

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



JANUARY, FEBRUARY 2019

VOLUME 72, ISSUE NO. 3



WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Making Good Things Happen Every Day



by Linda Averill, Ph.D., president

"Immerse yourself in a cause you're passionate about."

— Germany Kent

As I have traveled the state and listened to members this past year, I discovered that those who volunteer and are excited about what they do are the happiest of people. One lady cannot get around well but two or three times a week, she cuddles and rocks the babies at a local hospital. Another gentleman volunteers with the local police, cruising parking lots and looking at license plates for stolen vehicles. He also does house-checks for people on vacation. Others volunteer at blood banks as receptionists and canteen workers. One unit regularly helps at a local food bank.

I have volunteered at libraries, sorting books for sale and shelving returned books. As a retired librarian, matching books and people, especially children, is my passion. My unit, SnoIsle supports Christmas House (of Snohomish County) by collecting toys. This has become my cause! I am the "book lady," gathering books all year to give to over 7,000 children from 250 low-income Snohomish

County families. It is so rewarding for me to work with over 400 volunteers as we set up and run the Christmas House store for three weeks before Christmas. Parents are so grateful to choose toys, a scarf, hat or gloves, and a book for each of their children.

Though the holidays are over, many volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year; some are once a month for an hour while others are more often, some are more active than others. I urge each of you to explore a volunteer opportunity. There is something that will fit your interest if you just look for it.



"The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." --Barack Obama

ATTENTION WSSRA UNITS AND MEMBERS

The WSSRA board is considering options for replacing the work of the Outreach Committee that was disbanded by the vote of the Delegate Assembly at the 2018 Convention in Wenatchee. To that end, please share your ideas about the statewide promotion of programs and practices in community service, communications (including marketing and social media), and service to active K-12 employees. **Please send your ideas to:**

WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke, ALAN@WSSRA.ORG

PLEASE SUBMIT IDEAS BY JANUARY 31, 2019



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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**

February 5, 2019
for Mar./Apr. 2019 issue

April 5, 2019
for May/June 2019 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the executive director

Protecting Ourselves in the Electronic World



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

Happy 2019! With the beginning of the new year, and preparations ongoing for the legislative session (see Peter Diedrick's article on page 4), we can't forget that bad guys don't take time off for the holidays or make a resolution to stop cheating seniors through phone-based or online scams.

Indeed, they probably spent their holiday "break" dreaming up new and more ingenious ways to cheat seniors out of their well-earned money. In the first four months of 2018 it was estimated that 12 billion robo-calls were made to American homes. Word on the street is that 2019 will see even more attempts to lure folks into potentially bad deals via the phone. In fact, one source predicts that half of all cell calls in 2019 will be initiated by scammers! Of course, not all phone solicitations are bad. The trick is in deciphering which calls deserve a listen, and which do not.

For now, it's important to review the latest from 2018 scams, and make sure that you and your loved ones stay vigilant and on the lookout for deals that seem too good to be true. Hint: they almost always are!

The facts are that people over 65 are 34% more likely to lose money to fraud than those in their 40's. Even though state legislators have taken notice—last year 24 states enacted laws to stop financial exploitation of seniors—fraud attempts of retirees won't stop. It is just too easy for crooks to go after a vulnerable population.

So, what to do? For robo-calls—solicitations from a recorded voice—a hang up works well. This is especially true if the call alleges a credit fraud card alert—and asks for card numbers in order to "fix" the problem. The same is true for calls that promise to lower credit card rates or offer pre-approved loans—only if you provide important personal information.

Cheap vacations, time-shares, home security systems, and calls from phony government offices (including Medicare) or utility companies often top lists of calls to summarily reject. Notably, 2018 saw more and more calls disguised through local area codes and phone prefixes—all intended to make the call seem to come from a home town source. In most cases, this not true. By the way, there are apps—some free, some low-cost—that allow smart phone users to flag and block phony calls and text messages.

For email solicitations, a quick delete normally does the trick. Be wary of the sob story solicitations where some unfortunate person is in desperate need of cash to get through a crisis, and could use credit card help to survive. Delete is definitely the right move here. For people who legitimately are in a crisis, a number of safe and secure online options are available, as is the tried and true pathway of using services like Salvation Army for help. Also, a quick check of the email address of the sender can tip off a bad guy solicitation. Predictably, some clever crooks can make an address seem real, so always check the message and delete if you have any question about the source.

For more information, please see the AARP article on page 10.

Of course, to stop all of this I suppose we could just get rid of our computer and cell phone, but that is not going to happen. Life in 2019 is better using technology—so long as we all stay vigilant and hold personal information to ourselves. Happy New Year!

Note: AARP sources were used to support statements in this article.

Legislative News

2019 Legislative Session is Here



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

This past election season was fascinating to watch. The Primary election results were very unusual, forecasting unprecedented gains for the Democratic Party in the legislature. House and Senate Republicans took the warning in stride, and went to work clawing back votes. They were mostly successful and lost only seven seats in the House and three seats in the Senate. Based on the Primary, Republicans stood to lose fifteen seats in the House alone.

Legislatively, the Democratic gains will result in strong Democratic majorities in both the State House and the State Senate. The Democratic Party will have a 57-41 seat advantage in the House, and a 28-21 majority in the Senate. They will control the agenda with little input from the minority party. Democrats have stated their focus will be mental health funding, environmental issues, and affordable housing.

Olympia will see a number of new leaders in the upcoming 2019 legislative session. Senate Democrats have elected Andy Billig of Spokane as the Senate Majority Leader. J.T. Wilcox of

Yelm is taking the helm for House Republicans. Speaker Frank Chopp has announced his resignation as Speaker effective at the end of session, so there will be substantial jockeying in the House Democratic Caucus for that position. Finally, Governor Inslee has all but announced his intention to run for President of the United States, so he will likely be on the road much of the legislative session.

WSSRA will continue to work on retirees' key goals. Restoring a COLA for Plan 1, protecting your medical benefits, and providing early retirement options for members in Plans 2 & 3. In November, the Select Committee on Pension Policy voted to recommend a 3% pension increase for Plan 1 retirees. Governor Inslee followed suit by including the COLA in his 2019-2021 biennial budget proposal.

You can keep up to date on the legislative session by subscribing to email updates at www.wssra.org. For those who are on Facebook, we will be doing regular video updates throughout the legislative session.

On The Cover

Don Bunger, NW-2 representative, created each of these banners using hundreds of little LED lights. The WSSRA executive board gathered at the Capitol steps in Olympia, on a crisp, clear November evening, for this unique photo opportunity.



WSSR-PAC News



WSSR PAC: Wall of Support



by Lora Brabant, WSSR-PAC treasurer

Let's give a round of applause to our generous supporters for 2018!! Listed below are the contributors who gave to the WSSR-PAC so that our voice is heard in Olympia, letting our legislators know that we do care about the promises made while we were serving our community and our children.

Want your name on the 2019 Wall of Support??

