

Sno-King School Retirees



January-February 2019

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from our president

What's happening...

by Jim Siscel

I hope that all of us had a happy Thanksgiving (without gaining too much weight) and a joyous Christmas and happy new year. These times that we spend time with our families are so important in our lives.

I would like to thank Cheryl Bauer and Barb Bumgardner for presenting information to Northshore School District employees about the benefits of belonging to SKSR and WSS-RA at the district Benefits Fair in November.

Because of the logistics problems of set-up and tear-down at the Edmonds Universalist Unitarian Church, we are going to be moving to a new location for our November and April meetings. After having used the church for many years, this is not an easy transition for us. But as we age, we don't have the ability to move all of the equipment before and after our meetings. The SKSR Board is looking at several locations; we will let you know of our decision in the next Bulletin.

I would like to thank Karen McElliott for her work along with others making decisions about our grant recipients. Karen has done a great job getting volunteers to make the grant check presentations. I would also like to thank all those who volunteered. Please see the article on Page 9 .

Now that the November election is over, it is important that you contact your legislators to let them know which of our legislative concerns are most important to you. We have a new senator and representative in District 32. As soon as I receive their contact information, it will be posted on our website. The contact information for all other districts should be correct. We need a Legislative chairperson

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OFFICERS

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

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Barbara Berg, Scrapbook
Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas, Scholarships
Donna Murrish, Health
Marlene Johnson, Hospitality
Evelyn Nordeen, Sunshine
Betty Odle, Historian
Karen McElliott, Active Member Grants
Rita Requa, Legislative
Jim Siscel, Membership/Retirement/Website
Erma Snook, Membership Records
Jo Caldwell, Bulletin Editor

Our next events

February 9– SKSR hosts speaker from humanities Washington

by Roberta Hawkins, Chair

Do you remember the 1962 Columbus Day Storm? Do you recall the biggest snowstorm of your childhood? Was your Thanksgiving or Christmas ever held by candlelight? The Evergreen State has had many unusual weather events over the years.

Feliks Banel, a speaker from Washington Humanities and a local broadcaster, writer and historian, who serves as editor of *Columbia*, the quarterly magazine of the Washington State Historical Society, will be our guest speaker on Thursday, February 7, 2019. As a host and contributor to KIRO Radio and knowledgeable about matters of Northwest history and culture, Feliks Banel's presentation explores our region's darkest weather days and most infamous storms, including archival

photos, and radio and TV clips. Banel will take us back in time to hear stories of those who survived some of the worst Pacific Northwest weather in

recorded history in his presentation titled *Storm Warning: Historic Weather in the Evergreen State*.

Come join the fun on February 7, 2019, at

the Edmonds School District ESC, 20420 68th Ave. W., Lynnwood, WA 98036. We will explore both major events shared by our speaker as well as share some of your own memories of being snowed in, washed out or left without power after a big storm.

Our meeting begins at 12 noon with meet and greet, then we will hear updates from the Edmonds Superintendent of Schools Kristine McDuffy followed by Feliks Banel's interactive presentation.

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March 28–Field trip to University of Washington Crew House

by Linda Fitzgerald, Chair

If you loved reading *Boys in the Boat*, you will love our field trip on March 28th to the University of Washington!

Our guided tour will begin at 10:00 am and last for approximately 1 1/2 hours. We'll begin at the old crew house located on the Montlake Cut and after about a seven-minute walk, we will finish at the new crew house which contains more Husky Crew memorabilia and history.

As usual, we will car pool from the old Aurora Village parking lot.

We have only 50 spaces available, so contact Linda Fitzgerald (fitzdl@aol.com or 425-778-9549) to reserve your place.

Don't miss this chance to see some Northwest history!



Our Legislature in action

Legislative priorities for 2019

by Jim Siscel



The Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) is made up of 18,000 active and retired school personnel. WSSRA's mission is to develop, propose and support action benefiting all school retirees.

