

❖ SNO-KING RTA Bulletin ❖

President: Jim Becker, 284-8313

Editor: Betty Odle, 525-8276

JAN.-FEB. 1994

President's Message

THESE ARE THE GOOD OLD TIMES?

We used to take time off after the holidays to catch our breath. Many of our members headed off for warmer places during January and February. Unit activities were put on hold. January meetings and newsletter publications were deferred to February. Not any more!

Legislative sessions, even interim-sessions, become more important and demand our attention. Health care, COLAs, service cut-backs are just a few of the critical issues affecting us which are taken up by the Legislature. We have to keep in touch with our representatives.

Joanne Dunn, chair of the Unit Legislative Committee, has completed our Telephone Tree. In fact, the Tree may have been activated before you receive this newsletter. Confused messages come out of Olympia concerning health care coverage. What will the Legislature do with our request for a dollar COLA in place of the usual 3 percent request? Will the budget makers set aside TRS pension fund interest income for paying for COLAs, as we have asked? It is absolutely necessary that we communicate our concerns and suggestions to our legislators and to members of our Unit and WSRTA Legislative Committees.

So, the quiet time between Christmas and mid-February becomes a rather hectic time to learn everything and get everything accomplished. Whatever happened to the "dead time" we used to worry about that we thought came with retirement?

I appreciate your continued involvement in our activities. These are good times, working together for common goals.

Jim Becker, President

COMING EVENTS:

- February 1 9:30 AM NW-I Coordinating Council at Kings Table, Everett.
- February 9 1:30 PM Board Meeting at Betty Odle's, 2137 N 86th Seattle, 525-8276. At 11:30 a.m. we will be assemble packets for Retirement Planning Seminar at Betty's. (Bring sandwich/snack for your lunch.)
- February 17 1:30 PM Sno-King meeting at Edmonds School District Office, 20420-68th West, Lynnwood.
- February 22 7 PM, Mountlake Terrace High School Little Theatre-21801-44th West, Mountlake Terrace. Session #1, 1994 Retirement Planning Seminar (DRS Pension Benefits for TRS and PERS Members)
- March 9 1:30 PM Board Meeting at Barbara Berg's 714 Wandering CR DR, Bothell, 483-2671.



RETIRED TEACHERS ASK SANTA FOR COLA

Sno-King members, Frances Peters, Betty Odle and Irma Bendock ask Santa, Ed Osborn, for permanent COLA'S beginning at age 65! We hope that Santa has a lot of influence with the Legislature!

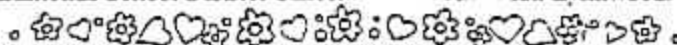
ANNIE & BEN MCCRACKEN SHARE ANTARCTIC TRIP AT FEBRUARY 17 SNO-KING MEETING

Annie and Ben McCracken reside in Kirkland. Annie is a retired Lake Washington elementary teacher.

The McCrackens have always chosen trips that are out of the ordinary. On a trip to the Amazon they met people who encouraged them to go to the Antarctic and so in December 1989 they went by plane and ship to that most southern continent, Antarctica.

When asked which place they would like to visit again, the Amazon or the Antarctic, Annie replied "Antarctic!"

Be sure to join us at our February 17 meeting at 1:30 p.m. when Annie shares her slides of her trip with us. The meeting will be held at the Edmonds School District Office, 20420-68th West, Lynnwood.





HEALTH & PROTECTIVE SERVICES



Gordon Bowers, Chairman, 778-9202

With Congress back in session, please take time to write (or call) your senators: Senator Patty Murray, US Senate, Washington D.C. 20510; Seattle phone 553-5545, Senator Slade Gorton, same address, Seattle Phone 553-0350, Representative Maria Cantwell, US House of Representatives, Washington D.C., 20515. Seattle phone 640-1233. Following is a sample letter:

*The Hon. Senator Gorton
(Address)*

Dear Senator Gorton:

My family and I care a lot about long-term care, and we want to be sure that you vote for a health care reform bill that includes long-term care. Please be sure that whatever health care reform you pass, you include provisions for some help to families who want to provide long-term care at home, and a way to cover home care costs.

