

Sno-King School Retirees



March-April 2019

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from our president

What's happening...

by Jim Siscel

The Legislature is in session and we need to be aware of what is happening with our issues. We are working for our retirees, our current active employees and future employees.

Each of the following WSSRA concerns has had bills introduced in both the House of Represent-

tatives and the Senate:

- Plan 1 COLA—3% one time;
- PEBB Benefit to pay 50% of healthcare cost;
- Early Retirement for Plans 2/3—lower retirement age to 60 years;
- Plan 2 Default—change default plan for new hires from Plan 3;
- VEBA Improvements—allow more than 180 days accumulation for VEBA;
- Retire-Rehire Improvements.

If any of the above is a concern of yours, please take the time to email your legislators. Their linked email addresses can be found under Legislation on our website, SKSR.org.

A variety of opportunities for you this spring

Please see information elsewhere in the *Bulletin* about our March UW field trip. Our April Scholarship Luncheon will be held at a new location—the First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach. Our joint meeting with Sno-Isle will be held in May at Le Bistro Restaurant.

Please consider joining the group that will be going to Yakima for the WSSRA Convention, June 3-5. There is sharing of information and an opportunity to meet new and old friends (like your high school business teacher), eat great food and enjoy good entertain-

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OFFICERS

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

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

Our Legislature in action

Legislative priorities for 2019

by *Tim Knopf, NW-1 Coordinating Council Legislative Representative, WSSRA Legislative Committee Member*

The 105-day regular session of the 2019 Washington State Legislature started Monday, January 14, 2019, beginning another two-year legislative cycle. Bills and bill numbers from the 2018 legislative session are now obsolete.

The Democrats solidly control both the House of Representatives and the Senate. One-fifth of legislators (28 members) are brand new; women make up 40% of the 2019 Legislature, and this session is the most ethnically diverse in Washington state history.

Rocco Gianni, Tim Knopf and Diane Visten, NW-1 Coordinating Council's members of the WSSRA Legislative Committee, are charged with informing and convincing the 27 legislators of the nine Puget Sound legislative districts between the Canadian Border and north Seattle (Legislative Districts: 42nd, 40th, 10th, 39th, 38th, 44th, 21st, 32nd and 1st) to support the legislative goals of the Washington State School Retirees' Association. They traveled to Olympia for three days of training and lobbying the legislature on January 29th through 31st and will go again in mid-March.

Plan 1 COLA plans moving forward

Before last year's session, the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) recommended to the Legislature a one-time 3% Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Plan 1 retirees. Legislators cut that to a one-time, 1.5% increase, but passed it as the first increase for Plan 1 members since killing the Uniform COLA in 2011.

This year the SCPP again approved a one-time 3% COLA for Plan 1 members. We support that but will press further for an on-going annual COLA like that enjoyed by every other Washington state retirement plan.

As nice as it was to receive a 1.5% increase from last year's Legislature, that's a pittance compared to the 16% to 33% of lost purchasing power suffered by Plan 1 members since the end of the Uniform COLA. Because Plan 1 retirees had to be 66 years of age before collecting the Uniform COLA, a 58-year-old retiring in 2003 after 30 years of service would have already lost 20% in purchasing power by the time that (s)he qualified for the Uniform COLA in 2011, the very year the Legislature killed it. Since then (s)he has lost another 13% for a total of 33% in lost purchasing power. Today roughly one in six

Plan 1 members earn so little that they qualify for the minimum benefit.

One of our most effective lobbying tools last year was the written statements of Plan 1 members that described the challenges that they've faced without an ongoing COLA since 2011. Handed to the members' own legislators, those statements had real impact!

Plan 1 members: how you can help yourself

If you are a Plan 1 member, you can help again this session by providing us with your written statement about what it's like to live without an on-going COLA and with ever-shrinking purchasing power. You need not include your name if you'd rather not, only your legislative district or hometown.

We will share with legislators the statements of any WSSRA members supporting any part of the WSSRA 2019 Legislative Agenda. Your legislators need to hear from you, their constituents.

New bills in the new session

To date nearly 500 bills have dropped into the hopper for the 2019 Legislative Session. These include two companion bills to provide that 3% one-time COLA for Plan 1 members. They also include two proposals to lower the full, penalty-free retirement age of Plan 2 and 3 members with 30 years' service to age 60 (House Bill 1132 and Senate Bill 5178). Two more bills speak to improvements in the VEBA program. House Bill 1085, that proposes increasing the PEBB Health Benefit to 50% of our cost, has been assigned to the House Appropriations Committee.

