

# The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



MAY, JUNE 2021

VOLUME 74, ISSUE NO. 5



**Unit 19 Renton-South King: Member Robin Stroben presents a student-teaching scholarship check to John Graves. He is completing his Master's Degree in Special Education at the University of Washington.**

## WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the president*

# Moving Forward Together



*by Bob Duke, president*

I was invited by Karen Keller to attend the SW-4 Coordinating Council meeting. SW-4, like other coordinating councils, has been working to adjust to life during COVID-19. Leader and member fatigue has been exacerbated by the need to meet virtually. In preparing for the meeting, I googled suggestions for virtual meetings for not-for-profit organizations. The first article to surface was by Laura Murry titled, "How to Lead With Emotional Intelligence in the time of Covid-19." What a stroke of luck and coincidence. While teaching Education Leadership at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) for three years following retirement, the book we utilized was a Harvard Business School text by Daniel Goleman titled, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*.

Reviewing the book and my notes was affirming. The review reminded me of the many discussions with the graduate students as they moved from tasks to be accomplished to becoming leaders who ignite passions and inspire the best in us. My questions are, how do we move forward from here and what mark do I want to leave the wonderful WSSRA organization.

It has been my intention as president to, "drive collective emotions in a positive direction and clear the fog created by toxic emotions." During the meetings I attended, I was amazed by the commitment of our membership to each other, to their communities and their schools.



Where units are functioning well, the unit meetings become an emotional magnet that members attend and leave being uplifted.

As members and unit leaders, *Primal Leadership*, identifies some practices and ways of thinking that optimistic members can use to help continue to make our wonderful organization vibrate and be a place of peace, connection, and growth for our members.

In our PLU classes, we focused on chapter nine, "The Emotional Reality of Teams." My graduate students would become part of many teams. To navigate the schoolhouse, aspiring leaders needed to understand the importance of bringing positive emotion to each team they served. WSSRA is an organization of teams. Each unit is a team. Coordinating councils are a team. The executive board is a team. The Foundation board is a team. The Scholarship Committee is a team. You get the point. If you are a member of WSSRA, as in your careers, we are all members of many teams. Each team member brings emotion and energy to each team.

I'll leave you with few thoughts from, *Primal Leadership*:

"For leaders to extend emotional intelligence throughout their teams and organizations they need to start by taking a hard look at reality, rather than focusing on an ideal vision."

"Know how to balance a team's focus on the task at hand with attention to relationships among team members. They naturally create a friendly, cooperative climate in a room that fosters a positive outlook to the future."

*President, continued on page 5...*



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**JOURNAL INFORMATION**

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**JOURNAL articles to:**

Kristin Murphy, editor  
 editor@wssra.org

**Upcoming JOURNAL**  
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**June 15, 2021**

for July/Aug/Sep 2021 issue

**September 5, 2021**

for Oct/Nov/Dec. 2021 issue

**WSSRA At Work For You**



*A message from the executive director*

## Retirement Funds and the WSIB



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

The other day a member asked me this question: "Is it true that over 70% of our monthly pension check comes from investment returns?" The answer is a resounding YES. In fact, as of 2019 73.2% of pension costs are attributed to investment returns, compared to 17.5% for employer contributions, and 9.3% for employee contributions (Source: 2021 NRTA/AARP "In the State" report).

So, what does that mean for all of us? For one thing, we need to pay attention to the work of the Washington State Investment Board (WSIB), the state agency that manages state investment accounts, including retirement monies, which currently total \$165 Billion (that's with a "B," not "M") on behalf of Washingtonians in fiscal year 2020.

WSIB has done well for us over the years. They have averaged a 9% return over the past decade, significantly above the 7.5% annual return the state actuary uses to estimate the unfunded liability that the state carries in funding the various pension accounts. To be sure, if WSIB investments do not hit the 7.5% mark over many years, the pension funds eventually would run out of money or need a substantial bailout. (Note: Currently all but two of the state's various pension systems, including Plan 2 and Plan 3 SERS and TRS, show low unfunded liability. However, that is not the case for Plan 1 PERS and TRS, which are 35% underfunded.)

What, specifically, does the WSIB do to gain such good returns? First, they handle a huge portfolio (again, \$165 Billion) and therefore have market clout that individual investors do not enjoy. Second, they diversify in a way that balances conservative investments with more risky—and potentially lucrative—offerings. For instance, in 2020 the WSIB's investment

portfolio included Fixed Income (29%--U.S. Government bonds, credit, and securitized bonds), Tangible Assets (4%--minerals and mining, energy, agriculture, and society essentials), Real Estate (13%--mostly managed properties leased to third parties), Public Equity (34%--domestic and international stocks), Private Equity (18%--managed stock accounts by agents with a track record of delivering returns significantly above public equity earnings), and Cash/Innovation (2%). Third, they stick to an established investment policy that includes sufficient flexibility to make appropriate market adjustments.

All of this has worked over the long run. We are fortunate to have an agency that has made good financial decisions and has brought home results that supply the lion's share of monthly K-12 pension checks.

But, are there financial headwinds for WSIB to overcome in the next several years? Certainly, if the stock market was to collapse, and WSIB would not be able to attain the 7.5% market return over a long period, a pension crisis would occur. The good news is that it would take many years for that to happen because the WSIB employs a concept of "smoothing"—designed to balance good years with those that are not-so-good. In other words, they operate under a strong rainy-day philosophy with a healthy "what if" fund.

However, a big concern in WSIB forecasting is the current low interest rates and the lack of a place to invest large sums with guaranteed reasonable returns. Unlike previous down times when agencies could move money from stocks to 5%+ government-backed bonds, 2021 interest rates are so low that public

*Executive Director, continued on page 5...*

## Legislative News



# A Change in Fortunes



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

## 2021 Legislative Session Update

The February edition of *The Journal* indicated that the state budget would be tight, and retirees would need to be mindful to avoid benefit cuts this legislative session. That scenario no longer exists – the March tax revenue forecast blew those assumptions out of the water. State appropriators went from a \$1 billion budget deficit to a \$2.2 billion surplus. Additionally, federal stimulus efforts are set to pump billions more into the state and local governments' budgets. Majority party legislators also appear set to approve several tax increases. In summary, the state is now flush with cash.

The massive change in revenue projections was caused by previous economic assumptions that did not hold-up. State economists put the November economic projections together assuming there would be no additional federal stimulus, the 737-MAX would not be recertified to fly until the end of 2021, and that COVID-19 vaccines would not be available early in the year. With two federal economic rescue packages, the 737-MAX in the air, and effective vaccine jabs in peoples' arms, our state's economic misfortunes have been markedly improved.

## WSSRA's Legislative Agenda

Originally, the WSSRA political team was looking to:

- Protect the \$183 Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit from cuts.
- Ensure the state's contribution to the pension funds.
- Pass HB 1032 to allow early retirement during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Pass HB 1040 to allow an open-enrollment period for retirees currently locked out of PEBB insurance.

The House and Senate have included the \$183 medical benefit and the actuarially recommended pension payment in their budget proposals. Appropriators have told us they will be included in the final version – great news.

Unfortunately, legislators were not interested in HB 1032 or HB 1040. The successful vaccine development program derailed the early retirement proposal. The relatively high cost for admitting additional participants into PEBB turned appropriators off. Neither bill escaped the House Appropriations Committee.

