy.

by seventeen members, a full house! Margaret Schiffrer, of the Columbia Basin Audubon Society, along with President **Gayle Talbot**, who is also a CBSRA member, presented their program for area fourth grade students, which includes a lesson at each participating school, prior to a field trip to the Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, where students get to view birds and other wildlife, in addition to learning about the plants and landforms in the protected area. Several of the CBSRA members in attendance also signed up as volunteers, to assist with the program.

A recent monthly outing was enjoyed by a group of CBSRA members at the Moses Lake Museum and Art Center, where they viewed beautiful pieces by Yakima Valley landscape artists. After the visit, they enjoyed lunch together at a local restaurant. Participants included Co-Presidents **Helen Preston** and **Lanita Pomeroy**, **Shirley Vincent**, **Gayle Talbot**, **Glenda Anderson**, **Gail Pinkerton**, and **Barb Franz**.

The March monthly luncheon featured Moses Lake Police Chief, Kevin Fuhr, who is also the president of the Moses Lake School Board. He spoke

about school and community safety issues, and he shared information about a program which offers an in-depth study of the relationship between the police department and a healthy community. A few CBSRA members participated in the course in past years, and they recommended it to others in attendance.

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

At the unit's February meeting grants of \$300 each were awarded to: **Melissa George**, Omak 5th grade teacher, for Learning Aids for Math Small Groups; **Jennifer Reynolds**, Brewster Kindergarten teach-

er for "Feeling Buddies Basic Toolkit for Classrooms"; **Rebecca Hallam**, Okanogan 8th-10th grades Special Education teacher, for alternative, flexible seating areas for her classes.

The Unit continues to receive, and welcome thank you letters from active members for the grants received. On another happy note, **Rita Figlenski** shared a letter and note from former member, **Ruth Parman**, who is 103 years old and an active member of Unit 25 Spokane Area SRA.

At the unit's March meeting, DNR representatives discussed how to protect homes and properties from wildfires. Two \$250 community service grants were awarded to the Meals-On-Wheels programs in Okanogan and Omak. Unit Health Chair **Colleen Pock** distributed "Files of Life" to members. **Richard Johnson** joined the scholarship committee.

In April, **Dr. Sue Kane**, director of STEM Initiatives and Strategic Partnerships for North Central ESD, presented information on STEM activities in Okanogan County.

#### **EAST-7**

**Don Kackman**, E-7 coordinating council chair, held a virtual meeting March 6, 2023. WSSRA President-elect **Ron Crawford** and WSSRA



## WSSRA Around The State

**Unit 34 Yakima Co.:**

A recent unit meeting featured a presentation by Yakima County Sheriff's Deputy Sanital and Patrol Dog Simco. The K-9 officers provided an exciting skills demonstration.

President and Spokane Unit President **Brad Beal** gave reports. E-7 District Representative **Linda Marler** is working on scholarship selections.

**Char Schelling, Dixie Eggleston, and Kathy Beal** have planned a gathering at The Hive to present the awards on Wednesday May 24, 2023. Spokane Vice President **Char Schelling** is coordinating SAREA delegates willing to work at the state convention in Pasco. **Pat Anderson** reported on lobbying in Olympia during March.

**Unit 25 Spokane Area:**

SAREA held its first in-person general meeting, since COVID, at ESD 101 on Wednesday, March 15. The meeting was also made available via Zoom. It was very nice to see unit members in person and welcome newcomers.

Tim Williams, from AMBA, gave an informative presentation about the vast benefits they offer to WSSRA members. He and his team spoke about dental and vision coverage, long term care, supplemental health policies that cover cancer, heart attacks and strokes, and life insurance. AMBA, also has a "passport" app that offers discounts on rental cars, cruises and vacations, restaurants, computers, and pet insurance, to name a few. He stressed that everyone's needs are different, so it is best to call them and set up an appointment to meet in person.

With COVID restrictions easing, this has been a year of firsts for SAREA. Unit scholarship recipients will be celebrated on Wednesday, May 24, during the spring scholarship luncheon. The Grant Elementary Drummers

and Dancers will provide entertainment. The students who received scholarships will be given a chance to thank the unit and share their dreams for a future in education. Based on the scholarship applications submitted, the future for students and schools looks very bright!

**EAST-8**

**Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy:** Unit 1 has been busy! As a result of in-person recruiting efforts, 21 new members have been enrolled. Congrats to unit membership chair, **Allison Hays**, for keeping the unit headed in the right direction.

Thank you to the unit scholarship committee, **Bonnie Hill, Mark Hoffmann, and Brenda Crumacker**, for evaluating scholarship applications. Kudos to **Debbie Romesburg** for spearheading donations for unit baskets to send to the state convention in the Pasco in June. **Sharon Hoseley** is leading the group working on table centerpieces for the June convention, gracias **Sharon!**

The Unit voted to donate money to the Asotin County Library Giving Day fundraiser and the Yes for CHS campaign. At the March meeting, representatives from the Yes for CHS committee gave a very thorough presentation on what the bond would do for the Clarkston School district

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## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:** Master Gardeners and BFSRA unit members with Primroses – Sheri Mitchell, Alice Allison, and Lynda Meyers offered a gardening presentation during a recent unit meeting.

and the unit was asked to help positively promote it. The unit had representation from **Kathi Carlson, Sharon Hoseley, and Barb Reddekopp** at the town hall information meetings for the bond.

