

Sno-King School Retirees



November-December 2023

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening

by Cathy Webb, chair

It seems like just a few days ago the skies were sunny and warm with beach trips and BBQs on our calendars. This year autumn seemed to return with the flip of a switch and our familiar rain and falling leaves remind us of the start of another school year.

Planning for the year's activities

Those attending this year's August retreat grappled with challenging issues in an effort to increase participation and better plan for activities and events. Questions around membership and engagement raised at this year's convention prompted much discussion. Group consensus is that we continue to make informative and relevant programs available to our members. However, dwindling manpower to organize and present events, as well as manage membership and communication, is our reality. It takes a village; we are a small band. For the first time since I've been involved with SKSR, we left the retreat with an incomplete calendar as we begin the 2023-24 year. Retreat attendees voted to reduce the number of luncheons this year to two: one in November and the Scholarship Luncheon in April, as these are labor-intensive events. A small committee volunteered to develop our events and activity calendar and explore new options to appeal to our broad membership base.

Won't you help build our village?

It's easy to lose sight of how valuable this organization is in the fabric of our lives. In this *Bulletin* you'll read about the legislative accomplishments and the plans for continuing to protect our retirement benefits. This work requires local support, too! The legislative-buddy program is an excellent opportunity to get involved. The

(chair's message continued on page 3)

OFFICERS

vacant, President
Cathy Webb, Vice President
Jan Phillips, Secretary
Jennifer Altena, Treasurer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

November luncheon

by Barb Bumgardner

Don't miss our Fall Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 16th—RSVP Now!

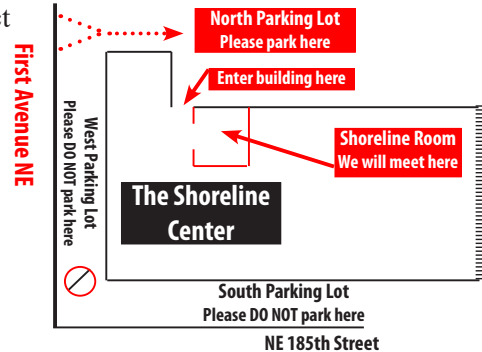
- Join us in the Shoreline Room at the Shoreline School District Conference Center, 8560 1st Ave. NE, Shoreline, WA 98155.
- Doors open at 11:30 AM for a Meet & Greet.
- Lunch will be served at 12:15 PM.
- Shoreline Superintendent Susana Reyes will report on her district. We're still working on arrangements for an adventure presentation!

Chef Dane will cater our lunch:

Lasagna
Oven-roasted Vegetables
Caesar Salad
Focaccia Bread
Cookies and Coffee for dessert

The cost is \$10 for members and \$15 for guests, payable at the door.

If you would like to attend, please email Jim Siscel at jsiscel@comcast.net or leave a message at 425-778-7202. Because the lunch is catered, **we need your reservation no later than Thursday, November 9th**. This way we can have the right amount of food delivered. If you cancel after November 9th, please send \$10 to our treasurer as the caterer will charge us for your lunch.



- 1) Park in the "North Parking Lot" at the NORTH end of the complex.
- 2) Enter the "North Entrance" to the Shoreline Room at this end of the building.
- 3) Do NOT enter the MAIN ENTRANCE on 1st Ave NE by West Parking Lot.

Although details continue to be hammered out for upcoming programs and activities, SKSR is pleased to roll out our **2023-24 Calendar of Events and Activities** for the year. We appreciate the collaborative efforts of all those working behind the scenes.

Our **October 23rd Meet & Greet** event was an example of trying a new venue and a new day in the hope of appealing to members unable to make it to our traditional Thursday programs. A huge thank you to all those who participated!

Save
the
Date

November 16

Luncheon, Shoreline Center, 11:30-2:00
Shoreline Superintendent report
Feature: an *Adventure program*

February 15

Edmonds ESC Board A/B, 12:00-3:00
Edmonds Superintendent report
Feature: Joel Underwood from Humanities Washington, *That Ribbon of Highway: Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest*

March (date to be determined)

A Field Trip is in the planning
A Spring Community Service Project will be announced

April 18

Scholarship Luncheon, First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach, 11:30-2:00
Feature: *Cascadia Search and Rescue program*

May 16

May Gathering, Edmonds ESCBoarA/B, 11:30-2:00
Feature: *In the Know with WA State Treasurer, Mike Pellicciotti*

July 18

Picnic, Edmonds City Park, 11:30-3:00

Legislative update

Message the SCPP now!

by Pete Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director



TRS 1 & PERS 1 members take note. The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) will soon act on Plan 1 COLA legislation for 2024. On November 14, the Committee will determine if a Plan 1 COLA for the 2024 is an appropriate recommendation to send to the legislature. **Legislators need to hear from you before November 14. Please write to the SCPP at state.actuary@leg.wa.gov.** Tell them you support a Plan 1 COLA and raising the COLA cap to 3% up to \$125 per month. Please DO NOT call the Actuary's office. You can also carbon copy your own legislative delegation.

