



The Bulletin



Volume LXXX No. 2

The Seattle School Retirees' Association

January-February, 2025

News from SSRA Acting President Julee Neuhart

HAPPY NEW YEAR! The Seattle School Retirees' Association is planning some changes for 2025. We hope the changes will be beneficial for our members. The big change for us will be moving to A NEW LOCATION FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.

The space at the Mountaineers Club that we have been using for the last few years is too small to comfortably accommodate the number of members who have been attending. (There are larger rooms at that location, but they are huge and quite expensive.)

For our next meeting ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025 we will meet at the SWEDISH CLUB aka the SWEDISH CULTURAL CENTER. The location is 1920 DEXTER AVENUE N in Seattle. This is more centrally located in Seattle on the east side of Queen Anne Hill overlooking Lake Union. In addition to having a spacious room, there is plenty of free parking. There is a parking lot on the south side of the building on Dexter Avenue. There is also free parking across the street on Dexter and a third lot behind the building. The room we will be using is on the street level, one floor up from the south side parking lot. An elevator is available near the south side entrance and there is a bus stop at the front side of the building for any members who use public transportation.

Our guest speaker for February 27th will be RHONDA GARDNER, a Master Composter and Sustainability Steward. She was trained by Seattle Public Utilities to present us with suggestions on soil and water management. Her presentation will focus on recycling, yard composting, cutting down on garbage, and maximizing our recycling efforts.

We are hoping that we can once again have a book club as we had at the Canal Restaurant where we met pre-pandemic. The Swedish Club room can accommodate a small group meeting in the rear of our space. Members who want to participate are welcome to come and share what they have been reading lately.

A buffet lunch will be offered for a cost of \$18. The lunch menu will include soup or salad and a choice of 2 entrees. Their famous Swedish meatballs will be served along with coffee or tea and cookies. Members with dietary restrictions are welcome to join us to hear our speaker and not participate in the lunch. Patricia MacGowan will be taking the head count for lunch. Members planning to attend need to contact Patricia by FRIDAY, JANUARY 24th. Patricia's email is CMACGOWAN@COMCAST.NET or by phone at 206-851-0232.

AGENDA

10:00 a.m.	Check in, book club meets, socialize with members
11:00 a.m.	Lunch set up
11:30 a.m.	Lunch begins
12:15 a.m.	Speaker
1:00 p.m.	Speaker Q & A
1:15	Announcements
1:30	Adjourn

LOOKING AHEAD

On April 16, 2025, we will hold our first meeting of the spring. We've chosen a date during the School District spring vacation. Our hope is that our members who are still working can attend. Please mark your calendar.



In Memoriam

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

Arlene Harrington
John Koruga
Vicki Marsh
Ben Masaoka
Virginia Roraback
Percy Shogren
Walter Wilson

Members who worked with those we have lost are welcome to submit short notes for the Bulletin about our lost members and their work in Seattle Schools. Send information by email to the Bulletin Editor, Joani Harr, at joaniharr@aol.com.



Howard Morrill March 19th, 1929—Sept. 4th, 2024

Howard was also a long-time member of SSRA although he didn't participate much in the organization. He was born and raised in Seattle and graduated from Lincoln High in 1947. While attending the University of Washington Howard was drafted to serve in the Korean War. He later graduated and taught in Seattle Public Schools where he spent his last several years teaching history at Ingraham High School.

SSRA Leadership for 2024-2025

Acting President.....Julee Neuhart
 Past President.....Pat Cygan
 Chairman of the Board.....Edith Ruby

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

Committee Chairs

Bylaws.....Roxanne Trees
 Budget.....To Be Named
 Community Services.....Karen Lam
 Drawings and Baskets.....Karen Lam
 Health Services.....Myrna Muto
 Interim Historian.....Eleanor Toews
 Legislative/PAC... ..Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon
 May Luncheon.....Margaret Nelson
 Membership.....Julee Neuhart
 Newsletter.....Joani Harr
 Parliamentarian.....Edith Ruby
 Programs.....Pat Cygan
 Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
 SEED Grants.....John Thorp
 Website.....Ron Cygan
 WSSRA's NW-2 Representative. .Patricia MacGowan

**Lillian Saltvig Oct. 1, 1931-Sept. 26,
 2024**

Lillian was a long-time member of SSRA and was active in the SSRA book club when we met at The Canal. She grew up in Seattle and graduated from Franklin High School in 1948 at age 16.

