

# NEWSLETTER



Washington State School Retirees' Association

**This is the first newsletter of the year. Read about our first guest speaker (Sandra Vea), a legislative report from Tim Knopf, and a financial report from Joan Penewell.**

## *Our first monthly meeting!*

**Tuesday, September 17, 10:30am**

**WHERE:** Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 215 Mukilteo Blvd

**Food created by:** Debra Draper

**COST:** \$5 per person. **Pay at the door.** Please let Marianne Harvey know you are coming so we will have enough food (425-348-4993 or jimmarh7@mac.com) **It's important to know how many people are coming. We want to have enough food, but not too much!**

**SPEAKER:** Sandra Vea, a local educator and author of **Rising Son.**

## President's Message:

Hello!

After a twenty year hiatus, I started lap swimming again and I've worked myself up to 17 laps. That comes out to be about one half mile. When I first get into the pool, the thought of swimming up and down the lane 34 times seems pretty daunting, but with each lap, a seemingly unattainable goal, it slowly becomes an accomplishment.

Besides the health benefit, it has changed the way I view other tasks in my life that sometimes seem overwhelming to me. Like weeding an overgrown flower bed or tackling a garage in need of major cleaning. When a task starts to overwhelm me, I try to reduce it to that first "lap" and slowly start to accomplish it. For example, I always put off writing my article for the newsletter; I'm a top notch procrastinator! **(Editor's note: Yes, this is true!)** With my new way of viewing tasks, I guess what I have just written is my first few laps and now I can welcome you to a new year with Sno-Isle SRA Unit 22.

In this month's newsletter you will get a glimpse of some of our plans for the year and hear about ways our organization helps the community and perhaps how you can get involved. If you are newly retired or a returning friend I hope you will join us at our first meeting of the year on September 17 at 10:30. We have great catered lunches for only \$5 and programs that we hope you will find informative and entertaining. So if you are hesitating joining us - jump in and take that first lap! I think you will be glad you did.

Ken Harvey, President Unit 22

## Our Featured Speaker for September

Sandra Vea has long been my friend and fellow educator at Mariner High School in the Mukilteo School District. A few years ago, I was pleased to discover her warm, wonderful and amazing book, ***Rising Son***. This is the remarkable story of her dear friend, Masao Abe, a Japanese American who served in a top-secret team during World War II that coaxed Japanese Imperial soldiers from their bunkers on the front lines of the war in the Pacific.

I am pleased and proud to present Sandra Vea as our featured speaker at our September 17<sup>th</sup> luncheon as she shares details of her astounding book honoring the life and sacrifice of Masao Abe.

Masao was a second-generation Japanese American, born and raised in southern California, who was swept up in the maelstrom of history during World War II. As a young teen, his family took him to live with his grandparents in 1930's Japan to be educated as a proper Japanese teenager. When his father later realized the Japanese government was planning a war of conquest, he rushed Masao home to the US to what he hoped would be safety, but Masao was soon drafted into the US Army. Shortly after completing basic training, Masao's military career was plunged into limbo and his loyalty as an American made suspect by Japan's sudden attack on Pearl Harbor. The US government didn't know what to do with him or how to think about him--was he an enemy or a patriot?

Masao was eventually recruited for the secretive Military Intelligence Service and trained to accompany American soldiers as they fought their way across the islands of the Pacific. His role was to convince Japanese Imperial soldiers to lay down their arms, and to read captured documents looking for enemy strategies. He went into combat with a bodyguard because his commanders knew Masao wore a target on both his front and his back. This little-known slice of history reveals how the confluence of race, war, and loyalty played out when the nation called for the service of those it judged most harshly.

Born and raised in Seattle, Sandra Vea earned a B.A. from the University of Washington, an M.Ed. from Western Washington University, and an M.A. from Seattle University. While earning those degrees, she developed the skills in research and writing that made ***Rising Son*** possible. She has worked as a public educator for 25 years.

