

Sno-King School Retirees



September-October 2023

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening

by *Jim Siscel, chair*

Your SKSR Board just completed its annual retreat, meeting in the library at Lynndale Elementary School. There was discussion about how many and what activities should be presented to our membership. A committee was formed to create a meeting schedule for this coming year and present it to the board at its

September meeting. The board will act on the recommendations and present the schedule to you, the membership.

It was decided to have two luncheons next year instead of four—one in November and the annual Scholarship luncheon in April. Due to increased food costs from our caterer, the price for meals will increase from \$5 to \$10. (We are paying \$20-\$25 for each meal.)

Welcome 2023 Retirees

Welcome to retired life! You will probably find yourself busier than when you were in the classroom teaching or doing some other educational job. But now you get to select what you want to do. We hope that one thing you will do is join with other Sno-King School Retirees (SKSR) in some of our activities. During the next year, we will have two luncheons, a service project, a general meeting with a speaker from Washington Humanities, possibly some other interesting speakers and a field trip. When you receive your *SKSR Bulletin*, please take time to read it.

As a newly retired SKSR member, the board would like to offer you a **FREE LUNCH** at each of our luncheons in November and April. Details regarding locations and programs appear in each *Bulletin*. When you read your *Bulletin*, you will find information on how to respond for each event. When you respond, please tell the RSVP person you are a 2023 retiree.

We hope to see you at one or more of our activities.

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

Upcoming events

Keep tuned for future SKSR events

by Cathy Webb

Beginning at the June WSSRA convention and continuing at the SKSR retreat, your leadership is taking a hard look at our historical events and activities. At the state level, the key word for this self-reflective work is “rejuvenating,” and it takes time

Your SKSR Board did not finalize details for our October and November events at the August retreat. But here’s what we know...

We will certainly host our first luncheon in November. The venue, program, and caterer details are incomplete.

We’re also proposing a “Meet and Greet” event for October, but we have no details at this time.

Save the dates



Decisions will be made at the September Board meeting. Members will have to wait for email updates to find out what, when and where our meetings will occur in October and November. We’re planning to keep our events on the third Thursdays. This information will be posted on our website, sksr.org, under Events as soon as it is available.

Leaders are planning events for our 2023-24 year that meet our mission of enhancing the general welfare of our membership, provide public education, and promote good citizenship in ways that are engaging and valuable.

Volunteer in a Classroom

Due to budget cuts across the three school districts represented by Sno-King School Retirees, many classrooms will not have instructional assistants this coming year.



How can we help?

Very simply, by volunteering to help in classrooms working with children and assisting the teacher.

You can volunteer as often as you like, for as long a time as you want each time you volunteer. Once a week for an hour is ideal, but if you need to miss your regular time that is fine. This is something

you can work out with the teacher with whom you are working. Usually, you will be working with one or two students at a time on reading and math skills or helping them with their writing skills. The children really like working with volunteers. For many it is additional attention that they need and helps them grow.

How to volunteer:

In all districts, contact the building office manager of a nearby school and let them know you want to volunteer. The office manager should put you in contact with the appropriate person in the building to connect you with an appropriate teacher.

In Shoreline School District, you can volunteer through the Power of One program-<https://powerofonevolunteers.wordpress.com>

In all districts, you will have to fill out the appropriate volunteer paperwork.

As retirees, we have the expertise that today’s current classroom teachers need for assistance.

Confidentiality of SKSR Membership Directory

This is our annual reminder to our membership to treat the information in our membership directory carefully and to take prudent actions to safeguard it. We are expected to restrict the distribution and use of such information to contacts with our members and official business.

It may not be used for any commercial or political solicitation.

Legislative update

Bits & Pieces

by Pete Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director



We're back! Hopefully you've had an enjoyable summer and are watching the kids go back to school from the comfort of your front porch.

The legislature is getting back to work as well. Legislators are still in district, but the professional staff is in Olympia preparing for the 2024 Legislative Session. It's been slower over the summer; however, there were some important developments.

COLA for 2024?

The Select Committee on Pension Policy met in June and July. That body seems poised to recommend a 3% Plan 1 COLA for 2024. The Committee is also scheduling time to study implementation of a permanent, automatic COLA for Plan 1. It's well past time, but we applaud their decision to tackle

the matter. Further action is expected at the October, November, and December SCPP meetings.

