

Sno-King School Retirees



March-April 2021

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening...

by Roberta Hawkins, chair

Spring is getting ready to arrive, and here we are still contemplating the changes that have occurred since the presidential inauguration.

“What shall we do today?” is a thought that often crosses our mind. Shall it be looking for another closet or cupboard to clean or shall it be checking on the

recent *SKSR Bulletin* to see what things have happened and what interesting and important events are occurring soon?

You will note throughout this *Bulletin*, that we are able to keep connected and remain supportive in several ways and, though our programs are changed or canceled, we do have some hope for holding our annual summer picnic event.

Perhaps the most important “issue” in the current *Bulletin* is the state legislative news and seeing what our legislative body is doing. All of the other items might seem equally important, but this one is perhaps more time-critical than the others.

We can always clean out the closet, but we cannot always send an email to or make direct communication with a legislator who could affect the outcome of legislative actions—actions that will affect our lives for some time to come. You may be thinking, “In order to write to my legislator, I need to know what they have done or might do or want to do.”

But what if you had some talking points sent your way? That information, coupled with your life knowledge and the examples you could provide regarding how what is being proposed would impact you personally, is already something you do know. It is also **something that the legislators need to know**. This kind of input and

(chair's message continued on page 5)

OFFICERS

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

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Barbara Berg, Scrapbook
Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas, Scholarships
Robin Randles, Health
Marlene Johnson, Hospitality
Barb Bumgardner, Sunshine
Karen McElliott, Active Member Grants
vacant, Legislative
Jim Siscel, Membership/Retirement/Website
Erma Snook, Membership Records
Jo Caldwell, Bulletin Editor

Our next VIRTUAL event
Scholarship Zoom meeting - April 15, at 1:00

by Linda Fitzgerald

One of the highlights of the year for us is honoring the new scholarship awardees of our \$2,000 SKSR scholarships. We usually have a chance to meet them in person at our annual scholarship luncheon where we hear a personal message from them. We also hear updates on our Winnie Smith Scholarship awardees who are in the second, third or fourth year of their educational program and who have received an additional \$2,000 scholarship. Unfortunately, this year we will not be able to meet in person, so this event will be via Zoom. I know many of you have been doing Zoom meetings with friends and families for the past year so this is a good substitute for an in-person meeting.

Our speaker will be Scriber Lake High School teacher Marjie Bowker, who will be talking about her trip with students from across the state to meet with the Dalai Lama. The Washington state delegation visited Dharamshala, India, in November 2019 to meet His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. The delegation was led by Washington Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib with the purpose to cultivate compas-

sion in the next decade through a program called “Compassion 2020.” Marjie will tell us about this trip and the “Compassion 2020” program.



Speaker Marjie Bowker

We will also introduce the awardees of the 2021 SKSR Scholarships. These seniors from the high schools in our districts are all planning careers in a school setting. Some of our applicants are planning on teaching, while others are looking for a career as a counselor, nurse, psychologist, or physical or speech therapist. We’ll also learn about how our Winnie Smith Scholarship awardees are doing in this remote learning time.

Please RSVP to Linda Fitzgerald, fitzdl@aol.com, if you are planning to attend. The week of the meeting we will email you a reminder of the Zoom log-in information, and the link will be listed.

To log into the Zoom meeting on **April 15, at 1:00**, click on the following link if you are reading the online version of the *Bulletin*, or type it into your web browser if you are reading from the print version.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88014623322?pwd=UTJsVFhVY3ZBOFJzL2ZsWUFJaFdiUT09>

You will be muted on entry. Please have your screen set up to show the *Speaker* as the main screen. There is a *View* button in the upper right corner of your screen where this can be selected.



Notice to member\$ regarding the budget

Earlier in the year, the SKSR Board agreed to continue functioning based on September approval of the Proposed SKSR Budget for 2020-2021 until we had an opportunity to hold a regular general membership meeting. That hope for a meeting has been lost in the ongoing pandemic issues and the delays in delivery, distribution and use of the Covid-19 vaccines. Doing a paper vote is more costly, and doing a vote via Zoom lacks the appropriate privacy required for such voting. Therefore, due to the ensuing circumstances preventing a general membership meeting of SKSR members, during our

recent Zoom board meeting, the SKSR Board moved and passed a motion to continue operating on the board-approved Proposed Budget for the remainder of this fiscal year.

We continue to have a solidly balanced and fiscally sound budget. We hope you, the membership, support our recent actions. If you have any questions regarding the budget, or would like to review a copy of the recent balanced monthly budget, please feel free to contact our treasurer Tom Hawkins at hamhawk@aol.com.