To learn more about Masao and Sandra's connection with him through Alan Abe, her life partner and Masao's youngest son, come to our September 17<sup>th</sup> luncheon. Copies of ***Rising Son*** will be on sale for \$20. Please bring cash or a check if you think you'd like your own copy. Actually, once you hear Sandra share Masao's story, I know you'll want one, so, don't miss out!

Tim Knopf

### ONGOING SNO-ISLE VOLUNTEER/GIVING OPPORTUNITIES...

**CHRISTMAS HOUSE:** They were able to provide a book for every child this year. When you do your fall cleaning, if you find any children's books (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.

**IMAGINE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM:** Please bring recyclables to support art programs. A complete list of items is on page 5 of this newsletter.

**TOUCAN TUESDAY:** If you bring two cans of food to any Sno-Isle event, we will be sure to get it to the local foodbank. It is always greatly appreciated!

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**NEED ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR YOUR SCHOOL?  
SNO-ISLE CAN HELP!  
IT'S EASY ~ APPLY TODAY**

**ALL school employees are eligible to participate.**

Learning support funds are available in TWO categories.

30 MEMBERS will receive LSF of \$400

10 NON MEMBERS will receive a one time LSF of \$100

The goals for this program are to:

Provide additional benefits to students.

Encourage new membership in the organization. (It is easy to join and only costs \$7 per month with automatic payroll deduction in most districts.)

**Your are welcome to make copies of this page and let non-members and potential new members in your school know of this terrific opportunity.**

Mail: Joan Penewell 10715 Birch Dr. NW Tulalip WA 98271

Or you may E-mail the information: two.primes@frontier.com

**LEARNING SUPPORT APPLICATION  
DEADLINE DECEMBER 15, 2019**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Principal \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE BE SPECIFIC** with your request. Funds may be used for classroom supplies, special events, field trips, all school projects, etc. Please include what you plan to purchase for your classroom or school and how the needed items will be used and the expected desired outcome.

## September 2019 WSSRA Newsletter Legislative Article

This is our first newsletter since the 2019 Legislative Session ended at midnight on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and my first chance to share just how things shook out.

Despite our high hopes going into the session, legislative results for school retirees were decidedly mixed. We thought that we would do well with the McCleary Decision behind us and its funding largely handled. It also seemed positive that the traditionally more generously spending Democrats now controlled both the House and Senate, especially since new revenues were remarkably higher. Surely there would be money for even school retirees.

Near the end of each regular session the House and Senate must agree on operating, capital and transportation budgets for the coming biennium. Each house passes a proposal for each budget. Delegates from the houses then reach agreement on a single budget in each category. Once agreements are reached, both houses vote and send the budgets to Governor Inslee for his signature.

The issues important to school retirees lay within the operating budget. When the two houses voted to approve the 2019-2021 operating budget we won in several areas:

The PEBB Medical Benefit for retirees aged 65 and older was restored to its original \$183 per month, just as it was in 2010. Of course, medical costs have increased considerably since 2010.

ESHB 1308, the Plan 2 Default bill, was signed into law. This bill will not cost the Legislature any new money, but it will provide a more stable and secure retirement plan for new hires who fail to choose a retirement plan within their first 60 days of employment.

Retire-Rehire improvements were made for Retirement Plans 2 and 3 members.

The Senior Citizen Tax Freeze Expansion was approved.

However, there were several areas where we experienced bitterly disappointing defeats:

The bills proposing Early Retirement for Plans 2 and 3 did not receive votes out of committee in either the House or Senate.

The bills proposing VEBA Improvements never even received hearings much less votes out of committee in the House or Senate fiscal committees.

Most disappointing of all was the failure to secure any Cost of Living Adjustment for Plan 1 members. The Senate Ways and Means Committee never even gave the Senate COLA Bill a public hearing. In the House, true to form, Appropriations Chair Timm Ormsby wouldn't allow the House version a vote out of committee.

