



The Bulletin



Volume LVI No. 3 The Seattle School Retirees' Association March-April, 2020

The President's Message



A Special Alert from SSRA President Pat Cygan

Like so many other groups in our local community and country, WE'VE CANCELLED SSRA's APRIL 14TH and MAY 5TH LUNCHEONS AT THE CANAL RESTAURANT. The good news is that the catering company at The Canal, Jewel Hospitality, will not charge us for cancelling them. I am also cancelling SSRA's Board of Directors' meetings on March 24th and April 21st, 2020 since the Greenwood, Broadview and Lake City Libraries are unlikely to let us schedule any of our meetings in their reserved rooms in the near future.

Hopefully, SSRA's Board will finally be able to hold a mid- to late-August meeting to do the SSRA-Board's 2020-2021 pre-planning. A top priority will probably be to designate one of our Fall 2020 luncheons at The Canal Restaurant to honor all of our members who are 85 years old or older with a free lunch and a few presents.

The Executive Board of the Washington State School Retirees' Association is meeting tomorrow (March 18th) to discuss whether to delay WSSRA's 2020 state convention in Pasco that was scheduled for June 8-10; WSSRA's Pasco Convention may instead be moved to early October. WSSRA Director Alan Burke will inform all unit presidents what the WSSRA Board decides in special emails on March 19th. As soon as I hear from Alan Burke, I will inform the Board by email and I will put a special alert on our website: www.seattlesra.org.

Our country is dealing with a major coronavirus pandemic. A lot of drastic decisions by our local and national leaders are in flux right now so BE WISE AND STAY WELL!

Correction on Garfield High School's Centennial Celebration

Oops! We were incorrect in listing the date for the official celebration of Garfield High School's first one hundred years. The correct date is JUNE 6TH. Find out more information by logging on to www.garfieldhighschoolseattle.com. Also check to see if that date gets changed. The event will be a showcase of activities that reflect the history of Garfield H.S. through videos, various displays and entertainment by alumni and students.

The Honorary Chair for this event is Quincy Jones, one of many famous graduates from the high school. Quincy Jones is a world-renowned musician, conductor, arranger, song writer



and record producer. He was named the most influential jazz musician of the twentieth century by *Time* magazine and is pictured at left. He has worked with dozens of famous entertainers including Michael Jackson as well as producing and conducting "We Are the World," as a unifying celebration.

Events at Garfield will take place from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Parking may be an issue so try to get there early.

Quotable Quotes about Education

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

“Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation.”

Walter Cronkite

“I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”

Maya Angelou

“You can never be overdressed or overeducated.”

Oscar Wilde



In Memoriam

It saddens us to learn that the following members have passed away:

James Creighton, Shanta Gangolli, Geneva Laws, Maxine Loo, Dennis Meyer, Daniel Peterson, Barbara Pethick, Walter Tianen, and Meriel Williams.

Obituary for Maxine Loo

Maxine passed away on February 10th at age 79 after a hard-fought battle with lymphoma. She was a long-time member of SSRA and enjoyed our luncheons. She also helped in getting some of our speakers.

She grew up with her brothers in Seattle’s Chinatown and graduated from Garfield High School in 1958. She went on to study at the University of Washington and became an educator specializing in teaching English as a second language. Maxine remained an advocate for immigrant children much of her

SSRA Leadership for 2019-2020

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

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

Committee Chairs

Audit Review.....Roxanne Trees
 Budget.....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.....Unfilled Spot
 Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
 Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....Sharon Green
 WSSRA-PAC.....Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby

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

life. She also helped out at the Wing Luke Museum in the International District. In fact she helped organize a field trip to the museum for SSRA years ago.

Maxine enjoyed travel and particularly liked visiting Italy where she was introduced to tiramisu which became her favorite dessert.

We will miss her at our luncheons.

The Bulletin is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees’ Association. **Membership meetings** are held on the first Tuesday from September through May (but not January nor February; in April we meet on 2nd Tuesday) 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. Our SODO office is rarely staffed, but you can reach us at 206 521-5170 and leave a message or by e-mail at ssra44@juno.com.

Obituary for Dan Peterson

Dan passed away on December 19th after facing serious health issues in recent years. Many of you recall that Dan volunteered as SSRA's Historian for some time, but he also worked as WSSRA's Historian in the past. He helped out at SSRA in a number of ways whenever help was needed.