Equal subsidy for traditional Medicare?

The Washington State Healthcare Authority—the agency managing state retiree insurance—has put out a plea to Washington's congressional delegation regarding subsidies for retiree insurance. The way the Social Security Act is written, Medicare Advantage plans are eligible for more subsidies than traditional Medicare plans. The state has asked Congress to equalize those benefits. WSSRA is fully supporting this effort to drive down premium costs. If you have the opportunity, *please raise this issue with your Member of Congress.*

PEBB MEDICARE Retiree 2024 Premiums				
Washington State Health Care Authority	Single Subscriber Premium		Change in Single Subscriber Premium	
	2023	2024	%	\$
	Final	Proposed		
Kaiser Northwest Senior Advantage	\$176.13	\$193.95	10%	\$18
Kaiser WA Medicare Advantage and Original Medicare	\$174.59	\$188.62	8%	\$14
UMP Classic Medicare	\$438.34	\$532.94	22%	\$95
UnitedHealthCare (MA-PD) PEBB Complete	\$145.63	\$160.58	10%	\$15
UnitedHealthCare (MA-PD) PEBB Balance	\$122.94	\$135.65	10%	\$13
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan F Retired	\$115.16	\$119.05	3%	\$4
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan F Disabled	\$196.69	\$207.45	5%	\$11
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan G Retired	\$98.53	\$101.99	4%	\$3
Premera Medicare Supplement Plan G Disabled	\$164.05	\$169.20	3%	\$5

On Tuesday, September 26, 9:00 am, the Health Care Authority will present a webinar on changes to the 2024 PEBB Medicare supplementary rates. Those rates in many cases have increased substantially. The reasons for those increases, plus general comparisons between plans, will be the main thrust of the webinar. Although many members did change providers for 2023, many more did not. In spite of cost differences, Uniform Medical Plan-Classic remains the plan of choice for a plurality of retirees.

With **November the only month that PEBB retirees can change plans for 2024**, this webinar will provide much of the information that members will need to consider if they are contemplating a change that would begin on January 1. **The webinar will be recorded and posted on the WSSRA website.**

Registration for the webinar can be made through this link <https://form.jotform.com/232326577422153>. Once registered, an email will be sent with a Zoom link for the September 26 event.

Scholarship update

Winnie Smith Scholarships

by Keith Lindaas, Scholarship co-chair

In August of 2022 the SKSR Board changed our scholarship amounts to award first- and second-year students \$2,500 for the first two years of their college education and \$3,000 for the last two years of the student's education. Each student could receive a total of \$11,000 during his or her four years.

Recipients of our \$3,000 awards for this academic year are the following:

Charlotte Appel is at Luther College in Iowa and is getting a degree in music education. Last summer she spent a few weeks teaching middle school students at Music School and found a new passion for teaching that age group of students. Not only were they eager to learn more about music, but they were learning about how to work together and create a masterpiece for their final concert. Charlotte has applied to become a part of the Teacher Education Program at Luther.

Gavin Dalziel is continuing at Linfield University and very pleased at being a student-athlete. He's a member of the varsity football team. He continues to take classes that will lead to a double major in secondary education and exercise science on his way to becoming a physical education major. Gavin is really pleased with how things are going at Linfield and is enjoying the personal connections with his professors. He thanks SKSR for our support.

Sofia Leotta is attending the University of Washington. She is currently studying environmental topics and working outside of school with Sustainability Ambassadors, a youth education organization that empowers teens to get involved in environmental issues. Through this position she designs lesson plans, works directly with high school students and practices communicating technical information in an engaging way.

Amanda Stanley is pursuing an alternative educational program that will grant her teaching certification. Last year she took a gap year and worked as an educational assistant in an elementary classroom. She received her degree from the University of Washington in early childhood education and has decided to become an elementary teacher. She states that she is very appreciative of our scholarship.

Recipients of our \$2,500 awards for this academic year are the following:

Claire Beaumont is a student at the University of Portland. She is currently plans on majoring in secondary education with a major in English and a minor in French.



Claire had field experience at two local K-8 schools this past year. Together her course work (education classes) and field experience have strengthened her resolve to continue studying secondary education.

