

# Sno-King School Retirees



January-February 2021

## The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

### What's happening...

by Virg Rayton, chair

Hopefully your holiday season has been enjoyable in spite of the abundance of draconian pandemic threats. Were you able to seek and find a source of joy and inspiration? Were you among those who shopped online or arranged pick-up or delivery orders to maintain a safe distance? TV shows sought to provide entertainment with many oddly emanating from studios devoid of a live audience. Even news and weather were broadcast in many cases from makeshift home studios. Someone asked, "When does Season Two of 2020 start? I didn't like Season One."

How our lives changed globally after the events of March. Many of the changes have affected the business and activities of SKSR/WSSRA.

### Community Service project

Sno-King School Retirees planned to repeat our popular January community-service project supporting Washington Kids in Transition. We couldn't congregate to bag nutritious snacks for hungry students for a number of reasons. In addition, Edmonds School District's adoption of a virtual-instruction model ended up surplus-ing the bus drivers who formerly dispensed the snack items. It was, therefore, necessary for families to apply for delivery of these food supplements by their social worker. When I last spoke with Program Director Kim Gorney, 87 families had made such a request. In view of these difficulties, the SKSR board opted to make a monetary donation of \$500 prior to the holiday season. Some board members were moved to add personal donations and contributed another \$500, making it possible for me to deliver \$1,000 to a very happy Kim

*(chair's message continued on page 7)*

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*Roberta Hawkins*, Vice President  
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*Robin Randles*, Health  
*Marlene Johnson*, Hospitality  
*Barb Bumgardner*, Sunshine  
*Karen McElliot*, Active Member Grants  
*vacant*, Legislative  
*Jim Sisco*, Membership/Retirement/Website  
*Erma Snook*, Membership Records  
*Jo Caldwell*, Bulletin Editor

Our next VIRTUAL event

## February 2021 program update

by Roberta Hawkins

### Do you know who Chief Seattle was?

Now is the time to mark your 2021 calendar. Our General Membership program occurs on Thursday, February 18, 2021, at 1:00 PM via Zoom. The topic *Who was Chief Seattle?* will be presented by David Buerge, and sponsored by SKSR and Humanities Washington. Registration will be required; see information below.

Chief Seattle was a warrior, an orator, a benefactor and a visionary who helped found the city that bears his name, Seattle, the largest city in the world named after a Native American. He wrote nothing down during his life, yet his words, both real and imagined, are known throughout the world. The result is a man made up of both historical and fictional aspects, from which conflicting messages can be gleaned.



David M. Buerge, a biographer and a historian to the Duwamish Tribe, explores this complex figure to uncover how one man's story still shapes the identity of the city.

A link to join the event via Zoom will be sent to registered participants a week before the event. If you don't see the email by an hour before the event, check your spam folder. You can access Zoom in your computer's browser or download the app for free on an Apple or Android device. You do not need to have your own Zoom account in order to participate.

We hope you will practice with your Zoom meeting skills between now and then so you can join us.

To register in advance for the **February 18, at 1:00**, webinar, click on the link below.

**[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_OVFuGEQN6meewmbgqfOg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OVFuGEQN6meewmbgqfOg)**

If you are reading this in the paper copy of the *Bulletin*, type this link into your browser and follow the directions provided.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

### Pre-Retirement Zoom Webinar

The usual in-person retirement seminars sponsored by the Edmonds School District will not be happening this year because of Covid-19. If this changes, we will notify our active educators via email. We are recommending the Pre-Retirement Zoom Webinar sponsored by the Washington State School Retirees' Association. This webinar will be held **Thursday, February 18, from 5:00-7:30pm**.

The webinar will feature presentations from the following agencies:

- WA State Dept of Retirement Systems: Plans 2 & 3
- WA State Health Care Authority, PEBB: Your medical/dental options
- Social Security and Medicare
- VEBA: Your sick-leave buyout options

To register email: [Tara@wssra](mailto:Tara@wssra)

An agenda with Zoom instructions will be sent out before the event.



