

# Sno-King School Retirees



January-February 2024

## The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

### What's happening

by Cathy Webb, chair

As we end one year and step into a new one, it's an excellent time to reflect and anticipate! Looking back at our SKSR events of 2023, we experimented with a new activity, enjoyed a familiar lunch event, received updates from two of our district superintendents, and completed another round of teacher grants.

A solid effort made possible by our member volunteers! This *Bulletin* articles will provide details for members who missed our gatherings.

One of my favorite volunteer activities is presenting teacher grants to our successful applicants. It seems a relatively small thing, but the appreciative smiles of the recipients, the gracious welcome of teachers encouraged by our support and the valued information we share about WSSRA and SKSR make my heart swell. If you haven't gotten in on this opportunity, be sure to volunteer for the next round of presentations. SKSR announced another grant opportunity for active teachers! Applications are due February 2, 2024.

### But wait...there's more for 2024!

Our Humanities Washington program in February will feature the story and music of Woody Guthrie and updates from Edmonds Superintendent Miner. We hope to tour Climate Pledge Arena in March. A service project for the Washington Kids in Transition organization is in the planning. Our Scholarship Luncheon in April and picnic in July are on the calendar. Finally, another experimental event: May Gathering, "In the Know" with Washington State Treasurer, Mike Pellicciotti. This informative presentation is not to be missed.

*(chair's message continued on page 2)*

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*Karen McElliott*, Active-Member Grants  
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*Jim Siscoel*, Membership/Retirement/Website  
*Erma Snook*, Membership Records  
*Jo Caldwell*, Bulletin Editor

Our next event

## A special presentation from Humanities Washington

by Roberta Hawkins

humanities  
WASHINGTON |  $\frac{h}{w}$

Mark your calendars and set your reminders for  
Thursday, February 15, at noon

### "That Ribbon of Highway: Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest" at the Edmonds School District ESC, 20420 68th Ave. W., Lynnwood

**H**ave you driven along the Columbia River or toured the Grand Coulee Dam recently? Imagine what it would have been like in 1941!

Have you ever sung along to "This Land is Your Land..."? Well, you will feel you are in good company when you come to our general membership program on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 12:00 PM in the Board Room of the Edmonds School District ESC, 20420 68th Ave. W., Lynnwood.

Joel Underwood will present "That Ribbon of Highway: Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest." This free, public event is co-sponsored by SKSR and Humanities Washington.

In 1941, folksinger and activist Woody Guthrie composed 26 songs in 30 days while riding along the Columbia River and touring the Grand Coulee Dam Project. His songs and his unique, authentic voice chronicled both the grandeur and the perils of what he called "The Greatest Thing That Man Has Ever Done" as an employee of the Bonneville Power Administration. His time here in the Pacific Northwest inspired a swell of patriotism that led Guthrie to enlist in the U.S. Merchant Marines in World War II. After his time with the Merchant Marines, he returned home to fame and notoriety, but also tragedy and great personal loss.



Our presenter, Joel Underwood, blends his talents, skills and experience to perform a program that is part concert, part theatrical drama, and part lecture. Audience members will sing along to "Roll on Columbia," "Pastures of Plenty," and the ever-popular "This Land is Your Land." They will also learn of the sometime-tragic stories behind the songs.

As a teacher, folksinger, historian and actor, Joel began his career with 25 years of teaching high school history. This led to his drive to get his master's degree in American History with a focus on folk and protest music. He received a Woody Guthrie Fellowship and was granted access to the Woody Guthrie Archives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he researched Woody's time in the Merchant Marines.

Joel continues to tour as a musician, both solo and with his daughter. He is a state resident, living in Olympia, and clearly has an affinity for Washington and its unique history.

**Thursday, February 15.**  
**Meet-and-greet begins at noon. Program starts at 1:00.**  
**Please Join Us!**

*(chair's message continued from page 1)*

I simply can't end a board message without inviting and encouraging any of you who are looking to get involved with a valuable organization to talk with any SKSR board member or contact me

(clmwebb0810@gmail.com or 425-877-5753).

The camaraderie is fun; the involvement is easy; the benefits are priceless!

Legislative update

## We're off to the races!

by Pete Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director

The 2024 Washington state legislative session begins January 8. It is scheduled to be a shorter 60-day session—assuming all goes according to plan. Deadlines arrive quickly—almost spontaneously—during short sessions. Bills must be sponsored and passed out of their initial committees by Monday, February 5.

