

Sno-King School Retirees



September-October 2020

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening...

by *Jim Siscel, chair*

Six months and counting our new life style. No meetings, no meeting with relatives and friends, going out only when absolutely necessary, wearing our masks, washing hands frequently and all the other things we have to do to be safe.

Thank goodness for Zoom, Facetime, Skype and all other video-conferencing platforms. These allow us to have distant meetings and visit with family and friends. Reach out to your friends with a telephone call or an email. Be sure they are doing okay. If you feel safe and are able to, help them out with something they need. Weekly, I pick up take-out from Chef Dane, SKSR's brunch and lunch caterer, and deliver to several other seniors in my cul-de-sac and Edmonds. My wife orders curb delivery from Fred Meyer for herself and a neighbor.

To our members who are working in education now—we retirees send many strong, positive thoughts to you as you start this very new and different school year. Distant learning, which will be used in our three school districts, is not what you were trained for. We appreciate how hard it was to explore this education format last spring. We know that you will do the very best possible to reach out to and teach the children in your classes. That is what all teachers do. We appreciate your concerns about teaching children in the classroom. Your health and your family's health are important. Teachers are essential workers no matter what the health situation is. But social distancing and plastic shields in the classroom are not how optimu teaching and learning happen.

To all of our members...*Stay Safe and Stay Positive*. This will end; we just don't know how soon.

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
Barb Bumgardner, Sunshine
Karen McElliott, Active Member Grants
vacant, Legislative
Jim Siscel, Membership/Retirement/Website
Erma Snook, Membership Records
Jo Caldwell, Bulletin Editor

Our next event

Activities temporarily suspended

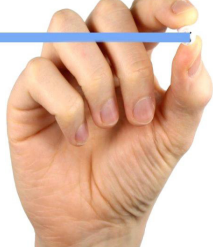
**The Fall October Luncheon,
usually held at le Bistro
at the Sno-Isle Tech Center,
has been
CANCELED.**



Health Chair needed

HEALTH CARE

Donna Murrish has decided that she can no longer continue as our SKSR Health Chair on our board; consequently, we need a new Health Chair.



What are the responsibilities of the Health Chair? You must...

- put together an article for each of our six *Bulletin* issues,
- attend board meetings as you are able,
- attend our annual planning retreat.

SKSR will provide you with subscriptions to two health publications, recommended by Donna, from which you can select information/topics/articles for the *Bulletin*, so you don't have to research or write articles yourself unless that is your preference.

Please contact Roberta Hawkins at 206-546-2556 if you are interested.

Confidentiality of SKSR Membership Directory

This is our annual reminder to our membership to treat the information in our membership directory carefully and to take prudent actions to safeguard it. We are expected to restrict the distribution and use of such information to contacts with our members and official business. It may not be used for any commercial or political solicitation.

Member Information Updates

New Members

Rebecca Cavanaugh	Thomas Radek
A. Elaine Frederickson	Ann Sheets
Ann Kashiwa	Livia Ziebarth*

* = active member

Deceased

Roger Bray 7/2020,
Edmonds retiree, Member since 1993-1994
James Steves, 7/14/20,
Shoreline retiree, Member since 1990-1991

Legislative news

Legislative resultsby *Jim Siscel*

Due to hard work by members, unit legislative representatives and WSSRA staff, we made several gains for retired, active and future educators during the 2019 and 2020 Legislative sessions.

- As a result of legislation approved earlier this year, certain retirees in Plan 1 of the Public Employees' Retirement System and Plan 1 of the Teachers' Retirement System (PERS 1 and TRS 1) received a one-time benefit increase in July of this year. Under the law, eligible PERS 1 and TRS 1 retirees received a one-time, permanent, 3% increase in their monthly benefit, not to exceed \$62.50 per month. The increase applied to PERS 1 and TRS 1 retirees receiving a monthly benefit on or before July 1, 2019. The adjustment does not apply to retirees who already qualify for an annual increase in 2020 through one of the existing minimum-benefit provisions provided by the plans. The law took effect July 1, 2020; the one-time increase was reflected in retirement benefits paid at the end of July.
- By request of the Select Committee on Pension Policy concerning the retirement strategy funds in the Plan 3 and the Deferred Compensation programs, legislation allows the Washington State Investment Board to include the state's comingled trust fund in the asset mix for Plan 3 and DCP Retirement Strategy Fund options.

