



UNIT 21
Skagit-Island-San Juan
School Retirees' Association

August, 2011

MONDAY, AUGUST 15

Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21

ANNUAL REUNION BARBECUE

Riverfront Park
101 River Road
Sedro-Woolley

MENU

Hamburgers with all the fixings
Salad and cookies
Coffee and punch
\$12 per person

11:00 a.m. visit and get reacquainted
11:30 a.m. lunch
12:30 p.m. program

RSVP is helpful—email is preferred babsann09@comcast.net or 360-708-9046

Map available: [http://www.ci.sedrowoolley.wa.us/parksand recreation/facilities.htm](http://www.ci.sedrowoolley.wa.us/parksand%20recreation/facilities.htm)

We look forward to a good old summertime barbecue and visit with old friends. Bring all your school employee friends. You do not have to be a member of WSSRA to join us.

We will have a collection point for food bank items. Bring non-perishable food items, mini toiletries (new/unused,) and, of course, cash is always welcome! This month the Sedro-Woolley Food Bank will be the recipient.

We have special ordered summer sunshine!!!

President's Message:

As the co-presidents for this year, Diane Visten and I are off to an unusual start!

Wow! Diane was stranded over the weekend in Italy then Frankfurt, so she was flying home on Monday during our meeting. I was expecting to be on jury duty so Barb Landrock stepped in expertly presiding over most of the meeting and then she handed the leadership over to me. Everyone attending stepped up. They planned events for the coming year and volunteered for offices and committee chairs. Diane and I are off to a running start!

Why would we decide to co-president this group especially at this time when we are losing our benefits and the professional respect we all have earned? A good question.

Today I will speak for myself. I do it for people like Viola Sexton who rallied us 30 years ago in the quest for a fair wage, decent medical benefits, and quality working conditions. She knew that how we were treated as active school employees would translate to how we would be treated as retirees. I do it for Barbara Spane, who made each of us want to stand up and be the best we could be as educators. I do it for all the active school employees, who will follow in our footsteps. I do it for all the retirees, who now need to stand up and be counted to protect what we have left of pension benefits and to STOP the erosion of our pension rights.

Please stand with Diane and me now. Join us at our luncheons and meetings. Please get to know your legislators and let them know you. Please talk to your neighbors, write letters, read and respond to newsletters, emails and websites. Check us out and see if together we can make a difference.

Thank you to all those who attended the July 25th planning meeting. Thank you all for your consideration of my thoughts.

Barbara Robinson

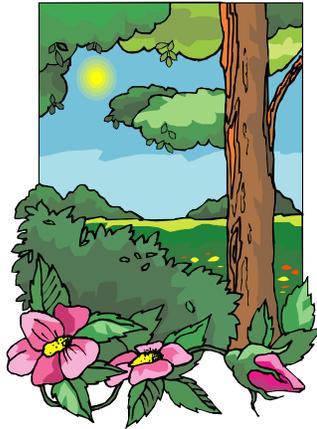
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Nina Martin
Joanne McInnes
Andra Schaub
Kathleen Woodard

We hope you'll join us for some/all of our activities!

WE REMEMBER

David Pocock



MEADOW VIEWS by Kathy Reim

Some years ago, I spent many months traveling around the state of Washington with a group of people whom I affectionately came to think of as the “curmudgeons.” We were working on reforming our pension system- changing the system at the state level from being represented by a group of elected political representatives to one that included members of the actual retiree groups who represented our interests and lives. It was successful. It was, however- too little and too late.

I met many good people and heard about dedication and devotion to our careers and kids and one another. Today, as I write, the view from my meadow is bittersweet.

I called one of my curmudgeon buddies this afternoon- and we agreed-as many of you who read this will - we did the best we could. It was not enough.

It is not that there was so much loss in resources this session. We understand that happens in hard times. It was the taking away of the future... the decision made in Olympia that when times improve, we will have to trudge back through a process of political negotiations for a level of fairness that is self-evident and hard-earned.

We are up against a sophisticated lobby system that pits those who know how to market and promote and convince and communicate against groups who have fewer resources and are at a place in their lives like children and the elderly- where the focus is on growing up or growing older. For me that is the bitter part. The sweet part is that I read once there can be no other group more determined than an organized bunch of elementary teachers.

At our luncheon on December 7 we will be collecting money for the WSSRA Political Action Committee. We can be disdainful of the political process ... or we can work to increase our membership to the 100,000 it should be. We can invest money in electing or supporting officials from either party who value the future of public school retirees now and in the future. We have some new leadership stepping up for Unit 21. That is what we have been hoping would happen.

Now:

Send us your e-mail address. Send us a small contribution for the PAC. Show up if you can. Ask another retiree or active to join and explain why. Show our new co-presidents (both of who were elementary teachers) that we know what it means to be determined.

