The Bulletin

Volume LXXXII No.2 *The Seattle School Retirees' Association* *November-December 2026*

News from SSRA President Julee Neuhart

THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR OPENS WITH AN OCTOBER 1ST LUNCHEON MEETING

Our October meeting was very entertaining. UW professor Dr. Lance Rhoades spoke about monster movies. He had film clips starting from the 1920's. The films were silent and scary. The actors were playing ghosts, vampires, and other monsters. He traced the genre all the way up to more recent films like "Psycho". Everyone very much enjoyed his presentation.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, December 3rd , at Ivar's Salmon House Restaurant (401 NE Northlake Way). The presenter will be Mr. Ben Shuldiner, the new Seattle School District Superintendent. He is giving us 1 hour of his time, from noon to 1:00 pm. The SSRA is submitting questions for him to address. I hope there will be some time for Q&A from the audience as well.

The social hour will start at 10:30 am with lunch service beginning at 11:30 am. Lunch will again be $20, cash or check; no credit cards, please. You will need to RSVP to Patricia MacGowan, by WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH (that is the day before Thanksgiving). If you do not hear from Patricia in 2 days, please contact her again. Phone: 206-851-0232 or text at CMACGOWAN@COMCAST.NET.

You will need to choose one of the 4 menu items and report it to Patricia:

1. Ivar's world famous fish and chips
2. Blackened salmon Caesar salad
3. Alaska true cod piccata
4. Veggie burger

Lunch will be served with coffee and tea. Ice cream will be served for dessert.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Invest in Youth is a free after-school tutoring program that has been active in the Seattle School District for several years. Currently they work with students at 4 elementary schools in grades 3 to 5.

The program offers once-per-week tutoring sessions with the same volunteer tutor for the entire school year, October through May for the 26/27 school year. The schools participating are: Beacon Hill, Roxhill @ Hughes, Sanislo, and Thurgood Marshall. They are hoping to serve 80 students this year

Volunteers can complete an application at www.investinyouth.org. You can also contact Carter Rusch at crusch@investinyouth.org or (425)495-5154 to learn more.



In Memoriam

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

Ellen Heroux, Tacoma, WA
Margaret Nelson, Seattle
Lawrence O'Donnell, Everett, WA
Kathleen Mayhle, Seattle
Sheila Ross, Moorpark, CA
Lawrence Sheffler, Port Orchard, WA
Larry Whitney, Lopez Island, WA

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

Dwight Harris



Dwight passed away at his home in Seattle on September 4th. He attended the University of Washington where he met his wife Louise. After 3 years in Viet Nam, returned to earn his teaching certificate. He taught in Seattle Public Schools from 1975 until his retirement in 2006. He was the kind of teacher you remember for the rest of your life, evidenced by the volume of students that contacted him decades after their schooling to tell him so. As an early adopter of personal computers, he won a teaching award in 1994 for leading the way on integrating technology into schools in Seattle. After retiring, Dwight and Louise (also a teacher) moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. There Dwight spend time running, climbing mountains and spending time with his grandkids. He also volunteered at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History. Dwight and Louse eventually returned to Seattle.

SSRA Leadership for 2025-2026

President…… …Julee Neuhart
Vice President ……....Edith Ruby
Recording Secretary……Mary Wallon
Treasurer……..Sue Battin
Parliamentarian……..Edith Ruby
Historian ……...Eleanor Toews
Bulletin Editor ……..….Joani Harr

Committee Chairs

Budget…….…….……Julee Neuhart
Health Services……...…....Myrna Muto
Legislative/PAC… ….....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon
May Honorees ……..Marie DeBell
Membership……...…...……Julee Neuhart
Programs…….……..……Ron Cygan
Scholarships..…….….Patricia MacGowan
SEED Grants……..…….…….John Thorp
Webmaster…..…….……..Ron Cygan
Sunshine……..……..Marcia Lalonde
WSSRA's NW-2 Representative. ..Patricia MacGowan
Community Service Recipients: Mary's Place and Tree House

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:
www.seattlesra.org

SSRA's Bulletin is published four times per year by the Seattle School Retirees' Association. We plan to hold four members' meetings for this year. You can leave a phone message or text at 206 549-4644. Our mailing address is PO Box 31027, Wallingford Post Office, 1329 N. 47th St., Seattle, WA 98103

THE S.E.E.D. GRANT APPLICATION IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE (www.seattlesra.org) AND WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN.

