

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2020

VOLUME 74, ISSUE NO. 1



The 73rd Annual WSSRA Convention was held via Zoom on June 30, 2020

(The in-person event could not be held due to public health concerns caused by coronavirus.)

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

With Challenges, Come Opportunities



by Bob Duke, president

I am pleased to have the honor of serving as WSSRA president for 2020-2021. I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities presented by the coronavirus pandemic. I have selected three priorities from the strategic plan as my focus for the year. Those three are: protecting our health benefits and pension system, increasing membership and collaborative activities, providing opportunities for social and individual growth.

Membership will be especially challenging as long as schools remain closed. Our contact with potential active members at school sites is not possible until schools fully reopen. I am hopeful that each current member can reach out to former colleagues and friends who might be potential new members. Signing up as a new member is easily done on the WSSRA website, wssra.org. We can remind potential new members that for the first time since 2011, Plan 1 members received a 3% COLA. We can also remind all potential new members that because of the current financial situation, our health care benefit is at risk. The WSSRA Legislative Committee and Legislative Director Peter Diedrick will continue to advocate for maintaining our COLA and healthcare benefits.

At our June executive board meeting, the board approved seven honorary members. To earn honorary membership status one has to have reached the age of 90, been a member of WSSRA for at least 20 years, and been an active, contributing member of WSSRA. Taken as a whole, the contributions of our newest honorary members demonstrate how our organization has continued to thrive for 73 years. Those contributions include: an 18-year member of Retirement Planning Committee, 20 years of presenting retirement workshops, preparing unit newsletters for over 20 years, participating as a convention delegate for 20 years, hosting annual unit picnics for many years, unit presidents, serving as sunshine chair

for 13 years, a 25-year unit board member, a Hoban award winner, a co-chair of the Legislative committee, coordinating council chair, preparing and conducting the WSSRA "Think of Your Future" planning seminars, and an active member for 33 years at state and local level. Special thanks for your contributions to the WSSRA membership. Our newest honorary members are:

Celia Holman (Unit 11 Lewis County),
Mary Kidrick (Unit 11 Lewis County),
Ruth Parman (Unit 15 Okanogan County),
Ed Monroe (Unit 16 East King),
Evie Nordeen (Unit 23 Sno-King),
Ester Wilfong (Unit 27 Pierce County),
Ralph Peterson (Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas).

WSSRA is not just a name, we are a community of educators who have chosen to come together to continue the work and commitment to improve the lives of students and colleagues. In our professional careers, WSSRA members were on the frontlines advocating for equality for every student. The current social unrest has stirred many emotions. The senseless death of George Floyd has created outrage and has impacted our communities and students. At turning points such as this our country has always moved forward. In writing to his school district my former intern, Dr. James Hammond, Superintendent of Ontario-Montclair school district wrote to his community, "The past inequities of our society, and our current state of social unrest, does not have to determine our future. The vision enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, and in our Bill of Rights, call us to do more, be more and act more. Together we can rise to the occasion in OMSD and model for others that equity for all is both necessary and possible." The WSSRA community will continue to advocate for equity for all.



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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**

September 5, 2020
for Oct./Nov./Dec. 2020 issue

December 5, 2020
for Jan./Feb. 2021 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Virtually Adjusting to a New Normal



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

Where are we going from here? After a few months of dealing with COVID-19 restrictions, we're all ready for a return to the good-old-days of February. But, really, when will that happen and what will life be like in the post-coronavirus world?

For now, at WSSRA we're going virtual. With the cancellation of the 2020 Pasco Convention and the scheduling of a virtual mini-convention on June 30, the WSSRA board clearly signaled their unwillingness to hold any large gathering of members until the coronavirus is in the rear-view mirror. We all know the story about this virus: it tends to spread rapidly when people gather in groups and spend a few hours together indoors—just like what happens at a convention, or a unit meeting. And this virus is anything but kind to seniors!

So, we adjust. WSSRA has purchased a Zoom account that can be used by unit leaders to schedule virtual meetings any time. A call or email to Tara Teitzel in our office is all that it takes to get this done.

The WSSRA Executive Board has been meeting virtually since the outbreak began, and will continue to do that indefinitely. Certainly, we're hoping to get the all-clear to hold on-site meetings from the state and local health authorities before the end of 2020, but that may not happen. To be sure, we absolutely do not want one of our members to contract the virus in any manner—and certainly not at one of our meetings.

In the meantime, Legislative Director Peter Diedrick and I will use Zoom for statewide town hall meetings like occurred on June 18, one-one-one interviews like the one conducted with David Iseminger from HCA/PEBB on June 1, and legislative updates. We'll also post messages from time to time on our Facebook page, and keep the new website up-to-date.

By the way, if you haven't visited our website lately, please do so to see the new features that have been added through our partnership with AMBA and their subsidiary Velocity.

As for the legislative outlook, we know that we'll be on the defensive during the 2021 session as Peter outlines in his update on page 4. We also have a primary election scheduled August 4 that will narrow the field in the 98 House races and 25 Senate contests that eventually will be decided in November. Members can help the WSSR-PAC and the WSSRA board by tracking races in your area and making sure that unit leaders know who will (or will not) likely be pension and retiree healthcare supporters over the next two years.

The WSSR-PAC and the WSSRA board make their endorsement decisions soon after the primary, so now is the time to do your homework on legislative candidates.

And now is the time to adjust to the new normal. We encourage all to take part in virtual unit meetings in the fall, and to help out when and where needed. Assistance with mini-grants, scholarships, community service projects, activities linked to the Health Committee Survey (see page 6), and legislative advocacy will continue in our 30 local units in 2020-21, but different pathways likely will be used to assure the same positive results are achieved. Your local leaders, perhaps now more than ever in the new, virtual world, need your involvement.

And that brings up one more "ask". If you are not getting regular emails from WSSRA, we don't have your email address. Given our upgraded reliance on electronic communication, we can't reach you for updates and presentation announcements without your email. If this describes your present situation, please send your email address to Michele Hunter at michele@wssra.org. Thanks!

Legislative News



Fighting for our Pensions and Healthcare Benefits



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

THE WSSRA POLITICAL FORECAST

The 2020 Washington State Legislative Session is officially in the rear-view mirror. Legislation WSSRA helped sponsor to provide a Plan 1 COLA, improve investment options for current employees, and lower prescription drug costs took effect on July 1. Thank you to everyone who contacted their legislators. Your advocacy made a difference. It is time to look ahead to this summer, autumn, and the 2021 Legislative Session.

THE COVID CRUNCH

With no end in sight to the coronavirus situation, the economic and state budget outlook is grim. Economists are expecting a 4.5% decrease in United States Gross Domestic Product for 2020. Unemployment is hovering at approximately 15% nationally and in Washington State. It was hoped by all that the country's initial virus response would allow the country to return to full economic output by the autumn. That hope was ill founded, and the cycle of virus outbreaks and quarantines will continue for the foreseeable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left few people's lives untouched and therefore tax revenue is severely affected too. The most recent economic forecasts predict a tax revenue reduction of \$4.5 billion between now and June 2021 and another \$4.5 billion shortfall between July 2021 and June 2023. Revenue forecasting is complicated work and those more distant numbers are subject to change depending on the course of the pandemic. It is a safe bet that legislators will have their hands full.