That is easy - contribute to WSSR-PAC and let us know that your name can be published! You can either contribute by credit card on WSSR-PAC.org and hit the "Donate Now" button (the on-line form will ask you if we can publish your name) or you can hit the "Contribute" button right under the "Donate Now" scroll down and print out an "Individual Donation Form" send the completed form and send a check to: WSSR-PAC Treasurer, Lora Brabant, 125 West 11th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362.



Please support WSSR-PAC by making a contribution today!

Online at:
www.wssr-pac.org

Check Payable to: WSSR-PAC

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c/o Lora Brabant

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In Memory of:

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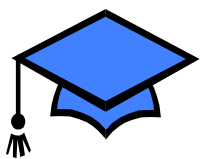
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Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Supporting Scholarships



by Ron Crawford, WSSR Foundation chair

As you know, the primary purpose of the WSSR Foundation is to provide funding for nine college scholarships to high school students graduating this spring planning on a career in education. Last year, the WSSR Foundation increased the nine scholarships to \$2,500 to better support the recipients with the high cost of attending college.

The source of funding for the scholarships primarily comes from your generous contributions through the basket-drawing program, silent auction, and contributions made throughout the year. In addition, any shortfall will come from interest in the Foundation investment account.

Members and units provide baskets and auction items for our fundraising effort at state convention. We would ask that the

coordinating councils place this on their meeting agenda to encourage individual units to start preparing for baskets/auction items for the convention. To me, the basket raffle is one of the many highlights at convention.

We also want to remind you that contributions can take place throughout the year. Please see donation form on this page. Last year, \$2,000 came in through this process.

The WSSR Foundation will also be the fiscal agent for the new Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship program for WSSRA. The scholarship will be \$1,000 for each of the eight regions in the state and is for college students intending to do their student teaching/internship this next year.

DONATION FORM

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' FOUNDATION

4726 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503-1216

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.

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

Check \$ _____ # _____
Cash \$ _____

Supporting Future Educators



WSSRA Now Offering College Scholarship for Student Teaching or Internships



by Jim Bumgarner, E8 district representative

The Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship

WSSRA has approved the use of Neil D. Prescott scholarship funds to help defray expenses for college students during their student teaching /internships. Eight \$1000 scholarships (one for each coordinating council district) can be awarded to winning applicants from those eight districts.

Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited institution of higher learning, anywhere, pursuing a degree/certificate in a field of education, and planning to student teach, or conduct an internship, in the year following their application. They must have graduated from a Washington State high school, and they must indicate strong desire to teach in Washington State.

Additionally, individual units will have access to applications in that coordinating council's applicant pool from students who graduated from any high school within their unit boundaries. If they choose, those units may award unit scholarships to as many applicants as they wish, including the coordinating council winner.

WSSRA encourages all members to share this opportunity to apply with family members, friends, and neighbors.

The deadline for submitting applications is March 1, 2019.

Application information can be found at www.wssra.org (under the "forms" tab)

ONLINE FOUNDATION DONATION

Did you know you can make an online donation to the WSSR Foundation? Donations can be a contribution, in honor or in memory of someone.

wssra.org

**Foundation link,
click on Donation
Form**

Foundation Contributors

Shirley Elfbrandt - donation

Karen Keller - in memory of Eloise Stendal, Harriet Smith

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Southwest King SRA - in memory of Velsid Cross, Evelyn Hammett, Gilbert Kugel, Judith Earle, Walter Edmiston

Yakima Co SRA - donation

WSSRA - donation

Membership: Strength In Numbers

Time To Build On Our Accomplishments



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

The months after the holidays present us with, in my opinion, a wonderful opportunity to build on what we have recently accomplished.

First, we need to thank our executive board for developing the \$10 membership building incentive program last spring. I know of a number of local units who have used this powerful tool to attract new members in a fun and effective way. Remember to use the new voucher form to accurately record and report the use of the \$10 bills. Each local unit needs to develop a procedure for making the money available and use the voucher to be reimbursed by the WSSRA office.

Secondly, membership is up as we demonstrate to prospective active and retired members how we are in a full-court press to get realistic retirement and substitute teaching measures through

the legislature for Plan 2/3 folks, as well as our constant efforts toward an adequate COLA for those on Plan 1. For the latter, we are already hearing that our effort for a 3% COLA is to be carried forward in at least one caucus and ultimately to the floor this coming legislative session. We are thankful to our legislative committee, as well as our executive director and legislative director, Alan Burke and Peter Diedrick.

Thirdly, our Membership Handbook continues to provide a wealth of ideas and procedures to guide local membership committees in their quest to find and encourage new members. This winter season is a great time to make presentations at staff meetings (teaching and classified) and spend ten minutes or so talking about WSSRA. Any unit member who can get an invitation to a staff meeting can make the presentation. Be sure to include your local membership chair and have some fun encouraging

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 4726 PACIFIC AVE SE, LACEY, WA 98503-1216

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

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



staff to join WSSRA. Remember, the \$10 incentive works, as long as the principal or meeting leader approves it first. Presentation materials are available from the WSSRA office or from me - just ask!

Finally, I would be interested in any feedback you may have on the change in the \$10 incentive program. For the past several years, the incentive program was set up in a different manner. I have been hearing that re-instating at least part of the previous program would be helpful and desirable. Please contact WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter or me with any remarks you might care to share. And, remember:

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

RETIREE RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

AARP Washington Office
1-866-227-7457 WWW.AARP.ORG
Mike Tucker, state president
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WSSRA Connections



Up For Grabs?

Washington Consumers Unknowingly Putting Their Digital Identities at Risk

by Jason Erskine, AARP Washington

Hardly a month goes by without hearing of another data breach exposing our personal information to hackers and potential identity thieves. These breaches affect millions of individuals: Equifax—147 million, Target—110 million, Uber—57 million, Home Depot—53 million, and the list goes on and on. According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, there were over 738 data breaches in 2017 exposing more than 2-billion individual's records. In fact, experts say very few of us haven't been affected.

And while identity thieves are busy sharing and selling our personal information online, a new state survey from AARP shows Washington consumers are falling further behind in the battle to protect their identities. While confusion on just what steps to take are holding many back, some consumers have simply thrown in the towel and conceded that it's only a matter of time before they're the next victim of identity theft.

In an age of data breaches and sophisticated identity thieves, protecting your digital information is more important than ever. According to consumer fraud experts, there are three key steps consumers should take to better protect their personal information:

1. Set up and monitor online banking and checking accounts often;
2. Freeze your credit; and
3. Strengthen online passwords and privacy settings.

AARP is sharing those tips as part of a statewide "Taking Charge of Your Digital Identity" campaign in partnership with the Washington State Attorney General's Office, Microsoft, the Federal Trade Commission, BECU and the Social Security Administration. As part of that effort, AARP released a new Washington state report, "Up for Grabs." The survey of Washington online users 18+ revealed that a lack of awareness and knowledge of online dangers may be contributing to increased dangers for Washington consumers. According to AARP's report, six-in-ten Washington adults (60%) failed a quiz testing their "Digital Identity IQ." For instance:

- Only one third of respondents (32%) know that a fraud alert will not prevent their credit file from being shared with potential creditors. A fraud alert does not block potential new credit, but places a comment on your history so that creditors will contact you prior to opening a new account.

