



*Volume LVIX No. 8*

# *The Bulletin*

*The Seattle School Retirees' Association*



*Summer, 2024*

## **A Changing of the Guard by President Pat Cygan**

From 1944 to 1946, Nellie Quirk presided over the organization we today call the Seattle School Retirees' Association. Since then, my research indicates that 58 others have served as our President or our co-Presidents. On July 1 of this year, I (Pat Cygan) officially joined an elite cadre of SSRA's ex-Presidents who are still alive (namely Barbara McHargue, Sue Battin and Ray Marik).

As SSRA's President from 2006-2008, 2009-2011, and finally from 2016-2024, I am passing SSRA's leadership torch to someone else. My twelve-year tenure as Unit President—as well as SSRA's Program Chair for many years—allowed me to create a great many memories to take into my future. My SSRA Presidency allowed me to interact with Seattle School District employees and retirees in various ways that were mutually valuable. My Presidency was also filled with meaningful encounters with the helpful, knowledgeable staff at WSSRA (The Washington State School Retirees' Association) in Lacey where the state office is located. In 2024-2025 I will be chairing WSSRA-Foundation's Board, which raises money and provides scholarships for all WSSRA units. I believe I will also continue to be co-chair of SSRA's Program Committee next year.

SSRA's Executive Board members have not yet filled my position as SSRA's President. Knowing how enterprising and tenacious SSRA's Board members are, I expect them to find a resourceful SSRA member to replace me as SSRA's President shortly.

## **Changes in SSRA Leadership Structure by Edith Ruby**

With the resignations of longtime SSRA President Pat Cygan and Communications Chair Ron Cygan, the SSRA Board met on June 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss how best to restructure leadership responsibilities to keep our organization running. Like many other volunteer organizations today, SSRA has been challenged to find new people willing to step up to do the tasks necessary for us to continue to function. Fortunately, Pat has agreed to continue to serve as Program Co-Chair, although she will take a break this fall because of knee surgery. So we are assured that we will continue to enjoy excellent speakers and programs for our luncheons. SSRA member Joani Harr has agreed to take over Ron's job as editor of "The Bulletin" so all members will continue to receive timely notice of luncheons and other information of interest. Ron will continue to update the SSRA website ([www.seattlesra.org](http://www.seattlesra.org)) and Sue Battin will continue as Treasurer.

Because no member has been willing to assume all the duties of SSRA president, for the time being we will be dividing up those duties among several Board members. All this has not yet been put in final form and the Board will meet again on August 15<sup>th</sup> to further clarify how we will operate in the coming year. We strongly urge any members interested in getting involved in running SSRA to contact Membership Chair, Julee Neuhart ([juleen1526@gmail.com](mailto:juleen1526@gmail.com)) to let her know their interests.

We also have a new mailing address for the organization: SSRA

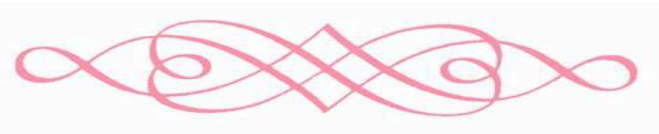
P.O. Box 31027  
Wallingford Post Office  
1329 N. 47<sup>th</sup> Street  
Seattle, WA 98103



*In Memoriam*

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

***Laila Adams, Katherine (Katie) Aldridge and Patrick Doyle.***



***Laila Adams***  
by Pat Cygan

On May 29<sup>th</sup> we lost a remarkable music teacher, concert violinist, master quilter and substitute teacher in Seattle Public Schools (from 1960-1969). Laila was also SSRA’s only office manager to earn the title we gave her: Executive Director of SSRA. She was our office manager from 1997-2005.

When her first husband, Wes Uhlman, was elected Seattle Mayor, Laila became Seattle’s First Lady between December of 1968 to January of 1977. As the mother of the Uhlman’s two sons, Carl and Dan, she was also a committed Cub Scout and Boy Scout volunteer. After her divorce in 1979, Laila married Steven Adams in 1984 and was widowed in 1993. Throughout these times Laila became involved with Citizens for Quality Integrated Education as well as with several quilting groups.

