

Sno-King School Retirees



May-June 2020

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening...

by Linda Fitzgerald, chair

After weeks of staying at home, I hope you have come to terms with this new reality of coronavirus in our lives. I also hope you are well and only going out of the house for trips to the grocery store and pharmacy. I'm sure all of us know someone who has the virus and is either under strict quarantine or in the hospital. My heart goes out to them and those who are separated from their loved ones while fighting this battle. We must continue to do our part by staying home, washing our hands, wearing a mask when out of the house, and practicing social distancing. This will pass, but only if we don't let our guard down too soon.

Especially for those of you living alone, I know how important the telephone and internet (also Face Time and Zoom) are to keeping you connected with your family, friends and neighbors. Even though we can't go out to lunch or dinner, or have friends over for a meal, we can keep in touch with them. I love the jokes that are being passed around on the internet as they bring a smile to my face. We are learning new things about ourselves and finding that we are resilient in this difficult time. (I learned how to fix my vacuum cleaner!) When this isolation is over, we'll go back to our lives, but with a new perspective on what is important.

Our SKSR Board canceled our field trip to the Asian Art Museum in March, had a board meeting at Jim Sisco's house in March (with social distancing being observed), canceled our April Scholarship Luncheon, canceled our April board meeting and now we have learned that our May joint luncheon with Sno-Isle has been canceled too.

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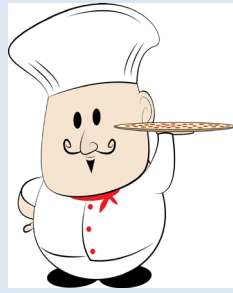
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Our next events

**The Joint Luncheon
at Le Bistro
scheduled for May 12
has been canceled.**



You're invited to SKSR's Annual Picnic

- July 16, from 11:30 until 2:30, Edmonds City Park.
- Jan's famous meatballs, salads, and dessert.
- SKSR scholarship recipients and some of our grant recipients.
- Installation of next year's officers.

Hope you all come to celebrate the end of the year with challenges, but we have all made it through.

Our February event

SKSR learns about the "sticky" subject of sugar

by Sylvia Haven

There was a good turnout for our February 27th meeting at the Edmonds School District Offices. A wonderfully entertaining and informative presentation was given by cultural anthropologist Julia Harrison from Humanities Washington. Her topic *Sticky Subject: The History and Culture of Sugar* embraced so much more than the title would indicate. Even the title has a double meaning: sugar is indeed sticky, but the history of its effects on human history has also been "sticky." With the emphasis on culture, she wove into her program the history of sweetness and sugar in the human

diet from 2500 B.C. to the present day with its far-ranging implications for society, history, nutrition, art, religion and politics. Her stated goal was to make connections in learning as opposed to compartmentalization. In this she definitely succeeded.

Dr. Harrison's talk was illustrated with slides that added graphic detail to her subject—sometimes with dramatic results. Her slide showing the huge historical Egyptian stone gears, where Arab slaves fed the canes for grinding, brought gasps as she informed us that many slaves, including children, were caught and mangled in those mammoth stone turbines. The work-life expectancy of those workers is estimated to have been ten years—a high human price to pay for the making of that luxury. Brought home to us was the sobering thought of what is behind the pleasures we so often enjoy today as well as in the past.

As an added etymological tidbit, we learned that the word "slave" derives from the practice of Arabs using people from the Slavic world for sugar production. While on the subject of slavery, she pointed out something not often included in high school history books concerning our country's past. When the French controlled New Orleans, slaves were given Sundays off, and they had the right to purchase their own freedom.

In very early times, it took more calories to get dietary sweets than was nutritionally derived from eating them. Our current levels of sugar consumption

are unique in human history. Delving into the science of nutrition as well as physiology, Dr. Harrison informed us that sugar (in the form of glucose) is what feeds the brain. It is also a compact form of energy which the classic Japanese ninja warriors well understood as they made it a practice to carry sugar balls.

Bringing her talk closer to home, she covered the topic of sugar in today's diet. Because refined sugar is so easily available in our times, its unnatural, excess consumption has led to problems of health. As teachers we all are aware of obesity as an increasing problem in today's society. It also touches on the subject of politics as our speaker pointed out. Of all the lobbying in Congress, 23% is from agricultural sources, and of that 40% is from the sugar industry.