1. TRS 1 & PERS 1 Pension Recovery.

- Plan 1 retirees have had one Cost-of-Living Adjustment since 2010. Plan 1 retirees have lost up to 33% of their purchasing power due to inflation. In 2018, the Washington State Legislature granted a one-time 1.5% COLA; however, inflation is expected to be 3.3% in 2018. Therefore, retirees continue to lose money.

2. Restore Retiree Healthcare Benefits.

- The Legislature lowered the Medicare Healthcare Benefit from \$183 to \$150 in 2011. In 2018, we successfully lobbied for an increase to \$168 per month. Increasing the Medical Benefit to \$205 per month will mitigate against the loss of purchasing power from increasing healthcare premiums.

3. Expand and Equalizes the Full Retirement Age in Plans 2 & 3.

- The current full-retirement age in Plans 2 & 3 is age 65. Employees can leave at age 62 but are penalized for working part-time in schools or local governments. We are advocating for eliminating those work penalties as well as dropping the

retirement age to 60—similar to public-safety employees.

4. Make the Actuarially Recommended Payment to the State Pension Funds.

- TRS 1 & PERS 1 are underfunded due to past skipped payments by the State. Plans 2 & 3 are fully funded. Making the recommended payments will keep all three plans on track.

5. Protect Retirees in Transition to New Health Providers.

- The State has created a School Employee Benefits Board (SEBB) and is studying the possibility of removing school retirees from the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) and putting them in new plans under the SEBB. Any changes must maintain or improve current benefits.

6. In addition, WSSRA is working on the following:

- Maintain the 3% COLA for Plan 2/3 members.
- Remove the 180-day cap on TRS VEBA cash out.
- Allow September retirees to collect a COLA the following July.
- Reopen the PEBB enrollment window for retirees who missed the original 60-day deadline.

Member Information Updates

Deceased

Brenchley, Dorothy A, 11/2018
Retired Northshore, Member for 19 years

Creighton, Janet, 10/29/2018,
Retired Edmonds, Member for 11 years.

Odle, Elizabeth (Betty), 11/25/2018,
Shoreline Member for 37 years, Past President

VanNess, Robert, 10/19/2018,
Retired Edmonds, Member for 20 years.

Werner, Glenn O, 11/5/2018,
Retired Shoreline, Member for 27 years.

New Members

Bemis, Andrea
Chastain, Caroline*
Collins, Polly Melissa*
Farrell, Shane M*
Folkman, Jessica
Audene*
Hudson, Barbara *
Huston, Joy
Jones, Erica Monique*
Markwardt, Janet
Marie*
McAuley, Logan A*
McCormick, Cynthia
M*

McElroy, Christine
Nam, JungAh*
Okazaki, Rhonda
Owen, Mark David*
Rogers, Jennifer
Marie*
Schaffer, Trudi
Wartinger, Gina C*
Wack, Joe*
Wood, Penelope

*=active member

From our October luncheon

Myth Buster within our midst

by Rita Requa, Chair

Fifty Sno-King members attended the Oct. 25 luncheon meeting at Le Bistro at the Snohomish County Skills Center. After a delicious and eye-appealing meal, it was time for our program speakers: Rebecca Minor, Shoreline Superintendent and Noah Haglund, reporter for the Everett Herald.

Mrs. Minor spoke about the building projects in Shoreline, which included complete rebuilding of Parkwood Elementary and the Children's Center, remodeling of Einstein and the future remodeling of Kellogg Middle School.

Noah Haglund spoke about the state of newspapers and journalism.

Reduced subscriptions, reduced advertisement and the advent of electronic news have contributed to the plight of newspapers today.



Shoreline Superintendent Rebecca Minor

There have been significant reductions of staff as a result. For example, there used to be two education reporters for the Herald, now no reporters are specifically assigned to education. It was apparent to those present that newspapers are a positive contributor to a democratic society and were disappointed that "Newspapers in the Classroom" no longer exists. There were questions about journalism in the classroom, how public events were reported, how we, as retired educators, can support newspapers.

