

The Journal

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



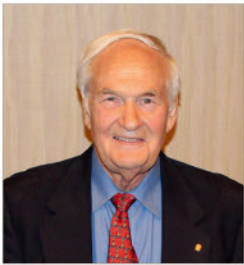
MAY/JUNE 2024

VOLUME 77, ISSUE NO. 5



Did you know...The WSSR Foundation and several WSSRA units award thousands of dollars in scholarships to college students that will be student teaching or doing an education-related internship. WSU Tri-Cities student, Isaac Marroquin, received a student teaching scholarship from WSSRA's Unit 29 Benton-Franklin. Pictured are Unit 29 members Dottie Stevens and Larry Sehmel with Isaac Marroquin and Chancellor Sandra Haynes.

WSSRA At Work For You



A message from the president

Join Us at the Convention



by Ron Crawford, president

The WSSRA annual convention will be held June 3-5, 2024 at the Wenatchee Convention Center. The mission and goals for this year's convention include:

- Intentional learning experiences that leave members ready to support unit goals and mission.
- Hands-on workshops and engaging speakers,
- Networking opportunities,
- Fun, social interaction, music, and food,
- Demonstration of latest technology,
- Inspiring ideas from cutting edge digital from units,
- Share time with other units.

We hope to see you in Wenatchee!

Your State Convention Experience



WSSRA EXECUTIVE BOARD

OFFICERS

President Ron Crawford
360-236-9305
ronaldwcrawford1@comcast.net

President-Elect Rita Figlenski
509-322-0064
ritafig22@gmail.com

Immediate Past President Brad Beal
509-466-3561
bradkathy.beal@comcast.net

Secretary Eileen Wascisin
360-733-4067
ejmw@comcast.net

Treasurer Jim Hall
425-822-3227
hstamps1@frontier.com

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

NW 1 Ken Harvey
360-653-5967
kenwes55@comcast.net

NW 2 Pat MacGowan
206-851-0232
pmac@uw.edu

SW 3 Cathy Storduer
509-539-3610
cathy.stordeur@yahoo.com

SW 4 Gail Feagins
253-964-1338
jetgail@comcast.net

E 5 Shirlee Jellum
509-365-4362
srjellum@gmail.com

E 6 Denise Perkins
509-741-0362
dperkins@nwi.net

E 7 Linda Marler
509-288-1314
ltmarler@gmail.com

E 8 Paula Nichols
509-529-5401
nananichols2@gmail.com

Historian Karen Keller

Journal Editor Kristin Murphy

THE JOURNALWASHINGTON STATE
SCHOOL RETIREES'
ASSOCIATIONMailing:
PO Box 5127
Lacey, WA 98509Location:
4726 Pacific Avenue SE
Lacey, WA 98503

360-413-5496

WSSRA.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:Dr. Alan Burke
alan@wssra.org
360-413-5496**ADDRESS CHANGES:**Michele Hunter
michele@wssra.org
360-413-5496**JOURNAL INFORMATION**Published five times per year
by the Washington State School
Retirees' Association, a non-profit
since 1947.The WSSRA Journal Policy
Board, WSSRA President and
WSSRA Executive Board assume no
responsibility for items appearing
over the signature of any source.
While every effort is made to check
the accuracy of items accepted,
articles cannot be reviewed for
technical accuracy.Material appearing in The
Journal, in addition to records
of action by the board, councils,
committees and units, is presented
to promote the general welfare of
WSSRA members and otherwise
to fulfill the purposes of this as-
sociation, as defined in Article II
of the bylaws.**JOURNAL articles to:**Kristin Murphy, editor
editor@wssra.org**Upcoming JOURNAL
article deadlines:****June 15, 2024**

for July/Aug./Sep. 2024 issue

September 5, 2024

for Oct./Nov./Dec. 2024 issue

WSSRA At Work For You*A message from the executive director***Protecting Retiree
Medicare Subsidies***by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director*

The one big message that we received from the 2024 legislature wasn't delivered in the normal fashion. To be sure, the advocacy effort surrounding the Plan 1 ad hoc COLA justifiably got the most attention, resulting in by far our biggest win. It was wonderful to receive the fifth Plan 1 COLA increase over the past seven years. That win helps to mitigate—but not solve—the effects of the recent high inflation rates. See more on the COLA in Peter Diedrick's legislative summary on page 4.

If the COLA was a win, the message we received on the PEBB Medicare subsidy was the warning. That message, delivered in a Senate bill that died in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, strongly suggested that future COLA increases would be considered in a "box" along with the costs of the PEBB Medicare subsidy—currently priced at over \$200 million per year.

That subsidy provides the lower of 50% of the plan cost up to a maximum of \$183/month. It represents a major advantage of sticking with PEBB for retiree health care coverage instead of choosing a plan from the private marketplace. For those of us in PEBB, quick math makes the concern obvious: if the subsidy goes away, the individual retiree PEBB health care cost would increase up to \$2,100 per year. Not good.

By the way, the subsidy affects pre-Medicare retirees as well. The state lumps PEBB Retirees under age 65 with active K-12 employees for insurance purposes, reducing aggregate health care costs. Because older retirees are much more likely to incur health related costs than younger workers, the state annually puts roughly \$30 million into a so-called "implicit" subsidy to assure that rates for ac-

tive educators are not increased to pay for higher medical usage for retirees.

These subsidies—for Medicare-aged and pre-Medicare retirees—have been in place for many years. Initially, they were established for the state to qualify for a special federal program that matched state spending for retiree health care with a federal stipend. When the program was launched, the federal subsidy was essentially equal to the state payment (approximately \$20 million for each). But, as health care costs increased over the years—especially for prescription drugs—the state payout continued going up while the federal stipend stayed the same. These past few years the state has paid \$200 million per year to qualify for the \$20 million federal stipend.

That gap is the impetus for state budget writers to re-examine the entire PEBB subsidy program, and potentially to lump it with the costs for a permanent Plan 1 COLA when considering total state payout for supporting K-12 and government retirees. This issue has come up in the past. In 2010, during a down financial year for the state, the maximum monthly Medicare subsidy was reduced from \$183 to \$150 per month. It took years of lobbying before the subsidy returned to the \$183 rate in 2019.

So, what to do? First, WSSRA and our advocacy partners will be following this topic closely from now through the 2025 legislative session. Second, we can remind legislators how important it is to keep medical insurance costs reasonable for all retirees—whether in Plan 1, 2 or 3. (Note: The Medicare and non-Medicare subsidies affect retirees in all three plans.)

Executive Director, continued on page 4...

Legislative News



Thank You 2024 Legislative Session



by Peter Diedrick, legislative director

It's always fun sharing good news. The WSSRA legislative team is happy to report that a Plan 1 COLA has passed for 2024, medical benefits are maintained, and the actuarially recommended pension payment is being made to the pension funds. Legislators adjourned the 2024 Legislative Session on March 7. Governor Inslee completed signing and vetoing bills on March 30.

Legislators have approved a Plan 1 COLA for the third year in a row. Substitute House Bill 1985 provides a 3% increase of up to \$110 per month. The legislation takes effect this July. Leaders on this legislation were State Representatives Joe Timmons (Bellingham), Joe Fitzgibbon (South Seattle), Mari Leavitt (University Place/Pierce County), and Senator Steve Conway (South Tacoma). They would love a “thank you” note from retirees living in those communities.

The WSSRA lobbying team was worried about potential cuts to retiree health benefit this year – the topic of the executive director's column on page 3. Despite the proverbial stormy clouds, retirees exited the session with the \$183 monthly Medicare benefit intact. The Washington State Health Care

Authority will study ways to lower costs in Regence Uniform. Slight changes to the drug formulary might make the plan eligible for additional drug subsidies. Nearly equal coverage with significantly reduced premiums is the goal.

We are marginally enthusiastic about House Bill 2481. This legislation requires the state to pay the PEBB medical premium for a retiree during the month of death. It does not pay the premium for spouses or dependents. The original proposal—the legislation we were excited to support—would have paid the pension payment for the full month of death. The House of Representatives pared the bill back to save money. This can be re-sponsored when different legislators are on the Appropriations Committee.

Thank you for your work in communicating with legislators. If you're interested in legislative issues, please reach out to your local retiree unit. Many of the local groups need legislative and membership point people. It makes an enormous difference in our work. The state office in Lacey can help you get connected.

Visit [WSSRA.ORG](https://www.wssra.org), click on “Legislative”

Executive Director, continued from page 3...

Third, we need to be aware of cost containment efforts of PEBB in adjusting rates for Uniform Medical Plan-Classic, the most popular—and by far the most expensive—PEBB Medicare plan. Through spring and early summer, the Health Care Authority will be considering a slight adjustment to the prescription drug component of UMP-Classic to align with federal subsidy regulations, an effort that could reduce 2025 rates by \$200 per month. Clearly, that reduction will be a big help to our members using UMP-Classic for their Medicare supplement but could kickstart a serious legislative conversation about reducing the \$200 million state health care payout. That would be a terrible development for PEBB users and will be strongly opposed.

