

# NEWSLETTER

Washington State School Retirees' Association



**In this newsletter you'll hear about the latest Legislative session, see the 2021-2022 budget and get information about Learning Support Funds.**

## President's Message

Well, well, well...this is not the start of our year together I expected. Up until our August planning meeting Sno-Isle's board had planned to start hosting lunch events again. But alas, higher covid rates changed our plans. The board hopes to return to lunch events at the start of the new year. Keep your fingers crossed.

We do hope to have a holiday luncheon at Le Bistro in early December. Sno-Isle Tech Center, that runs Le Bistro, is evaluating when and how to reopen. We are on an email list to be notified when they make a decision.

No matter what happens, we plan to run our annual toy drive for Everett's Christmas House. Last year, it was drive through, drop off; we will see what form it takes this year.

We're happy that our actives have returned to school. Students are glad to be back with classmates and school staff. Of course, this year will bring challenges and our organization is eager to do our part. We are offering \$400 stipends to members and \$100 stipends to non-members. The application is in this newsletter and also online at our website. Spread the word if you know a school employee with a project they would like funded.

Take care,  
Ken Harvey

## THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

ATTENTION CERTIFIED AND CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES within one to five years of retirement!

Last year the WSSRA state office sponsored a retirement zoom session for all prospective retirees in the state. It was very well received by all. Because of continued covid restrictions they are once again scheduling zoom webinars to cover a variety of topics related to retirement. Instead of one session there will be a two part webinar to allow time to cover all information and allow time for questions. It will be a virtual webinar to learn about Plans 2 and 3, medical and dental options, sick leave buyout(VEBA), Social Security and Medicare.

WA State Dept. of Retirement Systems(PLAN 2 AND 3) HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY Social Security, VEBA and Medicare will all make presentations and answer your questions.

Dates for these webinars are October 28 and November 4 from 4:30-6:30 PM

On Tuesday, October 26—9:00 to 10:15 am, Ellen Wolfhagen, Health Care Authority Manager for the United Healthcare (UHC) Medicare Advantage-Prescription Drug (MA-PD) program will present on the outcomes of the new UHC option to Uniform Medical Plan (UMP). Given the recent announcement of the 2022 increase in UMP (up from \$336 to \$364 per month for a single subscriber), the 2022 UHC options (\$125/month for “Balanced” and \$148/month for “Complete”) clearly will be of interest to a number of retirees. The reasons for the rate differences will be explained, as will the differences between the two plans. Following Ellen’s presentation, a Q and A session is scheduled.

To register contact [Tara@wssra.org](mailto:Tara@wssra.org) or call 360-413-5496. Ext111

## ATTENTION WSSRA MEMBERS!

Are there any new hires in your building ? WSSRA is presenting a seminar for members of the profession who must choose either Plan 2 or 3 shortly after being hired. The pros and cons of each plan will be presented so they are able to make an informed decision. This is their only opportunity to choose a plan best suited to them. Could you please inform them about the time of the webinar and encourage them to view the presentation? This is for both certified and classified staff. Thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

Zoom seminar scheduled for November 9. 4:30-5:45 PM  
Contact [Tara@wssra.org](mailto:Tara@wssra.org) to register. 360-413-5496. Ext 111

# WSSRA Sno-Isle September 2021 Legislative Report

As temperatures cool at summer's end, preparation for the 2022 Legislative Session heats up. It opens on January 10, 2022.

## Legislative Sessions Are Paired

Washington State legislative sessions are arranged in biennium pairs. The first sessions occur in odd-numbered years. They last 105 days or longer, if special sessions are needed to finish up. The biennium budget is set during these sessions and major spending measures are passed.

60-day second sessions come during the even-numbered years, like 2022. They fine tune the directions set during the previous sessions, and spending measures are generally smaller.

However, any bill not passed during the first session theoretically remains "active" and could be revived at any point before the end of the second session.

## The 2021 Session

2021's 105-day legislative session was unique because:

To curtail the Covid Pandemic, it was the first entirely digital session with no face-to-face meetings. This made it impossible to meet legislators face-to-face, but it was easier for members to join in on Zoom. No one had to drive to Olympia.

Funding was a rollercoaster before and during the session. Budget prospects looked positive at first, then Covid worsened, businesses closed, and revenue forecasts plummeted. It seemed certain that we would face benefit cuts. But as the session went on, revenue forecasts improved. Soon federal money entered the mix, and state coffers grew full again.

Over 1,000 bills were introduced in 2021, and they almost all failed, as usual. That included a number of bills supported by retired school employees.

## 2021 Wins and Losses

While the bill for another Plan 1 Cost of Living Adjustment failed, the Legislature made its full actuarially recommended payment to the pension system (something that it doesn't always do). Furthermore, legislators committed to make an additional \$800 million payment toward the Plan 1 unfunded liability in June of 2023. That would pay off that liability two years earlier, by July of 2024. This could make restoring the Plan 1 annual COLA increasing likely as we approach 2024!

While the effort to create an open enrollment period for retirees locked out of PEBB failed, the budget passed in 2021 will fund the monthly \$183 PEBB Medicare-Eligible Healthcare Benefit through June of 2023.

Other successes include House Bill 1218 enhancing the rights of the residents in long-term care facilities and House Bill 1438 that enhances the senior property tax exemption.

The 2021 session that once looked to be a disaster when it opened, actually turned out fairly well for school retirees.

### **WSSRA Communication Improves**

In 2021 WSSRA began its successful Legislative Buddies Program in which school retirees regularly emailed one of their legislators about our issues before and during the session (using prompts suggested by WSSRA Legislative Director, Peter Diedrick.)