Here is a sample letter:



DATE

To the Select Committee on Pension Policy:
Please support a Plan 1 COLA for 2024 and an annual, permanent COLA. I am a TRS/PERS 1 retiree and due to lost purchasing power, my income no longer meets my needs. I am also too old to return to work. If previous COLAs had not been removed, my retirement income would have been sufficient.

I also ask that you raise the COLA cap. The past few increases have been limited to \$62.50 per month and \$110 per month. Because this number is tied to senior property tax levels, and those have also increased with to inflation, I believe a COLA cap of \$125 per month is appropriate.

Thank you for your work and service. Please support my request.

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE NUMBER

(chair's message continued from page 1)

teacher-grant program for our active members just concluded and we look forward to awarding those funds to support kids in classrooms. Ideally, members go into buildings to make these awards. Our scholarship program is strong and will launch in early 2024. Each of our district superintendents is a member and will present reports to keep us in the know of educational initiatives and the work happening in our beloved schools. All of this seems important and valuable. What are the barriers for getting involved? Contact your SKSR leadership to offer your thoughts and creative ideas.

I'm energized when I gather with colleagues who understand and appreciate what it means to dedicate your work life to the field of education. We are a rare breed. Many of you have described how much connecting with fellow educators is a highlight in your schedule. When you come to an event, you join with friends to continue the journey of learning. Your SKSR leaders are focused and committed to developing relevant and meaningful activities and events to foster these connections. Member participation is essential!

I continue to be honored and humbled to serve

as one of your leaders in this organization. I'd love to have more of you join with us to make SKSR an amazing, vibrant part of our retired life journey. If you can help with an event or program, or just want to share your thoughts, please contact me (425-877-5753 or clmwebb0810@gmail.com).

Member Information Updates

Deceased

Mary Bryan, October 2023. Retired from Shoreline, member since 1997.

Stephen Burger, October 2023. Retired from Edmonds, member since 1997.

Robert Burton, December 2023. Retired from Edmonds, member since 2004.

Karen Guthrie-Mehlert, December 2023. Retired from Shoreline, member since 1991.

Kenneth Knautz, September 2023. Retired from Snohomish, member since 1995.

Margaret Van Natter, October 2023. Member since 1990.

New Members

Gross, Carolyn

Telstad, Mary

Health news

Standing up straight for good posture*compiled by Robin Randles, Health chair*

As we age, standing up straighter can become more of a challenge because we lose flexibility and strength. A forward-leaning posture makes it hard to straighten up. Making sure you hold your body the right way can prevent pain or injury.

Good standing posture means standing straight and tall with your shoulders back. Keep your head level and in line with your body and pull in your abdomen. When you practice proper posture, you keep your bones and joints in alignment and it allows your muscles to work more efficiently.

Poor posture is associated with breathing problems, digestive issues, depression, falls and decreased quality of life. Slouching or slumping can shift your body forward. When your head and shoulders round forward, your body's center of gravity shifts, which can increase the risk of falls.

Tips for improving your posture

Our use of technology is a contributor to poor posture. We bend our head and neck to look at our cell phones and when using our computers. It is suggested that holding our phones at eye level will cause less strain on your neck. When using the computer, make sure you adjust your chair height so your feet are flat on the floor and that the top of the monitor is at or slightly below eye level. Also, if your chair does not have a backrest, make sure your back is fully supported with a back pillow when seated. Remember to relax your shoulders.

Other tips for good posture:

- Take breaks if you are in a “rounded” position. Get up and move every 30 to 60 minutes. Do some exercises like shoulder circles, shoulder squeezes or chin tucks.
- Practice straighter posture. Stand against a wall

or lie down on a firm surface.

- Build up your strength and endurance by building stronger abdominal and back muscles.
- Build stronger bones doing weight-bearing exercises like walking and weightlifting.
- See a physical therapist who can provide exercises to strengthen weak muscles.
- See a doctor if you are experiencing pain or

numbness or if you are having trouble performing daily tasks. A big contributor to slouching is weak muscles in the abdomen and back. Stretching and core-strengthening exercises can help.

Simple posture exercises to strengthen the upper back, to keep the shoulders pulled back and to open up the chest help to keep you upright. These can be done easily during a break from work.

