

# The Journal

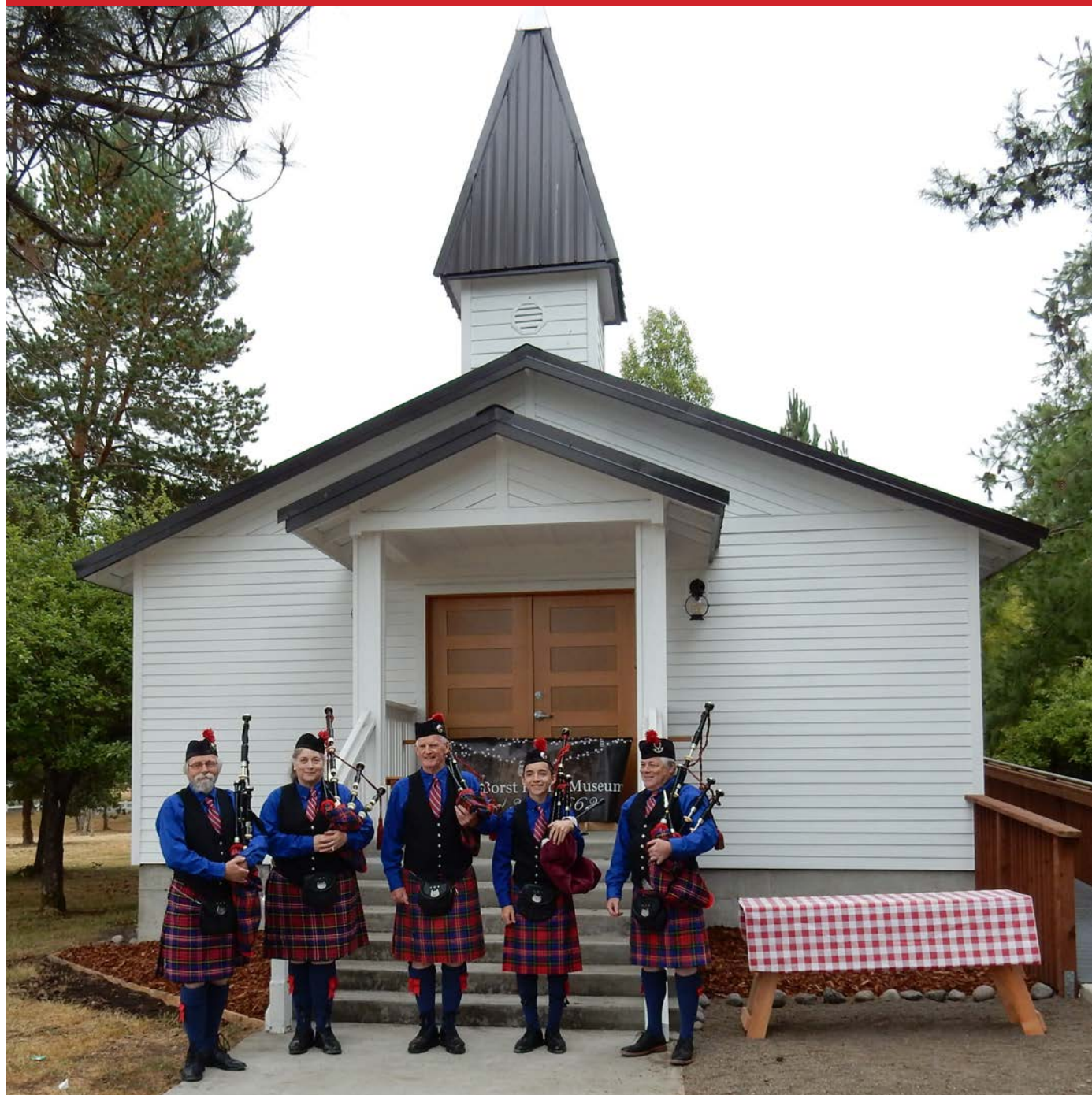
WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

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



OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2021

VOLUME 75, ISSUE NO. 2



Pioneer Church (replica) recently added to the grounds of the Historic Borst Home and Museum in Centralia, Washington. Members of Unit 11 Lewis County regularly support and volunteer at the historic pioneer property.

*See page 19. Photo courtesy of Jean Bluhm, Unit 11 Lewis County*

## WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the president*

## Communication



by Bruce Boyer, president

In the previous edition of the WSSRA *Journal*, I talked about our logo for this year, which identifies leadership, scholarships, communication, celebrating our diamond jubilee, and being your advocate in Olympia. In this edition, I would like to share what we are doing with communication. Obviously, you are now reading our October issue of the WSSRA *Journal*. In it are articles to keep you informed of what we are doing throughout the state. You probably also receive a newsletter from your local unit and can attend local meetings, which I hope to attend this year (many via Zoom, until the COVID issue is better resolved).

What we have started to do, since our last WSSRA board meeting, is to have the district representatives give unit presidents and coordinating council chairs a brief rundown on what was discussed and of board actions, within a week of the meeting. This is an effort to help get timely information into the hands of your local units quicker, so that it can be relayed to you in your newsletters sooner.

Prior to our August WSSRA board meeting, we held an orientation meeting for the new board members - Patricia MacGowan (NW-2), Linda Marler (E-7), and President-elect Brad Beal. The intent was to help them become more

familiar with the strengths that they bring to our organization and how it works. This too, is in keeping with our communication theme for the year. This meeting was also attended by Executive Director Alan Burke, along with Jean Kinnaman (SW-3) and Kay Bishop (NW-1), both of whom shared some of their experiences of being a district representative this past year. Eileen Wascisin, our WSSRA secretary, was also on hand to do a quick review of our association's by-laws. The more we know, the more effective we can be serving you this year.

Lastly, as I mentioned earlier this year, Alan Burke, our executive director, has been posting on our website (wssra.org) a monthly update on a number of issues that may interest you. For instance, in his recent "current news" column he addressed the upcoming .58% fee that all workers in our state will be paying for a long-term care benefit. You will note that there are several issues that could impact our current actives. Other recent topics include, "Seniors sought for U of W study," and "Federal subsidy available for Internet Services." As you can tell, the items vary in topic, but all contain useful information.



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**JOURNAL INFORMATION**

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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 association, as defined in Article II of the bylaws.

**JOURNAL articles to:**  
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**Upcoming JOURNAL  
article deadlines:**

**December 5, 2021**  
for Jan./Feb. 2022 issue

**February 5, 2022**  
for Mar./Apr. 2022 issue

WSSRA At Work For You



*A message from the executive director*

## Health Coverage Decisions



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

To be sure, WSSRA is all about tracking developments in pension policy and retiree health care. Those two items have been, and will continue to be, top priorities for our organization. For the 2022 legislative session, the COLA situation (maintaining the COLA for Plan 2/3; adding a COLA for Plan 1) will take center stage. See Peter Diedrick's legislative update on page 4 for more on that.

But before the session—specifically by November 30—Medicare eligible retirees who use PEBB for their Medicare supplement will need to make a decision about which carrier to use for 2022 services. Currently, most (approximately 55%) retirees use the Uniform Medical Plan (UMP). Others use Premiera or Kaiser Permanente, but those programs, unlike UMP, are not offered throughout the state.<sup>1</sup>

However, the new Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug (MA-PD) plan managed by United Health Care (UHC) that launched this past January is offered statewide, and is considerably cheaper than UMP. For instance, in 2021, the cost for a single subscriber for UMP was \$336 per month and for the most expensive UHC option ("Complete") was \$156.

Those numbers are very different, but in 2022 the gap gets even wider. UMP is going

up to \$364 per month while UHC Complete is going down to \$148.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a single subscriber who switches from UMP to UHC Complete in 2022 will save just under \$2,600 for the year. As of press time, the Health Care Authority (HCA) had not released 2022 figures for the categories of subscriber and spouse, or of combinations with dependents, but an easy extrapolation can see a subscriber/spouse savings of more than \$5,000 annually by completing the switch.

