



# The Bulletin



Volume LVII No. 1 The Seattle School Retirees' Association November-December, 2020



## Losing a Colleague and Friend Is Hard by SSRA President Pat Cygan

A consummate Seattle proponent her whole life, **Sharon Lazell Green was a major force AND influencer in the Seattle Public Schools and the Seattle School Retirees' Association.** Sharon died on August 21<sup>st</sup> after struggling against multiple health issues with tremendous spunk as well as tenacity. We witnessed some of Sharon's struggles but we also noted that Sharon **always showed up** for all sorts of events she supported and often cherished! So many in SSRA and the District witnessed her gallant efforts to advance both institutions over the past fifty or more years. Thus, Sharon Green will be genuinely missed by many of us—both professionally and personally!

Sharon was conscientiously a multifaceted individual. Well-read across many fields of study, Sharon enjoyed traveling within our country and to other countries; she frequently revisited friends in Hawaii and Western Europe (especially in London and Paris). She wholeheartedly supported diverse groups which she joined at different periods of her life. Paramount for Sharon, though, was contributing to scholarships for students of color in both public schools where she worked for thirty-plus years and in the Catholic schools she'd previously attended as a student.

After graduating from Seattle University with a political science major, Sharon immersed herself in public education in Seattle and in the state of Washington. During her 30-year career in Seattle Public Schools, Sharon served the District as a middle school and high school Social Studies Teacher, the District's Multicultural/Multiethnic Curriculum Consultant, a Principal of Franklin High and West Seattle High Schools, the District's Executive Director of Student Support Services, and finally Seattle's Director of the District's High Schools. Immediately afterwards, Sharon worked with our State Superintendent of Public Instruction's office in helping principals to ensure that their students were learning/using all of the skills and knowledge required by SPI's published standards. During some of that time she was also a multiethnic consultant for the state's Principals' Association. And, believe it or not, she was also immersing herself in some of the committee work of the Seattle School Retirees' Association Board of Trustees! Eventually Sharon took on SSRA duties as our co-President and/or the Board Member who implemented SSRA's S.E.E.D. Program which distributes funds to classrooms whose teachers (or other staff members) must apply for one of our \$200-\$500 Classroom Grants. *What a retirement Sharon Green launched for herself!* Add to all of the commitments I've enumerated here, Sharon Green also volunteered to do more work with and for her favorite sorority—Delta Sigma Theta! No sluggard evident in this activist-citizen!

Finally, I'd like to highlight one of Sharon's major contributions to Seattle's K-12 curricula. Starting in the mid-1970s, Sharon sought out and collaborated with various District staff who knew a lot about specific cultures; she worked with such ethnic "authorities" to devise projects and ideas that typified a particular culture or sub-group. Then Sharon edited their joint efforts—turning those into booklets which teachers could readily use/adapt. Those became popular resources for teachers trying to expand their students' perceptions of the world we live in—within our country's diversity and elsewhere. Thank you again, Sharon Green, for a timely, necessary "innovation"!



*In Memoriam*

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

***Sharon Green, Willie Hightower, Eddie Pepple, and Albert Walker.***



***Sharon Green***  
***Former SSRA President***

One of SSRA’s recently deceased Co-Presidents, Sharon Green’s special talent was the ability to take a long view of an organization’s potential to fill its members’ future needs. In recent years she insisted that SSRA needs to figure out how to adjust SSRA’s projects to fit those retiring under Plans 2 and 3. Most of the current SSRA Board Members and Active attendees at our luncheons at The Canal are Plan 1 retirees. Plan 2 and Plan 3 retirees were less likely to retire with full pensions while they were in their fifties; they’ve been plagued with many more meetings and regulations than most of us in Plan 1 faced. We current retirees need to create an SSRA that will better suit such new retirees.

Sharon will be greatly missed by many in this organization, mostly for her “spot-on” insights.



***SSRA Leadership for 2020-2021***

- 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.....Open
- 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.....Open
- Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
- Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....Kathy Purcell
- 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, a Co-President or Historian, please call SSRA President Pat Cygan at 425-493-0352.**

***Thoughts for the Day***

*“Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you.”*

*The late Ruth Bader Ginsburg,  
Supreme Court Justice*

*“Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.”*

*Author Albert Camus*

***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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 34<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:ssra44@juno.com).