- Only one-third of respondents (32%) know that a scan of the dark web will not confirm whether your personal information has been stolen. Because of the way the dark web is structured, it is impossible to do a complete scan of the dark web.
- Only half of respondents (53%) know that purchasing ID theft monitoring services does not prevent identity thieves from stealing your identity. Most ID theft monitoring services will notify individuals if someone is attempting to open new credit in their name, however it won't prevent it from happening.
- Only about four-in-ten (38%) know that there are millions of Social Security numbers available for sale on the Internet for as low as \$3.00 each.

Not only is a lack of awareness of online dangers placing consumers at risk, many others admit they have just given up. A full six-in-ten (60%) of those surveyed said that given the number of data breaches that have occurred over the past five years, they feel that no matter what they do, it is inevitable that criminals will use their stolen identity to exploit their credit at some point.

"With data breaches constantly in the news, keeping your personal information safe may seem like a difficult task," said Attorney General Bob Ferguson. "There are simple steps you can take to better protect yourself from identity theft. Take advantage of the resources offered by AARP, the Attorney General's Office and others."

Take Charge of Your Credit File

Getting a credit freeze is one of the three primary recommendations of security officials to help protect your identity. With a credit freeze in place, a criminal is unable to access your credit file or open new credit accounts. According to AARP's report however, fewer than one-in-six Washington adults (14%) report having ever ordered a security freeze on their credit.

"Along with checking their credit reports regularly and reviewing bills promptly, many consumers find that freezing their credit is a simple thing they can do to protect themselves from crooks looking to set up phony credit accounts," says Federal Trade Commission Regional Director Chuck Harwood.

WSSRA Connections

New survey shows many consumers fail quiz on how to protect their personal information, while others have simply thrown in the towel.

Check Your Online Accounts

With the ever increasing number of data breaches, experts say almost all of us have had our personal information exposed to potential identity thieves. So it's vital that consumers have online access to all of their important bank accounts, credit cards and retirement accounts and to check them frequently. According to AARP's report however, only four-in-ten (38%) of Washington adults have set-up online accounts for all of their bank accounts, while one-in-five (21%) admit they have not set up online access to any of their bank accounts. Similarly, only half (50%) of Washington adults have set-up online access to all of their credit cards, while more than one-quarter (27%) haven't set up access to any of their credit cards.

To make matters worse, some consumers who say they are staying offline are doing so for all the wrong reasons. Nearly half of respondents who have not set up online access to some or any of their bank or credit card accounts (45%) say they haven't because they are afraid their personal information will get stolen; about four-in-ten (41%) say they feel safer without an online account; and over one-third (36%) say they don't trust the internet. "It's ironic and unfortunate that fear and mistrust of the internet is actually putting people in greater danger that their personal information will be stolen and used by ID thieves," says AARP State Director Doug Shadel. "Crooks have told us that people without online accounts are the perfect targets. It allows the criminals to set up online access themselves, and to even set passwords and identifying information locking people out of their own accounts."

Strengthen Your Passwords and Privacy Settings

The difference between secure computing and falling victim to online fraud or identity theft often comes down to a dozen

or so keystrokes - your password. However, nearly half (45%) of Washington adults report using the same password for more than one online account. Younger adults are more likely to report doing this compared to older adults (18-49: 49%; 50-64: 46%; 65 and older: 33%). Using the same password across multiple accounts is a very risky practice. If hackers are able to break just one of your codes, they can now access each of your accounts. "Our members know we are very vigilant about protecting their data and often ask us what else they can do. We tell them to treat their passwords like toothbrushes," says Kyle Welsh, BECU's Chief Information Security Officer. "Change them frequently; don't share them; don't leave them lying around; and the longer you brush, the better."

Privacy concerns over users personal information on Facebook has also been in the spotlight lately. AARP's survey shows that among Washington Facebook users 18+, nearly three-quarters (72%) report having changed at least some of their privacy settings from the default settings. However, significantly fewer adults aged 65-and-older (33%) have done this. "Social media sites can be a great way to stay active and engaged, just be careful what you share," says Jeff Lilleskare, Online Safety & Security Risk Management, Microsoft. "Check your settings to make sure only friends can see what you post, or at most friends of friends. Don't post when you're going to be traveling. Don't share your address, and be careful about taking pictures with sensitive information in them," he says.

You can take AARP's "Digital Identity IQ Quiz" at aarp.org/wa and see how you stack up against the rest of the state. Also check out more consumer protection tips and sign up for fraud alerts from the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

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For Your Health

Staying Healthy and Upright in the New Year



by Donna Murrish, Unit 23 Sno-King

Do you ever feel dizzy, lightheaded, or as if you're going to fall? Dizziness is very common, but it is never normal and if this happens often, it could be a sign of a balance disorder. Having good balance means being able to control and maintain your body's position, whether you're moving or staying still. Although there are many causes of balance problems, such as certain health conditions or medications, many balance disorders start suddenly and with no obvious cause.

Why am I unsteady on my feet? Loss of balance when standing or walking are often experienced along with vertigo and other types of dizziness. The nerves can no longer send signals to your brain about the position of your legs and feet and can cause unsteadiness. Older people often have poor balance due to loss of muscle strength and joint flexibility, as well as reduced vision and reaction time. Most of the time dizziness is not from a life-threatening disease; it's often because of a disorder of the inner-ear balance system. Consult with your doctor for proper diagnosis.

Exercising for better balance: There is much more that can be said about balance disorders, but how about trying some balance exercises? You have no doubt heard a lot about the benefits of exercising and there are many exercises you could choose. Here are a few simple ones geared specifically for helping to improve balance:

Squat to a Chair

(the goal of this is to strengthen knees & hips which will boost your stability) Begin by standing in front of a chair, legs hip-width apart. Raise your chest slightly and then try lowering your hips back and down while bending at the knees. You can hover above the chair or simply sit down. Avoid extending your knees beyond the toes. Remain in this position with your entire body leaning forward, starting from the hip region.



Leg Raises

Start by standing behind a chair. Lift your right leg straight backwards. Try not to bend the knees. Remain in position for a couple of seconds and then do the same for the left leg. Try for 15 times for each leg.

Side-Leg Raises

Start behind a chair. Lift the leg to the side. Keep back straight and toes facing forward. Alternate legs and try for 15 leg raises per side.

Wall Push-ups

Stand at arm's length in front of a wall. Lean forward gently and place your palms on the wall. Keep feet firmly planted. Next, push yourself backward to the point where your arms are straight out. Do this 15 to 20 times.

Heel Raises

(strengthens ankle and knee joints) Try doing this with a chair to give you more stability. Stand upright, feet hip-width apart. Lift both heels so you'll be balancing on the balls of your feet. Lower yourself back to the ground gently. Repeat at least 10 times.