Of course, the number one question to answer in any health care carrier switch decision is coverage. When the HCA bid-out the new MA-PD plan a year ago, the criteria was that coverage had to be the equivalent of UMP. For the most part that is what occurred. There are some differences (e.g., hearing aid reimbursements; Silver Sneakers availability) but the basic plans are the same.

So, why the difference in cost? The explanation is complicated but the core is that UMP is a traditional Medicare program covering Parts A and B, while the UHC plans are part of the Medicare Advantage Program (Part C) that enjoys a federal subsidy for so-called "quality" care, and an even bigger subsidy for

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

<sup>1</sup> In addition to UMP and UHC, Kaiser Permanente (\$172 or \$175/mth) and Premiera (\$99 plus a \$45-ish Part D Prescription Drug plan) are also available PEBB Medicare supplements for retirees in 2022. These programs have been in the market for years and therefore have devotees that are happy (or neutral, or negative) with them, but they are not offered in many areas of the state.

<sup>2</sup> Here is another way to look at the expense of UMP as a Medicare supplement: For 2022, when the \$364/month retiree charge is added to the \$183/month subsidy the state provides, the composite single subscriber monthly cost for the supplement is \$547. So, UMP subscribers, with the mandatory state subsidy included, push \$547 every month into a fund to cover the 20% of medical bills that Medicare doesn't cover. Wow!

## Legislative News



## Preparing for 2022 Legislative Session



*by Peter Diedrick, legislative director*

### Autumn Legislative Update

Like the students you had in class, the legislature gets back to work in the autumn. Policymakers and advocacy groups are now busy preparing for the 2022 Legislative session starting January 10. Legislators can pre-file bills as early as December 13, so bill action will be starting in roughly 60 days.

WSSRA is also busy organizing for the upcoming legislative session. Bill drafts and supporting documents have been written for our 2022 Plan 1 cost-of living adjustment (COLA) request. The retiree advocacy organizations are asking the Select Committee on Pension Policy to hold hearings and votes on Plan 1 COLA legislation at their October 19 and November 16 meetings. The meetings will be on Zoom. You can watch the proceedings on TVW or join the Zoom hearing – the link will be available through the legislative webpage -- <https://leg.wa.gov/JointCommittees/SCPP/Pages/default.aspx>. WSSRA's legislative team also has upcoming meetings with the Governor's Office and State Women's Commission on getting this legislation endorsed and funded in the Governor's budget proposal.

WSSRA is drafting legislation to improve the timing of COLA's. Current rules require retirees to be separated from public service for 12 months to be eligible for a COLA. If a school employee

retires in July or August, they would not be eligible for a COLA the following summer. Our bill would change that rule to 10 months – summer retirees would be eligible for a COLA the following July.

### Pre-session Legislative Calendar

September 21 is a big day in Olympia. In addition to the previously mentioned Select Committee on Pension Policy meeting, the revenue forecast council will release the quarterly economic and revenue forecast – that's when we find out how much tax money legislators will have to spend. Our legislative goals all depend on the state having resources to use. Finally, the Washington State Redistricting Commission is meeting September 21. They will be releasing the new legislative district map proposals for the next ten years. Exciting news for lobbyists!

All legislators will meet to discuss committee assignments and policy goals in November. Following that, the Governor will release his 2022-2023 supplemental budget proposal. Majority party lawmakers will use the Governor's budget proposal as the framework for the budget they write, so it's imperative our top goals are listed in Governor Inslee's proposals.

### What Retirees Can Do

Be in regular contact with your legislators. WSSRA's legislative team can advise, organize, and cajole, but retirees' power comes from their personal relationships with legislators – being reliable voters helps too. If you are active in your WSSRA unit, make sure the unit is inviting legislators to be guests at your Zoom or in-person meetings. Being on WSSRA's email list is great – please sign up if you haven't – but your letter to the capitol will carry much more weight when the legislator or assistant knows the sender.

Thanks for your work and advocacy. We will be calling on you shortly.

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

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

**To join the legislative  
email contact list,  
please email  
[tara@wssra.org](mailto:tara@wssra.org)**

## Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of WSSRA

by Bruce Boyer, WSSRA president



Looking forward to 2022, WSSRA will be celebrating our 75th anniversary. We are beginning to think of ways to celebrate this anniversary, and would like your ideas and input. Karen Keller, our historian, informed me that for our 50th anniversary, local units contributed a quilt patch that was used to make a banner that now hangs in the Lacey office. Another year, all members received a commemorative pin.

What do you think would be a good way to help us celebrate this year? Maybe a new quilt with patches from local units, a crossword puzzle about WSSRA, memories from previous leaders, a paragraph or two on why you joined WSSRA, or....?

Please inform your local leaders or Tara Teitzel ([tara@wssra.org](mailto:tara@wssra.org)) about your ideas, so that whatever we do, it comes from the heart of our organization, you the members.

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

prescription drug coverage. Uniform Medical has neither, and, for several years, has watched as the costs of prescription drugs—especially for high-cost specialty drugs—go higher and higher. Basically, federal subsidies for drug costs accounts for most of the difference.

One caveat: for those who rely on UMP to pay for one or more expensive prescription drugs, it is imperative that they confirm that UHC (or Kaiser, or Premera's Part D choice) will cover them prior to switching.

Of course, we certainly need to hear from HCA and the field about 2021 experiences with United Health Care. And that is precisely what we have planned for a webinar scheduled on Tuesday, October 26 at 9:00 a.m. featuring Ellen Wolfhagen, Health Care Authority Manager for the MA-PD/UHC program. Ellen will review 2021 customer experiences with the UHC program, will explain differences between UHC and Uniform Medical (as well as Premera and Kaiser Permanente), and will answer questions from attendees.

In the meantime, WSSRA members who switched to UHC in 2021 are encouraged to send me ([alan@wssra.org](mailto:alan@wssra.org)) an email (or call at 360-413-5496 ext 118) about their experiences with the United Healthcare MA-PD program. At WSSRA, we are not in the business of promoting one program over another. However, for our Medicare-eligible members who use Uniform Medical for their Medicare supplement, and can save \$2,600 per person (\$5,000+ for a couple) in 2022 by switching to UHC, stories about experiences with the new program will be welcomed.

The HCA event on October 26 is one of a series of four webinars that WSSRA is sponsoring in late October/early November. Please see page 7 for a description of the other webinars, all of which will provide key retirement planning information for active K-12 employees.

We hope to see you at one or more of these events.

## Active Members



## K-12 Active Employees: Long-Term Care Act



by Alan Burke, Ed.D., executive director

The mandatory, state-sponsored Long-term Care Act goes into effect January 1, 2022. Here are the facts:

In 2019, Washington became the first state in the nation to create a government-run, long-term insurance care program. Funding for the program will come from payroll deductions at the rate of 58 cents for every \$100 in income (or \$290 per year for a person making \$50,000; \$580 per year for those with \$100,000 incomes). Deductions will begin with January 2022 paychecks. (See an AARP one-pager under the WSSRA website “Current News” tab for program details.)

In most cases, ten years of employment (beginning in 2022) is required to qualify for benefits, which are limited to \$36,500 lifetime. Portability (meaning out-of-state use) is prohibited. All compensated employees—whether they plan to work for the next ten years or not—will be assessed the fee.

The lone exception is for those holding an existing long-term care policy. Predictably, WSSRA, through its partnership with AMBA, has fielded inquiries from active K-12 employee members not planning to work for ten more years regarding purchasing a policy through AMBA’s vendor Mutual of Omaha.