There is rampant talk of a special legislative session prior to the regular session scheduled to start in January. Legislators considered calling a session in June to eliminate state employee salary adjustments and possibly the Plan 1 COLA. Fortunately, that plan did not come to fruition. Gossip at the capitol now indicates a possible November special session. A November session provides legislators political cover by putting off hard votes for program cuts or tax increases until after the General Election. The extra time would also allow time for the federal government to act with a state government relief package, should one materialize. Washington State has approximately \$3.5 billion in reserves and excess fund balances, so the more urgent need is to find an additional \$1.0 billion in cuts or tax revenues prior to the winter or spring.

YOUR PRIMARY BALLOT IS IN THE MAIL

It goes without saying that this is an election year. The primary election for Washington State is August 4. The ballot will include congressional races, all statewide elected positions, the entire state House of Representatives and half the State Senate. The WSSRA legislative team has asked our organization's local and state leaders to work with legislative candidates during the campaign season and to make recommendations to our PAC and executive board on WSSRA's legislative endorsements. The PAC is meeting after the August 4 primary and needs unit and member feedback by August 1.

The nation's General Election is Tuesday, November 3. The

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Informed
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**Visit WSSRA.ORG,
click on "Legislative"**

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

Democratic Party has a strong 57/41 majority in the State House and 28/21 majority in the State Senate. Democratic leadership thinks they can pick up a few more seats in the Senate due to the national political climate. Republicans are convinced that government mandated coronavirus restrictions and a new sexual education law have paved the way for Republican political gains. We will find out who is right in November.

A RETIREE CRISIS ON THE HORIZON

The state's budget crisis will create an incentive for legislators to cut or trim retiree benefits. We believe school retirees' biggest risk lies with the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit. Retirees who purchase Medicare supplemental insurance from the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) receive a premium discount of 50% up to \$183 per month. That benefit has become continuously more expensive for the state and is now approximately \$350 million per two-year budget cycle. We will need your advocacy help in keeping this benefit on the books.

WSSRA will continue to improve pension and healthcare laws. Nearly all Plan 1 retirees have fallen behind in purchasing power since retirement and need continued COLA advocacy. Obtaining COLAs for Plan 1 and maintaining COLAs for Plans 2 & 3 is a permanent mission for WSSRA. Additionally, there are opportunities for pension improvements that will have little cost to the state. WSSRA will work with the Select Committee on Pension Policy to advance good pension bills as they are developed and studied by the committee. Finally, WSSRA has joined an emergency coalition with AARP Washington to protect senior services and provide adequate supplies for long-term care facilities during the pandemic.

IN CONCLUSION

School retirees have a fight on their hands during the upcoming special and regular legislative sessions. This is a turning point for retirees. WSSRA has been focusing on benefit enhancements and this year circumstances will force our organization to fight cuts to our pension system and healthcare benefits. The WSSRA legislative team will keep you posted as events develop, but the path forward will be difficult. As always, we will need your help. The lobbyists are only the tip of the advocacy spear. Legislators need to hear your voices to know there is power behind our words.



**Do WSSRA members
give to their
communities?**

You bet they do!

During the 2019-20 school year, the 18,000 WSSRA members gave to their communities in a big way...

Volunteered over 133,000 hours

**Gave \$135,000 in mini-grants to
educators in our local schools**

**Awarded \$276,000 in scholar-
ships to high school seniors and
student teachers**

We are an organization that believes in public education and community well-being, and we walk our talk!

Congratulations and thank you to all who have generously given their time and money to help those in need.

For Your Health



Health Services Committee Survey Results



by Sam DeRosa and Jim Bumgarner, state health committee

Note: What follows is a summary and analysis of the Health Services Committee survey that was sent to members in the winter and spring. Thanks to all who completed the survey, and especially to committee members Sam DeRosa and Jim Bumgarner who compiled the data and provided the analysis.

-- Pam Francis, WSSRA President, 2019-20 and Alan Burke, Executive Director

PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to gauge the health and well-being of WSSRA by collecting member data as related to the four major elements which denote organizational health: personal and social well-being, nutrition, exercise, and financial wellness. Data collected is intended to assist the State Health Committee with decision-making regarding its health-related program and services to all members.

METHOD

At the 2019 fall meeting of the WSSRA State Health Committee, E8 Health Committee Chair Sam DeRosa submitted a draft health survey to the committee and was granted approval. Consequent approval by WSSRA's executive board pushed the survey forward with dissemination to all members.

Item Selection

For each element (listed above) the survey team created questions pertinent to each. Some queries were also designed to sample members' opinions of legislative matters as to our legislative issues with the COLA and Medicare subsidy.

Distribution

1. All members with emails received an invitation to take the survey online. An online survey platform, Constant Contact, collected, collated results, and sent them to WSSRA. All reports were, and will remain, confidential and totally anonymous.
2. For members without email service or computers, the survey was published in the *Journal* where they were invited take the survey, clip it from the *Journal* and mail to our state office.

3. Surveys were sent to all unit presidents who were encouraged to give their luncheon attendees, who had not yet filled one out, time to do so.

Surveys were disseminated between December 2019 and May 2020. As of May 31, 2020, we have received 1,427 surveys from members across the state.

RESULTS

- Members rated their quality of life as high. The majority live with family, in their own homes, exercise on a daily basis, are active in social organizations, and volunteer in their communities.
- They are satisfied with their PEBB health insurance, but dissatisfied with the state legislature, yet express positive feelings for legislators who support our COLA/Medicare subsidy. (The survey was taken prior to recent actions by our Washington legislature.)
- Although members are meeting nutritional needs and regularly read nutrition food contents, almost half of members reported being over-weight (44%).
- A large majority of our members have a primary doctor, but half of members report a chronic health condition (46%).
- Most members do not use a walker, and have not fallen recently.
- Majority of members do not smoke or vape.
- Most have an updated will, power of attorney, and health directive.
- Monthly income comes from pension, Social Security, and investments. A few are on state assistance and military benefits.
- 75% were women.
- 60% of members live on the west side of the state.

SUMMARY

The Association is populated with members who are socially involved (78%); personally active in many spheres (70%); report nutritional needs are being met (80%), still drive their own cars (95%); exercise from 20 to over 30 minutes per day (68%); financially, 92% receive a pension, 85% receive Social

Health Survey, continued on page 9

WSSR-PAC News



WSSR PAC: Is Legislative Activity Important to You?



by Edith Ruby, WSSR-PAC vice president and Mary Wallon, WSSR-PAC secretary

This fall we are looking at an extremely important election. All our state's representatives and half of our senators will be on the ballot. As a result of the 2008 recession school retirees in 2011 took painful hits to pension checks with the loss of the Plan 1 COLA and a substantial reduction in the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit. Between 2010 and 2020, Washington enjoyed a booming economy. Even with ever increasing state revenues, onetime COLAs for Plan 1 retirees were approved only twice, in 2018 for 1.5% and in 2020 for 3%. The Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit, for which all our retirees over age 65 are eligible, was finally restored to its 2010 level in 2019. Losing that benefit entirely could raise the premium of a Uniform Medical subscriber to \$519/month! Today, with the legislature facing the huge budget deficit caused by COVID-19, WSSRA must play a strong defense to preserve our small gains and protect against losses. We will need the help of legislators supportive of retirement issues.