Our questions and comments afterwards indicated a high degree of attention and interest in the program. Several of us are of an age to actually remember sugar rationing in WW II. Two people from the audience had heard rumors of "sugar dumping" during the war, ostensibly to maintain the idea of a real shortage. Two others had first-hand family experience with beet farming then. Because cane sugar from the Philippines was no longer available during the war, many sugar beets were grown in Idaho. Another teacher pointed out that because of protests, the Gerber company was forced to remove

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Legislative Report

Tim Knopf, WSSRA Legislative Committee member

Final wrap-up report

The 60-day, 2020 Washington State Legislative Supplemental Session began on January 13 and ended March 12. During that period, the world changed around us, not due to anything that the Legislature had done, but because a sub-microscopic coronavirus leapt from an animal into a human at an outdoor food market on the far side of the world. This new virus unleashed a pandemic that has burned across our state, our country and the world, altering lives in ways previously unimagined.

Pandemics aside, the 2020 Legislative Session actually went fairly well for Washington State School Retirees. Our primary goal at the start of the 2020 session was to achieve passage of at least a one-time Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Plan 1 members.

Since the 2011 Legislature sacrificed the Uniform COLA in 2011 to save state funds after the recession, Plan 1 members have endured the erosion of inflation on their fixed retirements. Each year for nearly a decade their retirements were worth less, while all other Washington state retirement plans remained level due to their built-in annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs).

During the 2018 Supplemental Session, Plan 1 retirees did receive a one-time, 1.5% COLA on the first \$25,000 of their retirements. That amounted to just a bit over \$1 per day, far from enough to make up for the 18-to-40% inflationary losses Plan 1 members had suffered by then.

A one-time, 3% COLA was proposed during the regular 2019, 105-day Legislative Session in the form of two identical bills, Senate Bill 5400 and House Bill 1390. This COLA would grant Plan 1 retirees a 3% COLA on their first \$25,000 of retirement income or, at most, not more than \$62.50 per month.

Unfortunately, neither bill made it out of committee during the 2019 session. However, near the session's end a "hail Mary" effort by Democratic Representatives Mari Leavitt (sponsor of HB 1390) and Shelley Kloba took the form of a letter to House leadership urging that the Plan 1 COLA be included in the House Operating Budget Proposal, and that letter was signed by over 30 fellow Representatives. House leaders grudgingly agreed to include it in



their proposal. Yet, during final budget negotiations with Senate leadership, the COLA bill was dropped from the budget submitted to the Governor.

School retirees made progress in other areas that session—notably, the Public Employees Benefits Board's payment toward the healthcare expenses of PEBB retirees 65 years and older was increased back to its 2010 level of \$186 per month. The passage of House Bill 1139 made improvements in Plans 2-3 retire-rehire provisions by allowing "early" retirees to substitute teach, coach or serve in any non-administrative, certificated or classified position up to 867 hours per year. Senate Bill 5360 made Plan 2 the default plan for new hires instead of the Plan 3 hybrid 401k/pension—something for which new hires may thank us in 35 years.

Having come so close to success on the COLA issue in 2019, WSSRA chose to push even harder for our legislative goals in the 2020 supplemental session. Since the two sessions in each biennium are connected, bills considered but not passed in 2019 could be revived during the 2020 session.

Under the leadership of WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke and Legislative Director Peter Diedrick and aided by the expertise of contract lobbyists Fred Yancey and Michael Moran, we prepared a full-out push to pass a Plan 1 COLA.

The WSSRA Legislative Committee came to Olympia from all across the state to lobby legislators in person February 2nd through 4th and again February 25th through 27th.

Meanwhile, the first official COVID-19 case in the U.S. was diagnosed in Everett, Washington, on January 21, 2020.

On February 13, 2020, Representatives Mari Leavitt and Shelley Kloba, joined by Republican Representative Skyler Rude, sent another letter to House leadership supporting the Plan 1 COLA. This one was signed by over 60 fellow House members.