Flamingo

(most senior-friendly) Stand on one leg. Place one hand on a chair and stretch the other leg forward. Stand this way 10 to 15 seconds; repeat about five times before moving to the other leg. Keep your shoulders back and head straight with ears above your shoulders.

Toe the Line

Place your heel so it touches the toes of the other foot. Repeat the process with the other heel. Focus on a single location to remain stable while doing this exercise.

Remember, body position and proper technique are more important than the number of repetitions or how fast you can do the exercise. While doing these exercises, it is a good idea to have someone nearby in the event you need help.

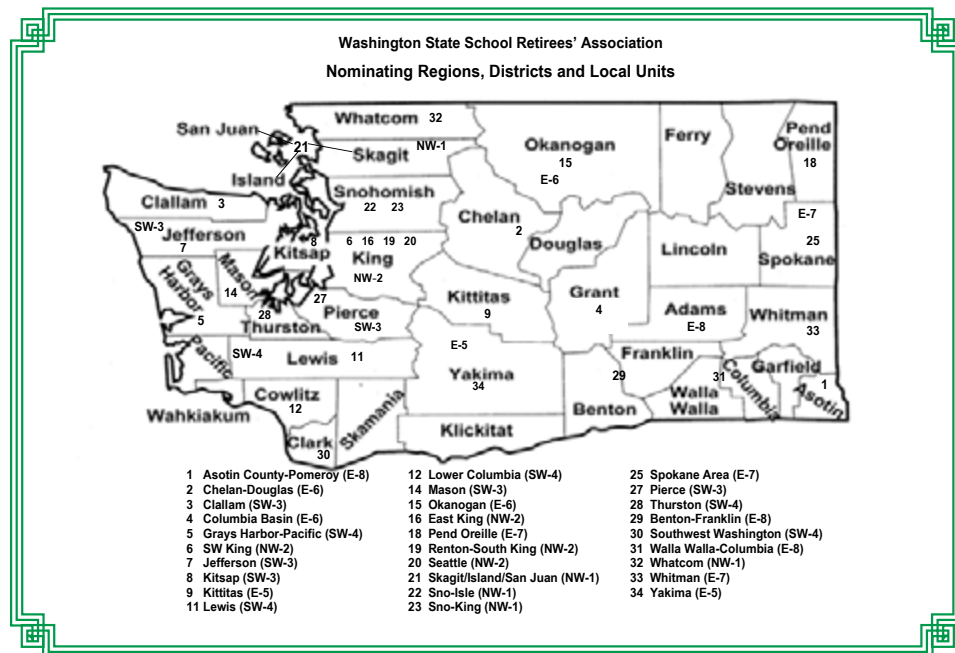
Get out that New Year's resolution list and add 'improving balance' to it. Good luck, stay upright, and Happy New Year!

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the districts



NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: Unit 21 has had a very busy fall. In October, 27 mini-grants were delivered to school employees in the area. The unit had planned to only fund 25, but two additional requests really pulled on the heart-strings of the mini-grant committee members, so money was reallocated from the outreach portion of the unit budget in order to make sure those additional two applications were awarded funds.

In November, the general membership meeting featured **Carl Bruner**, superintendent of the Mt. Vernon School District as the main speaker. Most in attendance have been

retired for several years and **Carl** illustrated how much the student population and needs have changed over the years. He also shared information about the current school construction project and those that will follow in the next two years.

In December, the unit gathered for the annual holiday luncheon at the Skagit Valley Golf and Country Club. The meal was a traditional turkey dinner and entertainment, provided by Kelly Visten and Ria Vanderpool, added a very festive holiday feel, as they sang and led the group with a sing-along. December's guest speakers included WSSRA President **Linda Averill** and Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick**. Continuing with

tradition for this luncheon, guests brought food items to be donated to the Skagit Valley food bank.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Sno-Isle Unit 22 met for their annual Christmas Brunch at LeBistro - Snohomish County's high school culinary skills center. Kamiak High School's Barbershop Choir provided the entertainment and attendees enjoyed a wonderful meal. Toys were collected for Christmas House - a local charity. Members also donated \$700 to help in the purchase of new toys for next year.

No meeting will be held in January but time will be spent distributing \$400 grants to

25 active members and for the first time \$100 grants to 25 non-members to use in improving schools.

The February lunch event will feature the services of the Snohomish County Library System.

Since Sno-Isle Unit 22 meets on Tuesdays, members continue to bring two cans to the meetings for "Toucan Tuesday." The local food bank is always appreciative of the donations.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

In November, **Cheryl Bauer** and **Barb Bumgardner** presented information to Northshore School District employees about the benefits of belonging to SKSR and WSSRA at the district benefits fair.

Forty early risers attended the unit's November brunch to enjoy a very tasty and beautifully presented array of quiches, fruit, and a delicious variety of pastries and muffins, catered by Bistro 76 Café. Emma Parker and Sheila Lashua, of Lynnwood AAA Washington, presented a very informative program on "Travel 101" that was geared toward handy tips and ideas for travel near and far. They provided information on packing, insurance, useful accessories, personal safety, and so much more. Even experienced travelers learned some new information.

WSSRA Around The State

Remembering

Eloise Stendal

WSSRA President, 1988-1989

Eloise Stendal, WSSRA president in 1988-89, passed away recently. Eloise joined WSSRA after a 28-year teaching career in Bellingham, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley and Butzbach, Germany. After her retirement she was active in her church, hospital commission, and served as a reading tutor. She also was an avowed world traveler, visiting six continents and multiple countries within each of them.

Eloise was a graduate of Mt. Vernon High School and Western Washington University. She joined WSSRA in 1985 and a year later was appointed to the legislative committee. She maintained a keen interest in pension advocacy and senior issues throughout her retirement years.

Her tenure as WSSRA president focused on moving the organization forward in a number of ways. Eloise worked steadfastly to promote the Plan 1 COLA, meet the 100% membership goal, increase community service, and improve communications with external and internal stakeholders. She recognized the need for day-to-day advocacy at the state capitol and supported the idea of hiring a paid lobbyist. Eloise believed in working with other retiree organizations on issues of mutual benefit, and backed up that notion by strengthening connections with NRTA and AARP. She also was among the first WSSRA leaders to move the organization from paper and pencil to computerized operations.

Eloise lived an active and full life. She is survived by her son Mark from Sammamish and daughter Mary from White Rock, BC and three grandchildren. Bill, her beloved husband of 67 years, passed away in 2017.

The unit's active teacher grant distribution time period takes place from December to February each year. Grants up to \$250 each were provided to 56 active educators in 24 schools in the three local districts. Since 1997, the unit has awarded over \$91,000 in grants. Grants are given out at staff meetings during which unit representatives tell about membership with SKSR and WSSRA. This is a time when the unit gains many new members. **Karen McElliott**, the unit's new grants chair, did a fantastic job organizing the grants process this year.