## New Opportunities – Investing in Plan 1

The infusion of tax and one-time federal money opened new advocacy opportunities. Without a budget crisis, the WSSRA political team asked legislators for an extra payment to the TRS & PERS 1 unfunded liability (the Plan 1 trust fund is only funded at 66%) and a Plan 1 COLA. The strategy worked. Senator Christine Rolfes, the Senate Ways and Means committee chair, proposed making an additional \$800 million payment to the TRS 1 unfunded liability. As a counteroffer, the House of Representatives proposed spending \$14 million on a one-time 1.5% Plan 1 COLA up to \$22 per month. As *The Journal* goes to print, WSSRA's lobbyists are working on a combination proposal including a more robust Plan 1 COLA and an unfunded liability payment.

## Other Senior Legislation

WSSRA has been advocating for a series of bills designed to improve the lives of older Washingtonians. They cover nursing homes, school employee pension credits, property tax exemptions, prescription drug prices, and high-speed internet access. At this point in time, all five appear likely to pass.

- House Bill 1218 (Rep. Jessica Bateman – Olympia) creates a bill of rights for long-term-care (LTC) patients. It would affect residents in nursing homes and group home situations.

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

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

The legislation would ensure patients have access to a telephone, personal protective equipment, and daily personal contact with one outside caregiver or family member. HB 1218 has passed the House and is being considered by the Senate.

- Senate Bill 5021 (Sen. Sam Hunt – Olympia) would protect school employees who were furloughed due to COVID-19. Furloughs would normally affect pension credits, but SB 5021 would keep those credits whole. This bill has passed the legislature and is awaiting action by Governor Inslee.
- House Bill 1438 (Rep. Ed Orcutt – Kalama) would help retirees qualify for property tax exemptions. Currently, lower income retirees (income eligibility depending on the county of residence) can qualify for a property tax deferral, freeze, or exemption. HB 1438 would allow retirees to deduct medical expenses and insurance premiums from their income, and thereby make it easier to qualify. HB 1438 passed the House and is under consideration by the Senate.
- Senate Bill 5203 (Sen. Kevin Van De Wege – Port Angeles) seeks to lower generic prescription drug prices. It would allow the state to contract directly with prescription drug manufacturers to negotiate bulk rates, thereby bypassing pharmaceutical distributors. It would also allow the state to manufacture drugs with open patents like insulin. SB 5203 passed the Senate and is currently in the House.
- House Bill 1336 (Rep. Drew Hansen – Bainbridge) is designed to spread high-speed internet across the state. The bill would allow public utility districts and local governments to manage broadband internet like a utility. HB 1336 has passed the House and is waiting for one final vote in the Senate.

## In Conclusion

It is a relief to know retirees will not be faced with benefit cuts this session. However, many WSSRA members have lost a tremendous amount of purchasing power over the last ten years. Those retirees need to regain financial ground, not just hold the line against further cuts. Legislators are currently in a position to help those retirees – soon we will find out if they are willing to do so.

## *...President, continued from page 2*

“Groups have moods and needs, and they are collective.”

“A team expresses its self-awareness by being mindful of shared moods as well as the emotions of individuals within the group. Members of a self-aware team are attuned to the emotional undercurrents of individuals and the group as a whole.”

I am proud to be a member of WSSRA and honored to have served as your president. I have been amazed by the contributions of our members to WSSRA and their communities. Members' generosity, commitment to each other and their communities ensures a long life for our organization. I am looking forward to President-Elect Bruce Boyer's leadership. WSSRA is fortunate to have a committed leader dedicated to moving our organization forward.

Be well, be safe, be kind, and be committed to our WSSRA sisters and brothers.

## *...Executive Director, continued from page 3*

portfolio managers across the country have had to move significant resources into stock markets (either public or private equity) to get anything resembling a good return. That is all wonderful as long as stock prices remain high. However, if they collapse, in today's financial markets there really is no 5% -return safe harbor.

To end where we began, we are fortunate to have the WSIB. They have done well for a very long time and there is no reason to believe that won't continue into the future. But the insight here is that our monthly pension checks are highly leveraged to the work of the WSIB in bringing home wins from investments that are not guaranteed. Employer and employee contributions over the years do provide crucial pension funds. However, the only way for the current system to work is for the WSIB to take those funds and make them grow through sound investments.

For many years, they have done that. Go WSIB!

## WSSR-PAC News



## WSSR PAC: Help!



*by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president*

On behalf of WSSR-PAC officers, board members, and general PAC membership, I hope all WSSRA members are healthy and safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. If you haven't joined your WSSR-PAC organization with a monetary contribution, it is critical that you do so. Without the help of more of our WSSRA members, we won't be effective in gaining more help from legislators for your retirement issues.

If each WSSRA member contributed a check of only \$30 per year, or would use our automatic monthly credit card withdrawal system for a \$3 a month contribution, we could have a more competitive lobbying system to reach a greater number of legislators who support us. It only makes sense that help from a larger number of members makes it much more effective than leaving the task to a smaller group. At last check, only 2% of WSSRA members are carrying the financial load to keep your WSSR-PAC team working for all members.



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

**Online: WSSR-PAC.ORG**

**Check Payable to: WSSR-PAC**

**Mail to: WSSR-PAC**

*c/o Lora Brabant, Treasurer*

**125 West 11th Street**

**Port Angeles, WA 98362-7709**

The "Please Support WSSR-PAC" box on this page has information to help guide you with making your contribution. If you have questions about the contribution process, please call WSSR-PAC Treasurer Lora Brabant at (360) 670-5183. If you are unable to reach her, leave your name and number, and she will return your call.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of face-to-face unit and coordinating council meeting fundraisers and the absence of our regular 2020 convention fundraiser activities put our PAC treasury in dire need of financial help.

We need help from all WSSRA members to keep your WSSR-Political Action Committee a force for convincing legislators to support retiree's needs.

A HUGE thank-you to all who have supported WSSR-PAC in the past. A HUGE appreciative plea to the rest of our WSSRA members to join us with your financial support. Thank you in advance for your help.



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



## Membership: Strength In Numbers



### Looking For Opportunities



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

Spring is here and WSSRA is still holding mostly steady in terms of maintaining our membership levels. As of April 1, we had 17,623 members. By comparison, a year ago, we had 17,871 on April 1, 2020. There's a certain level of frustration connected with last year, as we were making great progress. Before the pandemic caused so much to shutdown, we were on track to exceed 18,000 members.

With most local membership committees fairly quiet for the time being, we thank AMBA for their work with member recruitment. They can be counted upon to bring in a steady stream of 5-8 new members each month. And, a look back at membership for the last ten years, we are substantially ahead of the 17,007 level of 2011.

As our school buildings begin to reconvene in-person, with social distancing, each of us needs to be mindful of when it could be possible to get into staff meetings and other building

and district events in order to present WSSRA and our benefits. The final week of March saw district boards recognizing their retirees as part of Retirees Recognition Week. Even if only appearing before them virtually, it was an appearance after all. If you participated in one of those, that helped a great deal.

With the popularity of WSSRA's first online pre-retirement seminar in February, an additional seminar was held on April 29 and May 6. This time the content was spread over two days for better understanding by attendees. The February seminar had more than 1,700 attendees, with requests from 2,300 for information. We thank Alan Burke for his "pitch" for joining WSSRA, resulting in 15 new members in February.

I'm confident that when some normalcy returns we will see lots of membership building activity going on, causing a nice burst in membership growth. Any time now, I'm ready!

#### WSSRA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Do you know a school retiree who should be a member? Clip this form and ask them to complete and return the form today!