WSSRA is working on legislation for members of all school employee pension plans:

### Plan 1

The Select Committee on Pension policy is recommending a Plan 1 COLA for the summer of 2024. This bill must be passed during this legislative session. The SCPP is also working on a study to implement a permanent, automatic Plan 1 COLA in the future. WSSRA is working with the Office of the State Actuary on that study.

### Plans 2/3

WSSRA is sponsoring legislation to provide extra pension credit to school employees who serve

more than 30 years. This would improve financial security for future retirees, and help to alleviate staffing shortages that are currently ailing school districts.



### Health benefits for all members

All retirees participating in PEBB insurance receive insurance premium subsidies from the state, and none of those benefits are contractual obligations. Medicare retirees receive the monthly \$183 benefit we regularly discuss. Pre-Medicare retirees are kept in a PEBB insurance pool with younger employees—a highly valuable benefit that we don't discuss as much. We must keep working to ensure those benefits stay in place.

The legislative session always unfolds in unexpected ways. The WSSRA legislative team will keep in touch. Bill numbers for WSSRA priorities will be distributed as soon as they're available.

## DRS news update

by Jim Sisco



As an active member or a retired member, you can receive a variety of informational updates from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS). Active

members can receive information of DRS systems, plans, programs, and retirement planning. Retired members can receive retiree news.

To subscribe to the appropriate information, go to the DRS website [www.drs.wa.gov](http://www.drs.wa.gov) and click on *Subscribe* at the top. On the next page indicate whether you want email or text updates. On the following page, click on *For Members (Actives)* or *For Retirees* and select the information you want to receive.

Once you have submitted your request, a page will open that allows you to subscribe to information from many other state and federal agencies.

## Mark your datebook

### February 15

Feature: Joel Underwood from Humanities Washington, *That Ribbon of Highway: Guthrie in the Pacific Northwest*

### March (dates to be determined)

A *Field Trip* is in the planning and a *Spring Community Service Project* will be announced

### April 18

Scholarship Luncheon, First Lutheran Church of Richmond Beach, 11:30-2:00  
Feature: *Cascadia Search and Rescue program*

### May 16

May Gathering, Edmonds  
ESCBoarA/B, 11:30-2:00  
Feature: *In the Know with WA State Treasurer, Mike Pellicciotti*

### June 3-5

WSSRA Convention in Wenatchee

### July 18

Picnic, Edmonds City Park, 11:30-3:00

### August 8

Board Retreat

## Grants

**\$5,076 awarded to active teachers**

by Karen McElliott, grants chair

This fall SKSR's active members were offered the opportunity to apply for mini-grants of up to \$300 for work with their students. Typically, grants are awarded for speakers, field trips, tickets, and classroom materials (e.g., manipulative, books and P.E. equipment). Eighteen members applied, and were awarded a total of \$5,076 grants. This year for the first time, the board also awarded a mini-grant to a retired member, Mary Telstad, who regularly volunteers at her former school. To date, SKSR has distributed over \$120,000 in grants to aid students in our three districts.



**Congratulations  
to our 2023-24 Recipients!**

**EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT**Cedar Way Elementary

**Colette Christensen:** Transportation to Woodland Park Zoo as a culmination of a literacy unit in which students research and write animal books. (2nd grade)

**Meghan Galvan:** Tickets for the Storybook Theater presentation of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and help with transportation costs. (Kindergarten)

Hazelwood Elementary

**Tina Whicker:** Materials, including jigsaw puzzles, legos, board games, and snap circuits, for Hazelwood's Maker Space. (LMS)

Hilltop Elementary

**Sarah Allsop-Fine:** Four sets of high-interest books for struggling readers for her class's reading workshop. (5th grade)

**Deborah Fournier:** Spanish language versions of popular titles, such as *Pete the Cat* and *Dog Man*, for the school's growing Hispanic/Latino population. (LMS)

Maplewood Parent Cooperative

**Nanette Peppin:** Three sets of decodable books which build on specific phonics skill levels. (3rd grade)

Oak Heights Elementary

**Erica Morgan:** Two Finch Robots to support STEM learning, specifically computer coding. (4th grade)

Spruce Elementary

**Melissa Hart:** Help with bus transportation to Brackett's Landing. (Special ed/developmental kindergarten)

**NORTHSHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT**Canyon Creek Elementary

**Annie Hall:** Expand the reading space in Canyon Creek's library. (LMS)

**Michelle Vancour:** Six digital microscopes for use in the class's plant unit and on STEM days. (4th grade)

**SHORELINE SCHOOL DISTRICT**Briarcrest Elementary

**Jafet Corral:** A classroom license for IXL math. (2nd grade)

**Michelle Holguin:** High-quality headphones to use during reading rotations. (3rd grade)

**Emma LeBlanc:** Headphones to use in the classroom, especially for literacy programs. (1st grade)

**Amy Pitts:** A classroom license for IXL. (2nd grade)

**Janet Shin:** High-interest books and tactile materials for her reset station. (K-5th grades)

**Wendy Yamamoto:** Alphabet magnets and magnetic boards to use with the phonics program. (Kindergarten)

Brookside Elementary

**Mary Telstad:** Art supplies for watercolor workshops. (4th/5th grades)

Syre Elementary

**Julie Anneberg:** Lap desks to offer alternative seating options, thereby meeting different learning style needs. (3rd grade)