Legislative news

## Legislative focus in 2021

by Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director

WSSRA's primary focus in this upcoming legislative session will be to protect and maintain current retiree benefits. The Covid-19 pandemic has created a severe budget crisis for the state of Washington. The pandemic has also led legislative leaders to put strict controls on the type of legislation that can be sponsored. WSSRA's political team is expecting the entire session to be focused on the state budget and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The top goal for 2021 is to maintain the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Subsidy. This benefit reduces the cost of Medicare supplemental insurance by 50%, up to \$183 per month. Eliminating this benefit would save the state approximately \$175 million per fiscal year. Retirees depend on this benefit to balance their budgets—we cannot let it get nipped.

WSSRA's political team is concerned about the state's contribution to the pension funds. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the state only made partial payments, leading to today's underfunded status in TRS 1 and PERS 1. Recent legislative leaders have done a good job of making the full-payment level recommended by the state actuary. Unfortunately, freshman legislators have discussed skipping this year's pension payment to balance the budget. WSSRA strongly opposes such proposals.

Regarding Covid-19, WSSRA is developing emergency legislation to reduce the retirement age

for school employees.

The proposed legislation would reduce the full retirement age to 60 for

employees with 30 years of service credit. For employees over age 60 with 20 to 30 years of service credit, it would reduce the early retirement penalty to 3% of the pension per year—the current penalty is over 8% per year. The legislation would only be in effect while the governor's emergency Covid-19 proclamations are active. This legislation is being signed by the prime sponsor and sent to the Code Reviser for pre-filing this week.

Additional health legislation being drafted by WSSRA would allow for a one-time, open enrollment period for retirees who opted out of PEBB insurance. The Washington State Healthcare Authority has developed two new, statewide retiree health plans, and the WSSRA legislative team feels it would be an appropriate time to allow retirees to re-enter PEBB. This legislation is in the drafting and sponsorship phase.

Work to pursue a Plan 1 COLA and other political goals is ongoing. Due to the budget crisis and rules on what type of legislation can be sponsored in this pandemic session, there is little optimism that non-healthcare related measures will pass.



### My self-isolation quarantine diary

Day 1-I can do this! Got enough food and wine to last a month.

Day 2-Opening my 8th bottle of wine! I fear wine supplies might not last.

Day 3-Strawberries: Some have 210 seeds, some have 235 seeds. Who knew?

Day 4-8:00PM: Removed my day pajamas and put on my night pagamas.

Day 5-Tried to make hand sanitizer. Came out like Jello shots!

Day 6-Get to take the garbage out. I'm so excited; I can't decide what to wear!

Day 7-Went to a restaurant called *The Kitchen*. You have to gather all your own ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place stays in business!

Day 8-I put a liquor bottle in every room. Tonight I'm getting all dressed up and going bar hopping.

Day 9-Struck up a conversation with a spider today. He's a web designer.

Day 10-Isolation is hard! I'd swear my fridge just asked, "What the heck do you want now?"

Day 11-I realize why dogs get so excited about something moving outside, going for walks, car rides. I think I just barked at a squirrel!

Day 12-If you keep a glass of wine in each hand, you cannot accidentally touch your face!

Day 13-Watched birds fight over a worm. The Cardinals lead the Blue Jays 3-1.

Day 14-Anybody else feel like they've cooked dinner about 395 times this month?

Grants update

## Grants awarded to active SKSR members

by Karen McElliott



Each fall, SKSR's active members are invited to apply for grants of up to \$250 to facilitate special projects which will enrich their students' educational experience (e.g., field trips, guest speakers, materials for integrated units of study) or to provide materials/equipment to augment their students' learning (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones). Since the program was started in 1998, over \$92,000 has been distributed. Because of the uncertainty about when schools would reopen, this year's applications needed to be for projects and activities that could be conducted remotely.

Because of COVID-19 constraints, we are unable to recognize these educating SKSR into their zoom meetings. Jim Siscel has volunteered to make all of these presentations.