This year is our best chance to achieve our goals. We can't do it alone. We need you to speak out and help yourself by telling your legislators what you need. If you write it down and share it with us, we'll deliver your comments to your legislators. Send them to timknopf1@yahoo.com or 932 Wetmore Avenue, Everett WA 98201.



Our May event

May 16–Lunch at Le Bistro with Sno-Isle: Mark your calendar

by Jan Phillips, Chair

Have you read the book or seen the movie entitled *Farewell to Manzanar*? Maybe you have driven by the interment site in California, pictured on the right. We have the opportunity to hear someone who, along with her family, experienced living in a “relocation camp” in Utah during World War II. Altogether there were 10 “relocation camps.” In addition, there were three internment (prison) camps. There were 120,000 people of Japanese descent held in these camps; two-thirds were Japanese Americans.

When I interviewed Gloria Kawabori to get material for this article, it amazed me to hear that she learned by reading the book why some of events happened. She was born in the Utah camp. She will be talking from the heart, relating family experiences. It is very emotional for her. Just in the brief time that we talked, I was amazed at the “wrongness” that America committed.

There will be a meet-and-greet opportunity starting at 11:30 AM. Lunch will be served at 12:00. Following lunch, Gloria Kawabori will give her presentation. Then WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke will give a brief update of the recent legislative session.

- Le Bistro–Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center, 9001 Airport Road, Everett. We are limited to 29 Sno-King guests.
- The cost is only \$5 for members and \$10 for guests.
- RSVP to Jan Phillips, 425-743-5034 (you may leave a voice mail) or email soccerjan@hotmail.com by Friday, May 10, if you would like to attend. When you RSVP, please select Chicken Parmesan or Creamy Chicken Piccata for your entree. The meal also includes Minestrone soup and Blackstone cheese cake.



From our February meeting

Storms, extreme weather and human responses

by Roberta Hawkins, Chair

Our SKSR General Meeting on February 7th was a delight from beginning to end. Starting with coffee and tea and cookies, we were treated to a review of upcoming events and a brief presentation from Lynn-dale Elementary Principal Chris Fulford, who spoke about the practices and processes of evaluation being used in his school and across the district. In particular,



Roberta Hawkins presents certificate to Feliks Banel following his presentation.

he talked about a 1,2,3,4 scale used to indicate a student’s progress in relation to core standards. He also discussed both the positive aspects and the challenges

of the online grade reporting system used in the Edmonds District. Direct and immediate access are a real advantage, making it very easy for parents and staff to stay on top of student progress. Of course, challenges still exist, but are constantly being discussed and adjustments are being made. It made us aware of how much grading and evaluation have changed.

Following a brief question-and-answer period, Roberta Hawkins introduced our main speaker, Feliks Banel, local broadcaster and historian. He gave an interesting and informative presentation about the impacts of our region’s most amazing, and sometimes dark, weather events and most infamous storms. His interactive approach used personal stories and input from the audience, as well as wonderful historical photography of Seattle and local areas during the snow storms of the 1880s and 1916. He used video clips of the wind that destroyed the Tacoma Narrows Bridge known as Galloping Gertie, and live interviews he

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From our service project

Helping Washington Kids in Transition

by Jim Siscel, Chair

Fourteen members of Sno-King School Retirees (SKSR) assisted the Washington Kids in Transition organization by bagging approximately 2,000 snack-food bags in 90 minutes on Saturday, January 5th. The snack bags were packed with a salty item, a sweet item and a granola bar. These bags for homeless students provide some food that the students may not have access to until they return to school the following day. They receive the bags on 13 dedicated school buses that transport them to the place where they will spend the night. SKSR members donated \$770 to purchase the items.

SKSR member Judy Hewitt, “This particular community service project is one that is near and dear to teachers’ hearts because they know how important nutrition and general well-being are to their students’ ability to learn. Although we are retired, we educators never lose the desire to make the world a better place for students, and this is one way that we can accomplish that collectively.”

