Sno-King
School Retirees

The SKSR Bulletin

November-December 2024

A message from your board

What's happening

by Cathy Webb,vice president

It's fall and we're enjoying the crisper air, fall colors, the World Series, football season, and the start of a new program year for SKSR. It's a time to do new things and catch up with dear friends. I hope you'll consider participating in activities offered by SKSR. In this newsletter you'll find details for the November luncheon. Future editions will describe our February Humanities WA program, the spring field trip, and the April Scholarship luncheon.

Thank you to Deby Comfort, new Records Manager

I want to give a HUGE shout out to Deby Comfort who volunteered to take on the essential Membership Records' role. Deby also spawned the idea of a slideshow to promote joining SKSR and WSSRA. She worked with Jim Siscel to produce the Powerpoint sent to each of our school districts and shared with school personnel. "THANK YOU, Deby!"

Two more volunteers needed for key positions

One person is needed to take on the task of mailing our *Bulletin* to those who don't have email. This is a discrete task that only happens six times a year: printing labels from a provided list, affixing them to folded bulletins, and delivering them to the Lynnwood post office for bulk mailing.

The second task is collaborating with program coordinators and leadership to email announcements to our group using MailChimp. This task requires computer know-how and occurs two to five times a month during the school year.

Please consider your personal toolkit and schedule! Do you have

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OFFICERS

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

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Linda Fitzgerald/Keith Lindaas, Scholarships
Robin Randles, Health
Lynda Hughes, Community Service
Barb Bumgardner, Sunshine
Karen McElliott, Active-Member Grants
vacant, Legislative
Jim Siscel, Membership/Retirement/Website
Deby Comfort, Membership Records
vacant, Bulletin Mailing/E-mail Distribution
Jo Caldwell, *Bulletin* Editor

Our next events

Our first meeting of the year!

by Lynda Hughes

Join us for a highly regarded multi-media performance, **Within the Silence**, presentation by Living Voices, about the Japanese internment during World War II.

When? **Thursday, November 14**
Doors open for Meet & Greet at 11:30
Lunch at 12:00. Program will begin following lunch.
Shoreline Schools Superintendent Susan Reyes will give an update of school district news. Living Voices program will follow.

Where? Shoreline Room at the Shoreline School District Conference Center, 8560 1st Ave. NE, Shoreline
Park in the North Parking Lot, off 1st Ave. NE, not on NE 185th St.

Lunch catered by Parnita's Teriyaki Chicken. Marinated chicken breast, grilled and topped with teriyaki sauce, served with rice and salad. Cookies, water and coffee. Non-meat eaters may choose a larger salad.

Cost for the lunch is $10 for members, $15 for guests. ***FREE for new members***! Pay at the door.

Reserve your space! If you plan to attend, please email LyndaHughes@comcast.net or leave a message at **425-218-2002**. If you want the non-meat/salad-only option, please let Linda Hughes know when you make your reservation. Lunch reservations must be made **by Thursday, November 7**. If you have to cancel after November 7, please send $10 to our treasurer, Jennifer Altena (1211 NW 201st Street, Shoreline WA 98177), as we will have already paid for your meal.

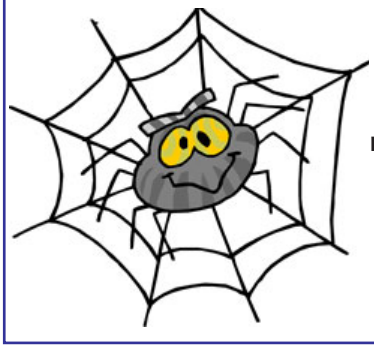
You are welcome to come just for the program; no outside food is allowed.

If you are able to help set up, please arrive at 10:45.

Welcome new retirees!

by Jim Siscel

As a newly retired SKSR member, the board would like to offer you a FREE LUNCH at our luncheons in November and April. Details regarding locations and programs appear in each *Bulletin*. When you read your *Bulletin*, you will find information on how to respond for each event. When you respond, please tell the RSVP person you are a 2024 retiree.



