

NEWSLETTER



Washington State School Retirees' Association

ATTENTION: The next & final newsletter of the school year will be published in early April. You are encouraged to keep this copy as a reminder of upcoming April events.

WE ARE CELEBRATING EDUCATORS!

Looking for some inspiration?. Join us in our annual event that celebrates the contributions of educators in the Sno-Isle Unit. This really is a celebration of all the good work we do and how your monetary support benefits students...long after you may have retired! We will share many of the projects benefiting K-12 students directly that our \$300 Learning Support Funds have made possible. You will be amazed at the wide range of ideas to improve student learning. **See a collage of some of our recipients on page 7.** AND, we will have updates on past recipients of our \$2000 student scholarships—we gave out two last year and are giving out two more this year. You will leave this event with inspiration and appreciation for our dedicated educators and how you have helped them. AND...you can thank some of them in person!

Tuesday, March 20, 10:30 a.m.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church (OSLC): 215 W. Mukilteo Blvd., Everett.

LUNCH: \$5.00 (pay at the door) buys you a hearty lunch that includes dessert. Water and coffee will also be provided.

RSVP to Marianne Harvey by March 14: 425-348-4993

******NEW MEMBERS ATTENDING FOR THE FIRST TIME—Your lunch is FREE!******

Meet Fire Chief Travis Hots

Tuesday, April 17, 10:30 a.m.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church (OSLC): 215 W. Mukilteo Blvd., Everett.

LUNCH: \$5.00 (pay at the door) buys you a hearty lunch. Our cook Debra Draper plans to provide a meal similar to one she prepares for EMTs in action. Water and coffee will also be provided.

RSVP to Marianne Harvey by April 10: 425-348-4993

******NEW MEMBERS ATTENDING FOR THE FIRST TIME—Your lunch is FREE!******

~~See more info about Travis inside this newsletter~~

Do you know of a high school senior or a student currently enrolled in college or university with plans for a career in education? Let them know about this financial opportunity.

\$2000 Scholarships Available

Applications are available at the Sno-Isle website: <https://sno-islesra.info>

Applications are due *MARCH 15!*

If you need more information, please feel free to contact either Karen or Joan:

Karen Carpenter: 425-347-2719, Joan Penewell: two.primes@frontier.com

Meet Fire Chief Travis Hots

Chief Travis Hots is the fire chief of Snohomish Fire District #22 (Getchell Station). He is familiar to many of us, because of his selfless dedicated command during the Oso tragedy. Chief Hots is a 5th generation born and raised in Marysville and is a graduate of Marysville Alternative High School. Travis is also volunteer rescue helicopter pilot with Snohomish Search and Rescue and a rated commercial pilot. Every wild fire season he leaves his wife and two children (as well as his farm and bee hives) to lead a strike teams to where manpower is needed to combat these fires. These deployments can last for weeks at a time and can be back to back in very harsh conditions.

The fires in Eastern Washington, Montana and California had many of us concerned because of the smoke experienced in our area and the impact that smoke had on our health. On **April 17, at our lunch event**, Chief Hots will share his experiences as a firefighter with words and photos, as well as educate us on what we can do to be prepared protect our property and lives from a fire.

There will time for questions and comments after his presentation...AND plenty of time to visit with other attendees.

We look forward to seeing members and guests at our April 17 lunch event. We think you will have a rewarding and enjoyable time with Travis' presentation and talking with other members.



KEEP IN TOUCH

<https://sno-islesra.info>

Like us on
FACEBOOK
Sno-Isle SRA



Left to Right:

*Linda Averill, WSSRA
President*

*Alan Burke, WSSRA Exec-
utive Director*

*Ken Harvey, Sno-Isle Co-
President*

*Gay Rutter, Long-Term
Care Ombud*

*Jill McKinnie, Snohomish
County Public Advocate
Director*



Sue Lanctot lined up speakers for our February lunch event...

Attendees listened to and learned from two Ombuds from Snohomish County. Jill McKinnie, head of the Office of the Snohomish County Public Advocate, and Gay Rutter, head of the Snohomish-King County Long Term Care Ombuds Program, told us about numerous resources for county. Public Advocate serves as an independent and fair intermediary between citizens and their government agencies. The Long Term Care Ombudsman advocates for residents (or their oversight person if unable to state their own needs) of nursing homes, adult family homes and assisted living facilities. Both programs are free of charge and help that Jill and Gay can impart to someone could be invaluable.