The purpose of WSSR-PAC is to give financial aid to the campaigns of legislators who have supported us and those we believe will do so in the future. To help elect legislative friends, our members' contributions are vital. In past years, we have received many contributions to the PAC treasury at our convention PAC table. This year with no convention, we can't remind members in person of the importance of contributing to PAC. We urge all of you convention delegates to pull out that checkbook or cell phone now and send your contribution to our treasurer, Lora Brabant. You might send a little extra since you had no convention expenses. If your unit's low-cost fundraisers have disappeared with meeting cancellations due to COVID-19, we can't give you a chocolate bar in return for a contribution but be assured a contribution will support efforts to protect your financial future.

Our PAC executive committee meets the week after the August 4 primary to decide which candidates most deserve our financial support. We look carefully at current legislators' leadership and support for our bills in past sessions, their effectiveness as legislators, their showing in the primary election, and our members' recommendations. We also evaluate their responses to the legislative questionnaires we sent them. Most often, we contribute to legislators running for reelection because they have a solid record on which we can judge them. In some cases, we contribute to a credible challenger of a legislator who has been unsympathetic to retiree needs or to a candidate for an open

seat who seems likely to help us. However, with our limited treasury we think it unwise to contribute to a candidate whose primary showing indicates very little chance of winning in the General Election. As a non-partisan group, we contribute to both Democrats and Republicans.

PAC contributions to candidates are recommended by the PAC executive committee and approved by the PAC board with representatives from all WSSRA coordinating councils. In addition, the PAC executive committee submits recommendations for endorsements to the WSSRA executive board for approval and publication in the *Journal*.

If you know candidates in your area whom you believe we should or should not support, please let us know. With 49 legislative districts in our state, we cannot be knowledgeable on all of them. We need this information before we make our decisions. Please send candidate information to Edith Ruby (eruby98103@yahoo.com) or Mary Wallon (mwallon21@gmail.com) by August 1. And don't forget those checks!



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

Online: wssr-pac.org

Check Payable to: WSSR-PAC

**Mail to: WSSR-PAC Treasurer
c/o Lora Brabant
125 West 11th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362-7709**

Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Students Need Your Help!



by Paula Buck Nichols, WSSR Foundation chair

Deserving students need your help. That's an important message to begin my year as president of the Washington State School Retirees Foundation. This year the Foundation is facing a serious challenge as we raise money to give to students interested in the field of education.

The money for scholarships comes primarily from fundraisers held at the state convention. For example, in 2017 we raised \$6,252 from raffle baskets and \$2,700 from the silent auction. In 2018, those totals were \$6,365 and \$2,000. In 2019, it was \$6,190 and \$1,801. Those generous amounts came because so many donated baskets and silent auction items, plus the purchasing of raffle tickets and bidding on the auction.

This year, of course, we were prevented from holding an in-person state convention and I know we all missed the fun of checking tickets to see if we won a basket. The result is the 2020 scholarship fundraisers earned nothing. Zero.

So, now we desperately need your help to raise at least \$8,000 for scholarships. We would like to ask that your unit donate the same amount you would have spent on the baskets you donated each year. As you contact your members, please ask them to make a donation to the Scholarship fund. Finally, if anyone has an idea for a fundraiser, we would appreciate hearing from you.

While this is my first year as foundation president, it is my final

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

year on the WSSR-F board. I began four years ago when Rita Figlenski was president. Each year, board members move to different positions — the first year is a learning year; the second year the member is secretary; the third year you become foundation treasurer; the fourth year you are vice-president; and the final year you become president.

It is a wonderful feeling knowing that you are raising money to give to deserving students who are interested in the field of education.

In closing, I want to welcome our new foundation board member, Pat Cygan, and give a big thank you to Tom Anderson for his leadership over the years. I also want to thank Tom's wife, JayDee, who has been invaluable during the convention taking care of the baskets and preparing them and us for presentation.

Foundation Contributors

Thomas Anderson - donation

Ronald and Patricia Cygan - in memory of Dan Peterson, John Doty, Warren Arnhart

Ken and Shirley Elfbrandt - donation

Gail Feagins - in memory of Billie Williams

Karen Keller - in memory of Beth Hanson, Billie Williams

Nancy Kleinschmidt - in memory of Beatrice Elder

Louie and Sherry Osmonovich - donation

Nadine Smith - in memory of Laura Mower

Doris Troxel Trust - donation

Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Douglas McQuaig, Gerald Jones, J. Doug Burke, Sherman Young

Lewis County SRA - in memory of Phyllis Carter, Robert Carter, Sally B. Nehring

Pierce County SRA - in memory of Joseph Baldassari, Lillian Cady, Melvin Gidley, Renate Bertoia, Odessa Simon

Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of John Day, Vincent Fryer

Southwest King SRA - in memory of Carol McNair, Jeanette Sargent

Whatcom County SRA - in memory of Gil Thurston

Yakima County SRA - donation

Health Survey, continued from page 6

Security, and over half, 51%, report income from investments. 71% report their quality of life as "high."

When asked if the legislature was meeting our Medicare subsidy and COLA needs, 21% reported being in agreement; 19% were neutral; and 58 % disagreed. (The survey was conducted while the legislature was in session.)

CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, since results from the survey indicate the majority of members consider themselves healthy and satisfied with their particular stations in life, it seems reasonable to assume the health of the Association reflects the same.

However, a few recommendations are offered: Specific conditions, such as weight (44%) and certain chronic conditions (46% - cardiac issues, diabetes, hypertension, etc.), could be identified for study. Presentations at meetings, newsletter articles, small group discussions designed to increase members knowledge of these conditions to assist in the development of appropriate coping skills could be made.

THE SURVEY

Please find the survey results at this site (type the following into your internet browser):

<https://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07egq50d18k2w9ws1n/results>

UPDATE

COVID-19 entered our lives in early March. We were all placed under quarantine to help slow further spread of the virus. As of this date, due to the subsequent economic downturn created by the quarantines, many states are moving toward loosening restrictions for people to return to work, and some degree of normalcy. The jury is still out as to the repercussions we may face. Meantime, we hope and pray all remain safe and secure until time permits a return to some degree of normalcy.

2020 Scholarship Recipients

WSSR-Foundation Scholarship

Awarded to high school seniors planning to pursue a career in the field of education.



Angelica Steshuk (NW1)
Glacier Peak High School
University of Washington-Bothell



Kyle Fergus (E5)
Zillah High School
Rocky Mountain College



Emily Guiton (NW2)
Mountainview High School
Doane University



Olivia Richards (E6)
Okanogan High School
Whitworth University



Kianna Miller (SW3)
Sequim High School
Western Washington University



Emily McCoury (E7)
Spokane Voc. Tech. High School
Eastern Washington University



Tristan Trudell (SW4)
Ilwaco High School
Western Washington University



Payton Wyatt (E8)
Kennewick High School
Whitworth University

Gene Forrester Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to high school seniors planning to major in Agricultural Education at Washington State University.



Julianne Dickinson (NW1)
Lynden Christian High School
Washington State University



Ellie Gering (E6)
Lind-Ritzville High School
Washington State University

Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship

Awarded to college students who will be student teaching or conducting an internship for the upcoming year.