Member Marilyn Irwin, who helped on the project, said, “I’m staggered by the large and growing need in the Edmonds School District. So many people are working hard to turn the trend toward homelessness

Front Row-L to R: Annette Roberts, Pauline LeWarne, Priscilla Strand, Lynda Hughes, Marilyn Irwin, Barbara Smith, Jennifer Cobb. Back Row-L to R: Jim Siscel, Marlene Johnson, Donna Murrish, Pat Cornwell, Jan Phillips, Virg Rayton, Judy Hewitt



around, but no progress is being made. The number keeps increasing. Although we did a teeny, tiny bit to put a short-term band aid on the problem this Saturday, dramatic, all-encompassing changes are needed to solve the homeless problem. I’m hopeful our participation was a value to some child’s life, and I’m sure in a small way it was. Our participation was equally valuable to each of us who was working. We were educated about the homeless children’s numbers and needs in Edmonds School District and, of course, people feel good when they are helpful. Isn’t that one of the reasons we were teachers?”

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conducted with those impacted by one of the those rare Pacific Northwest tornados that destroyed an elementary school. Each of these focused on the personal and human impacts of extreme weather events.

SKSR member Marlene Johnson remarked on the quality of the presentation, noting that long-time residents of this area recognized some of his pictures. The presentation gave us a clear feeling and example of how these types of major weather events often generate a sense of community, drawing people together to help neighbors and/or to enjoy the shared experience

with them and family. Karen McElliott said, “This was a great presentation. If Feliks Banel is representative of the caliber of information and presentation skills, we definitely need to keep Humanities Washington in mind when we are looking for future program ideas.”

We were fortunate that Humanities Washington, who sponsors these types of speakers, had this topic this year, as we know that our recent Gig Harbor tornado and even more recent snow storm and cold spell have indeed drawn communities to reach out to family and support neighbors.

Health News

Making sense of food labels

by Donna Murrish, Health Chair

Source: Consumer Reports on Health (February 2019)

Natural or Organic?

These terms are not synonymous. Organic has strong, comprehensive federal standards that address how foods are farmed and processed. Natural has only one regulated definition—on meat and poultry, and it means the product was minimally processed. On other foods, the term is essentially meaningless.

Look for the USDA Organic seal if you want foods produced without most synthetic pesticides and fertilizers or all genetically engineered crops, chemical processing aids, or artificial ingredients.

Multigrain vs Whole Wheat?

Multigrain just means there's a mixture of grains, most of which may be refined (processed to have the outer bran and inner germ stripped away). Whole Grain (whole wheat, oats or brown rice) is first in a product's ingredients' list and is likely to contain a decent amount of whole grains. Your best bet is to look for products that say *100 % whole wheat* or *100 % whole grain*.

Free-range or cage-free chicken and eggs?

Neither of these claims mean that the chickens roam freely. Cage-free chickens aren't raised in a cage, but they may still be packed into a building with tens of thousands of other birds with little ability to roam and peck. Free-range birds have access to an outdoor

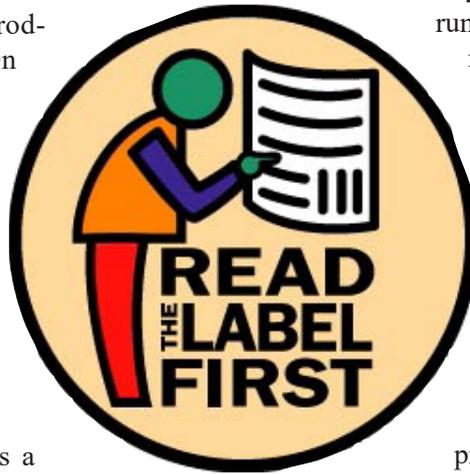
space but there is no standard for the amount of space and there may be only one door to the outside that's unreachable for most birds. To be sure chickens were actually able to access a spacious outdoor run, look for the "pasture-raised" claim in combination with the Certified-Humane seal.

Grass-fed Beef

If you want grass-fed beef, look for a specific 100% grass-fed claim, some with strong standards such as the American Grassfed seal, NOFA-NY Certified 100% Grass Fed and PCO Certified 100% Grass Fed. When possible, grass-fed beef and dairy products are a wise buy because their total fat content is lower than similar products from grain-fed cattle. 100% grass-fed beef has a higher proportion of healthy polyunsaturated fats than grain-fed beef, whether it's organic or conventional.

Safe to eat food past its use-by or sell-by date?

Sell-by is the date manufacturers use to tell retailers when to remove a product from shelves. Use-by is the date when the manufacturer guarantees the product is at its best quality. Usually, if handled properly, a product should be safe until spoilage is evident. Spoiled foods often have an off-odor and off-taste or changes in texture or color.



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ment. And the price is right—for the most part, it is free! Contact me if you are interested.

Your donations helped homeless children

Our service project was most successful, thanks to you for your donations allowing us to purchase the food that we packed for the homeless children. See the report on Page 5.

