

# NEWSLETTER



Washington State School Retirees' Association

**In this newsletter you will find a legislative report, information on Christmas House, a health article about breathing, volunteer opportunities and a report from a teacher and what she's doing to help students with distance learning.**

## President's Message:

We're an interesting organization. Even though we have the word "retired" in our name, Sno-Isle 22 Unit of WSSRA has 40% of our members that are still working (or "Actives" as they are called for sorting purposes). We are also unusual in that our members represent every aspect of education from bus drivers to administration - even superintendents.

Those of us who are retired are very interested in how remote learning is working for our actives. We have heard numerous stories of extra work loads and about so many employees going the "extra mile". We know that there isn't much extra time for those working right now but we would really like to know about how you are dealing with this and how our members can help. We would like to include first hand stories from our members so if you are able we would love to hear from you and share in our newsletter. You can send anything to my email at [kenwes55@comcast.net](mailto:kenwes55@comcast.net)

Also, please see the article about our toy drive for Christmas House. We usually meet for our holiday luncheon and bring donations for the Christmas House. Alas, we won't be meeting but we do plan to have a drop off toy drive on December 1. See the article for the details.

Take care, stay safe, and vote! We miss everyone.

Ken

## ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED

Four-hundred of our Sno-Isle members are Actives, those who are still in the classroom, and they are overwhelmed! During this COVID crisis they meet and greet students and parents online, present concepts via computer and teach remotely. Hands on practice and meeting individual needs are challenging. Those of us who are retired can offer these dedicated staff members a bit of encouragement through a letter or note. Sno-Isle would like your help. Needed are 20 volunteer retirees to each take 20 Actives names and send each a letter of support, appreciation and thanks. Sno-Isle will supply the stamps and volunteers can work on the letters at their own pace. If you would like to participate or need more information contact Joan Penewell at [two.primes@frontier.com](mailto:two.primes@frontier.com)

# Legislative Report to Sno-Isle SRA Unit 22

Thursday, October 15, 2020

The current focus in Washington State politics is the general election just weeks away. Control of the State House of Representatives, the State Senate and the Governor's office rides on this election. Democrats currently control the Governor's mansion and a majority of seats in both houses, but that lead is slim in the Senate.

Our state is burdened with a dramatic and unprecedented budget shortfall due to the cost of battling Covid-19 and the business shutdowns that followed. The party that wins this election will decide how Washington will respond to the budget shortfall in the next two years.

This period will bring great pressure to cut state costs. The state must balance its budget! This pressure may threaten the PEBB medical benefit of \$183 per month for the health expenses of retirees 65 and older. We will have to play defense through at least 2022, fighting to keep what we've already won.

This is why the WSSRA Board took a close look at every legislative candidate after the August primary, scrutinizing their positions and voting history. We need friends in the Legislature. The Board considered the recommendations of our lobbyists and local unit members before announcing their list of endorsed candidates for the general election. These include Governor Inslee and the legislative candidates most aligned with the values and issues important to school retirees and senior citizens.

A complete list of WSSRA legislative candidate endorsements can be found under the Legislative tab on the WSSRA website: <https://wssra.org>

In our Unit 22 region, WSSRA endorsed the following candidates, the people for whom we hope you will vote in this election:

## 1<sup>st</sup> Legislative District

Senate:	Derek Stanford	Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 1:	Davina Duerr	Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 2:	Shelly Kloba	Incumbent	Democrat

## 10<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Senate:	Helen Price Johnson	Challenger	Democrat
House Position 1:	Angie Homola	Open Seat	Democrat
House Position 2:	Dave Paul	Incumbent	Democrat

## 21<sup>st</sup> Legislative District

House Position 1:	No Endorsement		
House Position 2:	Lillian Ortiz-Self	Incumbent	Democrat

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District

House Position 1:	Cindy Ryu	Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 2:	No Endorsement		