On a final note, a UMP-Classic update will be the subject of a WSSRA Convention breakout session on the afternoon of Monday, June 3 in Wenatchee. HCA/PEBB presenters will not have the final word on 2025 rates by that date but will be able to let us know about the “tweaks” to the UMP-Classic prescription drug plan, and how much those tweaks are likely to save subscribers in 2025.

Please join us in Wenatchee and begin right now by sending legislators a message to not mess with the current retiree Medicare and non-Medicare subsidies!

WSSR-PAC News



Challenging Times Ahead for Your PAC



by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president

Challenge 1: Increase the number of WSSRA members to be WSSR-PAC members by joining with their contributions. WSSR-PAC not only needs financial help but help with ideas to improve its influence with legislators. The COLA and medical benefits we received the past few years are not automatic. Increasing PAC members means the PAC treasury will grow and more funds available for contributions to legislative candidates. The intended result being greater motivation for lawmakers to protect and improve retiree benefits.

Challenge 2: Similar to challenge number 1, the WSSR-PAC needs more members to join the PAC by contributing a small amount of the COLA we've each been receiving the past few years. We know that the current financial strains can hit hard. However, if you can donate even \$3.00 – it all adds up with many members. We give a huge thank you to the faithful contributors who continue to provide support, benefitting us all.

Challenge 3: With a large number of legislators retiring or changing positions, there will be new faces in the 2025 Legislature. The PAC executive board will need your assistance in helping identify and assess legislative candidates this summer. We are looking for information about supporting and endorsing legislative candidates who will support retiree issues. Get

to know the new legislative candidates in your district. If you glean some idea about how they feel toward retirement issues, contact your PAC board representative, and recommend those candidates for possible endorsement.

Challenge 4: WSSR-PAC welcomes any new ideas members have to enhance fund raising practices. Please relay your ideas to the WSSR-PAC board district representatives or to any of the six PAC executive board members listed on this page.

The contribution form on this page can be copied or cut out to be sent with your check to WSSR-PAC. For credit card donors, go to wssr-pac.org and click on "Contribute Now." Thank you so much for your support!

WSSR-PAC Board

District 1: Tim Knopf
 District 2: Rob Fletcher
 District 3: Doris Bucher
 District 4: Patty Gee
 District 5: Michele Kloss
 District 6: Beverly Jagla
 District 7: Donald Kackman
 District 8: David Randall

WSSR-PAC

Executive Board

Larry Scholl
 Caroline Stella
 Lora Brabant
 Edith Ruby
 Mary Wallen
 Louie Osmonovich

Support the WSSR-PAC — Contribute Today!

Contributor Name and Spouse (if applicable):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Unit #/Name:

In memory of
(if any):

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

Signature: _____

Contribution Amount \$

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

Mail Form & Contribution to:

WSSR-PAC

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

WSSR-PAC.ORG

Supporting Future Educators



WSSR Foundation: Caring and Sharing



by Ann Chenhall, WSSR Foundation president

The mission of the Washington State School Retirees' Foundation is to raise funds and accept donations for the Foundation, and to manage the Foundation's investments for the purpose of providing scholarships to students in Washington State pursuing a career in education.

The WSSRA annual convention is coming up in June! Hopefully, each unit has a group preparing fun raffle baskets, filled with treats from your area, to bring to the convention in Wenatchee. Does your unit also have some great larger silent auction items all lined up?



Vinny Lee, a Foundation basket winner in 2023

This is a terrific way for crafters to share their art. We never know what to expect!

Basket-drawing ticket sales and silent auction bids are always a fun way to donate to the Foundation. If you are attending the convention, remember to bring some sticky address labels to make completing the basket tickets easier. Also, remember cash or checks work for payment but not credit cards.

We care a great deal about the future of education in our state and have worked to provide scholarships to help the next generation of school employees prepare to replace us

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

in our schools. We share our donations, creative projects, and ideas to facilitate this. Thank you all for your support.

All of this requires a great deal of teamwork. The revision of the Foundation bylaws has been a major project this year. Please read the summary (*on page 13*) so you will know what convention delegates will be asked to vote on in June.

The 2023-24 WSSR-Foundation board members include President Ann Chenhall (SW4), Vice President Pat Cygan (NW2), Treasurer Kay Andersen (E8), Secretary Linda Marler (E7), and Trustee Mariane Harvey (NW1).

Foundation Contributors

James Devine - donation

Linda Gaines - in memory of Sue Baker

Jeanne Harmon - donation

Mary Lou Krause - donation

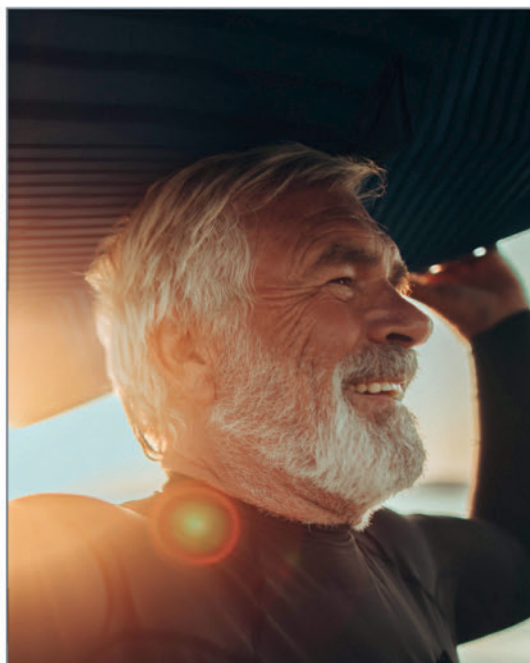
Mary Wallon - donation

Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Raymond Babcock and Bill Patrick

Unit 15 Okanogan Co. SRA - in memory of Betty Holmes, Jennie Hedington, Jerald Brightbill, and Lois Chavey

Unit 19 Southeast King SEA - in memory of Laura Ferguson

Unit 21 Skagit-Isle-San Juan REA - in memory of Ardelle Leach, Carol Elkins, Clinton West, Carole Mann-Cunningham, Donald Leach, Eleanore Melton, Heather Kendregan, Joanne Burcham, Joyce Scoll, and Marjorie Sargent



**LIVE LIFE,
UNINTERRUPTED**

KEEP LIVING YOUR WAY.

You can, with these benefits and discounts from **WSSRA & AMBA**:

- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long-Term Care
- Cancer, Heart, Stroke, and Accident Insurance
- Medicare Solutions
- Final Expenses Whole Life & Guaranteed Acceptance Life Insurance
- Tax-Deferred Asset Protection
- Hearing Benefits
- Hospital Stay Coverage
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

1.877.556.4582

myambabenefits.info/wssra

Washington State School Retirees' Association



Membership: Strength In Numbers

Building Memebership



by Don Parks, membership committee chair

The WSSRA convention will be in Wenatchee this year. At this time last year, we saw our membership surpass 17,000. This year, we are slightly under that at 16,948 as of April 1, 2024. We also have 65 active and one retired members pending. Our April 2024 membership numbers include 12,022 members with automatic dues deduction and 1,517 cash members. Sadly, we sustained about 35 deceased members. A hearty thanks to everyone working hard to continue building our membership. As we know, it takes a consistent effort.

For member email addresses, we currently have 7,960 emails which is a vast improvement over last year's 7,505. Email is an inexpensive and quick way for our association to communicate with members. Emails are especially important during legislative sessions when quick messages to state legislators regarding critical issues is imperative. This session's success with the Plan 1 COLA and other important bills were supported by the many phone calls and emails our members made to legislators.

Our association's ability to quickly communicate to members via email contributed to that success.

The council of committee chairs met on April 10. Our membership committee, made up of the coordinating council membership chairs, determined the agenda for the Membership break-out session at the Wenatchee convention. The enrollment incentives being implemented by local units will be a large part of that agenda, along with presentations by AMBA, WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter, and others. If you are thinking of providing any input to the committee on these and other relevant topics, we welcome your input before and during the session. Let us know your ideas.

We stand ready to answer your questions and to provide supplies your local unit may need for support of membership building. Best wishes for a pleasant spring and summer. Please thank your local legislators for their help in passing our bills.

WSSRA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

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

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

Please Print

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

SS Number _____ - _____ - _____ Home/Personal Email Address _____

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

Name of WSSRA Unit (or school district last employed) _____

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

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

Date _____ Signature _____

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

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

For Your Health



About Your Blood Pressure



by Myrna Muto, state health committee



**World
HYPERTENSION DAY**

"Image by Freepik"

The month of May is High Blood Pressure Education Month according to the National Institutes of Health (composed of 21 institutes). Half of Americans have high blood pressure or hypertension, but many don't realize it or aren't keeping it at a healthy level. To take care of your heart, it's important to know and track your blood pressure.

For most adults, healthy blood pressure is 120/80 or less. Blood pressure consistently above 130/80 increases your risk for heart disease, kidney disease, eye damage, dementia, and stroke. Your doctor might recommend lowering your blood pressure if it is between 120/80 and 130/80 if you have other risk factors for heart or blood vessel disease.