Legislative news

In touch with our legislators

by Tim Knopf, NW-1 Legislative chair

The 2021 Washington State Legislative Session began January 11th and should end on April 25, 2021—its 105th day. Due to Covid precautions, except for meeting in person just once to approve holding their session virtually, all the business of the Legislature is being done remotely this year through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

State money will be tight

The Covid-19 pandemic shocked Washington state's economy—closing schools, businesses and restaurants everywhere, some, sadly, forever. The state quickly slid from an economic boom into a sudden and vicious recession. Today state funds are very limited and on top of homelessness, paying for schools and every other normal issue, we are still fighting a deadly pandemic.

State money will be tight during this session. Instead of pushing for a further Plan 1 COLA, WSSRA will do its best to protect and hang on to what we have, like the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit. Through the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) and the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit, the state supplements the cost of retirees' health insurance by paying up to \$183 per person towards their premiums. All retirees (in PEBB) 65 years and up rely on that benefit.

Last fall some legislators discussed skipping this year's contribution to the pension fund to save money. We strongly oppose that dangerous idea. Skipped pension payments incur an annual interest penalty of 7.5% for future legislatures and are the reason that Plan 1 is underfunded today.

WSSRA supports two new bills

We actively support two new bills this session. Both currently wait in the House Appropriations Committee for hearings and a chance to move for-

ward. The first is House Bill 1032. During the current Covid-19 crisis, it would allow Plan 2 or Plan 3 members with 30 or more years of service to retire with no retirement income penalty beginning at age 60. This bill would sunset with the end of the governor's pandemic orders. The second bill, House Bill 1040, would permit up to 25% of retirees who didn't originally choose PEBB for their healthcare upon retirement to re-enter PEBB now that newer, more affordable insurance options are available.

You can help

by joining a meeting/sending a message

The WSSRA Legislative team representing NW-1 is made up of Barbara Robinson, Diane Visten, Rocco Gianni and Tim Knopf. They are now holding their first virtual meetings with legislators. These four are responsible for sharing the WSSRA priorities with the 45 legislators from the southern Snohomish County line to the Canadian border.

Now that everything is virtual, it is much easier to bring a constituent to a meeting. If you, as a constituent, would like to help by sitting in on a virtual meeting with one of your legislators, it would be a great help and is really interesting. Please contact Tim Knopf at timknopf1@yahoo.com or 425-327-5352 to volunteer to sit in.

This year we have formed a team of "Legislative Buddies" who write emails to one or more of their legislators each week to maintain contact and remind them of our issues. WSSRA Legislative Director Peter Diedrick provides a template to follow and personalize each week. If you would like to serve as a "Legislative Buddy," please contact Tim Knopf at timknopf1@yahoo.com or 425-327-5352.



Dr. Fauci says
EVEN AFTER YOU'RE VACCINATED...

WEAR YOUR MASK

WASH YOUR HANDS

WATCH YOUR DISTANCE

Grants update

Second round of grants awarded

by Karen McElliott



In the last issue of the *Bulletin*, the Board announced that it would offer a second round of active educator grants during January. The Grants Committee read the submitted applications in February. Congratulations to the following grant recipients.

EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Cedar Way Elementary

Michelle McShane: a grant to purchase Candy Land and Chutes and Ladders board games and decks of playing cards to facilitate play to learn objectives and reinforce math and reading skills. (Kindergarten)

Meadowdale Middle School

Birgit Albiker-Osterhaug: a grant to purchase 35 copies of *Ghost Boys* to use with ELL students.

SHORELINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Echo Lake Elementary

Jean Bolivar: a grant for a selection of non-fiction books for intermediate students needing accessible texts.

Allan M. Rand: a grant to purchase selected titles from the *I Survived*, the *Who Was/Where Is*, and the *Track* series for his fifth grade's genre studies.

Lake Forest Park Elementary

Kimberly Clasen: A grant to help pay for Rich Hartman's on-line STEM instruction on motion and design and the necessary fifth grade student materials.

Riley Kreutzer: A grant to help pay for Rich Hartman's online STEM instruction on motion and design and the necessary fifth grade student materials.

Tami Thompson: A grant to help pay for Rich Hartman's online STEM instruction on motion and design and the necessary fifth grade student materials.

Syre Elementary

Jennifer Altena: a grant for the school library to purchase fiction books that reflect the diversity of the students and their backgrounds.

If you used one of these:



Stay at home! You are in the high risk group.