Laila Adams ran SSRA’s office in the old Pemco Building headquarters on Eastlale from 1997 to 2005. She not only ran the office efficiently but made sure that each member of SSRA’s Board knew what was needed to be done at very specific times during each year. It was Laila who showed me the potentials and pitfalls of each new role I took on

***SSRA Leadership for 2024-2025***

President.....Someone New  
 President-elect for 2024-2025 .....Someone New  
 Immediate Past President.....Pat Cygan

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

***Committee Chairs***

Audit Review.....Roxanne Trees  
 Budget.....Jim DeJarnatt  
 Communications/Outreach.....Joani Harr  
 Community Services.....Karen Lam  
 Drawings and Baskets.....Karen Lam  
 Health Services.....Myrna Muto  
 Historian.....Julee Neuhart  
 Legislative.....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon  
 May Luncheon.....Margaret Nelson  
 Membership.....Julee Neuhart  
 Parliamentary.....Edith Ruby  
 Programs.....Pat Cygan and ?  
 Resolutions/Bylaws.....SSRA’s Board  
 Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan  
 Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....John Thorp  
 WSSRA-PAC.....Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby  
 WSSRA’s NW-2 Representative.....Robin Stroben  
 of Unit 19 (Renton-South King)

when I became a member of SSRA’s Board and I held various jobs on the Board. And it was Laila who helped me fill each new role I assumed more effectively. After she retired from her SSRA jobs, Laila continued to stay abreast of what we were all doing in SSRA through joining us at our members’ luncheons. She was also a friend of Barbara McHargue (who many of you know) and the two of them took a number of memorable trips together.

Laila hadn’t come to our gatherings in some time because of medical issues. Nevertheless, she will be sorely missed.

***SSRA’s Bulletin*** is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees’ Association. We used to hold members’ meetings/programs on the first Tuesday of most months from September to May. We held no meetings from March, 2020 until recently due to COVID issues. We hope to hold at least 4 members’ meetings for the 2024-2025 school year. If each one proves to be safe and reasonably attended, we’ll schedule others in the future. Even though our SODO office is rarely staffed, you can leave messages for us at the office number (206 521-5170) or by email at [ssra44@juno.com](mailto:ssra44@juno.com).



## **Plan 1 Members--Action Needed Now to Ensure Future COLAs!**

by Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

If you are a school retiree and checked your July 31 pension check, you were likely happy to see the 3% increase from last month. Plans 2/3 members can be reasonably sure they will receive cost of living increases up to 3% each July. Plan 1 members are at the mercy of legislators who have chosen to give them COLAs only 5 of the last 14 years. It is past time for Plan 1 members to have the same assurance of protection from inflation given other plan members!

Washington's Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) will be submitting to the 2025 legislature a recommendation to restore an ongoing Plan 1 COLA. They plan to put their recommendation in final form at their September 17 meeting. Exactly what that recommendation will look like is not yet determined. SCPP members need to hear from you that Plan 1 members need and deserve a yearly COLA equal to that of all other state retirees.

Letters should be sent before Sept. 17 to [state.actuary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:state.actuary@leg.wa.gov) and to the following legislators who are members of the SCPP: [matt.boehnke@leg.wa.gov](mailto:matt.boehnke@leg.wa.gov), [joe.fitzgibbon@leg.wa.gov](mailto:joe.fitzgibbon@leg.wa.gov), [drew.macewen@leg.wa.gov](mailto:drew.macewen@leg.wa.gov), [steve.conway@leg.wa.gov](mailto:steve.conway@leg.wa.gov), [june.robinson@leg.wa.gov](mailto:june.robinson@leg.wa.gov), [nicole.macri@leg.wa.gov](mailto:nicole.macri@leg.wa.gov), [drew.stokesbary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:drew.stokesbary@leg.wa.gov), [mike.volz@leg.wa.gov](mailto:mike.volz@leg.wa.gov).