Learn more online at: snohomishcountywa.gov and waombudsman.org

Alan Burke, WSSRA Executive Director also at our February event...

Also at our February 20 lunch event, Alan updated us on current efforts of the legislative committee to impact legislative decisions regarding needs for retirement plan enhancements for PERS and TERS retirees—many of whom have gone without COLA's and decreased healthcare benefits support for many years. He presented some clear graphic information about the significantly decreased ability of retired educators to keep up with increased costs in everyday living and healthcare expenses.

"Service Project - Imagine Children's Museum"

Keep collecting your recyclables and bring them to one of our Sno-Isle events! Suggestions for items to collect include the following: empty plastic food containers (e.g. yogurt containers) and meat trays—please clean first!; toilet paper and paper towel rolls, beads, feathers, ribbon, cereal / cracker boxes, tag board, CD cases, thread spools, stickers, wire, paint stir sticks, panty hose, artificial flowers, junk food boxes, cookie /cupcake boxes. If in doubt and you think what you have can be used for children's art projects—just pack it up for now. Last year we collected items at our April lunch event and will probably do so again this year.

Also...you can support this endeavor by attending the annual Women's Fundraising Breakfast on **Friday, April 27, 8:00—9:30**. Contact Nancy Strain for more info:

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) recognizes all retired school employees; and

WHEREAS, the WSSRA educates and assists retirees in meeting the special challenges retirement brings, and works to improve their general welfare; and

WHEREAS, the WSSRA aids in advancing education by supporting high educational standards; and

WHEREAS, the WSSRA promotes group and individual involvement in charitable projects and activities, sponsors scholarships, and maintains interest and participation in educational and community activities; and

WHEREAS, the WSSRA supports and encourages retired educators to remain active in the education profession through volunteer activities associated with learning;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim March 19-25, 2018 as

School Retirees Appreciation Week

in Washington, and I encourage all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 17th day of January, 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee".

Governor Jay Inslee



Need a ride to Sno-Isle Event?

We have many members who are willing to pick other members to attend events. Call or e-mail Marianne Harvey (her phone/e-mail address is located in various places in this newsletter) if you need a ride to the next Sno-Isle Event.

jimmarh7@mac.com, 425-348-4993

Upcoming 2018 SNO-ISLE EVENTS

MARCH:

Monday, March 12, 9:30am—COORDINATING COUNCIL, Mt. Vernon

Tuesday, March 20, 10:30am—LUNCH EVENT— ***“Learning Support Funds & Scholarships”***, OSLC

Monday, Mar 26, 9:30am—Board Meeting. OSLC

APRIL:

Tuesday, Apr 17, 10:30am—LUNCH EVENT— ***“Meet Fire Chief Travis Hotts”***, OSLC

Monday, Apr 30, 9:30am—Board Meeting, OSLC

MAY:

Tuesday, May 15, 11:30am—LUNCH EVENT with SNO-KING Unit at LeBistro (Sno-Isle Tech), ***“Search & Rescue”***, guest speaker **Bree Loewen**

JUNE: June 4-6, STATE WSSRA CONVENTION, Wenatchee WA

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

ALL members are invited to attend and participate in our planning/decision-making process. Meetings are scheduled for 9:30am, once per month (except May) throughout the school year.

COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Sno-Isle board members and state representatives meet tri-monthly with nearby units to share individual unit activities, lessons learned, and thoughts about beneficial changes.

Christmas House sent their thanks...

,,,for our support during the 2017 season and is preparing for 2018. They were able to provide a book for every child this year.

When you do your spring cleaning, if you find any children's book (suitable for kids ages birth through 18) and the books are "like new" or gently used, Christmas House would be delighted to receive them. Perhaps your neighbors, relatives or friends have some they would like to donate. Bring any you collect to a Sno-Isle event and we will get them to Christmas House.

Also, if you would like to make doll clothes for 18" dolls, please contact Linda Averill at seagull3@msn.com and she will loan you a doll. Dolls and clothes will need to be returned when you finish or at the October meeting.



MEET BOARD MEMBER: KEN HARVEY

This month starts a new series of getting to know your board members. My name is Ken Harvey and I am the co-president of Sno-Isle along with Jim Harvey.

I grew up in West Seattle and life was good in a 50's & 60's sort of way. Our street was only one block long and almost every house had kids close to my age. There were six of us that were in the same grade. The kids on our block spent most of the time playing outdoors and amazingly we all got along. I still keep in touch with many of them.

