

# Sno-King School Retirees



November-December 2019

## The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

### What's happening...

by Cheryl Bauer

Once again I find myself at the helm writing the message to Sno-King School Retirees. Because no one stepped up to take over the leadership position of president, each of the board members is chairing a month's activities. I happened to be October. By the time you read this, we will have had our first event of

the year. Many of you signed up to attend the luncheon and program at LeBristo.

At each board meeting, we go over the reports from the various committees. I'd like to highlight a few of those:

1) One of the most impressive pieces of information, I think, is our membership number of 1,427. That means 1,427 of you may be reading this message! We are the second largest unit in the state.

2) Another highlight was our discussion of educator grants, which we hoped the increased budget would be an encouragement for active-member applications. Look for exact details on Page 4.

3) And, of course, we explored the upcoming activities for the year. Articles about many of these events are covered in this *Bulletin*.

With the weather getting colder, the leaves turning color and the upswing in activities, we hope you'll make this the year that you join us at one or more of our gatherings. Despite no formal leader, we are not slacking in our programs. Hopefully, you'll find something that appeals to you.

#### OFFICERS

*vacant*, 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

*Karen McElliott*, Active Member Grants

*vacant*, Legislative

*Jim Siscoel*, Membership/Retirement/Website

*Erma Snook*, Membership Records

*Jo Caldwell*, Bulletin Editor

#### DATE CHANGE – PLEASE NOTE:

**The February general meeting date has changed. It will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2020, from 12:00 to 3:00.**

Our next event  
by Jan Phillips

## Scholarship Brunch—November 14

Worried about ID theft, fraud, scams? Attend our November Scholarship Brunch and hear from presenters from AARP—Tom Russell and our own Keith Lindaas—who will talk about cybercrime. Both have worked at the fraud-fighter call center based in Northgate for a number of years. They will focus on preventative measures to various scams and will bring handouts titled *The Con Artist's Playbook and Guide to Stopping Robo-Scammers*.

Before their presentation, we will be treated to a delicious brunch from Chef Dane, which includes vegetarian quiche, scrambled eggs with cheddar and sautéed vegetables, bacon, grilled ham, fruit platter and assorted pastries. We will “Meet and Greet” at 9:00, and the brunch will be served at 9:30.

We hope you will join us that day at the **First Lutheran Church, 18354 Eighth Ave. NW in Shoreline**. The cost is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.

Again, the date is **November 14, 2019 from 9:00 am - 11:30 am**.

If you would like to attend, please email Jan Phillips at [soccerjan@hotmail.com](mailto:soccerjan@hotmail.com) or leave a message at **425-743-5034**. The brunch is catered, so we need your reservation no later than Friday, November 8th. This way we can have the right amount of food delivered.

Looking forward to seeing you there.



## Of Interest to 2019 Retirees:

**There IS such a thing as a free lunch/brunch!** See article above to claim yours

by Jim Siscel

Welcome to retired life! You will probably find yourself busier than you were when you were in the classroom teaching or working in some other educational area. 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 a brunch, a luncheon, a service project, a general meeting with a speaker from Washington Humanities, and a field trip. When you receive your copy of the *SKSR Bulletin* via email or snail mail, please take time to read the articles in it.



As a newly retired SKSR member, the SKSR Board would like to offer you a FREE BRUNCH/LUNCH at each of our brunches/luncheons in November, April and May. The usual cost is \$5 for our catered meals. In November and April for our brunch/luncheon, we meet at First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach. In May, we will be served by the culinary arts students at Le Bistro Sno-Isle Technical Center across from Paine Field.

When you read *The SKSR Bulletin*, you will find information on how to respond for each brunch/luncheon. When you respond, please tell the RSVP person you are a 2019 Retiree.

