

The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

October 2023

OCTOBER'S MESSAGE

By Millie Stenehjem

Welcome to YCSRA's new program year. Our lead-off presenter is already well known and a friend, Lori Schatz, The Travel Lady from Harmon Center.

Now is your chance to get your questions about Harmon's travel programs answered, such as

1. How do you determine where we will go?
2. Mystery tours: Whose idea?
3. Do you use patron suggestions?

Lori has been with the Harmon Center for several years and is well acquainted with the travel industry.

Hasn't this been quite a summer? Aren't we lucky to live in this central Washington locale? We had only a week and a half of hot weather, some days of smoke filled air. We missed the Canadian fires, the devastation at Lahaina, Maui and the many areas of the world suffering from wind and rain damage. I hope we have been able to count our blessings and be pleased to gather for another year of meeting and sharing.

Speaking of sharing, we'd like your ideas for programs. If you have suggestions, grab anyone on the Board who can carry the suggestion to our next board meeting.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

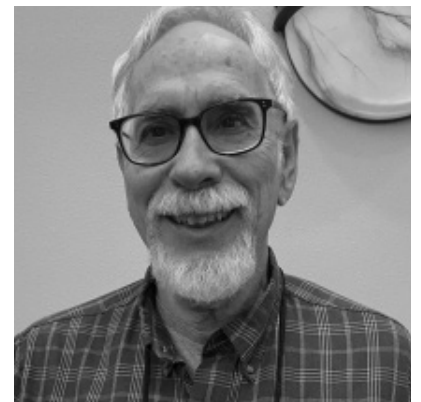
By Patrick Walsh

Dear members:

Another school year is upon us. Some of us have gone back to the school hallways and classrooms – charged up and ready to do the best job we can to instill knowledge and skills that will help make the world a better place. Those of us who have retired send our best wishes for your success. In the last legislative session, the WSSRA has been active and busy ensuring that our much deserved retirement pensions are improved and secured. A COLA of 3% was provided to Plan I retirees. This means an increase in pension of up to \$110 a month. Other legislation was passed to further secure pension funding and funding for the Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit.

The first teacher retirement system in Washington was legislated in 1917 with money from teacher contributions only and a post 30 year pension of \$480 per year. This system was the result of unified action by teachers to develop and pass legislation. The WSSRA was started in 1947 to continue that work. We have come a long way since then, but continued advocacy is necessary to protect retirement in the future. Membership has declined since the pandemic.

Membership at the State level has declined from 17,133 in August of 2022 to 17,024 in August of 2023; a loss of 109 members. In Yakima County, membership has declined by 27 members in the same time period. Yakima County maintains 1,511 members. These losses are not catastrophic, but are a warning sign of weakening legislative strength in the future. Please, if you have eligible friends who are not members, consider asking them to join this valuable association. Membership is easy via the WSSRA Website, just be sure to indicate that you are joining the **Yakima County Unit**. Go to wssra.org and click on membership, then choose **join**.





THE VOICE

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509 966 7430

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Carolyn Wilson
509 952 1911

Health Services/Memorials

Lorry Evert-Garvin
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Legislative

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Sandy Gavin
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Outreach

Jan Saxton
509 658 1527

Welcome/Registration

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509 658 1527

Linda Lockwood
509 961 5571

Mini-grants

Kathy Schultz
509 966 9341

GENERAL MEETING

When: Monday, October 2, 2023

Where: Englewood Christian Church, 511 N 44th Avenue

Fellowship: 12:30 pm

Our YCSRA board is providing treats as you visit prior to the program.

Program: 1:00 pm

Lori Schatz, Harmon Center Trip Coordinator

Join us for fun and fellowship as well as door prizes and drawing prizes. All attendees receive a door prize ticket for an opportunity to win a gift card to a local restaurant.

The following people have signed up to bring

TREATS

Nick and Kathy Schultz 509 966 9341
Kathy Fletcher 509 654 0350
Jan Saxton 509 658 1527
Sandy Gavin 509 952 9855
Linda Trepanier 509 966 7430

DRAWING PRIZES

Kathy & Nick Schultz 509 966 9341
Carolyn Wilson 509 952 1911
Jan Saxton 509 658 1527
Larry Scholl 509 674 9532
Patrick Walsh 509 854 7891
Millie Stenehjem 509 966 3409

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“School is a building that has four walls-with tomorrow inside”

**Make sure we have
your proper email**

If you have changed your email address in the last year, please send me a corrected one. Thanks!
Sandy Gavin, sandyg1948@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in **The Voice** are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of the YCSRA Board or the editors. Editorial contributions and articles as well as ideas for articles are welcome. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Send information to Kathy Schultz. Co-editors. Kathy Schultz • 509 966 9341 chevvhvn@charter.net Eric Patrick • 509 985 7768 ecpatrick@charter.net

WE SEND OUT WSSRA GREETINGS!

