

Sno-King School Retirees



May-June 2024

The SKSR Bulletin



A message from your board

What's happening

by Jim Siscel

As I sit here writing this, the weather is starting to get warmer, the trees and plants are greening out, and some spring flowers are brightening the scene. Baseball season is starting, but if you are planning on attending a game at either T-Mobile (Mariners) or Funko Field (Aquasox), you should still plan on wearing your heavy coats and long underwear. Oh, our wonderful Pacific Northwest weather!

Critical needs to help with maintaining your organization

In order to maintain/improve our unit, we need some members to serve in several vacancies. These needs include the following:

Board Positions

- **President**
- **Legislative Committee Chair**
- **Membership Records Manager**

This position is *critical* to ensure the continuity of SKSR.

Erma Snook has filled this position in an outstanding manner since 2011, but the time has come for her to retire.

- Responsibilities of Membership Records Manager:

- 1) Receive monthly membership information from WSSRA
- 2) Update SKSR database and directory
- 3) Work with me to ensure list is current
- 4) Send emails to membership as needed
- 5) Print labels bimonthly for mailing the *Bulletin*
- 6) Prefer PC user in order to use current Access database; MAC user could use Excel spreadsheet

(chair's message continued on page 6)

OFFICERS

vacant, President
Cathy Webb, Vice President
Jan Phillips, Secretary
Jennifer Altena, Treasurer

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Barbara Berg, Scrapbook
Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas, Scholarships
Robin Randles, Health
vacant, Community Service
vacant, 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

May 16 general meeting has something for everyone!

by Cathy Webb

Our SKSR May 16 **"In the Know"** gathering promises to keep the bar raised high for delivering valuable information and unique experiences to our members.

Washington State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti guides us through the ins and outs of what happens with money in our state coffers. Of particular interest to retirees is the handling of our pension funds. Pellicciotti's presentation at last year's WSSRA convention prompted the invitation to share his comprehensive and accessible expertise.



Brad Holden

To counterbalance the weighty discussion of money, we're in for a treat. Brad Holden, local historian and columnist for *Seattle Magazine*, shares intriguing stories surrounding historic buildings and activities in our area. If you read and enjoyed Holden's coverage of the Rosewood Manor story in *My Edmonds News*, you won't want to miss this presentation.

In case you're not totally sold on attending, there's a special something: You must be present to enjoy!



Mike Pellicciotti

WHEN? Thursday, May 16. Gather in the Edmonds School District board room at 11:30 for greeting time. Our presentations begin at noon.

WHERE? 20420 68th Avenue West, with parking in the front and back of the building.

HOW? Please RSVP no later than May 10 to ensure we have treats for everyone. Call or text Cathy Webb 425-877-5753 with your RSVP.

Service Project: Washington Kids in Transition

- at 19721 Scriber Lake Rd #B, Lynnwood.
- on Wednesday, May 29, 10am to noon

We will be packing art supplies for children's summer art projects.

SKSR has already donated \$200, and individual members have contributed another \$95 to help purchase the materials.

Please let Jim Siscel know by Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, if you will be coming (425-778-7202 or jsiscel@comcast.net). That way, they will know how many assembly stations to set up before we arrive, but please feel free to drop in even if you forget to tell Jim.

Let's do this one in memory of Virg Rayton, who was our previous organizer.



Mark your calendar

Annual picnic—July 18

by Jim Siscel

Mark your calendars for our summer event

- Thursday, July 18th • Edmonds City Park
- 11:30am Meet and Greet • Lunch at 12 noon
- More information in the next *Bulletin*.



Legislative update

End-of-session legislative report

by Tim Knopf

Unit 22, Sno-Isle Member and WSSRA Legislative Committee Member

The 60-day, 2024 Washington State Legislative Session ended at 5 p.m., Thursday, March 7, 2024.

