



# *The Bulletin*



*Volume LXXX No. 4*

*The Seattle School Retirees' Association*

*May-June, 2025*

## **News from SSRA Acting President Julee Neuhart**

Our next meeting ON WEDNESDAY, May 28, 2025 will be a time when we recognize (as we do each year) our members who have reached the age of 85. All members who have reach 85 or older, should identify themselves as being 85 when they RSVP. Those members will receive a free box lunch and a small gift in recognition of their elder status. To our younger members: if you know of an elder member who would enjoy attending our meeting, please spread the news.

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 May 28<sup>h</sup> will be retired astronaut DOTTIE METCALF-LINDENBURGER. Dottie was a science teacher in Vancouver, WA in 2004 when she was selected to be an astronaut, heading to the International Space Station. After extensive training, Dottie headed to the ISS in 2010 where she spent 15 days in space. She served as an Educational Mission Specialist. In June of 2014 Dottie retired from the Astronaut Corps and returned to the Pacific Northwest. Since then she has earned a MS in Geology at UW and worked as a geologist. In 2023 she founded her own business where she is a professional speaker promoting Science Technology, Arts, and Math education. She also volunteers as a board member for Challenger Learning Center, the Seattle Museum of Flight, and the Presidential Advisory Board for Whitman College.

Patricia MacGowan will once again track our RSVPs and our lunch choices. All attendees have a box lunch choice of: 1) sandwich, 2) salad, or 3) vegetarian at a cost of \$18. Members planning to attend need to contact Patricia with your choice by FRIDAY, MAY16th. Patricia's email is [CMACGOWAN@COMCAST.NET](mailto:CMACGOWAN@COMCAST.NET) and her phone is 206-851-0232.

## **AGENDA**

10:00 a.m	Check in and social hour
11:30 a.m.	Buffet lunch
12:15 a.m.	Speaker
1:15	Announcements
1:30	Adjourn



### *In Memoriam*

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

Robert Bune of Shoreline  
Gayle Flakus of Renton  
Sharon Larson of Bethesda, MD

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](mailto:joaniharr@aol.com).

Some education humor:

You know there is a problem with our education system when you realize that of the 3 R's, one starts with R.  
Dennis Miller

As long as there is Algebra, there will be prayer in school.  
Larry Mille

TEACHER: James, do you use bad words?  
JAMES: No, sir.  
TEACHER: Do you disobey your parents?  
JAMES: No, sir.  
TEACHER: Come now, you must do something wrong every once in a while!  
JAMES: I tell lies.

### *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*

By laws.....Roxanne Trees  
Budget.....Julee Neuhart, Interim  
Community Services.....Jody Lemke  
Drawings and Baskets.....Jody Lemke  
Health Services.....Myrna Muto  
Interim Historian.....Eleanor Toews  
Legislative/PAC... ..Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon  
May Luncheon.....Open  
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

### **NEED MONEY FOR YOUR CLASSROOM?**

*For those of you currently working for  
Seattle Public Schools, you can recoup  
unreimbursed costs by applying for an  
SSRA S.E.E.D. GRANT.*

**SEE OUR NEXT PAGE FOR  
AN APPLICATION.**

**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](mailto:ssra44@juno.com). Our address is: P.O. Box 31027 Wallingford Post Office 1329 N 47<sup>th</sup> St. Seattle, WA 98103



**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 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98125 OR  
send application by email to [jhthorp3@outlook.com](mailto:jhthorp3@outlook.com)  
(We must receive the application by May 1, 2025)

## SSRA's Committee Reports

### Health Committee

Myrna Muto, Chair

### **Shinrin-Yoku or Forest Bathing**

What are the comprehensive health benefits of exposure to nature and green environments on the human system? A thorough review of empirical research was conducted on the physiological and psychological effects of Shinrin-Yoku (or Forest Bathing). There were 64 research studies published between 2007-2017 that included phrases “Shinrin-yoku” and/or “forest bathing” and/or “nature therapy.”