## **No Secure Retirement Without Affordable Medical Insurance**

by Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

Most of us when we are considering retirement focus on how much we will be getting in our monthly pension checks. We calculate our expenses, add up what we can expect from pension and Social Security payments, and hope that this will give us a reasonably comfortable retirement. Maintaining the purchasing power of those pension checks has been a major focus of WSSRA's lobbying efforts. But that has not been our only focus.

Most active school employees have good medical insurance coverage with low out-of-pocket payments. If we assume that at age 65 we will get similar low cost coverage through Medicare, our retirement calculations may not add enough for medical expenses. Unfortunately, Medicare coverage alone is NOT sufficient to cover all medical expenses for older retirees. A Vanguard research study estimates that a typical 65-year-old woman pays \$5,200 annually in health costs, including Medicare Part B premiums and other out-of-pocket medical expenses. This cost nearly doubles by age 85, to \$10,000 annually (*Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, 10/2019).

Washington attempts to help state retirees with medical costs by offering medical insurance to supplement Medicare at a reduced rate through the Public Employee Benefit Board (PEBB). At present a state subsidy reduces monthly premiums on PEBB sponsored insurance by half of the premium cost, up to \$183/month. This subsidy is NOT guaranteed and must be approved in each biennial budget by the legislature. In 2011, in response to the last state economic downturn, legislators reduced the subsidy to \$150/month and only restored it to \$183/month in 2019. Meanwhile the cost of our insurance continues to go up. (For more complete information on Medicare eligible healthcare benefits see WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke's article in WSSRA's latest *Journal*.)

In 2021, because of the COVID caused recession, legislators will be faced with making over \$4 billion in budget cuts. They will be looking at every line item to find dollars to cut. Last recession they reduced our subsidy by \$33/month. What will they do this time? They could again reduce the amount or even eliminate the subsidy entirely.

Monthly premiums in 2021 for Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) will be \$336.30, for Kaiser \$177.10. With no subsidy the rates would be \$519.30 for UMP, \$360.10 for Kaiser. Such large increases would painfully stretch retirees' limited budgets and might force some to drop the supplementary insurance, eventually causing them even more financial problems.

WSSRA's Legislative Team, including SSRA members Edith Ruby, Mary Wallon, and Patricia MacGowan, will be meeting by Zoom in late November to develop priorities and strategies for lobbying in a session which likely will be at least partly digital. We will have more information for you in the next *Bulletin*.

## SSRA's Committee Reports

- [Health Committee](#)

[Myrna Muto, Chair](#)



### Scrubbing Your Hands Dry

Many of us are good at washing our hands to prevent the spread of germs. Since March we have been washing our hands with soap and water more often to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) added washing or cleaning hands after being in a public place and touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cash registers or screens, etc. and before touching our eyes, nose or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

Unfortunately, according to Drs. Janelle Nassim, MD, and Kristina Liu, MD, additional hand washing can result in dry skin and hand dermatitis, a rash that can manifest as red, itchy, cracked or sore skin. People who have a history of eczema or who are prone to dry skin may even be more likely to develop dry, chapped hands during this pandemic.

Intact skin acts as a protective barrier. Frequent exposure to water and the use of oil-stripping soaps and drying alcohol found in hand sanitizers diminish the healthy fatty compounds in the top layer of the skin. The result is an impaired skin barrier. In addition to the irritation and discomfort of dry hands, cracks and breaks in skin could lead to an increased risk of superficial skin infections.

To combat dry skin: wash hands with cool to lukewarm water and soap. Water temperature does not appear to affect elimination of germs. Extremely hot water can be more damaging and drying to skin. While skin is still slightly damp, apply a thick moisturizer to lock in moisture immediately and restore the skin's barrier. Pat hands dry lightly with a clean towel. Avoid wringing or rough rubbing. Look for a moisturizer with petrolatum, mineral oil, ceramides, and/or glycerin. Moisturizers packaged in a jar or tube are thicker and more moisturizing than those in a pump bottle.