I got my degree in education from Western. If I went back to school now, I would be a much better student! But at the time I enjoyed my classes and was excited to get a start in the profession.

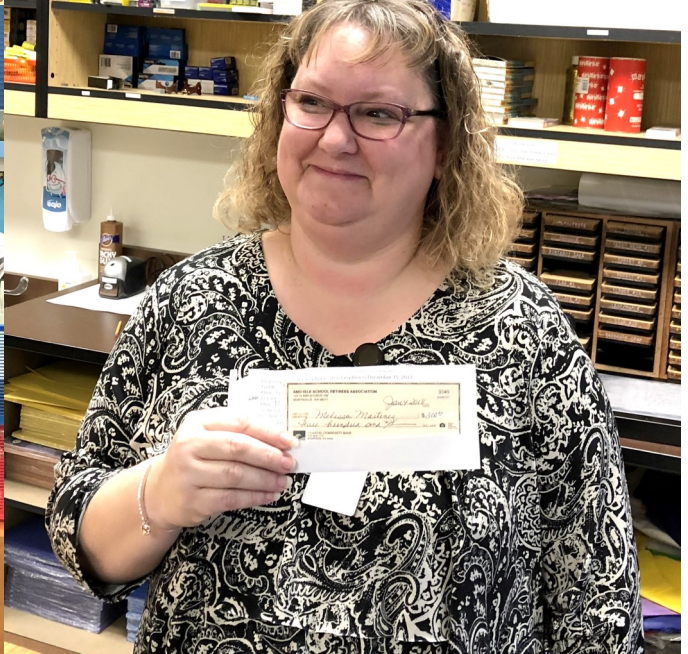
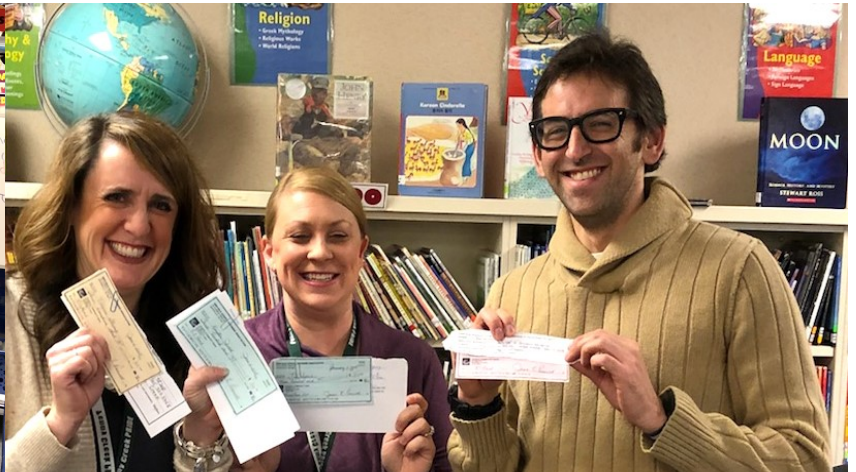
My first teaching position was in the North Dakota Badlands. A one-room schoolhouse with six students grades one through eight drew my attention, partly because there were very few teaching jobs in Washington and partly because it sounded adventurous to a city kid. It certainly turned out to be an adventure. A 10 x 50 trailer was provided next to the school. Unfortunately it had no running water or indoor plumbing. The first day we arrived people kept stopping by. I thought they were stopping by to say hello but everyone that came wanted to see the new outhouses that had been built for us. They all agreed the two privies were mighty fine! We spent three wonderful years in that lovely place which happened to be 40 miles from a town on a dirt road. It is an experience that made quite an impact on my life and teaching career.

In Everett I spent 24 years at Silver Lake. I finished my career at Penny Creek teaching 5th grade highly capable. Over the years I was fortunate to become connected to many wonderful families and because of social media, continue to keep in contact with many of them.

I attended a Sno-Isle lunch event early in the first year of retirement, enjoyed the program (and food), and was impressed with the work the local group did. I'm glad I became more active in our unit and WSSRA. I also enjoy working at the Marysville Food Bank. Another person and I run a program for kids ages 3-12 called Healthy Snacks 4 Healthy Kids.