Research conducted in Japan and China points to a plethora of positive health benefits for human physiological and psychological systems associated with the practice of Shirin-Yoku (SY), also known as Forest Bathing (FB). SY is a traditional Japanese practice of immersing oneself in nature by mindfully using all five senses. During the 1980s, SY surfaced in Japan as a pivotal part of preventive health care and healing in Japanese medicine. The research findings associated with the healing components of SY showed therapeutic effects on (1) the immune system function (increase in natural killer cells/cancer prevention); (2) cardiovascular system (hypertension/coronary artery disease); (3) the respiratory system (allergies and respiratory disease); (4) depression and anxiety (mood disorders and stress); (5) mental relaxation (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) and (6) human feelings or “awe” (increase in gratitude and selflessness).

SY may be considered a form of Nature Therapy, (NT). defined as “a set of practices aimed at achieving ‘preventive medical effects’ through exposure to natural stimuli that renders a state of physiological relaxation and boost the weakened immune functions to prevent diseases”

The conclusion of the review is that the practice of SY and NT are ontological realism and offer humans an authentic way of healing and health prevention for the mind, body and spirit. How would we encourage this health-promotion method and demonstrate scientifically and intuitively in order to add to global health care systems?

Fast forward to 2025, the University of Washington Botanic Gardens website has a Self-Guided Forest Bathing handout and audio guide to use in the Washington Park Arboretum. People are invited to learn and practice forest bathing, a nature immersion activity that has been shown to increase health and well-being.

### INTRO TO FOREST BATHING

Forest Bathing, or Shinrin-yoku, is a simple relaxation activity for people of all ages to de-stress and boost their health and well-being

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Find a place near trees or where you feel surrounded by nature.
- Commit to giving yourself 15-60 minutes to participate in this activity.
- Avoid distractions such as talking or using your phone or other devices.
- When your attention wanders, gently bring it back to one of the three steps below.
- Consider practicing regularly, on your own, or with others.

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(committee reports continued).

### STEPS

#1 BE SLOW, BE STILL Walk slowly or sit somewhere comfortable. This will help you notice as much as possible.

#2 WAKE UP THE SENSES What do you see, hear, smell, taste, feel? Can you become aware of one sense at a time? Notice how it feels.

#3 BREATHE AND SAVOR Each time you find something that interests or pleases you, hold your attention with it for a few moments. Be curious and have fun.

REPEAT THE THREE STEPS for 15-60 minutes

### CLOSING

When you are done, check in with how you feel. Then take a deep breath and enjoy the rest of your day!

Remember to find a quiet spot to enjoy solitude and connect. Leave your devices behind or out of sight. Slow everything down and pay attention to your surroundings. Use all five senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch actively. Notice the details around you. Enjoy your Forest Bath.

Shinrin-Yoku (Forest Bathing) and Nature Therapy: A State-of-the-Art Review, July 28, 2017, National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health

Self-Guided Forest Bathing, [botanigardens.uw.edu](http://botanigardens.uw.edu)

### S.E.E.D./CLASSROOM GRANTS

John Thorp, Chair



Pictured from left to right: Tara Williams, Mary Wallon, Mary McWhinney, Janet Ceballos, Meg Watson, and Principal Trenecia Gardner.

Some of the S.E.E.D. checks being delivered by Mary Wallon, SSRA Secretary, to Graham Hill Elementary.

(committee reports continued)

### Scholarship Committee

Patricia MacGowan, Chair

### **SSRA Scholarships 2025**

**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** for High School Seniors and Teacher Interns:

All applications are available from Patricia MacGowan [cmacgowan@comcast.net](mailto:cmacgowan@comcast.net) or on [seattlesra.org](http://seattlesra.org) website.

**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. Two \$3,000 scholarships are available.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE JUNE 1, 2025.

**The PHIL KONKEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP** provides two \$3,000 scholarships for Seattle High School students interested in secondary education.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE JUNE 1, 2025.