### 38<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Senate:	June Robinson	Appointed Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 1:	Emily Wicks	Appointed Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 2:	Mike Sells	Incumbent	Democrat

### 39<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

Senate:	No Endorsement		
House Position 1:	Claus Joens	Challenger	Democrat
House Position 2:	Carolyn Eslick	Incumbent	Republican

### 44<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

House Position 1:	John Lovick	Incumbent	Democrat
House Position 2:	April Berg	Open Seat	Democrat

This year Washington State School Retirees' legally separate political arm, WSSR-PAC, made campaign contributions to WSSRA-endorsed candidates in tight races from \$250 up to the legal limit of \$2,000. Even though only 2% of WSSRA's members contribute to our Political Action Committee, the PAC gave out \$24,500. When every WSSRA member supports the PAC, we will make a larger impact.

Please consider contributing to the PAC. You may do so on the WSSR-PAC website: <https://wssr-pac.org> or you may send a check written to WSSR-PAC in care of the PAC treasurer:

Lora Brabant  
125 W 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Most important of all, please exercise your right to vote for whom YOU support, and vote early. Use a state ballot drop box if one is near you, otherwise mail your ballot early, and please be sure to sign it!

Respectfully Submitted by Tim Knopf

If you are ever in need of a laugh, look no further than your phone. Alexa and Siri have lots of jokes to share! Just say, "Tell me a joke." Here's a recent sampling of jokes on the iPhone:

My umbrella broke in half. That's OK because there is only 50% chance of rain.

How do you create light with water? Clean the windows.

Did you hear about the mathematician who was afraid of negative numbers? She'll stop at nothing to avoid them.

Why did the Invisible Man turn down the job offer? Because he just couldn't see himself working there.

**At this point, Ken Harvey (president of Unit 22) would have his daughters groaning about horrible "Dad jokes".**

## Christmas House

Unfortunately, due to COVID, we will not be able to open the Christmas House store this year. Instead we are working closely with the Food Banks in Snohomish County. They are providing the numbers and ages of the children they serve and we will provide pallets of toys. As a result of this, the Christmas House goal is to find a way to continue to help low-income families provide a joyous Christmas for their children in 2020.

This charity 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 years old. In 2019 they provided over 44,530 gifts to 7,025 children from 2,380 families.

Last December the “store” was located in the Boys & Girls Club gym in Everett. This year, due to COVID, Christmas House will not have a store. Instead, they will be taking pallets of toys to the food banks throughout Snohomish County and needy families will still get Christmas gifts for their children.

Hundreds of people contribute to the success of Christmas House. Some contribute their time, some donate money or gifts, some hold fundraisers, some volunteer their skills ... the list goes on and on, and you can be a part of it all. Each year at our Sno-Isle Christmas lunch we have collected funds and new toys and books for Christmas House. This year due to the pandemic we are unable to hold the lunch but we still want to help this worthwhile charity so we will be hosting a “drive-by collection” on December 1. Between 10:30am and 12:00pm bring your contribution (new toys, books, checks) to Our Saviors Lutheran Church (215 Mukilteo Blvd.)

## Volunteer Opportunity

My name is Anthony Erickson and I am a program coordinator with the Snohomish County Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate.

I am hoping our program can partner with your organization in one way or another to spread the word about our need for more volunteers. We have a robust pre-service training program that we're facilitating on a monthly basis via Zoom. We do not require any previous education, training or experience with the foster care system.

Our program recruits and trains volunteers within the community to be court appointed advocates for children in the foster care system. Advocacy for children in the system can have a huge positive impact on the wellbeing of these vulnerable children. Our advocates are able to advocate in court for things such as foster care placement, medical and mental health needs, community and culture, as well as education. We currently work with a few retired teachers and they are amazing advocates for these children.

Thanks for your time!