On Saturday, January 5th unit members participated in a service project of filling snack bags that 250 homeless children receive each day as they are transported on district school buses to the place where they will be spending the night. Unit members donated \$570 that was used to purchase the snacks that were used. SKSR members worked with Washington Kids in Transition, which is a volunteer organization committed to providing basic needs to homeless children residing in the Snohomish County area.

The upcoming general meeting in February will feature Edmonds Superintendent **Kris McDuffy** giving an annual update about Edmonds School district. The planned speaker will be from Humanities Washington. Felix Benel will talk about the different unusual weather that Washington has experienced.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 6 Southwest King:

Southwest King School Retirees are in their 18th year of donating funds for school employees. The grants are split for a January 15 and a March 15 due date so teachers would have their materials before testing starts. Since thousands of Washington educators have student loan debt, unit membership is not a requirement to be a SWKSRA grant recipient.

The unit is now going 100% digital in reaching out to the four local school districts to provide information about grants. A one-page grant requirements flyer was created using Microsoft Word and saved in an electronic format (usually .pdf or .htm). The handout is then provided to the district for distribution via email to staff. Some school districts require flyers to be submitted to Peachjar, a software system used by most districts to reach all employees. Using Peachjar requires the a username and password and involves attaching the electronic flyer and choosing "email" to send to district employees.

Unit 16 East King:

East-King Unit 16 sent out grant applications to its six districts in November. They are re-sent in January along with reminders of their due date. January is also when \$500 checks for student school

WSSRA Around The State

supplies will be presented to two Issaquah schools at staff meetings. Clark Elementary and Maywood Middle School will be recipients this year.

Funds for the students' school supplies were largely raised by the generous members who participated in the annual silent auction in December. A wonderful variety of items were donated including delicious homemade delicacies and handmade treasurers. Christmas décor and Seahawks wares proved popular, too.

East-King continues to collect food and diapers for Hopelink each month. In the past, that organization gave a presentation during a unit gathering. Members were very impressed with how the charity used its funds and how efforts were made to help recipients become self-reliant.

Don Bunger and **Keitha Bryson** talked to East-King members last spring about how corporate reform impacts educators, students, and our democracy. Because of that presentation, **Don** (who is the NW2 representative) has been asked to speak again. His topic? "Class Wars and how did we arrive in this predicament?"

Unit 19 Renton-South King: During the November 6th unit gathering, Renton/South King welcomed Mary Kathryn Kozy (genealogist) to be the guest speaker. She

gave the members many tips on how to begin research into their family histories. Also, in November, Unit 19's budget for the year was finalized. On November 26, **Joan Morgenstern, Sue Perez, Eleanor Raschkow** and **Tina Underdahl** attended the Auburn School District Board meeting where they presented a check to Ed Herda, principal at Lea Hill Elementary for mini-grants to five teachers at his school.

Renton/South King's December 4 meeting was a holiday luncheon held at Fairwood Golf & Country Club. Guest speaker **Don Bunger**, NW2 Representative, told the members what to expect in the next legislative session. Kris Raftis, director of strategic relationships for RAYS(Renton Area Youth Services) gave the members a capsule of the programs offered for the Renton youth.

Unit 19 will not have meetings in January or February. On Tuesday, March 6, the membership meeting will be held at the Chateau in Renton. The guest speaker, from Washington Humanities, will be humorist Dori Gillam's topic, "What's Age Got To Do With It." The presentation should be an interactive and fun talk.

Unit 20 Seattle:

The November luncheon featured Lauren Williams, founder of "Casual Uncluttering," who spoke about how those of us who need to down-



Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: Tonya Bowers (left) and her student Isac (middle) receiving a mini grant from Barbara Robinson at the Discovery Learning Center in the Sedro Woolley School District. Isac is creating a welcome landscape at his school.

size can declutter. Years ago she downsized from a 4,600 square foot house to a 1,024 square foot apartment. She gave many useful suggestions.

For the December luncheon, the unit welcomed Larry Matsuda as speaker. He was born in an internment camp for Japanese-Americans during World War II. He later became a teacher and administrator for Seattle Public Schools, as well as for OSPI in Olympia. He is also a published author who has examined the experience of Japanese-Americans during and after the war.

The unit's S.E.E.D. Grant Program has increased the amount for unreimbursed expenses for Seattle teachers to up to \$500 per year for unit members and once up to \$200

for non-members. Sharon Green is the S.E.E.D. Grant Chair.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam Co.:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association Unit 3 met at Joshua's Restaurant, the venue for each month, on Tuesday, October 16th. The guest speaker was Cheri Tinker, executive director of Sarge's Place, Sarge's Attic, and Sarge's Farmstand. They are all designed to help veterans on the Olympic Peninsula and find them services they need.

During the last week of October, several members distributed bags of popcorn to school staff members at all facilities

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 22 Sno-Isle: Ken Harvey (right) and Gregg Milne, president of Christmas House, with toys donated by Unit 22 members for Christmas House to distribute to needy families in the Snohomish County area.

in Port Angeles, Sequim, and Crescent School Districts. This was the second year to do this and has been well received.

The November meeting was held on Tuesday, November 20th. Allyson Brekke, director of the Department of Community and Economic Development for the City of Port Angeles, spoke about past changes and developing projects in the city.

On December 18th, members were treated to a Christmas performance by Rainshadow Ringers, a group of bell ringers that includes local member **Cheryl Winney**. More books and funds were collected for First Step and Head Start.

Unit 8 Kitsap County:
Kitsap Unit 8 started out the

year at the Kitsap Family Pancake House on Kitsap Way. The gathering had wonderful attendance for the first meeting. **Doris Bucher** opened the meeting and talked about plans for the year. Ron Cleveland was the guest speaker and talked about how to organize your yard with plants for sun and shade. He gave a powerpoint presentation in which he showed his yard. He gave examples of sun and shade plants that worked in this area. He also talked about plants that could easily overtake other plants. He showed how to plant them in pots to keep them in check.

The October meeting was at the Kitsap Family Pancake House on Kitsap Way and included planning for the Christmas dinner and January's unit excursion to Olympia. Meeting turnout was excellent. **Doris Bucher**

talked about how ballots are processed and counted for an election. She talked about some of the challenges and how they are worked through. It was a very informative lecture. Also, during the gathering, hats, gloves and scarves were collected for the Kitsap Resource Center.

In December, unit members gathered at Ambrosia and had a good turnout. Unwrapped gifts were collected and given to the Kitsap Resource Center. Everyone had a great time visiting with each other.

Unit 27 Pierce County:

Pierce County's annual October Legislative "Meet and Greet" was held at and catered by Tacoma's LaQuinta Inn. What a great environment for legislative candidates from ten districts to mingle with members and nosh over cheese and crackers, fruit and elegant cookies! Candidates were seated at tables identified by their district so constituents could speak with candidates. Thanks to WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** and Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick**, Past President **Curt Horne**, and lobbyist **Fred Yancey** for their support.