Dan grew up in Coulee Dam, Washington and later attended the University of Washington, graduating with a history major. He married Shari Palmer in 1952 and went on to study at the University of London's School of Economics. He eventually taught at Olympic Junior College, Highline Community College, and finally at Seattle Central Community College.

After retiring he loved working as a historian on riverboat cruises in the Northwest. He also remained active in University Baptist Church until its closure in 2017.

His family has asked that donations be made to the Washington State School Retirees' Association in his name.



SSRA's Committee Reports

- [Health Services Committee](#)

[Myrna Muto, Chair](#)

The cause of Parkinson's disease is unknown, but scientists believe that there are genetic and environmental factors. Since there are no tests to confirm Parkinson's Disease, doctors look at key signs and symptoms. REM Sleep Disorder is one of the strongest and earliest signs of Parkinson's as seen when a person acts out dreams through movement and talking. The loss of the ability to smell certain foods like bananas and dill pickles is also one of the earliest symptoms. Problems with digestion and constipation can become big issues for those with Parkinson's. This can happen up to twenty years before the disease is diagnosed. Writing becomes more difficult and handwriting may become much smaller over time.

The most common sign of Parkinson's is tremors in the finger, thumb, hand or chin. At this stage, the brain has lost more than half of its cells that produce dopamine, which enables neurons in one's brain to communicate and control movement. The body's movement is slowed down and simple tasks become time consuming. Speech changes and becomes monotone and slow without inflections. The ability to do automatic movements like blinking and smiling decreases. The last sign is impaired posture (stooping, leaning, slouching) and impaired balance.

Some information from Jim Miller in "Detecting Parkinson's" appearing in Everett's "The Daily Herald" on February 19th, 2020.

- [Community Services Committee](#)

[Marilynn Miller, Chair](#)

Even though we won't have a luncheon any time soon, please keep in mind those less fortunate and do what you can to save up items that you can donate to the needy. There are a number of charitable organizations in your neighborhoods that would be grateful for whatever you can contribute, even if it might be some time before you can donate funds, clothing and/or food. Again, thanks for what you have brought in the past to our luncheons.

Committee Reports Continued

- [Scholarship Committee](#)

[Patricia MacGowan, Chair](#)

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES for high school seniors and teacher interns: all applications are available on our website—www.seattlesra.org.

THE LYNN FULLER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP provides a great opportunity for all SSRA members to nominate a student who is graduating and/or has graduated from the Seattle School District and is interested in pursuing the field of elementary education.

THE PHIL KONKEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP provides two \$2500 scholarships for Seattle Public High School students interested in secondary education.

All that is required for both The Lynn Fuller and The Phil Konkel Scholarships is a letter explaining why the nominator thinks the student is worthy of the scholarship as well as a short essay from the student regarding his or her goals in the field of education. Nominations are **due May 31st** and recipients will be notified by June 15th, 2020. Two \$2500 awards are made annually for each of these scholarships and are sent directly to the recipient's selected post-secondary institution.

SSRA TEACHING INTERN SCHOLARSHIP : These four \$5000 scholarships/grants are available for future teachers who are student teaching during the academic year 2020-2021 through a college/university program and who are working on initial certification in an educational field. Applications are **due September 1, 2020**.

If you have questions, contact Patricia MacGowan, Scholarship Chair, at pmac@uw.edu or (206) 851-0232.

We would also like to thank these recent donors to the Scholarship Fund:

Paul B. L. Anderson in memory of Daniel E. Peterson and Oleine Hadeen.

Remember, the value of a scholarship is more than just the ability to cover short-term tuition. A scholarship affords students the opportunity to pursue long-term goals: delivering a return on the initial investment that will benefit the student, his or her family, and the larger community for years to come!

- [Drawings and Baskets](#)

[Marilynn Miller, Chair](#)

Even though we will not be having a luncheon any time soon, please keep us in mind for future luncheons when we will continue to have baskets for drawings to support S.E.E.D. and our scholarships. Your contributions of baskets and items for our baskets are always appreciated.

- [Seattle Educational Enhancement Dividend \(S.E.E.D.\) Committee](#) [Sharon Green, Chair](#)

Last month I indicated how many S.E.E.D. grants have been granted since 2017 through December 2019. So far in 2020 five grants totaling \$1600 have been given.

