

Sno-King School Retirees



July-August 2018

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from our president

News from the convention and more

by *Jim Siscel*

Summer is here even though the lead-in has been questionable at times. I've accomplished most of the gardening chores that come at this time of the year.

Nine of your leadership team participated in a very interesting WSSRA convention in Wenatchee the first week of June. There are pictures on our website under

Activities. Our next important event is our annual picnic at Edmonds Park on Thursday, July 19. The announcement is on page 2. Please RSVP to me, so we know how many are coming.

As reported at the convention, school retirees received some benefits from our Legislature during the last session, but it was not to the amounts that we requested. We were told at the convention that your contacting your individual legislators during the session was very important. We need to keep this up after the November election. We all need to become members of the WSSR-PAC, making a minimum donation of \$25. This is the minimum amount that is counted as a

(continued on page 3)

OFFICERS

Jim Siscel, President
Roberta Hawkins, Vice President
Jan Phillips, Secretary
Tom Hawkins, Treasurer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Barbara Berg, Scrapbook
Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas, Scholarships
Donna Murrish, Health
Marlene Johnson, Hospitality
Evelyn Nordeen, Sunshine
Betty Odle, Historian
Diana McQuay, Active Member Grants
vacant position, Legislative
Jim Siscel, Membership/Retirement/Website
Erma Snook, Membership Records
Jo Caldwell, Bulletin Editor

FREE MONEY OFFER ENDS

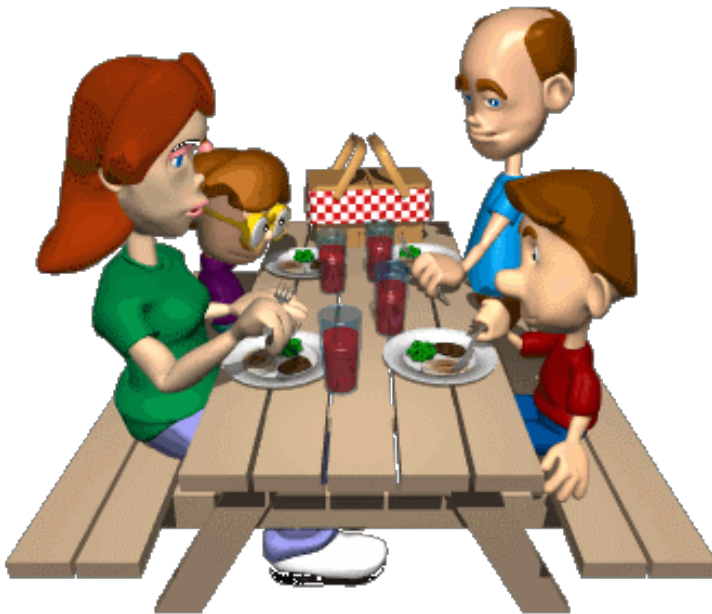


At its May meeting, the SKSR Board discussed its attempt to get more readership of the *Bulletin* by offering a \$25 reward in each issue to four members whose names were hidden throughout the *Bulletin*. After trying this for two years, we decided that our attempt was unsuccessful; only about 30% of the names listed requested their \$25 reward. We had hoped for 75% or higher. A decision was made to no longer make this offer to our readers. We hope that the articles and information printed will be enough incentive to read the *Bulletin* in the future.

Our next event

July 19 - Annual Picnic

by Jim Siscoel, Picnic Chair



Join us on Thursday, July 19, at our annual picnic at the Edmonds City Park, 600 3rd Avenue South.

We will “meet and greet” starting at 11:30. Lunch will be served at noon.

New retirees and grant recipients enjoy the event at no cost; the rest of us pay \$5.00.

This event includes Jan’s famous meatballs, salads, dessert and fun in the sun (hopefully).

Our special guest will be Linda Averill, newly elected president of WSSRA. She will install our new officers. We will hear from our 2017 grant recipients and again enjoy time with fellow colleagues. I encourage you to save the date and come.

Reserve your space now by contacting Jim Siscoel at 425-778-7202 or asjs68@earthlink.net by Friday, July 13.

We want to have enough food so no one goes home hungry!