As a result, when the House and Senate prepared their proposed Operating Budgets, no Plan 1 COLA was included. Only a last minute effort by Representative Shelley Kloba of the 1<sup>st</sup> Legislative District and Representative Mari Leavitt of the 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, created a letter to House Speaker Frank Chopp, Majority Leader Pat Sullivan and Appropriations Chair Tim Ormsby objecting to the inequity of denying Plan 1 members any kind of COLA and strongly urging the 3% one-time COLA be included in the House Budget Proposal. That letter was signed by 33 other Representatives including Dave Paul of the 10<sup>th</sup>, Lillian Ortiz-Self of the 21<sup>st</sup>, Mike Sells of the 38<sup>th</sup>, Jeff Morris and Debra Lekanoff of the 40<sup>th</sup> and John Lovick of the 44<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.

As a result, House leadership agreed to include the measure in their budget proposal. However, once negotiations with the Senate commenced, the Plan 1 COLA quickly went out the window. When both houses voted to approve the final 2019-2021 Operating Budget, no one objected to its absence.

Why didn't Plan 1 retirees get even a one-time 3% COLA? I believe it was because not enough of us cared enough to ask for it. Despite an enthusiastic cadre of roughly two dozen dedicated letter writers who strenuously, frequently and eloquently urged support for the Plan 1 COLA, we failed to impress Legislative leadership. Not enough of us did anything about it. I even held a training session late in the session to show Plan 1 members how to write their legislators, and no one showed up beside WSSRA President Linda Averill and myself!

Legislators still don't see the inequity of 13 retirement plans enjoying ongoing and annual COLAs of up to 3% while two plans, TRS 1 and PERS 1, slip ever further behind with no ongoing COLA. That's because they didn't hear from you.

Since the shorter 2020 60-day Legislative Session is really a continuation of the 2019 session, any financial bill that failed to receive a vote out of committee could be resurrected in 2020 by being declared "Necessary to Implement the Budget."

Most of the available revenue has also been spoken for, so something like an annual Plan 1 COLA must wait for the next full session in 2021. For 2020, WSSRA will continue to urge passage of the bills that didn't make it in 2019. Hope still lives (faintly) at least for a one-time 3% Plan 1 COLA, Plan 2/3 Retirement at age 60 and/or VEBA improvements.

During 2020 the Democrats will control both the House and the Senate. That may be good. The more conservative Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp, has stepped down to be replaced by the first female Speaker in Washington State history, the more liberal Representative Laurie Jenkins from Tacoma. She is a long-time supporter of civil rights and LGBTQ issues. We hope that will be good for us.

On the other hand, there are hints of a future financial recession coming. If it does, it would provide a great excuse to deny us a COLA again. We will wait and prepare to fight in 2020.

Sincerely,

Tim Knopf

WSSRA Unit 22 Member and WSSRA Legislative Committee Member

### **Materials for Imagine Children's Museum Art Studio**

Egg cartons TP rolls cup cozies beads broken jewelry CDs/DVDs sitckers

Lids empty thread spools bread tabs googlie eyes craft sticks paint stir sticks

CD cases buttons fake flowers/leaves un-used plastic silverware/straws keys

Old keyboards from computers garage odds and ends (nuts, bolts, washers, etc.)

Small/thin branches construction paper/patterned paper paint brushes paint cups

Paints markers/colored pencils yarn fabric ribbon ornaments

Holiday figurines (used on wreaths) Mardi Gras beads

## KEEP IN TOUCH

<https://sno-islesra.info>

Like us on  
**FACEBOOK**  
Sno-Isle SRA



### YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED!

Your Sno-Isle Board has some new members. The Friendship Committee will be handled by Brenda Leider, Sue Rookaird and Anne Spence. They will recognize members who are ill or have a special event in their lives. Liz Meisner will head the Health Committee. She will submit articles on all aspects of healthy living for our newsletter. Margie Tish will join Marianne Harvey on the Membership Committee. They will make sure new members feel welcomed by our organization.

