



# *UNIT 21*

## Skagit-Island-San Juan

### School Retirees' Association

May-June, 2012

### **Retirement Workshop**

This year's Retirement Workshop was a huge success and met all of the goals that were set forth. Those who attended were greatly appreciative for all the information. Skagit Valley College instructor, Thor McIlrath, was very informative and had a lot to offer retirees. A beautiful, eye-catching poster that Lonnie Keown designed and had printed was the main item used for advertising. Many thanks to everyone who helped with the workshop—and especially to Pam Verner and Lonnie Keown who were co-chairs for the event.

### **State Organization Scholarship**

The Washington State School Retirees Association awards, annually, scholarships to graduating seniors. There are twenty-four available. Eight are the WSSRA Foundation scholarship and sixteen are the Robert J. Handy scholarships. Unit 21 Skagit/Island/San Juan School Retirees Association is proud to announce the two recipients for the Robert J. Handy Scholarship are in our area. The scholarship is \$900 a year, renewable for four years. The two students are:

Kiah Rose – a student of Sedro Woolley High School. She plans to attend Washington State University to become a high school math teacher.

Abby Lohman – a student at Burlington-Edison High School. She plans to attend Oregon State University to become an agriculture teacher.

**We are very proud of these students and wish them well in their future.**

### **We Remember:**

Don Morris and Gerald Little

**You are in our thoughts.**



## **WSSRA Unit 21 Luncheon**

**Monday, June 18, 2012, 11:00 a.m.**

**Northwest Educational Service District #189**

**1601 R Avenue, Anacortes**

**The building is situated on Fidalgo Bay with a beautiful view of the water.**

### **Catered lunch**

Sandwiches, Salads, Brownies

Coffee or Tea

Cost: \$11

There will be a 50-50 monetary doorprize

**An RSVP to Eloise is appreciated. (360)757-2785 Guests are welcome!**

### Directions to NWESD building:

As you enter Anacortes on Highway 20, keep to the right, turning on the R Avenue Exit. Continue on R Avenue, which becomes Q Avenue.

Turn right on Seafarers Way. Go one block and turn right on R.

The ESD parking lot is the 3<sup>rd</sup> driveway on the left.



### **Meeting and Program**

There will be a business meeting at 11:00 a.m. followed by the catered lunch. We will leave the ESD building at 1:15 and proceed to the W.T. Preston Snagboat Heritage Center for a 1:30 tour. We are hoping to have a docent for our group; but if not, we'll manage.

The Preston was the last sternwheeler to work in Puget Sound and is one of two snagboats remaining in the contiguous United States. Her crews removed navigational hazards from the bays and harbors of the Sound and its tributary rivers.

The W.T. Preston was placed on the National Register for Historic Places in 1979. In 1981 the Army Corps of Engineers retired her from duty and solicited proposals to preserve the snagboat. In 1983 the Corps transferred the title to Anacortes. The city allocated \$40,000 to prepare a waterfront site for the Preston beside its old Burlington Northern Railway Depot.

Please join us to see this important part of our Western Washington history.

**Admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for seniors.**



## Outreach

Please bring non-perishable food items, unopened travel-size personal products, and/or cash donations to the meeting with you. Cash donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated. The donations this time will go to the **Hamilton Food Bank**. Thank you Reidar Ytgard for taking these to the various food banks for us!



## Treasurer's Report

May 14, 2012

Checking - \$6200.46

Savings - \$700.94

\$ \$ \$ \$

## Welcome new Members

Wendy Chevalier

Kenneth Guernsey

Dona Hargrave

Jim Lippert

Eleanor Melton

Patricia Shanander

Marilyn Vandererff

## 2012 WSSRA'S 65TH CONVENTION IN SPOKANE

On Sunday, June 3, 2012, these 10 members of Unit 21 are headed to Spokane for the 65th WSSRA convention: Joyce Scoll, Joyce Moon, Diane Visten, Barb Landrock, Joe Best, Diane Best, Barb Robinson, Joanne Jones, Raider and Millie Ytgard. They will be hearing from the legislative committee and the results of this legislative session and honoring members who have gone above and beyond the goals of WSSRA.