Another demographic is how many grants have been given to schools north of the Ship Canal Bridge and south of the Bridge since 2017. Twenty seven grants were given to schools north of the Bridge and eight grants given to schools south of the Bridge.

There is still time to apply for a grant this school year. The deadline is **April 30th**. The application form can be found at www.seattlesra.org under the Scholarship tab.

Committee Reports Continued

- **Program Committee**

Pat Cygan, Chair

As noted on page one, I felt compelled to cancel our April 14th and May 5th luncheons by the “social distancing” (and often changing) protocols defined for groups like SSRA by our nation’s and state’s leaders who are trying to keep us all healthy. What that means is that I will reschedule our April and May speakers into our 2020-2021 program. I was able to book Dr. David Fenner, a Middle East specialist at the University of Washington, to speak to us on a timely Middle Eastern set of topics at our September 1st, 2020 luncheon at The Canal. Thus far, I have not been able to speak with our Tulalip storyteller, Lois Landgrebe, to set up a new booking with her.

What topics are you most interested in addressing at our members’ luncheons at The Canal Restaurant during the 2020-2021 school year? Do you know any engaging speakers you would like me to book? I welcome suggestions for future speakers or programs from you, our members who often share great potential choices for me to call. If possible, try to get contact information on a potential candidate and email his/her phone number or email address to me at rcygan@earthlink.net or at ssra44@juno.com.

- **May Luncheon**

Margaret Nelson, Chair

As SSRA’s President and Program Chair Pat Cygan noted above, we’ve cancelled SSRA’s May 5th luncheon at which we usually honor our members who are 85 years and older. We hope to honor them at one of our fall luncheons, though. To help us find out if you are one of the lucky members we will honor at The Canal Restaurant then, please call our office number of 206-521-5170 or send us an email (ssra44@juno.com). Give us your name and list which Seattle Public School District schools you worked in during your tenure with the district. (That’ll clue us in on how many free lunches and gifts we should plan to get.)

Contact Your Legislators

Your legislative team has asked that you contact your legislators to THANK THEM for passing the COLA bill that gives TRS 1 retirees a modest cost of living increase. You can contact them in two ways. The first is to leave a message on their websites. You can find your legislators under the heading leg.wa.gov and go to CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS heading. The website allows you to find your House members and your State Senator and to leave a message for each. You can also mark that you want a reply. You can also phone the legislature toll free at 1 800 562-6000. Remember, legislators like to hear from their constituents.

Don’t Forget to Celebrate

February was Black History Month. In the last edition of “The Bulletin” we included Madam C.J. Walker as an answer in our quiz. She was the first African-American woman in this country to become a self-made millionaire. She lived from 1867-1919 and contributed to the Harlem Renaissance.

March was Women’s History Month and has been celebrated in this country only since 1987. April celebrates Earth Day which began on April 22nd in 1970.

May has Mothers’ Day on the tenth. See our special homage to mothers on page 7.

In these difficult times we all have reasons to celebrate.



Time to Say Thank You

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

The 2020 Washington state legislative session was the best in a decade for WSSRA retirees. Which is not to say that there is not much more to be done. After the legislature in 2011 eliminated the Plan 1 COLA and cut our medical insurance supplement from \$183/month to \$150, the WSSRA Legislative Team spent most of its time between 2012 and 2015 fighting more cuts. Starting in 2016 WSSRA began a determined push for restoration of the cuts as well as retirement improvements for Plan 2 and Plan 3 members. In the 2016 session Plan 2 and Plan 3 early retiring teachers were given permission to work as substitutes without losing pension payments. A bit of progress was made in 2018 with a 1.5% onetime Plan 1 COLA. In 2019 our medical insurance supplement was restored to \$183/month.

We were extremely disappointed that in 2019 legislators did not allocate funds for the onetime 3% Plan 1 COLA recommended by the Select Committee on Pension Policy. WSSRA leadership decided that the single top priority for the 2020 session would be to obtain this 3% COLA. After ten years with only one 1.5% COLA Plan 1 pension checks had lost nearly 20% of their purchasing power. With this strong focus and determination our WSSRA team lobbied hard, and legislators voted unanimously to fund a 3% COLA on the first \$25,000 in yearly pension income, a maximum of \$62.50/month. There was an additional win for Plan 3 members who will now be allowed to purchase shares in the state pension trust fund which may offer better returns than other investments choices. Some limits on prescription drug costs, which we lobbied for in conjunction with other senior groups, also passed.

