

NEWSLETTER

Washington State School Retirees' Association



In this newsletter you'll get a legislative update and details about our next event.

Sno-Isle 22 Holiday Luncheon

December 10

11:00 Social time 11:30 Lunch

Featuring music by Kamiak Mixed Barbershop Quartet

Please join us on Tuesday, December 10, as we gather for our luncheon to benefit Christmas House and enjoy each other's company. We hope you can attend!

We are collecting unwrapped toys for Everett's Christmas House.



**We will be meeting at Our Savior's Lutheran Church
215 Mukilteo Blvd
Everett, WA 98203**

Our Lunch

Lasagna Rollups (meat or vegetarian)

Salad

Roll

Dessert

Price - \$15 Payable when you arrive

Coffee, tea and punch will be available at 11:00 AM

Please RSVP by December 5.

Email Ken Harvey kenwes55@comcast.net or call Marianne Harvey at 425 238 3124 to let us know if you plan to attend.

For more information about Christmas House visit <https://christmas-house.org>

If you are unable to attend but would like to support our donation to Christmas House send checks payable to Christmas House or Sno-Isle 22 and we will add it to our donation.

Send donations to Joan Penewell 10715 Birch Dr NW Tulalip, WA 98270

Hope to see you!

Waiting on the Election and the November SCPP Meeting

At the time of this writing, shortly before the 2024 General Election, we are in a tense bubble eager to see what will happen on November 5th since so much depends on the outcome of that election at the state level.

Obtaining a permanent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Plan 1 retirees remains the WSSRA's top legislative priority. Plan 1 members are our oldest retirees and have endured 14 years of watching their purchasing power eroded by inflation. Since 2010 the national cost of living has increased more than 40 percent. As a result, many have lost close to half of their purchasing power to inflation. To offset these losses we have won only four partial one-time COLAs of between 1.5 and 3%. That is just not enough. In addition to their growing economic insecurity, these aging retirees are entering the time in life of rapidly growing medical expenses. In fact, quite a few have died waiting for the COLA that never came. Only a permanent annual COLA will halt their gradual slide toward poverty. That COLA would not restore purchasing power already lost, but it would prevent additional future erosion. It is essential to solve this issue before we move on to other priorities.

The bill that created the 2023 one-time ad hoc COLA also directed the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) to study establishing a permanent Plan 1 COLA and to present its findings to the 2025 Legislature. As a result, for the first time in history, the SCPP members voted at their September 2024 meeting to direct staff to prepare a bill creating a permanent Plan 1 COLA. We had hoped that at their October meeting they would vote to endorse and send it on for consideration by the 2025 Legislature, but they chose to wait due to a couple technical issues. Their last real chance to vote it forward will be at their November 15 meeting.

Meanwhile, financial experts anticipate a 5 to 7 billion dollar shortfall in state funding during the coming 2025-27 biennium. Demands from around the state for what money they will have are growing rapidly. So, just as our COLA chances look brighter in one way, something else comes along to threaten them.

Even worse than that are two initiatives on the November 5 General Election ballot. Either of them would kill our chance to obtain a permanent COLA if passed because that would strip away so much money from state coffers. These are Initiative 2109, to repeal the Capital Gains Tax on profits from stock investments above \$250,000 (made law in 2021), and Initiative 2117, to repeal the Washington Climate Commitment Act known as the CCA, also a law since 2021. The CCA will gradually shrink Washington's greenhouse gas emissions by 95 percent by 2050 through annually shrinking caps on carbon emissions allowed from our largest polluters and annual auctions that require them to purchase increasingly expensive credits to keep polluting. That money goes into the state coffers.

Both the Capital Gains Tax and the Climate Commitment Act bring huge amounts of money into the state budget to support important educational and environmental programs. The passage of either initiative would kill a major source of state funding, making a potentially bad situation for us much, much worse since the Legislature will need to fund those programs somehow. We might not even see an ad hoc Plan 1 COLA and we might even have to fight to save our PEBB medical benefit.

Hopefully I have shown you why this is a tense time. So much is riding on the outcome of the November 5 election and on the actions of the SCPP on November 15.

The WSSRA Legislative Committee will meet via Zoom on November 8. I hope to have more information for you and a plan of action after that meeting. Until then, cross your fingers and hope for the best.

Sincerely,

Tim Knopf

WSSRA Legislative Committee Member

AMBA Benefit for all WSSRA Members

AMBA has introduced a new benefit for all WSSRA members. It is a passport which may be used by both RETIRED and ACTIVES. It allows the member to receive discounts of up to 40% off services and merchandise from the business. You may use it where you live and also when you are traveling. When away from home just dial up the app to see what is available where you are. Some of the participating companies include Costco, Kohls, Sams, Wyndham, Apple, Disney Parks, Hertz, Whirlpool. Thousands of different opportunities are available in travel, dining, entertainment, clothes, health. These are in addition to the benefits that were already available through AMBA for long term care, dental, vision, hearing, cancer, life insurance, etc.

If you would like to take advantage of this benefit just follow these steps-Contact Michele in membership at the main office: 360-413-5496 Ext. 1. She will give you a code to obtain the free app for your phone and you will be set to start receiving discounts.

Christmas House

Christmas House is a 100% volunteer, non-profit organization in Everett, Washington that provides an opportunity for qualifying, low-income, Snohomish County parents to select free holiday gifts for their children age infant-18.

Christmas House was founded in 1981 by Roy Fraser in his garage. Roy had heard of children in Snohomish County who had not received anything for the prior Christmas and was determined to change that. He established the first annual Christmas House and stocked it primarily with used toys and hand-made items, which they refurbished and gave away to families in need. They served more than 100 children the first year. Unfortunately, Roy did not live to see the second Christmas House, but his memory lives on as the 43rd year of giving continues.

The general format of how Christmas House functions has not changed over the years, just the number of families and individual children who benefit from his dream over four decades ago.

Sno-Isle 22 is a big contributor to this organization. Our donations are put to good use. Please consider bringing an unwrapped item to our holiday luncheon. If you would like more information or to find out how to volunteer visit <http://www.christmas-house.org>



Gifts Unit 22 gathered for Christmas House. We also contributed a cash gift with generous donations from members.

Invite a friend to join and enjoy a coffee on us! Have your friend enroll at www.wssra.org. Enrollment information can be found under the "Membership" tab. It's easy to join. Once your friend has joined let us know at: ken-wes55@comcast.net and we will send you two \$10 Starbucks cards. Last month, Renee Barrie helped Jennifer Childs join. Welcome, Jennifer! Since you probably have more than one friend you can refer as many as you like.

Friendship pays off.

**SNO-ISLE
WSSRA UNIT #22**

10715 Birch Drive NW
Marysville WA 98271

**RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED**



2024-25 Sno-Isle Board

PRESIDENT

Ken Harvey

VICE PRESIDENT

Marianne Harvey (retiring after this year)

SECRETARY

Open

TREASURER

Joan Penewell (retiring after this year)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership—Open

Scholarships—Liz Meisner

Legislative—Tim Knopf

FB/Website—Ken Harvey

Newsletter—David Davis

Health—Open

Friendship—Brenda Leider, Sue Rookaird, Anne Spence

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Legislative Committee—Tim Knopf

District 1 Representative—Ken Harvey

UPCOMING DATES

December 10—Holiday Luncheon

February 18—Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger (Former NASA astronaut)

March 18—TBA

April 15—TBA

May 20—Scholarship Tea

June 2-4—2025 78th Annual WSSRA Convention in Yakima