



The Bulletin



Volume LV No. 2

The Seattle School Retirees' Association

January-February, 2019

Upcoming Luncheons

Please e-mail or call ahead to reserve your space: ssra44@juno.com or 206 521-5170 (the SODO office number). Please let us know ahead of time!

SSRA's February 5th Luncheon

Date: Tuesday, February 5th

Time/Place: lunch at 12:00 at The Canal Restaurant in Ballard next to the Locks

Price: \$20.00 for a buffet lunch

RSVP Deadline: Monday, January 28th

Program: Anila Goldie is a native Seattleite who once taught special education in Seattle Public Schools. For 19 years she taught special education to a variety of students. She also studied cultural anthropology at the University of Washington and was a research assistant in the College of Education. Ms. Goldie also taught English in Columbia and earned her Master's Degree in Education at the University of Washington.



After teaching in Seattle she accepted a job in a school in Sudan where she stayed for two years. She also taught English in a bilingual program for Latinos in Bellevue Public Schools.

Next she studied yoga and eventually taught yoga classes at Bellevue Community College. She also became proficient in "qi gong" (a form of yoga) and was invited to teach it at a research institute in Beijing.

Finally she returned to the States to write *The Problem Is Not Available* about her teaching and living experiences in Sudan.

Please welcome Anila who is now a proud member of SSRA!

Look Ahead to the March 5th Luncheon which will feature Nicole Tsong, a regular contributor to The Seattle Times 'Pacific Magazine' and an expert on exercise workouts.

We at SSRA Hope All of You Have a Happy Holiday Season!

The Washington State Legislature convenes on January 14th, 2019.

To find your District and your State Legislators, log on to www.leg.wa.gov click on "Your District & Legislators," fill in your home address, click on "Find My District," and then click on "Name of Legislator" for more information or to send a message.



S.E.E.D. Grants Still Available!

SSRA's S.E.E.D. Grants have increased for the 2018-2019 school year and are available to Seattle School District employees who seek unreimbursed expenses for student learning projects.

Non-members may apply for a one-time-only grant of up to \$200. SSRA members may apply for up to \$500 each school year. Apply at the SSRA website www.seattlesra.org.

Funds are limited so apply soon!

Meet John Thorp!

by Ron Cygan

John recently joined the SSRA Board as Chair of the Retirement Seminar Planning Committee. (SSRA works with other units of the Northwest II Coordinating Council to offer a Retirement Seminar available to all Public School District Employees in King County.)

He joined Seattle Public Schools in 1966 as a Language Arts teacher at Meany Junior High. He then worked in other Seattle schools as a vice principal, principal and central office administrator. He is currently President of the Seattle Education Foundation which offers grants to teachers and schools in the Seattle District. Last year the foundation gave a total of \$180,000 in grants.

John enjoys golf and travel in retirement and has recently vacationed in Australia and New Zealand as well as in the Mediterranean after which he sailed across the Atlantic.



John's Preferred Form of Transportation

Upcoming Retirement Seminar!

This Retirement Seminar is sponsored by the Washington School Retirees' Association King County Units (which includes SSRA) and will be held at Madison House retirement complex located in Kirkland on **MARCH 23rd** in 2019 from 7:45 a.m. until noon.

It will include speakers for TRS/PERS and SERs for Pension Plans 2 and 3, PEBB and VEBA. More information on registering will be forthcoming. There will be no charge to those who preregister.

SSRA Leadership for 2018-2019

President.....Pat Cygan
President-elect.....Someone New
Immediate Past President.....Sharon Green

Recording Secretary.....Mary Wallon
Treasurer.....Sue Battin

Committee Chairs

Audit Review CommitteeRoxanne Trees
Budget/Finance.....Jim de Jarnatt
Communications/Outreach.....Ron Cygan
Community Services.....Marilynn Miller
Drawings and Baskets.....Marilynn Miller
Health Services.....Myrna Muto
Historian.....Kathy Purcell
Legislative.....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon
May Luncheon.....Margaret Nelson
Membership.....ALL SSRA MEMBERS
Parliamentarian.....Edith Ruby
Programs.....Pat Cygan
Resolutions/Bylaws.....SSRA's Board
Retirement Seminar Planning.....John Thorp
Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....Sharon Green
WSSRA-PAC.....Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby

NOTE: If you are willing to chair our Friendship Committee or become SSRA's next President or Co-President, please call President Pat Cygan at 425-493-0352.