SKSR Grant aids learning with robots

Pictured are members of two Echo Lake Robotics and Coding Club teams: *Team Blooper Video*—Inara Cutler and Katerina Sitaras, and *We Don’t Come in Peace*—Mak Kanzler, Xavier MacDonald and Hyeon Kim.

Their teacher, Shari Wennik, an Echo Lake Elementary fourth-grade teacher, received a \$250 SKSR grant this past fall to purchase a robot for her newly formed after-school club.

The teams in the club worked hard for five months learning creative problem solving, coding and robotics to design solutions to science and technology challenges. They submitted their results and evidence through an online competition platform.

There were 7,100 teams with more than 22,000 students from 63 countries in the Wonder League Robotics Competition. Congratulations to the two Echo Lake teams, pictured above, who placed in the top 140 teams world wide!



- Our Primary Election will be August 7th. There are 22 candidates running for nine positions
- in the 1st, 21st and 32nd districts. We will be sending each of them questions that concern
- all of us. Once their answers are received, we will put out a small voters’ pamphlet with their
- responses to you via email by mid-July. VOTE!

Our Legislature in action

WSSRA-PAC needs your support: \$25

by Rita Requa

The recent legislative session yielded a few benefits for school retirees, including a 1.5% COLA (less than the 3% COLA recommended by the governor and the Joint Committee on Pension Policy). That increase was shown in the July 1 pension payment. While we are grateful for that increase, it is not enough to cover the 15% cost-of-living increase since 2011. The cost to the state for the increase in pensions totaled \$14 million, which is a drop in the bucket when the state budget is \$3 billion. The other benefit from the legislative session is the modest increase (\$18.00 a month) in health benefits, which will start with your January 2019 pension payment. In addition, the recommended payment by the state actuary to the unfunded liability was made.

The Washington State School Retirees Association (WSSRA) will continue to advocate for pensions for all TRS and DRS retirement systems. Emphasis will be on a COLA for Plan 1, and early retirement down to age 62 for plans 2 and 3. Watch for more complete WSSRA legislative goals in future *Bulletins*.

A donation of \$25 makes a real difference!

A PAC donation of \$25 sends a strong message to legislators.

I learned at the recent PAC meeting that only 2% (241) of our WSSRA members (17,000) donated to the PAC last year. That is referring to individual donations, not the anonymous donations at our PAC fundraisers, unless the contributions were made by check.

WSSR-PAC treasurer Lora Brabant said that

you can make your impact even bigger with a small monthly recurring donation of \$3. or a one-time donation of \$25.

For our legislators, \$25 is the magic number. That amount makes sure that your name appears on a list of school employees in connection with WSSRA members who are concerned about their retirement.

Legislators count names, and the more names we have (those who have donated \$25 or more), the stronger our clout.

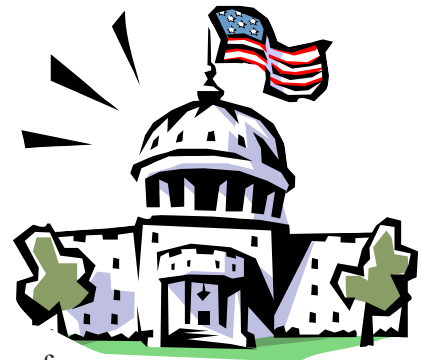
It's easy to donate

The PAC's new secure website has an easy way to donate on a regular basis. Go to wssr-pac.org, locate the *Donate* tab, fill out your credit card information. You're done!

You are supporting your future and the future of other school employees by donating to the WSSR-PAC.

Primary election coming soon

Ballots for the primary will be mailed July 20. Information about the candidates can be found online and in the voters' pamphlet. We need legislators who will stand up for retirees. If candidates come to your door, ask them if they will support our issues. Go to forums. Become an informed voter. Be sure to vote and mail in your ballot by **AUGUST 7**.



(President continued from page 1)

donation by the Public Disclosure Commission. We will have donation slips at the picnic.