### **SSRA TEACHING INTERN SCHOLARSHIP**

Five thousand dollar scholarships are available for future teachers who are student teaching during the academic year 2025-2026 through a college/university program and who are working on initial certification in an educational field.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE September 1, 2025.

**Questions? Patricia MacGowan, Scholarship Chair,**

[cmacgowan@comcast.net](mailto:cmacgowan@comcast.net) (206) 851-0232.

### **SEATTLE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS CEREMONY**

The Seattle Schools Scholarship Fund Trustees would like to invite all SSRA members to attend its annual awards ceremony at Franklin High School (3013 South Mt. Baker Blvd) on May 8th, at 7 PM.

The Fund receives a generous donation of \$25,000 annually from SSRA and is regularly represented by two SSRA members on its Committee of Trustees, Myrna Muto and Eleanor Toews.

It is an honor for the Seattle Schools Scholarship Fund to be so consistently and generously supported by SSRA. The number of high school graduates who will be selected by counselors for having overcome obstacles and various challenges on the way to graduate this year is 73. There will be 5 from each of our eleven traditional high schools and 3 from each of our 6 alternative high schools. Each awardee will be receiving \$10,000 to continue their studies at a university, college, or technical school.

Please join us at this event to see and hear from our awardees as they cross the stage to be congratulated and given the opportunity to say a few words.

Please contact Eleanor Toews [eleonor.toews27@gmail.com](mailto:eleonor.toews27@gmail.com) or Myrna

Muto [myrna.muto50@gmail.com](mailto:myrna.muto50@gmail.com) if you have any questions about this event.



Central I, ca. 1870., SPSA 094a-1

**BUILDING FOR LEARNING** Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2022 was published last year. It supersedes all previous editions, from 1951 to 2002. Information from Julee Neuhart.

The following is an excerpt of the chapter on the first school house in Seattle.

*In 1867, the district moved classes from the University Building, where they had been held on and off since 1861 (see University), to the original County Building on 3rd Avenue between James and Jefferson (site of today's Prefontaine Fountain). Erected in 1860 on property owned by Henry Yesler, this was the first county building. Yesler assumed ownership of the building in payment for back rent and rented it to the school district. Eliza Anna Fearer, the third female teacher hired by the district, taught at least one of the terms there in 1867.*

*Classes were transferred to Yesler's Pavilion (later called Yesler's Hall) when the County Building closed as a school site around 1868. Located on the southeast corner of Front Street (now 1st Avenue) and Cherry Street, it was built in 1866 for visiting entertainment, dances, celebrations, and public meetings. The hall served as a schoolhouse for one year with Sarah Jane Gallagher, one of the first Mercer Girls (see Thomas Mercer), teaching at least one of the terms. From 1867-1882, the hall was the site of large school board meetings and, in the early 1870s, school musical performances for the entire town. The building was destroyed by the Great Seattle Fire in 1889.*

*From Yesler's Hall, classes moved to a temporary building erected by the school board on 3rd Avenue between James and Yesler, for use from 1869 to 1870 while a permanent building was being readied. The temporary site was called Bacon's Hall after Carrie Bacon, the first teacher there. She was followed by Elma Preston.*

*In 1870, the original Central School, the first schoolhouse erected by the Seattle School District, opened on 3rd Avenue between Madison and Spring streets. Although the school had two classrooms for 120 pupils, only one teacher, Lizzie Ordway—another Mercer Girl and the second female teacher hired by the district—greeted an overflow of pupils on opening day. A second teacher, Mrs. C. M. Sanderson, was quickly hired.*

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*At the end of the 1871 school year, 294 pupils attended Central. The school board rented the Fisher Building on the northwest corner of 3rd and Union for an additional classroom in December 1871. The teacher was Caroline Parsons, the future wife of Seattle banker Dexter Horton. The Fisher site was abandoned at the end of the academic year because of the planned opening of North and South schools (see North and Gatzert).*

*In 1881, a third classroom was created in the Central attic. The original Central School closed in 1883 when the larger Sixth Street or Eastern School was opened (see Central II). The lot and building were then sold. The old schoolhouse was moved to Front Street (now 1st Avenue) and Virginia, where it became the Central Boarding House, or Central Rooms.*

Copies of the book may be purchased through the Seattle Public Schools Records and Archives Department. The cost is \$65 per book or \$75 with shipping. To place an order, please contact Melinda Lamantia, Records and Archives Manager, [mmlamantia@seattleschools.org](mailto:mmlamantia@seattleschools.org)

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SSRA Legislative Team  
at the Legislature  
working for you.