- Any early Plan 2 & 3 retirees who would like to substitute teach, coach or serve in any non-administrative certificated and/or classified job may now do so up to 867 hours per year.
- The Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit was restored to the pre-recession peak of 50% of the plan premium up to \$183 per month in 2019. The benefit was maintained in the 2020 supplemental budget.
- Working to help new employees, WSSRA supported a bill in 2019 that allows after July 1, 2020, new school employees who fail to fill out their retirement paperwork to default into PERS/SERS/TRS Plan 2 instead of Plan 3.
- Legislators passed a bill to cap out-of-pocket insulin prices at \$100 per month for both state-managed and private health plans.

Going forward WSSRA will be working to...

- provide a permanent COLA for TRS & PERS 1 retirees.
- maintain retiree health benefits.
- lower the retirement age in TRS/PERS SERS Plans 2 & 3.



SKSR Board member Jim Siscel was honored virtually during an August Mariners' game. During the game's telecast, Mariners' announcer Dave Sims recognized Jim for his 25 years as a Mariners' season ticket holder and spoke of his 26 years of service in the Air Force. If fans had been at T-Mobile Park, they could have seen pictures on the big screen of Jim's military service from Second Lieutenant to Colonel. One of the pictures included in the presentation was of Jim giving his Veterans' Day presentation at Highland Terrace Elementary School in the Shoreline School District.

Scholarship news

Winnie Smith Scholarship updates

by Keith Lindaas

The following students are receiving their final scholarships, worth \$2,500 each from SKSR. The total over four years is \$8,500: **Brent Johnson** (Meadowdale HS), **Katherine Lydin** (Shorewood HS), **Emilie Mathiasen** (Meadowdale HS), **Alayna Nickel** (Edmonds-Woodway HS) and **Olivia Riener** (Woodinville HS).



Brent is in his final year at Pacific Lutheran University and plans to become a choir teacher. He has been taking music education courses that cover musical skills, as well as classroom management and day-to-day student interaction. Brent extends his thanks to SKSR for awarding him this scholarship which has helped him fund his college education.

Kate is finishing her last year at Western Washington University. This past school year she had the pleasure of working with freshmen as a mentor in an English class. She also continued learning how to lead classroom discussions with older students in a literary setting. Kate thanks us for all the work we are doing for future educators.

Emilie is also finishing at Western Washington University. She is excited about her final year, student teaching and the thought of having her own classroom. Emilie said, "I have learned so much about myself and the type of teacher I want to be." She is proud and grateful to be one of the lucky recipients of this scholarship and thanks us again for this great honor.

Alayna is at Brigham Young University-Idaho and will have a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood/Special Education with an endorsement for grades 4-6. She said that she would not have been able to get her outstanding education were it not for our generous scholarship. Alayna is excited to start the school year 2020-2021 and thanks us for all our support.

Olivia is finishing her undergraduate studies at Western Washington University. She is enrolled in the Woodring College of Education and is continuing her dual endorsement in Special Education and Elementary Education. Olivia has three quarters left in her program and is looking forward to having her own classroom. She is very appreciative of this scholarship.

These scholarships are awarded to students who previously received SKSR scholarships and are continuing to successfully pursue degrees in an education.

From the Department of Retirement Systems



The Department of Retirement Systems will transition to a new record keeper to serve customers in Plan 3 (PERS, SERS and TRS) and Deferred Compensation Program (DCP). The DRS record keeper maintains the accounting of Plan 3, DCP and JRA investments and assists customers with transactions such as fund transfers and withdrawals. Empower Retirement is the current record keeper and will continue to serve cus-

tomers until the services are transferred to Voya Financial.

Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) for DRS-administered retirement systems and plans have been established for 2020. LEOFF Plan 1 COLAs took effect April 1. COLAs for all other plans took effect July 1 and were reflected in end-of-July benefit payments.

You can view the 2020 COLA percentages by retirement date and plan on the DRS website (drs.wa.gov/retiree/information/cola.htm). Additional information is available on the COLA FAQ page (drs.wa.gov/retirees/information/colafaq/).

Scholarship news

COVID affects plans of 2020 scholarship winners

by Linda Fitzgerald

As we approach the end of six months dealing with restrictions on our lives due to COVID 19, I know our thoughts are turning to those of you still working and wondering what your teaching will be like this year. It sounds like it will start mostly online only in Washington state, with a possible move to some in-school instruction as the year progresses, if we are able to contain the spread. Likewise, I have been wondering about the four students who received SKSR Scholarships this year and who will be beginning their college careers in September. I asked these future educators if/how their plans have changed. This is the information I received from them in the beginning of August.



Mae Cramer graduated from Lynnwood High School and told us on her application that she would be attending Gonzaga University. She tells me that Gonzaga is doing a combination

of different styles of classes. Students can choose to stay home and fully participate in their classes remotely. The professors have the choice of doing a hybrid model or going fully remote. Mae is planning to move to campus and do some hybrid classes and some remote classes. Gonzaga has been updating the students and families on what their choices are and have sent guides and rules that students will need to follow if they choose to live on campus.



Sydni Hillman graduated from Scriber Lake High School and chose Evergreen College. She has decided to stay home and participate on line. She has been receiving weekly emails from the college to

help make sure that she knows what her options are.



Piper Rosman, a Shorecrest High School graduate, plans to pursue her teaching degree at Western Washington University. Her choice is to stay home, as she and her family feel it is the

safest thing to do. She will be studying remotely, although 8 to 10% of the classes at Western will be held on-campus in-person. Piper also reports that Western has been sending regular emails to students and families to keep them current on the plans for fall quarter.



Another Lynnwood graduate, **Madison Strahan**, still has plans to attend Shoreline Community College. She had always planned on living at home, so her plans have not changed much,

although she'll be taking all online classes and will not be on campus. Maddy's immune system is compromised so she also feels safer to take all online classes. She says that Shoreline has not been keeping her updated, but she can find any information on their website.

The good news is that all four of our SKSR scholarship awardees from 2020 will be going to the schools they originally planned to attend. Only Mae Cramer, at Gonzaga, will actually be on campus this fall.

I'll check back with them in January and see how they did, what their plans are for winter quarter, and give you another report.



If you are concerned about the USPS delivering your ballot in a timely manner, we suggest that when you receive your ballot you immediately fill it out and then deliver it to a drop-box in your county. Ballots left in drop boxes are regularly picked up by elections officials and tallied in a timely manner.

To find drop boxes in Washington counties, go to...
<https://mynorthwest.com/1583950/washington-state-ballot-drop-box-locations/>
 and click on your county.

Grants update

Hold onto that idea... SKSR Active Member Grants paused

by Karen McElliott

Due to the pandemic, the application period for 2020-21 active member grants will not open with the beginning of the school year. It is likely that some revisions will need to be made to the process and application.

After months of mask wearing and increased hand washing, shut downs and social distancing, phase numbers going up then stalling, and restrictions tightening up again, it has become clear that things will not be back to normal when schools reopen in the fall. By early August, Edmonds, Shoreline and Northshore school districts had all announced that the school year would open remotely. On August 5, Governor Inslee, OSPI Superintendent Chris Reykdal and Washington state's top public health doctor, Kathy Lofy, recommended that high-risk counties, which include those of our three



districts, should not open with face-to-face instruction.

We learned last year that remote learning adversely impacted some of our active member grants. Spring field trips were canceled. Some purchases could not be delivered due to school closures.