Let's support our members with get well wishes, condolences, thank yous, congratulations, thinking of you and more. Email or call me with names and I'll get the card(s) sent out for you. Email: cmstenehjem@msn.com or 509-966-3409. Leave a message if no one answers.

~ Millie Stenehjem



MINI-GRANT APPLICATION

As a member of **Yakima County School Retirees**, you are eligible to apply for a mini-grant to use with the children in your school. These grants are intended for special projects or classroom materials. **Grants up to \$500 are available.** It is a token of our appreciation for all that you do to help students achieve their potential. This year we have \$12,000 to award. So let us help you with that great idea for your class or school.

Grant applications must be received by **Monday, November 13, 2023**. Applicants receiving grants will be notified by December 16, 2023. If you receive a mini-grant, we ask that you plan to share with us a written description along with pictures of how this mini-grant benefited your students. This will become part of a display at our May 2024, general meeting. *Please send it by April 15, 2024 to:*

Kathy Schultz, 4711 W Lincoln Ave., Yakima, WA 98908

Please complete the application below and attach to your typewritten sheet outlining program details. Make it brief and specific.

APPLICANT NAME _____

GRANT TITLE _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED _____ NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED _____

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION - Attach a separate typewritten sheet outlining program details.

APPLICANT HOME PHONE _____

APPLICANT (PERSONAL) EMAIL ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL NAME AND ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL PHONE _____

SUPERVISOR/PRINCIPAL (print name) _____

SUPERVISOR/PRINCIPAL SIGNATURE _____

YOUR SIGNATURE _____

Please return this completed application along with your typewritten grant description to:

**Kathy Schultz, YCSRA Mini-grants
4711 W. Lincoln Ave. Yakima, WA 98908**

This completed application must be postmarked by November 9, 2023.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is the best LIFE ADVICE you can give in 10 words or less?

Live each day to the fullest! Love and laugh a lot.
~ **Lorry Evert**

It's your attitude not your aptitude that determines your altitude. ~ **Peggy Young**

From a 100 year old: Don't lose weight because it fills out your wrinkles. ~ **Jan Saxton**

Find a reason to smile everyday! ~ **Kathy Fletcher**

Accept and love yourself and others. Start saving money early. ~ **Judi Lewis**

Do what you can do. ~ **Barbara Merz**

Treat others as you would like to be treated. ~ **Pat Walsh**

Find balance between everything you do. ~ **Linda Beck**

Worry less, laugh more and always act with love.
~ **Susan Kaplan**

Let Jesus Christ be CEO of your life. The bible is your users guide. ~ **Connie Carpenter**

Never give up. ~ **Nancy Lindgren**

Find joy in every day! ~ **Coreen Fortin**

Smile, be flexible, communicate, enjoy what you do.
~ **Steve Dulude**

There is always tomorrow! (This was self talk our first daughter lived. She did her best and started again the next day.) ~ **Candace Dulude**

Go deep! ~ **Chuck Weedin**

Be kind, honest; have fun; enjoy the moment.
~ **Casey Stenehjem**

Spend less than you earn. ~ **Rick Gagnier**

Listen to your inner self and become the best you can be.
~ **Kathy Dyblie**

Follow the Lord Jesus Christ. ~ **Bob Ferguson**

The two most important words in a marriage are: "Yes Dear". ~ **Larry Scholl**

Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and eats for a lifetime. ~ **Nick Schultz**

If it is to be it is up to me! ~ **Sandy Gavin**

The past is behind you. Move on. ~ **Norma Haney**

Always look for the positive in people. One small positive thought can change your day. ~ **Janet Fanciullo**

Life's not fair. Get used to it! ~ **Pat Gavin**

The Golden rule. ~ **Delia Garns**

Enjoy life! ~ **Paul Schafer**

To thine own self be true. ~ **Carol Mills**

Be Kind! ~ **Jane Watson**

Don't sweat the small stuff. ~ **Maureen Scott**

Life doesn't have to be perfect to be beautiful.
Be thankful! ~ **Kathy Schultz**



ZUCCHINI BAKE

- 1 can creamy chicken mushroom soup
- 4 C. sliced cooked zucchini (do not overcook)
- 1/2 C. onion finely chopped
- 1/4 C. butter melted
- 1/2 C. sour cream
- 1 C. raw carrots (shredded)
- 2 C. herb seasoned stuffing mix

In a 2 qt. baking dish (12x8x2) combine the sour cream, zucchini, carrots, and onion. Toss together butter & stuffing mix & spoon over veggies.