Words Worth Remembering

"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"Live as if you will die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

Mahatma Gandhi

The Bulletin is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees' Association. **Membership meetings** are held on the first Tuesday of each month from September through May (except January) with a buffet lunch served at twelve noon; then a meeting and guest speaker/program follow our buffet luncheon at **The Canal Restaurant** located at 5300 34th Ave. N.W.

Office hours vary. You can reach us by calling the SODO office at 206 521-5170. **Email:** ssra44@juno.com



Time to Educate Our Legislators

by Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chairs

Washington's 49 senators and 98 representatives will descend on Olympia January 14 to endure 105 grueling days of committee meetings, floor debates, and frequent visits from long parades of constituents with compelling stories telling why their bills are desperately needed. In the end, legislators must produce a budget designed to meet our state's needs for the next two years.

Many of these legislators are new to Olympia in 2019. Some are calling it a blue wave as the Democrats picked up 3 seats in the Senate to give them a 28 to 21 majority and 7 additional seats in the House to make it 57 to 41 for the Democrats. Will this blue wave prove to be a friend to present and future school retirees?

In the 2018 session, with Democrats in control of both House and Senate for the first time in several years, retirees saw two small financial gains, a 1.5% onetime increase in Plan 1 pensions and an \$18/month increase in the Medicare eligible PEBB medical insurance benefit. Will we receive more help this session? There are several areas where we will work for support from both Democrats and Republicans in passing our bills.

Good news is that the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) is recommending to legislators two of our goals. The first is the same recommendation that SCPP made last year, a onetime 3% COLA on income up to \$25,000 for Plan 1 retirees. Although the committee's recommendation is helpful, it does not guarantee that a bill will be passed. Last year legislators reduced SCPP's recommended increase from 3% to 1.5%. The second SCPP recommendation is that the default pension plan for new hires be Plan 2 rather than Plan 3. Plan 2 produces a predictable pension amount not dependent on stock market gyrations, and it costs the state a bit less.

What is the Select Committee on Pension Policy? It is an eighteen member committee that includes legislators and representatives from state employer and retiree groups. The committee does not pass laws, but it makes recommendations to the legislature on state pension policy. Legislation that has SCPP's blessing has a better chance of passing, but still it's no slam dunk.

New legislators face a mind boggling number of complex issues. It's our job to educate them on retiree needs. TRS 1 and PERS 1 are the only state retirement plans that do not have a COLA. New legislators most likely won't know this. Neither will they understand the importance of more financial help so we can afford medical insurance to supplement Medicare coverage. And they need to know why we are pushing to reduce penalties for "early" retirement. Seattle's three members of the WSSRA Legislative Team, Patricia MacGowan, Edith Ruby, and Mary Wallon, will visit Olympia in January and in March to explain these issues to our legislators, but we need your voice as well. Please talk or write to your legislators—hearing stories about the situation of their own constituents is a powerful way to help them understand the need for the bills we are pushing for.

For more information on the coming legislative session, be sure to read WSSRA Legislative Director Peter Diedrick's Legislative News page in the winter *WSSRA Journal* that you should be receiving soon.

Thanks to all of you who voted in the last election. Every vote counts.

[SSRA's Committee Reports](#)

- [Health Services Committee](#)

[Myrna Muto, Chair](#)

This is an update on the new shingles vaccine which was reported on here a few months ago. Should you get the new shingles vaccine? Yes, even if you have already been vaccinated against shingles. In October 2017 the FDA approved a new vaccine called Shingrix. It is recommended that you should get the new vaccine even if you have already had the old vaccine (Zostavax). Zostavax cuts your risk of shingles by 51% and reduces your chances of post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) which is a painful burning sensation that persists for weeks, months or even years after the rash disappears.

If you had chickenpox as a child, then the virus is in your body and may remain dormant. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in one of three people, it reappears in the form of shingles. Shingles is worse than chickenpox...with pain (which may be excruciating) followed by blistering rash. Other symptoms may include fever, headaches and chills.

The new medication, Shingrix, is more than 90% effective at preventing shingles. It's protective effects last for four years as opposed to Zostavax that starts to lose potency the year it is given. Shingrix is approved for people 50 and older and given in two doses about 2-6 months apart for long-term protection.

If you have never had the chickenpox, are you off the hook? No, according to the CDC. More than 99% of people over 40 have had chickenpox even if they don't remember it.

[sources: Stephanie Watson: "New Shingles Vaccine: What You Need to Know" *Webmd.com* and Barbara Brody: "Should You Get the New Shingles Vaccine" *Silversneakers.com*]

- [Community Services](#)

[Marilynn Miller, Chair](#)

Colder weather is coming and will likely take a toll on those who are needy. Please bring non-perishable food and personal items including white socks and other apparel as donations for the West Seattle Food Bank and The Compass Center. Your generosity is appreciated.