There are many ways to help Unit 22! If you see a committee that you might want to help with, contact Marianne Harvey. (425-348-4993 or jimmarh7@mac.com)

### Financial Report

Checking Account	\$10,495.34	Summary of Expenditures:	
Savings Account	\$4,868.19	Communication:	\$4100.00
Scholarship	\$5,282.9	Events:	\$300.00
		Grants:	\$13,300.00
Summary for 2018-2019		Scholarships:	\$4,000.00
Income:	\$28,475.00	Convention/CC:	\$2,235.00
Expenditures:	\$24,561.89	Foundation Donation:	\$300.00

Submitted by Joan Penewell, Treasurer Unit 22

### REMEMBERING...

We remember with gratitude and fondness the following recently deceased members: Fred Babb, Berva Bartlett, Thomas Casey, Robert Doyle, Carter French, Anita King, George Nowadnik, Doris Maley, Patty Norman and Lenore Chastain.

The gifts these individuals have given to education will be remembered and appreciated eternally by many colleagues and students they served.

## **High School Students Need Help**

Sno-Isle will be hosting a scholarship application work session for high school students on Sat., October 12 from 1 to 4 pm at the Marysville Library. The committee organizing this event is holding a planning meeting immediately following our Sept. 17 Unit meeting. We need lots of help! Plan to attend this meeting if you would like to be a part of our first scholarship training session.

If you have questions, contact Linda Averill (seagull3@msn.com) or Cheryl Hogle.

## **Books for PAC**

Pick up a good book at the Sno-Isle meeting and drop a donation in the jar. There will be a table full of books and you can stock up! Choose as many books as you like and make a donation to PAC (our political action committee). If you would like to donate books, bring them and they will be added to those already available. Books will be set out prior to the meetings and picked up at the close. Books not selected after 2 meetings will be donated to a charity like Goodwill. Want to help with the "PAC book table" committee? Contact Linda Averill (seagull3@msn.com)

## **New Members:**

Kelly Anderson, Crystal Bowsher, Judy Cheng, Joy Currie, Adria Degroot, Leroy Dilts, Mary Hawksley, Janis Howie, Carla Janke, Joni Johnson, Marilyn Lueken, Alice Marquis, Andrew Masonholder, Debbie McPherson, Kathleen Miler, Vicki Pawlitschek, Pam Piatz, Gretchen Shepherd, Gary Tallmadge, Deanne Willis and Dorothy Wislet.

We look forward to seeing you at Sno-Isle events and hope you will become involved in some of the endeavors we pursue in the community and in support of educators and students!

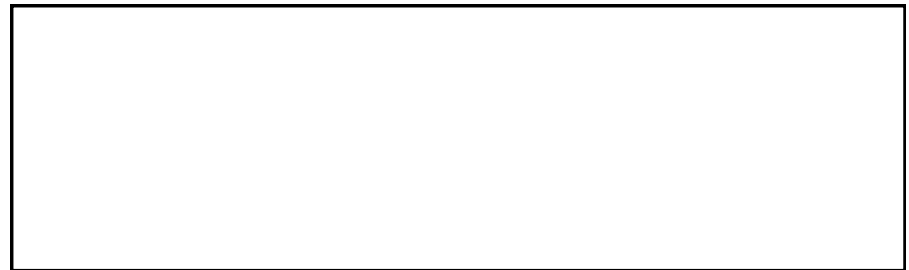
**Attend your first lunch free of charge!**

**SNO-ISLE  
WSSRA UNIT #22**  
10715 Birch Drive NW  
Marysville WA 98271

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**Retirement Planning**—Marianne Harvey

**Health**—Liz Meisner

**Friendship**—Brenda Leider, Sue Rookaird, Anne Spence

**2019-2020 SNO-ISLE REPRESENTATIVES TO STATE WSSRA**

Linda Averill, Past President

Marianne Harvey, Foundation Trustee and Nominating Committee

Tim Knopf, Legislative Committee

**Some of our Future Events:**

September 17—10:30 Speaker Sandra Vea—OSLC

October 15—10:30 Everett Police, Safety for Seniors—OSLC

November 19—10:30 Cocoon House—OSLC

December 10—11:30 Holiday Luncheon at Le Bistro

February 18—10:30 Scholarship Luncheon—OSLC

March 17—10:30 Health Topic TBA—OSLC

April 21—10:30 Container Gardening—OSLC

May 19—10:30 Joint meeting with Sno-King location TBA

June 8-10 WSSRA Convention Tri Cities