We need you to step up

The Nominating Committee has been activated to find a unit President and President-Elect for next year. If your unit is going to continue to be successful, these two very important positions need to be

filled. Your Sno-King School Retirees organization, the second largest in the state, needs two members to step up and volunteer for these two positions. Members of the current board have fulfilled the position of President multiple times and do not feel they should serve again. Please be assured that members of the current board will provide complete and total support to our new board members.

We also need a Legislative Coordinator to work with our NW-1 Coordinating Council legislative representatives and our local legislators. Please contact me if you are interested.

Grant Report

SKSR Grants presented to 56 active teachers

by Karen McElliott, Chair

In December and January, we delivered 56 grant checks to 24 schools in our three districts. Luckily, we were able to present all the checks before the snow started. A big “Thank You” to the 12 presenters who made this happen: Barb Bumgardner, Sharron Cain, Sylvia Haven, Ruth Kenney, Kay McKenna, Jan Philips, Mary Lynn Potter, Virg Rayton, Jim Siscel, Erma Snook, Priscilla Strand and Kathleen Ward. An “Extra Thank You” to Barbara, Mary, Lynn and Jim for presenting at several schools,

and an “Extra Special Thank You” to Priscilla, who presented at SIX Edmonds and Northshore schools. Without their willingness to take on extra schools, we could not have done this so quickly.

Most checks were presented at staff meetings. Besides awarding checks, the presenters also explained WSSRA initiatives concerning all school employee pension plans and how SKSR uses its dues for local programs, such as the annual Active Member Grants.

SKSR member Priscilla Strand presents a check to teacher Nanette Peppin of Maplewood Elementary. The check reimburses Nanette for the items on the table. that she purchased for use in her classroom.



A little teacher humor...

Teacher: How old is your father?
 Kid: He is 6 years old.
 Teacher: What? How is that possible?
 Kid: He became a father only when I was born.

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.
 Maria: Here it is.
 Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered North America?
 Class: Maria.

Member Information Updates

Deceased

- Katherine L. Leland, 1/5/2019,
Northshore Retiree, Member since 1999.
- Iris M. Page, 12/25/2018,
Retired from Edmonds 15, Member since 1997.
- JoAnne Y. Sekowsky, 12/2018,
Member since 1995
- Larry W. Squire, 12/2018,
Retired from Edmonds 15, Member since 1988.
- Margaret Stephensen-Dahl, 1/2019,
Member since 2009.
- Hazel O. Wilcoxon, 12/2018,
Retired from Edmonds 15, Member since 1999.
- Ruth M. Woodward, 1/11/2019,
Retired from Shoreline 412, Member since 1999.

New Members

- Anderson, Elizabeth A*
- Anneberg, Julianne M*
- Baker, Carolyn
- Baker, Laura A*
- Bender, Monica*
- Brookes, Lorie J*
- Christensen, Colette B*
- Clarke, Angela*
- Fell, Sarah Anne*
- Fike, Mitzi*
- Galvan, Meghan C*
- Hansen, Christine J*
- Hart, Melissa R*
- Henderson, Jeremiah J*
- Jaffe, Ilene*
- Jessen, Louise M*
- Keyser, Mary K*
- Kim, Lydia Y*
- Kleyn, Frank*
- Koeller, Patricia*
- Larson, Melodee L*
- Lyon Allison*
- Martin, Greg Scott*
- Massot, Trisha J*
- Mathias, Catherine*
- Miller, Lisa M*
- O'Connor, Kristyn A*
- Onishi, Leann Y*
- Parker, Linda P*
- Phipps, Jenny J*
- Pitts, Amy E*
- Scobie, Lori*
- Tyler, Karen D*
- Wilder, JaneAnne*
- Woodman, Mary Eileen*

*=active member

NW-1 Report

Summary from NW-1 meeting in January*by Roberta Hawkins*

On January 14, six SKSR Board members attended the NW-1 regional meeting in Mt. Vernon. Council co-chair Joanne Jones called the meeting to order and quickly began with the pledge and roll call. The urgency was because our speaker, Peter Diedrick, needed to return to Olympia for the beginning of the 2019 Legislative sessions.

WSSRA Legislative issues

Peter gave a succinct summary of the issues that are the focus of WSSRA for this year. He distributed a list of the current bills to be considered and indicated that he will be using this listing format and highlight items in green that WSSRA Legislative Committee will support. If you see this list in legislative news sent to you and it is marked in RED, that is not good, and he will indicate why it is not good and what action our members need to take. There will be some changes in the Health Care Authority to shut down Plan F. In its place they will be opening a Plan G. One of the WSSRA priorities is increasing the health-care subsidy with the argument that educators have, over time with limited increases, lost significant purchasing power.