High blood pressure is often "silent," meaning it doesn't usually cause symptoms but can damage your body, especially your heart over time. Having poor heart health also increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. While you can't control everything that increases your risk for high blood pressure which runs in families, often increases with age, and varies by race and ethnicity, there are things you can do. Consider these tips from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's (NHLBI) The Heart Truth program:

- 1. Know Your Numbers.** Everyone three years and older should get their blood pressure checked by a health care provider at least once a year. Expert advice: 30 minutes before your test, don't exercise, drink caffeine or smoke cigarettes. Right before, go to the bathroom. During the test, rest your arm on a table at the level of your heart and put your feet flat on the floor. Relax and don't talk.
- 2. Eat Healthy.** Follow a heart-healthy eating plan. For example, use herbs for flavor instead of salt and add one fruit or vegetable to every meal.
- 3. Move More.** Get at least 2½ hours of physical activity each week to help lower and control blood pressure. To reduce your sitting throughout the day and getting active, try breaking up your activity. Do ten minutes of exercise,

three times a day or do one 30-minute session on five separate days each week. Any amount of physical activity is better than none at all.

4. Aim for a Healthy Weight. If you are overweight, losing just 3-5% of your weight can improve blood pressure. If you weigh 200 pounds, that is a loss of 6-10 pounds.

5. Manage Stress. Stress can increase your blood pressure and make your body store more fat. Reduce stress by meditation, relaxing activities or support from a counselor or online group.

6. Stop Smoking. The chemicals in tobacco smoke can harm your heart and blood vessels. Seek out resources such as smoke free hotlines and text message programs that offer free support and information.

7. Work with Your Doctor. Get help setting your target blood pressure. Write down your numbers every time you get your blood pressure checked. Ask if you should monitor your blood pressure from home. Take all the prescribed medications as directed and keep up your healthy lifestyle.

Friday, May 17, 2024 is World Hypertension Day initiated by The World Hypertension League (47 countries) in 2006. Member countries carry out activities to promote awareness of hypertension. The theme this year is to promote increasing awareness of high blood pressure and accuracy in blood pressure measurement, toward the control of hypertension-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes.

Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and The Heart Institute.



WSSRA Convention 2024

2024 WSSRA Convention Preview

June 3 – 5, 2024 in Wenatchee, Washington

Planning for the upcoming WSSRA Convention is well underway. Please make plans to join us, June 3-5, in the Apple Capital of the World (Wenatchee, WA). It promises to be a top-notch event. With two keynoters, and a strong slate of Monday breakout sessions, the agenda should offer something for every member. Plus, with celebratory events and acknowledgments occurring all three days, those who volunteered their services in unit or statewide activities will be given a well-deserved “thank you.”

Keynote Speakers

On Monday afternoon, Dr. Gene Sharratt, long-time Washington educator, will kick off the convention with a message of hope and optimism for K-12 education. Gene has been a K-12 teacher, counselor, principal, central office administrator, district superintendent, ESD superintendent, executive director of the Washington Student Achievement Council (for higher ed), college professor, and chair of Education Northwest over a long and highly successful career. Perhaps above all, Gene is a champion for kids, and an unabashed optimist about the future of K-20 education.

On Tuesday morning, Dottie Metcalf-Lindenberger, will lead us through her fascinating journey from a classroom teacher to becoming an astronaut and aquanaut. Dottie, through a multi-media presentation that includes shots of her time on the Space Shuttle, will show attendees that setting high goals, perseverance, high energy, and commitment can lead to wonders for each of us and for those who we teach.

Breakout Sessions

During a Monday afternoon session, representatives from the state Health Care Authority will provide an update on PEBB Medicare supplement plans. Presenters will be Ellen Wolfhagen, senior accounts manager, and Jean Bui, deputy director of the Employee and Retirees Benefit Division. This session will provide the latest on possible 2025 rate reductions in the Uniform Medical Plan (Classic) program, and coverage/cost comparisons with other PEBB plans.

In another session, Wenatchee attorney and estate planning specialist David Kazemba will review the important elements of establishing and maintaining a strong financial position as the years go on. The estate planning topic is of high interest to retirees, many of whom have completed financial management training, but find themselves wondering how to assure that their assets are placed in a position to endure, over the long term, the inevitable ups and downs of the investment world.

In a third session, our partners from AMBA will lead a session on senior health care, with tips on how to navigate assistance that ranges from home-based care to assisted living to nursing homes and, finally, to hospice. All of us have (or will have) to face serious health care challenges for loved ones—whether parents, spouses, or other relatives. There are numerous decision points in the health care assistance continuum, and this session will assist in learning the tricks of the trade in finding and financing appropriate care.

In a fourth session, incoming Executive Director Peter Diedrick will do a brief training on the use of Facebook and Voter Voice for legislative advocacy. Following that presentation, he will be available for a question and answer session about his vision for the future of WSSRA.

Finally, Wednesday morning will be devoted to the traditional set of leadership training sessions, with an added optional topic of interest from a local Wenatchee source.

Of course, the convention will be filled with opportunities for social interaction, and will include times to celebrate unit achievements in 2023-24, acknowledge the work of WSSRA leadership at the state and local level, pay homage to those who have passed away, and complete the leadership transition from 2023-24 President Ron Crawford to 2024-25 President Rita Figlenski.

Convention At-A-Glance	TUESDAY (full day)	WEDNESDAY (morning only)
MONDAY (afternoon and evening) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Afternoon Keynote: Gene Sharratt• Session Options: HCA/PEBB Update, Estate Planning, Senior Care Options, County Fairs, Peter Diedrick Q&A• Dinner and Awards Banquet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening Ceremonies• Keynote: Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger• Delegate Assembly• Celebration of Life• Scholarship Luncheon• Legislative Workshop• WSSR-PAC Workshop• Dinner Banquet and Evening Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast• Leadership Meetings (unit presidents and vice presidents, membership, unit treasurers, legislative, unit secretaries, health services, retirement planning)• Numerica Performing Arts Workshop (for those not attending leadership meetings)

WSSRA Convention 2024

Welcome to Wenatchee



*by Denise Perkins and Kriss Crilly,
Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas*

“Where Friends and Rivers Meet” is on the welcome sign entering Wenatchee. Friendship is the emphasis for our annual WSSRA convention to be held in Wenatchee June 3-5, 2024. Association business is a priority, but learning, fun, and camaraderie are list toppers. We have an informative and entertaining convention planned for those of you who find your way to our diverse valley.

Wenatchee offers a wide choice of sights and activities for visitors. Our WV Museum and Cultural Center, Ohme Gardens, Downtown Art Walk, Pybus Public Market, The River Loop walking trail, and local wineries are here for you to enjoy.

Gene Sharratt, an outstanding motivational speaker, will share current trends in education. Dottie Metcalf-Lindenberger, a former astronaut, will wow us in her dynamic keynote speech. Breakout sessions will include estate planning, and how to set up a performing arts experience for your local students. Entertainment will also be on this year's program.

Our convention planning committee invites you to attend our 77th annual convention, it will be this year's highlight.

We'll see you in Wenatchee!

Convention Keynote Speakers



Dottie Metcalf-Lindenberger



Dr. Gene Sharratt

2024 Delegate Assembly – Candidate Statements



Dottie Stevens **for President-Elect 2024-25**

WSSRA and the Benton Franklin School Retirees' Association appealed to me after retiring in 2012 from the Kennewick School District. As a career public educator in Washington, Illinois, and Utah, I taught math and history for 15 years, and was an administrator for 26 years. Working in secondary education and K-12 curriculum development, I then became a principal at Kennewick High School for a decade. I finished my career at Legacy High School, and the Benton Franklin Juvenile Justice Center for 13 years. Taking early retirement, I focused on meaningful activity and community service, with fellow retirees, and as a Youth Services Director in Rotary.

With Retirees, my focus has been on fellowship, benefits, leadership, and advocacy. I am currently the unit president for Unit 29 Benton-Franklin and have served five terms. I have been an E-8 Coordinating Council chair and at the state level, the Foundation president. I look forward to continuing my service with WSSRA as president-elect.

2024 Delegate Assembly – WSSRA Convention

Candidate Statements



Robin Stroben
for Northwest 2
District Representative

I am excited to be running for the NW-2 District Representative again. I previously served three years in this position so I'm aware of the responsibilities and tasks involved. I joined WSSRA when I retired in 1999 after teaching thirty-one years and have been a member for twenty-five years. I attend the yearly conventions, local meetings, and NW-2 coordinating council meetings. As a district representative previously, I served on the Scholarship committee and chaired it for one year. Presently, I am on the Awards committee for WSSRA. I am currently serving my fourth year as the Chairperson of NW-2, as well as on the Scholarship committee. At the local level, I am the treasurer and membership chairperson of Unit 19 Southeast King. I have chaired the scholarship and mini-grant committees. In my spare time, I substitute in Renton School District. I have served on the board of directors of a large private campground and have done volunteer work at the King County Sheriff precinct station in Maple Valley. I like walking on trails and exploring nature. I enjoy camping and gardening, and, of course, being with my family. I look forward to serving on the WSSRA state level again.