## Legislative Report

*Tim Knopf, WSSRA Legislative Committee member*

## Hope remains alive for a COLA in 2020 session

WSSRA's legislative goals have remained similar ever since the death of the Uniform COLA for Plan 1 retirees and the slashing of the PEBB Medical Benefit for all retirees aged 65 and older from \$183 per month to \$150 per month in 2011:

- Establish an ongoing Cost of Living Adjustment for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees (while Plans 2 and 3 were born with ongoing COLAs, Plan 1 was created in 1933 with no provision for a COLA. That is why the discretionary Uniform COLA was so easily killed in 2011.)
- Restore the PEBB Medical Benefit for retirees aged 65 and older to its original \$183 per month that it was before being slashed in 2011.
- Make improvements in Plans 2 and 3 regarding lowering the age of full retirement and in providing greater flexibility in the area of retire-rehire for Plan 2 and 3 retirees prior to age 65.

### What's happened?

Though we've made incremental progress since 2011, we have not seen tremendous success. It took seven years for Plan 1 retirees to receive a tiny, one-time, 1.5% COLA in 2018.

We had high hopes going into the regular 2019 session. The McCleary Decision funding issues were largely behind us. The traditionally more generously spending Democrats controlled both the House and Senate, and new state revenues had reached epic levels.

Despite all this, 2019 was not a successful session for school retirees. It's true that the PEBB Medical Benefit for retirees 65 and older was restored to its 2011 level (effective January 1, 2020). We succeeded in making Plan 2 the default retirement plan for future new hires who fail to choose a plan within their first 90 days, and we saw improved flexibility in retire-rehire provisions for Plan 2/3 members before age 65.

However, we failed to lower the full retirement age for Plans 2 or 3. We failed to increase the number of days retirees could convert toward their VEBA plans. Worst of all, we failed to secure a Cost of Living Adjustment of any kind for our Plan 1 retirees, not even the one-time, 3% increase proposed by House Bill 1390.

A last-ditch letter was penned by House mem-

bers Mari Leavitt and Shelly Kloba urging House leadership to include

HB 1390 in the House Operating Budget proposal on the grounds that to do otherwise was an act of gender inequity since Plan 1, which represents a greater percentage of women, has no ongoing COLA. All 13 other state retirement plans that do enjoy built-in, ongoing COLAs represent more men. Thirty additional House members signed the letter, and that forced House leadership to include HB 1390 in their final budget proposal. However, during budget negotiations with Senate leadership, it was cut from the State's 2019-2021 Operating Budget.

### In the upcoming 2020 session

Since the shorter 2020 60-day Supplemental Session is essentially part two of the 2019 session, any financial bill that failed to thrive in 2019 may be resurrected for consideration in 2020 by being declared "Necessary to Implement the Budget."

While most available revenue was gobbled up during the regular 2019 session, enough remains for HB 1390's one-time, 3% Plan 1 COLA. The big dogs that pushed us aside in 2019 while fighting for projects costing hundreds of millions of dollars won't bother with the 2020 session. Finally, the last time Plan 1 retirees received ANY COLA was during the 2018 supplemental session, so hope remains alive for a COLA next session.

During 2020 the Democrats will again control both the House and the Senate. The former Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp, has been replaced by the first female Speaker in Washington state history, the more liberal Representative Laurie Jenkins from Tacoma. We think that could be good for us.

### Proposing a new plan

Frustrated by past legislative failures, we have looked for a new way to influence legislators on the COLA issue. We have discussed a recent plan to pay for informative ads about the Plan 1 COLA



*(legislative continued on Page 7)*

Our annual Service Project

## Volunteering for Kids in Transition on Saturday, January 4

by Jim Siscel

You're invited to join us for our Service Project

**Saturday, January 4th,  
10:00 AM to noon at Edmonds  
United Methodist Church,  
828 Caspers St, Edmonds.**

\*\*We especially encourage our active educators to join with your retired educator friends.

Our project will again be with Washington Kids in Transition, a volunteer organization committed to providing basic needs to homeless children residing in Washington state.

The organization provides food to these children each day after school. Some of the children will not have another meal from the time they leave school until they come back to school the next day.



The food is distributed on the bus for them to take home.