**SKSR Offers a Second Round of Mini-Grants**

Because the Grants Committee still has money to fund another 30 mini-grants, it is opening the grants' window for a second round of applications. The proposals need to be student-centered. Grant eligibility is not limited to certificated members,

but encompasses all active SKSR members in good standing who regularly work with students in some capacity, excluding those who have already received a 2023-24 grant or have reached the \$1,000 cap in the last three years.

*(Grants continued on next page)*

*(Grants continued from previous page)*

Please check the SKSR website (sksr.org) for details, the FAQ page for assistance in completing your application, and the application form itself; there are also links to brief descriptions of past grants if you are curious about the types of proposals that have received funding in the past.

**The application deadline is midnight, Friday, February 2.**

If you have any remaining questions, including whether you are currently eligible to apply for a grant, contact Karen McElliott (ksmcelliot@gmail.com).

**Note:** If you are an Edmonds School District applicant, you will not be required to complete the ESD Grant and Donation Request for Approval form.

Scholarships

**Scholarship deadline March 19**

*by Linda Fitzgerald, scholarship co-chair*

Scholarship application forms will be in each public high school in the Edmonds, Northshore, and Shoreline schooldistricts in January.



These scholarships are for students who are planning futures as teachers or other school-related employees. Students will be awarded \$2,500 for the 2024-2025 school year with the chance of renewing for another year at \$2,500. This second year award is possible because of a donation from one of our late members Winnie Smith.

Applications can be obtained in the high school career centers or on our website (www.sksr.org). The deadline for submission is March 19, 2024. Recipients will be honored at our Scholarship Luncheon on April 18, 2024.

Because of the downturn in the markets, our Winnie Smith Fund has diminished so we are suspending our program for third- and fourth-year scholarships for these recipients. We hope that with added donations we will be able to fund them again in the future.

**Member Information Updates**

**Deceased**

- Catherine Barker**–11/2023  
Retired from Edmonds•Member since 2006
- Robert Burton**–9/2023  
Retired from Edmonds•Member since 2004.
- Frances Eickhoff**–11/20/ 2023  
Retired from Shoreline•Member since 1991.
- Karen Guthrie-Mehlert**–9/2023  
Retired from Shoreline•Member since 1991
- Joan Hertrich**–October, 2023  
Retired Edmonds•Member since 2012
- Diana McQuay**–November 1, 2023  
Retired Shoreline•Member since 1991
- Mack Newton**–November, 2023  
Member since 2012
- Justine Wood**–November 7, 2023  
Retired Shoreline•Member since 2013

**New Members**

- Burton, Charles
- Fleischman, Maureen
- Killen, Christina C.
- Morris-Lent, Valerie S.
- Nguyen, Jimmy X.

*from a list by Jeff Foxworthy*

You know you live in Washington state...



1. If someone in a Home Depot store offers you assistance and they don't work there.
2. If you've wear shorts, sandals and a parka at the same time.
3. If you've had a lengthy telephone conversation with someone who dialed the wrong number.
4. If you measure distance in hours
5. If you know several people who have hit a deer more than once.
6. If you have switched from 'heat' to 'A/C' and back again in the same day.
7. If you can drive 75 mph through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching.
8. If you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over 2 layers of clothes or under a raincoat.
9. If driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow and ice.
10. If you know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter, and road construction.

## Health news

**How to stand up easily from a chair***compiled by Robin Randles, health chair*

**W**e take getting up from a chair for granted, but the act of getting up from a seated position can be challenging. As we age, our muscles start to lose mass, especially the large muscles in our legs that we use to stand. Difficulty standing up from a chair or toilet can be due to a combination of reasons: weaknesses in the legs, poor balance, back stiffness, lack of flexibility and/or improper technique. These issues can make daily activities such as getting up from the chair or couch harder.

