

The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

December 2025

THE REST OF THE STORY

Program arranged by Paul Schafer

Our December program for the YCSRA General Meeting will include a reading by Paul Schafer of Paul Harvey's "The Rest of the Story"- "Washington Crossing the Delaware" on Christmas Eve 1776." In addition we will have Christmas music. As usual we will have door prizes, drawing prizes and some surprises in store. Plan to join us for a festive meeting before the holidays.



Washington Crossing the Delaware
Artist Emanuel Lautze-1851

BREAKING NEWS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING HOW YOU RECEIVE "THE VOICE"

If you want to continue to receive The Voice through US mail you don't have to do anything. Many of our readers have requested that "The Voice" be emailed rather than sent through the US mail. Beginning with the February 2026 issue that will be an option.

YOU must be certain that Sandy Gavin has your current email address:

sandyg1948@gmail.com

Those receiving The Voice by email will receive it from a different email than previously. (newsletter@yakima-county-sra.org) So check your spam if it doesn't arrive.

If you wish to receive the paper copy AND email, be sure to let Sandy Gavin know. Our webmaster, Jon Klarich, is working on this. Be Patient as we do our best to make this happen.





THE VOICE

Board of Directors

Unit Contact

Nick & Kathy Schultz
509 966 9341

Secretary

Debbie Dougherty
509 594 5270

Treasurer/Community Service

Ulla Whitmont
509 260 0192

Health Services/Memorials

John Osegueda
509 952 9457

Legislative

Larry Scholl
509 966 0801

Membership

Patrick Walsh
509 391 4906

Retirement

Paul Schafer
509 453 2606

Social

Peggy Young
509 453 7250

Historian

Peggy Campbell
509 453 1680

Sunshine

Millie Stenehjem
509 966 3409

Web Coordinator

Sandy Gavin
509 952 9855

Outreach

Jan Saxton
509 658 1527

Welcome/Registration

Jan Saxton
509 658 1527

Coreen Fortin
509 966 2669

Mini-grants

Linda Sumner
509 248 1875

GENERAL MEETING

When: Monday, December 1, 2025

Where: Englewood Christian Church, 511 N 44th Avenue

Fellowship: 12:30 pm

Coffee/tea and treats will be provided

Program: 1:00 pm

Music Program

The Following People have signed up to bring:

REFRESHMENTS

Peggy Young 509 453 7250
Sandy Gavin 509 952 9855
Connie Carpenter 509 388 6252
Pat Walsh 509 391 4906
Kathy Schultz 509 966 9341

DRAWING PRIZES

Peggy Young 509 453 7250
Sandy Gavin 509 952 9855
Connie Carpenter 509 388 6252
Millie Stenehjem 509 654 3319
Lynda Bauer 509 457 4015

If you want your issue of 'The Voice' delivered by e-mail, YOU must be certain that Sandy Gavin has your current email address:

sandyg1948@gmail.com



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 12th of each month.

Send information to Kathy Schultz.

Co-editors. Kathy Schultz • 509 966 9341

chevyhvn@icloud.com

Sue Ryan-Osegueda • 509 895 4231

yakavegas@gmail.com

Design. 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



NOVEMBER LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Emmet Mills

Last month, important new information came to light in the Select Committee on Pension Policy’s (SCPP) study of two bills concerning the over-funded LEOFF 1 pension plan. The first bill, SB 5085, which WSSRA strongly supports, would use the LEOFF 1 surplus to provide an ongoing COLA to TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. The second bill, HB 2034, would transfer the LEOFF 1 surplus into the state’s general fund, allowing lawmakers to spend it.



At the SCPP’s October 21 meeting, representatives of a national law firm contracted for the study appeared before the committee. The attorneys made it very clear that SB 5085 had the better chance of receiving approval from the IRS, pointing to HB 2034’s mechanism of

returning pension contributions to the state as potentially problematic.

They also indicated that if either bill were to pass, it would take the IRS between one and two years to rule on it. All of this information should dissuade lawmakers from trying to balance the budget with the LEOFF 1 surplus.

At the SCPP’s November 18 meeting (which occurred after this article was written), committee members are expected to have an opportunity to recommend a course of action to the legislature regarding the two proposals. WSSRA is urging committee members to formally endorse SB 5085.