Many in attendance were astonished when Mr. Haglund spoke of salaries of some of his colleagues, which are half of a beginning teacher's salary!

On a lighter note, here are some alternative ways to identify reporters according to Noah Haglund: Myth Buster, Truth Broker, Reality Checker, Info Infantry, Jargon Slayer. Choose the alternative that speaks to you.

Herald reporter Noah Haglund.



FRIENDLY ADVICE: Drinking and Driving..

I would like to share a personal experience with my friends about drinking and driving. This might save you the cost and embarrassment of being arrested for DUI.

As you know, people have been known to have unexpected brushes with the authorities from time to time, often on the way home after a "social session" with family or friends.

Well, this year, it happened to me. I was out for the evening to a party and had more than several margaritas coupled with a bottle of rather nice red wine. It was held at a great Mexican restaurant. Although relaxed, I still



had the common sense to know I was slightly over the limit. That's when I did something I've never done before...I took a taxi home.

On the way home there was a police roadblock, but since it was a taxi they waved it past and I arrived home safely without incident. These roadblocks can be anywhere and I realized how lucky I was to have chosen to take a taxi.

The real surprise to me was I had never driven a taxi before. I don't know where I got it, and now that it's in my garage I don't know what to do with it. If you want to borrow it, give me a call.

From our November gathering

November brunch enjoyed by all

by Donna Murrish, Chair

Our second venture at trying a “brunch” instead of a luncheon can most assuredly be deemed a success. At least 40 early risers were in attendance to enjoy a very tasty and beautifully-presented array of quiches, fruit, and a delicious variety of pastries and muffins, catered by Bistro 76 Café.

Following our meal, Emma Parker and Sheila Lashua of AAA Washington presented a very informative program on “Travel 101” that was geared toward handy tips and ideas for travel near and far. We were given tips on packing, insurance, useful accessories, personal safety, and so much more. There were many good tips that I, for one, had never thought of before.

It isn't necessary to be an AAA member to work with one of the travel professionals. They will provide expert guidance for all your travel needs with

Sheila Lashua, travel agent and Edmonds School District graduate of Meadowdale HS, and Emma Parker, Manager of Lynnwood AAA Cruise and Travel, share travel tips at the November brunch.



personalized service tailored just for you.
It was a very pleasant morning.

Let's get packing!

- TSA Website- all the latest guidelines
- Quart sized plastic zipper bag with 3.4oz liquids
- Leave your bags unlocked or purchase TSA locks
- Medications: Must be in original prescription bottle, keep in your carry on bag, bring a few extras in case of delays
- Bring a copy of your prescription
- Emergency contact note inside
- Bring “dry sheets” - lightweight and not one of your liquids



Attend a
**AAA PackSmart
Packing Show** for
amazing packing tips
and tools!



2018 Sno-King survey summary

by Erma Snook, on behalf of the SKSR Board



We thank all of you who responded to our SKSR Member Survey in the September/October 2018 issue of *The SKSR Bulletin*. We had a light response, but the repeated comments were trend indicators and we find the feedback valuable.

To the question “What do you like about SKSR Events and opportunities?” we were impressed with the many responses that indicated that though many of our members live away from the area now, they find *The SKSR Bulletin* keeps them abreast of what is happening here and they

appreciate it. Other comments addressed the fact that our event sites were easily accessible, that newsletter folding was an enjoyable social event, that the Legislative Updates on retiree issues were helpful, and that awarding of high school scholarships and service projects were very valuable endeavors.

