

The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

November 2024

NOVEMBER'S PROGRAM

Arranged by Cindy Carroll, Director of Clinical Operations at Children's Village

Cindy Carroll is the Director of Clinical Operations at Children's Village as a MultiCare Memorial employee. She has been working to serve the community of Yakima and its families for 20 years and started as a speech and language pathologist (she was the first SLP hired by the hospital). Cindy came to Yakima from Spokane to continue her



passion for children on the autism spectrum. This led to a love for the community and the people of Yakima. She enjoys the unique nature of Children's Village and its collaborative partnership with three trustee partners (Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, the Memorial Foundation and MultiCare Yakima Memorial Hospital). Cindy's work provides

oversite to two home visiting arms, Nurse Family Partnership and Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers (zero-3). Together, these home visiting programs alone serve over 600 different families/month in a large geographical region including Yakima and Kittitas County. She also oversees the Parent-to-Parent program and an onsite therapy program.

Cindy lives with her husband, three dogs and a cat in West Valley. She has a 34-year-old son who lives in Chicago. She enjoys travel and history and just returned home from a three-week road trip to

Scotland and England, joining an archaeological dig and exploring the towns of her ancestors. Cindy is excited to share her passion for special education and how it interlaces with a medical model at Children's Village.



Book Corner

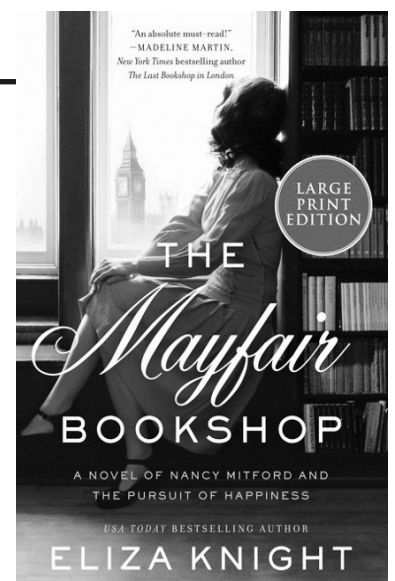
Submitted by Norma Haney

"The Mayfair Bookshop" a novel by Best Selling Author, Eliza Knight Lucy St. Clair is a New York historian and book seller. Lucy, a character from the present day, lands a temporary research gig in a famous London bookshop.

She is researching the lives of author Nancy Mitford who lived in London during the World War I German Blitz.(1)

This novel combines two time periods into a fascinating historical read. The British Mitford family, six girls and a boy, includes members who are Nazi sympathizers and those who hate fascism. The controversial family dynamics make for a absorbing novel.

(1) Nancy Mitford is a real life famous author





THE VOICE

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GENERAL MEETING

When: Monday, November 4

Where: Englewood Christian Church, 511 N 44th Avenue

Fellowship: 12:30 pm

Coffee/tea and treats will be provided

Program: 1:00 pm

Cindy Carroll, Children's Village

The following people have signed up to bring:

REFRESHMENTS

Patrick Walsh 509 391-4906
Chuck/Gloria Weedin 509 697 8040
Linda Bauer 509 457 4015
Bob Swope 509 965 2561

DRAWING PRIZES

Jan Saxton 509 658 1527
Jane Watson 509 833 4289
Linda Bauer 509 457 4015
Ulla Whitmont 509 260 0192



BLOND BROWNIES

FROM NORMA HANEY

This is my mother's recipe. Just pulling it out of my file makes me miss her. She usually made a double batch. I will bring some to our November meeting :-)

2 c flour	2/3 c shortening or unsalted butter
1 Tsp baking powder	2 c brown sugar
1/4 tsp soda	2 eggs
1 tsp salt	2 tsp vanilla
1 c walnuts	1 pkg chocolate chips

Mix ingredients except chocolate chips

Spread batter on greased rectangular baking dish

Sprinkle chocolate chips on top

Bake 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes

Cut into bars

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 you have for your class or school.

Grant applications must be received by **Friday, November 15, 2024.** Grant winners will be notified by December 13, 2024. If you receive a mini-grant, we ask that you plan to share with us at our May 5, 2025, General Meeting. It will be an evening potluck @ Englewood Christian Church, 511 N. 44th Ave. at 5:00 pm. YCSRA will provide the food.

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**

The completed application must be RECEIVED by the due date.



YCSRA MEMBER FEATURE

Meet Gretchen Vachon!

This month's member spotlight shines on Gretchen Ahlrichs Vachon. Gretchen doesn't have a middle name, as her grandmother, a dedicated suffragette, believed strongly in preserving women's maiden names after marriage. As a nod to that, Gretchen's maiden name now serves as her middle name. Born in Lafayette, Indiana, she's traveled far and wide in her academic journey, attending Montana State University, Central Washington University (earning a BA in Geography), the University of Texas (MA in Cultural Ecology/Geography), and later returning to CWU for her teaching certification.