As the 2026 legislative session draws near, the WSSRA Legislative Committee is preparing to go to work on your behalf. In what will be

another bad budget year, our focus will be on ensuring all retirees receive ongoing COLAs and that PEBB health insurance benefits are not targeted for cut backs.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MEET SUE RYAN-OSGUEDA.

Sue is a joyful blend of extrovert energy and cozy contentment — a retired middle school teacher who spent her career nurturing minds and now spends her days nurturing blooms, books, and beautiful memories. For the past 24 years, she and her husband John, her partner of 37 years, have made Yakima home — a place where their roots run as deep as the trees in



their lovingly tended garden. Sue is the proud mother of two grown children and a delighted grandmother to two young adventurers under six, who have turned her world into a playground of wonder, giggles, dancing and discovery. Whether she’s curled up with a book from her ever-growing reading list, puttering in her three-season backyard oasis, or leading backyard safaris with the grandkids, Sue finds joy in the simple, meaningful rhythms of family life. Though retired, she remains a lifelong learner, a passionate nurturer, and a believer that every chapter — like every garden — has its own season to bloom.

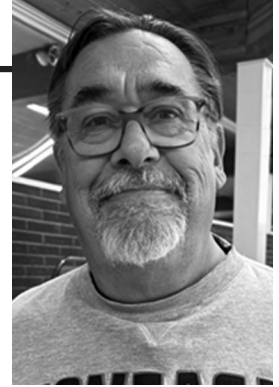
Sue is our new co-editor of “The Voice”.





HEALTH MATTERS

By John Osegueda



Surprising Connections Between Lifestyle and Health

The human body is remarkable. Understanding a few key insights can help you take better care of yourself, and appreciate what your body does every day.

LIFESTYLE & MOOD

- Coffee may boost mood. One cup of caffeinated coffee has been shown to reduce feelings of depression.
- Dog owners may have healthier hearts. The American Heart Association says owning pets improves mental health and may reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, lowering your risk for heart disease.

STRESS & DISEASE

- Stress raises diabetes risk. High stress increases cortisol, which raises blood sugar and can contribute to type 2 diabetes.

AMAZING BODY FACTS

- Your body generates enough heat in 30 minutes to boil water.
- Humans are the only animals who cry from emotion.
- The nose can remember 50,000 scents.
- The brain runs on 12–25 watts, enough to power a small light bulb.

SLEEP & HEALTH

- Exercise improves sleep. Activity earlier in the day may increase deep sleep.
- Sleep affects nearly every system, hormones, immunity, heart health, blood pressure, appetite, and more.
- The Sleep Foundation indicates that adequate sleep lowers the risk of stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

LAUGHTER'S BENEFITS

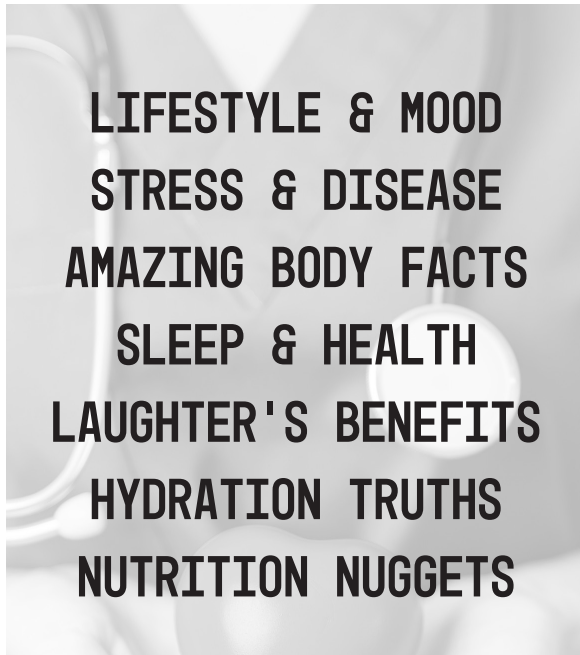
- Laughing releases endorphins, easing pain and boosting mood.
- It increases oxygen intake and promotes short-term relaxation.
- Research shows laughter can help control blood sugar and even reduce complications of type 2 diabetes.