In January WSSRA had high hopes for the following legislative priorities:

- **Obtain a Plan 1 Cost-of-Living Adjustment House Bill 1985:** to provide a PERS 1/TRS 1 one-time COLA for 2024 of up to 3%, limited to \$125 per month. Sponsored by Representative Timmons of LD 42, it was endorsed by the Select Committee on Pension Policy,
- **Support Plan 2/3 Members by lowering the retirement age and increasing pension benefits House Bill 2471:** to provide .5 additional retirement service credit for Plan 2 and 3 employees for each year worked beyond 30 years. (Sponsored by Representative Kloba, LD 1).
- **Provide Retirees Full Month's Salary/PEBB Benefit through month of death House Bill 2013 (The Month of Death Bill):** to allow a retiree's pension and PEBB medical premium to be paid for the full month of death. Sponsored by Representative Volz, LD 6, it was endorsed by both the Select Committee on Pension Policy, and the Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters' Pension Board.
- **Protect or Improve Retiree Medical Benefits**
- **Make the Actuarially Recommended Pension Payment to the Pension Funds**
- **Support Additional Payments to the Plan 1 Unfunded Liability**

So what happened?

The Legislature is designed to kill bills as the session moves forward. Many must die so that some may succeed. This happens through a series of deadlines imposed by the cut-off calendar. That calendar and legislative cost cutting worked their deadly magic on our bills as on thousands of others. By the end of the session:

HB 1985 (The Plan 1 COLA) the maximum payment was cut from \$125 to \$110 per month.

HB 2471 (Plan 2 and 3 Retirement Bonus for after 30 years) did not survive the cut-off calendar.

HB 2013 (The Month of Death Bill) was replaced by HB 2481 that paid only the PEBB medical benefit.

Retiree Medical Benefits were maintained.

The Legislature agreed to make its payment into the pension fund.



So, while it looks as if we lost some, this session was actually an over-all win. Since 2010 Plan 1 members had received just four previous COLAs. All of these added together amount to \$345 or an average of \$57.5 per month since 2018 or \$26.58 since 2011. Never before have we managed back-to-back Plan 1 ad hoc COLAs as we did last year and this year! Plus these weren't the measly \$62.50 COLAs of 2018 and 2020! These were each for up to \$110 per month. That's success.

While we didn't get all that we wanted with HB 2481's replacement of HB 2013, on the Month of Death Bill, at least we got the PEBB benefit paid. That's a good start!

Our PEBB retiree health benefits were maintained and the state agreed again to pay its share of the pension payment! That's a win!

What's ahead?

Next session, if state finances allow (i.e. the Capital Gains Tax is maintained along with the Carbon Cap and Trade Program), we will try for a permanent Plan 1 COLA.

We will work to get the missing half of the Month of Death Bill made law.

We will work to gain that retirement bonus for experienced Plan 2 and 3 workers willing to work more than 30 years.

We will work to improve retiree health benefits and keep the state paying its share in to the pension fund.

Who to thank?

For this year's successes you can thank your WSSRA organization and its leaders, Executive Director Alan Burke, Legislative Director Peter Diedrick, and contract lobbyists Fred Yancy and Michael Moran. You can thank the entire WSSRA Legislative Committee for countless hours of meet-

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Scholarship news

SKSR awards three scholarships

by Linda Fitzgerald

SKSR, Unit 23, awards \$2,500 scholarships to graduating seniors from the Edmonds, Northshore, and Shoreline school districts who are planning a career in a school-related field. This year these students were celebrated at our annual Scholarship Luncheon. They will be able to renew this scholarship for another year thanks to a large bequest by Winnie Smith, one of our former retired teachers.



Darci Dalziel is sure to become a wonderful teacher who hopes to come back to the Shoreline/Edmonds area for her career after earning a degree in Elementary Education at Saint Martin's University, where she also hopes to play on the women's soccer team.

She is looking forward to learning from the faculty at Saint Martin's as she did from the outstanding faculty in the Shoreline School District.

Soccer has been an important part of Darci's life. She has played for her Shorecrest High School team and for the Unified Soccer team. Her high school team placed fourth and second in state competition in her junior and senior years. She had many personal awards from the *Everett Herald* for her playing and leadership. Her leadership and respect from her coaches and teammates are shown by her being chosen captain of both soccer and track-and-field teams.