Our SKSR unit received three Certificates of Honor at the convention. First is the Unit-of-Highest-Distinction Award for completing 20 of 20 goals during the year. Second, for having an all-time high membership of 1,389 members with a membership increase of 23 members. This is the fifth consecutive year we have received this award. Third, for increasing our total membership by 53 new members for the year, our deceased members are not

factored into this number. See the convention report by Aaron Feik on page 6.

Our annual Planning Retreat will be Friday, July 13, at the Edmonds School District Office. All members are welcome to attend to help with the planning for our activities next year. If you are interested in attending, please contact me by Monday, July 9 so I can order a box lunch for you.

Have a most enjoyable summer doing all of those things we can do in our wonderful Pacific Northwest.

Notes from April's Scholarship Luncheon

Future educators awarded SKSR scholarships

by Linda Fitzgerald, Scholarship Co-Chair



SKSR
Scholar-
ship
winner
Justin Doyle

*Pictured at April's
Scholarship Luncheon
(L-R): Joanna
Schroeder, Freya
Bloomberg and Ashley
Aversano*

On April 19th our SKSR unit awarded scholarships of \$2,000 to each of four students who will be pursuing a degree in education. It's always fun to meet these students at our annual luncheon and hear from them. They continue to amaze us with their maturity and compassion for others; they will all be teachers we can be proud of.

Ashley Aversano, from Shorecrest High School, will be attending Western Washington University in September with a plan to be a teacher. While in high school, volleyball played an important part in Ashley's life; she played on the school volleyball team for four years as well as being involved with the Washington Volleyball Academy Club Volleyball for two years. She has also been an elementary school volleyball coach and a math tutor. Ashley has worked seasonally for Macy's and now is a sales associate and manager at another clothing store. One recommendation said Ashley is a "true role model," and another states that "she has that wonderful mix of serious and fun."

Another scholarship recipient, **Freya Bloomberg**, is also a volleyball player. She is from

Meadowdale High School and will be attending Western Washington University in September. Freya has been involved with volleyball at school, a club volleyball team, her local elementary school's volleyball camp and team manager for the middle school team. She wants to be an elementary teacher and is getting experience by watching children at her church and preparing lessons for them. One of her volleyball coaches says that Freya has an ability to "teach and inspire" those younger than she is. Another teacher says she enjoys Freya's "maturity and aptitude for learning." She also says she is proud to be Freya's teacher!

Central Washington University will be the home for **Justin Doyle** as he pursues his goal of becoming an elementary teacher. Justin has been involved in many

activities while at Shorecrest High School and in his Shoreline community. At school he has been busy participating in football and wrestling. In his community Justin had a leadership position in the Shoreline Youth Council, worked with children in his church and has been active with the YMCA. He has work experience as a server at a senior center and is now a barista. His counselor says that Justin is a "person of strong character" and that his natural gregarious nature will help him succeed as a teacher.

Joanna Schroeder will be at Western Washington University in September with the goal of becoming a secondary math teacher. She is also interested in acquiring certification in ELL or Special Education. While at Ed-

(continued on page 5)

Notes from April's Scholarship Luncheon

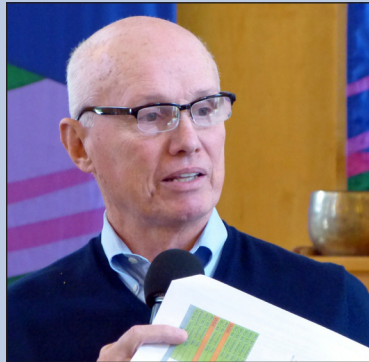
April luncheon program provides a variety of information

by Cheryl Bauer, April program Chair

Michelle Reid, superintendent of the Northshore School District, spoke to us about the things happening in that district. A question-and-answer session followed.



Alan Burke, new Washington State School Retirees Association Executive Director, encouraged us to continue communicating with our legislators.



The spring scholarship luncheon is always one of my favorite events. We get to eat good food, visit with fellow members, listen to guest speakers and hear from our scholarship recipients. The meeting/luncheon was called to order by President Cheryl Bauer at 12:00, her last official function of her term. The next order of business was to be

dismissed for lunch. For the last couple of years, we have been enjoying lunches provided by various caterers. At this event we had delicious sandwiches from Panera Bread.

