

# HAPPENINGS

Publication of the Pierce County School Retirees' Association (PCSRA) Volume XXXVII Issue 3 JANUARY 2026

## General Meetings/ Luncheons

### IN PERSON

### La Quinta Inn

1425 E. 27th Street, Tacoma

**Winter 2026**  
**February 12**

•  
**WSSRA Convention June**  
**8-10, 2026**

**Great Wolf Lodge,**  
**Grand Mound**

•

**Pierce County School**  
**Retirees' Association**  
P.O. Box 112493  
Tacoma, WA 98411-2493

**Sandy Grape**  
President

**Open**  
President-Elect

**Carolyn Ohlson**  
Recording Secretary

**Vickie Rettke**  
Corresponding Secretary

**Derryl Finney**  
Treasurer

**Conni Abernathy**  
*Happenings*

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**WSSRA:**  
**1-360-413-5496**  
**wssra.org**

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## February 12 Program

### Pam Gassman DAR

Pam Gassman is a long time member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Her genealogy in the USA goes back to the year 1630. This year, as we celebrate our country's 250th birthday, maybe some of you members

are interested and can trace your ancestors back to the American revolutionary days.

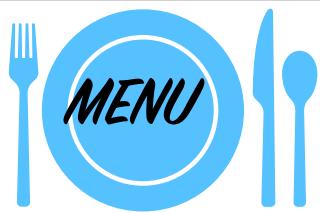
Pam has a very interesting story; her background in Genealogy led her to the DAR. You might be surprised at how important ancestors can be.

Pam is also busy with a variety of other pursuits. She can be seen demonstrating in the "home arts" at the Washington State Fair. Pam will be spinning, weaving, and crocheting; she is also a beautiful lace maker, a very interesting and intricate craft. Outside of her works with fiber, she is also a painter in both acrylics and watercolor.

Come and hear Pam tell her interesting story. You might be inspired to look into your own amazing ancestors' stories- not only how far back they go and what they did but what their lives were like and the activities that filled their days.

There will be a little time for questions. You can also learn how to join the DAR.





**February 12th:**  
BAKED POTATO BAR - Large baked Russet potato with the following toppings: sour cream, chili, shredded cheese, diced onions, diced tomato, green onions; tossed green salad with assorted dressings, cheesecake, iced tea and coffee.

**Cost \$15**

Deadline February 6th for reservations. Call Carolyn Bjerke at **253-759-3951**

## Membership Directory

For those members who wish to receive the newly published **Lavender 2025-2026** Pierce County School Retirees Directory, call **Marianne at 253-536-6717** and she will mail one to you, or pick yours up at the luncheon. Security concerns caused us to change the way the directory is distributed.



## President's Message – January 2026



Happy Winter!

As the weather became colder, December 11th arrived aglow with holiday spirit. Festive decorations adorned every table (thank you Karen Chapman) and members enjoyed a delightful buffet-style meal complete with delicious food and desserts.

The highlight of the afternoon was a presentation by two local business leaders, Veronica Davis and Kevin Dunn.

Veronica plays a significant role in Tacoma's community engagement efforts, working extensively with C.A.V.E. (Community and Veteran Events) in Pierce County. She excels in project management and veteran event coordination and is known for building strong partnerships with nonprofits and local businesses to support veterans through meaningful events and initiatives.



Kevin Dunn provides Legal Shield services in Pierce County, offering affordable access to attorneys for families and businesses. His work can be especially helpful for veterans seeking support with wills, contracts, identity protection, and other legal needs at a cost lower than traditional hourly rates.

Much gratitude goes to Susan Esson for organizing another successful sock collection at the December luncheon. These generous donations will support our friends at the Nativity House shelter in Tacoma.

Please join us for our next gathering on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at the La Quinta Inn & Suites in Tacoma. 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm. See you then!

# WINTER HEALTH TIPS

For seniors, winter health means staying warm with layered clothing and a warm home, preventing falls on ice, staying hydrated and eating nutritious foods, getting indoor exercise (like yoga or stretching), managing chronic conditions, and combating isolation and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) with social connection and sunlight, while also getting vaccinated against flu and pneumonia. Prioritize home safety with clear walkways and working detectors, and have emergency supplies ready for storms.

## Safety & Warmth

- **Dress in Layers:** Wear several light layers, including a hat, gloves, scarf, and warm socks, to trap heat and stay dry.
- **Heat Your Home:** Keep indoor temperatures at 65°F (18°C) or warmer, ideally 68°F (20°C), and check carbon monoxide detectors.
- **Prevent Falls:** Clear snow/ice, use salt/sand on walkways, wear slip-resistant shoes, and use handrails.
- **Limit Cold Exposure:** Stay indoors during extreme cold, wind, or dampness; don't stay out long.
- **Emergency Prep:** Keep blankets and essentials in your car and have emergency supplies at home.

yoga, or indoor walking maintain strength and circulation.

- **Boost Immunity:** Get annual flu shots and other recommended vaccines (pneumonia, COVID-19).
- **Manage Health Conditions:** Keep up with medications and appointments, as some conditions (diabetes, thyroid issues) affect warmth regulation.

## Mental & Emotional Well-being

- **Get Sunlight:** Open blinds or sit by a sunny window; a light therapy lamp can help with SAD.
- **Stay Connected:** Combat isolation with regular calls, visits, or group activities.
- **Prioritize Sleep:** Aim for 7-8 hours and create a relaxing bedtime routine.

## Health & Wellness

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water, even if not thirsty, and warm herbal teas.
- **Eat Nutritious Meals:** Enjoy warm soups, stews, and dishes with vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains.
- **Stay Active Indoors:** Gentle exercises like stretching, chair

## Know the Risks

- **Hypothermia:** Signs include cold, pale skin, confusion, sleepiness, weakness, and slow breathing; shivering may not occur.
- **Frostbite:** Damage to skin and tissues from extreme cold; cover extremities like fingers and toes.