Member Information Updates

Deceased

Phyllis Enger, Dec 2020,
Edmonds Member since 1990,
President 1994-1995
Donna Fish, Nov 2020,
Edmonds, Member since 1999
*Deborah Montague, Dec 2020,
Northshore Member since 1998
John Samples, Dec 2020,
Edmonds, Member since 1997
Zada Stein, Dec 2020,
Member since 1997
Barbara Whitson, Feb 2021,
Edmonds/Shoreline, Member since 2011

New Members

Cline, Cheri
Cooper, Thomas
Danker, Janet

Davis, Dottie
Lyle, Jean

*= active member

Urgent message for Plan 3 members, active and retired, re: retirement funds

by Jim Siscel

I'd like to share some information about changes that have occurred with the new record-keeper company, VOYA. I've learned these things from some of my own recent experiences and information from a VOYA representative.

In order to access your account, use either browsers Google Chrome or Internet Explore; Safari and Firefox will not work.

When you want to print your statements, be sure to allow pop-ups in the upper left on

Google Chrome or they will not display. As a MAC user, I do not know specifics about Internet Explorer or Edge, so please check them out to be sure they work correctly.

In addition, I found that my selected beneficiary did not carry over to VOYA's records. A VOYA representative told me that they would use the beneficiary listed at DRS; therefore, I would suggest that you contact DRS to be sure they have your correct beneficiary on record.

Due to pandemic, March field trip canceled

by Karen McElliott

Sadly, the pandemic has forced the SKSR Board to cancel another event. Although the state is easing Covid-19 restrictions and vaccinations have started, a field trip is still impossible.

We hope that circumstances will continue to improve as more people receive their shots and allow us to offer an outing in March 2022.

(chair's message continued from page 1)

doesn't require travel. Emails or participation in a Zoom meeting with a legislator are two ways that you can share this specific, "personal" information with members of our state's political bodies. Look for opportunities to do this. Legislative information is available on our SKSR website: <http://www.sksr.org/legislation.html>.

During his inaugural address, President Biden said we have to help each other, to reach out and talk to each other. Well, you have a chance to do just that by contacting your legislative representatives. This will help shape the future for all of us.

Speaking of taking action... have you been able to get your Covid-19 vaccine shot yet? Most of us can easily say we are eligible. I know it's been difficult to find a location for an appoint-

ment. Maybe today is the day to make another call or to go online to schedule your shot. Here is a link to the DOH website. (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Imunization/VaccineLocations>). The sooner more of us get vaccinated, the sooner we can help slow the impact of the virus. We know from the statistics reported that this year more people got their flu shots. The result is that this year has had a very low number of flu cases. Hmm! Guess that means vaccinations and wearing masks and keeping socially distant must work.

SKSR and our local region units sent a resolution to WSSRA to lobby for legislation to move ALL educators further up in the line for getting the Covid-19 vaccine. That would allow for schools to open safely and sooner. Since there is already a teacher

shortage in the United States, we definitely don't want to lose any more by exposure to Covid-19 when they return to school. WEA has made the same proposal. This issue is another "talking point" for the communications you have with those in political positions.

What we do each day can have a bigger impact than we may first think. Yes, whether we have a latte or not doesn't seem like much, but does it help a local business stay afloat? Does getting a Covid shot help only ourselves or also all those around us? Does making contact with our political representatives affect only our individual circumstance or all those who are like us in needing health coverage or a pension increase?

Next time you wonder, "What should I do today?" consider all the folks you could help with the decision you make.

Health news

Benefits of breathing exercises

by Robin Randles. Health chair

Source: *Consumer Reports On Health*, November 2020

Breathing deeply can improve blood pressure, reduce stress and help with chronic conditions.

Usually, taking a breath isn't something you stop and think about. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's easy to wonder whether a momentary shortness of breath could be a sign of illness. Those with conditions such as anxiety, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) often have to focus on their breathing as well.

People with lung disorders should perform breathing exercises regularly, according to the American Lung Association (ALA). And while we're still learning about the long-term effects of COVID-19, people dealing with its aftereffects may need rehabilitation programs to help them breathe better, says David Manino, MD, director of Pulmonary Epidemiology Research Laboratory at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

So what about the rest of us? As automatic as breathing generally is, many people with healthy lungs could benefit from paying more attention to it, says Payel Gupta, MD, an asthma and allergy specialist in New York City and spokesperson for the ALA. When we breathe, we bring in oxygen and expel carbon dioxide. Various forms of deep breathing have been linked to cardiovascular benefits, including increased blood flow and improved blood pressure. Taking deep breaths can also manage stress and improve cognitive function.

While there has been little study on how helpful formal breathing exercises are for healthy people, they can certainly "remind us that it's important to breathe and to be mindful of how you're breathing," Gupta said. "I think anyone can benefit."

Three breathing exercises

If you want to give breathing exercises a try, whether it's to reduce shortness of breath associated with a condition such as asthma or to simply alleviate some stress and anxiety, here are several recommended by the ALA. Practice these for 5 to 10 minutes a day, or as needed. "When you're not feeling well,

you can also use them to open up the airways more," Gupta adds.