- [Program Committee](#)

[Pat Cygan, Chair](#)

For the **February 5th** luncheon, **Anila Goldie**, who once taught in Seattle Public Schools, will discuss her time teaching in Sudan and other international schools... and then writing about them. Sudan will be her main focus at our luncheon.

For the program on **March 5th**, **Nicole Tsong**, a regular weekly contributor to *The Seattle Times' Pacific Magazine*, will discuss her latest exercise routines that she herself practices in various neighborhoods in the city. (Her articles explore a wide variety of exercise programs.) Our **April program will be on the 9th** (instead of the first Tuesday) so that current workers in Seattle schools can attend. We hope to feature Pulitzer-Prize winning political cartoonist **David Horsey**, an Ingraham High School graduate, who recently moved back to Seattle and creates timely political cartoons for *The Seattle Times*.

Our **May 7th** luncheon, which will honor our members who are 85 years or better, will feature noted actress and historian **Debbie Dimitre**. She hopes to premiere her newest program as Bertha Landes, Seattle's first female mayor.

We are also trying to get Seattle Public School Superintendent Denise Juneau to do a brief presentation at one of our lunches. If she can't attend, we will try to persuade another spokesperson for Seattle Schools to attend a luncheon.

- **Scholarship Committee** **Patricia MacGowan, Chair**
Thank you for your support of the SSRA Scholarships this year. Your support provided \$42,500 in total for all of our recent scholarship awards. (Remember that none of your dues to SSRA or WSSRA go toward this awards.)

This is a record setting scholarship year for SSRA. Congratulations to the scholars and to all the SSRA members who supported these scholars. We had so many excellent applicants that needed support and we appreciate their efforts in applying. Future teachers need our support now more than ever. One of our teacher intern winners wrote that her master's and teacher certification program costs were \$38,000 this year.

SSRA's 2018 scholars include: Cheyenne Brashear and Renita Gray as *Lynn Fuller Scholars*; Kidist Gashaw Wondem and Maria Gloria as *Phil Konkell Scholars*; Nazio Junejo, Makayla Henry, Omar Omar and Lyla Taddei as our *Teaching Intern Scholars*. These will be amazing future teachers and SSRA is proud to support them.

Thanks to the SSRA Board of Directors for approving increases for scholarship opportunities for 2019. SSRA will increase support for Seattle School District Scholarships to \$12,500 total and continue to provide our two Lynn Fuller elementary teacher scholarships at \$2500 each and our Phil Konkell secondary teacher scholarships for two individuals at \$2,500 each. SSRA will provide \$5,000 Teacher Internship Scholarships for next year.

Scholarship application information is available from the SSRA website, www.seattlesra.org or from Patricia MacGowan, SSRA Scholarship Chair, at pmac@uw.edu or by phone at (206) 851-0232.

- **Seattle Educational Enhancement Dividend (S.E.E.D.) Committee** **Sharon Green, Chair**
SSRA is proud to offer grants to any employee of Seattle Public Schools for the benefit of students in their building. Grants can be used for supplies, entrance tickets, transportation, guest speakers, room decorations, furniture, educational equipment, etc. There is no comparison of the requests to determine who receives grants.

Members of SSRA (also known as Actives) can apply annually for a grant of up to **\$500**; non-members are eligible for a one-time grant of up to \$200.

As of publishing time for this newsletter, S.E.E.D. has granted four requests for Actives and one for a non-member. An "Active" is a current SPS employee who also belongs to SSRA. Dues are only \$84 for the year or \$7 a month from payroll deduction. For this you are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$500 each and every school year. Plus, you are investing in an organization whose mission is to work on maintaining and improving your retirement benefits.

Think about it. If you usually spend \$500 out of pocket for student supplies, you recoup \$416 from an SSRA S.E.E.D. grant.

The application can be found on our website: www.seattlesra.org. It is a simple one-page application. We gave out 10 grants last school year. Our goal is to double it for this year.

- **Drawings and Baskets** Marilynn Miller, Chair
Hope you enjoyed the 50/50 drawing at the December luncheon. We are still looking for volunteers to contribute baskets or items for baskets for upcoming luncheons.
- **Audit Review Committee** Roxanne Trees, Chair
We have enough volunteers to serve on SSRA's Audit Review Committee to help examine the finances of SSRA for the fiscal year which will end at the end of June. We will announce their names soon.
- **May Luncheon** Margaret Nelson, Chair
Remember that those members who are 85 or older are eligible for a free lunch at the May luncheon. It's not too early to pre-register by phone or by e-mail to let us know ahead of time so that when you arrive for the May luncheon to register we'll know your status. We hope to see a number of you there to receive special recognition.