Thirteen dedicated buses carry 250 homeless children needing 250 small food bags each day after school. Last year, the organization distributed 32,000 small bags of food. Our project will be to fill each bag with three food items.

We will purchase items for the bags from donations received at our October Lunch, November Bunch and a donation from our unit funds.

If you unable to attend one of the above activities and would like to send a donation to our treasurer, please do so by December 1st: Tom Hawkins, 9630 236th Place SW, Edmonds WA 98020. Indicate the funds are for Washington Kids in Transition.

**Please contact Virg Rayton at 425-774-9413 or [virg@raytonfamil.com](mailto:virg@raytonfamil.com) by Friday, December 27th, if you are able to participate.**

New this year!

## New scholarship opportunities for active members

by Jim Siscel

The Sno-King Board would like to start a new program for our active (currently employed) members. We would like to provide \$2,000 each year to an active member who is pursuing National Board Certification or advanced degree/study.

In order to do this, we need to organize a new committee with the express charge of selecting the annual recipient. We would like to have both active and retired members on this committee. Ideally, we would like to have an active member who has recently been involved in the National Board Certification or advanced degree/study programs.

Our goal is to start this new program in the 2020/2021 school year.

We think some time should be taken this school year, starting in February, to develop the basic paperwork and procedures for implementing this new program. If you would be interested in serving on this committee, which would meet after the school day, please contact our vice-president, Roberta Hawkins, at 206-546-2556 or [rlhawkins@aol.com](mailto:rlhawkins@aol.com).



Winnie Smith Scholarship update

## Education students continue on paths toward teaching

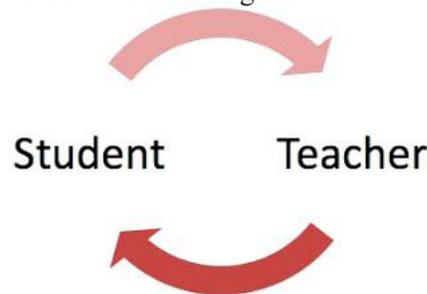
by Keith Lindaas

The following students are receiving their final Winnie Smith Memorial Scholarships: Emma Enga, Meadowdale HS; Shelbie Knowles, Lynnwood HS; and Meghan Trainer, Shorecrest HS.

**Emma** is a student at Western Washington University. She has completed the courses for her Biology/Chemistry endorsement and is in the secondary education program through the Woodring College. She has continued working in the tutoring center and this quarter is mentoring 5th-12th grade students from diverse backgrounds in Whatcom and Skagit counties. She concludes by thanking us for supporting her education.

**Shelbie** is excited to be entering her senior year of college at Northwest University. She is especially grateful to have had this scholarship for the past three years to support her schooling. Shelbie is going into her second year of the education program and looking forward to working with mentor teachers as she does her student teaching.

**Meghan** is finishing her studies at Whitworth College. She will graduate with a B.A. in Elementary Education and endorsements in Reading Education, English Language Learners Education and French Education. Meghan says that she finds herself growing more and more passionate about teaching. She finishes by stating that the assistance that we provided allows her to proceed at Whitworth in a financially stable state.



These students are receiving their second Winnie Smith Scholarship: Brent Johnson, Meadowdale HS; Katherine Lydin, Shorewood HS; Alayna Nickel, Edmonds-Woodway HS; and Olivia Riener, Woodinville HS.

**Brent** is a student at Pacific Lutheran University. He has finished many basic music requirements and has already observed and directed a middle school choir class and guitar lab, alongside a mentor teacher. Brent is experiencing new methods of teaching and instruction and is excited to expand his educational knowledge in his journey toward teaching music. He thanks us for our financial support.

**Kate** is attending Western Washington University and says that school was very good this past academic year. She has changed direction just a bit from elementary education. Kate is still looking forward to a life of teaching but is headed toward getting a degree in English and teaching in middle school or high school. She is very thankful for our support.