## Holiday Festivities at PCSRA Luncheon

Singing snowmen, led by our program director Karen Chapman, Christmas tree photos, a wonderful buffet luncheon and great friends highlighted our December meeting.

Guest speakers Veronica Davis and Kevin Dunn spoke about local programs that assist veterans and dependents with community services and legal issues.

The party atmosphere continued with raffle drawings and give-aways but we still got our meeting work done, committee reports and all.





Members took time out to have photos with the beautiful Christmas tree that graced our meeting room.

Above is Marian Griffin, to the right is Kellie Campbell our newest member and also newly retired. Congrats Kellie.



Above: Geraldine Brooks and Karen Chapman, left Diane Blair and below are Connie Wekel, Randy Wilson and Kitti Wheeler.



### The Lowly Penny

His birthday seems an appropriate time to bid farewell to the Lincoln Penny...

### US Treasurer:

#### ***My two cents worth?***

Over the last decade, the production cost of a single penny has risen from 1.3 cents to 3.69 cents. For more than two centuries, the American people have trusted the penny as a part of their everyday currency. Now the historic American penny will no longer be produced. Continuing to mint the penny no longer makes economic sense. The penny remains legal tender. If you have pennies in your pocket, use them.

Some business owners have noted emerging issues with fewer circulating pennies. For example, several fast-food chains have already begun rounding cash payments to the nearest five-cent increments. These developments reflect healthy market adaptation and evolving payment habits. This approach anticipates that as no new pennies are minted, the coin will gradually recede from circulation.

# Delegates to the State Convention

by Darryl Finney, PCSRA Parliamentarian

This is the second of three articles providing a summary of the changes to the PCSRA 2025 Bylaws. This article will go into the delegate selection process for the annual WSSRA Delegate Assembly. The next assembly will be held June 8 through 10, 2026, at Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound.

All members of the association are eligible for consideration and are encouraged to be a delegate to the annual convention. Being a convention delegate offers benefits like direct influence on policy and leadership, increased engagement, and potential for networking. Delegates represent the members, vote on important issues and are involved in shaping WSSRA's future through activities like attending meetings and voting on resolutions and budgets.

Automatic delegates are the elected officers (president, co-president, and recording secretary); the immediate past president and, if applicable, the incoming president (president-elect). The delegation will also consist of the treasurer and the corresponding secretary. It is not mandatory that automatic delegates attend the annual convention. State officers/district representatives are not considered as local delegates.

Nominees for the remaining positions shall be made from members of the association who are currently active. Delegates must agree to attend all

sessions of the convention unless otherwise identified as optional.

The call for nominations and self-nominations shall be announced at the February general membership meeting and will be accepted until the April general membership meeting. Should the nominations meet or are fewer than the allowed representation, the nominees are automatically approved as delegates. Should the nominations exceed the allocated number of representatives, the delegation will be determined on a first-come basis to include up to five (5) alternate delegates.

To self-nominate, members must attend one of the remaining general membership meetings following the February call for nominations.

Lodging and other arrangements will be decided at the April board meeting. Being a delegate provides a unique and in-depth experience of the internal workings of the association..

**WSSRA  
Convention  
June 8-10, 2026  
Great Wolf Lodge,  
Grand Mound, WA**

# SHIFTING STRATEGIES, 2026

BY WSSRA LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR Emmett Mills <[emmett@wssra.org](mailto:emmett@wssra.org)>

The state Legislature is faced with huge and challenging economic issues and a loss of federal funds. Consequently, this has impacted WSSRA's goals for the session.

With the resulting loss of support for the on-going Plan 1 COLA (SB 5085) from last session, WSSRA is shifting strategy to advocate for a one-time COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees in 2026 (HB 2034). One positive factor in achieving this goal is that the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) has recommended a one-time COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees in 2026. Another positive? The Governor's Budget maintained the current \$183 per month PEBB Medicare benefit. Our WSSRA Legislative Committee will be advocating with Pierce County legislators for passage of HB 2034.

## Sea Shells

Anyone having shells or other sea-related decor that we could use at the conference in June please contact Annie Regan or Vickie Rettke. They are in charge of table decor at the conference.

## Call for Nominations

According to the Pierce County School Retirees Association 2025 Bylaws, Article VI, Section 3: The call for nominations shall be posted in the January issue of the Happenings and made at the February general membership meeting. Nominees must agree to their nomination. Self-nomination shall be encouraged.

The President, Sandy Grape of the Pierce County School Retirees' Association, hereby calls for nominations for the positions of President, Co-President, and Recording Secretary for the upcoming term. Self-nomination is encouraged.



## SOCKS! SOCKS! SOCKS! THANKS! THANKS! THANKS!

PCSRA has a yearly sock drive. Donations were collected at our November and December luncheons, and were delivered directly to Saint Leo's Nativity House after our December luncheon. Our total came to 368 pairs of new socks. Many thanks to those who donated!

**Pierce County School Retirees' Association  
P.O. Box 112493  
Tacoma, WA 98411-2493**

Pierce County School Retirees' Association  
**Scholarships for 2026**



We need your help to spread the word to our future educators! It's not too late to apply for the PCSRA scholarships. The application deadline is **April 19th**. 'Education' includes teaching, counseling, therapists, and specialists. Information for our scholarships are found on [washboard.org](http://washboard.org). Insert 'Pierce County' in the search site.

- Nina Ball Future Educator's Scholarships
- Chuck Abernathy Memorial Scholarship For High School Seniors
- Chuck Abernathy Memorial Scholarship For Student Teachers

**Please share with family and friends!!!!**