SSRA Scholarship Report
Patricia MacGowan, Scholarship Chair

Thank you so much to these donors to the scholarship and S.E.E.D. mini-grant funds.

This fall we are give scholarships to 10 student interns. (see their photos and info on p 4 and 5)

We are so grateful for your support and recognition of the amazing future education leaders.

Thank you to Mike Linett, Samara Hoag, Joanne Franey, Lydia Gayton, Mary Johnson, Oleine Hedeen, Julia Peeler, and Patricia Siggs.

Thank you Marilyn Miller for your donation in memory of Pat Cygan, Paul Napolitan, Nona Wittenberg, and Genevieve Reckamp.

Thank you Edward & Jennifer Subica and Jon Alsterlind for your donations in honor of Pat Subica Cygan - a true champion for the Seattle and State organizations (SSRA and WSSRA).

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES for High School Seniors and Teacher Interns
All applications are available on the website www.seattlesra.org.

Northwest 2 Council meetings of all King County units are meeting December 4, 2026; February 19, 2027, and April 23rd, 2027.

Questions? Patricia MacGowan, Scholarship Chair cmacgowan@comcast.net (206) 851-0232.

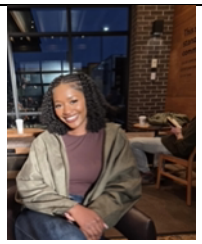
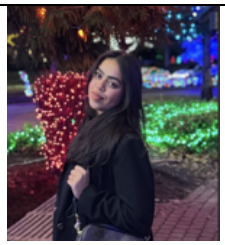
HELP WANTED
SSRA TREASURER
ANNUAL STIPEND - $400

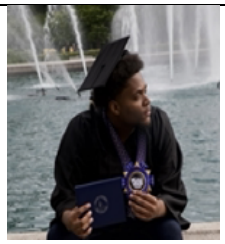
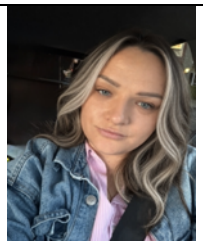
Job description: Attend board meetings monthly to report on budget income and expenditures. Manage payouts to scholarships, grants, and business expenses. Good arithmetic skills are a plus. Contact Sue Battin at bulldogsue@aol.com.

SEATTLE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION

2026 TEACHER INTERN SCHOLARS

Celebrating the future educators supported by your generosity

	**Greg Bellinger** Central Washington University Nathan Hale High School
	**Areauna Maria Brown** Pacific Lutheran University K-8 Elementary
	**Itzei Barajas Jimenez** Washington State University Little Mountain Elementary – 3rd grade
	**Cassandra Marie Schoelkopf** Centralia College Parkside Elementary School – Tenino, WA
	**Hilary Madsen** City University of Seattle Browns Point Elementary – 1st grade

	**Christine Bergdoll** University of Washington Cascadia Elementary School
	**Corey Michael Hendrix** Northwest University John Rogers Elementary – 1st grade
	**Justin Leary-Bignayan-Arcadio III** University of Washington – Bothell Maywood Hills Elementary – 2nd grade
	**Meredith Sam** Western Washington University Ingraham High School
	**Olha Sytnyk** Pacific Lutheran University Elementary education

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for investing in the next generation of educators.