*Better: Mix moist stuffing mix with other ingredients. Save out 1/2 cup or so to put on top and press into the rest. Bake at 350 for 30 min. or more depending upon how brown you like it.

From the kitchen of Millie and Casey Stenehjem



THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

Pre-Retirement Zoom Webinars

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 - 4:30pm

Department of Retirement Systems and Health Care Authority/PEBB

Thursday, October 19, 2023 - 4:30pm

Social Security/Medicare and VEBA

Sponsored by Washington State School Retirees' Association

Certificated and Classified Employees: If you are within 1-5 years of retirement, you will want to attend these (no fee) virtual webinars to learn about your retirement plans (Plan 2 or Plan 3), medical/dental options, sick leave buyout (VEBA), Social Security options, and Medicare.

These webinars will feature presentations from the following agencies:

- WA State Department of Retirement Systems (Plan 2 and Plan 3, October 18)
- WA State Health Care Authority/PEBB (Medical/Dental/Vision options, October 18)
- Social Security and Medicare (October 19)
- VEBA (Your sick leave buyout options – October 19)

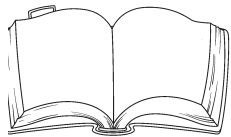


Please visit www.wssra.org and register under the webinars tab.

Phone: 360-413-5496 ext 111

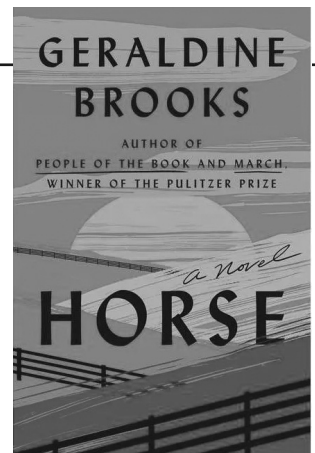
Website: www.wssra.org Email: Tara@wssra.org

ANNOUNCEMENT: Washington State Health Care Authority PEBB is now online 24/7!
No more long paper forms. Self service to fit your schedule. Benefits 24/7 is a convenient online system you can use to enroll in and make changes to your benefits.
Learn more by visiting the HELP WITH BENEFITS 24/7 at: benefits247.hca.a.gov



Book Corner

A review of the book 'Horse' by Geraldine Brooks by Al Woodworth, Amazon Editor. Geraldine Brooks' latest novel is a heart-pounding American epic that gallops backward and forward in time to tell a story about race and freedom, horses and art, and the lineage of not just ancestors but actions. In present day, we meet Theo Northam, a black art historian who is researching 19th century equestrian paintings, and Jess, a bone specialist who is called to help uncover an old horse skeleton lodged somewhere in the Smithsonian. And flash back to the 1850's, there is Jarret Lewis, an enslaved groom for Lexington-a horse that will become the fastest thoroughbred ever to race-who desperately wants to be free but will do anything for the horse he's raised. Weaving together these different narratives, 'Horse', tells a distinctly American story that shines a light on the legacy of slavery and the pursuit of independence. And like the races Lexington runs, this is a fast, exciting and all together remarkable read from Pulitzer Prize winning author Geraldine Brooks.



BITS & PIECES



By Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator

We're back! Hopefully you've had an enjoyable summer and are watching the kids go back to school from the comfort of your front porch.

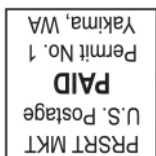
The legislature is getting back to work as well. Legislators are still in district, but the professional staff is in Olympia preparing for the 2024 Legislative Session. It's been slower over the summer; however, there were some important developments.

The Select Committee on Pension Policy met in June and July. That body seems poised to recommend a 3% Plan 1 COLA for 2024. The Committee is also scheduling time to study implementation of a permanent, automatic COLA for Plan 1. It's well past time, but we applaud their decision to tackle the matter. Further action is expected at the October, November, and December SSCP meetings.



The Washington State Healthcare Authority – the agency managing state retiree insurance – has put out a plea to Washington's congressional delegation regarding subsidies for retiree insurance. The way the Social Security Act is written, Medicare Advantage plans are eligible for more subsidies than traditional Medicare plans. The state has asked Congress to equalize those benefits. WSSRA is fully supporting this effort to drive down premium costs. If you have the opportunity, please raise this issue with your Member of Congress.

As always, thanks for your efforts. Our lobbying efforts are valueless without you.



Yakima County
School Retirees' Association
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