SKSR is proud to recognize the efforts of our active colleagues by providing these additional resources. We are also pleased to be able to offer additional grants this winter. Please see the next page for details.

### Congratulations to the following recipients:

#### EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT

##### Cedar Way Elementary

**Kristi Pihl:** \$250 for leveled books (first grade).

##### Hilltop Elementary

**Matt Grover:** \$248 for 19 copies of "Brown Girl Dreaming" (fifth grade).

**Lisa Reid:** \$190 for decodable Flyleaf Publishing books for emergent readers.

##### Lynndale Elementary

**Kari Park:** \$234 for 18 books from the "Little People, Big Dreams" biography series (second grade).

**Stacey Sateren:** \$247 for art supplies, including watercolor paints, crayons, neon pencils and black lights for art/literature unit (second grade).

**Jill Walzer:** \$231 for books that reflect diversity (second grade).

##### Lynnwood Elementary

**Debra Comfort:** \$250 for Capstone leveled readers (D-I) and Step Into Reading sets (second grade).

#### NORTHSHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

##### Canyon Creek Elementary

**Joanne Burkett:** \$250 for historical fiction (third grade).

#### SHORELINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

##### Briarcrest Elementary

**Cindy Ebisu:** \$216 to buy jump ropes (third grade).

**Amy Pitts:** \$211 for subscriptions to Scholastic News and stress balls (second grade).

##### Echo Lake Elementary

**Kathryn Pihl:** \$250 to purchase leveled books (first grade).

##### Lake Forest Park Elementary

**Frank Kleyn:** \$238 to purchase 11 titles from "Blastoff Readers (Level 2): World of Insects" series to supplement second grade science curriculum.

##### Ridgecrest Elementary

**Joanna Freeman:** \$224 for 30 chapter books from Capstone Publishers (library).

##### Syre Elementary

**Maggie Dunleavy:** \$250 for subscriptions to Scholastic News and Scholastic Book Club prize books (fifth grade).

**Jenny Hodgen:** \$250 for subscriptions to Scholastic News and Scholastic Book Club prize books (fifth grade).

**Debbie Hubbell:** \$249 for subscriptions to Scholastic News and Scholastic Book Clubs prize books (fifth grade).

## Former SKSR scholarship winner becomes grant awardee

When Amy Pitts applied for a grant this fall, she commented that she had also received an SKSR scholarship when she graduated from high school 33 years ago.



Jim Siscel looked through SKSR records and found the scholarship fund was first mentioned in January 1984; that spring a luncheon was held to raise funds, and in June 1985 the first scholarship was awarded.

Amy recalled her experience saying, “After taking many years off to raise my sister and me, my mother became the Shorewood High School Career Center counselor for 11 years. I am sure she is the one who pointed out the SKSR scholarship to me when I was a senior at Shorewood in 1987. I received a \$500 scholarship and attended UW the following year. I majored in Sociology and obtained my teaching certificate in my fifth year at UW. I interned at North City Elementary and was hired at the end of that year at Echo Lake Elementary, the same school where my mom had started. I have been at Briarcrest for the last 27 years.

“I have a family filled with educators and always knew I wanted to be a teacher. My grandmother was a French teacher, and my grandfather taught PE and was head football coach at Roosevelt High School for many years. My mom got her teaching degree from the UW and was hired by Shoreline Schools at Echo Lake Elementary in 1963. She taught there for three years before having my sister.”

**WEAR YOUR MASK**  
**WASH YOUR HANDS**  
**WATCH YOUR DISTANCE**

Scholarship update

## Scholarships to future educators

by Linda Fitzgerald and Keith Lindaas



Scholarship application forms will be in the high schools by the second week in January. Eligible students are those graduating from one of the high schools in Edmonds, Northshore or Shoreline school districts who are planning a future as a teacher or other school-related employee. We will award four scholarships, each worth \$2,000, to students planning to obtain a degree in one of these fields. Applications may be obtained from the high school career center or the SKSR website ([www.sksr.org](http://www.sksr.org)) after the second week in January. The deadline for submission is March 11, 2021. We hope to honor our recipients at a Zoom meeting in April.