As the members were enjoying the last of their lunches, Linda Fitzgerald introduced the scholarship recipients. They, in turn, introduced their parents or

other guests, and then spoke for a few minutes about a teacher that impacted them and their decision to become teachers.

Next to be introduced was Linda Averill, from our neighboring Sno-Isle Unit, who is the new president of WSSRA. We were then privileged to have Alan Burke as our main speaker. He is the new Washington State School Retirees Association Executive Director. He said that he was encouraged by all the new members our unit has brought in and by the positive things happening in Olympia. He reminded us to continue to be diligent with our phone calls, emails and letters to our legislators to help bring about new retiree benefits and saving current ones.

The luncheon ended with a raffle of centerpieces and bottles of wine. Actually, the very ending was plea from incoming President Jim Siscel about the leadership crisis in SKSR.

(continued from page 4)

monds-Woodway High School, Joanna has been involved in the International Baccalaureate program as well as continuing with her music for all four years. Outside of her classes, Joanna has been participated in cross country, track, swing club, Key Club and the Tri-M Society music honorary. Her French teacher says that Joanna is a “real leader” in the classroom and among her peers in school. Joanna’s Key Club adviser says that she is a “team player” who brings enthu-

siasm and efficiency to all of her volunteer activities.

The \$2,000 that we have awarded to each of these students will help them with their tuition expenses. Because of a generous donation by former SKSR member, Winnie Smith, we are able to offer them this scholarship award for three more years as long as they continue in education.

**VOTE IN THE
STATE PRIMARY ELECTION
BY AUGUST 7.**

Member Information Updates

Welcome New Members

Phillips, Johanna E
Plumis, Diana
Richardson, Joyce

Deceased

Parker, Katherine E, 05/09/2018,
Retired from Edmonds,
Member since 1997
Welch, M Elizabeth, 03/01/2018,
Retired from Shoreline,
Member since 1996

Report from May luncheon

Joint meeting at LeBistro

by Evie Nordeen

Speaker Bree Loewen, a member of the Seattle Mountain Rescue unit, shares stories with the group about her experiences as a volunteer over a number of years.



The May 8th joint meeting/luncheon with Sno-Isle was a great occasion to see friends and renew acquaintances. Twenty-five SKSR members enjoyed the event and SISR had a similar group.

The student chefs were attentive and accomplished a top mark in preparing the food plus serving. We look forward to honoring the young chefs next year!

Bravo to Sno-Isle for securing Bree Loewen as speaker. This young lady is author of “Found: A Life in Mountain Rescue.” Mrs. Loewen, a member of Seattle Mountain Rescue, is an excellent writer and presenter. Her focus is on the emotional impact on providers in the rescue process. She has participated in countless rescues and notes the dedicated volunteers experience tremendous mental and physical stress in order to serve people who are in a dire situation. To leave on a moment’s notice in the middle of the night as an emergency call arrives in the pouring rain and head to Snoqualmie Pass with massive equipment is a challenge. Bree testifies that all the sacrifices involved in mountain rescue are worth the price.

Convention report

Convention and delegate assembly meet in Wenatchee

by Aaron Feik

WSSRA’s 71st convention/delegate assembly was held in Wenatchee from June 4-6. Business items included rules, bylaw changes, reports, adoption of budgets and the WSSR-Foundation report. These items took most of the time in discussion: decisions, leadership changes and reports on how we are being addressed at the state and local level (politics).

One of the highlights of the convention was the Legislative Committee and WSSR-PAC reports. Besides having four legislators (one senator and three representatives) from east of the mountains, we had WSSRA Legislative Director Peter Diedrick and lobbyists Fred Yancey and Michael Moran. These people are representing us very well. We can help—by contacting our legislators and telling them what we value. The legislators need to hear your stories—this is key in helping make changes. The changes currently of focus are the COLA for Plan 1



TRS/PERS, maintenance of COLA for Plan 2 and 3, PEBB Medicare subsidy improvement, not limiting work hours for retirees without losing money, making Plan 2 the preferred plan option for new employees and keeping the retirement funds funded. Your input is always welcome.