The November luncheon, with AARP providing the program on fraud prevention, "Don't Be Scammed," broke attendance records and proved to be a draw for members. A December Christmas luncheon was brightened by **Dick Myking**, PCSRA member,

who entertained with accordion music. Carolyn Cook, public health nurse from Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department also presented information on immunizations recommended for those 60 and older.

Unit 27 donated over 200 pairs of socks to a local homeless shelter in Tacoma again this year. New socks are especially appreciated during the wet, cold winter months. Please join the gathering for the next meeting February 21st at LaQuinta Inn by the Tacoma Dome for a lovely luncheon at 12:00 noon. The unit looks forward to meeting and greeting new and prospective members! The program will be the "Five Wishes," which refers to an easy-to-use document for individuals to consider and document end-of-life decisions.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor Pacific: In October, Unit 5 celebrated Make a Difference Day by visiting two rehabilitation facilities: Pacific Care in Hoquiam and Montesano Rehab. Those who participated handed out "thinking of you" cards and spent time with the residents who were very pleased to have visitors.

Blanche Campbell is a very active knitter and is heading up the "Caps for Kids" outreach. She has at least 100 caps ready to be turned over

WSSRA Around The State

to elementary schools. This year, they will go to Satsop School, Simpson Avenue School, and Beacon Avenue School, both in Montesano. Hats are given to all the elementary schools in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties hats on a rotation method.

Unit 5 contributes to school libraries in honor of deceased members by donating a book in memory of each one lost. The book is given to the

school in which the member worked.

The unit is continuing to contribute financially each month to the Ocosta School's weekend backpack food program. Ocosta Schools send home about 100 backpacks, K-12, every Friday with the kids.

Unit 5 also continues to give a scholarship each year to a Grays Harbor College sophomore whose major is educa-

tion. Also, made a contribution to DAR for their scholarship program.

"Thinking of you" notes are sent to homebound members to let them know they are missed and are cared about. Each meeting, a member brings the cards and the group discusses local members who would enjoy a card. Those at the meeting commit to taking at least one name apiece.

Unit 5 is small in number but enjoy being together and appreciate those who come and participate!

Unit 12 Lower Columbia:

In September, Unit 12 enjoyed a powerpoint presentation by unit president **Noel McRae** on his RV trip to the Four Corners area. It included beautiful scenery, pictures of old town buildings, the remains of Native American

Unit Spotlight -- Unit 11 Lewis County

Helping Build Community Buildings to Further Public Education

by Jean Bluhm, Unit 11 Lewis County

Borst Park in Centralia, Washington features a historic house, blockhouse, and park where many visitors come to enjoy the past. In 1997, retired teachers of Lewis County raised money and built a one-room schoolhouse beside the 130-year-old house. Each year, hundreds of schoolchildren tour the schoolhouse and sit in the desks, ring the bell, and learn about pioneer education. Lewis County SRA (Unit 11) also serves as host for an annual open house held during the summer. The unit donated money for coloring sheets to give to visiting children. The coloring sheets show the many activities of children from that era and help educate current generations.

In 2017, one of the retired teachers had a dream of building a pioneer church to complete the Borst village. Lewis County SRA (Unit 11) donated to the fund and helped make this become a reality in many ways. Unit members, including retired teachers in their 80s, worked pouring cement, building the subfloor and getting the walls in place. The steeple is on and the end is in sight thanks in part to the interested, encouraging Lewis County SRA group. This is another community project that will advance visitor's knowledge of the past as well as teaching so many historic concepts to the schoolchildren who go through each year.



WSSRA Around The State

dwellings, and pictographs. Noel added many side stories to make it very interesting.

The October meeting centered around legislative issues that impact members. We also received a correspondence from a local State Representative asking for our support.

In November our member, **Clarence Blaine**, shared information from the Health Fair. He gave a very good overview of coverage of Medicare and the supplemental insurance plans available through PEBB. He told unit members to review the insurance plan they currently have and the others that are available to them. The window of time to change coverage is very narrow.

During the December meeting, the minister from the

Kelso Methodist church told of the work they are undertaking to help with the homeless in the area. They will be opening a building for daytime use. It will provide showers and laundry facilities.

In December, unit members always look forward to a performance by a local school choral group. This year, the group enjoyed the St. Rose Children's Christmas program.

Unit members are encouraged to come out to the monthly meetings, held the third Tuesday of the month. Come have breakfast together and enjoy an interesting program.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

Unit 28 Thurston County awarded \$6,000 in mini-

grants to elementary employees in November. This year, members could ask for up to \$300 and non-members up to \$200. The committee received ninety-five applications requesting \$18,471, which documents the value of the grant program. **Jo Edwards, Karen Coulson** and **Leslie True** had difficult decisions to be made and ultimately thirty grants were awarded. Mini-grants for secondary employees will be awarded in February.

Over forty-five new members have joined. **Karen Keller, Lorene Rang** and WSSRA Executive Director **Dr. Alan Burke** have made several staff meeting presentations in the Yelm and North Thurston School Districts.

Members had a raucous good time at the December luncheon, singing traditional holiday songs along with the Puget Sounders, a barbershop ensemble. Erin Quinn Valcho, curator from the Lacey Museum was also a guest and received a yearly donation from the unit. The Lacey Museum has accepted the unit's historical records as it follows the growth and history of the city of Lacey.

The unit will start off the New Year with an informative presentation on Cuba by our member **Gery Gerst**. **Gery** is a traveler and historian who never fails to deliver an interesting and thought-provoking talk.

Members are encouraged to "Each One Bring One," an initiative to get new faces to unit luncheons. A drawing is held for the members who brought a guest. The winner receives a Starbucks or movie gift card.

Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver):

Unit 30 recently donated \$1,000 to the Battle Ground, Evergreen and Vancouver Foundation. The funds are used to provide supplies for students. The donation was approved by the membership. Unit 30 also makes monthly packaged food and financial donations, averaging \$50 monthly to Vancouver's Food Bank. It was noted that Vancouver ranks as the nation's fourth largest in donations. Unit members take pride in this! Also, the unit donated \$500 to set up a playroom for children in a homeless center in Vancouver. Reports are, that it looks, "Great!"

The Retirement Seminar will be held March 7, 2019 at the Performing Arts Center at Fort Vancouver High School. Unit members applaud WSSRA Executive Director **Dr. Alan Burke** for selecting this site and engaging a great range of speakers for the Plan 2 & 3 retirees, and potential members of WSSRA.

This fall, Unit 30 joined with the Retired Council of Employees (RPEC) to host local candidates running for office. It was a great event and



Unit 3 Clallam County: Marcia Homer and Rindy Hainstock set up a popcorn display in a Sequim school.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 23 Sno-King: SKSR President Jim Siscel, Echo Lake Elementary mini-grant recipients: Alison Bowhay, Shari Bronster, Kelly Dillon, Josh Frank, Susie McDowell, Marcia Sanders, Tani Stenfjord, Joe Wack

KCSRA has a need to keep membership numbers strong.