**Anthony Edwards**, CASA Program Coordinator

Office of the Court Appointed Special Advocate

2801 10th Street Everett, WA 98201

Office: 425.388.7042 Cell: 425.293.3385

# Teaching During a Pandemic

*This is written by Dana Vance. She is a second grade teacher at Mill Creek Elementary. It certainly lets us all know the kind of effort needed to teach during a pandemic with distance learning.*

Upon completion of our Spring Remote Learning session, I spent some time reflecting on how I could improve the remote learning experience for my 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. The top item I kept coming back to was this: Students need the tools necessary to be successful. Tools... what kind of tools? Math tools? Reading tools? Writing tools? Art tools? Science tools? Well—I settled on ALL kinds of tools. I then began to make a list for each subject area.

The lists became very long! I soon realized that I had to focus my efforts in one or two areas so that I could take on this project and be successful. As summer progressed, it became more and more evident that we would be engaged in remote learning again. Therefore, I put all of my energy into getting my "Toolboxes" ready.

I started with Math. My goal was to provide students with the tools necessary to explore, investigate and learn math in a manner that would be "similar" to our classroom experiences. I wanted the students to be able to experience and manipulate tools so that they could gain a deeper understanding of the math concepts. I knew that Google Slide decks and videos were not going to do the trick.

Next, I began to purchase the needed items that I would need to make Math engaging and exciting. I also did some reading on education blogs and websites. I found a lot of amazing ideas and lessons.

My next step was to begin purchasing my materials. My school had a Meet Your Teacher Drive Thru event where the parents came through the parking lot in their cars. There was a sign on the car as to who their child's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher would be. The teachers were positioned around the parking lot at tables. The parents stopped briefly, stayed in their cars, all participants wore face masks and I got to meet my new 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and hand them their Tools for Successful Remote Learning.

After I assembled the bags and boxes, I then realized that the students would then need to know which "tools" would be used each day. Therefore, I created a Tools for Successful Learning document in our Google Classroom.

Each evening, I upload this list. The parents/students open the list and gather their tools for the next day. They are to put them in their "learning space" or in their bags to go to their alternate learning location, such as Daycare or their Learning Pod in their neighborhood. This Daily Tools List has ensured that the students are successful and prepared for each day. I did not want them to be packing ALL of their tools with them each day.

## **Financial Report** (Reported by Joan Penewell, Unit 22 Treasurer)

Checking Account: \$17,364.95

CD: \$5,172.38

Money Market: \$4,869.87

Total: \$27,407.20

Continued from Teaching During a Pandemic

## Here is a snapshot of one of our Daily Tools List:

**Tools for Successful Learning**

Hello! Please gather and prepare these Tools for Successful Learning. Be sure to place them at your learning space or in your backpack if you are going to an alternative learning location.

Thursday: September 17, 2020

	Dice in Dice		Thin tip Dry Erase Marker Eraser
	Plastic Sleeve		Math Tools Just have the folder with ALL the tools ready!
	Handwriting Practice Folder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pencil</li><li>• Eraser</li><li>• Crayons/Colored Pencils</li></ul>	

See you in the morning @ 10:00am on ZOOM!

In our Daily Schedule, we also have a "Gather & Prep" time at the top of the day. From 9:00 -9:15 they need to make sure they are all set for our day.

The parents are amazed at the organization and the way the students have stepped up to this challenge. They are getting their Tools ready and prepared each evening! I am so proud of them. We are at day 10, and every student has showed up for our Class ZOOM at 10:00am ready to learn! YEAH!

These Toolboxes & Bags are definitely a labor of love. I am driven to ensure that my students have all the resources that they will need to be successful remote learners!



## Just Breathe ...

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to wonder if a momentary shortness of breath could be a sign of illness. We are still learning about the possible long-term effects of COVID-19. People dealing with its aftereffects may need exercises to help them breathe better. Additionally, those of us with conditions such as asthma, anxiety, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) often worry about breathing.