Abigail Lindberg (NW1)
Eastern Washington University
Elementary Education



Olivia Alvord (SW4)
Saint Martins University
History & Secondary Education



Noelle Morrison (NW2)
Pacific Lutheran University
Masters in Teaching - Secondary
Social Studies & ES



Jamie Lange (E7)
Whitworth University
Secondary Ed., History/Social Stud.



Halle Walker (SW3)
Pacific Lutheran University
Elementary Education



Kaitlynn Davis (E8)
Washington State University
Secondary Agriculture Educ.

2020 Scholarship Recipients

Robert J. Handy Memorial (PEMCO) Scholarship

Awarded to high school seniors planning to pursue a career in the field of education.



Taryn Genger (NW1)
Ferndale High School
Washington State University



Naomi Elyard (E5)
Trout Lake High School
Western Washington University



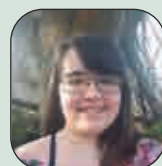
Megan Low (NW1)
Everett High School
Grand Canyon University



Javin Morrison (E5)
East Valley High School
Western Washington University



Julia Raffel (NW2)
Eastlake High School
Arizona State University



Stephanie Goble (E6)
Omak High School
Central Washington University



Andrea Talamantes-Gallegos (NW2)
Highline High School
Western Washington University



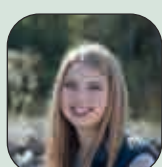
Abbigail Popelier (E6)
Okanogan High School
Arizona State University



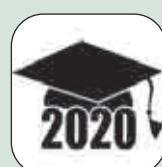
Sarah Espinoza-Alfara (SW3)
Lincoln High School
Gonzaga University



Jeremiah Summer (E7)
Ferris High School
Eastern Washington University



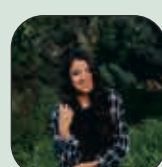
Claire Golding (SW3)
Eatonville High School
Pacific Lutheran University



Madeline McKinney (E7)
NW Christian High School
Eastern Washington University



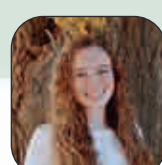
Kate Bias (SW4)
Vancouver Sch. of Arts & Academics
University of Washington



Abryl Mercado (E8)
Southridge High School
Brigham Young University - Hawaii



Grace Jacobsen (SW4)
Washougal High School
Washington State University



Makaley Specht (E8)
Connell High School
Brigham Young University - Idaho

For more information about scholarships awarded by WSSRA, please visit our website at WSSRA.ORG and click on WSSR-Foundation, Scholarships.

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Celebrating Membership Building



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair



Summer is here and WSSRA has been through a long "dry spell" as we have adjusted to the realities caused by the coronavirus. I hope that everyone is coping well and in good health during these frustrating times. Our hats are off to our staff in Lacey as they have made many adjustments to stay at a distance and still get the work done.

Our virtual "convention" occurred on June 30 and all were impressed with how smoothly it went in spite of the learning curve involved in running it online. I know I learned a great deal.

I made the following announcements at the convention: You may recall we have had a membership incentive program for many years that awards \$100 to a local unit for adding 25 new members. We might refer to that as "Plan 1." Under that

plan we congratulate Chelan/Douglas, Sno-King, and Yakima. We recently added an option that we can call "Plan 2." It involves actually handing a newly signed member a \$10 bill on the spot, as long as it occurs at a WSSRA or local unit sponsored event. Many units use this plan and it provides a bit of fun while building our numbers. This plan is being used by about 15-18 of our local units.

Certificates for net increased membership have been sent to presidents of the 17 units that qualified. Notable are Pierce County and Thurston County. Fifteen others had significant increases as well.

A new award category was developed for this past year due to the abrupt closedown in March. The category is New Members Enrolled between March 2019 and March 2020. There was a

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 or 360-413-5496, ext 116

great deal of membership building going on at that time that unfortunately came to a halt in March. Twenty-nine units qualified for this award. Notable again were Pierce and Thurston Counties, as well as Yakima and Benton/Franklin.

Finally, certificates have been sent to the presidents of nine local units who experienced all-time high membership levels for 2019-2020. Notable are Columbia Basin and Thurston County (2nd year), and Benton/Franklin for 18th year of all-time high membership.

It's pretty clear that membership building efforts were both ongoing and very successful while we all had the situation we needed. I, for one, am very excited for the results we will be seeing whenever we get the "green light" again to get back to it. Our July 1 membership stands at about 17,950. That's excellent considering we lost the 4th quarter of our year. Thanks to all who are building membership for WSSRA.

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

RETIREE RESOURCES

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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
Kim Jo, state president
Doug Shadel, Washington state director

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



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WSSRA Convention 2020

73rd Annual Convention and Delegate Assembly

June 30, 2020 *(virtual, via Zoom)*

Thanks to all who attended the 2020 WSSRA Virtual Convention on June 30. Although we all missed connecting with one another and the outstanding social events that occur during a real convention, members were pleased for the opportunity to recognize the contributions of individual members, units, and coordinating councils.

Highlights included the announcement of scholarship recipients (see pages 10-11), and winners of WSSRA's major awards: the Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award (JoAnn Lewis and Sharon Salley from Chelan Douglas), the Stan McNaughton Outreach Award (Patricia MacGowan from Seattle), and the President's Award (Cookie Billups from Spokane).

With a solemn but touching Celebration of Life, those who passed away this past year were recognized and thanked. Their support of WSSRA over the years has assured our success today.

Good luck to 2020-21 President Bob Duke (Pierce County SRA), and congratulations to newly elected President-elect Bruce Boyer (Unit 21 Skagit Island San Juan SRA). In addition, best wishes to new SW 3 District Rep Jean Kinnaman (Unit 27 Pierce County SRA), E 5 District Rep Larry Scholl (Unit 34 Yakima County SRA), and WSSR-Foundation Trustee Pat Cygan.

Mention was made that both the Foundation and the PAC are missing fundraisers this year due to the cancellation of the on-site convention. Please consider a cash donation to each group.

With COVID-19 still lurking, business in 2020-21 will be anything but normal. However, please plan on joining us in Pasco for the 74th annual WSSRA convention June 6 – 9, 2021.



President's Award

Cookie Billups *Unit 25 Spokane Area*



As 2019-20 WSSRA President, it is a pleasure to announce that Cookie Billups is my choice for the 2020 President's Award. Cookie is an active, energetic member of the Spokane Area Retired Educators' Association. During her time with SAREA she has been the membership chair and, in that role, has led multiple efforts that have resulted in increasing enrollment. Specifically, she has reached out to numerous school leaders in the greater Spokane area to arrange meetings with active teachers who are considering retirement. She also has led recruitment at annual SAREA Pre-retirement seminars that routinely increase membership.

Cookie is an outstanding SAREA volunteer, helping out at activities that range from preparing baskets for the WSSR-Foundation fundraiser, to a major organizational and helper role for the spring Pre-retirement Seminar, and to any number of SAREA community service program such as clothing and book drives to help out needy children.

Cookie, indeed, is a super volunteer who helps makes SAREA a strong and vibrant WSSRA unit. -- **Pam Francis, WSSRA president, 2019-20**

WSSRA Convention 2020

Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award

The Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award is presented to a member of WSSRA who volunteered their time for fulfillment of WSSRA goals, achieved beyond the norm in the performance and charged responsibilities of their duties, and have inspired and encouraged fellow constituents in their performance to achieve WSSRA goals.