Unfortunately, Mutual of Omaha, along with other insurance carriers in Washington who participate in the long-term care market, apparently have placed a moratorium on selling long-term care policies through the November, 2021 state-imposed opt-out deadline. No formal rationale has been given for the decision to stop selling these policies. Some speculate that one reason is to avoid difficulties with less-than-honest individuals who purchase a policy to avoid the state tax, and then quickly cancel it to avoid paying any money for long-term care services. Others have noted that companies have been inundated with requests to purchase these plans in far greater numbers than in the past. This creates uncertainty—not something valued in the insurance business.

The bottom line is that if an active employee/WSSRA member has a long-term care policy in hand at this time, s/he is not required to pay the 58 cents per \$100 fee. Our understanding is that tax exemption forms will be available on the Employment Security Department website ([esd.wa.gov](http://esd.wa.gov)) and must be completed by December 31 to qualify. The “WA Cares Fund” website also has information ([wacaresfund.wa.gov](http://wacaresfund.wa.gov)). The opposite is also true: no policy and the fee will be assessed beginning in January for all—whether the ten-year threshold is likely to be met or not.

Check the WSSRA website under the “Current News” tab for updates or changes with the timelines or rules for the state’s implementation of the long-term care insurance act. We understand that ongoing discussions among state officials and insurance companies about the mechanics of the program are occurring. We also are aware that several legislators from both parties are studying these issues, and are discussing possible fixes that could be proposed early in the 2022 legislative session.

Please visit us at...

WSSRA.ORG



## Retirement Planning Events



## Fall Retirement Planning Webinars and 2022 Health Care Information

The following WSSRA-sponsored events have been scheduled to inform members about retirement planning and Medicare health care options for 2022. Registration can be arranged through an email to Tara Teitzel ([tara@wssra.org](mailto:tara@wssra.org)) or by hitting the link under the "Events" tab on the WSSRA website ([wssra.org](http://wssra.org)). Please pass this information along to others who may be interested in one or more of these webinars.

### HCA/PEBB 2022 MEDICARE RATES

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26 (9:00 AM – 10:15 AM)**

Ellen Wolfhagen, Health Care Authority Manager for the United Healthcare (UHC) Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug (MA-PD) program will present on the outcomes of the new UHC option to Uniform Medical Plan (UMP). Given the recent announcement of the 2022 increase in UMP (up from \$336 to \$364 per month for a single subscriber), the 2022 UHC options (\$125/month for "Balanced" and \$148/month for "Complete") clearly will be of interest to a number of retirees. The reasons for the rate differences will be explained, as will the differences between the two plans. Following Ellen's presentation, a Q and A session is scheduled.

### RETIREMENT PLANNING — DRS and PEBB

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28 (4:30 PM – 6:30 PM)**

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) and the Health Care Authority (PEBB) will present the first part of a 101-level review of basic retirement planning. This will be similar to the WSSRA-sponsored webinar that took place last April. Active employees within five years of retirement particularly will benefit from the information provided. Once again, following the presentations a Q and A opportunity will be provided.

### RETIREMENT PLANNING — SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, and VEBA

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (4:30 PM – 6:15 PM)**

The second part of the basic review of retirement planning will focus on Social Security/Medicare and VEBA. This also will follow the format of last spring's presentation. We found that dividing the presentations into two separate sessions avoided the rush and "too-much-information-at-once" challenges that came with one lengthy presentation.

### NEW SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANNING WEBINAR — WSSRA & DRS

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (4:30 PM – 5:45 PM)**

**This brand new event is designed for newly hired school employees.** By early November this group will be approaching their non-revocable 90-day deadline to choose between Plan 2 or Plan 3. DRS will be on hand to explain the differences between both plans, and will provide information on state-sponsored deferred compensation. In addition, a financial planner will discuss the advantages of establishing a long-term savings plan and thinking about retirement security at the beginning of a K-12 career.

## WSSR-PAC News



## WSSR-PAC: Getting Ready For 2022



by Louie Osmonovich, WSSR-PAC president

Four important goals for our present and future retirees are:

1. Maintain and improve medical benefits.
2. Convince the Legislature to pay off their Plan 1 unfunded liability.
3. Institute a permanent COLA for the Plan I retirement system.
4. Make improvements to Plans 2 & 3 retirement systems.

To reach these goals, our legislative committee members do the face-to-face meetings with individual district legislators. Many of these legislators request our help with financing their campaigns.

The legislators we endorse are chosen after checking their support of our retiree issues through a questionnaire returned to us, recommendations from district PAC board member, and input from WSSRA unit members throughout the state.

As mentioned in previous *Journal* articles, the COVID epidemic has reduced the PAC efforts to raise funds through our annual convention. Also, with many units not meeting in person, low-cost fundraisers have been few and far between. Consequently, we need more WSSRA members to contribute directly to our treasury via the support box included on this page.

We have a huge election year coming up in 2022. All of the House members and half of the Senate will be vying for seats in the 2023-24 legislatures.

In our previous fundraising drives, we reached or surpassed our WSSR-PAC goal of \$25,000. So far this year, we are almost half-way to reaching this goal. We need all the help we can get from all WSSRA members (retirees and actives) if we are going to be influential in gaining legislator's support during the next session. We need their support to make any gains toward the retirement goals mentioned at the beginning of this article.

The WSSR-PAC executive committee and district board members volunteer their time to research and select legislators to endorse financially, each year. We strive to responsibly endorse those legislator's campaigns that we feel will help us realize our deserving goals.

Thank you in advance for your generous contribution.

Stay safe and keep healthy!

### Support the WSSR-PAC — Contribute Today!

Contributor Name and Spouse (if applicable):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Unit #/Name:

Contribution  
Amount \$

In memory of  
(if any):

Can we publish your name on the  
WSSR-PAC Wall of Support list?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Form & Contribution to:**

WSSR-PAC

125 West 11th Street  
Port Angeles, WA 98362

**Online:**

**WSSR-PAC.ORG**



## Membership: Strength In Numbers

## Every Contact Opportunity Valuable



by Don Parks, state membership committee chair

It seems we are back to "here we go again." Many are saddened and frustrated by the return to masks, etc., as well as distancing and other restrictions. Unfortunately, we are still in a waiting mode for the ability to get out there and do in-person staff presentations, benefits fairs, and other proven activities designed to build membership in WSSRA. Whatever is being done in each local unit to function in spite of this, congratulations to you and your unit's membership committee. Again, we appreciate AMBA's continuing work and effort.

Membership statewide is still holding up well in spite of what we are faced with. September membership was at 17,424, down from 17,440 as of August 1, 2021. By comparison, about a year ago, membership was at 17,834 as of September 1, 2020.

Some local units were able to participate in district benefits fairs this fall under interesting circumstances, such as outdoor venues

and strict mask rules. Some headway has been realized in terms of scheduling administration staff presentations at a future date, such as late September or in October. There are also opportunities available to take care of our actives, such as delivering their local directories and classroom grant application forms to them through their building offices or to them directly. **Every contact opportunity is valuable during these strange times.**

I met, via Zoom, with the state membership committee in late September. I'm looking forward to trying out some new ideas and hope to report on progress in the next *Journal*.

Finally, everyone appreciates any efforts toward keeping WSSRA and your local unit in front of those who need to know we are here and working for them. Let's hope that in a few more months we will see a better path forward for membership building.

## WSSRA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

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

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

Please Print

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

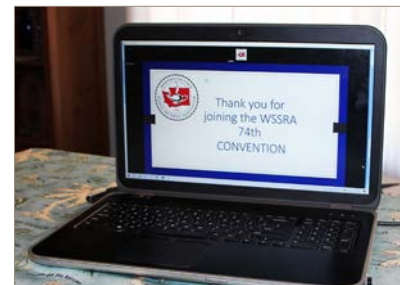
Contact WSSRA for membership information: Michele Hunter, [michele@wssra.org](mailto:michele@wssra.org) or 360-413-5496, ext 116

## WSSRA Convention 2021

## 74th Annual Awards and Recognition

September 15, 2021 *(via Zoom)*

With continuing concerns about COVID-19, the 2021 in-person convention was shifted to a two-part virtual event held via Zoom. On June 9, 2021, part one included a business meeting, announcing by-law changes and introducing the 2021-22 executive board. On September 15, 2021, part two celebrated the organization's accomplishments over the past year. The event featured awards and recognitions, including state level leadership, scholarship award recipients, and units of distinction. Nominees and recipients of WSSRA's two major accolades, the Stanley O. McNaughton Outreach Award and Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award, were announced. A celebration of life, remembering members who passed away, was also part of the event.