Sincerely

Your letters are important! Honest expressions of personal concern from their voters count far more with a member of congress than any slick TV ad or large campaign contribution.

Also, effective January 1994, some SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARIES will pay higher federal income taxes on their benefits. If you and your spouse have a combined provisional income of \$44,000 or more (single, \$34M) up to 85% of your Social Security benefit is subject to tax. The new law applies to benefits received in 1994. Thus, it will affect 1994 income taxes that are paid in 1995. Those who file estimated returns during the year may need to adjust their payments if they are subject to the 85% taxation level. PROVISIONAL INCOME includes taxable income, plus your tax-exempt interest income. STAY TUNED!

HELP WANTED FOR UNIT PROJECT

Edmonds School District has asked Sno-King RTA to assist in seeking volunteers to tutor students one or two hours per week.

In collaboration with the South Snohomish County Chamber of Commerce, Edmonds offers an Evening Academy (a free tutorial program) for middle and high school students. Also, there is a supportive program for elementary school pupils, called "Lunch Buddies."

Sno-King RTA is interested in undertaking this as a Community Service Project for 1994. One or two Unit members are needed to coordinate Sno-King RTA's part of the program. Sno-King RTA coordinator provides important assistance by recruiting other members as tutors and "lunch buddies," explaining the project to them and providing names/hours/days of volunteers to the Edmonds coordinator.

Evening Academy Project

Tutoring sessions for the Evening Academy are held three (3) evenings a week: Tuesday (5 & 6 pm) at Meadowdale High; Wednesday (5:30 & 6:30 pm); and Thursday (5:30 & 6:30 pm) at College Place Middle School. Sessions are after school and for one (1) hour each. Volunteer tutors usually have the option of location on request.

There is immediate need for tutors in math/sciences and some foreign languages as well as history and English. There are also classes to prepare students to take the SAT for college entrance. The average ratio of students to tutors is 2:1.

Students are registered into the program through their school counselors. The Evening Academy is available to all Edmonds students at no charge.

"Lunch Buddies" Project

Volunteers are also needed to assist elementary pupils as noon-time "Lunch Buddies." Members having day-time hours available can offer support to younger children in school adjustment as well as subject matter tutoring during the school's lunch hour.

Sno-King RTA Needs Project Coordinator

Members having 4-5 hours a week free and are interested in taking a leadership role in coordinating the Unit's part of the project are asked to call Jim Becker (284-8313) right away for more information and to volunteer.

Edmonds has a paid staff member who coordinates both these programs for the district. One or two Sno-King RTA members are needed to work closely with the Edmonds coordinator, *Mary Cameron*. Please call her at 670-7113 for information and application materials.



LEGISLATIVE NEWS - Joanne Dunn, Chair 363-8943

The JCPP (Joint Committee on Pension Policy) yet again did not address the issue of Plan 1 COLA improvement. Please write or call your legislators - all need to be reminded that the JCPP again did not address this issue.

When you write legislators, *personalize your message*. Tell them what has happened to *your* pension and to *your* costs for prescriptions, medical premiums, property taxes, car and home insurance, utilities, food and clothing. This is the message they care the most about. Even if you tell them nothing else, this will have an effect.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES 1994