The following wonderful response encapsulates our retired lives of today. One writer shares: I wish I could reply to the survey electronically, but I am not technically skilled enough to do it. I wish I could be more active in the retirees’ activities as well, but we just have too many irons in the fire. My mother told me this about retired life, “When I retired, I got up in the morning with nothing to do and, by the time I went to bed at night, I had it half done.” I do not know if that was original, but I had never heard it before, and I have used it often—it is our life. My wife and I are helping raise three of our grandchildren, we are remodeling our house and yard, we go to Mayo in AZ every six months for doctors’ appointments—and we call that our vacation! We totally enjoyed our years of service to the Edmonds

School District and miss all of our colleagues and friends very much. We appreciate all that the Sno-King School Retirees Association does for retired teachers and enjoy the *Bulletins* very much. Thanks to you, it has kept us in the loop.

Our second question How can SKSR serve you better? included many compliments about our doing a good job (we love hearing that, of course!) But foremost in those responses was again an appreciation for *The SKSR Bulletin* to keep them in touch. There was one suggestion that we have since acted upon because we it was a definite need and that was to provide members with a calendar-of-events for each year. It was sent out electronically.

The third question had a list of events inviting members to volunteer to assist in our work. We recruited helpers in all categories: folding newsletters, delivering grant checks and helping at Retirement Seminars and Benefit Fairs. And many respondents are willing to help with our service projects.

Thank you again for your feedback. We loved hearing from you, and we hope you feel you were heard.

(President, continued from page 1)

on our Board. Rita Requa has had to resign because of health problems. Please contact me if you are interested in this position.

By the time you receive this Bulletin, we will have completed our service project of filling after-school snack bags for homeless children in conjunction with Washington Kids in Transition. Thank you to all who donated toward the \$570 we collected so we could purchase snacks to put in the

bags. The Board added \$200 from our budget, for a total of \$770. We purchased a van full of snacks at COSTCO.

See the article about our February general meeting on Page 2. We will have a speaker from Washington Humanities. We are opening the meeting to the public and are inviting members of Sno-Isle School Retirees to join us.

Former SKSR President Betty Odle dies

E. Elizabeth (Betty) Holm Odle passed away, Sunday, November 25, 2018. She was a Sno-King School Retirees (SKSR) and Washington State School Retirees Association (WSSRA) member since 1981-1982. She was a member for 37 years and in her nineties was bestowed Honorary Membership for her continued service. She was the person we turned to for how things should be done, and, officially, was SKSR Unit 23's Historian.

Betty served as Sno-King President from 1984-1986. In addition to her sage counsel, she always served on the Sno-King School Retirees' Board, supporting SKSR events. Whether hosting SKSR meetings or *Bulletin* folding parties in her home, organizing food and kitchen fare, supplying seasonal table decorations for luncheons, making schoolhouse decorations for Rita Requa's State Presidency (WSSRA), or even, more famously, serving her famous sweet-and-sour meatballs at the SKSR annual picnics, Betty was there. And this was always done with her quiet (not to be mistaken for shy) and efficient demeanor.

The annual Washington State School Retirees Association's Conventions were a priority for Betty. She attended and represented SKSR for 30 consecutive years. She served on state committees and

helped realize the genesis of the retirement seminars. She joined a cadre of members

who initially travelled around the state conducting those seminars. They continue today. In early days, Betty in the midst of the action, some hotly contested convention issues were sometimes met with advocacy, backroom newsletters that they produced on a mimeograph! Betty, held in high esteem around the state organization (WSSRA), was awarded the first Patrick T Hoban Meritorious Award in 1991 for supporting WSSRA goals, achievement beyond the norm, and inspiring and encouraging others.

Although small of stature and unassuming in manner, Betty's influence on the Sno-King School Retirees and WSSRA is legendary. She will be remembered and missed by all who knew her.



2019 Retirement Seminar Schedule

The Edmonds School District and the Sno-King School Retirees are providing the districts' 2019 Retirement Seminars for Edmonds, Mukilteo, Northshore and Shoreline school districts. These sessions are provided for employees and spouses at no cost, and confirmation to attend is not necessary.