## Units of Distinction Awards — 2020-21

## Highest Distinction

*(reaching 17 or more goals)*

Unit 1 Clarkston-Asotin-Pomeroy  
 Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas  
 Unit 3 Clallam County  
 Unit 19 Renton-South King  
 Unit 23 Sno-King  
 Unit 27 Pierce County  
 Unit 28 Thurston County  
 Unit 29 Benton-Franklin

## Distinction

*(reaching 14-16 goals)*

Unit 8 Kitsap County  
 Unit 16 East King  
 Unit 20 Seattle  
 Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan  
 Unit 22 Sno-Isle  
 Unit 25 Spokane Area

## President's Award — 2020-21

Lora Brabant

*Unit 3 Clallam Co.**Presented by Bob Duke, WSSRA President, 2020-21*

I am pleased to present the 2020-21 President's Award to Lora Brabant. Lora joined WSSRA upon her retirement from Port Angeles in 2012 (after 10 years as marketing teacher and DECA advisor). She immediately became an active member of the Clallam County School Retirees' Association. In fact, she has served as unit president since arriving at CCSRA, leading her group in advocacy, recruitment, philanthropy and developing strong connections with local schools over the past decade.

Specifically, she has worked with school leaders in nearby districts like Port Angeles, Sequim and Crescent, but also has reached out to distant school systems in Forks and Neah Bay. Membership has grown 20% during her time as unit president.

Lora also has served three terms as SW 3 Coordinating Council chair, and has been an active member of the state legislative committee. Particularly notable is her local advocacy for pension and health care improvements in Legislative District 24, where she has developed strong relationships with Representatives Mike Chapman and Steve Tharinger, and Senator Kevin Van De Wege and their staffs.

Finally, and perhaps most noteworthy, for the last four years Lora has served as WSSR-PAC treasurer, a very demanding job that requires time, attention to detail, and accuracy in meeting reporting deadlines of the Public Disclosure Commission. Lora's perfect record with the PDC on behalf of the WSSR-PAC are appreciated by all—and represent a remarkable accomplishment.

Lora, with her companion dog Daisy, is a welcomed member at all WSSRA functions. Lora truly is a person who walks her talk. She is devoted to WSSRA and fully deserving of special recognition.

## WSSRA Convention 2021

## Patrick T. Hoban Meritorious Award

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

Sue Kane

*Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas*



Sue Kane has been a Unit 2 member for fourteen years, starting when she was still employed as a principal. Sue is well known for her giving smile and “can-do” attitude. Unit 2 has greatly benefited from her technical and organizational skills. Sue also has a wonderful willingness to try new ideas.

Officially, she serves as the unit treasurer, but she is so much more. Sue has edited our newsletter, created a volunteer school support system for our retirees, overseen our outreach to the community, and been a legislative liaison for our unit. In the past Unit 2 had to hire professional publishers to help with the unit newsletter. Sue rescued us. She worked with the publishers to understand the computer software and now does the work herself. Sue maintains all the finances and records four Chelan-Douglas SRA. She has also taken on several legislative special projects. Unit 2 is fortunate to have her as a member and leader.

## Stan McNaughton Outreach Award

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

Karen Chapman

*Unit 27 Pierce County*



Karen Chapman is a remarkable lady who doesn't let any grass grow under her feet! She is very energetic and is always involved in working on a project (or several). Volunteering for Karen is harder than most – she has macular degeneration and is severely visually disabled. This results in her

having to arrange special transportation for her volunteer projects; however, she continues to volunteer despite her disability. Karen is always cheery and wonderfully supportive.

Karen currently volunteers with Unit 27 on the program and decorating committees. She also makes and coordinates the Unit 27 baskets that are raffled off at the WSSRA state convention. At the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, Karen has volunteered in educational areas and at Zoo Lights. As a member of the Friends of the Library she has assisted with book fairs. Karen continues to be involved with the Puyallup School District, the Special Olympics, and in agricultural education.

### 2021 Hoban Meritorious Award Nominees

Beverly Brown (3), Robin Stroben (19),  
Tim Knopf (22), Jeff Hunter (25),  
Heather Gurley (27), Jo Edwards (28),  
Eileen Wascisin (32)

### 2021 McNaughton Outreach Award Nominees

Kriss Crilly (2), Gary Gleason (3),  
Eileen Yamada Lamphere (19),  
Kathy Reim (21), Jan McFarland (25),  
Sally Jones (28), Jerry Finkbonner (32)

## Supporting Future Educators



## WSSR Foundation: Scholarships Increased This Year



by Dottie Stevens, WSSR Foundation president

Exciting news, scholarships have increased! Please be sure to share this information with students and schools. Thank you for your generosity in giving to the Foundation and remember we may receive donations to the WSSR Foundation as a 501(c)(3) organization. See the information about RMD's that allow direct tax-exempt donations (page 13).

This fall, the Foundation board met to conduct an audit and a review of investments. An awards presentation on September 15, 2021 included announcing scholarships for 2022-23 and scholarship winners for 2021-22. Also during the ceremony, Apple Awards were announced with many thanks to our benefactors. A high point for us is the Platinum, Diamond,

and Golden contributors whose donations allow us to increase scholarships to our future educators, student teachers, and interns.

Scholarships to be awarded this year:

- 16 WSSR Scholarships — two per coordinating council area, one for \$2,500 and one for \$1,500.
- 2 Gene Forrester Memorial Scholarships — \$2,000 each to a student in Agricultural Education at WSU.
- 16 Neil D. Prescott Scholarships — two per coordinating council area, \$2,000 each for student teachers and interns in the field of education.

### 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



Also continuing next year, many thanks to PEMCO for funding the Robert J. Handy Memorial Scholarship which includes 16 scholarships, two per coordinating council area worth \$900 and redeemable up to four years.

Thanks again to our Foundation contributors. Donations can be made "in honor" of a special person(s) or "in memory" of special person(s). It all adds up to support our future educators.

## Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

Many of us, who are 72 and older, annually face a requirement to convert a percentage of our tax-sheltered savings (IRS 403b, 401k, etc.) from tax-free to taxable assets. Of course, when the time comes to convert the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), the money becomes ordinary income and is subject to withholding regulations and, at the end of the year, federal income taxes.

That is, unless those monies are sent to an IRS 501(c)(3) charity. In this case, any amount (up to \$100,000) given directly to a charity is tax free, and any amount passed on to the retiree is taxable. If you are considering donating RMD proceeds to a charity, how about choosing the WSSR-Foundation? The Foundation supports what we all support—high school seniors interested in a career in education and student-teacher/interns. Their scholarships have aided hundreds over the years, and have been increased recently to reflect the realities of high college costs and challenging teacher preparation expenses.

So, if you are faced with a RMD this year, please consider a donation to the WSSR-Foundation. **Note: when making a RMD-to-Foundation donation, make sure that your financial institution sends the check directly to the WSSR-Foundation.** Unfortunately, a check from a private donor to a 501(c)(3) charity is not considered tax-free by the IRS.