- 1) Make the "Age 70" ad hoc COLA permanent. Also, amend this COLA so that retirees are eligible when they reach age 70. Background: This legislation, passed in 1993, provided for \$3 per month per year of service for Plan 1 retirees who were age 70 or older by 7/1/93, retired for at least 5 years and not currently receiving any other COLA.
- 2) Put \$25 million in a special account to be used for continuing retiree benefits in effect July 1993. Background: \$25 million was put in the budget last session into the stabilization account "for the continuing costs of any state retirement benefits in effect on July 1, 1993" (SSB 5968, p. 127, line 22). Initiative 601 did away with the state stabilization account; however, the setting aside of these funds was part of the agreement made last session by the leadership of both houses of the Legislature.
- 3) Support the JCPP recommendation that the ad hoc "February COLA" passed in 1992 be made permanent. The cost would be \$10.1 million.
- 4) Support the JCPP recommendation to simplify the method for determining when a Plan 1 retiree qualifies for the 3% COLA. Presently, the 40% loss of purchasing power must be determined on an individual basis. The proposal is to chart when the youngest age 65 retiree has lost 40% of purchasing power and to provide the COLA for all retirees that age or older. At the present rate of inflation, retirees won't qualify for the 3% COLA until they are over 80 - no matter what the method of calculation!
- 5) Urge JCPP members to recommend the "Minimum COLA" simplification proposal studied by the committee. Currently, the "Minimum COLA" is not figured on the annuity portion of the benefit, resulting in a COLA of 2.6%. The proposal would calculate the COLA based on the employer's contribution and the annuity, providing a full 3% COLA. The cost of this proposal is \$300,000 for the last year of this biennium and \$800,000 for 1995-7. Encourage Committee members to act on this proposal during the 1994 Session.

PLAN 2 PROPOSALS

The JCPP considered two proposals for Plan 2 which would emphasize greater flexibility regarding how a member uses pension funds. One proposal, the Deferred Plan, would improve benefits for employees who leave employment. No recommendation was made regarding this plan. The other proposal, the Split Plan, would create a new Plan III. This includes a Defined Benefit portion which the employer pays and a Defined Contribution portion which the employee pays. The JCPP recommended support for this proposal. WEA and local education associations are informing members of the details of this proposal.

YOUR LEGISLATORS (Olympia, WA 98504)

1st District:

Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe
402A Cherberg Bldg.
786-7600

Rep. Barbara Cothem
305 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7928

Rep. Linda Johnson
304 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7900

21st District:

Sen. Gary Nelson
106-A Institutions Bldg.
786-7640

Rep. Paul Shin
405 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7972

Rep. Jeannette Wood
415 Legislative Bldg.
786-7950



LEGISLATIVE REPORT, CONT'D**32nd District:**

Sen. Al Williams
401-A Legislative Bldg.
786-7910

Rep. Grace Cole
341 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7910

Rep. Nancy Rust
407 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7880

44th District:

Sen. Tim Erwin
109A Institutions Bldg.
786-7686

Rep. Jim Johanson
437 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7892

Rep. Jeanine Long *
415 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
786-7982

*Member, JCPP

CONTINUING UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION

To leave messages for Legislators (State Legislative Hotline) - 1-800-562-600

To leave messages for Legislators (Senior Citizens Lobby) - 1-800-562-6000

To get up-to-date information (WSRTA Legislative Message Center) - 1-800-221-1269
WSRTA Office - 1-800-544-5219

NEWS ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

We are sorry to report the death of our member **Melba Byers** on November 25, 1993. Our sympathy to her family and friends.

Our deepest sympathy, too, to **Esther Sellers** in the loss of her husband. Our thoughts and prayers are with her.

Marion Bellows is now staying with her son, Greg, 5033 NE 190th, Seattle 98155, 367-5953. She will be having an operation for a blocked carotid artery. After this procedure she should begin to recover her strength. We miss you Marion!

Edie Kirkpatrick has just had knee surgery and is staying with her sister, Esther Peterson, 632-7755 - she would appreciate a call.

Jean McEwen has just moved to Manor Way Nursing Home, 3701-188th SW, Lynnwood 98036 and would appreciate hearing from or seeing Edmonds friends.

Northshore retiree, **Barbara Skibeness** is working in the catalog and retail sales department of Eddie Bauer as well as substitute teaching. Husband, Reed, a retired Edmonds teacher landed a bit role in *Northern Exposure*. What interesting lives retired teachers seem to have!

News deadline for February Bulletin is February 20. Send to Betty Odle, 2137 N 86th, Seattle 98103. Phone: 525-8276. Please send us news about other members as well as about your activities. If you know of any illness, please contact our Sunshine Chair, Barbara Berg - 483-2671 or President Jim Becker - 284-8313, or Editor Betty Odle - 525-8276.

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