**Alayna** attends Brigham Young University-Idaho and is doing great in her educational endeavors. She is working toward a degree in Early Childhood Education and has completed her required foundational courses. Alayna has been learning how to teach to specific needs that each individual child may have and feels confident that her knowledge has greatly increased. She thanks us for our generous scholarship.

**Olivia** is enrolled in the Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University. She is in the Special Education Elementary Education Dual Endorsement major and is absolutely loving the program and learning so much about becoming a great teacher. Olivia has had several opportunities to work with students of varying disabilities, and that has reaffirmed her love for teaching.

A request to share

### Volunteering is what we do!

by Roberta Hawkins

Few of us really consider all the activities that we do to quietly support our communities. We give of our time because we want to help others. It is part of our DNA. We rarely think about the number of hours spent doing volunteering with/for our local social groups inside and outside of WSSRA (church, Rotary, Lions, Elks or other fraternal organizations, food banks, youth groups, schools. etc.).

WSSRA is asking us to keep a rough count of our hours. One of their goals is make sure units are credited with all the work their members do. An equally significant goal is to look forward to the day WSSRA can let legislators know that WSSRA members do lots more than ask for money. The documented hours of community contributions give concrete evidence of the care we have for our communities.

**Our request for you:** When you volunteer, just make a quick note of the time spent. It can be done

on your calendar or tallied on a tablet, or you could do it for each week or by the month.

In a later *Bulletin* we will have a form that you could use to send us your tallies. It is possible that you could do the monitoring for a single period of time, from say January through March. Then send your tallied response to [rlhawkins@aol.com](mailto:rlhawkins@aol.com).



### Volunteers at Benefits Fairs

SKSR had a table at the Northshore and Shoreline School Districts' Benefits Fairs. Volunteers talked to many current staff about what our organization does to protect, enhance and recover their retirement benefits.

*Below: Jim Siscel, Robin Randles and Roberta Hawkins at the Shoreline Benefits Fair on October 9.*



*Above: Don Denton who worked with Jim Siscel, at the Northshore Benefits Fair on October 2.*

New opportunities for retirees

## Return-to-work rules have changed for TRS and SERS retirees

by Jim Siscel

Effective May, 8, 2019, the rules for using the 2008 Early Retirement Factors (ERF) have changed. If you're a retiree of Plan 2 or 3 of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) or School Employees' Retirement System (SERS) who used the 2008 ERF, you can now return to work in a non-administrative position for up to 867 hours without impacting your benefit.

Keep the following rules in mind so you can continue to receive your monthly pension benefit while working:

- You must be a retiree of Plan 2 or 3 of the Teachers' Retirement System or School Employees' Retirement System.
- You must retire under the 2008 ERF.
- You can only return to work in a nonadministra-

tive position (please see the definition below).

- You must have reentered employment on or after May 8, 2019.
- You must wait at least 30 calendar days after your retirement date before returning to work.
- Training, orientation and classroom preparation time all count as returning to work.

Nonadministrative positions with certain employers are the only ones that qualify. To determine your eligibility, refer to this definition: For 2008 ERF retirees returning to work in a nonadministrative position or nonadministrative capacity means a position at a school district, charter school, educational service district, state school for the deaf, state school for the blind or tribal school which does not require an Administrative Certification, as defined by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