## Foundation Contributors

Fred and JoAnn Balmer - donation

Mary Bly - donation

Brenda Crumpacker - in honor of Jean Tobin, in memory of Barbara Daniel

Ronald and Patricia Cygan - in honor of Mary A. Johnson, in memory of Sharon L. Green

Jim and Pat Davison - donation

Sharon Dennis - donation

Lloyd and Ardith Eakin - donation

Kathleen Eide - in memory of Paul E. Eide

Kathy and Richard Fletcher - in memory of Casey Osmonovich

Ed and Diane Gonion - in memory of JoAnn Balmer and Bill Marvin

Jacqueline Hofmann - donation

Karen Keller - in memory of Janice Irle and Merle Klavano

Barbara Landrock - in memory of Bill Marvin and Bonnie Green

Julee Neuhart - donation

Evelyn Nordeen - in memory of Roberta Adams

Laurel Powell - in memory of Toni Hara

Blake and Elise Slansky - in memory of Mike Lanctot

Chelan/Douglas SRA - in memory of Janice Irle, Joe Teague, Lynnea Anderson, Nellie O'Keefe, Roger Brantner, Rosemary Faust, William Kiehn

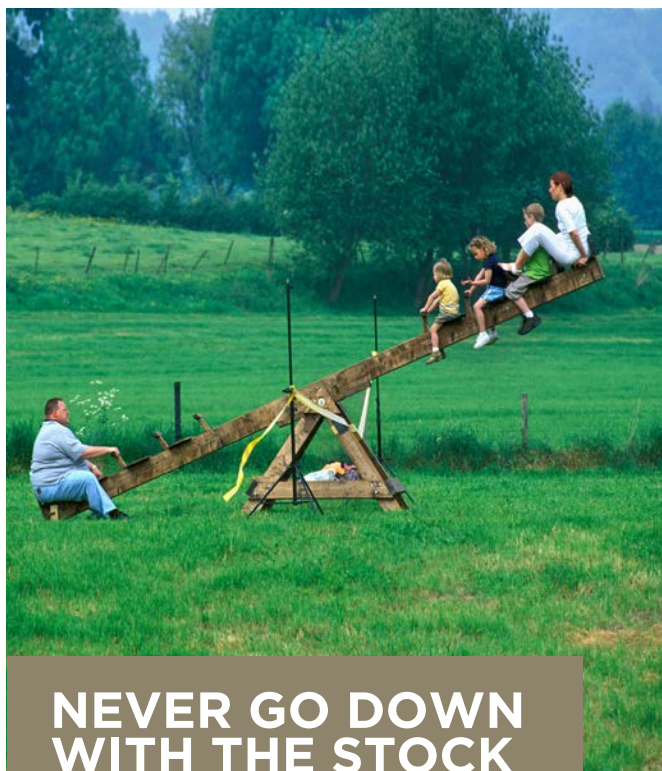
Lewis County SRA - in memory of Blair Barner, Hilda Miller, William "Bill" Leth

Renton/South King RSEA - in memory of Connie O'Keefe, Leigh Anne Raschkow, Thomas Stewart

Skagit-Island-San Juan REA - in memory of Bonnie Greene, Carlton Torbergson, Clyde Kennard, Lavonne Newell-Reim, Reidar Ytgard, Trudy Fairweather, Valerie Moore, William Reinard

Sno-Isle SRA - in memory of Mike Lanctot

WSSRA - donation



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**WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL  
RETIREES ASSOCIATION**



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**RETIREE RESOURCES**

**WA Dept. of Retirement Systems (TRS, PRS)**  
1-800-547-6657 [DRS.WA.GOV](http://DRS.WA.GOV)

**PEBB and Health Care Authority**  
(health insurance)  
1-800-200-1004 [PEBB.HCA.WA.GOV](http://PEBB.HCA.WA.GOV)

**SHIBA - Statewide Health Insurance  
Benefits Advisors** 1-800-562-6900  
[INSURANCE.WA.GOV/SHIBA](http://INSURANCE.WA.GOV/SHIBA)

**Social Security Administration (SSA)**  
1-800-325-0778 [SSA.GOV](http://SSA.GOV)

**AARP Washington Office**  
1-866-227-7457 [AARP.ORG](http://AARP.ORG)  
Jim Ko, state president  
Doug Shadel, Washington state director

**Senior Citizens' Lobby**  
360-754-0207 [WASENIORLOBBY.ORG](http://WASENIORLOBBY.ORG)



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in your mail-  
box?**

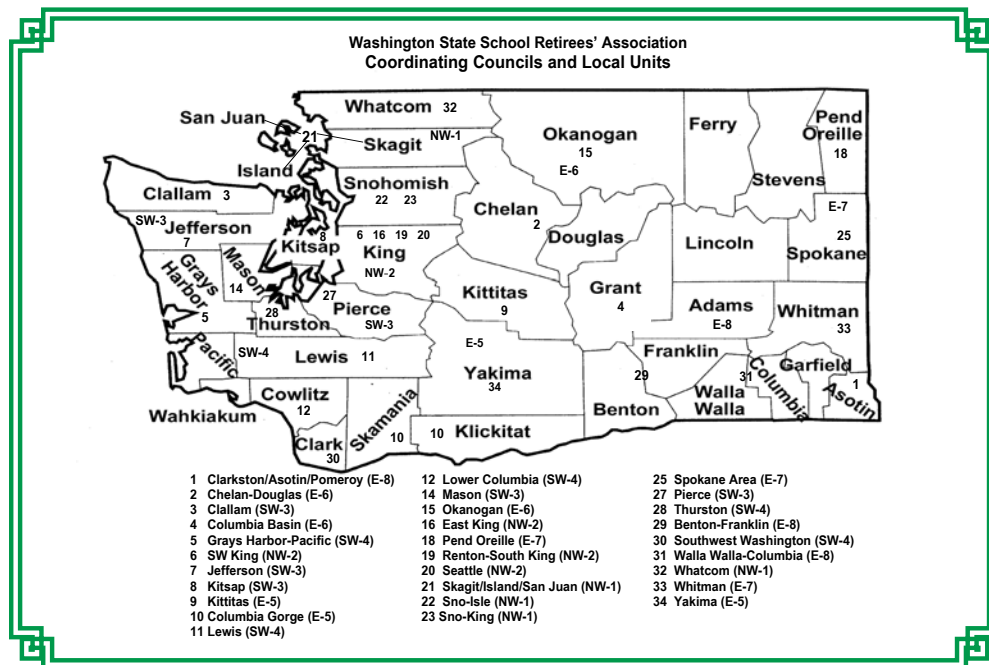
The *Journal* comes out five times each year. WSSRA's longstanding practice is to send a copy of the *Journal* to every member. For those households with more than one member, multiple copies are sent to the same address - one for each member.

If this scenario applies to you and your spouse/roommate and you would prefer to receive only one copy per household, please contact WSSRA Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter, [michele@wssra.org](mailto:michele@wssra.org) or 360-413-5496, ext. 116. She will make the changes to our mailing list.

## WSSRA Around The State

## What's happening in...

## From the Coordinating Councils and Local Units



## NORTHWEST-1

**Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan:** Unit 21 is “zooming” into the fall with plans for building membership, outreach into the schools using a mini-grant event, and staffing up the unit’s board.

On August 19, the unit’s annual retreat was held on Zoom. New board members were welcomed – **Tom Andre** as unit legislative chair and **Mim Ambrose** as member-at-large supporting programs and events.

The mini-grant program will be offered in October with online and paper mailings to each school. With the continuing COVID issues, there are

needs that don’t usually occur during more normal times, so the unit is offering larger grants to meet those needs.

Unit officers and chairs have some new faces. **Bruce Boyer** will be serving as WSSRA state president. **Barbara Robinson** and **Diane Visten** will be unit co-presidents. **Tom Andre** will be the unit legislative chair and member of the state legislative team as well.

There are many new superintendents in the local school districts this fall; the unit’s first priority for membership drive will be to invite them to become members. Next steps will be to get into the schools as soon as it can be done safely.