She then went to the University of Washington. She taught mostly at View Ridge Elementary and retired in 1991.

SSRA's Bulletin is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees' Association. We plan to hold 4 members' meetings for the 2024-2025 school year. 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.



Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend (or S.E.E.D. Grant) Classroom Grant Application September 1, 2024 to May 1, 2025

NAME _____ DATE _____

SSRA MEMBER? ___ YES ___ NO Best Phone Number/Times To Reach You? _____

Amount of Request? SSRA MEMBERS MAY REQUEST UP TO \$550 IN A SCHOOL YEAR. _____

A NON-MEMBER MAY REQUEST UP TO \$300 ONE TIME ONLY. _____

Your School and Its Address? _____

Your Position/Role? _____ Your e-mail? _____

Grant Amount Requested? _____ Number of Benefitting Students? _____

Mail check to whom and where? _____

Important Alert Notice: Usually each school year falls into 2 calendar years [e.g., Sept. 2024 to June 2025]. If SSRA were to send you SEED Grants of \$600 or more in the same calendar year [=Jan. to Dec.], both SSRA and you would be required by the Internal Revenue Service to fill out a 1099 form—thereby reporting that sum to be a potential addition to your income for that tax year. Thus, SSRA Members, if you apply for a SEED grant in 2 different but adjacent school years, please space your requests for S.E.E.D. grants so that the total for both grant requests will not equal \$600 or more dollars between January and December of the same calendar year.

Is This A Combined Project? ___ Yes ___ No If combined, with whom? _____

Is This A Summer School Project? ___ Yes ___ No Is This An After-School Project? ___ Yes ___ No

Briefly describe how this grant will be used to enhance students' learning? (Use back if necessary.)

What specifically do you plan to purchase with this S.E.E.D. grant? (Use back of this sheet if necessary.)

Project's Start Date = _____ Project's Finish Date = _____

Next, you will need to show this request to your school's PRINCIPAL OR PROGRAM MANAGER FOR HIS/HER SIGNATURE. YOUR PRINCIPAL/PROGRAM MANAGER'S SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED.

PRINCIPAL or PROGRAM MANAGER'S SIGNATURE _____ Please PRINT Principal/Program Manager's Name.

MAIL A PAPER APPLICATION TO John Thorp at 11033 39th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98125 OR send application by email to jhthorp3@outlook.com (We must receive the application by May 1, 2025)



Emma Favier, UW Seattle
 #
 Lincoln High School with Somayeh Hashemi
 Teaching Honors Alg 2 And Calculus BC
 “Thank you (and the rest of the SSRA, please forward my gratitude!) so much for selecting me for this award. I can’t even express how much stress it will save me this fall and winter. I feel so lucky and fortunate!! “
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Sue Eakin, University of Puget Sound
 Downing Elementary School Tacoma
 4th - 5th Grade Split Class
 Intermediate Education
 “I am so grateful for the scholarship, it will directly help fund my education and my family. Thank you!!”
 #

#



Naomi Cheuk, UW Seattle
 Queen Anne Elem Developmental program for children ages 3-4 that have disabilities.
 “Thank you so much.”
 #

#



Karley Deegan, Seattle Pacific University
 #
 Ballard High School teaching Spanish.
 “Such great news! I am grateful for the support of the SSRA to pursue my Masters at SPU and work to become an effective educator. Thank you!”
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Communicating With Someone Who Has Alzheimer's Disease

By Myrna Muto, Health Services Committee Chair

How does Alzheimer's disease change communication? Alzheimer's causes people to get confused about language. If English is their second language, they might only understand their first language. People with Alzheimer's may struggle with:

- Finding the right word when speaking
- Understanding what a word means
- Paying attention during long conversations
- Organizing words logically
- Keeping their train of thought
- Blocking out background noises (radio, television, conversations, phone calls) in a room.

