

# Sno-King School Retirees



May-June 2022

## The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

### What's happening

by Karen McElliott, chair

Our journey to hire a clerical assistant continues to progress. (To review our past work, see the board messages in the July-August 2021 and March-April 2022 issues.) In the last month we took the list of clerical tasks that we had compiled in February and reformatted it so that it was organized by month so we

could better gauge the clerical need each month. Jan Phillips used that document to create a list of overarching descriptors of these tasks as a first step toward creating a job description. We sent both documents to Alan Burke, WSSRA executive director, and he used them to flesh out a more-complete job description.

At our April board meeting, Alan joined us by Zoom, talked us through our next steps and offered us assistance at various points along the way. He recommended that we purchase a p.c. for the position. We discussed the interview process, and the need for reference and background checks. He talked to us about creating a contract. We considered whether we needed to include a vaccination requirement. By the time we had finished, our heads were spinning with everything that needs to be done.

As a result of our discussion, we have divided our work into three working groups. Treasurer Tom Hawkins and Jim Siscel will work on finance issues; Rita Requa will begin work on the interview process; Jan Phillips and I will work on a job announcement that will incorporate Alan's draft, job timelines and a statement that this is a contractor position.

The Board greatly appreciates Alan's assistance and remains hopeful that SKSR will have hired someone by September.

#### OFFICERS

*vacant*, President  
*vacant*, Vice President  
*Jan Phillips*, Secretary  
*Tom Hawkins*, Treasurer

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*Barbara Berg*, Scrapbook  
*Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas*, Scholarships  
*Robin Randles*, Health  
*Virg Rayton*, Community Service  
*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 event

## SKSR/Sno-Isle Joint Luncheon to be in person

by Jim Siscel



**Tuesday, May 17.** Doors open at 10:30 for coffee and socializing. Lunch will be served at 11:15, with program starting during dessert.

**Speaker Linda Allen** will present “Here’s to Women!” commemorating the battle for the 19th Amendment. The silencing of women’s experiences and the empowering of women’s voices as they struggled for the vote are at the heart of this presentation featuring, songs, images, stories and readings.

Dr. Allen is a songwriter, performer and educator who has been a voice for women since the late 1960s through songs, concerts and workshops. She has done research and presentations for the Washington Women’s Heritage Project, the Women’s History Consortium, the Humanities Commission, the Washington Centennial Commission and multiple museums, schools, libraries and other venues.

**Lunch is provided for \$5**, payable at the door. The menu includes a spring salad with vinaigrette dressing, Parmesan risotto, chicken breast and strawberry slab pie.

The caterer needs a count for the number of servings to prepare. **Please contact, Evie Nordeen, 425-775-1127, evie.nordeen@gmail.com no later than Wednesday, May 11, if you plan to attend.**

**Site:** Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 215 Mukilteo Blvd, Everett, WA 98203

*From I-5, take exit #192 and follow signs to go West on 41st Street. After winding through Forest Park, 41st Street becomes Mukilteo Blvd. At the stop light, turn right onto Olympic Blvd., and then take an immediate right into the driveway.*

## Cost-of-Living Calculator and Your Plan-1 COLA

by Bruce Boyer, WSSRA President

We all know that the cost of living has increased since our retirement. Ever wonder how much is needed to buy today what you could when you retired? One of our members used the CPI Inflation Calculator to determine his loss of purchasing power. Compared to when he retired, it would now take \$153 to purchase what he did back in 2003 for \$100. If you would like to determine your loss of earning power since retirement, you can use the following government website: [www.bls.gov/data/inflation-calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation-calculator.htm).

### What’s happening next?

The State Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) will be meeting for the next few months to make recommendations to the State Legislature about possible changes/improvements to the DRS retirement plans.

When they recommended to the legislature this last session that TRS and PERS Plan 1 members be given a 3% COLA, that is what the legislators agreed to. The recommendations from this committee are usually the fall-back position when COLAs are discussed during a legislative

session. In the spring of last year, everyone thought that a 3% COLA would be a “fair” number. As it turned out, inflation began in earnest after that and shook the boat.

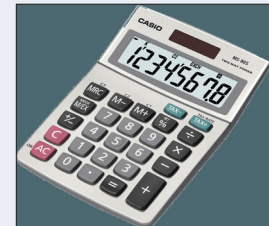
This year, we will not ask for a specific number for a COLA, but will ask them to tie it directly to the consumer price index for the Seattle metropolitan area.