Currently, Gretchen teaches 6th and 8th-grade science at Highland School District's middle school. In her spare time, she enjoys knitting, reading, and biking or hiking. She also values quiet moments of relaxation, appreciating the art of doing nothing—guilt-free! Her informal acts of service have included opening her home and heart to young people in need of guidance, helping them get back on track with their education and life. While the results can vary, Gretchen finds the experience incredibly rewarding when even small successes are achieved.

A former Teacher of the Year recipient, Gretchen also shared a lesser-known fact about herself: "I'm perfectly content traveling alone. It allows me to do things my way—whether that's knitting, reading, or exploring at my own pace—without feeling pressured to fill every moment. I especially love listening to the peaceful sounds of nature."



HEALTH MATTERS

Contributed by Health Chair John Osegueda

Ten Things Your Doctor Wants You to Know Before Your Next Visit

Building a meaningful, honest relationship with your healthcare provider is essential. With a little preparation, you can make the most of your appointment. Here are ten tips to optimize your next visit:

1. **Come Prepared:** Bring a list of your doctors' contact details, scan images, insurance/prescription cards, completed forms, and pharmacy information.
2. **Write Down Questions:** List your questions ahead of time to ensure nothing is forgotten.
3. **Set Priorities:** Identify the key topics you want to discuss, keeping in mind the limited appointment time.
4. **Keep Communication Open:** Add your care team(s) phone numbers to your contacts to avoid blocked numbers, update voicemail, and share contact details with your doctor's office.
5. **Report Symptoms Promptly:** Track symptoms with photos or a diary to share with your healthcare team.
6. **Use Patient Portals:** These are a great way to communicate directly with your doctor.
7. **Understand Your Treatment Plan:** Your doctor considers various factors, including insurance, safety, and treatment delivery methods, when creating a plan.
8. **Ask About Your Treatment:** Is it effective, safe, and worth pursuing? Don't hesitate to question your options.
9. **Seek Additional Opinions:** Especially if you receive worrisome news. Virtual second opinions are available through telemedicine.
10. **Ask for a Sucker:** Because you're never too old for a sweet treat after your visit. (Red's the best!)





LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Introducing our new Legislative Coordinator

Emmett Mills became WSSRA's Legislative Coordinator in July 2024. He spent the previous five years working for the Retired Public Employees Council of Washington (RPEC), where he worked alongside WSSRA on public sector pensions and health insurance benefits. Emmett's parents are both retired career public employees. He grew up and attended public schools in Corvallis, Oregon and moved to Washington in 2013 to attend Western Washington University. He graduated in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science after completing an internship with State Senator Lynda Wilson (R, Vancouver). Emmett lives in Olympia and enjoys hiking, camping, reading political biographies, collecting LPs, and playing folk music on the guitar. His partner, Laura, is a licensed mental health counselor.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

On September 17, the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) took a major step toward restoring an ongoing cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. The SCPP directed committee staff to prepare draft legislation to give Plans 1 retirees the same annual COLA that Plans 2 and 3 retirees receive of up to 3% per year.

The draft legislation will also include financing provisions that should increase its likelihood of passing the legislature in what looks to be a tight budget year. It will extend the current requirement of a 10-year financing period to a 15-year period. Additionally, it will re-amortize costs of previously granted one-time COLAs over the same 15-year period. These measures will substantially reduce short-term costs for the legislature while not impacting the COLA that retirees receive. Both the Plans 2/3 benefit design and the financing approach selected by the committee were requested in a joint letter that WSSRA and other public sector retiree organizations sent to the SCPP on September 9. WSSRA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Carolyn Stella (Unit 11) and Pat McLachlan (Unit 28) testified before the committee, urging for the restoration of a COLA for Plans 1 members. The committee listened, with all but one member voting to move ahead with WSSRA's preferred plan.

On October 15, the SCPP will review the draft legislation and have an opportunity to officially recommend it to the Washington State Legislature, which convenes in January 2025. While there is still a long road ahead, the SCPP has never before seriously considered restoring an ongoing COLA for Plans 1 retirees. This progress is the result of years of WSSRA members meeting with their legislators to build support for our cause.



A Special Thanks to Our Volunteers!

We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Norma Haney and Sandy Gavin for their outstanding contributions to the November issue of *The Voice*.

Norma shared the program information, a delicious recipe, and a thoughtful book review.

Sandy wrote a wonderful feature article on our member, Gretchen Vachon.

We truly appreciate all of our volunteers for their dedication and hard work! If you're interested in contributing to future issues, we'd love to hear from you—let us help bring your ideas to life!

Pictured: Norma Haney (left) and Sandy Gavin (right)



MEDICARE PLAN CHANGES

BIG MEDICARE PLAN CHANGES COMING IN 2025



Explore your options this open enrollment,
October 28 through November 25, 2024
HCA-Health Care Authority
Public Benefits Board

Get more open enrollment info on the HCA website site starting October 4, 2024
<https://www.hca.wa.gov/employee-retiree-benefits/open-enrollment-pebb>
(for continuation coverage subscribers)
Kaiser Permanente is no longer available through PEBB!



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