An army of WSSRA members wrote emails, not just to their own legislators but also to members of the House Committee for Appropriations, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and as Senate Bill

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(Legislative report continued from page 3)

5400 and House Bill 1390 progressed, to the members the House and Senate Rules Committees.

Meanwhile, the first official COVID-19 death in the U.S. was reported at Seattle's Harborview Hospital on February 26, 2020. Soon several Washington high schools closed due to cases on campus. On March 9, the UW took its classes online only and the Northshore School District closed. By March 10, schools in Snohomish closed. COVID-19 cases were reported in several nursing homes besides Life Care Center. The Washington death toll climbed to 24.

In Olympia, as the session neared its March 12 conclusion, House Bill 1390 moved ahead, passing both the House and the Senate with overwhelming support on March 10. It was delivered to the Governor's desk on the last day of the 2020 Legislative Session, Thursday, March 12, 2020. We had finally achieved our primary goal for the session and gotten Plan 1 retirees some kind of a COLA!

The Plan 1 COLA wasn't our only success in 2020. Senate Bill 6383 provides Plan 3 members the chance to invest the private savings portion of their retirement accounts and Deferred Compensation savings in the state's own pension fund, the Comingled Trust Fund, an investment that can earn upwards of 8% (in normal times).

Another benefit to diabetic school retirees was Senate Bill 6087 and House Bill 2662. Together, these bills limit out-of-pocket expenses for insulin to \$100 per month.

In addition to everything else, before closing, the Legislature approved an emergency \$200 million to fight the growing Coronavirus crisis. The next day Governor Inslee closed all K-12 schools in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties.

Meanwhile the COVID-19 pandemic grew worse. On March 11, Governor Inslee banned social, spiritual and recreational gatherings of over 250 people. The next day he announced the closure of all public and private K-12 schools to start March 17. On March 15 he closed all sit-down restaurants, entertainment and recreational venues. State parks were closed on March 25.

On March 23, with over 2,200 COVID-19 documented cases and 110 deaths, the governor issued his first statewide "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. Meanwhile, House Bill 1390 remained on his desk, unsigned.

On March 31, we learned that House Bill 1390

could be vetoed by Governor Inslee as he desperately fought to save the state money to fight the virus. An urgent request went out from WSSRA to call and email the governor asking that he not veto the bill. Several legislators joined the effort, including Mari Leavitt, Shelley Kloba and Mike Sells. WSSRA's letter-writing army went back to work, and again inundated Olympia with emails.

On Friday April 3, Governor Inslee reported that he had vetoed nearly two dozen bills and 140 separate budget items, saving the state \$445 million over the next three years. However, HB 1390 was not among them. Instead, he finally signed our one-time, 3% Plan 1 COLA into law!



As of April 11, 2020, there have been nearly 10,000 cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in Washington state and 475 deaths reported. Unemployment numbers due to the "Stay Home, Stay Safe" shutdown have reached unprecedented numbers. Our economy is nearly stagnant.

Now, we school retirees, as members of one of the most medically at-risk groups, must stay safe and live to enjoy our retirement checks that, ironically, keep coming while hundreds of thousands of fellow Washingtonians go without theirs.

The battle against COVID-19 will continue and may even require a special legislative session later this year to address it. Only time will reveal its full effects on our state and economy. Stay safe!

For a detailed explanation of all the bills, related to public retirees in the 2019-2020 legislative sessions, please see the Session Bill Report link posted under the Legislative tab of the Washington State Schools Retirees' Association website. Prepared by WSSRA's Legislative Director Peter Diedrick, it is a very complete, clear and factual report on all our successes and failures.

News from Olympia

From the Department of Retirement Systems: Uncertain times and your retirement—March 20, 2020

The turbulence and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic can be unsettling whether you are currently retired, retiring soon, or even if retirement is years away. We understand your concern. Here are some things to know as we navigate through this current event.

For retirees: One of the Department of Retirement Systems’ core functions is to pay pension benefits to retirees and other annuitants, especially in times of emergencies. DRS operations are continuing in the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” environment with most of our team members teleworking and a few onsite. The payment of pension benefits is an essential service and will continue as normal. As always, we recommend electronic deposit as the safest, most secure way of receiving your monthly benefit.