Losses, scholarships, auction

Following Diedrick's presentation, co-chair Bruce Boyer recognized the loss of state leaders Eloise Stendal, Rick Nebeker and Jim Legget and noted information about memorials for them.

NW-1 Representative Ken Harvey talked about the scholarships presented annually: the WSSR-Foundation scholarships, the Neil D. Prescott Scholarship, the Robert J. Handy Pemco Scholarship and a new one for a student-teaching/internship candidate.

Marianne Harvey spoke about information regarding fund raising through the WSSR-Foundation auction at the annual convention. The bigger donated baskets and individual crafts and arts will be part of a silent auction and displayed in the general meeting room to generate more attention for the auction.

**State president's message**

WSSRA President Linda Averill spoke about how interesting her year has been, particularly helping units and members keep their resolutions regarding Health and Welfare. She also discussed the importance of recruiting and retaining members. She recommended having Alan Burke speak at "grant delivery" times to help with recruitment. Averill also expressed concern about the State Outreach Committee and the limited response WSSRA has had to the request for input on the direction this group should take.

Committee reports

The remaining committee reports dealt with the need to train and plan for meetings with legislators and to make sure that proper steps for giving the membership incentive are followed. In addition we learned that changes may be coming to the state insurance program so that all K-12 educational employees are covered under a state plan.

Individual unit reports

Individual unit reports were given including the general activities conducted by each thus far and those yet to be completed this year. Jim Siscel, our SKSR Unit 23 President, spoke about the loss of Betty Odle and also handed out information regarding our February 7th information program.

Scholarship process

After a brief lunch, Kay Bishop spoke about the scholarship-reading process. The dates decided upon will be March 18, 2019, in Mt. Vernon, beginning at 9:30 AM. Jim Siscel presented a proposal to the NW-1 Council regarding keeping scholarships in the state of Washington. It was approved and passed along to the WSSRA.

Next meeting

The next NW-1 meeting will be March 11, 2019.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2019 Member Directory Published

by Jim Siscel

Our 2019 Member Directory has been published. It was sent to those with email addresses as a PDF document and a Word document. It will be updated to those email addresses in February each year in the future. If you want a hard copy, you can print it yourself in the PDF or Word document. If you printed a hard copy previously, please destroy the old copy.

We found before publication that a number of members have not updated their email addresses and/or telephone numbers. Maybe you have changed from a primary home phone to a primary cell phone. If you did not receive the directory via email, please contact Erma Snook via email, and she will send it to you. When looking at the directory, if you find that your telephone number is incorrect, please contact her with your correct telephone number. Erma's email is egsnook@comcast.net.

"Thank you" to Erma Snook for keeping our membership records and to Jim Siscel for his work with Erma on the directory.



SKSR Scholarships for future Educators

by Linda Fitzgerald

Our scholarship applications for future educators are now available for graduating seniors from high school. We will award four scholarships that are each worth \$2,000 and are renewable for three more years at \$2,000. These renewable scholarships were made available to us by a generous donation from past member Winnie Smith and will be awarded to students who continue to pursue a degree in education.

Application forms are available in each of our three districts' high schools and on line at www.SKSR.org. The deadline for mailing is March 14th. Our awardees will be honored at a luncheon on April 4th when we will all have a chance to meet these wonderful young people and their parents. Information about that luncheon is on Page 4.

Be a Census 2020 employee

The USA Census 2020 is now accepting applications for those interested in working the 2020 Census. Good salary, paid training and flexible hours are listed on the official announcement. If interested, call 1-855-JOB-2020 or visit www.2020census.gov/jobs.



Exercise for people over 50

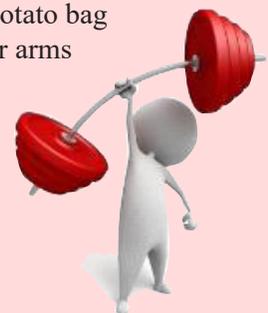
Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5-pound potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there for as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-pound potato bags. Then try 50-pound potato bags and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-pound potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a minute. (I'm at this level.)

After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.





Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline items for the next *Bulletin* is **April 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* **May 6**, contact Robin Randles, 206-542-6428 or Robinrandles@cmug.com