At the next SKSR Board meeting on September 10, the board will determine what changes need to be made to the grant application process to avoid funding grants that can't be completed; for example, the board might decide not to fund field trips and guest speakers this year. As soon as the board has discussed the pertinent issues

and made its decisions, the grants page on the SKSR website will be updated with the information, and an email notice will be sent to active members.

Please check the SKSR website after September 11 for more informatin.

We're into our 7th month of COVID-19. These may make you laugh, but there's a lot of truth here.

1. So let me get this straight, there's no cure for a virus that can be killed by sanitizer and hand soap?
2. Is it too early to put up the Christmas tree yet? I have run out of things to do.
3. If these last months have taught us anything, it's that stupidity travels faster than any virus on the planet.
4. Just wait a second--so what you're telling me is that my chance of surviving all this is directly linked to the common sense of others? You're kidding, right?
5. People are scared of getting fined or arrested for congregating in crowds, as if catching a deadly disease and dying a horrible death weren't enough of a deterrent.
6. Whoever decided a liquor store is more essential than a hair salon is obviously a bald-headed alcoholic.
7. Remember when you were little and all your underwear had the days of the week on them. Those would be helpful right now.
8. The spread of Covid-19 is based on two factors: 1. How dense the population is and 2. How dense the population is.
9. Remember all those times when you wished the weekend would last forever? Well, wish granted. Happy now?
10. Did a big load of pajamas so I would have enough clean work clothes for this week.
11. It may take a village to raise a child, but I swear it's going to take a whole vineyard to home school one.

In the news

Five months into the pandemic, tips for fighting COVID-19 stress

from *Lynnwood Today*, August 3, 2020, by Bob Throndsen,
edited by Jim Siscel

Yes, there is such a thing as COVID stress. Burnout. Overload.

“We are so saturated with information,” says Pat Morris from Volunteers of America Western Washington, “that there’s a sense of powerlessness among all of us. When are we going to get back to normal? When is this going to be over?”

The information saturation, says Morris, comes from 24-7 news, social media, lost jobs, friends and family, fears about school, shopping...even getting out of the house for a break.

The American Medical Association reported in June that 40% of us “say worry and stress related to the threat of coronavirus has played a negative role in their mental health.” The Kaiser Family Foundation conducted the tracking poll, which shows that 46% of women, and 33% of men, believe COVID-19 “has negatively impacted their mental health.”

COVID stress affects all ages. A study from San Francisco’s Woebot Labs claims that “more than two-thirds of Millennials (born 1981-1996) and Gen-Z (born after 1997) survey respondents said they feel anxiety nearly every day.” That’s higher stress levels than the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and Gen X’ers (1965-1984) exhibit.

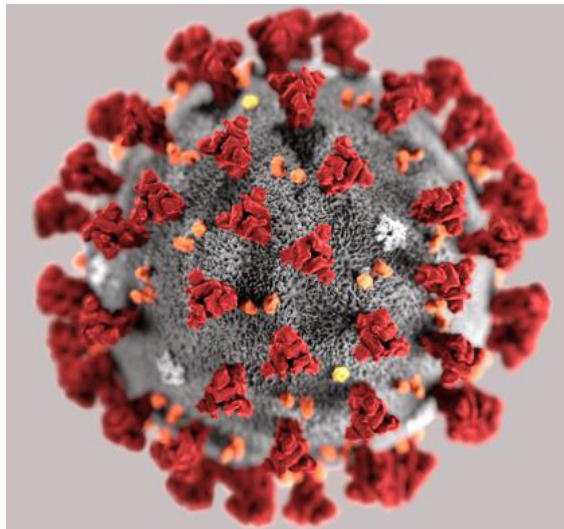
How do we combat the stress, after five months living with the pandemic?

Morris says to bring your focus back to your own individual level. “What choices can we make to assure ourselves that we’re going to be safe?”

“Remember,” she adds, “we can’t control what others do, but we can control what we do.” She believes

that “it’s pretty powerful if everyone took ‘self-responsibility’ to wash our hands, wear masks, keep apart; I think we’d be having a different discussion now.”