HYDRATION TRUTHS

- You may lose 3% of your body weight in fluids before you feel thirsty. Instead of going by thirst, check the color of your urine. It should be close to clear. If not, you'll want to drink up.
- "8 glasses a day" is a myth, needs vary by activity, climate, and body size.
- As much as 20% of your hydration levels come from foods. Soups and produce are high in liquid content, which adds to your overall hydration.
- Too much water can cause hyponatremia, lowering sodium to dangerous levels.

NUTRITION NUGGETS

- Healthy fats (like omega-3s) are essential for heart and brain health.
- Lemons are nutrient powerhouses with Vitamin C and immune benefits.
- Sunlight helps your body make Vitamin D, an important part of overall nutrition.





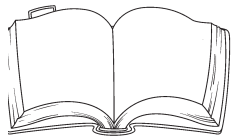
**Favorite Recipes from
Our Members**

MINI-CHEESECAKES

From the Kitchen of Kathy & Nick Schultz

- 2, 8 oz cream cheese blocks
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs beaten slightly
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 20-21 Vanilla Wafers
- Cherry pie filling - 1 can

Directions: Combine 1st 5 ingredients in bowl and beat for 5 minutes. Put muffin papers in the muffin pans. Place a vanilla wafer in each paper. Spoon cream cheese mixture into each paper. Bake 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Let cool and top with cherry pie filling or fresh berries of your choice. Makes about 21 cupcakes.



Book Corner

“Demon of Unrest” by Erik Larson. Book Overview by Kathy Schultz

This book is a riveting account of the beginning of the Civil War. I found the Sources and Acknowledgments written by Erik Larson riveting.

“Whenever I search for a book idea, I look first for a subject that is inherently suspenseful and lends itself to being told as a story with a beginning, middle and end. I think of this central arc as a narrative spine, a Christmas tree; the fun part is finding and hanging the shiny ornaments, the revealing details hidden deep within archives, diaries and memoirs. The search for these invariably becomes a journey full of unexpected surprises and revelations no matter how much a subject has been studied before-because every writer in every time brings to the field a unique lens through which to view the world, formed by personal experiences and characters of the era. I began working on this book in early 2020 during the first weeks of the Covid pandemic. Political unrest had heightened the chaos of the pandemic. For whatever reason I began wondering- Exactly how did the Civil War begin? While searching The Library of Congress, I came across a collection of documents titled “The War of Rebellion: A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies and learned that I could acquire a bound copy. There it was: my narrative spine.”

Here are 2 pivotal quotes from this source:

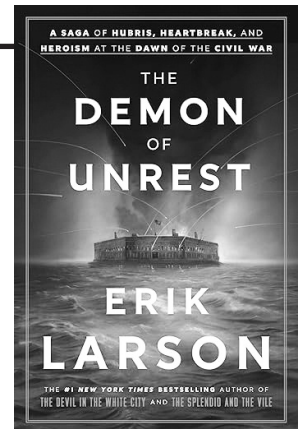
Arthur Hayne to President James Buchannon, December 22,1860

“Slavery with us is no abstraction-but a great and vital fact. Without it our every comfort would be taken from us. Our wives, our children made unhappy-education, the light of knowledge-all lost and our people ruined forever. Nothing short of Separation from the Union can save us.”

Abraham Lincoln to Private Secretary, John Ray, May 1861

“We must settle this question now, whether in a free government the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose. If we fail it will go far to prove the incapability of the people to govern themselves.”

This book is a gem and well worth reading. Kathy Schultz, an Erik Larson fan



YCSRA MEMBERSHIP



Dear YCSRA member,

Well in Yakima County, we are going strong with our membership numbers over 1,400 but there exists a sad and slow decline in membership as retired educational heroes pass away. So it is essential that we never stop recruiting new members. If you can, pass on (or forward) this newsletter to a friend who is a school employee or retired school employee, and ask them to consider joining this incredible association that never stops supporting education and retirees. The YCSRA donates thousands of dollars each year to in-school mini-grants, community service organizations and scholarships. In addition, there is the continuing advocacy in Olympia to protect and improve our pension systems and health insurance. Joining is easy, through the website (Yakima-county-sra-org) or by contacting me, at 509-391-4906 or patwalsh057@gmail.com. There are no contracts and the association is nonpartisan.

Best wishes, Patrick Walsh, Membership Director

WORDS OF WISDOM

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, “I lived through the horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