Don Kackman
for East 7
District Representative

I was raised on a farm outside of Endicott, Washington. I graduated from Eastern Washington University in 1968 and started teaching 6th grade in LaCrosse, Washington. My wife, Christine, graduated from the University of Washington in Physical Therapy in 1966. I taught 6th grade in LaCrosse for 3 years, 2 years in Endicott before teaching in Colfax for 30 years. I retired from the Colfax School District in 2003 and Christine retired as the Rehabilitation Services Director at Whitman Medical Hospital in Colfax in 2004. We have two sons, a daughter, and eight grandchildren.

I have been a member of WSSRA for 25 years, attending state conventions since 2004. I have served as treasurer of Unit 33 Whitman County for eight years and as the E-7 Coordinating Council chair for 14 years. I enjoy this work and look forward to serving our E-7 as the District Representative.



Tedd Davis
for WSSR Foundation
Secretary

I was born below sea level in Death Valley. We lived there until I was the age of four when we moved to Richland, Washington for 18 years. Then I headed to college in Bellingham, Washington. While going to school, I worked for the Park Service, becoming a supervisor in Olympic National Park after graduating with double BS degrees. I was responsible for budgeting and arranging for work crews to maintain trails, campgrounds, and facilities.

In 1979, I was hired by the Port Townsend School District to be a science and math teacher. Along the way, besides teaching middle and high school students, I was dean of students, ASB supervisor, and substitute principal. I served a seven-year term as president of Port Townsend Education Association which required budgeting dues and expenses.

Retirement came in 2013, when my wife and I moved to Shelton, Washington, and I became a member of Unit 14 Mason County. I have been unit treasurer since 2016, actively participating locally and for the state. I served on WSSRA bylaw committee until 2022.

I am looking forward to representing our SW-3 region as a Foundation representative.



Bill Tracy
for WSSR Foundation
Trustee

I am running to become more familiar with our organization and how it can assist incoming teachers around the state. I spent 31 years with the Highline School District in secondary education, all as a teacher. I then added 10 years managing the district's stadium track meets. During this time, I was a member of Unit 6, rising to unit president for 2012-15 and am currently unit president again. I have also been a delegate to numerous WSSRA conventions. Outside of education, I am an officer of several non-profit clubs, serving as president, secretary, and treasurer. I am currently a commissioner of the SW Suburban Sewer District outside of Seattle.

2024 Delegate Assembly – WSSRA Convention

WSSR Foundation Bylaws – Proposed Amendments

The WSSR Foundation board of trustees conducted a review of the Foundation's bylaws and identified possible updates and revisions. The proposed revisions were reviewed by the WSSRA Rules and Resolutions Committee and sent back to the Foundation Trustees. The proposed revisions to the WSSR Foundation Bylaws, described below, will be presented to the Delegate Assembly for a final vote during the WSSRA convention's Delegate Assembly session on June 4, 2024.

WSSR FOUNDATION BYLAWS – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
<p>Bylaw Change 1: Add to Article II, Section 1 - Purposes: To provide annual scholarships for high school seniors planning to major in education or school-related fields or for college students selected for student teaching or internships leading to professional certification.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 2: Add to Article II, Section 1 - Purposes: As revenue increases or decreases, the Board may set new scholarship amounts offered to recipients to reflect those increases or decreases.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 3: Combine the terms trustees and officer responsibilities in the Articles as they were repetitive and streamline this area.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 4: An attorney was hired to update the Liability section of the Bylaws, and it is now worded per the attorney's recommendation. This includes Indemnification of Trustees and Officers and Indemnification of Others.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 5: Article IV, Section 9 - Trustee at Large: The corporation's Trustee at Large will not be assigned specific duties, but will be expected to learn basic Foundation governance operations. In addition, the Trustee at Large shall perform duties assigned by the either the WSSR Foundation Board or the WSSR Foundation President.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 6: Article X - Bank Accounts, Depositories, Title to Property, Disbursements and Audits: The Section "Audit" or "Agreed Upon Procedures" is clarified.</p> <p>Bylaw Change 7: Updated word usage and grammar throughout the document.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The WSSR Foundation recommends a DO PASS



OUTGROWN YOUR BENEFITS?

TIME TO EXPAND YOUR COVERAGE.

You can, with these benefits and discounts from WSSRA & AMBA:

- Dental & Vision Plans
- Long-Term Care
- Cancer, Heart, Stroke, and Accident Insurance
- Medicare Solutions
- Final Expenses Whole Life & Guaranteed Acceptance Life Insurance
- Tax-Deferred Asset Protection
- Hearing Benefits
- Hospital Stay Coverage
- Discounts on Travel, Dining & more

1.877.556.4582

myambabenefits.info/wssra

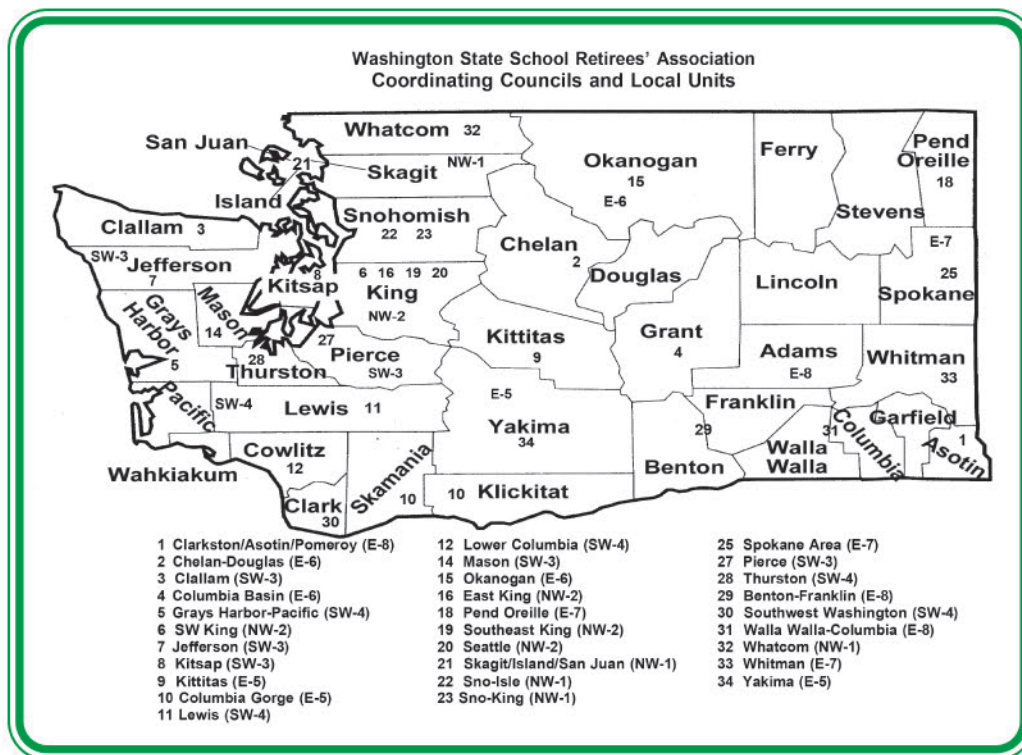
Washington State School Retirees' Association



WSSRA Around The State

What's happening in...

From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



In June, several board members will attend the WSSRA convention in Wenatchee.

Unit 22 Sno-Isle:

Sno-Isle Unit 22 honored their scholarship recipients with a luncheon hosted by board members. Generous donations helped increase the unit's scholarship fund. One of last year's recipients, Anna McPherson, entertained the group with a beautiful saxophone performance. Anna is a music major at WSU.

The luncheon concluded with a slideshow of some of the many projects that the unit's \$400 mini-grants funded this year. At the end of the slideshow members got to watch thank you videos from Sno-Isle's two students who are currently enrolled in college and have successfully applied for renewals of their \$2,500 scholarships.

Unit 23 Sno-King:

February saw the unit's annual Humanities Washington presentation coordinated by **Roberta Hawkins**. The speaker was Joel Underwood, teacher, folksinger, historian, and actor. His topic for the day was, "That Ribbon of Highway: Woodie Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest." His presentation opened with the song, "Rolling Man," and took the group on a musical journey through Guthrie's early life and his time along

NORTHWEST-1

Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan: The unit's February luncheon, at the Royal Star Restaurant, featured speakers Skagit County Coroner Hayley Thompson and **Bill DeHon**. They gave a presentation about the duties and responsibilities of the coroner and deputy coroner. They also talked about the critical emergency services in the community.

The April unit meeting featured **Bill DeHon** doing a presentation on wills.

The unit has partnered with Western Washington University and has made scholarships available for student teachers. Some of the scholarships can be renewed by application. The unit will also offer one to two vocational-technical scholarships which will be a renewable \$3,000 grant per year.

The unit made a \$1,000 contribution to the Skagit Boys and Girls club to enhance their after-school program. The unit also made a \$1,000 contribution to the Skagit Breaking Free Club which assists students who were previously

incarcerated to further their education.