For active members: As you think about your retirement future, keep in mind that all members of the state’s retirement systems have a defined benefit in their retirement plan. Plans 1 and 2 are solely defined benefit; Plan 3 is part defined benefit and part investment earnings (more on that in a moment).

When you retire, your defined benefit is calculated based on how many years you have worked and how much you have earned in compensation—it is not based on investment performance. Defined benefit payments are guaranteed for your lifetime (and for your survivors if you have chosen a survivor option).

Defined benefits are paid from the state’s retirement trust funds, which are among the most well-funded in the nation. These funds are invested and

(board message continued from Page 1)

Behind the scenes the board continues to work on important business. The scholarship committee chose our four scholarship recipients by communicating through email; we will celebrate them on July 16th at our picnic at Edmonds City Park. Board members have submitted articles to Jo Caldwell for this newsletter, Jim Siscel has kept our website current, Evie Nordeen is sending cards to members who are sick and grieving, and Erma Snook has been working with our records. We are all eager to return to our former lives and reconnect with our members in a personal way.

managed by the Washington State Investment Board (WSIB), and we are confident that the WSIB is well positioned to continue to invest through the ups and downs of the market cycle, as it has done throughout its existence.

If you are in Plan 3 or the Deferred Compensation Program (or both), you are making regular contributions into the investment fund or funds you’ve selected, or you may be maintaining those funds in retirement or another job. Either way, you are undoubtedly concerned about the performance of your investments as the market continues to react to the pandemic.

In times like this, it helps to focus on the long term and be mindful that markets have bounced back after other severe shocks, most recently the 2007-08 global financial crisis. The important thing is to avoid over-reacting. If you have concerns about your investment lineup, it may be a good time to consult a financial adviser on strategies for the current environment and beyond.

Member Information Updates

New Members

Fridge, Thomas B*	Treadway, Ryan M*
Mayer, Monica S*	Turner, Allyn J*
Peck, Shirley J*	*=active member

Deceased

Sharon Berglin, 4/2/2020 Member since 2011

Jack Eschrich, 3/2020

Retired from Edmonds, Member since 2000

James Frans, 3/2020 Member since 2009

Margery Hanson, 3/2020 Member since 2012

(Feb. event summary continued from Page 2)

the excess salt and sugar content from its baby foods.

This program, covering the varied threads of many subjects within one unifying topic, was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. If Julia’s presentation is indicative of the high quality of scholarship and audience appeal that Humanities Washington offers, it might be a good idea to look into other programs they offer. Because they are non-profit and are supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities among many others, they can offer these free programs.

Scholarship report

2020 SKSR Scholarships awarded

by Linda Fitzgerald

Our Sno-King School Retirees annually award scholarships of \$2,000 to four graduating seniors attending public high schools in our three districts who are planning to pursue a degree in a school-related field. This year's Scholarship Committee of Keith Lindaas, Linda Fitzgerald, Evie Nordeen and Diana McQuay was not able to meet in person so we communicated using email. As always, we were able to award scholarships to outstanding candidates. These students can request their scholarships to be renewed for three more years through funds left to our unit by Winnie Smith.

Our recipients are usually celebrated at our Scholarship Luncheon. Because of the Stay-at-Home order, that event was canceled. We have asked the students and their parents to join us on July 16th at Edmonds City Park for our annual picnic. We hope that you will come to the picnic and support these fine students.



Mae Cramer attends Lynnwood HS and is planning to obtain a degree in Elementary Education from Gonzaga University. Since she was nine years old, her dream has been to be an elementary

school teacher; she will pursue this degree along with one in Women's and Gender Studies. While in high school, Mae has shown leadership abilities in student government and clubs. She is secretary of the class of 2020, president of Intersectional Feminism Club, a student adviser on the Edmonds School Board, and head editor of the student newspaper. While being very active in school, Mae has also worked several jobs. Mae's AP United States History teacher said, "One of Mae's most outstanding characteristics is her willingness to fight for those who do not have the ability to do so for themselves."