One of our late members, Winnie Smith, made a generous donation in her will for scholarships. We use this money to extend the original scholarships for three more years, providing the student is progressing in his or her academic program with the goal of being an educator.

## Second round of grants available for active members

After nine months of cancelled SKSR events—lunches, brunches, a picnic, a fieldtrip—SKSR is adding an event to the calendar. The Executive Board has decided to offer a second round of grants to our active members. All information and forms are posted at the SKSR website ([sksr.org](http://sksr.org)) in the Grants section.

Applications will be accepted beginning January 4, 2021. All applicants must be members in good standing of SKSR/WSSRA by Jan. 29, 2021.

The deadline for applying is Feb. 2, 2021. November 2020 grant recipients are not eligible.



## Health news

**Feeling dizzy? What to do?**by Robin Randles. *Health chair*Source: *Consumer Reports On Health*, December 2020

**F**eeling faint, light-headed or as if the room you're in is spinning? As many as 30% of adults older than 60 experience dizziness at some point, about 50% after age 85.

This unpleasant sensation only rarely signifies a serious medical condition, but it can knock you off balance, leading to falls and injuries.

**What causes it?**

One of the most common causes of dizziness and vertigo (specifically, a spinning sensation) in older adults is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), which may affect up to 10% of people by age 80, according to some estimates.

BPPV occurs when tiny crystals in the inner ear, which play a role in balance, become dislodged. BPPV is more likely as we get older because wear and tear can cause the crystals to shift out of place, according to Timothy Hain, MD, an otoneurologist at Chicago Dizziness and Hearing, a medical practice affiliated with Northwestern University.

The resulting dizziness is generally triggered by changes in head position. People with BPPV often complain the room spins when they roll over in bed, get into or out of bed, tip their head back, bend over or make other quick head movements. These episodes usually last only a minute or two, but they may happen intermittently over a period of time.

A drop in blood pressure may also cause dizziness, even fainting, especially when changing position from sitting or lying down to standing. This so-called postural hypotension is often the result of problems with blood-pressure medication, says Jacqueline Fincher, MD, president of the American College of Physicians. "It's not uncommon to experience a momentary sense of dizziness when you change position quickly or jump out of bed," she said. "But if this is something that occurs on a daily or regular basis, it's something that needs to be evaluated." Certain sedatives, antidepressants,

cough-and-cold medicines, and antibiotics can lead to dizziness too.

Dehydration may be another culprit in postural hypotension. "Staying hydrated is extremely important for balance, blood pressure and general well-being, but many older people just don't drink enough," Fincher said. Declines in hearing and vision may also change the way you perceive your body's positions in space, affecting balance.

**Dealing with dizziness**

If you feel even mildly dizzy, stop what you're doing and sit down or lie down immediately so that you don't fall. Check and record your pulse if you can, Fincher says this information can help your doctor rule out potential heart-related cause of dizziness, including arrhythmia.

Most bouts of dizziness don't last more than a few minutes.

But if it persists or worsens, or is accompanied by a severe headache or vomiting, changes in vision, difficulty speaking, numbness on one side of the body, or chest pain, call 911. These could be signs of a stroke or heart attack. Otherwise, when you feel it's safe, stand up or change positions slowly and then drink a glass of water.

Let your doctor know about the episode. BPPV can usually be treated with a gentle head-tilting exercise called the Epley maneuver, which guides the crystals back to where they belong. An otolaryngologist, otoneurologist, vestibular therapist or experienced primary-care provider can teach you how to do a version of the maneuver at home.

Also, call your primary-care provider if you experience dizziness after starting a new drug or changing the dose of drug you're already taking. This may signal postural hypotension. In that case, your doctor will probably take your blood pressure and pulse while you are lying down, sitting and standing to see whether it drops with changes in position. If necessary, he or she can suggest changes to your medications or give you a urine test to find



*(health continued on next page)*

*(chair's message continued from page 1)*

Gorney. Their new location is at 19721 Scriber Lake Road in Lynnwood. It's on the east side of Scriber Lake Road behind Jo-Ann Fabrics. Potential donors of warm clothing and non-perishable food items will find a tub outside the front door under a very visible sign. Contact Shoreline and Northshore school districts for information about their similar projects.