I've enjoyed my retirement. My neglected yard is thankful to get more attention. I love growing things in my greenhouse. David and I have taken some great trips to areas of the country we had never visited. We split our time between Marysville and our cabin by Mt. Rainier. My entertaining granddaughter, Wednesday, loves to join us on trips and enjoys the cabin as much as we do. If you read last month's presidential message you know we were attending Katy Perry. She performed for over two hour--and I mean performed. Next time I feel tired from some of my projects I'm going to think of Katy!

**TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF OUR LEARNING SUPPORT FUND
WINNERS ON THE NEXT PAGE...WHO DO YOU KNOW?**



The Legislature On Speed!

(Submitted by Tim Knopf 3/9/18)

2018's 60-day legislative session was like "the Legislature on speed!" But, it is finally over! While shorter than a regular session, it seemed to take forever. However, last night both houses adjourned "sine die." The Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia said it best, "What a long, strange trip it's been."

Six bills proposing some kind of Plan 1 COLA were introduced this session, but only one made it to the end. The other five died by missing one or another deadline imposed by the rigid cutoff calendar.

IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVE...

When a legislator drafts a bill and drops it into "The Hopper" where it receives a number and becomes an official bill the process is like dropping a toy boat into a mountain stream and hoping that it will reach the sea. So very many obstacles wait for it along the way.

Once a bill is introduced into its house of origin it is referred to a committee for study and discussion. Measures like the COLA bills, that cost money, go to a fiscal committee (House Appropriations or Senate Ways and Means Committees). The Committee Chair may give the bill a public hearing to take testimony on the bill, or the Chair may sit on the bill, trapping it in committee.

When possible, legislators of different houses coordinate their efforts so identical bills are dropped in the House and the Senate to improve the chances of one becoming a law, like dropping two boats into the stream instead of one.

HERE IS WHAT HAPPENED...

House Bill (HB) 2323 and **Senate Bill (SB) 6290** were two such bills. They proposed a one-time 3.0% pension benefit increase for all Plan 1 retirees.

HB 2323 was introduced and referred to the House Appropriations Committee. It never got a public hearing and died once it missed the February 6 "move out of committee" deadline.

SB 6290 was introduced and referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee and received a public hearing January 23 with the other Senate COLA bills. As part of our January 23-25 lobbying effort, WSSRA's Legislative Committee attended that hearing and several testified in favor of a COLA. Even so, **SB 6290** died without a vote out of that committee before February 6.

HB 2452 and **SB 6305** proposed a 3.0% increase to Plan 1 retirees only on the first \$25,000 of retirement income capped at not more than \$62.50 per month. **However**, they **also** proposed an increase in the PEBB Medicare Eligible Health Benefit to no less than 50% of retirees' insurance premiums.

HB 2452 was referred to the House Appropriations Committee, but like **HB 2323**, it didn't get a public hearing and died after the February 6 deadline. **SB 6305** got a public hearing, but wasn't allowed a vote out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee before February 6.

The last two bills, **HB 2511** and **SB 6340** proposed a 3.0% increase on Plan 1 retiree's first \$25,000, capped at not more than \$62.50 per month, but **did not include the Health Benefit increase**. These bills came originally out of the Special Committee on Pension Policy's vote on December 12 to endorse a one-time 3% Plan 1 COLA, capped at \$62.50 per month.

HB 2511 and **SB 6340** received public hearings. However, House Appropriations Committee Chair Representative Timm Ormsby amended **HB 2511** by erasing all of its language. The bill now known as **Substitute House Bill 2511** became just a title stating that the legislature should eventually consider a proposal to increase the minimum pension benefits provided to Plan 1 members.

SHB 2511 was voted out of House Appropriations and on to the House Rules Committee where it died after not being referred for floor vote before the February 14 deadline.

Legislature On Speed (continued)

SB 6340, the last surviving COLA bill in the 2018 session, got a public hearing in Senate Ways and Means January 23, but was amended by the Committee Chair, who cut the 3% increase to 2% on the first \$25,000 of income. The amended bill, known as **SSB 6340**, was voted out of Senate Ways and Means February 6. It was placed on the Floor Calendar for a second reading February 8, and on February 14 the full Senate passed it 48 to 0.

On February 15 **SSB 6340** went to the House and was referred to the House Appropriations Committee. To become law **SSB 6340** had to be voted out of committee and on to House Rules by February 26 and pulled for a floor vote by March 8.