Recently, the unit has worked on several projects, including: Visiting local schools to encourage retiring teachers to join WSSRA.

Board members communicating with local legislators and visiting Olympia during legislative session. The members then share what they've learned with unit members.

Working together with the League of Women Voters in classrooms emphasizing the importance of voting.

WSSRA Around The State

the Columbia River under contract with the BPA for 30 days. The presentation was attended by 29 SKSR members and 29 community members.

The unit provided the annual field trip to members in March. **Karen McElliott** coordinated a behind the scenes viewing of Climate Pledge Arena. The two-hour tour showed the hockey dressing rooms, Storm dressing room, potential future NBA dressing room, and the rooms where musical performers ready themselves for their performances. There is a recording studio available for the performer's use. Tour attendees also viewed the rink from the Kraken team area on the ice and from high up in the owner's suite.

Unit 32 Whatcom Co.:

Unit 32 took the holidays off except the executive leadership board and advisory committee continued to meet and plan for 2024. The unit is very excited to welcome three new leadership members: **Lisa Lockwood** as newslet-

ter editor, **Cheryl Frazer** as newsletter assistant, and **Scott Morrow** as unit treasurer. The unit still needs to fill the unit secretary position and is hoping someone will step forward for that position soon.

The unit ended 2023 by awarding \$300 mini-grants to eight recipients from four different Whatcom County school districts for a total of \$2,400 being given to local active schoolteachers to benefit students.

The unit's first in-person free luncheon was held on March 16 with over twenty WCSRA members attending and enjoying a most delicious lunch. WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** shared important information from the WSSRA state level activities and legislative updates.

The gathering was honored to have 33 Ferndale High School band students perform several musical pieces that definitely got the attention of unit members. The students were able to join for lunch and seemed to really enjoy



Unit 3 Clallam County: Clallam County School Retirees' Association officers for 2024-25. Picutred (left to right) are Jill Oakes, secretary; Cathy Stordeur, vice president; (seated) Arlene Morganroth, treasurer; Lora Brabant, president.

the variety of food (several students had seconds and even thirds!). Band members left with smiles on their faces and extra food in their hands!

The unit's May 16 in-person free luncheon will feature a special speaker, Eric Pierson, with the Whatcom County Coalition on Aging and pro-

gram director for the Bellingham Senior Center. He will share important information for those getting older, pertinent information for all of us.

The unit is excited to announce that Unit 32 will have six members attend the WSSRA state convention in June.



More than one *Journal* in your mailbox?

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

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

WSSRA Around The State

The unit will be having its annual Fun and Yummy activity on July 18. Members are invited to take a crab cruise with San Juan Cruises out of Fairhaven terminal. It's a two-and-a-half-hour cruise of both Bellingham Bay and Chuckanut Bay while enjoying all the delicious Dungeness crab you can eat! Other food served will include roasted chicken, broccoli salad, rice pilaf, rolls, and dessert. For each WSSRA member attending, the unit will reimburse \$20 off their \$69 cruise total.

Unit 32 fall activities will be decided during the summer by the executive board and advisory committee.

NORTHWEST-2

Unit 16 East King:

The culmination of East-King's grant presentations took place in March, with **Robert Fletcher** giving awards at staff meetings, whenever possible.

The grant chairperson chose to personally present an award because it was to take place at the last school in which she had taught. She was warmly welcomed and her sharing of information about WSSRA and East-King was well received. What followed was proof that what we do is important and appreciated. As the group broke for lunch, she was suddenly hugged by

one of the educators and told, "You were my favorite teacher all through school and the reason I became a teacher." After a tearful exchange, a second young lady approached, "I'm one of those high school seniors who was given a college scholarship by your organization, and I've been teaching for ten years now."

If that wasn't enough validation for our work, within half-hour East-King's post office box yielded a packet of hand-written student letters thanking the unit for what their teacher had been able to purchase for their classroom with the grant she had received.

April's presentation to East-King's members was a Hawaiian program that was both entertaining and informative. Songs and dances from the islands as well as historical facts about Hawaii were presented. There was a display of instruments and costumes. A history of hula was given followed by a demonstration and teaching of the hula.

Unit 19 Southeast King:

On March 11, 2024, Dr. Alan Spicciati, superintendent of Auburn School District recognized the Southeast King unit and read Governor Inslee's proclamation designating the week of March 18-24, 2024, as School Retirees' Appreciation Week. Ryan Foster, associate superintendent, also

Honorary Lifetime Membership

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

Betty Berry

Unit 28 Thurston County

Patricia Lester-Davis

Unit 15 Okanogan County

Pauline Eggleston

Unit 25 Spokane Area

Marlys Mayer

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

Lee Ozmun

Unit 28 Thurston County

Rita Requa

Unit 23 Sno-King

Martha Vannice

Unit 28 Thurston County

recognized the group and acknowledged the mini-grants presented to nineteen staff at Rainier Middle School by Unit 19.

Unit 19 membership meeting on April 2, 2024, was

held at Village Concepts in Fairwood. Light refreshments were served. The program featured Susan Miller, a master gardener from Fall City, who spoke about climate change gardening.

WSSRA Around The State

The May 7 unit meeting was held at Lakeshore Retirement Home in Renton. Box lunches were provided. Unit 19 member **Eileen Yamada Lamphere** was the featured speaker. She gave members information on the Japanese Internment and the Day of Remembrance Memorial.

Eight delegates from Southeast King will attend the WSSRA convention in Wenatchee on June 3-5, 2024: **Rachel Almeleh, Beverly Bly-Addington, Judy Dotson, Jane Freer, Linda Hollingsworth, Susanne Perez, Robin Stroben,** and **Tina Underdahl.**

Unit 20 Seattle:

The Seattle Unit held its March luncheon/meeting at The Mountaineers' Club with **Dr. Alan Burke**, WSSRA executive director, as speaker. **Dr. Burke** discussed the role of WSSRA in its efforts to maintain and increase benefits for all WSSRA members during the recent state legislative session. His talk was informative and insightful. He also described how members can contact legislators to influence their decision-making at various times.

SSRA's next luncheon meeting will be held on May 10 at The Mountaineers' Club in Seattle's Magnuson Park. It will feature actress **Debbie Dimitre** in a program she calls, "Broken Star," about Harriet Beecher Stowe (author

of Uncle Tom's Cabin) and about Harriet Tubman, the well-known African-American activist who helped slaves escape the South through the Underground Railroad. The luncheon gathering will begin at about 11:30am with details posted on the SSRA website: seattlessra.org. The May luncheon will also offer a free lunch and gift for SSRA members who are 85 or older.

Unit 20 will continue offering new members who sign up to join WSSRA and SSRA with-

in this school year a one-time six-month free membership. The offer means new members would pay \$42 instead of \$84 for their first year of membership. To make this work, their membership applications will need to be sent to **Michele Hunter**, WSSRA membership coordinator, who will submit the membership applications after six months of free membership to either the Seattle School District payroll department (for current district employees) or to the Washington State Depart-

ment of Retirement Systems (for the district's retirees). Applicants must contact WSSRA Membership Coordinator, **Michele Hunter** for a membership application. Mail requests to her at WSSRA, PO Box 5127, Lacey, WA 98509 or contact SSRA's Membership Chair **Julee Newhart** by email at jneuhart@comcast.net or **Pat Cygan** at rcygan@earthlink.net. SSRA would like to thank **Michele** and the WSSRA board for developing this special program. Remember, this offer ends in June.

Join the WSSRA Email List

Now, more than ever, technology has become a critical way to connect with people and stay informed.

Email is a simple, quick, and inexpensive way for WSSRA to connect with members.

Join the email list in 3 easy steps:

1. **WSSRA.org**
2. **Scroll to bottom of the page**
3. **Join Our Email List**

Connect and Stay Informed...

- Legislative updates
- Zoom events
- Unit happenings
- and, more!

WSSRA does not share email addresses outside the association.

Join our email list!

* Email

* First Name

* Last Name

By submitting this form, you are consenting to receive marketing emails from: WA STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 5127, LACEY, WA, 98509, US, <http://www.wssra.org>. You can revoke your consent to receive emails at any time by using the [SafeUnsubscribe®](#) link, found at the bottom of every email. [Emails are serviced by Constant Contact.](#)

Submit

 Constant Contact

©2020 Association and AMBA. All Right Reserved.

WSSRA Around The State

John Thorp, SSRA's SEED Grant chair, is still processing the mini-grants for Seattle's teacher applicants. He has processed 16 SEED Grants this school year totaling \$5,724. There may be a few more coming to us before the May 1 deadline.

The unit's very active scholarship chair, **Patricia MacGowan**, has updated the SSRA website to reflect current scholarship information for both high school graduates interested in working in education and for college interns about to start student teaching.

Unit members would like to thank SSRA's legislative team for their lobbying efforts during the recent legislative session. Thank you to **Edith Ruby**, **Mary Wallon**, and **Patricia MacGowan**.