##### DUES DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION FORM WASHINGTON STATE RETIREES' ASSOCIATION PO BOX 5127, LACEY, WA 98509

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

SS Number \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Personal Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Retirement Plan (CIRCLE) TRS1 TRS2 TRS3 PERS1 PERS2 PERS3 SERS2 SERS3

Name of WSSRA Unit (or school district last employed) \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems to deduct the following dues and any future increases as voted by the membership, from my monthly retirement allowance and to pay such deduction to the Washington State School Retirees' Association.

Should I wish to cancel ensuing deductions I will send a written notification of cancellation to Washington State Department of Retirement Systems and WSSRA.

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## Supporting Future Educators



## WSSR Foundation: Thank You for your Commitment to the Foundation



by Paula Buck Nichols, WSSR Foundation chair

The last year has been very difficult on our lives. Many changes have taken place — most notable for the Foundation is not having a convention in 2020 and delaying the 2021 convention. Nevertheless, WSSRA members have really gone above and beyond in their support of the Foundation.

Many thanks for your monetary donations. With your generosity, we were still able to give \$2,500 scholarships to eight seniors from each of our eight regions. The scholarship recipients have an educational goal of graduating college and beginning a career as a public school educator. We also offer the Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship of two \$1,000 grants for each of the eight regions within the

state for college students intending to do their student teaching/internship.

WSSR Foundation Trustees include: Paula Nichols, Dottie Stevens, Marianne Harvey, Pat Cygan, and Ann Chenhall. Executive Director Alan Burke and Debbie Burgess provide support from the WSSRA office.

The WSSR Foundation welcomes your donations in memory of members who have passed or as a bequest in your will. The WSSR Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and donations are tax deductible. Contact the WSSRA office for more information.

### DONATION FORM

#### WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION

PO Box 5127, Lacey, WA 98509

Please Print

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### ONLINE FOUNDATION DONATION

**wssra.org** Foundation link > Donation Form



## Foundation Contributors

Audrey Absalonson - donation  
 Carol Brandt - in memory of Joanne Brant  
 Gene & Vivian Forrester - for Gene Forrester Scholarship  
 Karen Keller - in memory of JoAnn Balmer and Shirley Elfbrandt  
 William & Jeanne Mazzoni - in memory of Roberta Adams, RN  
 Edith Ruby - in memory of Nancy Minard and Sharon Green  
 Janice & Kenneth Taylor - in memory of Cheri Relyea  
 Eileen Wascisin - in memory of Terry Devalois  
 Margaret Wharton - for Gene Forrester Scholarship  
 Marsha Williams - donation  
 Lewis County SRA - in memory of Celia Holman and Michele Birley  
 Pierce County SRA - in memory of deceased members 2020-21  
 Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of Dorothy Luce, Lelia Davis, Shirley Harless, and Tracy Zimmerman  
 Southwest King SRA - in memory of Hazel Eilers, Joanne Brant, Juanita Bell, and May Mettler

## RETIREE RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Remembering



### JoAnn Balmer

*WSSRA President, 2005-2006*

JoAnn Balmer (1934-2021) passed away recently. JoAnn was the 2005-06 WSSRA President and was an energetic WSSRA member for years before and after her presidency. JoAnn retired as a special education teacher in the Tacoma School District in 1991 and moved to Ocean Shores, where she resided during her active years with Grays Harbor/Pacific SRA and WSSRA.

In addition to her work with WSSRA, she was an AARP Community Coordinator, an active Lions Club member (local president, district and zone chair), and was particularly known in the Ocean Shores area for bringing the closed Grays Harbor Interpretive Center back to life by finding a host of volunteers to oversee the Center.

As WSSRA President, JoAnn led during a period of increasing emphasis on membership and legislative advocacy. The legislature was dealing with the aftermath of pension payments cuts that had the effect of increasing Plan 1 unfunded liability and making COLA requests more challenging. JoAnn actively sought new members, circulating a regular "best practices" newsletter that provided a template for unit leaders to attract new K-12 retirees.

JoAnn was born in Tacoma, graduated from the University of Puget Sound, and earned a Masters Degree from Seattle University. She is perhaps best remembered during her teaching years for establishing a sheltered workshop for disabled 13-21 year-olds to assess, train, and eventually place in appropriate employment positions.

JoAnn's husband (Fred Balmer—1930-2013) and daughter (Terri Jean Balmer—1955-2015) preceded her in death. JoAnn's kindness, friendship and energy will be missed by all.

## WSSRA Convention 2021

### 2021 Convention Update

In planning the 2021 convention with COVID-19 still a factor, the Executive Board at their meeting of April 14 approved a plan to split the event into two sections:



1. **June 9, 2021:** A 1:00 p.m. virtual business meeting that will include an announcement of 2021-22 statewide election results (for President-elect, District Representatives for NW-2 and E-7, and the eastside WSSR-Foundation Trustee), approval of the 2021-22 budget, and Delegate Assembly (proposed Bylaw changes). Like last summer, elections and bylaw voting will take place in May through hard copy ballots mailed to convention delegates. Those ballots will be returned to the Lacey office for counting.
2. **October 4–6, 2021:** An on-site convention, in Pasco, with organizational awards, scholarship recognition, a sneak preview of the 2022 Grand Mound convention, and training (including keynotes, Monday breakout sessions and leadership training on Wednesday morning).

This schedule will allow us to have our 2021-22 leadership team in place by July 1, include revised bylaws in the 2021-22 handbook, and still convene on-site in October. To be sure, the October event will be subject to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions based on vaccine effectiveness, the reduction in new cases, and hotel restrictions. Plans are in the works to offer Zoom connections to important convention events for those who cannot attend live.

### Candidate Statements



#### **Brad Beal for President-Elect 2021-22**

##### **Platform: Service**

I would be honored to serve as WSSRA's president-elect. My goal is to help create an environment that draws on the strengths of each leader in the organization.

My leadership style is to come along side those within WSSRA who accept these positions. I would humbly ask for your support of my candidacy.

##### **Educational Background**

After graduating from Clarkston High School, I received a Bachelor of Science and Masters in Education from Whitworth University. In addition, I completed the U.S. Army Command School.

##### **Work Experience**

I taught elementary grades 4-6, Talented Gifted Math Program, Administrative Assistant, Math Committee Chair, and Learning Facilitator within the Mead School District over a period of 35 years. I spent several years teaching for WSU through a National Science Foundation math grant for teachers. The

majority of my adjunct work was for Whitworth over a 30-year period, and I applied for a two-year leave from Mead to direct the Elementary MIT program. I also served four years on the Washington State Math Panel developing guidelines of K-12 math instruction, under the direction of the Washington State Board of Education. Additionally, I served 20 years in the U.S. Army Reserve Medical Service Corps. My last 3 years were as the Executive Officer, administering personnel for a 350-bed Combat Support Hospital.

##### **WSSRA Involvement**

I joined Spokane Area Retired Educators and WSSRA in 2007 after receiving an AMBA advertisement. I found the work within the community and state organization commendable and well worth becoming actively involved. I have served as a scholarship reader, delivered mini-grants to schools, volunteered at our annual pre-retirement conference, as well as becoming a delegate at WSSRA conventions. These experiences helped me build relationships within the organization. Six years ago, I became vice-president and now I am completing my 3rd term as president of SAREA.

## WSSRA Convention 2021: Delegate Assembly



### **Patricia MacGowan for Northwest 2 Dist. Representative**

It would be an honor to serve as Northwest District 2 District Representative for WSSRA.

I am a Co-Founder and served as the first Executive Director of the Washington State MESA program designed to increase the numbers of women and under-represented minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Washington MESA received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring in 2000. MESA also received the KCTS Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Education in 2005. It was my pleasure to work for MESA for 25 years. Prior to my work with MESA, I was a middle and high school science teacher in Seattle Public Schools.