*(legislative continued from Page 3)*

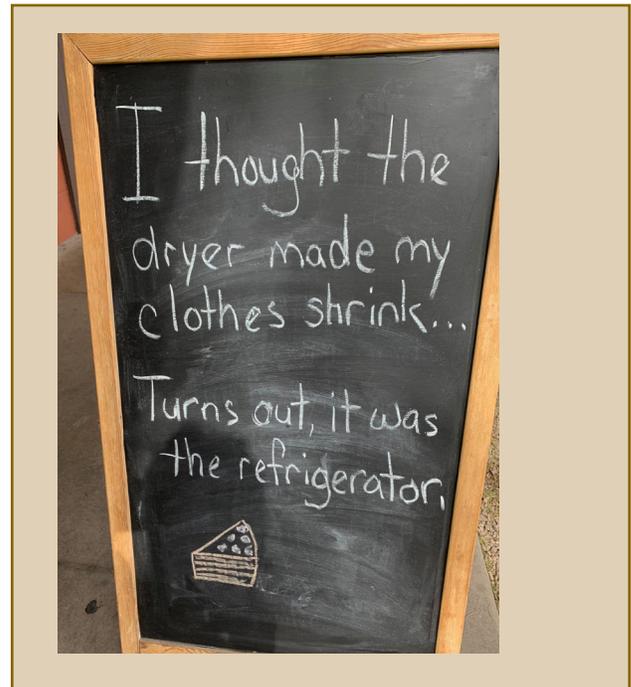
issue that would appear on Facebook pages (including legislators' pages) in the Olympia geographic area. This proposal was revealed and discussed at a September 5th meeting of the WSSRA Legislative Committee held in Cle Elum and during an October 3rd Legislative Committee conference call. The Legislative Committee supports this approach to the issue.

The ads would be informational only and would appear on all Facebook pages within a set geographic area, probably starting in early November, skipping the holidays and resuming during the 2020 Legislative Session.

We think this may be a very effective way to bring our issues to the attention of legislators during the next session. If needed, the program even has the ability to target all Facebook pages within a specific legislative district's geographical region.

The decision to pursue the project rests with the WSSRA Executive Board at its November 5th meeting. The members of the NW-1 Coordinating Council voted to support it and directed our WSSRA

Board Representative to vote yes for the plan at the November 5th WSSRA Board Meeting.



## Member Information Updates

### New Members

Roberta McNabb Leila Olson

### Deceased

Kenneth Ball,  
Northshore Member since 1994

Nelsie McLeod,  
Edmonds Member since 1999

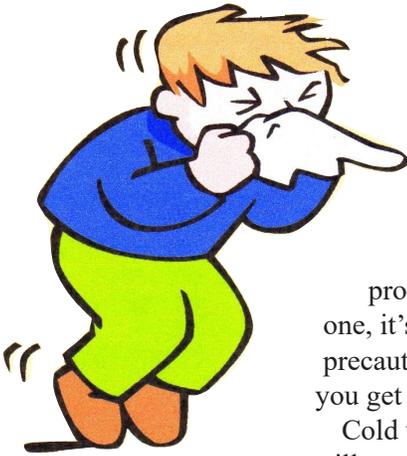
Gerald "Gerry" Geshke,  
Edmonds Member since 1994

Esther Sellers  
Edmonds Member since 1989

## Health News

**Extra precautions for winter health**

by Donna Murrish



**W**ith fall and winter on the way, bringing colder temperatures and a range of potential health problems for everyone, it's important to take precautions now before you get sick.

Cold weather doesn't cause illness, but some studies have found that cold and flu viruses can multiply and spread more easily in lower temps and humidity. Older adults are especially susceptible to getting sick because the immune system gets a little weaker as they get older.

There are many kinds of winter illnesses—the common cold, sinusitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, flu and stomach bugs. Don't let flu turn into pneumonia! Every year thousands of people land in the hospital because of the flu, and many of those die. But flu that leads to pneumonia is even deadlier. According to the medical director of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, flu-plus-pneumonia ranks eighth in leading causes of death in the U.S. The flu-to-pneumonia progression isn't the only cause of pneumonia, of course, but because the combination is so deadly—and often so preventable—it's worth special attention and extra precaution.

You've heard this before but it bears repeating again and again...

- 1) Get a flu shot—it's the best way to protect yourself and, while not 100% effective, it does offer substantial protection. The 2019 flu shot should be good for the kinds of flu viruses expected which, according to the World Health Organization, includes two new strains.
- 2) Be sure you've had the pneumococcal vaccine if you're 65 or older. Start with a one-time dose of the vaccine called PCV13 (Pneumovax 13). One year later get a dose of PPS 23 (pneumovax), which protects against 23 strains of pneumococcal bacteria.