SOUTHWEST-3

Unit 3 Clallam County:

Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) met at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on March 19. Member **Eve Datisman** gave a presentation about her recent travels to New Orleans and Mexico which she titled, "Dependent on the Kindness of Strangers." She also traveled to Uruguay and will give a presentation on that part of the trip at another time.

The CCSRA election of of-

ficers was held earlier than usual, followed by installation of officers. The same officers will serve again next year: **Lora Brabant** as president, **Cathy Stordeur** as vice president, **Jill Oakes** as secretary, and **Arlene Morganroth** as treasurer. **Beverly Brown** led the installation ceremony.

The last week of March, right before spring break, CCSRA volunteers distributed gift pens with inspirational messages to all staff members at three county school districts: Port Angeles, Sequim, and Crescent. A few WSSRA brochures and membership forms were left next to the pens.

The April 16 meeting was held at the home of members **Larry and Robin Sweeney** in Port Angeles. Following a catered lunch, the Sweeneys presented, "Conscious Gardening, Ground Covers, Composting, and Underground Irrigation," which are all things employed at their home.

Unit 8 Kitsap County:

This has been a busy year so far. The unit held the election of officers and elected the same officers for the 2024-2025 year. Congratulations to **Doris Bucher** - president, **Craig Miller** - vice-president, **Patty Marz** - secretary, and **Allison Morris** - treasurer.

Dr. Aaron Leavell, ESD 114 superintendent, was the guest speaker at a recent unit meet-



Unit 34 Yakima Co.: Unit members enjoyed a presentation by the Yakima Pegasus Project, a therapeutic program utilizing the healing power of equines to help children and adults with special needs, gain balance, core strength, social skills, and boost confidence. Pictured are Executive Director Jene Pleger, Jane Butler, Jan Saxton, Casey Stenehjelm, and Sebastion "Bash" the dwarf miniature pony.

ing. He gave a wonderful and informative talk about the challenges facing districts, suggestions for improving communication with districts, and ways the unit can help local students. It was an en-

lightening talk as he discussed artificial intelligence (AI) and the challenges it presents to all districts and students. The unit plans to invite him back next year for an update on the ESD 114 school districts.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 19 Southeast King: In recognition of Governor Jay Inslee's School Retirees' Appreciation Week proclamation, Unit 19 Southeast King was honored by the Auburn School District board in March. Pictured with the Auburn School board are Eleanor Raschkow, Sue Perez, Tina Underdahl, Karen Jones (*in back*), Joan Morgenstern, and Robin Stroben.

The unit does not hold a meeting in February due to weather concerns. (Snow has canceled the unit's February meeting the last two years.)

In March, the unit worked on suggestions for upcoming luncheon meetings. There was also discussion about choosing which charities the unit will support this year. The unit will continue to support all the food banks in Kitsap County this coming year.

The unit's program will include a visit to the Bainbridge Island Art Museum. Members are all looking forward to seeing it for the first time.

Unit 14 Mason County:

Mason County continues to meet the first Tuesday of most months at 11:30 am at El Puerto de Angeles restaurant in Shelton. The unit offers a Zoom connection for those who are unable to attend in-person. Every meeting includes a guest speaker, legislative update, grants updates, community donations, and scholarship updates, as well as other unit business.

Unit officers were elected for the 2024-25 year, including president is **Eileen Perfremment**, vice-president is **Reva Fowler**, secretary is **Bonnie Rice**, and treasurer is **Tedd Davis**.

The unit awarded two scholarships to Mason County high school seniors. The recipients are Filesi Tausa (study Agriculture Education at Washington State University, in the amount of \$2,000) and Jayden Lovingfoss (study kinesiology and education at George Fox University, in the amount of \$1,000). Both Filesi and Jayden are seniors at Shelton High School. They will be awarded certificates at the Senior Awards Program by Unit President **Eileen Perfremment**.

The Southside Elementary choir honored board members for supporting grants for library and school improvements during a choir concert.

The March 5 meeting's guest speaker was **Tedd Davis**. He serves as a guardian ad litem in the juvenile court system in Mason County. He explained his role representing children in difficult family situations.

The April 2 meeting's guest speakers were from Turning Pointe Survivor Advocacy Center. Becky Sayan-Ayers, interim executive director, spoke of the services available to victims. Verenise Chavez, youth and prevention supervisor, spoke specifically about children's programs.

The unit's small number of active participants are proud of supporting the community through volunteer service and donations to shelters and food banks throughout the county, grants to teachers throughout the county, scholarships to high school students in the county, and collaboration with the 35th legislative district senator and representatives to support bills that assist seniors and retirees in living a comfortable life.

SOUTHWEST-4

Unit 5 Grays Harbor/Pacific Counties: The unit is happy to continue sending funds to the Ocosta School District for their Lunch Buddy Program.

A few unit members attended the coordinating council meet-

WSSRA Around The State

ing in March. It was great to meet new people and connect with friends. Unit members look forward to the next meeting.

The unit is working on compiling a unit member email list to keep members informed about the legislature's progress and other unit news.

The unit will not have any members attending the annual WSSRA convention this year but are sure it will be a big success.

Members are looking forward to a great summer.

Unit 28 Thurston County:

During TCSRA's March luncheon meeting, the group enjoyed **Art Dolan's** historical presentation, "Women of the American Revolution." A retired teacher and member of TCSRA, **Art** has given several presentations including "George Washington's Secret Navy" and "Espionage, The Second Oldest Profession." **Art** is a direct descendent of a Revolutionary War patriot and an active member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

At the April luncheon meeting, "Parade of Projects," mini-grant recipients shared information about their projects and brought samples to show to TCSRA members. This year TCSRA received 48 elementary and 31 middle school/high school appli-

cations, including 17 from TCSRA members. The unit was able to fund 59 requests, totaling \$12,657.

Now that the 2024 Washington State Legislature has adjourned, thank you to TCSRA members who participated in the Legislative Buddy Program. The unit's buddies for Legislative District 22 were **Debbie Hathaway** (Senator Hunt), **Vicki Carter** (Rep. Bateman), and **Patty Gee** (Rep. Doglio). For Legislative District 35, they were **Gery Gerst** (Senator MacEwen), **Pat McLachlan** (Rep. Griffey), and **Diana Kildow** (Rep. Couture). During the session, WSSRA's Legislative Director, **Peter Diedrick** prepared a weekly message that the Legislative Buddy rewrote as a personal letter and sent to their designated legislator. This program was very effective, and it is believed to have helped the passage of a one-time 3% Plan 1 COLA up to \$110 to be adjusted in paychecks this summer. TCSRA also recognizes **ZiNita Carrell** for sending out legislative notices to unit members.

Unit 30 SW Washington:

The unit has been busy providing mini-grants, wonderful programs, and meals this year. In March, the unit had a Leprechaun Luncheon, with the Cascadia Tech Academy Culinary Arts Department providing a delicious meal. Cascade Academy Dean of Students Paul Huddleston

was the special guest and gave an informational and interesting update on what is being provided for students in Southwest Washington. Additionally, SWWSRA members brought limericks to share. All had a great time, and the board is looking forward to more members attending on May 15 at 11:30 at Cascadia Tech Academy with another wonderful luncheon provided by the Culinary Arts Department. The board is making a final decision on the program. Members should watch their emails for information.

EAST-5

Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:

The February 20 luncheon and meeting went off as planned at the Rosewood Clubhouse. After sharing lasagna, salad, and dessert, members were provided with worthwhile information about AMBA by representative Charlie DeElle. Member **Wendell Savile** shared that his neighbor and former educator, Floradel Bowers, recently celebrated her 98th birthday. She continues to live in her own home with the help of family members.

RETIREE RESOURCES

WA Dept. of Retirement Systems (TRS, PRS)

1-800-547-6657

DRS.WA.GOV

PEBB and Health Care Authority

(health insurance)

1-800-200-1004

PEBB.HCA.WA.GOV

SHIBA - Statewide Health Insurance

Benefits Advisors

1-800-562-6900

INSURANCE.WA.GOV/SHIBA

Social Security Administration (SSA)

1-800-325-0778

SSA.GOV

AARP Washington Office

1-866-227-7457

AARP.ORG

Jim Ko, state president

Marguerite Ro, Washington state director

Senior Citizens' Lobby

360-754-0207

WASENIORLOBBY.ORG

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Unit mini-grant recipients from Groff Elementary School in Moses Lake. Left to right are Karen Schafer, Christi Young, Megan Cox, Carina Cruz, Candace Pitts, Jannette Serrano-Vasquez, Kim Francisco, Gayle Talbot, Holly Trinnaman, Melodee Evenson and Debbie Sackmann. Not pictured is Rebecca Dalton.

The April 16 meeting took place at the Putnam Senior Center in Cle Elum with lunch served by the staff at the center. Representatives of the relatively new organization, “Community Builders,” provided the program.

The May 21 luncheon and meeting at Rosewood Clubhouse will feature “Collectibles” by DD Pringle. This “Antique Road Show” type program was very popular in the past. Attendees are urged to bring objects to be evaluated.