JoAnn Lewis and Sharon Salley

Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas



JoAnn and Sharon are exceptional in so many ways. They started their volunteer work by organizing projects to support local charities. Then they built a strategic plan to visit all 56 schools in the 13 school districts in their region (Chelan, Douglas, south Okanogan counties). For over a decade, JoAnn and Sharon have devoted countless hours

and driven many miles in support of WSSRA and Unit 2. They have met with administrators and faculties. In their faculty presentations, they zestfully explain how WSSRA protects retiree healthcare and promotes retirement benefits. Their efforts have been spectacularly successful. Chelan Douglas is one of just two WSSRA units whose active educator membership numbers exceed that of retirees. This growth in membership increased the unit's impact in the community.

In addition to their highly successful recruitment efforts, they have served as Unit 2 co-presidents, newsletter chairs, coordinating council representatives, and state membership committee members. They have shared their recruiting secrets and techniques at convention training sessions. Finally, they coordinate the unit 2 "Haven of Hope" project that collects and delivers supplies to the Wenatchee women's shelter of that name.

Stan McNaughton Outreach Award

The Stan McNaughton Outreach Award is presented to a WSSRA member who volunteers their time beyond the goals of WSSRA to enhance the lives of community members and has improved the quality of life in their community, and in doing so has improved the image of WSSRA.

Patricia MacGowan

Unit 20 Seattle



Patricia MacGowan has led statewide efforts to innovate and improve math and science education programs for over 30 years. She is co-founder of the Washington MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science, Achievement) program. Washington's MESA is a national leader in building

pathways to college and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for African American, Native American, Latino, and women students.

Patricia has done extensive work for WSSRA and other retirement advocacy organizations. In particular, she has been an active member of the Unit 20 and state legislative committees for many years and has been a frequent member of the WSSRA lobbying team meeting with legislators. Her work with identifying supportive Seattle legislators, and encouraging them to become champions of senior issues, has been of great importance. For the Seattle SRA, Patricia serves as the unit's scholarship chair and the primary creator of its Teaching Interns' Grants Program. Her yeoman work with Unit 20 and WSSRA has drawn countless compliments and is particularly appreciated by the WSSRA membership.

2020 Hoban Meritorious Nominees

Beverly Brown (3), Wanda Harrison (4), Jean Goodrich (16), Karen Jones (19), Roxanne Trees (20), Joyce Moon (21), Char Schelling (25), Diane Blair (27), Lois Sheppard Gerig (28), Tom Callahan (29), Frances Person (30), Joan Helm (31), Eileen Wascisin (32), Norma Haney (34)

2020 McNaughton Outreach Nominees

Arlene Mullins (1), Kriss Crilly (2), Gary Gleason (3), Wanda Harrison (4), Robert Fletcher (16), Rachel Almeleh (19), Joanne Jones (21), Marilyn Richards (25), Connie Rickman (27), Hank Henry (28), Sam DeRosa (29), Martin Erickson (30), Jim Davison (31), David Simonson (32), Linda Lockwood (34)

Unit Spotlight



Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas Helps Connect Students During Closures



by Susan Kane and Marie Buckner, Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas

As with most units, Chelan/Douglas has been unable to meet due to the dangers of COVID-19. We have, however, been able to help some students in the Cascade School District (Leavenworth area) continue their education by helping them get remotely connected to their teachers and assignments. As "remote learning" was being initiated in our state, school districts were getting creative; Cascade was able to broaden their bandwidth and allow students to access district internet via hotspots in the community. Internet providers were generous in providing free Wi-Fi to families that didn't currently have it. However, in the Cascade district, it became evident that not all students could access this help even though the district could provide computers and iPads for loan. Some students lived beyond the extended networks and out of cell service range.

Because many of the student's parents still had to work, there was no one to drive them to the available "hot spots" on a regular basis or come into town to regularly pick up educational packets. Older students were often in charge of their younger siblings since parents were working.

Finally, devices and an internet connection were found that could connect these outlying areas to the AT&T network. AT&T would provide the hotspot devices, but unfortunately, the remote connection fee was very costly (\$90 a month per device!). The Chelan/Douglas School Retirees Association came to the rescue! We were able to fund the connection for 13 families (approximately 40 students) that were truly in need. Each device is able to service 5-10 computers or iPads, so families with a number of children could return to their education.

Emily Ross is the Cascade School District's Migrant/Bilingual Director as well the principal of Peshastin-Dryden Elementary school in the district. She is a CDSRA active member and was key in getting this project rolling! She provided this "thank you" from teacher Jill Weil who is working directly with some of these students. Jill is an ELL teacher and graduation specialist at Cascade High School.

"I wanted to thank you for your generous donation of hotspots for students who did not have internet access during the closures. As a support specialist for English Language Learners and migrant students, many of whom were recipients of your gift, I was able to witness firsthand the impact of your donation. I wanted to share a few of the success stories you made possible:

1) One of our freshman students has been caring for her younger cousins during the closures. The only person in the family with a driver's license is her older brother, who continued working full-time as an essential worker. She had no internet, no way to get to the internet access points in the county, and very little time to engage in school due to her child-care responsibilities. Nevertheless, she did all she could. She completed all the paper packets that were assigned (not many at the high school level), and tried to do online learning via her cell phone and its data plan. However, she could never download or read her teacher's Microsoft Word documents or PowerPoints on her phone, and of course could not write essays or other long responses. Once, she even tried to take a test on Zoom with her phone - it was such a challenge to control the cursor with her phone that she ended up dictating her answers to her teacher instead! She was granted a hotspot and a school laptop in May. Since then, she has done schoolwork daily in an effort to catch-up. She has committed to summer classes in order to retrieve missed credit and missed learning opportunities. In addition, she has been able to participate in non-academic (but also important) tasks like registering for next year's classes. One of the best parts of her story is that the younger cousins she cares for are also benefiting from the hotspot. They all "do school" together during their day and are moving forward academically, thanks to you!

2) Another 8th grader had disengaged from school completely during the closures. With no internet access and no way to access his teachers or his classes, the "incompletes" and the "missing assignments" kept piling up until his grade in every subject was a "U - unsatisfactory." As soon as he received a hotspot, though, he started plowing through that pile of missing assignments. He worked hard every day and turned in multiple assignments per day. He is now receiving a Satisfactory score in all subject areas except Pre-Algebra, and -- a tribute to his work ethic -- has asked to register for an online summer Pre-Algebra course in order to stay on track and be prepared for high school. Here is a young man taking full advantage of the opportunities the technology you provided offers.

There are many stories besides these two (13 more to be precise), but these are two I've personally witnessed. Thank you for your kindness and generosity. I can tell you from my front row seat: you have had a tremendous positive impact on young people in our community."

Remembering



Gilbert Thurston

WSRTA President, 1991-92

Gilbert Thurston, 1991-92 WSRTA President, passed away recently. Gil lived most of his life in the Bellingham area, and was a member of the very first graduating class of Bellingham High School. After graduation he enlisted in the Marines and served in the South Pacific during World War II. After completing college at Western Washington College on the GI Bill, he taught in Camas for two years before returning to Bellingham to teach at the elementary level. He eventually became a principal and worked at six separate schools over a 26-year administrative career, retiring as the leader of Birchwood Elementary in Bellingham.