Between February 20-23 WSSRA's Legislative Committee came back to Olympia to vigorously lobby legislators for **SSB 6340**. A great many other WSSRA members contacted House Appropriations Committee members, particularly the Chair, Representative Timm Ormsby and the Vice-Chair, our own Representative June Robinson, to explain why the COLA and **SSB 6340** were important to them. On Saturday, February 24 **SSB 6340** (with over 30 other bills) received a public hearing and public testimony. It was scheduled for a vote out of the House Appropriations Committee Monday, February 26.

However, when **SSB 6340** came up for a vote, House Appropriations Committee Chair Ormsby proposed an amendment so the COLA would apply only to Plan 1 members receiving the minimum benefit or the alternative minimum benefit. Their increase would be three percent, not two percent, but it would give nothing to the vastly larger number of PERS and TRS Plan 1 members. This amendment narrowly and the rewritten **SSB 6340** passed went onto the House Rules Committee by a vote of 22 to 11.

If this now substantially amended **SSB 6340** is passed by the House, it must go back to the Senate for another vote since it was amended outside its house of origin. If it is brought up there, the Senate must vote to concur or not concur. If they vote to concur, the amended **SSB 6340** would pass the Legislature and go to the Governor. The Senate would vote to concur or not concur. If they concurred the amended **SSB 6340** would pass the Legislature and go to the Governor. If they did not concur, a conference committee might work out mutually agreeable language that both houses could approve. At that point, it seemed clear now that any COLA for the majority of Plan 1 members was dead, and even the one-time 3% increase for our lowest paid members had a dangerous course to navigate. Our last little boat is radically changed, barely afloat and in the gravest danger. The regular session ends on March 8.

NOW...

Yesterday, the last day of the session, the Senate concurred to the House Amendments and passed **SSB 6340** by a vote of 49 to 0. **SSB 6340** is on its way to the Governor! That's not all! Buoyed by an unexpected revenue increase, the Legislature's Supplemental Budget added \$18 per month to the Public Employees Benefits Board Medicare Eligible Health Benefit for Plans 1, 2 and 3!

So, is this a victory? Starting in July there will be a one-time 1.5% COLA for all Plan 1 members. Retirees receiving the minimum benefit or the alternative minimum benefit will also receive an automatic COLA of up to 3%. The PEBB Medicare Eligible Health Benefit that was slashed in 2011 from \$183 to \$150 per month has been bumped to \$168 per month. For the first time in eight years, things have actually improved for Plan 1 members!

Still, health care costs have risen dramatically since 2010, and \$168 per month is \$15 less than retirees received in 2010. While it's nice to receive a 1.5% pension boost, Plan 1 members have lost 12 to 25% in purchasing power since the Legislature killed the Uniform COLA in 2011.

2018 is an election year for all the House of Representatives and roughly half the Senate. This November's vote could erase or dramatically strengthen the Democrats' slender majority from this session. Nobody knows! The 2019 Legislative Session will be a regular 105-day session opening on January 7, 2019. **Now who says this isn't fun?**

Editor's Note: Thanks much to Tim and his colleagues on the WSSRA Legislative Committee for all your perseverance and tremendous efforts to improve the retirement benefits of all educators. The Sno-Isle Board also wishes to thank Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Chair and Alan Burke, WSSRA Executive Director for all their efforts and getting out to so many members in the state to "spread the word."

NANCY'S HEALTH NOTES

The Best Foods for a Healthy Skin

As you read this, you'll tell yourself, "These foods are what are also good nutritionally for my body!" It does make sense that foods which are good for our body inside are also good for our skin. Many people have skin problems during their adult years, and then as many more people age, they may worry about age spots, wrinkles or sagging skin. Following are suggestions from three authors for maintaining skin health. Research favors the idea that a diet high in processed or refined carbohydrates and unhealthy fats, promotes skin aging.

Lawrence E. Gibson, MD, reports there is limited research on skin-healthy foods, but that antioxidant-rich foods do seem to have a protective effect for the skin. He recommends the following:

- Carrots, apricots, and other yellow and orange fruits and vegetables
- Spinach and other green leafy vegetables
- Tomatoes
- Blueberries
- Beans, peas and lentils
- Salmon, mackerel and other fatty fish
- Nuts

Amy Zerello identifies "8 Essential Foods for Beautiful Skin":

- Avocados
- Green tea
- Tomatoes
- Salmon
- Eggs
- Pomegranate
- Walnuts
- Beans/legumes

She gave readers a home remedy using avocados to make a moisturizing mask: Pit the fruit, puree the pulp, and pat on your face. The oil acts as an emollient and it also contains beneficial vitamin E.