This unit and members are grateful for the many years Executive Director **Alan**

Burke has devoted to the purposes and interest of the WSSRA as he plans to retire.

Unit 10 Columbia Gorge: Unit 10 had a successful “winter warmth” clothing drive, collecting over 100 items from unit members and teachers in the local schools. Socks, mittens, scarves, and hats were distributed around the region by the Washington Gorge Action Programs. The unit also awarded two mini-grants to a group of elementary teachers who are using the funds to enhance a classroom library and to provide logic puzzles for their STEM curriculum.

Unit 10 gave posters to their twelve school districts listing ways teachers can honor their retired colleagues for School Retiree Appreciation Week. In addition, they provided food platters for staff at several schools for Teacher Appreciation Week. Members also participated in the annual Community Cleanup as greeters and recycle workers. At their final meeting of the year, Unit 10 recognized 2024 retirees with goodie bags and gift cards.

Unit 34 Yakima Co.:

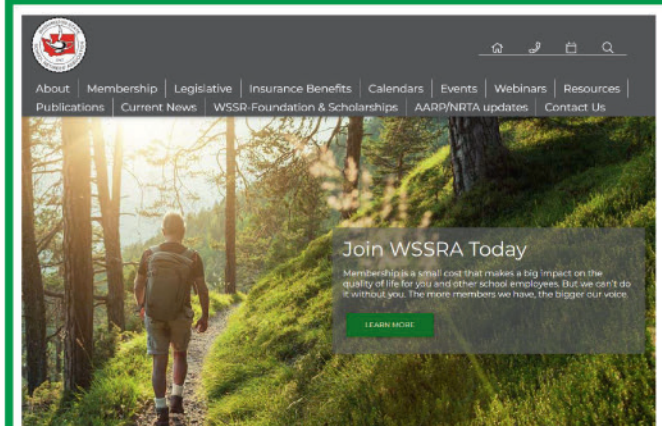
YCSRA has had two general meetings recently. Both meeting programs have featured aspects of animal/human interactions, and the therapeutic benefits of being close to animals.

At the unit’s March general meeting, Unit President Pro Tem **Patrick Walsh** invited

Yakima Valley Pet Rescue members to share information about their activities. For this meeting, YCSRA members were asked to bring donations of animal care supplies. Attendees were amazed and gratified to learn that Yakima Valley Pet Rescue, which was founded in 2003, has saved over 13,000 pets. Yakima Valley Pet Rescue helps people by providing care to animals when the owner must move to a nursing home or other life events.

At the unit’s April meeting, the featured animals were horses. President Pro Tem, **Norma Haney** contacted Yakima Pegasus Project. Pegasus Executive Director, Jene Pleger, spoke, presented a video, and a live pony for attendees to enjoy. This therapeutic program utilizes the healing power of equines to help both children and adults with special needs, gain balance,

Please visit us at WSSRA.ORG



WSSRA Around The State

core strength, social skills, and boost confidence. Pegasus ponies have been known to visit local nursing homes. An often-used quote for people who know horses is, "The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a person." Pegasus Program is one of the organizations that YCSRA supports as a public service project.

EAST-6

Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:

Thanks to the great work by **JoAnn Lewis** and **Sharon Salley**, sixteen new members of Cashmere's Vale School were signed up for CDSRA membership.

The unit nominated **Kriss Crilly** for the McNaughton Award and **Beverly Jagla** for the Hoban Award. **Mary Perkins** was chosen as a posthumous nomination for the Wilfong Legislative Award. Convention plans were discussed, and volunteers were assigned. Members signed up to attend the convention. The unit voted unanimously to support **Rita Figlenski** for 2023-24 president-elect of WSSRA.

A committee was formed to plan a special event inviting regular and active members to gather for a "get together" in the spring. Members will help at the Cashmere Museum's spring clean-up. The unit, again, contributed \$1,000 to

the "Every Kid at the Performing Arts Center" upon hearing that the "Dinosaur World Live" show that the unit sponsored was sold out and not all the students could attend.

The unit's meeting program featured Ayden Itterly, an 8th grade student from Pinnacles Prep. He shared his "passion project" of making Native American jewelry and brought earrings he made. The proceeds from his project will go to a fund for murdered and missing Indigenous women. He is a member of the Quinault Tribe and presented serious facts from his learning.

Unit 4 Columbia Basin:

The members of Columbia Basin Unit 4 welcomed **Peter Diedrick**, WSSRA's legislative director, to their March luncheon at Pillar Rock Grill in Moses Lake. The luncheon was well-attended, and **Peter** gave an informative and entertaining talk that was enjoyed by everyone.

A total of 30 teacher grants were recently presented to local educators. In the Moses Lake School District, nine grants were given at Groff Elementary School to **Megan Cox**, **Carina Cruz**, **Christi Young**, **Jannette Serrano-Vasquez**, **Holly Trinnaman**,

Kim Francisco, **Rebecca Dalton**, and **Candace Pitts**. Three recipients were from Lakeview Terrace: **Rena Janke-Kilmer**, **Brittany Hedrick**, and **Kristine Irwin**. Other awardees were **Bill Bertram** and **Brenda Welch Mathis** from Knolls Vista Elementary, **Prelita Owen** from Park Orchard Elementary, **Judy Pohjola** and **Debbie Horney** from Peninsula Elementary, **Lynette Zimmer** from Garden Heights Elementary, **William Thurmond** from North Elementary, **Anna Davis** from Sage Point Elementary, **Chris Kalmbach** from Larson Heights and **Jennifer Carpenter** from



Unit 4 Columbia Basin: Unit members gathered at a local restaurant in March for a monthly meeting. The meeting included WSSRA Legislative Director Peter Diedrick giving an update on the legislative session. Pictured are (seated, left to right) Susan Hickok, Bev Shelton, Lanita Pomeroy, Peter Diedrick, Helen Preston, and (standing, left to right) Roger Stanford, Bill Anderson, Glenda Anderson, Shirley Vincent, Margaret Heming, Pat Simmons, Gayle Talbot, Sue Beall, Melodee Evenson, Sue Mabry, and Barb Stanford.

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 29 Benton-Franklin: Membership Chair Don Parks introducing Superintendent Jim Jacobs of North Franklin School District during a recent unit luncheon.

Moses Lake High School. **Joan Dopps**, recently retired, also received a grant.

There were four recipients from the Ephrata School District. **Ronda Billingsley** and **Judy Dillon**, both from Columbia Ridge Elementary, **Shannon Dahl** from Grant Elementary and **Tina Mullings** from Ephrata Middle School all received grants.

In addition, **Katie Pippins** and **Marcee McLain** from Soap Lake Elementary, **Lynette Rackham**, Scootney Elementary School in Othello, and **Jackie Floetke** from Wilson Creek rounded out this year's grant recipients.

Unit 15 Okanogan:

February's meeting found OCSRA members awarding \$300 grants to four active members. Awardees are: **Melissa George** (East Omak Elementary, grade 5) for providing students hands-on learning with real world models of ecocolumns, **Rose Corso** (Tonasket Pre-K through grade 12) for school garden materials to build raised planting boxes for recently built greenhouse, **Heather Downey** (Okanogan grades 6-12 Life Skills) for art project materials using skills of creativity, following directions, fine motor development, self-expression, **May Riggan** (Omak High School Foods) to provide King Arthur on-demand television.

OCSRA members gathered on March 14 at the home of **Marcelle LaGrou** to celebrate Washington State School Retirees' Week, as well as π (pi) Day and Einstein's birthday.

At March's general meeting, members elected a full slate of officers for next year. Copresidents **John LaGrou** and **Richard Johnson**, Co-Vice Presidents **Maralee Bowling** and **Carol Payne**, Treasurer **Penny Garrison**, Secretary **Marcelle LaGrou**, and Scholarship Trustee **Donna Sanford**.

featured two fabulous guest speakers.

Gina Naccarato, from Spokane Public Schools, provided information about Reading Buddies. This is a wonderful volunteer opportunity, especially for retired teachers. Volunteers meet with their K-3 reading buddy once a week. Together they select a book to read, after which they choose questions from a packet designed to further the student's understanding. Students flourish from the one-on-one attention they receive from a caring adult.

Corinne Wilson, from Spokane Public Libraries, presentation was titled, "Libraries - Not Just for Books Anymore." Ms. Wilson immediately grabbed the group's attention by sharing all the things librar-

EAST-7

Unit 25 Spokane Area:

SAREA held a general meeting on March 17 at ESD 101 and via Zoom. The meeting

WSSRA ON FACEBOOK:
"Facebook/WSSRA"



Click LIKE to start following
WSSRA on Facebook.

WSSRA Around The State

ies in the area offer to the public at no charge. To highlight a few - the ability to make 80 copies a week, for free. Having trouble understanding your computer? Just call, set up an appointment and they will have an expert who can answer your questions. Free symphony tickets and document shredding days are available. Activities are organized for all ages, including many to enjoy with grandchildren. Topics covered include arts and culture, gardening (including composting, seed libraries and growing orchids), birdwatching, hikes, nature and the outdoors, the Ice Age floods, health, wellness, support, Medicare workshops, business matters, and so much more.