Academically, Darci has an almost perfect GPA while challenging herself with Honors and AP classes. One of Darci's teachers describes her as being "intellectually curious and eager to learn" as well as "an outstanding young woman." We will look forward to hearing from Darci as to her progress in the future.



Aki Sano plans on an Early Childhood and Family Studies major at the University of Washington to be an elementary teacher after graduating from Meadowdale High School. Key Club has been an important part of Aki's life while in high school;

she was club treasurer last year and editor this year. Since Key Club believes in service to others, she has been involved in many hours of volunteer service in the community. One of those is the Family Peace Association, where she has had several internships.

In addition to her involvement in Key Club, Aki has participated in cross country, track-and-field, girl's tennis and was a manager for the boy's tennis team. She worked over the summer with a paid internship for the Foundation for the Edmonds School District Nourishing Network, where she was a teacher assistant taking care of over 100 children. She is now working for Shake Shack, preparing food and assisting customers.

Academically, Aki has almost a perfect record while taking Honors classes in high school and Running Start classes at Edmonds College. She will be a success in whatever she sets her mind to. We are lucky that her choice is to be a teacher.



Ava McGinness, who will be graduating from Edmonds-Woodway High School, is also planning to teach elementary school. She has been involved in athletics while taking classes to prepare academically for college. Those classes have included some of the rigorous International Baccalaureate and AP classes that her school offers. She has been on her school's volleyball team and was captain of her club volleyball team.

Children have always been an important part of Ava's life so teaching is a perfect fit for her. Babysitting and volunteering in her church's nursery have had an impact on her, but her church's mission trips, where she was able to see how education is the key to these children's journey out of poverty, deepened her resolve to

make a difference and be a teacher. She will be pursuing her Elementary Education degree at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona.

Bits & Pieces, April 2024

And that's a wrap.

The 2024 Legislature has adjourned. Not every item on WSSRA's wish list was checked off, but retirees had a good legislative session. We are now waiting on Governor Inslee to sign legislation.

Plan 1 retirees will receive another COLA starting in July. It will be a 3% COLA, capped at \$110 per month.

Medical benefits are maintained. The Senate toyed with adjusting retiree medical programs, but the \$183 Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit was fully maintained in the end. The budget includes money for studying less costly structures for PEBB Uniform (Regence). The plan might be eligible for an additional federal subsidy—resulting in similar benefits with smaller premiums.

The state will also change the current policy and pay the PEBB insurance premium for a retiree that passes away. This will save retirees' families a potential catastrophic financial incident from unpaid premiums. Dependents' premiums will not be covered by the state, but dependents will continue to be eligible for PEBB health insurance.

After Governor Inslee signs our legislation, the legislative team will pivot to the 2024 elections and 2025 legislative session. Over two dozen legislators have announced retirement plans. There will be many fresh faces on the campaign trail this summer. Our advocacy team will be asking for your help as we introduce WSSRA to a whole new set of lawmakers.

Thank you for all your help and advocacy. We can't do this without you.

Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director

(Legislative continued from page 3)

legislative-lobbying visits, both on-line and in-person. Those from NW-1 include Bruce Boyer, Barbara Robinson, Diane Visten, Rocco Gianni and myself, Tim Knopf.

You can also thank the thousands of fellow school retirees who wrote to their legislators, who joined us on virtual visits, and who signed in as "Pro" on our bills at hearings. They made the difference! One in particular deserving our thanks was Plan 1 retiree, Virg Rayton, who helped me on a virtual visit with Representative Duerr (LD 1) in January and died the next week.

Now it's an election year

This year is an election year. We need to keep the friends of school retirees in office and ease our opponents out. One way to support our friends is through regular donations to **WSSR-PAC** so the PAC can make significant campaign donations to help them remember us. It is easier than ever to sign up for on-line donations to **WSSR-PAC**. I recommend the (almost) painless amount of \$3 per month as an investment in your own future. Please check out the PAC website and consider signing up for monthly donations at <https://www.wssr-pac.org>.