For more information about your retirement issues, visit

sksr.org

wssra/org

AMBA Benefits

by Jim Siscel

As an active or retired member of WSSRA, you are eligible to participate in the many benefits provided by AMBA. One of the benefits is the Passport Savings Program. This program allows members to receive discounts of up to 40% off services and merchandise from the recognized businesses. You can use it where you live and when you are traveling. There are discounts for dining, shopping, travel, tickets, and more. You just put in your location and benefits in the area are shown. Some companies involved are Costco, Whirlpool, Hertz, and Kohl's.

Contact Jim Siscel at jsiscel@comcast.net or call Michele at WSSRA, 360-413-5496, to get the information to download the app, which is activation-code protected.

Additional AMBA member discounts are legal services, dental and vision plans, life insurance, Medicare solutions, cancer, heart, stroke, and accident insurance. Information on these other discounts is available on the WSSRA.org website, Click on the Benefits (AMBA) link.

Legislatve update

Initiatives threaten permanent Plan 1 COLA

by Tim Knopf, WSSRA Legislative Committee

We are more than three months away from the 2025 Washington State Legislative Session, but things are happening in the legislature right now that could directly affect our futures.

You are aware that since 2011, WSSRA and many Plan 1 retirees have fought every session for a permanent Cost-of-Living Adjustment like that enjoyed by Plans 2 and 3. Yet, for 14 years that permanent COLA has been denied. The best that they could manage were partial "one-time COLAs" in 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024 that blunted the speed at which Plan 1 retirements have lost purchasing power, but many have already lost 50% of their value.

Due to a provision in the one-time COLA that passed the legislature in 2023, the important Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) was ordered to study the feasibility of providing Plan 1 retirees with a permanent COLA and to recommend action regarding it to the 2025 legislature. A Plan 1 COLA is not inexpensive; it would cost the state $1.6 billion over the next ten years.

For the first time ever, at their September 17, meeting, the SCPP voted to instruct their staff to prepare draft legislation extending a permanent COLA to Plan 1 members. We expect that at their October 15 meeting that the SCPP will vote to recommend this new, permanent COLA to the legislature.

Never before has the path forward to a permanent COLA for Plan 1, like that of Plans 2 and 3, been so clear. This recommendation from the SCPP wouldn't automatically make the Plan 1 COLA law. The bill would still have to clear every obstacle and fiscal committee in both legislative houses, but we have never before begun a session with such excellent "field position."

Two initiatives on the November 5, 2024, general election ballot could kill any chance of that COLA

That is why it is cruelly ironic that two initiatives to appear on the November 5, general election ballot could kill any chance of that COLA happening in the coming years. As a result, for the first time the Washington State School Retirees' Association has taken a position ***opposing these two state-wide initiatives.***

The first is **Initiative 2109**. It is sponsored and primarily funded by Republican former hedge-fund manager and millionaire, Brian Heywood, leader of "Let's Go, Washington." If passed, it would repeal the Capital Gains Tax that has been Washington state law since 2021 and which survived a 2023 challenge in the State Supreme Court.

That tax imposes a 7% excise tax on the sale of long-term capital assets, specifically stocks, bonds and business interests (not real estate) above and beyond $250,000. Keyed to inflation, that tax floor has risen to $262,000 this year. The people paying this tax are Washington's wealthiest residents, and their number lies somewhere between three and four thousand people, that's about .002% of state residents.

If this passes, a potential $2.2 billion will be removed from state revenue in the next five years just to give millionaires a tax break. That money goes to K-12 education, early learning and child-care, K-12 school construction, and higher education. Its passage would require major budget cuts, killing new spending proposals like a Plan 1 permanent COLA.

The second threat is **Initiative 2117**, also sponsored and funded by Brian Heywood and "Let's Go, Washington." It would repeal the Climate Commitment Act (the CCA) also a state law since 2021, meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and by 95% by 2050. It does this by setting limits on major greenhouse gas emitters, such as oil refineries and utilities, requiring them to purchase state allowances at state auctions for each metric ton of air pollution produced beyond that limit.

Each year the number of allowable emissions is reduced further. The funds created by the state auctions finance hundreds of climate sustainability projects. Passage of this initiative would eliminate limits on greenhouse gas emissions, kill those environmental projects and force state budget cuts–killing new spending proposals like a Plan 1 permanent COLA.