- While sitting or standing, shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and then relax them down.
- While sitting upright, lift your arms up into a goal-post position with your elbows bent at a 90-degree angle, even with your shoulders. Relax

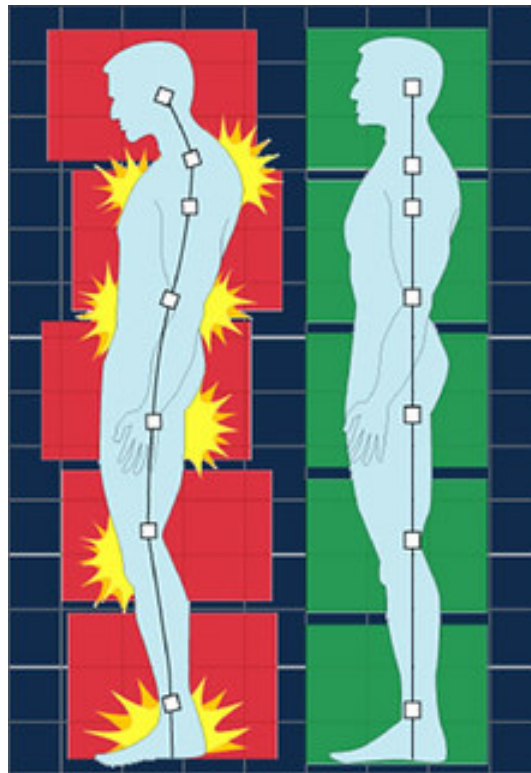
your shoulders down, and then pull the elbows towards the back of the room.

- Arm circles forward and backward can be done while sitting or standing.

Endless options you can access on line

Another option for exercises that focus on stretching, balance and body awareness are yoga and Tai Chi. You can look up exercises for better posture on the internet. There are many sites that cover this topic.

With awareness of what good posture is, working on standing tall and doing strengthening exercises, you can improve your posture. With practice, you will look and feel better.



Report from NW-1

WSSRA: Improving your retirement

by Karen McElliott

On October 2, five SKSR Board members attended the NW-1 regional, hybrid meeting in Mt. Vernon; another two SKSR Board members attended via Zoom. Marianne Harvey, the new council chair, called the meeting to order.

Report from Olympia

Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director, noted that WSSRA's legislative priorities will be similar to last year's: maintain, if not improve, the health subsidy (currently \$183); lobby for a Plan 1 one-time COLA for 2024 (hopefully, 3%); and support actuarially recommended pension payments be made to the pension funds.

The PEBB open-enrollment period is November 1-30. Costs are going up, and PEBB members should review their options. Price differences between plans reflect those that receive financial support through the Social Security Act from those that are privately funded.

Currently things look promising for a proposal that Plan 1 members receive an automatic COLA similar to the two other plans; Diedrick felt that this might become a reality by 2025.

As a result of identity thieves targeting retired public employees, DRS is working on legislation to limit the amount of personal information it is required to disclose through the Freedom of Information Act.

WSSR-Foundation

The Foundation is healthy and coordinating with the Scholarship Committee. All regional representatives now serve on the Scholarship Committee. All the scholarship forms are now online, and, as a result, the number of applications dramatically increased last year. The committee is considering expanding the scholarships to include vocational and post-graduate education. Marianne Harvey reminded everyone that this will be her final year serving on the committee, so NW-1 will need to find a replacement for her by the end of this school year.

Retirement-Planning Committee

WSSRA is again offering live pre-retirement webinars in October. By the time you read this, both the DRS/HCA-PEBB Webinar and the SS/Medicare/



VEBA Webinar will be posted at wssra.org under webinars.

Legislative Committee

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) has scheduled a Plan 1 COLA hearing and vote on November 14. All Plan 1 members are encouraged to write to the committee (state.actuary@leg.wa.gov) and describe the impact that inflation, plus the lack of an automatic COLA, have had on their lives.

Unit Reports

Each of the four units reported on their activities since last spring and their plans for the coming year. In addition to information about unit mini-grants and scholarships, program ideas were shared, including the county coroner, a local author, and an expert on elder law. Several units are now holding meetings at local restaurants.

NW-1 Duties at 2024 Convention

The 2024 WSSRA Convention will be held June 3-5 at the Wenatchee Convention Center. NW-1 is charged with assisting the local unit with logistics. Marianne Harvey and Kay Bishop, WSSRA President-Elect, went over the list of tasks delegated to NW-1: helping with registration, taking tickets, passing out materials, and organizing the Celebration of Life, which honors recently deceased members. Jim Siscel volunteered SKSR to serve as ticket-takers.

The next NW-1 Meeting will be held January 8 via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, contact Jim Siscel (jsiscel@comcast.net).



Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline for the next *Bulletin* is **December 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.

We have resumed our regular schedule of preparing the *Bulletin* for mailing.

*If you would like to help on **January 9**,*
call Robin Randles, 206-542-6428.