- 3) Wash your hands often.
- 4) Avoid contact with sick people.
- 5) Stay hydrated.
- 6) Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
- 7) Get enough sleep.
- 8) Stay away from shared food, such as potlucks during the winter season.

**Note:**

Pneumonia occurs less often in adults who get routine dental checkups.

**Bonus:**

A healthy mouth reduces heart disease risk, too.

**Another note:**

Patients recovering from pneumonia are also predisposed to developing it again—another good reason to prevent it in the first place!

*Sources: Harvard Medical School Health Letter of October 2019, and Infectious Disease Specialist, William Schaffner, MD, at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville*

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NW-1 Coordinating Council report

## October 7 meeting summary

by Roberta Hawkins

Chair Marianne Harvey called the NW-1 Council meeting to order on a grey, blustery and rainy morning in Mt. Vernon. Five SKSR members attended: Jim Siscel, Virg Rayton, Karen McElliott, Roberta Hawkins and Tom Hawkins.

Guests included WSSRA President Pam Francis, NW-1 Representative Kay Bishop and WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke.

WSSRA President Pam Francis spoke briefly about her visit to Western Washington from distant Omak. Her comments were followed by Kay Bishop who expressed her willingness to help any NW-1 region unit with whatever needs they had.

Ken Harvey, Unit 22 Sno-Isle SRA and NW-1 Representative on the Health Service Committee, focused on three projects the state has endorsed:

1. WSSRA would like each unit to help them complete a collection of Community Service Project descriptions. WSSRA would like to update its information and celebrate how local units across the state give back to their communities. It will also help units find new ideas for service projects. The information can also show legislators that we are about more than pension requests.
2. Units are also asked to compile a rough count of their unit's volunteer hours for 2019-2020. Whatever our members do volunteering throughout the community should be included. We can do a simple check at our gatherings and keep a running count to submit at the end of the year.
3. The final focus is to celebrate the 100th year Anniversary of Women's Suffrage. In 1919 women were granted the right to vote. WSSRA Historian Karen Keller is collecting vignettes of local women who have made a difference in their communities. Each unit will select a woman from its community and provide background about what difference she has made. This is YOUR TURN to submit a name and help our unit. A display of some of these women is planned for the WSSRA Convention in June.

In his final report, Ken noted that an online survey would be sent out in order to gauge membership health habits.

As usual, much was said about legislative issues. Alan Burke and Tim Knopf provided a great deal of

information about WSSRA strategies to achieve our Legislative Goals for the year. At their recent committee meeting, they concluded that previous methods for gaining legislative attention have not been successful. WSSRA is asking each coordinating council for approval to shift gears and reach out via social media to make WSSRA views and needs known. They feel that such a media approach could enhance our reach and impact. Alan Burke showed one media example in print form. We need a more factual and explicit approach using pictures and vignettes. Look for opportunities to provide facts and stories to help in this campaign.

Barbara Robinson, Unit 21 Skagit/San Juan Island, spoke passionately about membership recruitment and shared materials that, with the help of WSSRA, her unit produced to put in school faculty rooms. Alan Burke also spoke about how important is it to make presentations to faculty meetings and have a special hook, like a drawing for a gift card or "instant" classroom grant, for those who join that day. At the state level, we had a 300 net gain in membership last year.

The final reports were brief. The Retirement Committee representative was absent. Alan Burke mentioned the desire to provide more direction to those retiring. It is an attempt to make the mechanics for retiring easier.

Kay Bishop, who was appointed to fill the vacated position of NW-1 Representative, has volunteered to take on the position for the next full term.