Soap is a surfactant (compound) that grabs and traps dirt, oil and germs. Soap also has the ability to dissolve lipids (fats). This enables soap to break down the outer envelope of certain viruses, including the Coronavirus. Soap loosens the grip between the skin and the virus and helps break apart the bonds that hold the virus together. Soaps containing moisturizing ingredients may be less harsh or drying to skin. For those who opt out for natural products, look for soap containing avocado oil, shea butter, coconut oil or jojoba oil.

At bedtime, consider using a moisturizing compound such as a heavy ointment. A great option is plain petroleum jelly, which is thick and occlusive, excellent for locking in moisture, and does not contain additional ingredients that could irritate skin. At night, for extreme cases, wear cotton gloves over the moisturizer to help seal in the moisture.

Information from: Nassim and Liu (2020), "Scrubbing Your Hands Dry? Soaps, Moisturizers and Tips to Keep Skin Healthy," Harvard Health Publishing, April 07, 2020.

*SSRA Committee Reports Continued*

- [Scholarship Committee](#)

[Patricia MacGowan, Chair](#)

### **Congratulations to Our Teacher Intern Scholars for 2020**

When SSRA supports teacher interns through our Teacher Intern Scholarships, we are making an investment in the future of public education. The SSRA Board of Directors increased our scholarships this year from four to six \$5000 awards. (Remember, none of your dues are used to fund these awards.) Here are the newest internship award winners:

#### **Ashlye Allison**

Ashlye is in the Seattle Teacher Residency (STR) Program at the University of Washington in Elementary Education. She has worked for the AmeriCorps Service Program with Seattle Schools for four years, working as an elementary classroom's student success coach and managing school partnerships by communicating with multiple partners and school leadership. She also managed Rising Star Elementary School's extended day program as well as coaching AmeriCorps members on how to respond to data through observation sessions.

Ashlye is passionate about and committed to issues of racial and educational justice and equity. She will be interning at Seattle's Dunlap Elementary School with 5<sup>th</sup> graders in all subjects.

#### **Diana Herrerias-Reiyes**

Diana is a candidate for her B.A. in Elementary Education with ESOL endorsement and certification at the University of Washington Bothell. She is a DACA student who moved here when she was seven and will be the first in her family to graduate from college.

Diana has volunteered at Seattle's View Ridge Elementary with fifth graders working on math and science and at Kenmore Elementary with an ELL teacher in planning lessons for small groups of students in reading and math. Her mentor teacher, Jessica Hope, describes Diana as a "highly skilled, confident, collaborative and reflective teacher. She will excel in any teacher preparation program and will be an asset to the teaching profession." Her internship is at Westhill Elementary School in a fourth grade classroom.

#### **Breanne Johnston**

Breanne is working on her Masters in Teaching in Social Studies and English Language Arts with an ELL endorsement at the University of Washington. She intends to "use my voice and position in schools to advocate for disability representation and accessibility." Future dreams include becoming a principal or one day being part of opening an outdoor middle school. Breanne has experience in the outdoor classroom of NextGen Outdoor Camp and has served as a teacher intern for that program; she also coordinated a day camp featuring local and healthy food options for the Bremerton community.

Breanne studied abroad in Merida, Mexico in a program that included community-based work with EducaTE, an organization providing academic and community support for low-income students in Cholul, Mexico.

*Continued on Next Page*

*Committee Reports Continued:***Noelle Morrison**

Noelle is working on on her Masters of Teaching in ESL and Secondary History at the University of Washington.

She writes: “I am the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants. My mother left the only home she knew to build a better life in America. Tagalog was abandoned for English that was deemed ‘broken.’ On my journey to become an educator, I want to study pedagogical methods that would allow English to be a source of empowerment for my students, while still emphasizing the value and necessity of communicating in their native tongue. This scholarship will aid me in pursuing my goals.”

Noelle is student teaching at the Overlake School in Redmond, Washington where she will work in seventh grade English classes as well as a teacher-assistant for sixth graders.

**Ana Radzi**

Ana is working on her Bachelor of Arts in Education with an Elementary Option at the University of Washington, Bothell Campus.