I currently serve on the University of Washington Retirement Association (UWRA) Legislative and Benefits Committee, on the board of the National Girl's Collaborative Project, and am the Scholarship Chair for the Seattle School Retirees Association (SSRA). SSRA provided a total of \$37,500 scholarship support for future teachers in 2020. I serve on the WSSRA state legislative committee working hard with amazing colleagues to take care of our pensions and provide them for future school employees.

Thank you very much for the 2020 Stan McNaughton Outreach Award.



### **Kay Andersen for WSSR Foundation Trustee (east)**

I began my 36 year career in education at Clarkston High School as an English teacher and volleyball coach for 10 years. But for the next 26 years, I was the CHS librarian. After correcting countless essays, I loved the opportunity to move to where I was surrounded by books! I also became the ASB Advisor/Activity Director so I kept pretty busy with kids, dances, assemblies, student government and I loved it!

I joined WSSRA Unit 1 (Clarkston-Asotin-Pomeroy) as an active member and became involved after retiring in 2016. After one year of learning the ropes, I became President and have thoroughly enjoyed our members and goals.

My husband and I stay busy boating, camping, and traveling. I also am an active member of P.E.O. and our church music team. I have recently become President of the Asotin County Library Foundation and we have many goals we hope to attain.

I fully support the WSSR Foundation goals and have seen how the scholarships positively impact students in our state. I look forward in continuing my support of WSSRA as a Foundation Trustee.



### **Linda Marler for East 7 District Representative**

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 de-

grees in family and consumer sciences. I have taught 38 years in Washington in LaCrosse, St. John, and Colfax public schools and nine years at All Saints Catholic School in Spokane at the middle school. The last three years I also served as half-time vice principal. I served on several Diocesan committees chaired by Dr. Duane Schafer. When there were few positions in FCS available, I took reading classes at EWU and became a middle school teacher.

Outside of school, I was coordinator of religious education at my church for fifteen years and taught second grade and junior high classes for over twenty 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 joined our Whitman County Unit of WSSRA shortly after I retired in 2009, and I am now serving as vice president. I have been a scholarship reader a number of times. I helped with the state convention when it was in Spokane. Our organization is blessed with members from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests who understand the importance of our mission.



## WSSRA Convention 2021: Delegate Assembly

# 2021 WSSRA Bylaw Amendment Proposals

The WSSRA Executive Board requested that the Rules and Resolutions Committee review wording of Article V-Section 5; Article V-Section 6.c2; Article V-Section 8.a, 8.b, 8.c; Article IX-Section 3; Article XI-Section 5; to update wording in current WSSRA Bylaws that are obsolete. The Rules and Resolutions Committee met and voted on March 3, 2021 that the following WSSRA Bylaws be considered by the WSSRA Executive Board for submission to the Delegate Assembly. If this is voted upon and approved by the Delegate Assembly, it cannot be changed by anybody other than the Delegate Assembly. After a review of recommended amended Bylaw updates and discussion of the proposed Bylaw amendments, the Executive Board voted during its April 14 board meeting, that the following amendments be presented to the Delegate Assembly with DO PASS recommendations.

### AMENDMENT 2021-01

#### Article V – Executive Board - Executive Committee Section 5 Electronic Meeting

##### PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Add new Section 5, “Electronic Meeting” and re-number remaining sections

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 5 will state:

If health or weather-related challenges make holding a face-to-face meeting unsafe, a virtual meeting via software e.g., Zoom that provides live visual pictures of members and full discussion and debate opportunities can replace one or more of the six required face-to-face Executive Board meetings. In virtual meetings all regular voting procedures (e.g., agenda approval) shall continue to be in effect as though the meeting were held in person.

##### RATIONALE:

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has presented WSSRA with new issues. For WSSRA to continue to function effectively, the above amendment is proposed.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rules and Resolution Committee – DO PASS  
WSSRA Executive Board – DO PASS

### AMENDMENT 2021-02

#### Article V – Board Actions Between Meetings Section 6 - C.2

##### PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Add new Section 6 - C.2

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 6-C.2 will state:

If the Executive Board is unable to find a qualified person to fill the Executive Board Parliamentarian position, the Executive Board may choose to keep the position unfilled. The Executive Director, with approval from the Executive Board, shall contract with a Professional Registered Parliamentarian (PRP) to serve in that role for Delegate Assembly.

In lieu of a Parliamentarian at Executive Board meetings, the Executive Board Secretary shall serve as Parliamentarian using the current edition of, *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

##### RATIONALE:

It may be difficult to find a PRP to attend WSSRA Executive Board meetings gratis.

The current WSSRA Executive Board Secretary is knowledgeable with *Roberts Rules of Order* to manage this position during regular WSSRA Executive Board meetings

A PRP is required for WSSRA Delegate Assembly.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rules and Resolution Committee – DO PASS  
WSSRA Executive Board – DO PASS

## WSSRA Convention 2021: Delegate Assembly

### AMENDMENT 2021-03

#### Article V – Board Actions Between Meetings

#### Sections 8.A, 8.B, 8.C

##### PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Remove (strike) language currently in 8B and 8C and replace with the following proposed language.

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 8A will state:

If health or weather-related challenges make holding a face-to-face meeting unsafe, a virtual meeting via software (e.g., Zoom) that provides live visual pictures of members and full discussion and debate opportunities, can replace one or more of the six required face-to-face Executive Board meetings. In virtual meetings all regular voting procedures (e.g., agenda approval) shall continue to be in effect as though the meeting were held in person.

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 8B will state:

Such meetings shall be conducted virtually, using software (e.g., Zoom), that provides visual contact with Executive Board members and offers opportunities for full discussion and debate of agenda items. In such virtual meetings all regular voting procedures (e.g., agenda item approval) continue in effect as if though the meeting were held in person.

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 8C will state:

If a virtual meeting is not possible to schedule, a telephone conference call shall be held. In the event of a telephone-only meeting, any vote that takes place during the meeting must be confirmed by participating Executive Board members through electronic confirmation within five business days of that meeting.

##### RATIONALE:

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has presented WSSRA with new issues. This updated amendment deals with the inability to meet face-to-face and a procedure to vote. For WSSRA to continue to function, the above changes are proposed to update 8.A; 8.B; 8.C.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rules and Resolution Committee – DO PASS  
WSSRA Executive Board – DO PASS

### AMENDMENT 2021-04

#### Article IX – Council of State Committees

#### Section 3 – State Committee Electronic Meetings

##### PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Add new Section 3

##### IF ADOPTED, new Section 3 will state:

If health or weather-related challenges make holding a face-to-face meeting unsafe, a virtual meeting via a product like Zoom that provides live visual pictures of members and full discussion and debate opportunities can replace any face-to-face State Committee meeting. In virtual meetings all regular voting procedures (e.g., agenda approval) shall continue to be in effect as though the meeting were held in person.

##### RATIONALE:

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has presented WSSRA with new issues. For WSSRA to continue to function effectively, the above amendment is proposed.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rules and Resolution Committee – DO PASS  
WSSRA Executive Board – DO PASS

## WSSRA Convention 2021

### 2021 WSSRA Bylaw Amendment Proposals

(continued from page 12-13)

#### AMENDMENT 2021-05

##### Article XI – Affiliations and Alliances Section 5.a Dissolution of Unit funds disbursement, and 5.b Unit member assignment

###### PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Add new Section 5.a. and 5.b. and renumber  
current Section 5 to Section 6

###### IF ADOPTED, new Section 5 will state:

5.a Upon notification from Unit leadership that a Unit intends to dissolve, the Executive Director shall meet with that Unit's leaders to identify challenges to attempt to formulate a plan for continuation. If those efforts fail and a Unit dissolves, Unit leaders shall be encouraged to send the Unit's treasury balance to the WSSR Foundation.