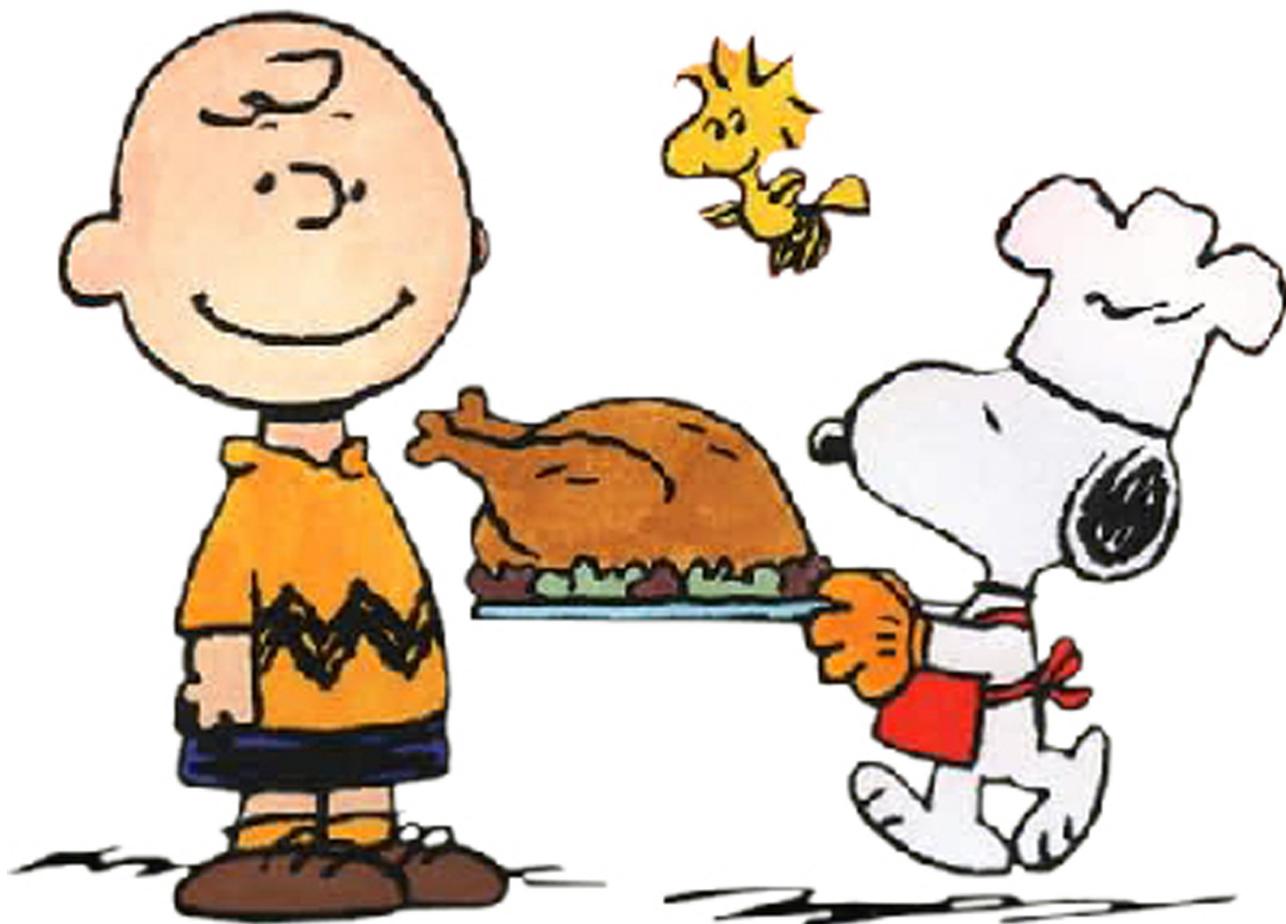
The individual unit reports summarized activities of each unit from last spring until the present, including the many lunches, retirement seminars and events like our own picnic in July. One event of note was Sno-Isle's hosting author Sandra Veal, who wrote *Rising Son* about a member of a special Army Unit during WWII. All who attended thoroughly enjoyed the presentation.

We finished with reminders regarding dates and deadlines for the remainder of the year.

Please consider joining us for the next NW-1 Coordinating Council Meeting: January 13, 2020.



# Happy Thanksgiving



## Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline items 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](mailto: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* **January 6**,  
contact Robin Randles, 206-542-6428 or [Robinrandles@cmug.com](mailto:Robinrandles@cmug.com)