The West Coast Health Alliance

By Myrna Muto, WSSRA Health Committee, Unit 20

California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington formed the West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA) to uphold the integrity of effective public health strategies that protect the health of our communities. The WCHA includes public health leaders and subject matter experts from the state health departments of California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

The members of the WCHA share a commitment to public health recommendations that are guided by safety, effectiveness, transparency, access, and trust. Through this partnership, the four states will work to coordinate health guidelines by aligning public health recommendations informed by respected national medical organizations. This will allow residents to receive consistent, science-based recommendations they can rely on to keep themselves, their families, and their communities healthy and safe.

The Scope of WCHA:

- Evaluating and responding to threats to national public health policy and recommendations
- Reviewing data, information, and reports from credible clinical and scientific professional organizations that use evidence-based methodologies and source materials to assess changes in public health policy
- Developing unified public health position statements, policy recommendations, and guidance
- Addressing communications needs and countering mis- and dis-information

The Objectives of WCHA members:

- Work together to ensure the public has access to credible information
- Coordinate to reduce confusion and increase trust in public health
- Provide evidence-based position statements, policy recommendations, and guidance
- Seek alignment with respected national professional organizations
- Share tools and best practices

The WCHA is issuing immunization recommendations for the 2026-2027 respiratory virus season. These recommendations are informed by trusted national medical organizations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American, College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, (ACOG).

Immunization is the best protection available against respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Seasonal immunization is also a critical public health tool to reduce serious illness, community transmission, and health care systems strain. The WCHA believes that all recommended immunizations should be accessible to the people of our states. WCHA emphasizes the importance of protecting people most impacted by these respiratory viruses, especially our most vulnerable. This includes the youngest and oldest individuals in our states; other individuals at higher risk for complications, including people who are pregnant;

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individuals living in congregate settings; and those who live or work with people at higher risk. The WCHA will continue to evaluate new evidence and recommendations as they become available and is committed to sharing any updated assessments with our communities.
The WCHA recommends the following for 2026-2027:

- COVID 19 vaccinations

  All adults 65 years and older
  Adults 19-64 years with risk factors
  All adults who are in close contact with others with risk factors
  All adults who choose to reduce the risk of severe illness
- Influenza vaccinations for all adults

- RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) vaccinations for all adults

For more information see https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/west-coast-health-alliance

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THANK YOU, SUE!

Sue Battin, the SSRA Treasurer, has been managing our finances for ten years. She has done an excellent job keeping our Association financially very healthy. She has helped develop our yearly budget and keep us living within the budget while growing our savings. And before Sue took on the Treasurer role, she served as President.

Sue has now informed the SSRA board that she will retire from her Treasurer duties at the end of the 26-27 school year. THANK YOU, SUE, for your years of dedicated service.

The board is now searching for someone to replace Sue. The board is hopeful one of our members, perhaps a retired Business Education teacher, or a member who just loves numbers and writing checks will step up and volunteer to serve the Association in this position. The position does have a modest stipend.

Sue has given the board a full year's notice so we can select her replacement and she and the new Treasurer can slowly work together over the school year to make a smooth transition. If you are interested and want to know more about the job, please text me.
juleen1526@gmail.com

Julee Neuhart, SSRA President

ALL HANDS-ON DECK!

By Mary Wallon, Co-chair, SSRA Legislative Committee

As you read this issue of *The Bulletin*, you have knowledge that the writers of these articles did not have. You know the election results in Seattle, in Washington State, and nationally. But even without knowing the election results, we do know that the upcoming legislative situation is expected to be difficult. The state faces a possible budget shortfall that could go over a billion dollars, even if the millionaire's tax is enacted.

The Legislature is required to pass a balanced budget, and already there is talk about the necessity of cuts. Last year the state Senate passed a reduction of our PEBB Medicare Benefit from $183 per month to $150 per month, but that cut was not in the final budget. WSSRA's Legislative Committee will work hard to prevent that reduction from happening this year, but we need your help and support. To see the effect of the potential cut on cost of your PEBB health care plan, look at the chart on page 6 of the October/November/December *WSSRA Journal*.