**Diane Visten**, scholarship chair, has contacted Western Washington University to assure them that the Student Teacher Scholarship Program will continue for five more years.

The unit is starting to prepare for the next legislative session by building a buddy list. Buddies should start now by signing up for their legislator’s newsletter and respond to those newsletters. In responding, be sure to mention that you are a school employee, retired or active and begin to build a relationship now. Our voices need to be heard, and now is a good time to begin.

Summer was quiet and sunny. The challenges continue, however Unit 21 is back to

business and looking forward to an active and rewarding year of webinars, Zoom meetings, and hopefully a return to in-person projects soon.

**Unit 22 Sno-Isle:**

Sno-Isle Unit 22’s board met in late August to plan the year. It was decided at that time not have to have lunch event meetings during fall. Board members decided to increase the frequency of their newsletter and to keep members informed of upcoming online events. Even though in-person events are currently on hold, Sno-Isle is offering \$400 Learning Support stipends to members and \$100 stipends to non-members. Applications have been coming in and there seems to be quite a need and interest as students return to the classroom.

The board also approved granting two \$2,500 scholarships to be awarded later in the year.

Many Sno-Isle members were able to attend the virtual convention and were impressed with all that was accomplished during a rather difficult year.

**Unit 23 Sno-King:**

The unit’s first live attendance activity in seventeen months was the annual picnic at Edmonds City Park on July 15. Everyone enjoyed their box lunches provided by

## WSSRA Around The State

Chef Dane Catering. **Linda Fitzgerald** introduced this year's four scholarship award-ees who explained why they were entering the field of education and what universities they would be attending. WSSRA State President **Bruce Boyer** spoke about topics of interest for members that are posted on the WSSRA website. **Matt Grover**, an active educator member, spoke about how he used a grant that he received. WSSRA Executive Director **Alan Burke** installed unit officers for this

year. Members voted to approve the updating of several sections of unit by-laws. **Rita Requa** collected \$123 for the WSSR-PAC.

The August planning retreat was held at **Jim Siscel's** home. The weather was warm and box lunches from Chef Dane were enjoyed. The board planned for activities during the conclusion of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. Of course, not knowing what will happen with COVID restrictions, plans were made

to work around them. The usual October meeting at le Bistro was cancelled, but the November meeting should occur inside.

### Unit 32 Whatcom County:

The WSSRA board has met and is making plans for the upcoming year. Plans include inviting a speaker from the Whatcom County History Museum in November. **Jerry Finkbonner** and **Eileen Wasicisin** took a history cruise on Bellingham Bay this summer

and are working on plans to make this a Unit 32 event next summer. It is always amazing when you have lived somewhere for many years and didn't realize some of the things that had happened to shape the county.

**Linda Pettett** is the unit mini-grant scholarship chair this year. Applications are due October 15. The unit has set aside \$4,000 for mini-grants. The unit is also making a final decision on the one-time amount to be awarded to each Whatcom County Food Bank in November. Other tentative plans for the upcoming year include a speaker on health issues, Whatcom Parks and Recreation, Chamber of Commerce, Village Books, and other informational topics. At this time, all meetings will be held via Zoom due to COVID concerns.

## 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
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Connect and Stay Informed...

- Legislative updates
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- Unit happenings
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Submit

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## NORTHWEST-2

### Unit 6 Southwest King:

Thank you to **Carol Brandt** for over a decade of serving as unit treasurer. Also, thank you to **Kerry Lohr** who has taken on the duties of treasurer.

The unit is not meeting in person for this school year due to COVID and changes to the meeting arrangements.

Unit members received a short newsletter at the end of September with the applica-



## WSSRA Around The State

tion forms for active teachers for the educator grants. Applications will be due after Thanksgiving vacation which has been the typical due date for years.

**Zoom presentation:** How Audio Technology Changed the World - Unit members will receive a second newsletter in late January, 2022. The newsletter will include a Zoom password for a Humanities Washington program on Saturday, February 12 at 7 pm from Ross Reynolds, a veteran broadcaster. Ross hosted a Friday-at-noon program on KUOW for 16 years, which you probably heard during the summer or year round after you retired. He will explore the impact audio transmission has had on society and storytelling, beginning with the first century of radio (1920-2020) up to the modern age of audio books, internet streaming, podcasts, and smart speakers. He will untangle how audio transmission changed society and what makes it such a powerful form of communication. One of his goals will be for attendees to share stories of their formative audio stories.

Another unit Zoom event is currently being planned for April.

### **Unit 15 East King:**

In September, East-King's executive board had a virtual meeting to discuss 2021-2022

unit meetings. It was decided to start with a Zoom presentation in October. Attendance at that meeting will help determine future programs and whether they will be virtual or not. In-person events will depend on possible available places for luncheons and what protocols will be in place at those locations.

East-King's newsletter editor, **Jim Hall**, keeps members informed (and entertained) via email and hard-copy newsletters that are sent out about every two months. Executive board members contribute articles and he culls other sources for articles of interest and jokes.

In anticipation of new and continuing needs in schools, Grant Chairperson **Shirlee Hall**, and her husband, **Jim**, emailed mini-grant applications and cover letters to East-King's six districts in mid-September. In 2020, the grant budget was increased and all applicants who applied received funding. It is anticipated that 2021 will be similar.

### **Unit 20 Seattle:**

On July 21, the unit presented a Zoom program to members about the iconic movie, "Citizen Kane," presented by historian Dr. Lance Rhoades.

Unit board meetings were held via Zoom in July and September.

The unit's Scholarship Committee, headed by **Patricia MacGowan**, continues its work to provide scholarships for Seattle Public School graduating seniors and to college students beginning their student teaching. The committee has recently received eighteen applications for a possible six internship scholarships, with the winners to be announced soon.

The unit is still receiving generous contributions to fund scholarships and classroom grants, many of which are sent in honor of past colleagues.

Communication with members is largely being done through the unit newsletter, "The Bulletin," edited by **Ron Cygan**, which is mailed in print form and also posted on the SSRA website: [www.seattlesra.org](http://www.seattlesra.org).

## **SOUTHWEST-3**

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

The executive board of the Clallam County School Retirees' Association (CCSRA) met at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles on August 17 to plan for the 2021-22 year. It was decided that until COVID conditions improve, all meetings will be hybrid meetings. People will have the choice of attending in person at Joshua's Restaurant in Port Angeles or attending via Zoom. Instructions and links will be emailed

to members a week in advance of each meeting.

CCSRA had a table at the benefits fair for Port Angeles School District on August 31, where information about WSSRA membership and CCSRA mini-grants was distributed.

The unit continues to collect new and gently used books to distribute to Clallam County children through a few different agencies.

The first general meeting of the year was held on September 21. The guest speaker was Steve Methner who spoke about the Dream Playground community project in Port Angeles. His talk was followed by a field trip to the playground for those interested in seeing it up close.

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

It has been an eventful year. The unit met via Zoom meetings and then, in April, met at the Kitsap County Mobile Park recreation room. Those who have been able to attend have missed seeing many members but understand that it is difficult with the pandemic going on and want everyone to be safe.

In May, eight members gathered at the Trophy House Restaurant and had a very nice time. The food was great and all enjoyed seeing each other. The unit is trying to plan for

## WSSRA Around The State

**Unit 8 Kitsap:** Members gathered at the Trophy House Restaurant in Port Orchard for a luncheon meeting this summer. Pictured (*left to right*) are Jim Hunt, Cathy McVicker, Sandy Deason, Doris Bucher, Craig Miller, Cheryl Miller, Allison Morris and Susan Martin.



Unit officers for 2021-22 gathered for the unit's annual summer picnic. Pictured (*left to right*) are Unit President Doris Bucher, Treasurer Allison Morris, Secretary Patty Marz, and Vice President Craig Miller.

shelter for the homeless community in Shelton. It began as an overnight shelter, but during COVID, it became a 24/7 shelter for many homeless in the community. It offers meals as well as showers and beds. Educational opportunities and mental health and drug rehabilitation services are offered. The facility is seeking sustainable funding to become a permanent shelter. Some former clients have become staff members. They have daytime and overnight managers, and community volunteers to help with meals and housekeeping.