Update from DRS

**Valuable
information
available on
DRS website**

by Jim Siscel



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

To subscribe to the appropriate information, go to the DRS website 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 if you so desire.

Member Information Updates Deceased

Evelyn Cohu, April 2024.
Member since 2000.

Phyllis Fiege, March 2024.
Retired from Edmonds
School District.
Honorary Member, and
Member since 1993

Jane Roper, April 2024.
Member since 2015.

Barbara Truax, April 2024.
Retired from Edmonds
School District,
Member since 1999

New Member
Lisa Reid

(Chair's message continued from page 1)

Coordinators (no need to attend board meetings, but are welcome to)

- **Humanities Washington February activity**
- **Washington Kids in Transition spring project**

For further information about any of these positions, please contact Jim Siscel, 425-778-7202.

Board activities this spring/summer

We have completed distribution of grants to our active educators and planned for our Scholarship Luncheon, where three seniors who are planning on being educators will be honored. We're looking forward to our May general meeting, where we will hear from our Washington state treasurer and an excellent local historian who will provide some history tidbits about our area.

In June seven of your members will attend the WSSRA Convention in Wenatchee. We will visit with other WSSRA members from across the state and learn of ways to make our unit even better.



Karen McElliott (in red) presents certificates to Cedar Way staff who received mini-grants. Seven staff members were recognized: Laura Baker (seated), (L to R) Meghan Galvan, Kristyn O'Connor, Colette Christensen, Christine LaSalle, Jennifer Phipps, and Leann Onishi (not pictured).



Jennifer Altana presents Syre teacher Katie Dawdy with a mini-grant certificate. Katie is using her grant to cover transportation costs for a salmon-release field trip for fifth graders.



Erica Morgan, Oak Heights fourth-grade teacher, receives a grant certificate from Jim Siscel. She plans to use her funds to purchase two Finch Robots to support STEM learning.

Our last event

An enlightening field trip to Climate Pledge Arena

by Karen McElliott

On March 21, a group of SKSR members and guests were treated to a fantastic guided tour of Climate Pledge Arena at the Seattle Center. Our group of 20 was divided into two smaller groups so we wouldn't be crowded in small spaces and so everyone could see.

The tour included visiting the Kraken and Storm locker rooms as well as seeing what will, hopefully, soon be the entrance to Seattle's new NBA team's locker room. We were able to walk through the tunnel that takes the Kraken to their box. In addition, we visited the facilities for the NHL away teams, which are said to be the nicest in the league, and saw the press room where the post-game interviews take place.

But wait, there was more!

We also wended our way through various backstage areas used by performers when they entertain at CPA: the "green" room where artists' entourages hang out, the dressing room, and the entrance hall that leads onto the arena floor. We spent time in the Apple Artist Lounge, where performers can listen to a curated playlist, record before a show, or even have their recording session piped into the arena for the audience's enjoyment.

And we we're still not done!

We checked out one of the Tunnel Club suites, the Owners' Box, and a number of food venues—from spots that use Amazon *Just-Walk-Out* technology to the food court to the more exclusive Symetra and WAFD Bank clubs.

Environmental highlights

Throughout the tour, guides pointed out facets of CPA's environmental mission. There are over 1,300 solar panels covering the roofs of the Alaska Airlines Atrium and the neighboring First Avenue N. garage. There is a 15,000-gallon cistern under the building that collects rain water from the roof to use in maintaining the NFL ice rink and also for flushing toilets. The arena avoids single-use plastics by using biodegradable alternatives, and is com-

mitted to using locally sourced food whenever possible. And in an arena that prides itself on being green, there is a literal green wall—the 200-foot long, 14-foot high Climate Pledge Living Wall which contains over 8,500 Pacific NW plants.

By the end, our tour had lasted well beyond the promised 75 minutes, and it felt like we had seen every inch of the arena, from the shipping bays in the subbasement to the press box high above the ice.