Upon retiring, Gil joined the Washington State Retired Teachers' Association, serving in a number of leadership capacities including president in 1991-92. As president, Gil focused on building partnerships with WEA, AARP and PERS, closely monitoring the state investment board to assure that pension funds were properly managed, and continuing the quest for a permanent Plan 1 COLA. He strongly believed that WSRTA members should be involved in their local schools, and work diligently to promote public education.

In addition to his work with WSRTA, Gil was a charter member and president of the Association of Washington School Principals, and was a board member of the National Association of Elementary Principals and National PTA. He also was an AARP-WA Health Coordinator, chair of the Whatcom County Red Cross, chair of the Whatcom County Alliance for Healthcare Access, and chair of the Washington DSHS Mental Health Advisory Council—four of the many community service organizations that he served. He was preceded in death by Inge, his loving wife of 71 years. He is survived by four sons, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Scams, Scams, and More Scams

With the recent press coverage of the millions of taxpayer dollars lost in coronavirus-connected scams that issued phony unemployment checks to cyber-crooks, fraud is in the news—yet again.

At the WSSRA office, we get calls and emails just about every week about a new scam that is “out there.” For instance, lately criminals have found a way to use names of friends or acquaintances who have, according to the story, a “grandson who needs surgery,” or a “daughter who just found out she has cancer” as a way to pull on the heart strings and send a couple of gift cards to make everyone feel better.

Warning: Gift card “asks” scream scam! Gift cards are easy to sell on the dark web and are pretty much untraceable. In the last two years, scammers have even used the names of WSSRA leaders (for example, Presidents Curt Horne and Pam Francis) as the ones asking for money. Not true. When you see one of these emails from a “friend,” delete it and then let the person know that their name is being used by scammers.

As a rule of thumb when reading shaky emails or listening to crazy phone messages, remember that offers that appear to be too good to be true, probably are. In addition, an email asking you to help a “friend” undoubtedly didn’t come from one. The take-away on all of this is: DELETE, DELETE, DELETE!

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Receive updates and information
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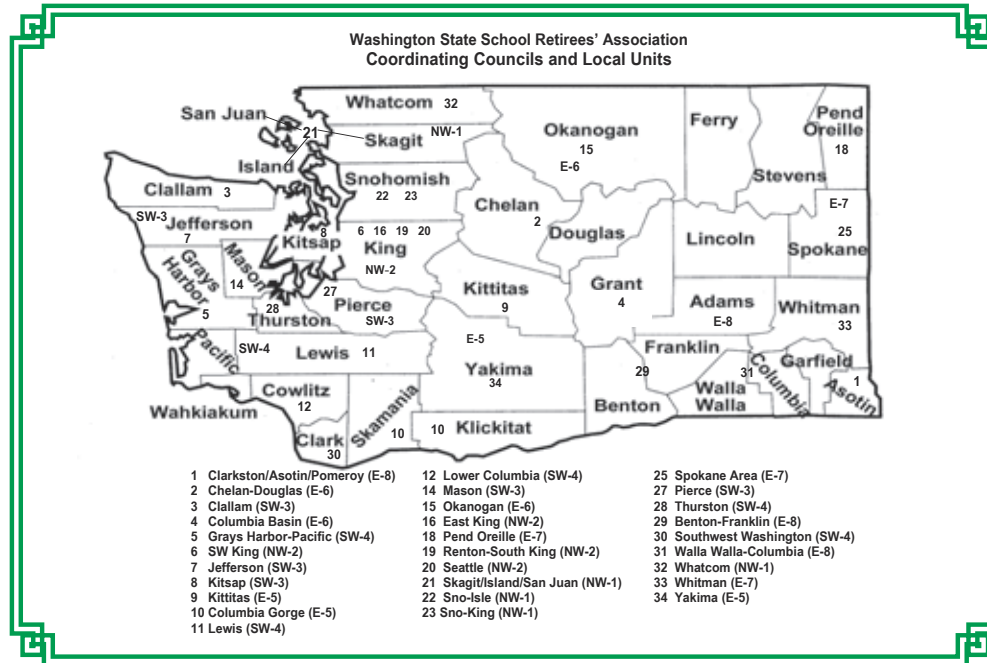
(scroll to bottom of main page)

and sign up today!

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



many leadership positions and has a passion for music. He knows that becoming a music teacher will be the best way to share his gift.

The committee also awarded a third scholarship beyond the budgeted amount with the approval of the Sno-Isle board. Anahi Valdez will receive \$1,000 to attend Everett Community College in the fall. She is graduating from Marysville Getchell High School. She enjoys helping others, which is why for next year she will be trying to pursue a pathway in special education or human services while attending Everett Community College.

NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:

Since members are in the higher risk category for the COVID-19, the unit has not had any group meetings for several months. However, the unit board has been trying out the Zoom meeting format and has encouraged others to view the Zoom meetings from the Lacey office. The meeting where WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke**, interviewed David Iseminger, the director of the PEBB and SEBB programs was very informative. The “town hall” meeting via Zoom on June 17 was also packed with good information. If you haven’t tried this avenue for information yet, give it a try, as it is anticipated that there will be

few meetings with close contact in the near future.

One last piece of information, Unit 21 was able to put together and send out a spring newsletter. Yes, it was a bit more time consuming with the stay-at-home directive. However, it was able to get done and many members appreciated receiving the most current unit news. A new component was articles from active teachers, students, and a local district superintendent, who shared their thoughts about offsite learning this spring.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Even though it seemed the world turned upside down this spring, it was exciting and re-

warding for Unit 22 Sno-Isle to announce this year’s scholarship winners. The scholarship committee met outdoors in April maintaining a six-foot distance. After scoring and completing the evaluations of many qualified students, the committee selected two students to receive a \$2,500 scholarship.

Rachel Foster is a first-year junior at Western Washington University. During quarantine, she has been learning how to become a beekeeper. Rachel plans to become an elementary school teacher.

Jayson Dick graduated this year from Marysville Pilchuck High School. He will attend Western Washington University this fall. Jason has held

Unit 23 Sno-King:

Unit members have been staying home, being safe, and healthy. The March board meeting was held at **Jim Sissel**’s house with everyone sitting at the required social distance. The March field trip, April and May luncheons, and July picnic were cancelled. The unit will be recognizing their four scholarship recipients with a framed certificate. **Evelyn Nordeen** has been recognized by WSSRA with an Honorary Membership. The June board meeting was held “virtually” using Zoom. It was the board’s first try and it worked reasonably well. The board plans to use the same “virtual” meeting format for the annual planning retreat in September. Due to the fact

WSSRA Around The State

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 (via Zoom), by email, or phone.

that the unit has not had nor will be able to have a group meeting in the foreseeable future, the SKSR board appointed the current officers to continue for the 2020-2021 year.

Unit 32 Whatcom County:

Unit 32 has had to cancel their meetings for the remainder of the year as has so many others. The board, however, has had a Zoom conference to discuss items that need to be completed for the end of the year and to make plans for next year. The board voted to donate money each month to a different food bank within Whatcom County. A follow up meeting was held via Zoom on June 12.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 20 Seattle:

Unit 20 has hunkered down during the coronavirus but has communicated mainly by email, phone, and even Zoom.