Sydni Hillman said that she wants to be an educator to help others have the successes she has received. She attends Scriber Lake HS in Edmonds and plans to attend The Evergreen State College

next year. Sydni started high school at Edmonds-Woodway and transferred to Scriber Lake as a sophomore where she has excelled in a different learning environment. She now understands that she has a different learning style and what she needs to do to be successful. Sydni's counselor believes that the non-traditional approach to coursework at Evergreen State will continue to add to her success. Her future goal is to return home and support others as she has been supported.

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Grant to Brier Terrace Middle School

School psychologist Ellen Winningham requested high-interest/low-reading level books for middle-school students reading at a primary level. Shirley Peck's students used the books, and when Winningham and Peck compared before and after reading levels, they found students had made marked improvement.

Grant presentation: teacher Shirley Peck, grant recipient Ellen Winningham, and presenter Karen McElliott

(2020 SKSR Scholarship awardees, continued)



WWU will be the future school for **Piper Rosman** from Shorecrest HS. Piper's goal is a degree in Early Childhood Education with a career goal of being an elementary teacher.

At Shorecrest, Piper has been in many clubs, student government and athletics. She has participated volleyball, basketball, lacrosse and track-and-field, while being a member of Environmental and Interact Club. Outside of school, her volunteer work has mainly been through the Campfire Organization. Piper has run a babysitting business for years, and for the past year she has worked at a daycare where she gets firsthand experience working with children. One of her teacher recommendations speaks highly of her "innate characteristics of a successful educator that cannot be taught." Piper speaks of her former teachers, who she now sees as mentors, who have "made such a significant impact on who I am today." She will soon be that mentor to her students.



A degree in History Education is in the plans for **Madi-son "Madi" Strahan**, a senior from Lynwood HS, and a future Shoreline CC and CWU student. She has been very busy, especially during her

summers, furthering her knowledge of American Sign Language, which was a course during her first two years of high school. She has attended two summer camps and received credit for the one through the UW. Madi has also been employed at retail stores for several years, learning important skills in working with the public. One teacher says when you look at Madi, "you will find a dedicated, intelligent, hardworking and exceptional person." She adds that Madi "is a well-rounded individual who has a positive rapport with others." Madi is very connected to her family and says she loves learning about the past and planning for the future with them.

Patricia Valle: WA Excellence in Education winner

by Mary Jo Heller

SKSR member Patricia Valle, Social Studies teacher at Kellogg Middle School in Shoreline, has been named Washington State Teacher and recognized with the Excellence in Education Award for Alpha Delta Kappa, an honorary fraternal international organization.

The award is based on dedication, knowledge, skills, professional achievement and success, school/community involvement, contributions to the educational process and active participation in ADK.

Kellogg Principal Heather Hiatt said, "Pat is a natural leader inside of her classroom, in our school community and within our district. She is leading her colleagues through the curriculum with a lens on equity, making sure to identify and analyze the stories being told and omitted."

Pat holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado, and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Washington. Pat taught elementary school in Colorado and Okinawa, Japan, before moving to Seattle in 1989. Pat left the classroom for a few years to serve as president for the Shoreline Education Association. She is an advocate for, and has been working with unions since beginning teaching.

For ten years, Pat has worked with the WEA in Minority Affairs. She has taken training in *Difficult Conversations*, a program to aid conversations between teachers, and between faculty and administration. As SEA President, Pat has had many opportunities to use this training.

At Kellogg, Pat is the faculty sponsor of the Gay/Straight Alliance, co-chair of the social studies department and a representative for Kellogg to the SEA. Pat has also sponsored and facilitated a youth forum at Edmonds-Woodway High School.



Health News

Supporting your bone health

by Donna Murrish

Sources: Environmental Nutrition; Harvard Health Letter; Healthy Aging

Every day now you're hearing about the coronavirus and Covid 19, so I'm not going to repeat anything except to remind you to stay active and eat healthy meals.

While it's true that all people lose bone as they age, osteoporosis is not inevitable.

Exercise

The best way to protect bone health is with regular exercise. Walking, hiking and aerobics are good for keeping the bones in your legs and hips strong. Regular exercise not only helps maintain joint function, but also reduces stiffness, pain and fatigue. This is in addition to a whole host of benefits for your

heart, lungs, bones, muscles and even mood. It might seem that exercising would aggravate aching joints, but the truth is that joints tend to be more painful when they are left idle. When not exercised, the tendons, muscles, and ligaments quickly shorten and tense up. Exercise, and stretching afterward, can help reduce stiffness and help preserve range of motion in a joint. If you walk with a friend or walking group, it can be a good way to keep up the social interaction that may help preserve cognitive wellbeing. Remember to stay hydrated, even if you don't feel thirsty.