Pursed-lip breathing

Breathe in through your nose, then exhale for at least twice as long through pursed lips, as if you were flickering the flame of a candle. This helps slow down your breathing. It can also help get additional air out of your lungs, which can build up in people

with lung diseases such as emphysema and COPD. This can help you manage a feeling of breathlessness and make physical activity easier, according to Grace Anne Dorney-Koppel, president of the Dorney-Koppel Foundation, which has co-founded 12 pulmonary rehabilitation clinics.

Diaphragmatic (belly) breathing

People who take short, shallow breaths might not make full use of this important muscle. To retrain yourself to use your diaphragm more regularly, place a hand on your stomach so that you can feel it rise and fall. Breathe in

through your nose then out through your mouth for two to three times as long. This can help maximize the lung function you have.

Box breathing

When you need to relax or de-stress, try breathing in for a count of four, holding your breath for a count of four, exhaling for a count of four, and holding your breath again for another four count. Repeat this four-sided breathing method until you're feeling calm.

Help for ongoing problems

If you regularly have trouble catching your breath, a doctor can help determine whether it's related to a disorder such as COPD or asthma, says Dorney-Koppel, who herself received a COPD diagnosis in 2001. If you're told you have a lung problem, a treatment may involve medication and pulmonary rehabilitation - personalized therapy that includes workouts, breathing exercises, and education on medication use. "People don't regain lung function that they've lost to disease," Manino says, "but you can maximize what you have."



From WSSRA

NW-1 Coordinating Council report

by Roberta Hawkins



It was a dark and rainy morning. Five SKSR members gathered in front of their computers and attended the NW-1 Regional meeting. Following the usual opening, Rita Requa, Jan Phillips, Tom Hawkins, Roberta Hawkins and Jim Siscel, who was also the NW-1 meeting chair, settled in to the business of the day.

WSSRA Legislative Director Peter Deidrick listed the primary objectives and goals of WSSRA during this legislative session. We are aware that the state needs to tighten its belt and is looking to make cuts during this session. However, WSSRA is going to press the need to protect the current \$183 health subsidy; to continue to make actuarially recommended pension payment to the pension funds; to reduce early retirement penalties during the current Covid-19 pandemic; to provide an open enrollment window for retirees locked out of PEBB Health Plan Access.

WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke reaffirmed the importance of preserving the benefits and providing support for the early retirement options being included.

NWCC 1 representative Kay Bishop spoke about the scholarships offered and the need for information to be reinforced with the districts so that students will apply. There is also a need for an additional person to read those application packets once they come in in March.

The need for a few more members willing to fill the remaining positions for regional and state committee positions was emphasized; a few additional

responses were elicited. But the primary concern was legislative. We need members to contact their respective legislators.

There is also an opportunity to sit in on some Zoom meetings with the legislators since we can't meet in person. It would be an opportunity to participate in ways we have not done in the past. The state would set up the Zoom meeting, publish the dates, and invite our members to listen in and participate.

Each of the regional membership units presented a picture of how their respective units are functioning during this pandemic time. For all, meetings are conducted remotely, and the usual activities and events are canceled or a substitute remote option is offered. Grants have been awarded to educators to support their remote teaching; donations were made to support local food banks and family support organizations.

Planning for the WSSRA convention was mentioned with focus on the potential for a live convention in either June or later in the fall. A decision will be made in February regarding the feasibility of this event.

We discussed the need for all educators to get the Covid vaccine before fully opening schools. This idea, supported heartily by the attendees, led to the formation of a subgroup who polished a resolution supporting this position which was passed by the group—Subject: School Employee Covid-19 Vaccination.

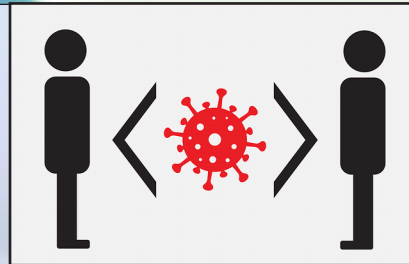
Notification of 2021 WSSRA Convention change

The WSSRA Executive Board voted to change the dates of 2021 annual convention. The NEW dates are from October 3-6, 2021, at the Pasco Red Lion.

The board made the change hoping that by October, vaccine availability will be much improved and accomplished for most members, and our COVID worries will be behind us. However, the board will review this status mid-summer, making a final "go"/"no-go" decision. If the decision at that time is "no-go," a virtual convention will be scheduled.

For now, please hold October 3-6 on your calendar.

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



Help us with the *Bulletin*

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

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 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.