Ella Stroup is continuing at Chapman University with an education major. She is in the process of declaring her minor in disability studies and wants to be a special education teacher. Ella writes, "Once again, thank you so much! There are no words for how much the SKSR Scholarship has helped me." She was also very appreciative of the increase in the scholarship amount.

Maggie Way is a student at the University of Washington. Her plan is to continue to major in education and then get her master's in teaching and become an elementary school teacher. Last quarter Maggie had the privilege of working with children through an internship, which she loved. She hopes to have more opportunities to work in schools this year and in the future.

Grants update
Active Member Grants Announcement

by Karen McElliott, Grants chair

It's that time of year again! The Grants Committee is accepting grant proposals of up to \$300 for student-centered proposals. Grant eligibility is not limited to those who are certificated but encompasses all active SKSR members in good standing who work with students in some capacity.

Please check the SKSR website (sksr.org) for details, the FAQ page for assistance in completing your application and the application form itself; there are also links to brief descriptions of past grants if you are curious about the types of proposals that have received funding.

The board has increased the committee's budget to \$14,500, which allows us to fund at least 47 requests. The application deadline is midnight,

**SKSR BOARD
 INCREASES BUDGET
 TO \$14,500,
 ALLOWING FUNDING
 FOR AT LEAST 47 REQUESTS!**



Thursday, November 2. If you have any remaining questions, including whether you are currently eligible to apply for a grant, contact Karen McElliott (ksmcelliot@gmail.com).

Note: If you are an Edmonds School District applicant, you will not be required to complete the ESD Grant and Donation Request for Approval form.

Poet enjoys "fooling with words"



In addition to SKSR authors Lynda Humphrey and Linda Hope Lee, who were featured in a recent *Bulletin*, we have become aware that we have a poet, Tom Fortin.

A member of the Edmonds-based EPIC Poetry Group, Tom is a longtime, retired teacher. He taught at Meadowdale High School from 1966-1980, Lynnwood High School from 1980-1997, and community college. He says now he has plenty of time for fooling with words.

Tom said, "My active interest in creating my own poetry was launched by that Bill Moyers-titled PBS series in 1998. And lately, I enjoy becoming more public with my poetic attempts. I love my present Lynnwood/Edmonds/Sno-King life. The vibrant artistic climate surrounding us here today fills my heart—and my poetic spirit—to overflowing."

Here is a link to three of his poems that were published in *My Edmonds News* in April of this year. Note that two of them fit many of our senior moments. https://myedmondsnews.com/2023/04/poets-corner-brainstorms-eating-gummies-at-80/?mc_cid=155adce28d&mc_eid=117c110c52

Member Information Updates

Deceased

- Bruce Clute**, July 2023,
Retired member for 12 years.
- Allen Hayes**, May 2023,
Retired Northshore member for 25 years.
- Leslie Kendig**, May 2023,
Retired member for 16 years.
- Jean Otness**, May 2023,
Retired Shoreline member for 32 years.

New Members

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Flatness, Paul R | McCormick, Cynthia |
| Hager, Jim | Mikolasy, Karen |
| Hansen, Laurel | Riccardo, Don |
| Harmon, Elizabeth | Roper, Jane R |
| Harter Horn, Paula | Schwab, Gregory |
| Hashimoto, Lori | Skowbo, Joan C |
| Havens, Frank | Veal, Sandie |
| Hipke, Gerene | |

Need a laugh?

- I never thought orthopedic shoes would really work for me. But I stand corrected.
- Once upon a time there was a king who was only 12 inches tall. He was a terrible king, but he made a great ruler
- I wrote a book on how to fall down the stairs. It's a step-by-step guide.

Health news

Vitamin B-12

by Robin Randles

Vitamin B-12 or cobalamin is an important nutrient in red blood cell formation, nerve function, cell metabolism and the production of DNA.

Where to find B-12

Vitamin B-12 is found naturally in a wide variety of animal foods. Manufacturers also add it to some fortified foods. Plant foods have no vitamin B-12 unless they are fortified. Check the nutrition facts label to see if the food has been fortified. Foods that naturally contain B-12, do not have vitamin B-12 listed on the nutrition facts label.

If you eat a variety of the following foods, you can get the recommended amounts of vitamin B-12.