Work to protect WSSRA members from painful cuts in their benefits cannot be successful if it is done by only the WSSRA Legislative Committee. We need all hands-on deck. During the session, those of you who have signed up for information about the progress of our legislative issues will receive requests that you contact your legislators to ask them to support certain bills, or to not support other certain bills. It is essential that as many as possible respond to those requests. If you are not receiving that information, please look at page 18 in that same issue of *The Journal* to see how to get on the e-mail list. Your contacts with legislators may be more important than in any other year. You can also call the Legislative Hotline at (800) 562-6000 with a message of support for the hard work your legislators do, and a request that they remember the needs of retirees.

If your legislators have an event, try to attend and speak to your legislator about what it is like to have to worry about whether you can afford to pay for health care, or mention what it is like to have COLAs that are below the rate of inflation, or, as in the case of Plan One retirees, no COLA at all in a majority of years. Some legislators are new and need to be educated on school retiree issues. Legislators work hard, and we appreciate them for the success of our efforts last year. But this is a new year, and we must work together to safeguard our benefits this year.

THANK YOU FROM COREY MICHAEL HENDRIX AT JOHN ROGERS SCHOOL

Thank you again for selecting me for this scholarship. This award means so much to me and will be a tremendous help as I continue my Master in Teaching program and prepare to begin student teaching in second grade. I am truly thankful for your support and for the support of the Seattle Schools Retirees' Association.
Warm regards.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

Submitted by Julee Neuhart

Going through some old documents I found some 10-year old Bulletins. It was interesting to see what has changed in 10 years and what has stayed the same.

Ten years ago we had an office in the PEMCO Insurance building. And later that year the office moved to the SODO neighborhood. We had a small space in the office of the printing company that prints the Bulletin. Today we have no office. We are just renting a small space to store our filing cabinet which holds our archives. It is located at our printing company which is now in the White Center neighborhood of West Seattle.

In 2016 our luncheon meetings were held at the Canal Restaurant in Ballard. But the price for lunch has not changed. Still $20. Our Community Service project was collecting socks for Operation Nightwatch. We are still helping the homeless, but now it is by making donations to Mary's Place.

Our legislative concerns have not changed in ten years. We are still trying to get an annual cost of living adjustment for our retirees on the Plan 1 pension plan. This seems to be a never-ending battle.

Several of our leaders for 2016 are no longer with us. We have lost Pat Cygan, Sharon Green, Phil Konkle, Don Meehan and Dan Peterson and others. But others are still serving the Association 10 years later: Sue Battin, Ron Cygan, Patricia MacGowan, Edith Ruby, Eleanor Toews and Mary Wallon. What a huge gift of time and energy they have given to the Association.

Our SEED Grant program was giving money to teachers back then. But the grants were much smaller, just $100 to non-members and $200 to members. Today the grants have grown to $300 for non-members and $550 to members. In the fall of 2016 we awarded two $5000 scholarships to college students who were beginning their classroom internships.

This fall we are giving away $50,000 to ten college students who are interning this semester. This wonderful growth of the scholarship program has occurred due to the generous donations the Association has received in recent years. Please keep the donations rolling in so we will have even more money to give away in the years to come.

THANK YOU FROM OLHA SYTNYK, ELEMENTARY INTERN

I received your letter today, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I am sincerely and endlessly grateful for this generous scholarship and for everyone who helped make this support possible for me. May God bless you, your family, and everyone who was involved in making this generous contribution. Thank you so much for your kindness and support. With heartfelt gratitude,

Seattle School
Retirees'Association
P.O. Box 31027
Wallingford Post Office
1329 N. 47th St.
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:

(A) Scholarship Fund ***or*** ***(B) Burbank Rideout SEED Fund***

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

Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend helps provides mini-grants to school workers for special classroom projects.

(If a box is not checked above, your donation will be placed where the need is most.)

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 law.

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