Ana taught at the Abubakr Academy and was awarded Teacher of the Quarter in the winter of 2019. Ana is fluent in English, Malay and Arabic and is certified to teach Arabic. Ana has tutored students at the East African Community Services where she collaborated with teachers and supervisors to establish programs on student mindfulness. She has volunteered at Seattle’s Kimball Elementary School, working with small groups of students and implementing one-on-one reading activities.

Ana is the mother of four children so she has great need for financial support at this time. She is interning at Thurgood Marshall Elementary in Seattle Public Schools with first graders working with teacher Mindy Huss.

**Marie De Los Angelos Rivera**

Marie is working on her Master of Arts in Music Education plus Certification at the University of Washington. She was a student intern at Frank Love Elementary under Karen Oie, teaching remotely by using Google sites and *Seesaw*. The COVID pandemic forced Mari to return home to help her parents while she completed her sixteen credits of coursework remotely. Her cooperating teacher said “Marie is a GEM. A shiny, sparkly diamond. Most days I am learning more from her than she is from me.”

SSRA’s Intern scholarships are important for these six student-teachers. As Breanne Johnston wrote: I appreciate the generosity of people like you and programs you have of giving back.” I would also like to thank all readers on the SSRA Scholarship Committee for time spent reviewing this year’s applicants: Pat Cygan, Ron Cygan, Sharon Masse and Kathy Purcell. If any member would like to make a gift to support the program, please complete the form on the back page of “The Bulletin” or visit our website at [www.seattlesra.org](http://www.seattlesra.org). Thanks again for your generosity.

Photos of the recipients of this year’s Internship Scholarships are on the next page (except for Ana Radzi).



Ashlye Allison

Diana Herrerias-Reyes

Breanne Johnston

Noelle Morrison

Maria De Los Angelos Rivera

- [Community Services](#)

[Marilynn Miller, Chair](#)

Even though we have cancelled a number of luncheon meetings, our favorite charities are still in need. Please try to donate what you can to the West Seattle Food Bank, the Compass Center and Operation Nightwatch. I would also suggest donations to Mary's Place which helps serve Seattle school youth in need. Your generosity will be appreciated by these recipients.

- [Program Committee](#)

[Pat Cygan, Chair](#)

Unfortunately we are still unable to safely return to our luncheons at The Canal Restaurant for the rest of this year because of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Jewel Hospitality group which served us delicious luncheons have faced serious setbacks resulting from The Canal's shutdowns. Hopefully all of our regular luncheon guests as well as Jewel Hospitality's crew are all staying safe during this current health crisis.

- [S.E.E.D. Committee](#)

[Kathy Purcell, Chair](#)

Welcome to Kathy Purcell as the new SSRA S.E.E.D. Grant Chair replacing Sharon Green. She was formerly the SSRA Historian. Kathy retired from Seattle Public Schools after holding a number of administrative positions within the District.

S.E.E.D. Grant Applications for Active Members are available on the organization's website: [www.seattlesra.org](http://www.seattlesra.org). Remember, grants are available for out-of-pocket expenses by teachers for student projects up to \$500 per school year for SSRA members and up to \$200 one-time only for non-members.

### Open Enrollment for PEBB Healthcare Options

For retirees eligible for healthcare under Washington State P.E.B.B. (Public Employees Benefits Board) open enrollment has begun and will continue until November 30<sup>th</sup>. You should have received information about this by mail. If you do not want to make changes and your health care plans are still available, you need not fill out any forms or call P.E.E.B. However, there have been more changes to healthcare plans than usual. You can access your account on the internet by going to "PEBB My Account" at: [hea.wa.gov/my\\_account](http://hea.wa.gov/my_account) or by calling 1-866-577-2793.

In a related matter, Ellen Wolfhagen of the Health Care Authority (HCA) will present the latest on the new United Healthcare Medicare Advantage plus Prescription Drug (MA-PD) plans in a webinar on Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. You can access this program by going to the WSSRA website: [wssra.org](http://wssra.org).



Seattle School Retirees' Association  
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 Seattle, WA 98134

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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.