### Scholarships

As in the past, Linda Fitzgerald and Keith Lindaas are in the process of solicitation of scholarship applications from graduating seniors pursuing a degree in education.

### Grants

We also offer our active members the opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$250 every fall. Grants chair Karen McElliott announced that her committee is opening a second application period in January. Details for application are available on page 5 and on our website, [www.sksr.org](http://www.sksr.org).

### Legislative

January is also the time when Olympia becomes the center of the universe as the Legislature opens on Monday the 11th. We can expect that COVID-19 demands will be a significant concern. It will be a time when we retired educators will need to remain vigilant to protect our benefits from being eroded. WSSRA's legislative priorities for this session are:

1. Protect retiree medical benefits (\$183).
2. Make the actuarially recommended pension

payments to the pension fund.

3. Protect at-risk teachers from COVID-19.

4. Provide an open enrollment window for retirees locked out of PEBB.

If you aren't already on their email list, you can request to receive up-to-date legislative progress reports from our WSSRA lobbyists during the session. Submit your request to [www.wssra.org](http://www.wssra.org).

### Pre-retirement sessions

There will be no in-person pre-retirement sessions this year. Please look on page 2 of this *Bulletin* for information about the Zoom webinar that is being planned.

### Membership

While there have been many changes, our most recent membership report shows that our SKSR unit currently numbers 1,411, making ours the second largest in the state. Educators know how to be disciplined and lead the way...and besides we want you to stay healthy!

### Looking ahead

You've heard it before but it's worth repeating, even though a COVID-19 vaccine is on the horizon, we still need to wash our hands, wear a mask and maintain a safe distance.

P.S. I stayed up New Year's Eve. Not to see the new year in, but to make sure 2020 left! Here's to a promising 2021.

*(health continued from previous page)*

out whether you're dehydrated.

### Pointers on prevention

Take your medications only as directed and let your doctor know about new side effects. And make sure you get enough fluids. Fincher recommends putting a half-gallon pitcher of water in the refrigerator in the morning and making sure that it is 90% gone by the time you go to bed. Getting your hearing and vision checked regularly may also help reduce the likelihood of future bouts of dizziness.

## Member Information Updates

### New Members

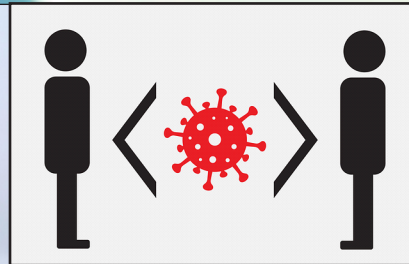
Elizabeth Blake  
Robert Boesche  
Rebecca Cavanaugh  
Myrleen Christensen  
Sue Gallo  
Diane Graham  
Paul Koehl  
Mary Loes  
Timothy Parnell  
Sharon Sanchez  
Faye Scannell  
Livia Ziebarth\*

\*= active member

### Deceased

**JoAnn Cordz**, Member since 1990  
**J. Scott Farquhar**, Shoreline retiree, member since 2006  
**Donna Fish**, member since 1999  
**Sandra Hertz**, Shoreline retiree, member since 1997  
**Allen Johnston**, Shoreline retiree, member since 2015  
**Helen MacGilvra**, Edmonds retiree, member since 2000  
**Roger Reinig**, member since 2009  
**Barbara Smith**, Edmonds

**PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF  
HELP IS COMING**



## Help us with the *Bulletin*

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

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

If you know of illness, please call Sunshine Chair Barb Bumgardner, 206-364-8413.

With the current conditions, there will be no group foldings and preparations for mailing of the *Bulletin*.

After we are back to "normal" we will resume that process.