**Some ways to help getting out of a chair with less effort**

- Chose a firm seat. Switching from a soft chair to a strong, firm, chair will help. To firm up a soft seat, you can put a piece of plywood under the cushion.
- Choose a chair with arms
- Raise your chair so you don't have so far to stand up. There are furniture risers sold in hardware stores.
- Use assistive devices, if needed. Devices called couch canes or bed canes should help with support. Regular canes or walkers can tip or slip. Also think about a raised toilet seat and/or a toilet safety frame that has arms/rails to assist with standing up.
- Position yourself correctly when sitting up or lying down. To get up when lying down, roll onto your side and use your arms to push up to a seated position.

**The tried and true method for sit-to-stand is sometimes called "nose over toes"**

1. Scoot to the front edge of your chair.
2. Sit up straight.



3. With your knees bent, pull your feet back under the front edge of your chair.

4. Place your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart.

5. If you have armrests on your chair, place your hands near the front of the armrests. If you don't have armrests, place your hands beside your thighs, at the front edge of your chair, or on the tops of your thighs. Do not use a regular walker or cane during this step as the legs can slip!

6. Lean forward from the hips, keeping the back straight. If you lean forward far enough, gravity can

actually help you stand up. Your head should move forward during this step—"nose over toes."

7. As you lean forward, press your heels into the floor and you push yourself up with your legs and with your arms.

8. Straighten your legs. Lift your head up to straighten your hips.

If you are having trouble with getting out of a chair easily, it is recommended to practice the "nose over toes" technique/exercise daily.

Use this same technique when getting out of or into a car. Bring your feet back underneath your body. Lean forward; the body's center of gravity shifts toward the front of the feet. (Nose over toes.) This allows gravity to help you rise up from the seat.

**Still need help?**

The act of standing up from a sitting position is important for independence. If you are still having trouble, don't forget to check with your doctor. Your doctor can help walk you through your concerns and may prescribe physical therapy to help you improve your strength and mobility.

## Recapping member events

### Fun fall activities

#### October Meet and Greet

by Cathy Webb



It was an Edmonds kind of Monday, and the views were gorgeous as we kicked off the SKSR 2023-24 year with something new. Despite the challenges of parking and dodging trains, 32 members gathered in Community Room B of the Edmonds Waterfront Center

to catch up on SKSR friends and enjoy coffee and pastries.

Member and Northshore Superintendent, Michael Tolley, provided an update on Northshore district initiatives. EWC Executive Director Daniel Johnson shared an overview of the mission of this facility, and Volunteer Coordinator Lorna Butterfield outlined program activities and ways to get involved.

A bingo game provided motivation for getting to know one another, and silly prizes seemed an appropriate way to end our get-together.

#### Lots of fun at November luncheon

by Barbara Bumgardner

We had a good crowd at our luncheon on November 16th which was held in the Shoreline Room at the Shoreline School District Conference Center. Chef Dane served up lasagna, Caesar salad, roasted vegetables, and focaccia bread. We also enjoyed a variety of cookies with coffee and tea. After lunch, we had a presentation by Shoreline School District Superintendent Susana Reyes.

Our featured speaker, former two-term ESD School Board member Diane White, told about her experiences during the 2023 Paddle to Muckleshoot, a journey that featured more than 100 canoes and canoe families. She illustrated her talk with photographs of the Blue Heron canoe and canoe family, the month-long journey, the landing at Alki,

*Luncheon speaker Diane White is known for her efforts to celebrate, share and keep alive the traditions of the Coast Salish People.*

and the many activities that followed.

You may read a more detailed review of her adventure with lots of photographs on this link from "My Edmonds News": <https://myedmondsnews.com/2023/08/diana-white-reflects-on-her-week-with-this-summer-paddle-to-muckleshoot-canoe-journey/>



#### Former teacher returns to first love: poetry

Alison Jennings is a Seattle-based poet who taught in the Edmonds School District before returning to her first love, poetry. She was at Meadowdale Middle School from 1996 to 2009, and taught eighth-grade English, social studies, reading, and math. She was also the adviser for the MMS



yearbook for five years and helped students publish a school newspaper.

Since retiring in 2009, she has had a mini-chapbook and 80 other poems published internationally in numerous journals, including *Burningword*, *Cathexis Northwest Press*, *Meat for Tea*, *Msexia*, *Poetic Sun*, *Red Door*, *Sonic Boom*, and *The Raw Art Review*. Please visit her website at <https://sites.google.com/view/airandfirepoet/home>.

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

We have resumed our regular schedule  
of preparing the *Bulletin*.

If you would like to help on **March 6**,  
call Robin Randles, 206-542-6428.