Ken and Jennifer Altana, Lynda Hughes, Linda Fitzgerald, Cathy Webb, Eric Breekha, Gail Bauman, Sandy Todd, Aaron Feik, and Marc Erlander stand outside the Kraken locker room. As part of the tour, they walked through the tunnel from the locker room to the players' box leading to the ice.



Relaxing in the coach/player interview room are (seated) Sharron Cain and Dave McElliott, (standing) Jim Siscel, Ann and Brian Ayers, Karen McElliott, Sharon Lindaas, Marlene Johnson, Keith Lindaas, and Dave Johnson,

Health news

Foods with health benefits—some may surprise you

compiled by Robin Randles, health chair

Most of us know which foods are healthy for us, but some foods may be overlooked when shopping or filling our grocery cart. We know about fruits, vegetables, whole-wheat bread and chicken breasts, but some foods are forgotten due to our outdated diet ideas. We also may not be familiar with foods having health benefits.

Fermented foods

One category of foods that can be overlooked is fermented foods. Sourdough bread is fermented using natural, not commercial, yeast. As the bread rises, it slows the absorption of starch. Sourdough bread doesn't raise blood sugar as quickly as regular white bread.

Another fermented food that we may not know about is kimchi. Kimchi is a Korean dish made of vegetables and hot-pepper paste. Kimchi adds a spicy kick to meals and is a great condiment. Because it is fermented, it adds good bacteria to our gut. Eating kimchi regularly can help with lowering cholesterol and blood pressure.

Overlooked fruits

Fruits that can be overlooked are mangoes, watermelon, and grapes. One cup of mango contains vitamins A and C, as well as blood-pressure-lowering potassium. It is also a good source of fiber. Two cups of watermelon have vitamins A and C, potassium, and lycopene, and contain only 80 calories. Grapes are one of the sweetest fruits with about 12 grams of sugar per half cup; however, sugar in fruit is absorbed more slowly in the body. Grapes have fiber and vitamin K, which is important for bone health. They also have resveratrol, a powerful antioxidant. Don't overdo on the intake of these fruits, but do add them to your diet.

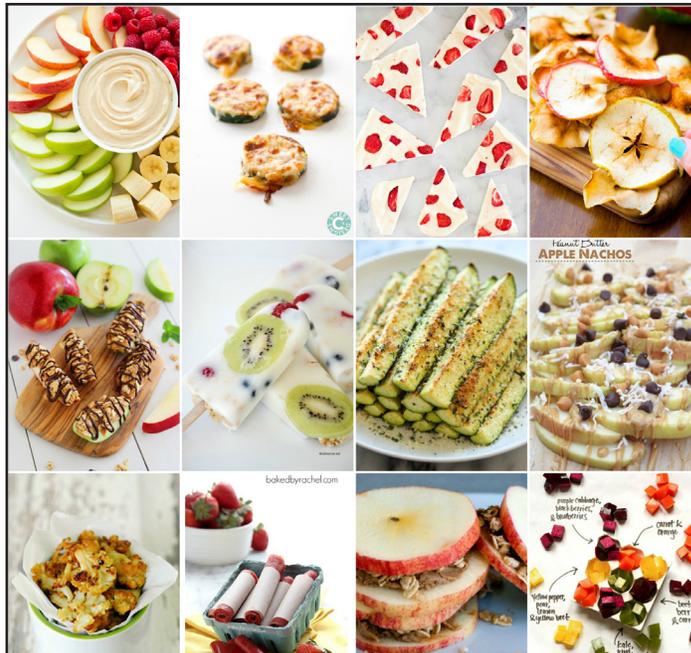
Don't forget these vegetables

Vegetables we may not add to our shopping cart are beans, squashes and cabbage. Garbanzo beans (chick-peas) are rich in protein, fiber, folate, iron, magnesium, and zinc. They are a versatile bean and can be added to salads, soups, stews, and curries. Butternut squash can be baked, sautéed, or used in soups. This squash is full of vitamins A and C and fiber. Cabbage is rich in fiber, vitamin C and glucosinolates—compounds that may protect cells against cancer-causing damage. So

when eating out, opt for the coleslaw.