Angela Haupt gives us her nine choices to protect skin from sunburn or ease wrinkles:

- Tomatoes
- Mangoes, papaya and apricots
- Cocoa powder—remember hearing or reading about the benefits of a dark chocolate bar or cocoa powder in your morning coffee, or milk
- Flaxseeds
- Sweet potatoes
- Mussels
- Spinach
- Canned tuna
- Safflower oil

Some common foods I'm going to focus on are tomatoes, salmon, spinach. I'm restricted in my consumption of beans or nuts, so those are off my list. Each of us may have dietary restrictions that guide our choices. BUT, for all of us winter is a good time of year to choose some foods to begin focusing on. By summer, we should feel good about our goal of healthier skin and body!

Pining for the good old days?

*When you are dissatisfied
and would like to go back to
your youth—think of Alge-
bra.*

~~Will Rogers

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE STATE CONVENTION IN JUNE...

Your WSSRA state legislative committee is planning a fundraiser at the Wenatchee Convention with the goal of raising \$1,000. Remember how at one of our meetings we sold inflated balloons? The buyer popped the balloon, found the number inside and claimed a prize that matched the number. The committee is planning to do this activity at convention. We hope to have all prizes donated **and this is where Sno-Isle members can help.** Any new item, whether it is handmade or purchased, would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps you have something; jewelry, a scented candle, a box of golf balls, a scarf or a gift card, maybe something you want to re-gift, that you know you will never use. These are just a few examples and all are appropriate. If you have something for the committee, you can bring it to a Sno-Isle event and give it to Linda Averill. Questions? Please contact Linda @ seagull3@msn.com

Abigail LaBerge is Recipient of Special Educational Funding

Sno-Isle's Board of Directors voted in January to spend the remaining \$2000 budgeted toward learning support funding as a special scholarship to Abigail LaBerge who is currently student teaching in 3rd Grade at Cedarhome Elementary in Stanwood. In September she will be student teaching in special education. Both Abigail and her husband Peder are full time students at Western Washington and she will graduate in December 2018 with a dual endorsement in elementary education and special education.



Abigail's husband is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Exceptionality and Disability. The couple lives in Arlington and attends Western Washington University. This summer Abigail will again be working at the day Camp Prov in Everett. The board wishes her well as she pursues her goal to work not only with special needs students but to help their parents meet the needs of their child.

For the past year the board has been investigating ways to assist future teachers as they complete their classroom experience. We hope this is the first of many future such stipends

Retirement Seminar Chairperson Marianne Harvey reports...

On February 22 twenty-five educators had the opportunity to attend a session at the Community Resource Center Everett School District. Sno-Isle again sponsored the event. Future retirees heard from PEBB Insurance Benefits Office and Eric Mathieu from Empower, DRS. Plan 2 and 3 PRS and TRS were described and options before retirement were explained. Attendees were encouraged to plan early when contemplating retirement and to weigh all their options. The presentation was well received by all.

Many Sno-Isle board members were on hand to host and talk with attendees about the importance of being involved with WSSRA.

For those life-long learners amongst us...

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute may be something you're interested in. I (Jacquie Jensen) recently attended (for free!) a lecture for seniors at the Mukilteo Rosehill Community Center at which Dr. David Smith, UW professor, presented thought-provoking ideas about the roles of Human Rights and Religion in daily lives and decision-making processes.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Washington (OLLI-UW) invites adults over 50 to come together to share intellectual interests and make new friends. In this lively learning environment, current and retired UW faculty and community experts lead courses and events.

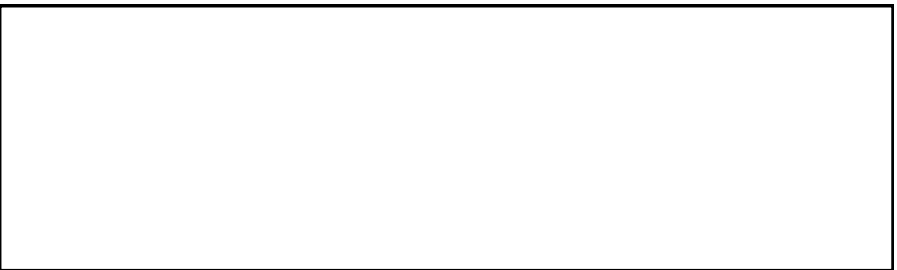
Find out more about opportunities for learning at www.osher.uw.edu

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