Interesting note: When one of our lobbyists was asked how many of our 17,000 members are members of the WSSR-PAC, the answer was 250, but the commission only counts members who have given \$25 or more, so keep that in mind when you donate.

You were well represented by Sno-King School Retiree President James (Jim) Siscel, and members Barbara Berg, Aaron Feik, Tom and Roberta Hawkins, Donna Murrish, Evie Nordeen Virg Rayton and Rita Requa. It was good spending time with other colleagues, getting to know them better and seeing so many members helping other members

(continued on page 7)

Health news

Ticks: What to look for

by Donna Murrish

It was reported a couple of months ago that it looks like a big year for ticks in Eastern Washington. Ticks, however, don't have any boundary rules and it's wise to be wary when you're out and about. Ticks like to hang out in the woods, in grasses, sand dunes, low shrubs and low-hanging branches, where they can casually drop onto people and animals passing through.

The ticks in Eastern Washington aren't likely to cause Lyme disease, but health officials still urge caution to avoid other illnesses and complications associated with bites. East of the Cascades, though it's rare, ticks can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Species include the Rocky Mountain wood tick and the brown dog tick, which is found throughout the state.

The Western black-legged tick, or deer tick, is the one known to spread Lyme disease and is found on the west side of the state.

Be informed and be prepared

Be wary in all seasons, particularly from April to September.

In the nymph stage, a tick can be as small as a poppyseed. It can look like a piece of dirt or a small blood blister.

Cover your body as much as possible and wear



clothing that helps you see ticks more easily.

Use DEET. According to the Mayo Clinic, you should choose a repellent that has a DEET concentration of 20% or higher.

Keep a close eye out for rashes and bites.

If you find a tick

Check your body after being in tick territory. Remove any ticks you might find. Ideally, use a tweezer to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and gently pull it off. Be careful not to squeeze the tick.

It is recommended that you take a shower within two hours after being in wooded and grassy areas. Showers should rinse off any loose ticks.

What to look for if you are bitten

The first indication is often a bite mark which will become red, swollen and quite tender.

A reddish rash may appear with a red ring around the bite resembling a bull's eye.

Flu-like symptoms may develop, a mild fever, swollen lymph nodes, achy muscles and joints, lethargy and rapid heart rate. If not treated, Lyme disease can wreak havoc with the nervous system. Most people respond very well to treatment once the disease is diagnosed.

(continued from page 6)

in so many ways. Our new president for 2018-19 is Linda Averill from Unit 22, Sno-Isle; we are in good hands.

For the opening ceremonies the colors presented by Pack 32 Scouts of East Wenatchee, and we were welcomed by Wenatchee Mayor Frank Kuntz; Michelle Price, ESD 171 Superintendent; and Curt Horne, WSSRA President. I was impressed by Key-note Speaker Dana Anderson whose topic was Leading in a Challenging Time with three major themes.

The second day we had a special Celebration of Life, which is a remembrance of the 413 friends and colleagues who died this past year. This was the responsibility of our unit 23; everyone did a wonderful job, especially Evie Nordeen playing the piano.

By-laws revision work

by Jim Siscel

A Bylaws Revision Committee (Roberta Hawkins, Jan Phillips, Jim Siscel and Erma Snook), met to look at our Bylaws to make sure they were correct. They found a number of areas that needed to be either added, deleted or corrected. They did the same with the Appendix to the Bylaws and our Policies and Procedures documents. We need to vote on the Bylaws changes at our general meeting at the picnic. The other documents are accepted by the board at one of its meetings. The Bylaws to be approved can be found on our website at <http://www.sksr.org/by-lawspolicies.html>. Please take a look at what the committee did. If you have any questions, please contact one of the committee members.

Sno-King School Retirees
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Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline items for the next *Bulletin* is **August 13**.

Send news, pictures and other materials to Jo Caldwell: jo@wmea.org—425-218-8434.
Please send us news, pictures, etc., about other members as well as about your activities.

Please send changes in your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address to
Erma Snook, egsnook@comcast.net, or call 425-776-2067.

If you know of illness, please call Sunshine Chair Evie Nordeen, 425-775-1127.

To help with mailing our next *Bulletin* **September 4**, call Marilyn Dauer, 425-774-7445.