The business of our association will be covered on Tuesday. Tuesday evening the installation of WSSRA's new officers and District Representatives will take place. Wednesday is a busy time for members attending breakout sessions—learning and sharing how the various state committees function and help our 17,000 plus members. Convention is not all business—visiting and meeting new friends, great entertainment, good meals and fun is had by all.

Attending a convention really shows what our Washington State School Retirees Association is all about. Our state organization relies on volunteers to get the business done—volunteers who

want to improve the life of our state's retirees. Members of Unit 21 have served on various state committees. 2012-13 Barb Landrock will serve on the state Nomination and Review Committee.

Each unit is given a specific number of delegates, based on the number of members in the Unit. In 2013 our members again will have an opportunity to step forward and be a delegate. The dates are June 3-4-5 in Wenatchee. Join us for another year of WSSRA Convention experience. By the way—Unit 21 pays **ALL** expenses.

*Barb Landrock*



## **Volunteering**

Susan Allison, the activities director of Birchview Memory Care facility in Sedro-Woolley, is looking for a few wonderful volunteers to commit to helping her for ANY amount of time that would be convenient for you. Opportunities are open to use your particular skills and interests.

Some residents just need someone to talk to for awhile. Some residents would like to play cards or board games with someone. Some residents would like a partner to walk with them. Gardening activities are going on. Arts and crafts always need assistance. This volunteer time is interesting and rewarding.

If you feel that you could volunteer some time, please call Susan at Birchview. Talk to her about what you would like to do, and how much time you would be able to commit to this. Even a small amount of time once a month would be helpful to her—so almost ANYONE could fit something into their schedule.

She was excited about hearing from retired school employees because we are known to have many great skills that would be useful to these people. They would love to interact with the world they have known, but in a controlled situation. Storytelling, singing, craft work, reading, writing letters, painting nails—the list is endless.

Please call 856-1911 and ask for Susan today. Tell her you are from the retired teachers' organization and would like to help.

*Pam Verner*



## **A Few Dates to Remember**

**July 16 or 23—Retreat—stay tuned; August 13 or 20—Special activity—stay tuned; September 17—Board Meeting; October 15—Luncheon; November 5—Board Meeting; December 5—Christmas Holiday Luncheon at the Skagit Valley Country Club.**

## **RESULTS OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Washington State has adopted a supplemental budget. The agreement took one Regular Legislative Session, two Special Legislative Sessions, and an additional seven hours. In the end, Legislators voted to reduce pension benefits for future employees, change the K-12 healthcare structure, and retain the \$150 Medicare Eligible Healthcare subsidy.

**2ESB 6378 - PENSION REDUCTIONS.** THIS BILL WILL ONLY AFFECT NEW SCHOOL AND STATE EMPLOYEES. THE BILL DOES NOT CHANGE BENEFITS FOR CURRENT RETIREES OR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES WITH AN ESTABLISHED MEMBERSHIP IN A STATE RETIREMENT PLAN.

The Legislature will:

1. Keep TRS/PERS Plan 2, defined benefit pensions, open for new school employees.
2. Make the necessary \$146 million payment to the TRS/PERS unfunded liability.
3. Reduce early retirement benefits for future State and school employees. Anyone beginning school employment after May 1, 2013, will have the option of retiring at age 55 with 30 years' service. However, those employees will lose 5% of their monthly pension benefit every year before the age of 65. A future school employee could retire at age 65 with a full benefit, at age 60 with a 25% reduction, or at age 55 with a 50% reduction.
4. The Select Committee on Pension Policy, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, will study risk classifications for state and school employees. They will make recommendations to the Legislature for additional Early Retirement Factors in certain strenuous school and public employment positions.

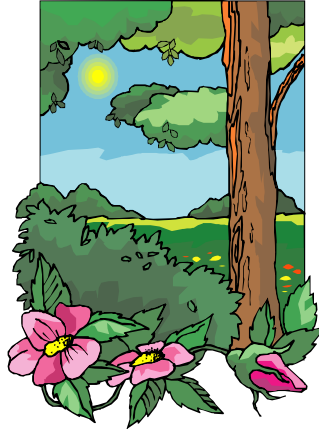
## **SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5940 - K-12 HEALTHCARE BENEFITS**

The legislature attempted to reduce K-12 healthcare expenses through ESSB 5940. This legislation is significantly altered from its original version and does not affect retirees.