The scholarship committee, led by **Linda Marler**, met on March 21 to score and award scholarships to high school seniors going into education. Scholarship readers are always so inspired by the students, not only because of all they have achieved but their passion for teaching students.

In addition to the Foundation scholarships, SAREA also awarded four more scholarships for \$1,500, including a PAW Scholarship. The PAW Scholarship is awarded to a student who may not have the highest score but has overcome significant challenges and clearly shows they have the heart of a teacher.



Unit 15 Okanogan Co.: The unit celebrated School Retirees' Week and WSSRA President-Elect Rita Figlenski at Marcelle LaGrou's home in March. Attending were (front row, left to right) Mary Johnson, Rita Figlenski, Donna Sanford, Carol Payne, Penny Garrison, (back row, left to right) Gordon Pitts, Richard Johnson, John LaGrou, Helen Lees, Sharon Pitts, Marcelle LaGrou.

Unit 33 Whitman Co.:

Don and Chris Kackman and **Martin and Linda Marler** were guests of Unit 25 Spokane Area Retired Educators Association for their holiday luncheon at Centerpiece in Spokane Valley. A group of retirees played before the luncheon, and a high school girls' vocal group entertained afterward. **Char Schelling** arranges a wonderful event, thank you SAREA for hosting.

Unit 33 had a board meeting in March to plan the unit's spring activities. A spring potluck luncheon will be held at **Alice Davis's** home. Members will receive luncheon information in late April for the unit's May 16 luncheon.

Three unit members served as scholarship readers for the high school and student teacher scholarships awarded by WSSR Foundation. In addition, Unit 33 Whitman will award a \$1,000 grant for a Whitman County applicant.

EAST-8

Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy: Unit 1 did not hold a gathering in January, but the executive board did meet. Many items were discussed, and a few improvements were made to the unit's mini-grant process. **Sheryl Andrews**, the unit's long-time treasurer, has

decided to step down from her duties beginning next year. She has done a fabulous job, and the unit is sorry to see her leave her office but understands her decision. She has been invaluable and unit members are thankful that she has been the unit treasurer for so long!

The unit's February meeting was supposed to be at Lewis Clark State College in their hospitality department. However, the main instructor got very ill, and they had to cancel. The unit quickly found a restaurant that allowed them to hold their meeting while eating their very awesome food. Thank you to Southway Pizzeria in Lewiston for step-

WSSRA Around The State



Unit 29 Benton-Franklin: In March, the Pasco School District recognized unit members in honor of Governor Inslee's proclamation for School Retirees' Week. Pictured (left to right): Victoria Russell, Diana Baker, Don Parks, Elaine Banks, Lew Edming, Dottie Stevens, Superintendent Michelle Whitney – Pasco School District. The unit was also recognized by the Richland and Kennewick school districts.

Don Parks, WSSRA membership committee chair, E-8 membership representative and Unit 29 membership chair, will be leaving these positions and will be greatly missed. The unit has always maintained an amazing membership due to his direct efforts – who can say no to **Don**? The unit has 846 members as of March, only slightly down from last year at 849. And true to his mission, **Don** visited Patterson and Kahlottus recently with membership brochures, a “drop in and drop off” for all employees. During the unit meeting, **Don** introduced North Franklin Superintendent Jim Jacobs as his guest. Jim is retiring soon, and the unit looks forward to welcoming him as a member.

ping up at the very last minute. The unit hopes to reschedule with the college next year.

In March, **Allison Hays** and **Deborah Davies-Wagner** gave a program on their trip overseas. **Allison** and **Deborah** are retired foreign language teachers, and all were envious of their trip!

A new unit project, “The Great Kindness Project” was brought forward by **Jan Goodheart**. More information will be shared at the next unit meeting.

The unit elected new officers: President **Kay Andersen**, Vice-President **Debbie Romesburg**, Secretary **Bonnie Hill** and Treasurer **Judie Hanley**.

The unit presented a pre-retirement panel in April. The Asotin County Fair was also in April...spring has sprung in the Lewis-Clark Valley.

Unit 29 Benton-Franklin:

The February and March unit luncheons were well attended with 70+ members. The February meeting featured **Coleen Culmer** and Alexis Bonoff from the Alzheimer's Association with outstanding presentation on “Dementia and Alzheimer's.” The program was recorded for future viewers. **Coleen Culmer**, a retired educator from Kennewick is a BFSRA member, and has lived through the tragedy of this disease in her family.

The March luncheon had a variety of interesting presenters including WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke**. **Jim Davison**, legislative representative for E-8, shared a promising legislative report.

The unit recognized their nominees for the Stan McNaughton Community Award - **Alice Allison**, and Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award - **Diana Baker**. Amazing ser-

WSSRA GOALS 2023 - 2024



WSSRA President Ron Crawford's
theme for 2023-2024

WSSRA Around The State

vice to the local community and unit. Also, a combined E-8 units nominee for legislative recognition, **Jim Davison**, for the Ester Wilfong Legislative Advocacy Award.

The March program featured Jacob Bang, director of education programs and staff for Columbia Basin College. They currently have 27 student teachers in a Bachelor of Arts, K-3, Elementary Education program. They are looking to expand to K-8. Also presenting was a current student teacher and a Kennewick teacher who had received her degree through the program. Columbia Basin College serves 44% first generation students and has a 47% Hispanic enrollment.

Additional mini-grants were awarded to Jennifer Ward and Ashley Rhoton in Finley, and Jamie Chavez in Pasco.

BFSRA retirees attended recognition functions in Pasco, Richland, and Kennewick School Districts, with Governor Inslee's proclamation read, and time for a few comments from unit members.

The upcoming May program will feature a celebration of life and installation of officers with WSSRA President **Ron Crawford**.

Current and future program information can be found on the unit blogspot: bfsraunit29.blogspot.com

Unit 31 Walla Walla-Columbia: Unit 31 selected the mini-grant winners for the spring: **Kerri Tucker** (Walla Walla High School), **Andrea Valencia-Garcia** (Edison Elementary, Walla Walla), **Nichole Hansen-Arbogast** (Davis Elementary, College Place), **Kim Kelsay** (Green Park Elementary, Walla Walla), **Barbara Brown** (Center for Children, Walla Walla), **Jason Grove** (Davis Elementary, College Place), **Lori Thomas** (Center for Children, Walla Walla), **Gina Ruvalcaba** (Sharpstein Elementary, Walla Walla), **Jeff Foertsch** (Prescott School District), **Erika Romero** (Prescott School District), **Sarah Pearson** (Prescott School District), **Jodi Gradwohl** (Prescott School District), **Debbie Ortiz** (Touchet School District), **Cathy Plucker** (Touchet School District), **Tyana Herbrandson** (Prescott School District), **Shannon Milsten** (Prescott School District).

During the March luncheon officers were nominated for the 2024-25 year. President **Sue DeRuwe**, Vice President **Roseann Groom**, Treasurer **Jim Briggs**, Secretary **Kathy Pritcher**. The Unified Sports program at Walla Walla High School presented their club and the events they attend. The students were excited to present and were well prepared to share their club activities.

During the April luncheon a selection of mini-grant winners shared with the members how they were able to use their funds for the betterment of their students.

For the May luncheon, WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** will attend and install the new unit officers. Unit 31 plans to present him with a gift for his years of serving WSSRA. Also in May, the unit will hold a memorial for members lost during the past year.

The unit's annual Teddy Bear Tea was discontinued during the COVID year. Since the unit was unable to secure enough workers to continue the event the board decided to end the event in 2022. All items for the Tea were stored in a local member's shed. In March, members gathered to remove the items from the shed and place them in a variety of locations around the valley to organizations/groups who can use the assorted tea-cups, plates, tablecloths, tea pots, serving dishes and Teddy Bears. The end of the Teddy Bear Tea is now complete.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please Notify:

Membership Coordinator

Michele Hunter

michele@wssra.org

Phone: 360-413-5496

WSSRA, PO Box 5127

Lacey WA 98509

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



The Journal

Washington State School Retirees' Association
PO Box 5127, Lacey WA 98509

PRSRT STD
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE WA
PERMIT # 2389

Change Service Requested

Washington State School Retirees' Association

Vision — Mission — Purpose

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

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

The Association's Mission is to...

- Develop, propose, and implement action that will benefit all school retirees.
- Propose legislation and legislative action that will enhance school retirees' lives.
- Provide the support necessary to strengthen Local Units of WSSRA.
- Foster involvement by school retirees in educational and community activities and organizations.
- Communicate to Local Units the activities and priorities of NRTA, AARP, and other entities that affect retired school personnel.
- Represent all present and future Washington State school retirees, both classified and certificated.

Ask a friend to join us today...

You'll find inside...

AMBA..... 7, 14
2024 Convention Preview..... 10
Delegate Assembly..... 11
Executive Director's message...3

Foundation6
Health9
Legislative News.....4
Membership.....8

President's message.....2
Retiree Resources..... 21
WSSR-PAC.....5
WSSRA Around The State..... 15