Unit 21 Officers and Chairpersons

Co-President: Diane Visten and Barbara Robinson
Co-Secretary: Lonnie Keown and Joyce Scoll
Treasurer: Barbara Landrock

Health Services: Joyce Scoll

Legislative:

Membership: Harriet Smith until we can find a volunteer!!

Retirement: Pam Verner and Lonnie Keown

Outreach: Reidar and Millie Ytgard

Newsletter: Joanne Jones

Online communications: Kathy Reim

Grants: Glenda Hobbs and Harriet Smith

Dates to Remember

August 15 Reunion Barbeque at Riverfront Park in Sedro Woolley
September 19 Unit 21 Board meeting at Royal Star Buffet in Mt. Vernon
October 22 AN EVENT: Critical Conversations
Public Employees and the Future of Retirement in Washington State
December 7 December Holiday Luncheon and Silent Auction at Skagit Golf and Country Club

Keep these dates on your calendar!

CHANGES ARE A-COMIN!

The Health Care Authority has new health plans for the PEBB (Public Employees Benefit Board). Big changes are coming to your PEBB health plan choices for 2012. There may be more choices within your current plan. Premiums will be higher or lower according to coverage.

You may change plans during open enrollment in November. You will receive documents describing the plans in the mail in October. Be sure to review the plan's coverage carefully. Go to benefit fairs in our area. Schedules will be listed in the PEBB documents. Make an appointment with your local SHIBA volunteer. Remember if you cancel your PEBB plans you will not be able to rejoin any PEBB plan at a later date.

Medicare retirees will not be eligible for every new plan from Uniform, Kaiser and Group Health. The legislature reduced the \$189 supplement for Medicare retirees to \$150 a month. The details should be available sometime this summer. Be prepared for an increase in your plan. Updates are to be available in late July by mail or at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov.

Joyce Scoll

Kudos for Unit 21

Emerson High School thanks Unit 21 for awarding \$ 100 grants to teachers Rachaelle Baxter, Chris Gusta and Stan Hayden.

Mr. Gusta used his grant to purchase replacement paperback copies of books (*To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies* & *Hiroshima*) that were needed due to increased enrollment, and ‘shrinkage’ due to students not returning books when they unexpectedly move [e.g. our homeless and migrant youth].

Mrs. Baxter commented, “I found an author that the students for my English improvement classes seem to really like: Gary Soto. I do a teacher read aloud with one of his novels entitled *Afterlife*, and I was able to get a class set so that students could read along. I also purchased a class set of short stories by Soto called “*Baseball in April*.” Last but not least, the kids really enjoy an author Reymundo Sanchez who writes the books about his involvement and escape from life in the Latin Kings gang. He has several books that I purchased for students to check out.”

Mr. Hayden teaches fine and graphic arts, and he commented, “Emerson has a 70+% ‘Free/Reduced’ population so our students have a very hard time buying any school supplies. The school has a very limited budget and although we do receive some donations to purchase/replace consumable art supplies for fine and graphic arts classes, the needs of the students are greater than the supplies. The supplies that our budget pays for, or that are donated, are basic supplies for beginning students. I used the grant from Unit 21 to purchase a small number of supplies to be used by my advanced students – their work really blossomed this year”. Thank you Unit 21!!!



Rachaelle Baxter and Chris Gusta (not pictured, Stan Hayden)

Skagit-Island-San Juan, Unit 21 Washington State School Retirees' Association
GRANT APPLICATION

Starting in 2011, first time applicants do not have to be members of WSSRA; however we encourage you to join on line at <http://www.sisra21.org/> to be eligible for future grants.

Typically these grants have been for \$100.00 each.

Please post this at your school!

All information provided will be used only for this purpose.

Deadline for applications is: Friday, October 28, 2011

Name:

Your home e-mail and preferred number:

School District:

School Name:

School Mailing Address:

School Phone and e-mail:

Best time to call:

Brief description of your needs:

Approximate number of students involved:

Applications may be sent to the website or to Harriet Smith
Hrsmith_80@hotmail.com or they may be mailed to:

Barbara Landrock, Treasurer – Unit 21
1407 State Route 9
Sedro-Woolley, Washington
98284
Phone – 360-856-2190

TAKE TIME TO SMILE

'This telephone is an amazing invention but who would want to use one of them?' American President, *Rutherford Hayes* 1876.

'X-rays are a hoax'.
Lord Kelvin, president of the Royal Society in 1900.

'I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts'.
Will Rogers [Comedian, social commentator, vaudeville actor]

'You can fool all of the people all of the time if the advertising is right and the budget is big enough.'
Joseph Levine

'A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.'
Mark Twain

'Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.'
George Orwell

'If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself.'
Charles M. Schulz

Puns for Educated Minds

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian .
3. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
4. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
5. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
6. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.