1. School districts will be required to provide health plans with a wide range of premium options.
2. Family premiums will be required to be less than 3X the cost for individual coverage. Individual premiums will subsidize dependent premiums.
3. K-12 health plan data will be submitted to the Office of the Insurance Commissioner for analysis and review.
4. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner and the Washington State Health Care Authority will review insurance data and make policy recommendations to the Legislature by 2016.

Please read the above carefully and contact your legislators about your feelings concerning the decisions made.

Submitted by Barbara Landrock - Information from Oetzer Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator.



MEADOW VIEWS by Kathy Reim

WHY SAVANNAH?

Kathy Reim was born in Savannah, Georgia, right at the end of World War II to a mom who was raised in North Carolina. Kathy spent her early childhood traveling with the circus across the mid-west and southern part of the country and then at 8 years of age found herself part of a new family in a small town in Texas. She remembers that when she graduated with the class of 1963, she was still the new girl.

After being selected for a tuition scholarship by her teachers, she went off to North Texas State College (now the University of North Texas) in Denton, Texas, under the newly established National Defense Education Act.

“We are framed by our stories,” Kathy says. “I was drawn to teaching because I had such good teachers in my life. I was drawn to the students who came with unconventional stories and atypical lives. I am dedicated to maintaining an American Dream that is within reach of every child because it was available to me.”

All of that is not unusual for teachers. What, however, creates school employees who are also eager to work on behalf of the wider issues in education? Well, stories are also certainly part of that.

“It helped that I was non-renewed, riffed, early in my career,” she says. “It still makes me laugh that we find euphemisms for being laid off or fired. I came from a working class background so I knew being fired wasn’t always personal. I also knew that being organized and having a union was important.

Kathy continues, “I went to that first meeting after getting the nonrenewal notice and remarked to one of my “riffed” colleagues, ‘So they fired the tall lady over there with the silver hair, too?’”

“Oh, no,” he replied. “That is Vi Sexton, and she is here to help.”

“She was and still is.” Kathy says.”

“As we get together at meetings and for conversation, the stories are important. Our younger colleagues are learning from their stories. Every generation thinks it is smarter than the one before and wiser than the one coming after; but we do have wisdom to share. Together-across generations- we can work in the best interest of public education and support the hard-working people who over time and especially now, develop hope for the future.”

“Oh,” she added, “and that is why my Yorkie’s name is Savannah.”

## President's Message

### Getting to Know You!

March 19-25, 2012, was proclaimed by Governor Christine Gregoire as School Retirees' Appreciation Week. This brought to mind the many members we have that volunteer in our area. So we want to know what kind of volunteering you do and about how many hours a week or month you do this. We think it is time we celebrate ourselves. One member found that by giving grants to the active school employees, we impact in a positive way about 1700 children. We believe we impact many other people in our community in a variety of other ways, too.

Please fill out the survey and return it to one of the addresses at the bottom of the page either by email or by regular mail. We appreciate your efforts and want to recognize each of you and our retiree group.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Current phone number and email address \_\_\_\_\_

Give a short summary of where you volunteer, who you work with and how many hours a week or month you spend. Please share all you would like to share.

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We really hope to hear from all of you and are looking forward to hearing about your ventures.

Send to: Barbara Robinson 3625 S. Woodland Place, Mt. Vernon, WA 98274  
or Diane Visten 307 Arrowhead Pt. Lane, Camano Island, WA 98292

Email: [babsann09@comcast.net](mailto:babsann09@comcast.net) [divisten@wavecable.com](mailto:divisten@wavecable.com)

**Skagit/Island/San Juan  
School Retirees  
1407 Highway 9  
Sedro-Woolley WA 98284**

**PRSRT  
AUTO  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284  
Permit No. 218**

**WSSRA Unit 21 Luncheon  
Northwest ESD #189  
1601 R Avenue  
Anacortes  
Monday, June 18, 11:00 a.m.  
Catered lunch \$11 per person  
RSVP appreciated**

**Guests are welcome  
PLEASE JOIN US!**