### What you can do?

Contact the [state.actuary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:state.actuary@leg.wa.gov) or the leaders of the SCPP, Chair Representative Drew. [Stokesbary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Stokesbary@leg.wa.gov) and Vice-Chair Senator Steve. [Conwa@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Conwa@leg.wa.gov).

Let them know how a lack of a COLA has affected you and your family. Property taxes, medical, food and other costs have gone up considerably. Maybe you had an unexpected repair (roof, water damage, etc.) or needed to replace a major item at your house.

Give them your story; that is one way that you can help us make a difference as we work to get a needed COLA.



Legislative update

## A final report from the 2022 Legislative Session

by Tim Knopf



The 60-day 2022 Washington State Legislative Session ended Thursday, March 10th. The Washington State Schools Retirees' Association had four goals to achieve in this session:

1. Amend upwards and pass the 3% Plan 1 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) already recommended by the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP).
2. Protect retiree healthcare benefits.
3. Equalize Plans 2/3 retiree health insurance.
4. Stabilize the K-12 workforce by allowing more retirees to substitute up to 1040 hours per year.

Both before and during this session, WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke, Legislative Director Peter Diedrick, contract lobbyists Fred Yancey and Michael Moran and WSSRA President Bruce Boyer labored tirelessly to persuade legislators to pass the legislation that would advance WSSRA's four goals. Working with them were two dozen volunteer Legislative Committee members and countless more individual members dedicated to improving life for Washington school retirees.

Our NW-1 Coordinating Council legislative team consisted of Diane Visten, Rocco Gianni and Tim Knopf. Aided by a number of intrepid individual member volunteers, they held 30 virtual meetings (via Zoom) with legislators from the nine legislative districts in the NW-1 region.

### What did we accomplish?

1. Yes, the Legislature did pass Senate Bill 5676 to grant a COLA to PERS 1 and TRS 1 members. Starting this July, Plan 1 members will see a one-time 3% increase of their retirement income that will apply to the first \$44,000 of their income. "One-time" doesn't mean that it will go away next year, it will remain every year from now on but it won't climb another 3% in following years the way that Plan 2 and Plan 3 retirees' COLAs do.

This was not the annual COLA that Plan 1 members desperately need. For these retirees who have already lost between 20% and 42% of their retirements' value to inflation, getting just 3% is a bitter pill, especially with this year's inflation of over 7.6%.

While all three plans—1, 2 and 3—will receive a 3% COLA this year, due to the current inflation rate, all three plans will also lose over 4% to inflation. However, Plans 2 and 3 have annual COLAs with a "banking" feature to maintain their 3% increase in future years, even when inflation drops below 3%, until the difference is made up. Plan 1 members, already 20% to 42% behind, have no such benefit, and the Legislature remains unwilling to grant it.

2. Yes, we did protect retiree healthcare benefits. Medicare-eligible retirees who are members of the Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) receive \$183 per month toward their medical expenses. Because this benefit is provided solely at the discretion of the legislature, in any session it could be reduced or eliminated.
3. Yes, we were able to stabilize the K-12 workforce by allowing more retirees to substitute up to 1040 hours per year (House Bill 1699). We thought that this bill had died after failing to make a crucial deadline, but on the session's last day, rules were suspended, and it was brought back for a final vote in both houses. It will remain in effect through 2025.
4. No, we were not able to equalize Plans 2/3 retiree health insurance. The bill to accomplish this, House Bill 1911, died mid-session because it couldn't get a House Floor vote before a crucial deadline. We will pursue this measure through the SCPP before next session.

### What's ahead for the future?

The legislators have made clear that they won't support an annual Plan 1 COLA until the Plan 1 unfunded liability is paid off. Sadly, that pushes an annual Plan 1 COLA out to 2026.

The WSSRA Legislative Committee met on April 4th to decide how to pursue a Plan 1 COLA in the 2023 session. They chose to recommend to the WEA Board that we seek support from the state's Select Committee on Pension Policy for a COLA to match the most current CPI percentage as calculated by the Department of Retirement Systems.

*(continued on page 5)*

## Scholarship update

**2022 SKSR Scholarship winners**

by Linda Fitzgerald, Scholarship co-chair

Our Sno-King School Retirees Unit awards four new scholarships each year to seniors from our member districts of Edmonds, Northshore, and Shoreline. We accept applications from any senior graduating from a public high school in any of those three districts and we award a \$2000 scholarship to four students who are planning a career in education. This year we had exceptionally fine applications for our scholarship committee to read.