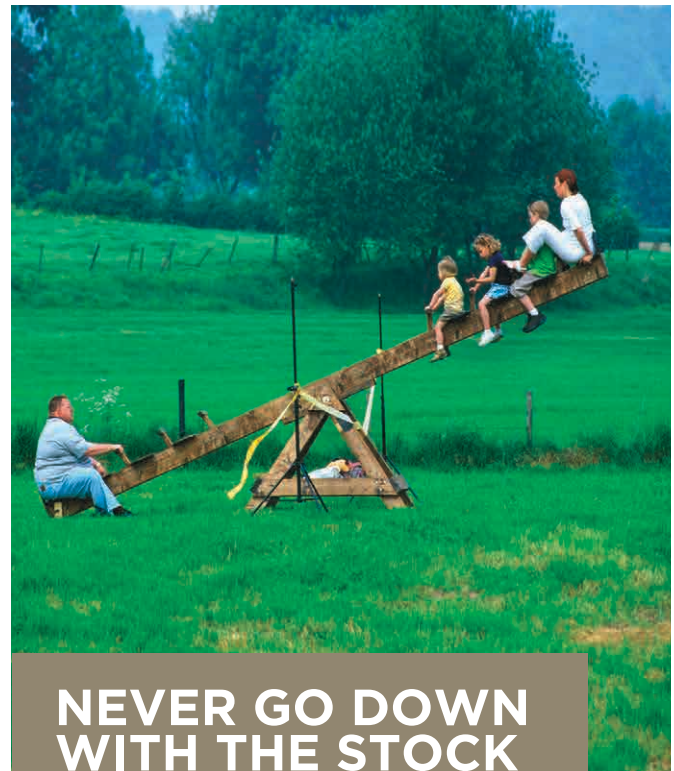
5.b Upon dissolution, the Executive Director shall notify all members of the dissolved Unit of affiliation choices with other WSSRA Units. If members of the dissolved Unit do not choose a new Unit, the Executive Director shall assign those members to the Unit closest geographically to the members' home address, or for those living out of state, to the Unit closest to the members' last place of K-12 employment.

###### RATIONALE:

Members of NW-1 found that when a unit dissolves there is no WSSRA Bylaw that specifically states what happens to unit treasury funds and unit membership. NW-1 asks that an amendment be placed in the WSSRA Bylaws which addresses unit dissolution.

###### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rules and Resolution Committee – DO PASS  
WSSRA Executive Board – DO PASS



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#### WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION



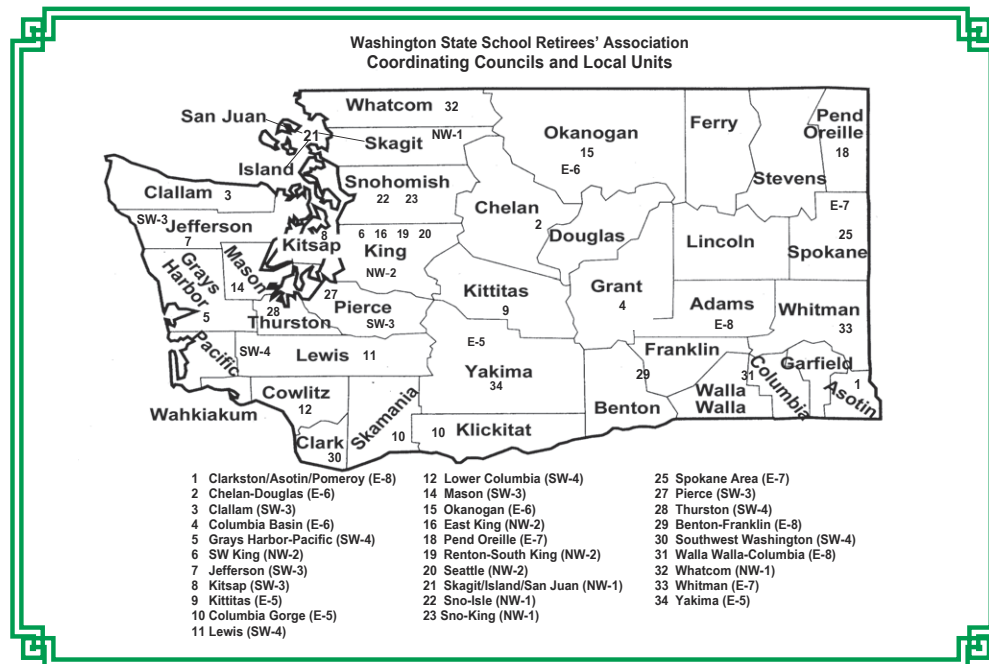
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## WSSRA Around The State

# What's happening in...

## From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



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

## NORTHWEST-1

**Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:** From the Tulip Fields of Skagit Valley: As noted in the previous WSSRA *Journal*, the unit has significantly increased mini-grant and outreach funding this year to try to mediate the financial burden put on teachers and their students during this time of COVID-19 and remote learning. A big thank you to board members **Barbara Robinson**,

**Diane Visten, Joanne Jones, Lonnie Keown, Joyce Moon, and Bill De Hon** for being the drivers in unit initiatives undertaken thus far. After approximately doubling mini-grants this fall, the unit is now funding other “projects” that are considered essential to the homeless and ELL students adversely affected by remote learning. The unit donated \$500 to a new alternative high school in the area, the funds will help stock a room with

food and clothing for students in need. The unit also donated \$500 to a local middle school program working with homeless and marginalized ELL students. Members know that there are other needs in local schools and will consider funding those needs as they become aware of them. Maybe the motto this year should be, “If you can’t get into a school building to help, support students in other possible ways.”

**Diane Visten and Joyce Moon** recently read and scored a number of scholarship applications. A big thanks to them for their time and thoughtful analysis to help support deserving local scholars.

**Diane Visten and Barbara Robinson** were elected, during a recent board meeting, as unit co-presidents. The unit is grateful for their leadership this coming year.

### Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Unit 22 was able to award more learning stipends because of decreased spending in other areas. A \$500 donation to The Imagine Children’s Museum was appreciated as their budget depends for a large part on admission fees. The Museum has continued to share online experiences for families.

Sno-Isle Unit 22 awarded two \$2,500 scholarships to students who plan to enter education.

The unit held their first Zoom event on April 20. The presenter was Art Krull, a pilot who was on one of the last planes hijacked to Cuba in 1980.

Members are anticipating a time they can safely gather and see friends “live” and not on Zoom.

## WSSRA Around The State

### **Unit 23 Sno-King:**

The SKSR board has continued meeting via Zoom.

**Linda Fitzgerald and Keith Lindass** recognized the unit's four scholarship recipients at the general unit meeting on April 15, 2021 (via Zoom). SKSR awards four scholarships of \$2,000 each to graduating seniors and additional scholarships of \$2,000 to continuing second, third, and fourth year students.

Marjie Bowker, Scriber Lake High School teacher, told about her 2019 trip with students from across the state to meet the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India.

Using some discretionary funds, the unit made separate \$500 donations to Northshore Schools Foundation Basic Needs Aid Fund to help families in crisis and Shoreline PTA Council, "The Works," which provides free high quality, gently used and new

children's and teen clothing to Shoreline School District families.

Unit members appreciate the assistance of **Tara Teitzel**, WSSRA staff, in setting up their Humanities Washington webinar in February. There were 61 participants from SKSR, WSSRA, and the public who learned about the life of Chief Seattle.