Morris is senior director of behavioral health for Volunteers of America in Everett. She oversees a regional crisis/chat line, is a certified trainer/consultant for suicide and crisis intervention; a member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Steering Committee and board member for NASCOD (National Association of Crisis Line Directors).



With the coronavirus, she knows “each and every one of us is at risk of being affected by the virus at any time.” She says watching out for yourself is key. “It’s more about refreshing your memory of things that work for you” to help relieve COVID stress. She says it’s basic self-care: Get enough sleep, keep to a schedule of some kind, eat properly. Don’t succumb to the so-called “COVID diet” of sitting at home, feeling bored

and eating food that we normally wouldn’t.

Stay connected to friends and family by phone, online, via Zoom, Skype or Facebook. Be the one who initiates contact.

Morris knows coping with COVID goes way beyond self-help. People face lost jobs, housing insecurity, other health issues and child care availability—not knowing where to turn for help. For many, she adds, this is the first time they have had to reach out and they don’t know what is available. “I don’t have any money to pay my rent,” is something Morris says they hear again and again.

Learn more about VOAWW’s <https://www.voaww.org/covid-19-updates>.

Can we all agree that in 2015 not a single person got the correct answer to the question, “Where do you see yourself five years from now?”

Health News

Do you have a first-aid kit?

by Donna Murrish

Source: *Consumer Reports on Health*, July 2020 issue

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, now more than ever, a home first-aid kit is essential. Whether you already have one or not, this would be a good time to either put one together or review the contents of the one you have. The Red Cross recommends the following:

1. Absorbent compress dressings to help stop severe bleeding
2. Adhesive cloth tape to hold compress dressings in place
3. Adhesive bandages of assorted sizes
4. Antibiotic ointment, such as bacitracin, polysporin, or mupirocin
5. Antiseptic solution or wipes such as hydrogen peroxide, povidone-iodine, or chlorhexidine
6. Aspirin in the event of a heart attack
7. Instant cold compress
8. Non-latex gloves
9. Hydrocortisone ointment
10. Three and four-inch gauze roll bandages to wrap injuries
11. Box of sterile gauze pads for sterile wound dressings
12. Triangular bandage to use as a bandage or tourniquet



13. Oral thermometer
 14. Tweezers
 15. CPR mask which can be used to administer CPR without breathing in another person's bodily fluids.
- ***You may also want to have petroleum jelly, pain relievers such as Tylenol/generic, and antihistamines like Benadryl/generic. (Be alert for side effects with antihistamines)

Note: Because COVID-19 can cause low blood oxygen, you might wonder whether you should have a home pulse oximeter, a device usually worn on the finger to check levels of oxygen in the blood. If you decide to get one, be aware that a 2016 study found that some home models were more error-prone than the ones doctors use. If you encounter symptoms that could be COVID-19, pay attention for shortness of breath and alert your doctor right away if it occurs.

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ing the legislature this coming year and the importance of the 2020 election. Both Peter and Louie Osmonovich discussed the importance of donating to the WSSR-PAC, our political-action group. Because no live meetings or convention were held, they are in need of funds to help support candidates. Individuals can reach their website through wssr-pac.org.

The final element of the virtual convention announced the election results: President-Elect Bruce

Boyer; NW-1 District Representative Kay Bishop and WSSR-Foundation Trustee Pat Cygan. Bob Duke will serve as WSSRA President for the 2020-2021 year.

While this year's convention was not our usual, it did provide closure of the business for the year and brought the whole state together. It lacked the things that make it fun, but it couldn't be helped. We hope that we will have that "fun" at next year's convention to be held in June in Pasco.

WSSRA News

Our virtual convention

by Roberta Hawkins

Hello to all members of SKSR from the cozy site of the 2020 WSSRA Convention! I made it in time for the starting presentation. I travelled all the way from my kitchen with my cup of tea to my office to settle in front of my computer and turn it on.