Some tips to cope with communication challenges:

- Make eye contact and call the person by name
- Be aware of your tone, volume, facial expressions and body language. Try to avoid appearing angry or tense. Show a warm, loving and matter-of-fact manner.
- Be patient with angry outbursts. Be calm. Try distraction=offer a favorite snack, guide them gently to another room or hold their hand and take them on a walk outside.
- Allow more time for the person to respond; try not to interrupt. Be patient.
- When speaking to a person with Alzheimer's, try to ask questions with a yes or no answer.

Examples of what to say/not say:

Avoid saying

What do you want for dinner?

That is not how you do it.

How do you feel?

Are you hungry?

Instead, say

Do you want chicken or a hamburger for dinner?

Let's try it this way.

Are you feeling sad?

Dinner will be ready in five minutes

Be aware of nonverbal communication. As people lose the ability to talk clearly, they may rely on other ways of communicating their thoughts and feelings. They might use facial expressions to express anger, sadness, or frustration

Be open to communicating with family and friends with Alzheimer's.

From "The National Institute on Aging"

SCHOOL LEVY REMINDER: The ballots for the upcoming Seattle School Levy election of February 11th will be mailed out in late January. To learn more about the levy and where money will go, see the Seattle Public Schools website and BE SURE TO VOTE.

The 2025 Legislative Session—the Good and the Bad!
By Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chairs

We are sharing with you information about Washington's 2025 legislative session which has been sent to us by WSSRA's new legislative coordinator, Emmett Mills. The session starts January 13 and is scheduled to last 105 days. The major responsibility of legislators this session is to set our state's next two-year budget. Their budget decisions will impact active and retired members' salaries, pensions, and medical insurance. We urge you to sign up for legislative updates and contact your legislators to let them know your concerns. Legislators' emails can be found at www.leg.wa.gov.

Here is Emmet Mill's article:

The 2025 legislative session is almost here and there is good news and bad news to share. Here's the good news: In November, the Select Committee on Pension Policy unanimously approved a plan to restore an ongoing cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. If enacted by the legislature, TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees will get the same annual COLA that members of most other state-managed pension plans receive. This is a huge win for retirees who have waited 13 years for their benefits to be restored. The proposal will be introduced as a bill in January for the Legislature's consideration.

Unfortunately, this victory couldn't have come at a worse time. According to projects from November, the state is expected to face a budget shortfall of between 10 and 12 billion dollars over the next four years. This will likely force lawmakers to explore budget cuts and/or find new revenue sources. It will make it extremely difficult to pass bills that involve new spending.

Revenue projections are informed by ever-changing economic data. It is possible that financial conditions could improve between now and March, when a forecast will be made to determine the legislature's budget for the upcoming biennium. While it faces long odds, we must continue to ask our legislators to pass the TRS1 and PERS 1 ongoing COLA bill in 2025.

... While revenue projections have the potential to improve by March, they also have the potential to get worse. We've learned from experience that in a true budget crisis, pensions and health insurance benefits are far from secure. For this reason, we will be prepared to play defense. One of our least secure benefits is the health insurance subsidy that the state provides to Medicare plans offered through the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB). The state automatically pays 50% of the premium (up to \$183 per month) for Medicare eligible retirees who get health insurance through PEBB. We must keep funding for this program in the budget. We must also ensure that the legislature continues to fully fund all pension plans. TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees know that pension underfunding can lead to loss of benefits

There will be many opportunities to get involved during the legislative session. To make sure you're getting the latest news, please go to www.wssra.org and sign up for our email list.

Questions, comments, or concerns? Contact WSSRA Legislative Coordinator Emmett Mills at emmett@wssra.org or (360) 413-5496, ext 2.

1989 SSRTA Oral History Project by Eleanor Toews

An oral history project was conducted by members of the Seattle School Retired Teachers Association in 1989.

Tapes of oral interviews and transcripts have recently been acquired by SSRA from Seattle Schools Retiree Paul Hoerlein who was one of the interviewers. Mr. Hoerlein and others, like Olaf Kvamme, Jim Farris, Lois Benson, Joan Coffey, Amorette Richards received training by Lorraine McConaghy who was then a public historian at MOHAI (Museum of History and Industry).