On April 12, the unit hosted a pre-retirement panel as a follow-up to the Zoom pre-retirement webinars that

WSSRA provided. The unit has developed a great working relationship with the new CSD HR director, Rob Moore, and his administrative assistant, Karin Maynard. The unit hopes to do this retirement panel Q&A every spring.

As always, everyone is looking forward to summer travels, seeing family and friends, and enjoying great weather!

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

Unit 29 was overjoyed to hear the election news on February 14 when local bonds and levies passed. Considering it takes 60% plus one, the news for the Pasco School District at 60.9% was very welcome, as the two Pasco high schools are very overcapacity. They are planning a third high school, and a smaller innovative high school - career and college academy.

Unit members are looking forward to the June WSSRA Convention in Pasco. It will be lively with music at banquets and a special ensemble for Tuesday evening in the Grizzly Bar. Thank you to **Victoria Russell** for making these arrangements. The Air Force ROTC from Kennewick High School will present the color guard. An opening welcome will be by Pasco School District Superintendent **Dr. Michelle Whitney**. The unit is planning three small baskets for the Foundation drawing and larger items for the silent auction.

Previous unit luncheons were very well attended with over seventy attendees in February for a health and nutrition program. Attendees heard from Tami Silva, community relations director for Columbia Crossings at Grandridge, an assisted care facility. Tami recommended focusing on choosing wisely when leaving one's current home. Attendees each received a treat that included a fresh apple. Kristi Thien's, nutrition services director for Meals on Wheels, discussed nutrition issues and the widely used senior program that is totally paid for by the community.

The March meeting included a Master Gardener program presented by BFSRA members, **Alice Allison, Lynda Meyers, and Sheri Mitchell**. They have a demonstration garden near one of the public libraries and it is a good walk. They are also in the schools and at public events, and even the youth detention center has a garden. The April meeting program was Juneteenth scholarships and pageant invitation. The



### **More than one *Journal* in your mailbox?**

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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](mailto:michele@wssra.org) or 360-413-5496, ext. 116.



## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:** Super Seniors Elaine Banks and Sam DeRosa, celebrating with fellow BFSRA members, Ardith and Lloyd Eakin (at right).

May meeting will feature a celebration of life and installation of officers with WSSRA President **Brad Beal**.

Current and future program information can be found in the unit newsletter and on the unit webpage: [bfsra29.blogspot.com](http://bfsra29.blogspot.com).

**Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia:** The unit's March luncheon was well attended, and the speaker was Joanna Lanning from the Mountain View Cemetery. The cemetery includes the cemeteries formerly owned by the Masonic Lodge, International Order of Odd Fellows, and the Catholic Church with burials dating back to the 1850's. Ms. Lanning showed an interesting slideshow which included many facts about the cemetery and the many historical

figures from the Walla Walla Valley.

The unit board nominated and submitted the paperwork for the Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award and for the Stan McNaughton Outreach Award. The board believes that **Jim Briggs** and **Jim Davison** were very worthy of their nominations.

The April luncheon included the election of Unit 31 officers. Unit officers will include President **Kathy Pritcher**, President Elect **Sue DeRuwe**, Treasurer **Jim Briggs**, and Secretary **Mary Jo Fontenot**. Presentations from the mini-grant winners for the winter were shown by **Rebecca Wilson**.

The unit's mini-grant recipients include Prescott School District - **Leanne Branson**,

**Jackie Garanzuay**, **Jeff Foertsch**, **Heather Beden** - Columbia Elementary, **William J. Clancy** - Dixie Elementary, **Elizabeth Arebalos-Jagelski** - Waitsburg School District, **Jackie Helm** and **Kathie Warner** - Touchet School District. From Walla Walla School District: **Valerie Gentzler** - Walla Walla Online, **Kelsee Anderson** - Opportunity, **Stephanie Gomsrud** - Lincoln High School, **Jim Lux-Green** - Park Elementary, **Deborah Prior** - Opportunity, **Ginger Heiser** - Walla Walla High School, **Laura Berg** - Sharpstein Elementary, **Rebecah Boeckman** - Green Park Elementary.

During the May unit luncheon, the installation of officers was held followed by the memorial/remembrance of Unit 31 members lost during

the last year. The luncheon concluded with the scholarship presentation.

Unit 31 typically provides two individual scholarships each year. However, with the exceptional quality of the candidates this year, the unit board moved to provide four scholarships. Four outstanding individuals were presented with scholarships at the luncheon. Two were given \$2,000 each from the Blue Mountain Community Foundation/Unit 31 and two were given \$2,000 each from the Unit 31 general funds.

The board brainstormed ideas for next year's luncheon speakers and have a complete slate for another exciting year of learning for the Unit 31 retirees.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

*Please Notify:*

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**Michele Hunter**

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- 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.
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