Suggested letter information:

Begin your letter with a brief introduction telling members how long you worked in public education in Washington, what you did, and when you retired. You may, or may not, choose to tell the amount in your current pension check, but tell about the challenges of living on a small, fixed pension with no assurance of increases to keep up with inflation. Good to give examples of how shrunken purchasing power of your pension impacts your life and makes it difficult to plan for your future.

Urge SCPP members to recommend keeping your restored COLA simple with the same rights as Plan 2: an annual COLA of up to 3% with banking of funds when CPI is less than 3%. It's an equity issue with our most elderly members now receiving the least help from the state.

Tell members that as a longtime state employee you are counting on them to help you to survive financially as you deal with the challenges of aging in these high cost of living times.

More important than the wording, just sit down at your computer and send off those emails NOW.

## SSRA's Committee Reports

- Scholarship Committee

Patricia MacGowan, Chair

### Congratulations to Our High School Senior Scholars

*The Lynn Fuller Scholarship* supports students interested in elementary education and *The Phil Konkol Scholarship* supports students interested in secondary education. These \$3000 scholarship awards can be used for tuition, books, lab fees and other education-related expenses.

#### **The Lynn Fuller Scholars**

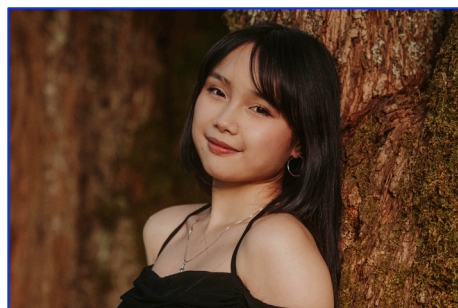
**Alayanna Ayala** graduated from the Muckleshoot Tribal School and will attend Central Washington University. Alyanna was chosen to attend the National Congress of American Indians and the CLOSE UP Conference in Washington, D.C. because of her academic achievements and her demonstrated leadership skills.

**Jessica To** graduated from Hazen High School and will attend the University of Washington. Jessica volunteered at her school's Opportunity Center that keeps students informed about volunteer opportunities and community events. She was the Blood Drive Coordinator recruiting volunteers, assigning tasks and planning blood drives during the school year.

#### **The Phil Konkol Scholars**

**Magarsa Ahmed** graduated from Franklin High School and will attend the University of Washington. Magarsa's work to learn English impressed his teachers and fellow students. He is a fantastic team player and seeks out opportunities to help others when they struggle.

**Julia Wright** graduated from Nathan Hale High School and will attend the University of Nevada, Reno. Julia plans to become a science teacher and wants to inspire students to enter STEM fields. She volunteered at Camp Invention (A STEM Camp) and at a Jump Start Readiness program. She loves seeing students collaborate, working with hands-on projects, and being highly engaged.



*Alayanna Ayala  
pictured at far*

*Left.*

*Jessica To seen*

*In middle.*

*(Scholarship Committee Report Continued)*



*Magarsa Ahmed  
pictured at left.*

*Julia Wright  
pictured at right.*



AGAIN, MANY THANKS TO ALL DONORS to SSRA's Scholarship and S.E.E.D. Grants

- [Drawings and Baskets](#) [Karen Lam, Chair](#)

The SSRA Board decided to do just one large basket to auction off at the next luncheon. The SSRA Board will provide the basket with plenty of goodies. Plans are still being made for the upcoming luncheon/meeting but will notify you in the next "Bulletin."

- [S.E.E.D./Classroom Grants](#) [John Thorp, Chair](#)  
We are planning to have an increase in S.E.E.D. grants for the coming school year. Stay tuned for more information in the next "Bulletin."

- [Program Committee](#) [Pat Cygan, Chair](#)  
As mentioned on page 1, I will continue to work on getting good speakers for future programs. I will let you know more after we plan for our next meeting. Also, thanks to those of you who have recommended various speakers over the years. I received quite a bit of good feedback concerning our last speaker, the talented Debbie Dimitre.