Patricia MacGowan, SSRA scholarship chair, announced winners for two of Seattle's scholarships: James Spott (from West Seattle High School) and Jonathan Barrera (from Rainier High School) for the Lynn Fuller Scholarships, as well as Isaiah-James Draculan (from Cleveland High School) and Mario Daniel Garcia (from Sammamish High School) for the Phil

Konkel Scholarships. Her committee will choose teacher intern scholarships after applications have arrived (due September 1). The unit has also continued its major financial contribution to the Seattle School's scholarship fund, which provides financial support to 24 needy high school graduates who were first in their families to seek post-secondary educational opportunities.

During WSSRA's virtual convention, **Patricia MacGowan** received the 2020 Stan McNaughton Award from WSSRA largely for her work with Unit 20's scholarship program and her leadership in a wide assortment of state and national organizations.

SSRA President **Pat Cygan** chaired the WSSRA Awards Committee to select both the Stan McNaughton and Patrick Hoban awards. Others on the committee included **Doris Bucher**, **Bill Marvin**, and **Beverly Jagla**. Both award winners were announced during the June 30 WSSRA virtual convention.

SSRA's luncheon gatherings have been cancelled due to the coronavirus until further notice. SSRA's board will meet later via Zoom to decide when the unit may safely schedule future luncheons.

Unit 32 Whatcom County recently received this note of gratitude from a mini-grant recipient...

Dear WSSRA Board,

In December, you graciously awarded me a mini-grant of \$200 to help me build my classroom library for my 5th grade students. Thank you so much for your generosity. They learned about a historical figure of their choice by reading a biography, and researching online. They each wrote a biographical essay, created timelines, and gathered mementos to represent their subject. They dressed as their subject, and spoke in the first person for our "Living History Museum." Families and 3rd and 4th grade students came to hear all about many famous historical figures. This is becoming a 5th grade tradition at Central Elementary. The students really enjoy this learning project. Thank you again for helping make this possible by your support in purchasing the books for our classroom library.

With gratitude,

Nancy Button

5th Grade Teacher, Central Elementary

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam Co.:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association has not had a meeting since February due to COVID-19. Agendas for each month have still been emailed to keep members informed. The unit board has handled business via email and with one in-person meeting. One thing that was accomplished was establishing the Clallam

County School Retirees' Association Foundation, a 501(c)(3) entity that will manage scholarships and mini-grants for the organization. Those awards are granted within Clallam County. A bank account for the foundation has been started.

Work is continuing on collecting and making items to sell for the 2021 WSSRA Convention. There was discussion about possible guest speakers

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 21 Skagit, Island, San Juan: Secretary Diane Visten, Unit President Bruce Boyer, and Membership Chair Barbara Robinson met in June to figure out how the unit can continue with business as usual. They practiced social distancing and wore masks while enjoying the view from Diane's deck overlooking the Sound.

for the coming year. Using people and resources within CCSRA is the plan for the first half of the year. It is hoped that meetings can resume in September.

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

This has been a trying year with the COVID-19 virus. No convention and no unit meetings since March. The unit board has been informing members of what is happening via e-mail. A unit board meeting was held in June to talk about planning the calendar for next year. For September and October, there will be no speakers. Instead, in September, members will talk about

their favorite book, and in October, members will share about trips they have taken. In December, the Christmas party is scheduled for Ambrosia with **Alan Burke** to talk about legislative agenda. In January, attendees will share about the "Most Important Person in My Life." In February, the sharing topic will be, "Best High School Memory." In March, Liberty Books will give a presentation. In April, Lisa Stirret Studio will be talking to the group. The year will end with visits to Albers Garden and Valley Nursery in Poulsbo. There will also be a picnic at Lions Field. All of these meeting plans are still tentative and if unit members

have any additional ideas, please contact **Patty Marz** at peppermintpatty@comcast.net. Looking forward to seeing members next year. Stay safe and take care of yourself.

Unit 27 Pierce County:

Exciting news for PCSRA was receiving the "All-Time High" Membership Appreciation Award (1,200 members) and earning the Unit of Highest Distinction Award for 2019-2020.

Unit 27 is pleased to announce the Pierce County Future Educator's Scholarship Award winners: Chloe Callow attending Washington State University, Ella Jones attending Eastern Washington University, and Ari Zantkovsky attending Washington State University. Additionally, it is an honor that the unit's own **Bob Duke** was installed as president of WSSRA for next year.

Due to the influence of COVID-19, PCSRA mini-grant winners chose to utilize their funds to enhance their on-line instruction, an unexpected but appreciated opportunity!

Members have enjoyed the expansion of the Pierce County newsletter coverage this year to include new articles: Unsung Heroes, Adventure Corner, Travel Spotlight, and Volunteer Profiles. Members' passions, commitments, and contributions are extraordinary.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 11 Lewis County:

Despite no regular meetings, LCSRA Unit 11 was able to award three scholarships to high school seniors and make a donation to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library for Lewis County. The unit also increased their contribution amount to the Centralia College Foundation.

Unit 11 Lewis County is very appreciative of Honorary Membership status being granted to **Mary Kidrick** and **Celia Holman**. They join Honorary Member **Doris Coble**. All three are very deserving having given much time, talent, and leadership in service to the unit.

Unit 12 Lower Columbia:

Unit President **Noel McRae** was pleased to announce that the scholarship this year was given to Nyssa Engebo from Kelso High School. She had a GPA of 4.0 and glowing recommendations from the faculty.

Mary Lou Salberg, unit treasurer, reported on the 26 mini-grants that were awarded to area teachers. These grants were given with funds provided by Fibre Federal. A 5th grade teacher bought books that have different literary elements. Another purchase was for virtual travel viewers and headsets for students studying China. One grant was for a

WSSRA Around The State

K-5 daily friendship club. These children work on small arts and craft projects while practicing social skills such as cooperating with others and building friendships. A grant was given to Blooming Generation Garden. The children care for the garden that they share with their school community.

Unit 12 members kept busy doing various fun and community-minded activities even while keeping safe and well during this unusual time in which we live. Although members are anxious to get back to normal, so they can again enjoy each other's company. **Sharon-Ewing-Fix** went on weekly trips to Costco to pick-up items for her family and friends. She also did community service through her church. **Peggy Porter** assisted Sharon Kai-ghin with her move to a new home. **Mary Anne Gennette** was very busy keeping in touch through phone calls to family and friends. She also attended her daughter's fun 60th birthday party which had a Cinderella theme. People sat on the sidewalk and wore masks.

Judy Higgins bought groceries, delivered goodies and meals to shut-ins. **Judy's** brother-in-law started 500 tomato and other vegetables in his greenhouse. **Judy** handed out many of these plants to friends from Wallace Elementary, church friends, and to family and friends in Idaho.

She said the best part of handing out plants was seeing the smiles on people's faces.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

Unit 28 continues to work around the stay-at-home order by doing business via e-mail, phone, text, newsletters, and Zoom meetings. The Unit 28 officers for 2020-2021 were installed by Washington State School Retirees' Association President **Bob Duke** on June 16 during a Zoom meeting.