Health news

Symptoms of urinary-tract infections in older adults

compiled by Robin Randles, Health chair

Urinary-tract infections (UTI) are common in adults over the age of 65. They happen more frequently because of many age-related factors such as malnutrition, long-term hospitalizations, trouble getting to the bathroom, weakened immune systems, some medications that cause urine retention, lower estrogen in females, and enlarged prostates in males.

Urinary-tract infections are caused when bacteria infects your bladder, urethra, or other organs in your urinary tract. Urinary-tract infections can be serious if left untreated and can spread to the kidneys or the bloodstream.

Urine left in the bladder can give bacteria time to grow, so it is important to empty your bladder completely. Men with an enlarged prostate gland and women with thinner vaginal walls are susceptible to urinary-tract infections. Some medication side effects cause urine retention. People in hospitals or long-term care facilities can be exposed to bacteria that can lead to infections.

Symptoms of infection

The classic signs of a urinary-tract infection include frequent urination and burning and pain while urinating. Other common UTI symptoms are lower abdominal or back pain, fever, blood in the urine, or cloudy urine.

As we age, those symptoms aren't the only ones that can occur, so spotting a UTI can be difficult. Older adults may not experience common UTI symptoms. They may experience seemingly unrelated symptoms like confusion in the absence of fever, agitation, delirium, fatigue, drowsiness, dizziness, frequent falls, and decreased appetite. Adults who have trouble communicating may not be able to let someone know they are feeling these symptoms. Their infections can be easily overlooked.

Urinary-tract infections can quickly lead to more serious infections. Older adults should seek care to avoid complications. Your urologist or primary care physician will do a few tests to confirm if your symptoms are a UTI. A urine culture can be a helpful test to confirm the infection and identify the type of bacteria causing it.

Treatments

Treatment varies depending on the symptoms. UTI symptoms are generally managed by antibiotic or anti-fungal medication. Advanced cases may require hospitalization and intravenous antibiotics.

Prevention

There are some things we can do in our daily lives to help prevent urinary-tract infections.

- Empty your bladder about every four to six hours during the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids–about 50 to 70 ounces per day–to keep the urine from becoming too concentrated.
- Reduce or avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Practice good toilet hygiene. Wipe from front to back to prevent spreading bacteria. Put on clean underwear every day. Promptly change incontinence pads or underwear when wet or soiled.

Be alert to any symptoms you may be feeling and consult your primary care physician, sooner rather than later, to rule out a UTI. Don't delay and put off a visit to the doctor. Knowledge is power when we are talking about our health.

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the time and skills to take on either of these roles for 2024-25?

Please contact Jim Siscel (jsiscel@comcast. net, 425-778-7202) or Cathy Webb (clmwebb@gmail.com, 425-877- 5753) or Erma Snook (egsnook@comcast.net) for more information.

Lastly, this year we have an important election opportunity. Be sure to vote on November 5. The current issue of the state magazine, The *Journal*, has a list of candidates supported by WSSRA. There are local issues, statewide issues, and other decisions to be made.

Please exercise your right to vote!

How to wash a cat

1. Put both lids of the toilet up and add 1/8 cup of pet shampoo to the water in the bowl.
2. Pick up the cat and sooth him while you carry him towards the bathroom.
3. In one smooth movement, put the cat in the toilet and close the lid. You nay may need to stand on the lid.
4. At this point, the cat will self agitate and make ample suds. Never mind the noise that comes from the toilet – the cat is actually enjoying this.
5. Flush the toilet three or four times. This provides a "Power Wash" and "Rinse."
6. Have someone open the front door of your home. Be sure that there are no people between the bathroom and the front door.
7. Stand well back behind the toilet as far as you can and quickly lift the lid.
8. The cat will rocket out of the toilet, streak through the bathroom, and run outside where he will dry himself off.
9. Both the toilet and the cat will be sparkling clean.

Yours sincerely,
The Dog

T-shirts for Retirees

Wishing Happy Holidays to you from your Sno-King School Retirees' Board

Help us with the *Bulletin*

The deadline for the next *Bulletin* is **December 13**.
Please send changes in your mailing address, telephone number, or e-mail address to Jim Siscel, jsiscel@comcast.net, or call 425-778-7202.

If you know of illness, please call Sunshine Chair Barb Bumgardner, 206-364-8413.

If you would like to help fold and prepare the *Bulletin* for mailing *on* **January 6,** call Robin Randles, 206-542-6428.