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

Unit 32 held a great meeting on March 18 with Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick**, AMBA Western Region District Representative **Jeff Burgess**, and Unit 32 member/author/former educator and administrator **Steve Morse**. Each of these speakers provided excellent presentations and were thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

On May 20 at 10 am, WCSRA will host OSPI Superintendent Chris Reykdal and OSPI Communications Director Katy Payne. Unit 32 invites members throughout the state who would like to hear them speak and answer questions about this school year and the changes in the educational teaching environment to contact **Eileen Wascisin** at [wcsra32@gmail.com](mailto:wcsra32@gmail.com) for Zoom login instructions.

Unit 32 held bimonthly meetings via Zoom during 2020-21 and look forward to meeting in person in the upcoming year.

## NORTHWEST-2

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

Although East-King Unit 16 has not held unit meetings so far in 2021, the executive board has continued to meet via Zoom and to put out newsletters every two months. The executive board wants members to know that they are being thought of, planned for, and kept up-to-date.

Newsletters had articles on mini-grants given, membership, scams to avoid, healthy aging advice, emergency preparedness, and legislative updates. Members were also informed about the WSSRA retirement seminars, district legislators, and the importance of sharing email addresses with WSSRA. Co-President **Carolyn Fletcher** reminded readers about the importance of donations made to WSSRA Foundation for scholarships and to WSSR-PAC, also.

### **Unit 19 Renton-South King:**

After a short holiday, Unit 19 program chair, **Linda Van Nest**, invited the membership to Zoom down the yellow brick road with Lance Rhoades. He informed the group how M.G.M.'s Technicolor musical adaptation of L. Frank Baum's book, *The Wizard of Oz*, has sent generations of fans "over the rainbow!" Mr. Rhoades, a University of Washington Excellence in Teaching award winner and multifaceted Seat-

**CAUTION**

**CAUTION**

### **Always Check a Questionable Message**

Often K-12 retirees receive emails, letters or phone calls from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), the Health Care Authority/PEBB, Social Security or Medicare. Often these contacts are routine and clearly legitimate. But sometimes they are not. Crooks often pose as representatives of government agencies to acquire personal information that can be used to steal money.

If you have any question about the authenticity of a message that comes from one of these agencies, it is always best to call and make sure. To be sure, you may find yourself in a phone queue waiting for assistance, but better to be safe than sorry.

**DRS ([drs.wa.gov](http://drs.wa.gov)): 800-547-6657**

**HCA/PEBB ([hca.wa.gov](http://hca.wa.gov)): 800-200-1004**

**Social Security ([ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov)): 800-772-1213**

**Medicare ([medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov)): 800-633-4227**

## WSSRA Around The State

tle-based lecturer on the history of literature and cultural history in film, will return to Unit 19 in the near future.

Unit 19 was excited to present a scholarship check for \$1,000 to John Graves, special education paraeducator at Nelsen Middle School in Renton. *(John is pictured on the cover of this Journal).* He is completing his final quarter at the University of Washington and preparing for the required certification tests for his Master's Degree in Special Education. He is the first recipient of the Renton South King Unit 19 Student Teacher Scholarship.

In April, Casandra Rief, a 4/5 teacher from Martin Sortun elementary school (Kent School District), addressed the unit via Zoom on how she, and other teachers, survived teaching in the COVID-19 era. Unit 19 members became the students as she taught a Zoom lesson used in her class. She explained how she planned the lesson and handled the tech part as well as shared her thoughts on Zoom learning in comparison to in-class learning...and Unit 19 attendees were able to ask questions along the way!

In conjunction with the Des Moines Garden Club, members were able to design over 35 fresh floral May Day baskets (really, cups!) for Lakeshore Retirement and Brookdale Senior Living in Renton. Now that their dining rooms are open, they will be used

as table decorations for "in house" dining.

Unit 19 continues to present Random Acts of Kindness awards to educators throughout the Auburn, Enumclaw, Kent, Renton, Tahoma school districts.

The unit continues to keep apprised of the latest legislative issues with reports from **Judy Dotson**, legislative chair. The unit also keeps in touch with each other via Zoom meetings, Facebook, and a new feature of the newsletter "Meet the Board."

### ***Unit 20 Seattle:***

Despite not having in-person meetings, Unit 20 Seattle still communicates with members through "The Bulletin" newsletter and with various emails. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, donations continue to be made to the unit's Scholarship and Grant Fund, which pays for a variety of scholarships and mini-grants, called S.E.E.D. classroom grants, which are monitored by recently elected SSRA board member **Kathy Purcell**.

Seattle unit's legislative team, who also serve as members of WSSRA's lobbying group, are **Edith Ruby**, **Mary Wallon**, and **Patricia MacGowan**. They update unit members on their interactions with key state legislators through detailed messages in the unit's newsletter and in emails re-



**Unit 23 Sno-King: Roberta Hawkins, unit vice president, presenting a check to Amy Reed, Shoreline PTA Council co-president. The unit made a \$500 donation to the PTA's, "The Works," program which provides free high quality, gently used and new children's and teen clothing to Shoreline School District families.**

garding legislative updates. Regarding retirement planning, some SSRA members joined in to watch the special WSSRA webinar on February 18 for retirement information.

Unit members keep hoping to resume in-person meetings later this year when venues for gatherings may be safely reopened.

## SOUTHWEST-3

### ***Unit 3 Clallam County:***

Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) had a hybrid meeting on March 16, 2021 with some attending via Zoom and others in person at Joshua's Restaurant in Port

Angeles. The guest speaker was Clea Rome, the director of the local Washington State University Extension Agency, who presented via Zoom. Her presentation about all of the things that the agency does was very informative.

The April 20, 2021 meeting was also a hybrid meeting. An election of officers was held. The officers for the 2021-22 year will be **Lora Brabant**, president; **Beverly Brown**, vice president; **Linda Boyd**, secretary; and **Arlene Morganroth**, treasurer. **Linda Boyd** has also volunteered to take over the job of historian and to handle the group's Facebook page and website. **Lora Brabant** was the meeting speaker. She presented an



## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):**  
**Member Irma Slocum turns 100 years old. She is holding the certificate that the unit presented to her. Happy Birthday Irma!**

updated AARP scam information program.

The book club is still happening on the second Thursday of each month both in person and by Zoom. Any CCSRA member is welcome to attend.

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

Kitsap County School Retirees Association held a regular meeting, with no speaker, via Zoom on February 25. The unit officers 2021-22 include President **Doris Bucher**, Vice President **Craig Miller**, Secretary **Patty Marz**, and Treasurer **Allison Morris**.

Some potential program ideas for next year include: a presentation on guide dogs, Keyport Museum, Puppet Museum, Kitsap Historical Museum, tour of gardens on Bainbridge, meeting with

Olympic College to find classes for senior citizens. Members can submit other program ideas to **Craig Miller** or **Patty Marz**.

The unit will donate \$100 a month to the South Kitsap Food Bank in Port Orchard, the food bank in Bainbridge Island, and the Central Kitsap food bank. Unit Treasurer **Allison Morris** will send the checks to them.

Unit members met, on Zoom, with local legislators in the 23rd and 26th district to discuss the agenda of WSSRA.

During a recent unit meeting, Victoria Irwin, of Eagle Harbor Books in Winslow, discussed some book reviews and talked about the new books in the shop. She stated that because of COVID-19, visitors to her shop need to

wear a facemask and the number of people who can enter at one time might be limited. She said there was a lot available online and that one could call and have a pick-up outside the store, if desired. **Bruce Boyer**, WSSRA president-elect, also attended the meeting. He said his biggest priority was communication and would try to get around to all the units he could next year.