In Memoriam



It saddens us to learn that the following members have passed away:
***Jeanne Ballard, James Beaulieu, Carol Cannon, June Milette,
James Reed, Reed Sargent, Joyce Tartar and Teruko Watanabe.***

The Northwest II Coordinating Council Meets

by Ron Cygan

Northwest II's Coordinating Council met on November 16th in Burien. (This council is made up of the four King County units, which includes SSRA.)

Alan Burke, Executive Director of WSSRA, was the guest speaker and mainly explained ways the state organization and local units can attract new members. A good deal of time was also spent on planning for the upcoming Retirement Seminar to be held at Madison House in Kirkland on March 23rd. (See the article on page 2 of this issue.) We also went over plans for the WSSRA Annual Convention planned for Yakima next June. SSRA will need a few volunteers at the convention to help with the Celebration of Life Ceremony and for registration and ticket-taking for some gatherings.

Remember, any interested SSRA member is welcome to attend Northwest II meetings. The next gathering will be on February 15th at Angelo's Restaurant in Burien (601 SW 153rd St.). Let an SSRA Board Member know ahead of time if you are interested in attending so that we can set up carpools of three or more for reimbursement.

Words Worth Remembering

"In order to be irreplaceable, one must always be different."

Coco Chanel, French fashion designer and business woman

"Be yourself. Everyone else is taken."

Oscar Wilde, Irish poet and playwright

"The best revenge is massive success."

Frank Sinatra, singer, actor, celebrity

Season's Greetings and a Few Emergency Preparedness Tips

by Pat Cygan, SSRA President



Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! And a fulfilling Kwanzaa Season to you all! December and January traditionally bring many families and friends together.

'Tis the season to also prepare ourselves for potential emergencies with "emergency kits" that could save or help us and others. The federal government's www.ready.gov website provides handy ideas of what to put into your kit and where to store it. Experts on emergency preparedness encourage families and close friends to plan for a specific meeting place and methods to communicate. Sometimes text messages can be sent and received; sometimes cell towers may be down so texts and any cell call cannot get through. At other times, it may be our land lines that work—or these may be down for days or weeks. A network of contacts one can reach on foot or by car can re-connect families and friends.

All of us would need a basic survival kit for emergencies lasting three or more days. Include in it:

- Prescription medications, eye glasses, hearing aids, and other medical devices
- A change of underwear and other clothing you will need
- One gallon of water per day, per person to last at least three days
- At least a three day supply of non-perishable food that can be easily opened and prepared
- A manual can opener to open cans and drinks
- Local area maps
- A wrench or pliers to turn off gas or electric utilities and a hammer
- Pet food and water for household pets
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags (and plastic ties)
- Dust masks to help filter contaminated air as well as plastic sheeting and duct tape in case you need to shelter in place
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery operated or hand crank radios
- A whistle to signal for help
- A Cellphone with a solar charger.

Remember that episodes of local and national disasters rarely announce themselves ahead of time. We've seen disasters this past year severely impact California, Oregon and the Southern Gulf Coast states, the Mid-West, and a recent serious earthquake in Alaska. Being prepared is wiser than waiting for a disaster to happen! Hopefully our beloved Northwest will be catastrophe free in 2019!

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

Barack Obama

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*



Seattle School Retirees' Association
 151 South Lander St. #C
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SSRA Scholarship and/or S.E.E.D. Grant Fund Donation Form

Date _____

Enclosed is my gift for:

SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Helps provide scholarships for post-secondary education and training for graduates of Seattle Public Schools.

BURBANK RIDEOUT SEED FUND



Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend provides mini-grants to school employees for special classroom projects.

If a box is not checked above, your donation will be placed where the need is greatest.

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Person or family (and address) to be notified of my gift: _____

In honor of _____

or

In memory of _____

My name _____

Please make checks payable to SSRA Scholarship and Grant Fund

Mail to: SSRA, 151 S. Lander St. (Suite C) Seattle, WA 98134

Donations are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent allowed by law. You may double your gift by enclosing a matching donor form from your (or your spouse's) employer. Please check here if you would like information about including the Scholarship and/or Burbank Rideout SEED Fund in your estate planning.