**Claire Beaumont**

is graduating from Shorecrest High School and will begin her college career at the University of Portland where she will study to teach either English or history in high school. Claire sees

herself as a helper in her classrooms, her school and her community. She will bring this skill to the classroom where she will help students feel safe to learn and make mistakes. She is the editor of the school's literary arts magazine, a leader in Link Crew and an Ambassador. Her teachers appreciate her dedication and effort in the classroom and her ability to connect with other students who need help. Claire has maintained an almost perfect grade-point average while working part-time and volunteering with several non-profit organizations.

**Kisanet Gabreselassie**

attended Meadowdale High School, but she has spent most of the two years in Edmonds School District at Edmonds College through Running Start. Her goal is to become a high school English teacher where she will

embrace the differences of all students and enable all students to succeed. Kisanet has been a part of the Edmonds' Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee, the Initiative for Diversity, Equity, Antiracism and Leadership (IDEAL) Fellowship, Young Executives of Color, and the Black Student Union. She tutors elementary and middle-school Eritrean children in a program that she founded; she also volunteered at Northgate Elementary and was program co-coordinator for a summer church camp. Kisanet will continue her college education at Swarthmore College.

*(Scholarship winners continued on next page)*

**Member Information Updates****New Members**

Faye Rasmussen\*      Susana Reyes\*  
\* = active

**Deceased**

**Donna Hoggins** – 2/2022,  
Retired from Edmonds, Member since 2012

**Mary Koon** – 2/2022,  
Member since 1998

**Joan Wronski-Molvik** – 2/2022,  
Retired from Shoreline, Member since 1991

**SKSR Grant update**

The Grant Committee is pleased to announce that it has awarded **Christina Torres**, librarian at Brookside Elementary, a \$296 active-member grant for the school library.

She is using the money to buy books in Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Braille. The foreign-language texts allow students to have reading opportunities with family members who may not be fluent in English. The Braille texts will dramatically increase the number of books available to Brookside's visually impaired students.

Christina submitted her application in a second round of grant application open only to active members who joined after Nov. 4, 2021.

*(Scholarship winners continued from previous page)*



**Ella Stroup** from Bothell High School will be attending Chapman University for the next stop on her educational journey. She has spent time working with special education students through her Helping Hands club

in school and the Special Olympics. She has been involved in peer coaching with the Special Education Department since her sophomore year. Her experience with children extends to her employment at a daycare and preschool. One of Ella’s teachers reports that the students “comment on her sense of humor, gentle rapport, and structured delivery of instruction/support.” Ella has also been a member and captain of her school’s soccer team and a club soccer team. Her goal after graduation is to be a special needs preschool teacher.



**Maggie Way** from Woodinville High School will be headed to the University of Washington. After earning a degree in Early Childhood and Family Studies, she plans to focus on becoming an elementary teacher. North-

shore School District has a class called “Careers in Education” that Maggie has been enrolled in for two years. This class along with her internship at her home elementary school for three years have solidified her decision to become a teacher. While doing this internship, Maggie has tutored children for free and she states that she “will continue to fight for equal access to education for all children.” In addition to having perfect grades, Maggie has a job, is Public Relations Director for FBLA and has helped connect her local YMCA teen-leadership board with the local Rotary.

NW-1

**March 7 meeting**

*by Jim Siscel*



The four units of NW-1 met via Zoom on March 7. WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke commended Tim Knopf for his diligent work with the Legislative Committee and meeting with legislators. Dr. Burke reported the following:

- The 2022 WSSRA Convention will be September 12-14 in Grand Mound at Great Wolf Lodge.
- WSSRA membership is down 500 from last year due to COVID.
- WSSRA has new scholarships available.

Reports were given from our NW-1 District Representative Kay Bishop and WSSR Foundation Vice President Marianne Harvey. WSSRA committees haven’t been meeting because of COVID.

Unit reports were brief, with most having board- and general-meetings via Zoom.

*(Legislative report continued from page 3)*

You may request that the SCPP endorse that concept by writing to [state.actuary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:state.actuary@leg.wa.gov). Their first meeting of the interim (between sessions) will be April 19th.

Now that the session is over, we owe our legislators a debt of thanks. Theirs is no easy job. The campaign season has begun and the legislators who supported the issues important to us look to us for our support.

One way to show support for legislative allies is to volunteer in or contribute to their election campaigns. Another way is to contribute to our WSSR-PAC by sending a check today care of Lora Brabant, WSSR-PAC Treasurer, 125 W 11th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362. The PAC must report your name, full address and the dollar amount. You can also learn how to contribute monthly at <https://www.wssr-pac.org>. The money that WSSR-PAC raises will go out to candidates endorsed by WSSRA after the August 2nd primary.