SESSION 1

Thursday, February 28 Boardroom A/B
 5:00 – 5:15 pm Welcome
 5:20 – 6:00 pm The Emotional Side of Retirement, EAP
 6:05 – 6:20 pm Protecting Your Retirement, Sno-King School Retirees

SESSION 2

Thursday, March 7 Boardroom A/B
 4:15 – 5:15 pm Social Security & Medicare
 5:30 – 7:00 pm Solving the Retirement Income Puzzle
 D.A. Davidson & Co

SESSION 3

Thursday, March 14 Boardroom A/B
 5:00 – 5:30 pm VEBA
 5:40 – 7:00 pm State Medical & Dental Plans, PEBA

SESSION 4

Thursday, March 21 Boardroom A/B
 Washington State Retirement System
 5:00 – 6:20 pm TRS 2/SERS 2/PERS 2
 6:30 – 7:00 pm Deferred Compensation
 7:10 – 8:30 pm TRS 3/SERS 3/PERS 3

Health news

Sleeping pills—be cautious

by Donna Murrish Source: Department of Veterans Affairs



Do you often struggle to sleep at night? Well, you're not alone. Millions of Americans

have this problem, and many of them turn to sleeping pills for help.

According to a recent study published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, this may not be such a good idea. The study found that about one in three adults ages 65-80 use prescription or over-the-counter sleep aids at least occasionally.

Experts say this is concerning for a number of reasons. Studies have linked the regular, long-term use of OTC sleep medicines to some potentially serious side effects. Many OTC sleep aids—such as Benadryl and Tylenol PM—contain diphenhydramine that blocks activity of a brain chemical that plays a role in muscle activation and also in brain functions like alertness, learning and memory.

Because of this blocking effect and the side effects of these OTC drugs, the American Geriatric Society has deemed them “generally inappropriate” for seniors.

Another concern is that the side effects of these OTC pills can set off a “prescribing cascade,” for example, if a person experienced an issue caused by

the side effects of the sleep aid but failed to mention it to a doctor, a new medication may be prescribed to treat that problem. This new drug could also have side effects and something else might be added to manage those...and on it goes. Be sure to tell your doctor about all pills you're taking.

Concern #3 is growing worry about another, more-serious risk associated with these OTC drugs. A 2015 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that over a 10-year period, people who regularly took the amount of diphenhydramine found in two Benadryl or two Extra-Strength Tylenol PM pills about once every week or two were at significantly increased risk for dementia. For individuals who took these drugs about once every three or more days, their dementia risks rose by 54% compared to people who did not take these types of medications.

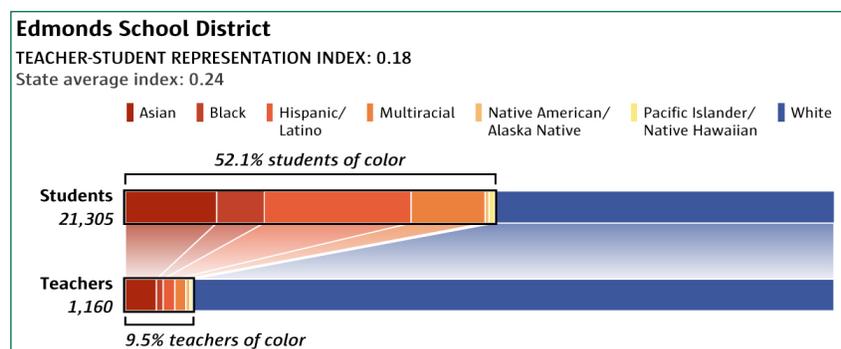
The links between these OTC drugs and dementia are far from certain. The UK, in a more recent study, turned up only “tentative” links, and it was determined that more research is needed. But the only way to 100% attribute a health issue to any specific treatment is through a randomized trial.

Prescription sleep aids carry their own risks. Headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and hallucinations are a few of the short-term concerns associated with a class of drug designed to induce sleep that includes Ambien, Lunesta, Sonota and others. Researchers find it very difficult to nail down the long-term risks associated with regular use of these drugs.