On April 16, members will again be welcomed to Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum for lunch and a program. The expected program will focus on preparations for living in the forest interface and fire danger. The final meeting of the "school year" will be on May 21 at Rosewood Clubhouse in Ellensburg.

RPEC's support was appreciated. Both groups share the same concerns, such as social security, health coverage, etc. and plan to band together on more efforts. Their zeal is encouraging, and they go en masse to visit legislators!

Extremely dedicated, hard-working member and former unit president, **Sherry Boose**, recently turned 80, so her fellow unit members joined in her celebration at The American Legion Hall. **Sherry** just glowed! Guests brought hygiene items for students, at Sarah J. Anderson Elementary, where **Sherry** taught for 25 years. The tables were packed!

Halloween is always a favorite celebration. For the October unit gathering, members love to wear costumes and sing "pumpkin carols!" **Mina Milligan** entertained the group with 1800's "ghost stories" from Vancouver's Officer's Row.

One of the unit's favorite

high school jazz ensembles, directed by **Darcy Schmitt**, performed for the holiday luncheon program in December.

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:

Continuing with a tradition of serving upper county retirees, members of KCSRA met at the Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum in October. Following a luncheon served by center staff, the group listened to presentations by State Senator Judy Warnick and State Representative Tom Dent. They also conducted a worthwhile question and answer session.

A planned November holiday dessert event could not take place because of a scheduling conflict.

Into the new year, KCSRA expects to meet on February 19 in Ellensburg at the Rosewood Clubhouse for lunch and a program. At that time grant person, **Tim Bow**, will be re-

porting on the grant recipients and their projects. The unit has made \$150 grants available to as many as eighteen active classroom teachers each year. A new practice this year will be the granting of a small \$100 grant to any applicant who did not understand the necessity to be a member of the unit and accompanying this will be an invitation to membership. Like all units,

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

Laughter was heard all over the room as the students from Gilbert Elementary sang musical numbers from The Holly Jolly Pirates of Piñataville. Approximately 35 students under the direction of Mr. Chapman entertained Yakima County Unit 34 at the December meeting potluck. Four first time attendees joined in the activities. WSSRA Legislative



Unit 30 Southwest Washington (Vancouver): The annual Halloween photo (left- right) Fran Person, Gerry Jarvis, Sherry Boose, Margaret Snitzler, Donna Quesnell, Kathy Lisignoli

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 25 Spokane Area: Jeff Hunter, unit outreach chair at the annual holiday luncheon, collecting winter-wear for kids. More than fifty jackets and other winter items were collected for foster children.

Director **Peter Diedrick** was the guest speaker. He updated the unit on the past session's legislative accomplishments and the goals for the future. The meeting was closed with group Christmas carol singing.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

The first fall unit meeting started out on a high note with the largest turn out in many months. Local legislative candidates were the guests and gave good information on their positions on upcoming issues including retirement benefits. It was a very worthwhile meeting. The business items included the yearly budget, money allotted for

grants, homeless donations to Wenatchee, Cashmere, Eastmont, Orondo, Entiat and Chelan schools.

The unit's October program featured Matt Cadman, executive director of the Performing Arts Center (PAC). He explained the PAC's program in which all local students can attend a live theater performance for free. The unit donated \$1,000 to this program. The program reaches thousands of children in a year's time. Small groups of unit members can also attend for free. Earlier in October, a small group from the unit also sponsored a booth at the East Wenatchee Wings and Wheels Festival. They helped participants make and color paper airplanes and drive remote control cars.

The Chelan-Douglas unit continues to support the LEGO Robotics Tournament, Maker Space program (\$500), a table at the Greater Wenatchee Area Technology Alliance Innovators Lunch (\$350) and other STEM programs as the need arises.

The unit is so happy to welcome 41 new members so far this year. **Sharon Salley** and **JoAnn Lewis** keep on amazing us!

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

This fall, Columbia Basin has met the last Tuesday of each month at Pillar Rock Grill in Moses Lake. The executive board also met each month.

In September, WSSRA Legislative Director **Peter Diedrick** was Columbia Basin's guest speaker. **Peter** updated Unit 4 on critical legislative

issues for retirees. Besides the lunch meeting he also spoke to active members at the Columbia Basin Technology Center.

In October, Unit 4 had a lunch meeting updating members on the budget, health items and training for recruiting members. November's CBSRA meeting guest speaker was Andrea Carrillo from the Salvation Army. Andrea went over the local Salvation Armies' programs and recruited some of Unit 4's members to be bell ringers. CBSRA also presented her with a \$200 check.

In November, six members met and prepared 600 books to be presented to newborns at Othello and Samaritan hospitals. It is never too early to start reading to your child. Columbia Basin received donations from Moses Lake Lions, Lioness, Women's Club



Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas: Sharon Salley, Beth Smith, JoAnn Lewis. Beth, a paraprofessional, is a mini-grant recipient for her program, Books and Breakfast.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Wanda Harrison and Lois Palek presenting Leticia Perez (left) her \$500 Student Teacher Scholarship.

and Kiwanis to buy books. CBSRA thanks these organizations for their contributions.

CBSRA has been busy reading and approving scholarships and grants. Six student teachers were awarded \$500 scholarships in Columbia Basin. Twenty grants were read, approved and distributed to the recipients during staff meetings. As part of the presentations, staff had the opportunity to sign-up for WSSRA membership.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

Fall grants have been awarded in the amount of \$200 each to OCSRA members:

Denise Hack, Omak Kindergarten, science tubs, soil, and seeds; **Rachel Abrahamson**, Okanogan grade 4, science hands-on experiments; **Paulet Duck**, Omak grade 1, flexible

seating; **Heather Downey**, Okanogan Elementary special education, life skills learning supplies; **Carol Payne**, Art Docent Okanogan grade 2, art prints; **Shayla Picard**, Okanogan grade 5, launch pads for rockets; **Alicia O'Dell**, Okanogan grade 1, STEM supplies; **Lee Ann Schrock**, East Omak Elementary, wobble chairs and wobble cushions. **Jennie Hedington**, **Penny Garrison**, and **Marcelle LaGrou** traveled to schools to present the awards.

According to Chair, **Penny Garrison**, OCSRA's October Retirement Seminar saw 28 attendees. Two new members were recruited at this meeting. Attendees were treated to homemade cookies and brownies.

November had the OCSRA board meeting at Magoo's and a "strictly social" held at 97

Roadhouse. The social saw **Maralee Bowling** and **Connie Palmer** leading the group in gift tag and card making while being entertained by **Doug Woodrow** on the guitar. **Doug's** vocals included several oldies but goodies—e.g. "Good Night Irene" as well as folk songs and carols.

EAST-7

Unit 18 Pend Oreille Co.:

Information about Unit 18's \$200 mini-grants has been sent to each of the three school districts: Newport, Selkirk and Cusick with grants being awarded in March. Prior to the holiday season, each of the four food banks were awarded funds to help with the services provided to the communities.