We will really need Legislative Buddies again for 2022. If interested, please contact Tim Knopf at [timknopf1@yahoo.com](mailto:timknopf1@yahoo.com).

We also maintained weekly bill updates, weekly podcasts and Facebook updates. These will all resume in October, 2021.

In next month's legislative article, I will share what's happening with the important Select Committee on Pension Policy and what WSSRA plans for 2022.

Tim Knopf

### **New Members:**

Diane Bissell, Debi Doyle, Lora Mortimore, Paul Treckeme, Julianne Williams and Marry Ann Wood.

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!

## Board Adopts Budget for 2021 -22

Sno-Isle's accounting year begins July 1 and ends June 31. Total Sno-Isle funds as of July 1, 2021 was \$27,950.75. Of this money a little over \$10,000 is in savings accounts. The carry over money from the previous year of about \$18,000 was much larger than anticipated due to covid and "distance everything". The budget adopted at the board meeting in August anticipates what might be in the coming year.

### **\$2,455 BOARD EXPENSES:**

Convention, NW 1 Coordinating Council Meetings, Office supplies, Donations to WSSRA foundation scholarships in memory of deceased members who served on the board and a yearly planning meeting

### **\$6,200 COMMUNICATION**

Printing, Postage and Web page

### **\$200 FACILITY USE**

**Our Savior's Lutheran Church**

### **\$15,000 LEARNING SUPPORT FUNDS**

35 Member @ \$400

10 Non-member @ \$100

### **\$5,000 SCHOLARSHIPS**

This year our two future educators on scholarship are Rachel Foster, a Senior at WWU and Alyssa LaCourtsiere, a freshman at CWU

One major change to future budgets is the board's decision to make our college scholarships renewable. This means that within 3 years Sno-Isle will be supporting four students at \$2500 each and our current expenditure of \$5000 a year will become \$10,000.

## **REMEMBERING...**

We remember with gratitude and fondness the following recently deceased members: Margarita Ellis, Lera Jordan, Donna Linden and Michael Lanctot

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

**NEED ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR YOUR SCHOOL?**

**SNO-ISLE CAN HELP!**

***IT'S EASY ~ APPLY TODAY***

**SNO-ISLE is unit 22 of the Washington State School Retirees' Association  
Serving Snohomish and Island Counties  
ALL school employees are eligible to participate.**

Learning support funds are available in TWO categories.

35 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.)

You must be a member to receive a \$400 stipend. BUT, if you are not currently a member, you can join when you apply for the stipend. (cost is \$7 per month, which is taken directly from your payroll). or visit our website to join online - <https://wssra.org/join-wssra/>

By becoming a member you help support service projects like this. Our Snohomish County Unit (Sno-Isle 22) is 1000 members strong. The state organization has 18,000 members. A primary goal of WSSRA is to protect and work to enhance the retirement of public school employees.

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

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

**LEARNING SUPPORT APPLICATION**

**DEADLINE November 15, 2021**

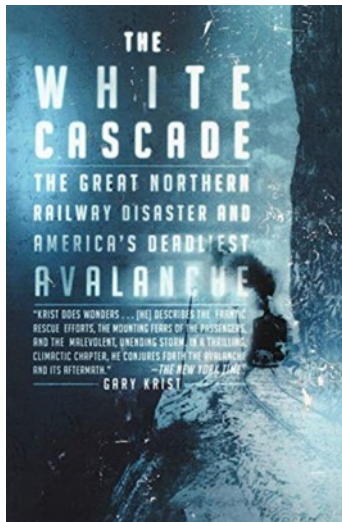
Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

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.

Last year our members used Learning Support Funds for books, art materials, science projects, math materials and packets of supplies for home use. Amy Routsala at Woodside in Everett asked for a Makerspace. It is a collaborative workspace inside a school with the goal of facilitating learning for 20<sup>th</sup> Century and gain skills that are critical for college, career and life ready. Her specific request was for Electric Sewing and e textiles: Students use electric circuits to create lights on existing garments and back-packs. Items needed for the project are conductive thread, alligator clips, coin battery holder batteries and small LED lights.

A Recommended Good Read from Joan Penewell



### **The White Cascade**

#### ***The Great Northern Railway Disaster and America's Deadliest Avalanche***

by Gary Krist Holt Publications 2017

This is a tale that takes place during the Golden Age of Railroading and is a gripping narrative of the mammoth blizzard of 1910. This storm struck the Cascades in late February when everyone assumed the worst of winter was past and even after it began most believed it would not last long. But this storm lasted longer and was worse than anything before or since.

“White Cascades” tells of an almost forgotten tragedy at Stevens pass near the little town of Wellington and of the people who were there and how lives that were changed for ever after.

Although this is a work of non-fiction it reads like a suspense novel. As I was pulled into this tale, I began to experience the fear of being trapped in a pullman car for days, felt the agony of workers trying to get the snow plows moving, and understood the nightmare developing for the engineers who were making impossible safety choices. This is railroading against extreme elements.

The author Gary Krist deftly used diaries, memoirs, court records, telegrams, newspaper articles and personal accounts to weave a masterfully researched story with many ties to Everett.

**Do you have a book to recommend? If so write a short review and send it to editor David Davis [veto55@comcast.net](mailto:veto55@comcast.net) We're eager to share good reads.**

**SNO-ISLE  
WSSRA UNIT #22**

10715 Birch Drive NW  
Marysville WA 98271

**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**



**2019-2020 Sno-Isle Board**

**PRESIDENT**

Ken Harvey

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Marianne Harvey

**TREASURER**

Joan Penewell

**SECRETARY**

Cheryl Hogle

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**Membership**—Marianne Harvey

**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