Those present at the March meeting also discussed items for the Foundation baskets for the WSSRA convention in October. Any unit member interested in donating items should do so by September.

### ***Unit 14 Mason County:***

The Mason County Unit 14 continues to meet by Zoom or phone connections. The members are missing in-person restaurant meetings. The unit plans to return to hybrid meetings in May 2021.

The guest speaker for the March 2, 2021 meeting was **Peter Diedrick**, WSSRA legislative director. He started his presentation with an overview of where the association had been pre-COVID-19, and then where we wanted to go in this legislative session. It was disappointing that early retirement for teachers and extended PEBB enrollment died in committee. However, a number of other bills benefiting seniors are still alive. Members were encouraged to

contact legislators to support these bills. The Plan 1 COLA may still be an option in the budget as well and needs support by the legislators.

The community speaker for April 6, 2021 was Clara Robbins, YMCA. She reported on the opening of the new facility in Shelton conveniently located near Shelton High School and Oakland Bay Junior High School. It is also a close distance from Olympic Middle School and Mt. View Elementary. It is open to the community with senior and family memberships available. Scholarships are available for low-income students. It has exercise facilities and a pool available to all.

Every meeting includes an update on the status of Mason County in relation to COVID-19 statistics and the state of schools in reopening to in-person teaching. All of Mason County schools are now open to hybrid learning in some form.

Future meetings will include a community speaker from Exceptional Foresters on May 4 and presentation of the grants completed on June 1. At least one teacher plans to join the meeting, likely on Zoom, for the grant presentation. She will share about a very successful project she completed. For teachers who can't be present, their reports will be shared by **Bonnie Rice**, Grants chair.

## WSSRA Around The State

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

Unit 27 welcomed spring with a delightful program about Pierce County's own Seymour Botanical Glass Conservatory, an historical landmark. As one of only three public Victorian-style conservatories on the West Coast, its ever-changing botanical exhibits provide an intimate experience with rare and exotic plants.

The PCSRA board approved an annual donation of \$1,000 to WSSRA Foundation in memory of our deceased members.

May memories of them live on through scholarships for future educators. In addition, this unit remembers with gratitude, Nina Ball, whose endowment has provided scholarships for future Pierce County educators these past twenty years.

At the May meeting, Unit 27 enjoyed a legislative update given by WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick**. Thank you to **Peter, Alan Burke**, and lobbyists, **Fred Yancey** and **Mike Moran**, as well and the legislative com-

mittee, for your diligent dedication representing WSSRA member's needs and interests!

## SOUTHWEST-4

### **Unit 5 Grays Harbor-Pacific:**

Even though Unit 5 hasn't been able to meet as an entire group, members have managed to keep in contact with many unit members. The unit executive board has met a few times, and cards have been sent to all members. Members are looking

forward to meeting as usual and getting back to what we all consider normal.

Unit community service projects have continued, and some new ones have even been added. One of them is reaching out to needy children and being sure they have warm knit hats, books of their own, and coloring books and crayons. Many bags of knit hats, books, coloring books and crayons have been delivered by the unit to organizations in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. These organizations include Friendship House (Union Gospel Mission's home for women and children), the Domestic Violence Shelter, Heart and Hands, and the Catholic Community Service Center. They will distribute the items to children who need them.

The unit gives Ocosta Schools a monthly donation of \$75 to help with their food program for the weekends. The unit helps them with their weekend breakfasts, lunches, and snacks for the families.

A new project unit members are beginning is to provide financial assistance to student-teachers from Grays Harbor College. The students don't have time to have a job with long hours and do student-teaching. The unit will help two to three students at a time. The Grays Harbor Foundation will help in finding the student-teachers most in need.

## 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!

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**\* 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.](#)

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## WSSRA Around The State

The unit will continue to offer a \$1,600 scholarship annually to a Grays Harbor College sophomore in the field of education. In addition, the unit gives \$3,500 worth of scholarships to three high school seniors planning to go into education.

Unit 5 hopes all members of WSSRA are looking forward to meeting again with friends in-person and are hoping to meet many new friends as well.

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

Lewis County Unit 11 has not met but the unit is expecting to award up to three scholarships this year. Members are looking forward to future luncheon gatherings and hope that we can all safely meet once again by fall. The unit remains extremely grateful for the work of the WSSRA staff and the many officers and unit workers who have enabled the organization to continue functioning so well.

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

The in-person monthly unit luncheon meetings have been replaced with a monthly Zoom gathering. In addition to the usual meeting activities there are special guests making presentations. One of the scheduled presentations will be a program titled, "Twenty Books in Twenty Minutes," delivered by Washington State Librarian Carolyn Petersen. Another scheduled program will be by well-known historian, Art Dolan and is titled, "The History of the American Flag."

Elementary and secondary mini-grants for school employees in Thurston County have been awarded. Many thanks to elementary and secondary committee chairs, **Nancy Zabel, Patti Colombo, and Pat Slosson** for their hard work in evaluating and awarding the mini-grants.

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

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

It is not every day that we can commemorate a 100th birthday, but Unit 30 did just that, presenting a framed certificate, gorgeous live Orchid, and a signed 100th birthday card to **Irma Slocum**. The local newspaper, The Co-

lumbian, wrote that **Irma's** church celebrated by holding a drive-thru parking lot party on March 6, though her official birthday was on March 8. More than 200 cars passed through while she and her family sat under a pop-up tent to wave and welcome everyone at the church. The Vancouver Police Department's Happiness 911 also visited to sing "Happy Birthday." **Irma**, who attended Julliard School of Music and served in the Women's Army Corp, taught music and kindergarten at Evergreen Public Schools for many years.

Unit Treasurer **Marty Erickson** reported at the unit's March Zoom meeting that SWWSRA has currently presented \$6,900 in mini-grants. He also delivered two checks to the Clark College Foundation, totaling \$1,600.

Walmart has enlarged a picture of one of Unit 30's checks to be used for photo opportunities showing recipient's acceptance of various grants. This enlarged check is attached to a piece of plywood for current and future occasions.

## EAST-6

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

The February board meeting was held via Zoom and handled several business items. "Goodies" were sent to local legislators as encouragement



**Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas: Leprechauns, Billi Kraft and Nancy Valeson prepare to deliver St. Patrick goodie bags to a number of retired unit members.**



## WSSRA Around The State

for supporting association needs. The “Connections Project,” which provides gifts to some retirees in assisted living, was granted \$200. The unit spent \$540 to put a Valentine in the local newspaper to show the unit’s support of educators in the region. Health insurance was discussed, and legislative issues were examined. Future meetings will be held on Zoom.

In March, it was shared that the “Connections Project” has become very popular with the recipients. Twenty Valentine baskets were delivered and another 25 on St. Patrick’s Day, as well as 22 cards which were mailed. Easter baskets were distributed as well.

Another project, “Community Cares,” headed by **Billi Kraft**

is working to connect community members who need help with agencies that can give assistance. So far, she has worked with the community food bank, “Serve Wenatchee Valley” and the Veterans Association. Another member, **Sharon Salley**, was able to help a preschool teacher get the funds from the school district for a special STEM project that the unit was unable to fund. CDSRA members have a lot of “good connections!”

Under the guidance of **Deb Lacy**, CDSRA is making plans for the upcoming “Pangborn Project” that will occur in the fall. CDSRA members will work with all the 3rd grade students in the Eastmont School District.