The physical benefits of deep breathing are often immediate. By breathing deeply, you can activate your parasympathetic nervous system, and in turn, slow down your heart rate and lower your blood pressure. This creates a feeling of calm. When your body is operating under fight-or-flight response or stress, it releases a surge of hormones (cortisol and adrenaline) that causes your breathing to speed up. It also increases your blood pressure and puts you in a state of hyper-awareness of your surroundings. Deep breathing can help reverse this response and relax your body.

In addition to reversing the physical stress response in the body, deep breathing can also help calm and slow down the emotional turbulence in your mind. In fact, there are studies that show breathing intentionally can help treat depression, anxiety, and even PTSD. It can really help to manage stress and improve cognitive function.

If you would like to try some breathing exercises here a few to practice. Try these for 5 minutes a day, or as needed. When you are not feeling well, you can use them to open the airways more.

**Smell the Flowers/Blow out the Candles:** Breathe in through your nose, then exhale for at least twice as long through pursed lips, as if you were blowing out birthday candles. This helps to slow down your breathing and help to get additional air out of your lungs.

**Belly Breathing:** Place a hand on your stomach so that you can feel it rise and fall. Breathe in through your nose, then out through your mouth for two to three times as long. This will help you maximize your lung function.

**“Box” Breathing:** If you need to relax or de-stress, try breathing in for a count of four, holding your breath for a count of four, exhaling for a count of four, and holding your breath again for another count of four. Repeat this four-sided breathing method until you are feeling calmer.

And when all else fails, just remember to breathe...

Submitted by Liz Meisner, Health Committee

### STUDENTS NEED ASSISTANCE—WSSR FOUNDATION SEEKING SUPPORT

Students seeking scholarship funds apply each year for scholarships awarded by WSSRA. These funds are distributed by the Foundation to deserving high school Seniors who are planning to enter the field of Education. Funds are raised each year as a result of money contributed by the members at the annual convention—both from the silent auction items and money spent on the baskets donated by each unit. Because of the Covid pandemic, WSSRA was not able to have an in-person event in 2020. As a result the approximately \$ 8000 normally raised is absent from the fund. Members are so generous in support of the students each year. This year the amount raised was zero. We would encourage you to make a contribution to the scholarship fund personally to help alleviate this deficit and show our support for the future educators of students in

Washington State. This opportunity is open to all WSSRA members both retirees and actives. Any amount would be appreciated. You may contribute by writing a check or going to the WSSRA website. [wssra.org](https://www.wssra.org) Foundation link>Donation Form. Let's show our support for the future of education in Washington State.

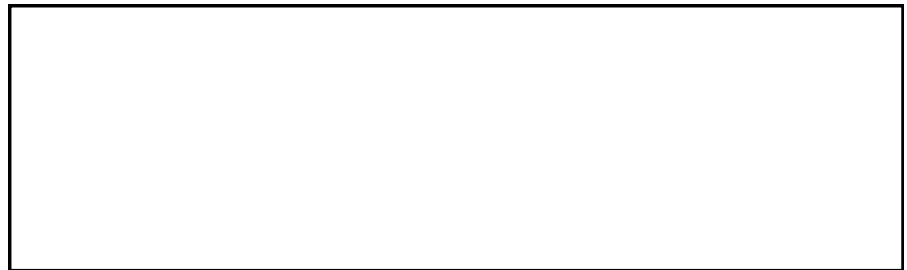
**SNO-ISLE  
WSSRA UNIT #22**

10715 Birch Drive NW  
Marysville WA 98271

**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**



**PRE SORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
EVERETT, WA  
PERMIT NO. 93**



**2019-2020 Sno-Isle Board**

**PRESIDENT**

Ken Harvey

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Marianne Harvey

**TREASURER**

Joan Penewell

**SECRETARY**

Cheryl Hogle

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**Membership**— Marianne Harvey and Margie Tish

**Scholarships & Learning Support Fund**—

Karen Carpenter and Joan Penewell

**Legislative**—Tim Knopf

**Facebook/Website**—Ken Harvey

**Newsletter**—David Davis

**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  
Kay Bishop, District 1 Representative