The Seattle Times Teacher Diversity in Washington state

On December 14/15, The Seattle Times featured a story about teacher diversity in the state. One of the districts included in the staff/student analysis was Edmonds. The article can be found at: https://projects.seattletimes.com/2018/teacher-diversity-wa/?utm_source=marketingcloud&utm_medium=email&utm_

“Greater representation can improve outcomes for students of color. So why are 89% of Washington teachers white?”



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Emily M. Eng / The Seattle Times

Grant Report

Grants awarded to 56 active SKSR members

by Karen McElliott

Each fall SKSR's active members are invited to apply for grants of up to \$250 to facilitate special projects, which will enrich their students' educational experience (e.g., field trips, guest speakers, materials for integrated units of study) or to provide materials/equipment to augment their students' learning (e.g., noise-cancelling headphones). Recipients included classroom, ELL, special ed., and LAP teachers; subject specialists; school psychologists; an instructional coach; speech and language pathologists; library media specialists; an occupational therapist; and a teacher of the autistic.

This year SKSR is awarding 56 grants, a new record, amounting to just under \$9,000. Since the program was started in 1998, over \$88,000 has been distributed. SKSR is proud to recognize the efforts of our active colleagues by providing these additional resources.

SKSR members are in the process of presenting checks to grant recipients at staff meetings.

Congratulations to the following recipients:

EDMONDS

Brier Terrace MS: Ellen Wingham
 Cedar Way Elementary: Michelle McShane, Kristi Pihl
 Edmonds Heights K-12: Robin Waldron
 Hazelwood Elementary: Lisa Van Horne
 Hilltop Elementary: Sarah Allsop-Fine
 Lynndale Elementary: Clarence Korf
 Lynnwood Elementary: Debra Comfort
 Madrona K-8: Penelope Nichols
 Maplewood Parent Cooperative:

Nanette Peppin
 Meadowdale MS: Brigit Albiker-Osterhaug
 Seaview Elementary: Melissa Falleroni, Logan McAuley, Amy Rust

NORTHSHORE

Arrowhead Elementary: Paula Wilson
 Canyon Creek Elementary: Joanne Burkett, Suzanne Ducotey, Ashley Farner, Annie Hall, Mark Mayberry, Lisa Reid, Karen Rogers, Jenny R. Ross, Michelle Vancour
 East Ridge Elementary: Tamra

Erickson
 Secondary Academy for Success: Gary Sogn
 Woodmoor Elementary: Cathy Kennedy

SHORELINE

Brirarcrest Elementary: Cindy Ebisu, Monica Holdridge
 Cascade K8 Community School: Sheryl Yost
 Echo Lake Elementary: Allison Bowhay, Shari Bronster, Kelly Dillon, Josh Frank, Susie McDowell, Marcia Sanders, Tani Stenford, Joe Wack
 Lake Forest Park Elementary: Kimberly Clasen, Lynn Gardiner, Riley Kruetzer, Rhonda Okazaki, Tamara Thompson
 Parkwood Elementary: Dianne Hertzberg, Bethany Ibach, Renee Iverson
 Ridgecrest Elementary: Joanna Freeman, Sheryl Lundahl, Mary Rae
 Shorecrest HS: Veronica Cook
 Syre Elementary: Jennifer Altena, Lori Hashimoto, Jenny Hodgen, Debbie Lea Hubbell, Stephanie Martin, Maggie Rock



Echo Lake Elementary Grant Recipients with SKSR President Jim Siscel: L to R: Alison Bowhay, Shari Bronster, Kelly Dillon, Josh Frank, Susie McDowell, Marcia Sanders, Tani Stenford, Joe Wack



Help us with the *Bulletin*

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

Send news, pictures and other materials to Jo Caldwell: jo@wmea.org—425-218-8434.
Please send us news, pictures, etc., about other members as well as about your activities.

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 Evie Nordeen, 425-775-1127.

To help with mailing our next *Bulletin* **March 4**, contact Robin Randles, 206-542-6428 or Robinrandles@cmug.com