Diet

Bone is a dynamic living tissue, removing old bone cells and rebuilding it with new ones. As we age, this becomes less efficient with old bone being removed faster than it can be replaced. Along with regular weight-bearing and strength-training activities, the foods you eat play a large role in preventing and managing bone loss. Make sure your diet has all the nutrients it needs to keep building bone.



Calcium is a critical mineral contained in our bones. Dairy foods provide the most concentrated sources, but you can also find calcium in such foods as sockeye salmon, sardines, fortified orange juice, spinach, dried beans, nuts and tofu made with calcium sulfate. A “food-first” approach is typically advised versus

an over-reliance on dietary supplements. Calcium supplements can interfere with the absorption of certain medications so you should talk with your pharmacist about the best timing for your calcium supplements.

Vitamin D works hand-in-hand with calcium in maintaining bone health. The body makes its own vitamin D when sunlight hits the skin. This may be a bit of a problem for people

who have little or no sun exposure or who live in wintry climates for a long period of the year. Vitamin D is found in foods fortified with Vitamin D such as dairy products, orange juice, soy milk and cereals, as well as fatty fish, beef liver and egg yolks.

Vitamin K helps produce a protein involved in making bone. Studies have found that people who take in higher levels of Vitamin K are less likely to break hips. This vitamin is found in broccoli, kale, Brussels sprouts, leafy greens and cabbage.

Protein intake is important for bone health. A good rule of thumb is a daily intake in grams that is roughly half your weight in pounds. For example, for a woman who weighs 150 pounds, a recommended intake would be 75 grams of protein.

Beverages can affect the absorption of calcium and lead to bone loss. Alcohol should be limited to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. Caffeine—a daily limit of three cups of coffee. Soda—avoid cola soft drinks when possible.

Grants news

Grants in action at Lake Forest Park

by Karen McElliott

Lake Forest Park students had a fabulous afternoon of learning about energy, motion and design with Rick Hartman “The Toymaker.”

This grant provided the opportunity for all fifth graders to participate in this hands-on learning and really helped set the stage for science concepts in their Motion and Design Unit.

Three fifth grade teachers combined their grant money to help pay for a experience for their students in which they learned about force, motion, gravity, speed, patterns, and design.

“Thank you so much,” said teachers Kimberly Clasen, Tamara Thompson and Riley Kreutzer.

Mylo, Leo, James and Andrew construct vehicles applying the scientific principles they learned. Students experienced the process of innovation as they built, tested and evaluated their vehicles.



(right) Olivia displays her Dick’s Hamburger vehicle. She used the drive-in’s anniversary as her inspiration when applying the workshop principles of motion and design to create her vehicle’s signature look.

Lake Forest Park fifth graders attend a hands-on workshop on Motion and Design. Afterward, students used what they learned to design and build individual vehicles.



In December, Frank Kleyn, librarian at LFP Elementary, received a grant to purchase early reader chapter books. The books were to serve two purposes: to augment that section of the school’s library and to teach character traits. Early readers preparing to make the leap from picture books to more complex chapter books participated in a series of activities over several weeks including discussions of character traits and character comparisons.

“THANK YOU for the amazing opportunity to help our young readers with the new books brought to our library through this year’s SKSR grant. We feel very fortunate to have received this year’s SKSR grant. Please let your



Mrs. Brittany Rieck’s second grade class shows off their favorite early reader chapter books. They spent three weeks reading the books and analyzing the character traits.

members know that the books will be read and enjoyed by our readers for many years to come,” said Frank Kleyn.



Help us with the *Bulletin*

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

Please send changes in your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address to
Erma Snook, egsnook@comcast.net, or call 425-776-2067.

If you know of illness, please call Sunshine Chair Evie Nordeen, 425-775-1127.

With the current conditions, there will be no group foldings and preparations for mailing of the *Bulletin*.

After we are back to "normal" we will resume that process.