Unit 25 Spokane Area:

The Spokane Area Foundation, **Carol McGurk**, **John Young**, **Jeff Hunter** and **Marilyn Richards** met and decided the award excess income funds of \$1,000 to the scholarship fund and asked **Pam Francis**, scholarship chair in 2018, to identify a recipient. **Pam** referred the honorable mention candidate from Reardon School District and attending the University of Washington to receive the funds.

One of the highlights of the Spokane Area's year is the holiday luncheon held at the Manito Golf and Country Club. **Jeff Hunter**, outreach

chair, uses each of the major events to collect clothing, books and raise funds to help those in need and funds for the PAC. At the holiday luncheon, each of the 50+ members, spouses and guests were asked to bring winter clothing for kids and at least 50 children will be warmer this winter as a result of **Jeff's** efforts. Also, at the luncheon, entertainment was provided by the talented **Bill Marvin** at the piano and vocalist Kalla Mort of the Aspire Theater in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, provided the holiday spirit. All of the attendees left with toes wanting to dance to the rhythm of holiday tunes.

The Spokane Area awarded \$6,100 in 47 mini-grants thanks to **Jan McFarland** and her committee. Each of the grants was for \$200 or less with the lowest being \$50.

The Spokane Area Retired Educators Association (SAR-EA) Retirement Conference Committee held its second meeting to plan for the fourth annual conference, "Help Maximizing Your Retirement 4.0" to be held at West Valley High School on Saturday, April 27, 2019. They gathered at the Whitworth Building in Spokane's University district and continued to address issues identified at the previous conference. After considerable discussion, it was decided that lunch will not be provided due to the significant cost. Also, the program will be structured so that the event is done by 2:00pm on Saturday.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 15 Okanogan: Donna Sanford and Sybil Wheymeyer making Christmas cards at the unit's annual November social gathering. Doug Woodrow playing guitar during the gathering.



Unit 33 Whitman Co.:

In October, Unit 33 was privileged to have Executive Director **Dr. Alan Burke** as guest and speaker at WSU's Elson S. Floyd Culture Center on campus. After touring the building, the unit held its general meeting. **Penny Betas** presented the list of active teacher grants for the year and Whitman County Retirees

voted to accept the eight grant applications.

Alan Burke then spoke about legislative issues and what the legislative team will be focusing on in January. One item will be a bill to provide a Plan 1 COLA pension increase. **Alan** also talked about health insurance options and where to get help in understanding

the market. Unit members appreciated having **Alan** at the meeting and asked him many questions.

Les and Pam Francis attended the meeting and **Les** spoke about E7 and what he is planning in Spokane. The group was also very pleased to have **Pam Francis**, WSSRA president-elect, at the meeting. The meeting ended at the with a catered lunch.

involvement with the Hanford site.

The Legislative Committee and Pre-Retirement Committee were recognized for their hard work and accomplishment with the September Open Forum for candidates, and the October Pre-Retirement Seminar for 150 attendees. Retiring State Representative Terry Nealey, was honored for his support of WSSRA legislative issues.

Members brought unwrapped toys for the Salvation Army Toy Drive to the Thanksgiving luncheon in November. "Mary Lou and Stevie" entertained with Christmas songs.

The WSSRA Neil D. Prescott Student Teaching/Internship Scholarship became available, as did the BFSRA scholarships. The allotted 20 mini grants have been awarded to active teachers by personal

**PLEASE SUBMIT
ADDRESS CHANGES
TO:**

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

Phone: 360-413-5496, ext 116

**WSSRA, 4726 Pacific Ave SE,
Lacey WA 98503**

EAST-8

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

The October meeting began with a presentation from the local American Legion with three veterans presenting flags and **Vickie Evans** leading the group in a medley of hymns. Northwest Public Radio journalist, Anna King presented "Daughters of Hanford," highlighting local

contact from President **Dottie Stevens**.

Don Parks, Membership chair, reported an addition of more than 60 new actives; 30 from the benefits fairs and the one staff meeting, and approximately 30 from the Pre-Retirement Seminar. **Rohn Rutledge** from AMBA and WSSRA Executive Director, **Alan Burke**, were present at the latter.

Current/future program information and news can be found on the webpage <http://bfsraunit29.blogspot.com/> and in the monthly newsletter. All luncheons will be held at the CG Public House and Catering, 9221 W. Clearwater Ave, Kennewick.

Unit 31 Walla Walla/Columbia: Walla Walla-Columbia County (Unit 31) members have been busy this fall distributing mini-grants to the winners, enrolling new members, reviewing supplemental insurance options, and celebrating the holiday season. The mini-grant applications included in the "goodie bags" distributed in September to active members generated many applications for the \$200 award. Sixteen names were randomly selected at the October luncheon for members from seven area school districts. Presenting the grants often generates some excitement, and this year was no exception. Especially in one school district which had four winners, a

number of staff decided to join the association. They were reminded that sixteen more mini-grants will be awarded in the spring.

Judy Jacobe from Unit 1 was the featured speaker at the November luncheon. **Judy** presented detailed information about the various Medicare supplemental and prescription insurance plans available in the region and emphasized that the choice depends on each individual's medical situation. In fact, she added that she and her husband are on different plans because of their unique medical and prescription needs. Her information was especially timely because the local health fair was held two days later.

The December meeting is traditionally a time for a special luncheon, musical entertainment, and extra time for socializing. This year, even with a change of location, the festive luncheon featured traditional holiday food and entertainment by the Walla Walla chamber choir. Donations of money and food items were collected and distributed to a local food bank. Poinsettias which decorated the tables were later distributed to shut-in members who were unable to attend.

Plans are underway for the spring events of the Teddy Bear Tea and retirement seminar. More about those events in the next *Journal*.

Willingness To Serve

Willingness To Serve

Forms Due March 3, 2019

Are you interested in serving on a WSSRA statewide committee or in a leadership role? Please complete a Willingness To Serve form today.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

- **President-elect** (SW3 or SW4)
- **District Representative** (SW4, E6, E8)
- **WSSR Foundation** (NW1, NW2, SW3, or SW4)
- **Awards** (E5, E6, E7, or E8)
- **Finance** (SW3 or SW4)
- **Convention Planning** (E7, E8)
- **Legislative Committee** (all areas)
- **Membership** (all areas)
- **Health Services** (all areas)
- **Retirement Planning** (all areas)

Questions? President-elect Pam Francis will be appointing the positions. Unit presidents, current committee members, and district representatives can offer information about the positions.

Complete a Willingness to Serve Form online at:

**wssra.org
forms/wssra forms**

**Forms are also available from
WSSRA office, please call
360-413-5496**

**Submit the Form by:
March 3, 2019**



Change Service Requested

Ask a friend to join us



Vision

WSSRA will provide leadership
and promote action relevant
to all retired and active school personnel.

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

The mission of WSSRA is to...

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

Don't delay – ask today

You'll find inside...

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