- [Community Service Committee](#) [Karen Lam, Chair](#)  
We are still collecting non-perishable food and personal items like new white socks for donating to our favorite charities. Operation Nightwatch, the West Seattle Food Bank and Mary's Place really appreciate your generosity.



## Next Year's PEBB Health Insurance Rates

Information sent by Edith Ruby

Washington's Health Care Authority (HCA) has announced proposed 2025 rates for members purchasing their medical insurance through the Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB). The table gives monthly rates for most commonly used plans by our members. More complete information below for all plans available through PEBB will be provided soon by the HCA.

Plans	2024	2025
Kaiser WA Medicare Advantage	\$188.62	\$177.41
Uniform Medical Classic	\$532.94	\$453.21
UHC Complete	\$160.58	\$181.55
UHC Balance	\$135.65	\$153.56

The HCA will be doing a webinar with information on plans and plan changes Thursday, Sept. 19, 2:00. Information on how you will be able to register to join in this webinar will be coming from WSSRA later in the summer

## A Time to Reflect by Ron Cygan

“Four score and seven years ago.” That’s how long it seems that I have been doing SSRA’s newsletter. I started over ten years ago when Paul Nicholas wanted me to do it. I had no real experience at publishing a newsletter but learned by doing.

Next came the website: [www.seattle.sra.org](http://www.seattle.sra.org) which Patricia MacGowan and I got up and running. Again, we learned by doing and we got help from the webmaster, Ken Kohnhorst of GraphicOne. He passed away suddenly two years ago and left no plan for his web business. It took me over six months to get rights to our domain name and work with a new webmaster.

I would like to thank all Board members who have sent in articles for “The Bulletin.” This has really been a help the last few years. I would also like to thank my wife Pat who is the proofreader but who also has a tendency to rewrite a bit much. I also want to thank AAA Mailing for doing such a fine job with printing the newsletter to make it really look professional.

So now it’s time to pass the torch to Joani Harr. It’s been quite a ride for me as well as for Pat. “Here’s looking at you, kid.”



*Ron and Pat on a Cruise Ship a Few Years Ago*

## WSSRA CONVENTION HELD

by Julee Neuhart

In June, the Washington State Schools Retirees' Association (WSSRA) held its annual convention in Wenatchee. Seattle Schools Retirees' Assoc. (SSRA) sent seven board members and others. These as well as two others included Sue Battin, Bruce Jackson, Patricia MacGowan, Myrna Muto, Julee Neuhart, Edith Ruby, Roxanne Trees, Dennis Trees and Mary Wallon.

One goal of the convention is to raise funds for the scholarship program. This year, 50 scholarships were awarded. Sixteen went to college students who were about to begin their student teaching or internship experience. The other 34 scholarships were awarded to high school seniors from around the state, planning to start college and study education in the fall.

One of the fund raising activities is a silent auction. Another is a raffle where several large gift baskets are raffled off. It's great fun to watch these events and see who gets to take home some fun and interesting gifts. The Political Action Committee (PAC) also raises money with a silent auction of wine where attendees can bid on bottles of wine placed on each dining table.

Some other activities that are held during the convention include reports from state staff and officers, a Political Action Committee meeting, a presentation from our lobbyists, election of new officers, awards to WSSRA members who have made major contributions to the organization this year, and break-out sessions to help units better run their chapter and problems-solve with colleagues.

Next year's convention will be held in Yakima. Any SSRA member who would like to attend is welcome to go (within some limits). Travel and housing expenses are reimbursed by SSRA.



Myrna Muto Winning Basket



Julee Neuhart, Roxanne Trees and Dennis Trees



Bruce Jackson and Sue Battin

*Photos from Patricia MacGowan*



Seattle School Retirees' Association  
 P.O. Box 31027  
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 Seattle, WA 98103

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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.