**Bonnie Rice**, unit secretary, presented the last four grants that did not submit reports by the June meeting. Some will be extended to the 2021-22 school year because of the unusual circumstances of COVID restrictions.

**Eileen Perfrement**, unit president, reported on WSSRA convention updates, Mason County COVID statistics, and the seven Mason County school districts' plans for reopening and administrative changes.

all alternatives for the next year and hopes to see everyone who feels safe coming to meetings. Your safety is the main concern.

The annual unit picnic was held at the Kitsap County Mobile Park recreation room. The group was small but it was wonderful to see everyone. Thanks to everyone for everything they have done

this year. We appreciate all of you. Looking forward to a great year next year.

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

Unit 14 continued with a hybrid meeting of Zoom and in person on July 6, 2021. The unit has appreciated the large, separate meeting room at El Puerto de Angeles restaurant in Shelton. Members who at-

tend in person can spread out for safety. This time the Zoom connection was unsuccessful, so state leaders and interested locals were unable to attend. Eight members attended in person.

The guest speaker was Sue Barnard, a retired Shelton School District teacher and current board member of Community Lifeline, a local

The members agreed to take August off and resume meetings in September. Because of a resurgence of COVID through the Delta variant, the September meeting was virtual through Zoom. The September 6 guest speaker was scheduled to be Audrey O'Conner of Mason County Health Department. She planned to present the current

## WSSRA Around The State

COVID statistics and recommendations for school safety. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend because of the high number of cases of COVID in Mason County, high hospital rates, and a couple of deaths. She was overwhelmed with the workload right now and couldn't spare even a short Zoom presentation.

**Bruce Boyer**, WSSRA president, presented his goals for the upcoming year. **Alan Burke**, WSSRA executive director, also presented his goals, including legislative action.

**Eileen Perfrement** presented the latest plans for all the Mason County school districts for in-person learning and student safety. She also reported on the COVID information the scheduled guest speaker briefly shared with her.

The membership decided to hold the October 5 meeting on Zoom because of the uncertainty of the COVID outbreak. Audrey O'Connor rescheduled for October and presented the COVID statistics and implications for Mason County schools and community.

Future guest speakers will include new school district superintendents in the county.

The unit is proceeding with mini-grants due October 29. The plan is to present the grants at faculty meetings and solicit membership. If that is

not possible, **Bruce Boyer** suggested presenting at school board meetings instead.

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

Fall highlights for Pierce County included September's speaker, Hans Zeiger, author, local historian, former legislator and member of the Pierce County Council. Members learned more about local World War II history as Ziegler shared excerpts from his 2018 book, *Puyallup in World War II*.

In years past, Unit 27 hosted an annual "meet and greet" with local legislators. This year, for the first time, members participated in a video focused on retirees' needs and priorities. This video was distributed to all elected legislators serving in Pierce County.

Attending school staff meetings with presentations on membership and mini-grants has been a commitment this fall. Meanwhile, research continues regarding menus and venues for possible future in-person meetings.

#### **SOUTHWEST-4**

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

The Lewis County Retired Teachers have been interested in and helped support the Borst Museum in Centralia

for many years. In good times, over 300 school children tour this historic place each year, learning about their past. Unit members have served as guides for over 30 years. Beginning in 1997, the unit worked for three years to build a pioneer school on the Borst original land grant by the 160 year old house. Then, three years ago, the unit donated money to buy pencils, crayons, paints, and had historic pictures printed for children to color and learn from as they toured the hands-on carriage house. Also, as part of the tour, students could dress in old costumes, see the doctor carriage of old, and play with toys of the past. For five years, unit members have supported with interest a pioneer church replica to finish the pioneer's dream of land, a home, education for their children, and religious freedom for their

family. On August 7, 2021, the replica was dedicated with a Bagpipe band concert and on September 18, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to formally open this building for rent to people and along with the little cemetery in back to tell more of the story of the past.

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

Welcome to a new school year, with COVID masking up requirements for everyone still in place... even for retirees. After deliberation, Unit 28 decided to cancel the September picnic. In October and November, the unit will have their programs via Zoom, no luncheon. December will be skipped. The second half of the year (January through May) will be re-evaluated later. Meeting scheduling decisions were based on mem-

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## WSSRA Around The State

bers' health and well-being as the COVID cases have been rising every day.

Unit 28 is excited about the upcoming WSSRA state convention at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, Washington, June 5 – 8, 2022, hopefully! At the convention, the 75th anniversary of WSSRA will be celebrated. The Great Wolf Lodge has a spacious conference center, meeting rooms, and a famous indoor water park for children of all ages!

The unit continues to collect socks for the Little Red School House, who in turn distributes school supplies, coats, and socks to students in Thurston County.

Mini-grant applications can be accessed on the unit's website beginning September 1. The deadline to submit an application is October 13. Grants will be given out in early November. The grants awarded will be up to \$500 for members and \$250 for non-members.

## EAST-5

### *Unit 9 Kittitas Co.:*

The previously announced September general meeting of the Kittitas County unit did not take place. The surge in the COVID variant across the region made it inadvisable to have a group gathering. The executive board will be

meeting to review other options for fall.

The unit will be offering mini-grants again to active teachers with more information in the near future. All members, retired and active, will be receiving a newsletter telling of these decisions.

Medical insurance news will be released soon and again Kittitas County will be affected. Both PEBB and SEBB have other offerings to consider. Stay well, be safe as all people plan for the future.

### *Unit 34 Yakima Co.:*

The unit did not meet face-to-face last year but did continue to keep local donations going. In fact, because of not meeting, donations to those organizations that the unit usually gives to were doubled.

The unit board has had several planning meetings and the first general meeting was held on October 4. The group is excited to get rolling again.

Member **Patrick Walsh** recently had a letter to the editor published in the Yakima Herald. The letter stated, in part, "Kudos to the Yakima County School Retirees Association. In previous years the association has provided mini-grants to teachers...Despite the barriers [caused by COVID-19], the Yakima County Unit provided approximately \$13,000 more than last year in

[mini-grant] donations. Total in philanthropic donations was increased from \$22,000 in the 2019-20 school year to \$35,000 in the 2020-21 school year. Nine community organizations were granted \$2,000 each. These included: Rod's House, Nicker Place, Camp Hope, La Casa Hogar, Voice for Casa, Central Washington Agricultural Museum, Pegasus Project, Union Gospel Mission, Madison House, Trailseekers and the Yakima Valley Museum. The Granger and Mount Adams school districts were granted \$6,000 each to improve internet access for students. A music scholarship of \$4,000 was granted through the Camerata Club."

## EAST-6

### *Unit 2 Chelan-Douglas:*

The CDSRA June meeting was a casual get together to celebrate the past year and welcome active members. A CDSRA grant recipient reported on how the funds that the unit donated were used to purchase "Cashmere Bulldogs" string backpacks, which were filled with important information for students just entering high school. Due to the inability to have personal meet and greets with incoming students, these became a way to greet and inspire school spirit with students.



**Unit 2 Chelan/Douglas:** Mary Perkins and Marie Buckner presenting Ralph Peterson with his Father's Day gift from the CDSRA "Connections" project.



## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 4 Columbia Basin:** Members gathered at the Japanese Gardens Park in Moses Lake for the unit's annual luncheon celebrating the start of the school year (and being retired!). Pictured are Karen Schafer, Pat Simmons, Judy Dagnon, Lanita Pomeroy, Shirley Vincent, Nancy Nishida, Lois Palek, Wanda Harrison, Bill Anderson, Sue Beall and Linda Bishop.

on Wednesday, September 1. Members brought their own lunches, and some brought their own chairs, in an attempt to mitigate any spreading of the virus. Those in attendance were **Lois Palek, Wanda Harrison, Bill Anderson, Sue Beall, Pat Simmons, Judy Dagnon, Shirley Vincent, Nancy Nishida, Lanita Pomeroy, Linda Bishop, Gayle Talbot, and Karen Schafer.**

During the summer, the board met to go over, update, and approve the budget for the coming year.

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

August 11 saw OCSRA board members gather for the first time in a long time for a face-to-face meeting. Plans were made for the 2021–22 year with the caveat that things could change.

In another piece of good news, **Dr. Richard Johnson** has come on board as the third member of the OCSRA Scholarship Trustee board together with **Donna Sanford** and **Delores Blank**. In that same good news vein, **Carol Payne** will chair this year's grants committee. **Maralee Bowling** continues as newsletter chair, and **Penny Garrison** will once again coordinate with the unit's webmaster plus local media. **Sibyl Wehmeyer, Mary Johnson, Homer Hedington, Jennie Hedington, Marcelle LaGrou, and**

**Mary Perkins** held a political action (PAC) fundraiser after the regular meeting. A number of members donated as well as signed up for the automatic deduction option.

August brought hot weather but did not dampen member's spirit. A productive board meeting was held with the revised bylaws being approved and the 2021-22 budget being adopted. Grants were approved: \$1,000 to the Wenatchee Museum and Cultural Center and traditional grant amounts going to the homeless programs in the Cascade, Cashmere, Chelan, Eastmont, Entiat,

Manson, Orondo, Waterville and Wenatchee School Districts.

The unit decided to start the year off with on-line Zoom meetings due to the COVID-19 virus.

The unit's big project for this fall will be the "Pangborn Teaching Project." This is the 90th anniversary of the first Trans-Pacific flight, which took off from Misawa, Japan and landed in East Wenatchee, Washington. Teams of retired educators and friends will be going into the 3rd grade classrooms in the Eastmont School District. The Pang-

born-Herndon story will be presented through Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) as students participate in projects and hear the history of this event. Many volunteers will be participating as **Debra Lacy** and **Sue Kane** organize this event.

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

A dozen of the retired members of Columbia Basin Unit 4 met on the first day of school for their traditional Hallelujah Luncheon. The event took place at the Japanese Gardens Park in Moses Lake

## WSSRA Around The State



**Unit 25 Spokane Area:** Unit board members met in Secretary Marilyn Richard's beautiful park-like backyard. Eleven attended in person along with two online. Pictured (*left to right*) are Secretary Marilyn Richards, Vice-President Char Schelling, Treasurer Kathy Beal, and President Brad Beal.

**Barbara Christensen** have agreed to help with other committee jobs/works.

Because COVID variants are currently rampant, the board decided that grant checks would be mailed rather than being presented in person this fall to OCSRA recipients. Four \$300 grants are to be awarded this fall; four \$300 grants are to be awarded in the spring to OCSRA members currently employed or volunteering in one of the association's school districts. Applications are available on

the unit's website:  
[okanogancsra.com](http://okanogancsra.com)

Since WSSRA is planning fall retirement seminars, the unit has decided to forego plans for an OCSRA fall retirement seminar and to devote itself to advertising for the WSSRA-held virtual seminars.

On a final note, OCSRA will curtail any face-to-face general meetings for the remainder of 2021.

## EAST-7

**Unit 25 Spokane Area:** Summer Retreat: **Marilyn Richards**, SAREA secretary, hosted a luncheon board meeting in her beautiful backyard garden retreat. The unit celebrated its first in-person meeting since early March 2019. With a fully vaccinated board and lunch prepared courtesy of Costco. One member said, "I came because I didn't have to make something."

The special By-Laws and Standing Rules committee

spent time updating "standing rules" and by-laws. A tentative plan was scheduled and will be precipitated by the pandemic. The challenging part of the meeting was attempting to run a hybrid meeting outdoors, but the group managed to cobble it together with the patience of the two members attending online.

The board members were able to stay after the meeting adjourned and enjoy reviewing the unit historian's meticulous albums, chronicling the history of SAREA through pictures and documents.

**October General Meeting:** AARP has numerous educational half-hour and hour presentations for seniors. Unit Program Chair **Char Schelling** arranged a session on cyber security during the Zoom general meeting.

**Mini-grants:** The unit gave out \$8,000 in grants of \$250 or less. Normally members distribute the checks in person, but with the continued health restrictions unit treasurer, **Kathy Beal**, mailed out the checks to the schools.

### **Unit 33 Whitman Co.:**

For the first time since February 2020, Unit 33 had a face-to-face planning meeting! All enjoyed an Arby's lunch.

The unit doesn't have a full slate of officers but has changes at the unit president and



## WSSRA Around The State

secretary positions. This year's officers include President **Linda Marler**, Secretary **Alice Davis**, Treasurer **Lu Luhring**, and Active Teacher Grant Chair **Penny Bettas**.

After looking at the budget, plans were made for mini-grant applications for active teachers. Last year, ten grants for a total of \$2,700 were made. This year, the unit plans to give \$3,000 in mini-grants, with a maximum of \$300 per teacher. Grant applications go out soon and are due back by November 5, 2021.

## EAST-8

**Unit 1 Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy:** Unit 1 members have been working on some great plans for this upcoming year. All the COVID variants are making it difficult but members are up to the challenge! The "Back to School Bash" for active and retired school staff has been postponed until after the new year. Lots of door prizes and fun is planned.

The unit is putting together a committee to be able to assist unit school employees "navigate the maze" to learn more about retirement options and benefits as they prepare to retire.

The first unit meeting of the year was outdoors at Patt's Garden Center in Clarkston where attendees learned tips

and tricks for design, maintenance and care of a container full of fall annuals and perennials. Participants were lucky enough to plant and take home their own unique container!

And a big thank you goes out to the following members who have generously agreed to give their time to the unit this year: **Allison Hays** - membership, **Denice Strohmaier** - outreach, **Debbie Wagner** - financial investing, **Jerry Hendrickson** - PAC, **Kathi Meshishnek/Valerie Birdsong/Sheryl Andrews/Allison Hays** - retirement committee, **Sheryl Andrews** - treasurer, **Bonnie Hill** - secretary, **Judie Hanley** - vice president, **Kay Andersen** - unit president.

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

In-person luncheon meetings for BFSRA are on hold until the board decides in-person meetings would be safe. Zoom meetings for the officers and executive board continue as they carry on the business of Unit 29.

As the year 2021-22 unfolds, officers and committee chairs have laid out the year's agenda.

When safe, the luncheon meetings will continue at the Pasco Red Lion. Programs for the luncheons are listed in the BFSRA directory, the newsletter and the web page (*see end of this article*).

BFSRA set up an information table at the benefit fairs in Pasco and Richland School districts. The Kennewick fair is tentatively planned for October.

Earlier, membership directories for the 2020-22 year were distributed in a drive-thru at the Kennewick First United Methodist Church. For those members wanting a directory, arrangements can be made to get one, please contact Unit President **Victoria Russell**.

The biennial update of the by-laws has been completed and will be shared at the first in-person meeting.

BFSRA increased the scholarship amounts to \$3,000, to WSU, Eastern, Western, and Heritage. Communications with these educational

institutions are in order for the coming fall.

Twenty mini-grants for \$300 are available. Applications can be found in the newsletter or at the website.

Meetings for E-8 (Benton/Franklin, Clarkston/Asotin/Pomeroy, and Walla Walla/Columbia) are scheduled, for the year, via Zoom. The first held in early October.

WSSRA state convention that was held via Zoom in June was followed up with a WSSRA Zoom awards/recognition event in September.

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

## ADDRESS CHANGES

**Please Notify:**

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**Michele Hunter**

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



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# 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

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