Chicken thighs have health benefits

Instead of chicken breasts, try chicken thighs. Dark meat is considered a little more fatty, but the difference is minimal between thighs and breasts. Chicken breasts have slightly more protein, but chicken thighs have more iron, which is a mineral lacking in many diets. Chicken thighs are more flavorful and easier to cook too.

**Popcorn**

Popcorn is a healthy snack—WHEN you make it yourself. Movie-theater popcorn is swimming in butter and salt. Bagged and microwave popcorn are high in saturated fats and salt. Popcorn is a whole grain and is high in fiber. A three-cup serving has about one-fifth of our daily fiber intake. Popcorn has anti-oxidants that help with blood pressure and cholesterol. So make your own popcorn in an air-popper or on the stove. Season it lightly with a little olive or avocado oil and salt and spices. Enjoy your homemade popcorn snack.

Try changing up the foods in your shopping cart. See what you can add to the basic “healthy” foods and expand the good-for-you foods.

Report from NW-1

March 19 meeting held via Zoom

by Jim Siscel

Executive Director Alan Burke told how he has been involved in helping to rejuvenate some units that are having trouble finding members to take leadership position. Peter Diedrick reported a summary of this year’s short legislative session.

Reports

NW-1 Representative Ken Harvey shared information from the recent WSSRA Board meeting. Actions at the meeting included approval of a new phone system for the WSSRA office and changes to Unit of Distinction reporting.

WSSR Foundation Representative Marianne Harvey reported that the Foundation bylaws have been updated and will be voted on at the WSSRA Convention in June.

Legislative Representative Tim Knopf gave an excellent update on the just-completed legislative session. See that report on page 3 of this *Bulletin*.

Each unit gave a brief report on happenings in the unit since the last NW-1 meeting in January.

Sno-King will have the leadership responsibilities for NW-1 meetings next year.



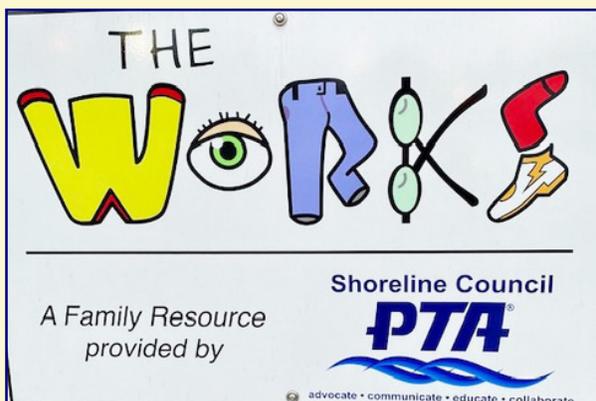
If you need a little laugh...

- The biggest lie I tell myself is, “I don’t have to write it down. I’ll remember it.”
- The thing no one ever talks about when it comes to being an adult, is how much time we debate keeping a cardboard box because it’s, you know... a really good box.
- You think you know stress. When I grew up, if you missed a TV show, it was gone forever.
- My superpower is holding onto stuff for years and then throwing it away the week before I need it.
- The most expensive vehicle to operate, by far, is the Costco shopping cart.
- By replacing your morning coffee with green tea, you can lose 87% of what little joy you still have left in your life.

Supporting schools

SKSR makes donation to The Works

by Robin Randles



The Works co-chairs, Andrea Petrusky and Bonnie Stieber, accept a \$200 check donated from the Sno-King School Retirees. It will be used to help needy children.

The Shoreline PTA Council supports the family resource called The Works. TheWorks is a free, student-clothing room that provides high-quality, clean, gently used children’s and teen clothing and self-care items to Shoreline School District children.

Shoreline families can take their children to “shop” for gently used, stylish clothing. Monetary donations go to buy coats, socks, underwear, and sneakers. The Works also has an Amazon wish list on its web site.

The Works is normally open on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 PM when school is in session.



Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline 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 Barb Bumgardner, 206-364-8413.

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

If you would like to help on **July 1**,
call Robin Randles, 206-542-6428.