- Fish, shellfish, red meat, liver, poultry, eggs
- Clams and beef liver are a *great* source of vitamin B-12
- Milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products
- Enriched soy or rice milk
- Some breakfast cereals, nutritional yeasts and other food products are fortified with vitamin B-12

Causes of deficiency

Vitamin B-12 deficiency isn't common in the United States. People who follow a vegan or vegetarian diet could be prone to vitamin B-12 deficiency because plant foods don't naturally contain vitamin B-12.

If you have a vitamin B-12 deficiency, you may feel tired or weak. Other symptoms include: pale skin, heart palpitations, loss of appetite and weight loss. Sometimes people have problems with balance, depression, confusion, and soreness of the mouth or tongue. Symptoms can take years to appear. If you are concerned, check with your doctor and ask to get

a blood test to check your vitamin B-12 level.

Some drugs used to treat diabetes like Metformin, anti-inflammatory drugs to treat gout, and drugs to reduce stomach acid like Prilosec and Prevacid can inhibit your body's ability to absorb the B-12 vitamin. Pregnant women can also have low B-12 levels.

To overcome deficiency

Older adults and people who have conditions that affect their ability to absorb B-12 from foods

might benefit from oral supplements or injections. Have your B-12 levels checked by your doctor and listen to their recommendation for treatment if your B-12 levels are low.

Vitamin B-12 is available as an oral

supplement in multivitamins or B-complex supplements or in a supplement containing only B-12, usually called cyanocobalamin. Vitamin B-12 injections or nasal spray may be prescribed to treat a vitamin B-12 deficiency. The recommended amount of vitamin B-12 for adults is 2.4 micrograms.

How much B-12 is absorbed?

The amount of vitamin B-12 in supplements varies. Most have doses much higher than recommended amounts. The body only absorbs as much as it needs (a small percentage of the vitamin B-12 supplement) and the rest is passed through your urine.

Before starting a vitamin B-12 supplement, it is important to know if you need it or not. Vitamin B-12 may interfere with medications you take, so it is critical to check with your doctor before starting a B-12 regimen. Most people get most of their nutrients from food and beverages and do not need a supplement.



Our last event
A good time was had by all!

by Cathy Webb



Jim Siskel introduces Michele Hunter and presents an SKSR certificate of appreciation in recognition of her outstanding support. Michelle serves as WSSRA membership coordinator.



Blue sunny skies and a light breeze graced us as we gathered at Edmonds City Park on Thursday, July 20. Our most well attended event of the year included 32 members and nine WSSRA- and teacher-grant awardees.

Official business activities included the installation of SKSR officers for the coming year: Vice President Cathy Webb, Treasurer Jennifer Altona, and Secretary Jan Philips. Rita Requa encouraged support of the WSSR-PAC, recommending a valuable donation based on the 3% increase coming on an upcoming pension check.

Karen McElliott introduced three of this year’s teacher-grant recipients: Cindy Ebisu, Matt Grover, and Susan Sellers. They spoke briefly about the grants and the impact on their classrooms.

For this attendee, the best part of the picnic was listening to the chatter and laughter, observing the happy smiles, feeling a deep sense of belonging to something truly special whenever SKSR members gather.

I hope more of you will make a plan to join us for memorable programs in the coming year. Put the July annual picnic on your 2024 calendar now!



WSSRA President Ron Crawford speaks to attendees about successful legislative initiatives, as well as goals for the coming year. Expect to hear the word “rejuvenation” as the organization gears up for 2023-24.



SKSR Vice President Cathy Webb recognizes Tom Hawkins, who served as SKSR Treasurer for the last 11 years. Tom received heartfelt appreciation from members at the picnic.



Fifteen long-serving SKSR board members receive appreciation and a deserved thank-you Starbucks gift cards: Jim Siskel, Karen McElliott, Keith Lindaas, Linda Fitzgerald, Tom Hawkins, Rita Requa, Evie Nordeen, Barb Bumgardner, Robin Randles, and Marlene Johnson. Not pictured: Barbara Berg, Jo Caldwell, Donna Murrish, Jan Phillips, and Virg Rayton.



Help us with the *Bulletin*

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

If you would like to help on October 31, 2023,

call Robin Randles, 206-542-6428.