The tapes and transcripts are currently being prepared for transfer to the University of Washington Special Collections division. Before that happens, I've decided to give our members a peek into the content of these interviews.

First, a few excerpts from an interview conducted by Olaf Kvamme with Amelia Telban whose first assignment as a cadet was at Bailey Gatzert School (1927) which had an almost 100% Asian population.

Q: You used the word “cadet.” Explain what a cadet was in Seattle’s terminology at that time.

A: A cadet teacher was a newly-hired teacher who was given the benefit of special help by a cadet supervisor.

Q: Say a little about that population [at Bailey Gatzert School] and what its impact was, or any differences that you think may have occurred because of that population.

A: Well, it was really a very fine place to work. There were a thousand children at the time that I was there.

Q: In how many grades?

A: In six grades. And I know the emphasis was a little different [at that school]. Our principal, Ada J. Mahan, felt that the children were at a disadvantage because of the language problem, and she didn't expect them to do as well as the children in other schools in reading. But she felt that in arithmetic -- in math -- there should be no problem, so it was up to us to see that they did well in city-wide tests in arithmetic. And, with that goal in mind, she really worked.

Q: Were there married women who were teaching or was it possible for a married woman to be hired in Seattle? The whole married woman issue comes up from time to time – say a little bit about that.

A: Well, when I began, marriage meant termination of your contract and married women were not hired. Widows were hired, and I suppose divorcees, too, but I didn't know of any married woman living with her husband, unless he was an invalid or something, who would have been hired. And if she were, she might have been a substitute, not a regular teacher.

Q: In the folklore, there are reports that there were a substantial number of women teachers who were married but the administration was not aware of it. Do you believe that – “a substantial number?”

A: I don't think it was a substantial number, but I do know of one that was. It did happen.

Q: What about a formal school that was designed for modeling teaching – the whole demonstration school idea. Say a little bit about that.

A: Well, I was aware of that from the beginning because as cadets we were sent to observe at a demonstration school which at that time was Summit School, pretty close to downtown Seattle. Later on, a larger school was used as a demonstration school. But, as a rule, we got to go to a demonstration school once a year and observe a teacher. I think it was a good thing; it was very helpful.

Q: what would be the process at the demonstration school?

A: Well, we would meet and have a short preparation. The principal of the school would prepare us for the demonstration. We would learn what it was that was going to be taking place. Then when the demonstration was over, we would meet again and have a discussion. It was usually a half day affair, in the morning, and we would be free to return to our respective schools in the afternoon.

Q: What about field trips? How prevalent were they, and if there were field trips, how did you get to where you were going?

A: Field trips were few and far between. I don't recall taking any field trips. The only times that we left the school was to go to maybe a musical program at the opera house or something of that sort. It would have to be very, very special.

The following excerpt is from an interview conducted by SSRTA member Amorette Richards in 1989 with former teacher Florence Byers who remembers returning to teaching in 1934 when she was alone with two children.

Q: After getting your degree at UW, where did you go when you returned to teaching?

A: I went to John Muir School where I remained for seventeen years, which was a very unusually pleasant experience for me. It was probably, if there's an experience of teaching to think about and reminisce on, that is the experience of my teaching life which was so fortunate for me. ... it was such a well-organized school and ... there never was any question of discipline or problems there that I recognized. The school principal there for some years was a lady by the name of Miss Lockwood. She was a New England person who came with some knowledge and probably personal experience – though I don't know that – in the private schools there.

In many ways, John Muir School was operated somewhat like a private school might have been. There was much emphasis on character development and students taking charge in school affairs and having a student government body, and giving a school auditorium program in which they reported on affairs of the school or civic affairs or whatever the committee work they were involved with was. There were many functions which kept students and parents involved with the school. They had a slogan – the search for the Holy Grail, and so the school was on that kind of a basis of conduct. It was a very pleasant place to work, though that was a very heavy time of teaching. Some of my classes has as many as forty students in them, but they were not difficult. I enjoyed my teaching very much and of all those people today, many of the students from that school are some of Seattle's leading business executive in private industry or public places.

I hope this give you some idea of the content of these oral interviews.

Eleanor Toews
SSRA Acting Historian