SKSR grants update

## Grants in action

by Karen McElliott, Grants chair

**S**SKSR distributed \$6,688 in grants this school year. Despite some supply-chain issues, recipients are slowly receiving their purchases and continue to report their appreciation of SKSR's support. The following are updates:

**Clarence Korf** (Librarian at Lynndale)

"I was able to purchase 36 books (see picture) from a company in England which specializes in books which have high interest and are super readable. The books have a dyslexia-friendly font, layouts and spacing to avoid overcrowding and off-white paper to reduce visual stress.

I am excited to share them with my students but have been challenged in getting them processed for library checkout with our Covid restrictions. I will be processing them shortly and will have them available for students after spring break.

I am very grateful to SKSR for helping fund this project for our school. Thank you for checking in and supporting our students and staff."



Some of the accessible and dyslexic friendly books that Korf has purchased, targeting students struggling with literacy acquisition.

**Erin Zackey** (K-6 science/art/writing teacher at Edmonds Heights K-12)

"Here is a photo of my super cool art of soil watercolor purchase. These are watercolor paints made from soil! Can't wait to have the students give them a try." Recently she added, "These supplies are for many projects and will last for years to come!"

Zackey also used her grant to purchase other art supplies, such as watercolor paper, modeling clay, other watercolors and chalk pastels.



Paint made from soil samples is one of the art materials Zackey will use in her Art of Science course.



For more color photos of the artwork created by Zackey's students, go to our website ([sksr.org](http://sksr.org)) and click on Grants and then 2021-2022 Grant Recipients. There you will find more photos of this year's grants, as well as a list of all recipients.

## Health news

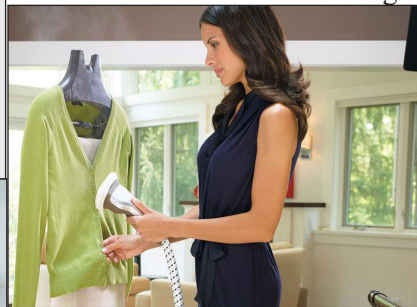
**Making your daily tasks easier**

by Robin Randles, Health chair

**A**s we age, simple tasks can become more frustrating due to decreased mobility or arthritis. There are many, less painful ways to go about our daily routine. Some require planning and creativity, and some require “gadgets” to simplify our lives.

Here is a list of ideas that can help reduce stress in your daily life and on your joints.

1. Turn your prescription medication caps upside down. If young children are not present in your home, you can use this trick to make the prescription container cap an easy twist-off: remove the cap and flip it over. Or ask your pharmacist to use non-childproof caps on your prescriptions.
2. Put on ordinary household rubber gloves for a quick, easy way to remove a very tight lid. With a smaller cap, such as a soda bottle, use pliers. Another idea is to use a round, non-slip rubber-jar opener, also called a gripper-pad lid opener.
3. Use pump containers instead of squeeze bottles.
4. Use extended-handled tools to help pick things up off the floor or reach objects on shelves.
5. Use foam pipe insulation (or tape or cloth) to wrap around handles to make tools with bigger and wider handles that are easier to grip.
6. Use shoe and sock aids, like long-handled shoehorns, that require you to bend less when putting on your shoes and socks.
7. Sit while you dress. If one arm or leg is more painful, slip it into the clothing first. When undressing, remove the stronger arm or leg first.
8. Buy lightweight appliances, like mops and vacuums.



9. Line baking sheets and pans with foil for easier cleanup.
10. Reduce cleanup with prepackaged, microwave-steamer bags for vegetables.
11. Rushing can create stress. Reduce morning pressures by preparing breakfast foods, clothing and other items at night.
12. Have each family member use a mesh lingerie bag for dirty socks to cut sock-matching time.
13. Use a garment steamer, instead of ironing, to get rid of wrinkles.
14. Use voice-recording software on your phones, tablets and computers to give your fingers a rest from typing. (Some typing is required to fix the typos!)
15. Get in and out of your car more easily with a swivel maneuver.

With your back to the car, sit and then swing your legs forward. Reverse the process to get out.

16. Take a warm shower or bath at night to relax before bed, turn off electronic screens and turn down the thermostat in the bedroom. You will have a better night's sleep.

Find out more ways to make your daily tasks less stressful or painful by going to the Arthritis Foundation website at [Arthritis.org](http://Arthritis.org). There are other websites with creative and helpful tips to make our daily lives easier.



## Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline items for the next *Bulletin* is **June 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.