Unit 28's Bits & Pieces newsletter will be available only by email and on the unit website for the foreseeable future because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The May newsletter and the June special edition issue have been emailed to members from WSSRA via Constant Contact. Any Unit 28 member who has not received an issue since April should complete two simple steps to get on the email list for the summer newsletters and to read recent issues.

1. Go to the WSSRA website (www.wssra.org) to complete and submit the simple form at the bottom of the homepage. Doing this will ensure that you will receive any of our newsletters that can be sent only by email.

2. To view current and past issues, go to www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/, click on "Newsletter," and select the issues you would like to read.



Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy member and E8 District Representative, Sharon Hoseley has been hard at work. Here is her story...

Beginning on March 19, my granddaughter, Haelee, and I began sewing cloth face masks. We want people to be safe and know that many cannot afford to buy masks.

We began with a stash of material I had on hand. We sew each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Haelee sews the first round and turns them inside-out. I pleat and do the finishing two rounds. We make three sizes: small, medium, and large because one size does not fit all and people won't wear them unless they fit. Every time the stack of cloth gets low, a sack with more shows up on my doorstep, plus thread and even paper lunch sacks to put them in. I've received some donations of money, which I use to purchase elastic.

The masks are free. Each order goes in a sack with the person's name on it and is placed on my front porch for the people to pick-up. In each bag, I put this note: "With each mask I've sewn, I've prayed for the one who will wear it. We all want this to end. God promised: 'I am God. At the right time, I will make it happen.'" Isaiah 60:22"

Cards and notes of thanks are overwhelming. We average about 80 masks each week. As of mid-July, we've made over 1,760 cloth masks.

WSSRA Around The State

Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):

Unit 30 has worked hard on their internet site. Go to WSSRA's official web site, local units, Unit 30. Explore and enjoy all the information that is provided. Positive testimonials are encouraged and will be presented on the site concerning the many activities that are enjoyed at unit luncheons during the year.

Although not officially voted in, the following will be the unit officers for 2020-2021: president (a committee will be determined at a later date, contact person is **Jeanie Anderson**), Vice President **Waneta Filbin**, Secretary **Mina Milligan**, Treasurer **Marty Erickson**.

Monthly luncheons are enjoyed at Cascadia Tech Academy where students receive on-the-job training in a full

service restaurant. For over 30 years, Cascadia Tech Academy has provided high school juniors and seniors of Southwest Washington with the necessary professional skills and technical knowledge to enter high demand occupations with confidence and pride.

Unit 30 presented scholarships to Cascadia, Vancouver School District Foundation, and Battle Ground School District Foundation.

Fran Person had unit members fill-out a questionnaire that was prepared by WSSRA's Health Service Committee. Information from the survey will be used to plan future committee activities with a focus on meeting the health-related concerns and challenges expressed by the membership.

EAST-5

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

Unit 34, Yakima County, has had members involved in both the town hall and WSSRA convention, both held via Zoom meetings. At this time, unit meetings are not being held, however the YCSRA participants in the town hall and convention Zoom meetings appreciate the work done at the state level to keep members informed.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

See article on page 16.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

Columbia Basin Unit 4 held its June board meeting at a city park, with everyone wearing

masks to make sure all members stayed safe. Ten members of the group were delegates to the WSSRA virtual state convention on June 30. Representing Unit 4 were **Wanda Harrison, Susan Hickok, Bev Shelton, Helen Preston, Gayle Talbot, Linda Bishop, Pat Simmons, Lanita Pomeroy, Lois Palek, and Karen Schafer.**

Unit 15 Okanogan:

While in the midst of a unit shutdown (and Washington State shutdown), the OCSRA scholarship committee has been hard at work and has awarded its annual scholarship to a Pateros High School graduate and Elementary Education major at Washington State University, Aubrey Miller.

The scholarship, which is awarded yearly by OCSRA, is limited to Okanogan County residents who are of at least junior standing in a college/university and who are working toward initial certification in an educational field with a desire to work in public schools.

The Okanogan County unit's scholarship has been available to college students for over 25 years.

In addition, the following high school students were selected by the E-6 scholarship team for this year's high school scholarship awards: Stephanie Goble, Omak (PEMCO



Unit 23 Sno-King: Evelyn "Evie" Nordeen was recently granted Honorary Membership to WSSRA. Evie turned 90 in May and has been an association member since 1993. Before her retirement, Evie served as a nurse with the Northshore School District. As a member of SKSR and WSSRA, Evie has been active in a variety of community service projects, served as acting unit president, unit membership chair, scholarship committee, mini-grants committee, participated in many retirement benefits fairs, and regularly attended coordinating council and WSSRA conventions. Evie has been the unit's Sunshine chairperson for the past 13 years. Thank you Evie!

WSSRA Around The State



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scholarship) and Abigail Popelier, Okanogan (PEMCO Scholarship). PEMCO awards are \$900 each renewable for four years. A WSSR-Foundation scholarship was awarded to Olivia Richards, Okanogan. The Foundation award is \$2,500 for one year.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: The unit board plans to meet in July and August and continue to plan the year. However, at this time, the first meeting in September will be a brown bag lunch at 11:30am in the Asotin Park. The park has a large covered area, which will allow for easy social distancing. A portable sound system will be used so everyone should be able to hear well. It is recommended that people wear masks and

hand sanitizer will be available. If the weather is poor, the covered picnic area will protect attendees from the elements. People will also be asked to bring their own chair if they don't want to sit on the picnic benches.

This spring, the unit donated funds to assist a local family who lost their home to a fire in late May. They already had 3 children and at the time of the fire, the mom was in the hospital with newborn triplets. The husband barely got their one-year-old out through a window in time! The mom, Jeni, graduated from Clarkston High School and her children attend Clarkston schools now. Unit members were disappointed that they weren't able to deliver scholarship awards during senior awards nights this year. Nevertheless, the unit was excited to award scholarships even though they

weren't able to present them in person due to the quarantine. Each recipient sent a thank you note to the unit. The students all confirmed that their college plans are still intact even with the pandemic.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

Convention delegates from Unit 29 participated in a virtual WSSRA state convention on June 30, 2020. The virtual convention covered the necessary action items including scholarships, unit awards, committee reports, recognition, celebration of life, and installation of officers. The 2021 WSSRA state convention will be held in Pasco, June 7-9.

A highlight from convention for the unit was membership acknowledgements. From March 2019-March 2020, BFSRA enrolled 82 new members (deceased not factored in). Membership increase was a net 33. All time high

membership level – 18th year with all time high. Unit 29 also received Unit of Distinction with 20 points out of 20.

Earlier in the year, each unit was asked to tally the number of volunteer hours for their members. The total of volunteer hours collected statewide totaled 133,000. This translates into free volunteer service provided by educators to the community.

BFSRA 20-21 officers are President **Victoria Russell**, President-Elect **Liz Friedrich**, Secretary **Lew Edming**, Treasurer **Ardith Eakin**, and Immediate Past President **Dottie Stevens**. The most recent newsletter outlined the protocols for the general membership meetings.

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

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please Notify:

Membership Coordinator:
Michele Hunter
michele@wssra.org

Phone: 360-413-5496, ext 116

WSSRA, PO Box 5127
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Vision
WSSRA will provide leadership
and promote action relevant
to all retired and active school personnel.

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

The mission of WSSRA is to...

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

Don't delay – ask today

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