From left to right: Rita Figlenski, WSSRA President, Patricia MacGowan, Senator Vandana Slatter, Mary Wallon, and Edith Ruby



From left to right: Emmett Mills, Patricia MacGowan, Mary Wallon, Edith Ruby and Representative Janice Zahn

### **Will You Be Alive in 2040?**

By Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

Legislators in Washington's House and Senate have very different views of the plight of Washington's oldest state retirees, those retired under the long closed TRS/PERS 1 Plans. Members of the Senate recognize that after only five cost of living adjustments in 14 years, it is time to restore the TRS/PERS 1 yearly COLA that legislators took away in 2011. House members feel that we "nice old people", as one legislator characterized us, can continue to do without. After all, teachers have always accepted being underpaid.

SSB 5085, passed by the Senate this session, merges the LEOFF 1 (police and firefighters) pension fund, now overfunded by \$2.9 billion, with the underfunded TRS/PERS 1 funds. There would be enough dollars in the merged fund to ensure that all LEOFF 1 members receive full lifetime pensions and to give all TRS/PERS 1 members yearly COLAs. Because the money is already in the LEOFF pension fund, using the excess dollars to eliminate the TRS/PERS 1 pension debt and provide yearly COLAs would add nothing to the state budget deficit.

HB 2034 and HB 1467, proposed by House leadership, give NO COLA to Plan 1 retirees. Instead, they transfer the pension surplus to the state's general fund and spend it as one-time funds in 2029. State and local governments are forced to continue to pay into the TRS/PERS 1 funds until fully funded in 2040. When fully funded, might legislators consider a yearly COLA for that remnant of Plan 1 members still alive? Or not? Most of us will never know.

Both House and Senate have published their proposed state budgets. Only the Senate budget includes SB 5085. As the session moves toward its April 27 end, House and Senate negotiators will produce a final budget which must then be approved by both Houses.

There is no question as to which budget will help our Plan 1 retirees! SSRA members Patricia MacGowan, Mary Wallon, and Edith Ruby were in Olympia March 18-20 meeting with Seattle area legislators. We thanked senators for their support and urged them to insist that 5085 not be bargained away in budget negotiations. We urged House members to question their leadership's decision to throw Plan 1 members under the bus as they work to fill the state's budget deficit. The legislature already threw us under the bus fourteen years ago. We have never recovered.

**If you want legislators to restore the Plan 1 COLA lost in 2011, TODAY is the time to contact the senator and two representatives in your legislative district.** Just tell them to support SB 5085 restoring the Plan I COLA. Few of us will be around to see a COLA in 2040.

To find your legislators' emails go to [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov). Or leave a message on the legislature's hotline, 1-800-562-6000. For updated legislative news, go to [www.wssra.org](http://www.wssra.org).

[The article above was submitted before the Legislature ended its session and is, of course out of date.]





Seattle School Retirees' Association  
P.O. Box 31027  
Wallingford Post Office  
1329 N. 47th Street  
Seattle, Washington 98103

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Seattle, WA  
Permit #1445

***SSRA Scholarship and/or S.E.E.D. Grant Fund Donation Form***

***Date*** \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my gift for:

**(A) SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

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

OR

**(B) 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 \_\_\_\_\_ and address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to SSRA Scholarship and Grant Fund and mail to:

SSRA, P.O. Box 31027, Wallingford Post Office, 1329 N. 47th Street, Seattle, WA 98103

Donations are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent allowed by the law.

Please check here \_\_\_\_ if you would like more information on including either of these funds in your estate planning.