Why did we finally succeed this year? There were several factors. An unexpected \$600 million surplus over previously forecast state revenues was helpful. Our oldest retirees' substantial loss of purchasing power over ten years may have evoked sympathy from some legislators or concern that some would soon fall onto public welfare programs. Legislators heard and responded to messages from many retiree constituents telling about their reduced financial circumstances. And we finally found a champion, Mari Leavitt, a new representative from SW Pierce County, the prime sponsor of HB 1390, the 3% COLA bill. When her bill failed in 2019, Rep. Leavitt didn't give up. In 2020 she wrote a memo to House leadership stating clearly the need for the COLA and requesting that it be included in the 2020 operating budget. She personally circulated the memo to House members, getting the signatures of 28 Democrats and 31 Republicans, a majority of House membership. When your three SSRA lobbyists spoke with legislators during the session, the memo was often mentioned.

This year we won a battle but certainly not the war. A onetime COLA will not protect us from future inflation. Plan 1 retirees need the same COLA that members of all other state pension plans receive. How many more years must we continue to beseech legislators for a onetime increase? Small increases in two years out of ten is not a good record.

Now it is time to say thank you to our legislators. Each of us needs to contact the legislators in our legislative district, by email, snail mail, or in person, and express our thanks for their vote for this badly needed pension increase. (Legislator email addresses can be found at www.leg.wa.gov) Then we need to urge them to create a permanent fix for Plan 1 pensions so we do not need to continue these yearly battles. In addition, an email to Rep. Leavitt (mari.leavitt@leg.wa.gov) thanking her for her outstanding leadership would be very appropriate.

Thank Your Legislators
and the SSRA Legislative Committee!

Pictured at right are the SSRA Legislative Committee with State Senator Rebecca Saldana (37th District): Mary Wallon, Edith Ruby and Patricia MacGowan.



“MOM” Means So Much To So Many—A Mother’s Day Tribute For All Mothers

(A Lost Treasure Pat Cygan Recently Found and Then Slightly Revised)

The Good Lord was creating “Mothers” on His sixth day of *Creation Overtime* when an angel appeared before Him and said, “You’re doing a lot of fiddling around on creating this one.”

And the Lord said, “Have you read the specs on this order? SHE has to be completely washable but not plastic, have 180 moveable parts (all replaceable), run on black coffee and leftovers, have a lap that disappears when she stands up, a kiss that can cure anything from a broken leg to a disappointed love affair as well as six pairs of hands.”

The Angel shook her head slowly and said, “Six pairs of hands . . . no way.”

“It’s not the hands that are causing Me problems,” said the Lord. “It’s the three pairs of eyes that MOTHERS have to have.”

“Is that on the standard model?” asked the Angel.

The Lord nodded. “One pair needs to see through closed doors when she asks, ‘What are you kids doing in there?’—when she already knows. Another pair in the back of her head that sees what she shouldn’t—but what she has to know. And, of course, the ones here in front so that she can look at a child when he or she goofs and say, ‘I understand and I still love you!’ without so much as uttering a word.

“Lord, You must go to bed and solve these prescriptions tomorrow,” said the Angel, touching His sleeve gently.

“I can’t postpone this,” said the Lord. “I’m so close to creating something that almost resembles Myself. Already I have created one who can heal herself when she’s sick as well as feed a family of six on one pound of hamburger plus is able to get any 9-year-old to stand under a shower.”

The Angel circled the Lord’s most recent model of a MOTHER very slowly. “It’s too soft,” she sighed.

“But tough,” said the Lord excitedly. “You cannot imagine what this MOTHER can do or endure.”

“Can it think?”

“Not only can it think but it can reason and compromise,” said the Creator.

Finally the Angel bent over and ran her finger across the cheek. “There’s a leak,” she pronounced. “I told YOU You were trying to put too much into this particular creation.”

“It’s not a leak,” said the Lord. “It’s a tear.”

“What’s it for?”

“It’s for joy . . . sadness . . . loneliness . . . and pride!”

“YOU are a GENIUS!” said the Angel.

The Lord looked somber . . . “I didn’t put it there.”

Thank You, Mothers! From Your Sons And Daughters



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

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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.