**Unit 4 Columbia Basin:** In March, members **Susan Hickok, Lanita Pomeroy, Bev Shelton, Helen Preston, and Karen Schafer** (bottom) gathered for a unit meeting (and selfie picture) in Moses Lake, Washington.

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

The Unit 4 board held a meeting on March 25, 2021 at Michael’s Bistro in Moses Lake. Those in attendance were Co-Presidents **Helen Preston** and **Lanita Pomeroy**, Treasurer **Bev Shelton, Susan Hickok**, and **Karen Schafer**. The Books for Babies program has been providing area hospitals with books for newborns, and unit members have been busy assembling more book bags. Unit 4 retirees have been contacted, by email or letters, offering assistance to any members who need help in securing appointments and/or transportation for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The Moses Lake School Board presented CBSRA Unit 4 with an award for community service at their March meeting.

### **Unit 15 Okanogan:**

OCSRA is pleased to have two 2021-22 District E6 Robert J. Handy WSSRA Scholarship winners: Raven Clark, Lake Roosevelt High School, and Lyndsi Streeter, Okanogan High School. Raven plans to major in Elementary Education at Gonzaga University. Lyndsi plans to attend Washington State University with an Elementary Education major. Each scholarship is worth \$900 renewable for four years for a total of \$3,600 each if grades, citizenship, and self-reliance are maintained at acceptable levels.

In addition, Sarah Dixon, Eastern Washington University Elementary Education major with a Middle Level Math Endorsement and Okanogan High School graduate, has been awarded a



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## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy:** For the first unit meeting in many months, a small group of members gathered to tour “The Inn at Hells Canyon,” a new Best Western hotel in Clarkston, Washington.

Neil D. Prescott Scholarship of \$1,000. This scholarship was established in 2012 to honor Neil who retired after serving as WSSRA Treasurer for 20 years.

OCSRA will be awarding one \$1,500 scholarship in May to a college student of at least junior standing working toward initial certification in an educational field. That person must have a goal of teaching in public schools.

In light of the ongoing pandemic, the unit has rolled over its panel of officers. Serving 2021-22 will be **Rita Figlenski**, president; **Jennie Hedington**, vice-president; **Maralee Bowling**, secretary; and **Penny Garrison**, trea-

surer. **Donna Sanford** and **Dee Blank** will serve as the OCSRA Scholarship Trustee board.

### EAST-7

#### *Unit 25 Spokane Area:*

The unit mini-grant committee, chaired by **Jan McFarland**, distributed \$6,000 to the 35 selected recipients out of approximately 100 applications. The awardees received from \$100-200 depending on their need. This year’s grants were well represented by all grade levels K-12. SAREA hopes to provide more money dedicated to mini-grants in the future.

SAREA Foundation Outreach Committee authorized the distribution of \$500 grants after they prioritized local non-profits that meet the needs of children and families of the local community. This year’s mini-grant recipients are the following: Campfire USA, Crosswalk of Spokane, Mobius Kids, Second Harvest Food Bank, Spokane Area Children’s Chorus, Spokane Valley Partners, Spokane Youth Symphony, Women’s/Children’s Free Restaurant, Family Promise of Spokane, N.W. Museum of Arts and Culture, Reach for the Future, Heart Program, Under the Bridge, Our Place Community Outreach, and Heal Spokane. SAREA’s hopes to be able to repeat these gifts at the end

of the fiscal year, since the pandemic has been an extra burden for these organizations.

### EAST-8

#### *Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/*

**Pomeroy:** Unit 1 was very excited to have the first in-person meeting since October. Since many members have not had their vaccines, the gathering had a small but mighty turnout. The program was socially distanced as the group was given a tour of the new Best Western Plus, “The Inn at Hells Canyon.” It has some wonderful features including great pictures of the surrounding area, rivers and fish depicted in the floors, beautiful railing from the second floor looking down into the lobby and some rooms with small private doggie lawn areas. The breakfast room even has its own cook!

The unit executive board has been busy behind the scenes and has a full slate of officers and committee chairs. The unit will be able to start the year off right in September for sure.

Since luncheon meetings aren’t being held due to COVID-19 protocols, unit meetings are “on the road.” The next one will be held at a new winery in downtown Clarkston, “Parejas Cellars Tasting Room,” for a bit of wine education. With many

## WSSRA Around The State

members who are gardeners, the final meeting of the year will certainly be outdoors!

The March meeting also included a canned food drive that was delivered to St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry. The next meeting will be a collection of personal care items for the YWCA in Lewiston.

The unit's Facebook page, "WSSRA Unit 1", is helping keep members engaged. The paper newsletter goes out to active and retired members as well. Cheers to a spring of good news, good health, and another step toward a new normal!

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

Unit 29 continues to carry on unit business under the leadership of President **Victoria Russell** with monthly board meetings and with the multitude of activities that arise.

In a normal year E-8, which includes Benton-Franklin, Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy, and Walla Walla-Columbia SRA, would be in the midst of planning and hosting the state WSSRA Convention in Pasco. Unfortunately, with COVID-19, the convention was postponed to October. Planning for the convention will resume in August.

The March/April edition of *The Journal* spotlighted the cover with active teacher, Maricarmen Kruger, second

grade dual language teacher from Fuerza Elementary School in Kennewick, for receiving a mini grant.

Unit membership numbers show 2020 with 850 members; 2021 with 840 members; 160 Actives and 5 lifetime honorees.

Washington State Retired Teachers' Week was observed with BFSRA members being honored at school board Zoom meetings in Pasco and Richland and in-person in Kennewick.

Plans for installation of 2021-22 officers and the Celebration of Life ceremonies are to be in-person. Use of masks and social distancing will be followed. **Alan Burke**, executive director of WSSRA, and **Bob Duke**, president of WSSRA have confirmed their attendance.

With no in-person meetings, donations that would be gathered at the monthly luncheon meetings are sent to Treasurer **Ardith Eakin**. In addition, the donations, which would be gathered at the state convention, are sent to the WSSR-PAC. A thank you goes to the members.

Correction: In the March/April edition of *The Journal*, the name Alice Hayes should be replaced with **Alice Al-lison**.

**Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia:** The unit has lost one of its most treasured members, **Jackie Ormsby**. She was the founding organizer of the unit's successful Teddy Bear Tea fundraiser and community event now in its 16th year. Her hand-made bears were the highlight of the tea. She will be greatly missed.

In March, 13 active members applied for the mini-grant of \$200. Each person received the money to spend on helping children in the local school community. During the March meeting, a wonderful presentation was

made by **Pam Conover**, unit mini-grant coordinator, showing how active members used their mini-grant awards.

The slate of officers for next year were voted on at the March meeting and will be installed at the May meeting. Due to the number of people limited to gather (even outdoors), the year's final unit meeting will be via Zoom.

The unit is looking for a couple of members to be newsletter editor and communications director.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

***Please Notify:***

**Membership Coordinator**  
**Michele Hunter**  
**michele@wssra.org**

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

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**Lacey WA 98509**

***Also, if your household receives more than one copy of the Journal in the mail each time, you can let Michele Hunter know if you prefer to receive just one copy per household.***



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**Washington State School Retirees' Association**  
*Dedicated to preserving, protecting and improving  
the benefits of educational retirees.*

The mission of WSSRA is to...

- develop, propose and implement action that will benefit all school retirees.
- propose legislation and legislative action that will enhance school retirees' lives.
- provide the support necessary to strengthen local units of WSSRA.
- foster involvement by school retirees in educational and community activities and organizations.
- communicate to local units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP and other entities that affect retired school personnel.
- represent all present and future Washington state school retirees, both classified and certificated.

## Don't delay – ask today

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