Yes! There was a convention. No! It wasn't the usual, convivial gathering of folks at a traditional convention site. No, it wasn't a multi-day event. BUT it provided just the right approach to make us all feel comfortable in a year unlike any other year. It was a "virtual" convention: a ZOOM Webinar. There I was sitting comfortably in my home office chair watching.

"Host" WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke called the group to order and reviewed the five primary items to be included in the Webinar: Recognitions, Reports, Legislative News, the Celebration of Life of those lost, and WSSRA 2020 Election results. He introduced WSSRA President Pam Francis, followed by the singing of the national anthem by McKinle Pontius, Aspire Middle School seventh grader. And so, the webinar/convention began.

I took another sip of tea and listened as "recognition" was given to all those who have served throughout this past year. It takes a very large village to keep all the business of WSSRA running smoothly.

Another area of "recognition" focused on the philanthropy, both at the state level of WSSRA, as well as the individual units across the state. Three areas, in particular, received attention: Community volunteer efforts-13,300 hours; Mini-Grants: \$135,000 statewide; Scholarships: \$187,000 Local Units plus \$32,000 WSSR Foundation plus \$56,000 PEMCO scholarships. The total: \$275,000! Clearly, we give much back to the state with our combined efforts and actions.

The Year-in-Review provided a clear picture of the achievements, including legislative gains, as well as individual-unit achievements reflected in unit and individual awards. With over 17,200 members statewide, we present a strong advocacy for all our members, including an increasing membership of "active members." A new website (<https://wssra.org>), provides members with readily available news, benefits and resources. The following link leads directly to

a recording of the entire Virtual Convention:

<https://wssra.org/index.php/events-vcms/wssra-73rd-convention>)

Some individual units were recognized for increasing membership or achieving established goals. Seventeen units increased their membership this last year. Units that reached specific goals were noted as "Units of Distinction." SKSR was one of eight units to achieve that status.

Other awards were the 2020 Patrick T. Hoban award, given to an individual for meritorious service to their unit; the Stan McNaughton Outreach Award, based on community involvement of the recipient; and the 2020 President's Award. The final group to be recognized were the individuals who had fulfilled the criteria for Honorary Membership, which included our own Evelyn Nordeen.

The next awards were the scholarships managed by the WSSR-Foundation, in all 32 scholarships were given: eight \$2,500 scholarships to students pursuing careers in the field of education; two \$2,000 Gene Forrester Memorial Scholarships to students pursuing degrees in the field of agriculture; six \$1,000 Neil D. Prescott scholarships to those pursuing student teaching or internships in education; and 16 \$900 PEMCO-Robert J. Handy scholarships to seniors pursuing careers in education.

The WSSRA 2019-2020 Celebration of Life recognition included lists of members from each unit who had passed during this last year. While our state association is not shrinking, it is apparent that we must actively recruit new members to continue our strong advocacy for all those employed in education in our state.

Legislative Director Peter Diedrick briefly summarized the legislative actions taken this difficult year. It included a short list of House and Senate bills that passed which support our membership: Plan 1 COLA (one time), Plan 3 & Deferred Compensation, and the medical subsidy stayed constant at \$183. This year also saw WSSRA engage in direct use of Facebook advocacy to promote our concerns and causes. Peter mentioned the budget issues fac-

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You are encouraged to *vote as soon as possible* upon receiving your ballot and *return it right away*.

Questions? Go to sos.wa.gov or call 1-800-448-4881 (M-F, 8AM-5PM) or email: elections@sos.wa.gov

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

Estimated iVoterGuide Release Date for General Election

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Voters' Guide for Snohomish County mailed out
(at time of publishing, King County date is unavailable)

Friday, October 16, 2020

Ballots mailed out – Voting begins for General Election

(For drop-box locations near you, go to

<https://mynorthwest.com/1583950/washington-state-ballot-drop-box-locations/>
and then click on your county)

Monday, October 26, 2020

Last Day to Register online or via email to Vote in the General Election

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

General Election Day

Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline items for the next *Bulletin* is October **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 Barb Bumgardner, 206-364-8413.

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.