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 Muckraking Legislators Attempt to Balance the
 Budget on the Backs of Sweet Little Old Teachers
 AGAIN this year
 And MORE.....

Skagit/Island/San Juan
 School Retirees
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Skagit-Island-San Juan
UNIT 21
WASHINGTON STATE
SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION



WINTER 2015 * * *

Picture it!

- Christmas Party at the Skagit Golf and Country Club.
- Spry senior celebrant types in sweaters and sparkly faux jewelry.
- Christmas music on the piano with Pam Verner's big smile.
- Inspirational singing by the Mt. Vernon High School Swing Choir Synergy.

So to end this jolly, holly SISRA luncheon story, the officers had a GREAT NEW IDEA, Brown Bag Surprises, for raising \$\$\$ for mini grants! That meant almost EVERYONE getting a prize.

Holy Mistletoe! This rather large, but quiet, unobtrusive woman gingerly lifted a "jazz handful" of items which seemed to leap from her chise Brown Bag—holiday magic transforming her into **RED HOT CHRISTMAS MAMA** right in front of all those startled seniors! See for yourself! WE have great pictures of her transformation on our website sisra21.org.

Our fundraiser gained us \$129.00 and will be added to our fund. This year we plan to provide 20 grants to active school employees in the Skagit-Island-San Juan schools.

Visiting Olympia!

Did you know you can visit Olympia while the legislature is in session? Diane Visten and I took a trip down to the capitol on January 24th. We were escorted by our WSSRA Legislative Coordinator Peter Diedrick as we visited with Representative Dave Hayes of the 10th District. We also talked with the assistants of Representative Norma Smith, and Senator Barbara Bailey of the 10th District and Representative Kristine Lytton of the 40th District. We were able to let them know of our concerns as school retirees. You can speak to these legislators and others online, by phone and by letter too. They need to hear from all of us. Contact state legislators toll free hotline: 1 800-562-6000 or on www.leg.wa.gov

Contact your Unit 21 Board Members:

Presidents: Diane Visten 360-387-1348 Barbara Robinson 360-708-9046
Secretary: Joyce Moon 360-766-6869
Treasurer: Lonnie Keown 360-856-6498

TEKKIE NEEDED (#VOLUNTEERS #SUPPORTERS #LOVE YOU FOREVER)

Your devoted, dedicated presidents, talented as they may be, are old, out of date and not up with the times. But they know that MANY of YOU are not in that category!!! They are peering out of their trifocals trying to find some tekkie volunteers to assist with online communication. Support is needed to send out the newsletter online and to keep email addresses up to date. They probably need support with lots of other tekkie things, but don't even know enough to know what to ask for. If you could and would have a little time to help them PLEASE contact Barbara Robinson at babsann09@comcast.net (Even just having an email or phone number to call for tech support and questions would help, if you just wanted to be a resource person).

Muckraking Legislators—What is that all about?

Not sure what a muckraker actually is, but it's a great word—probably has some different connotations here in Skagit County than in other places! Just an attention-getter at this point to make sure that you know that this year's legislative session this year has a very different focus greatly impacted by the state supreme court decision (the McCleary Decision). If you usually think the legislature has nothing to do with you, think again. THIS IS YEAR WILL BE CRITICAL!

The following quote from member Elaine Banks, highlights this concern:

*"January 12 was the first day of the 2015 Legislative Session. I wish we could be singing "Happy Days are Here Again" but that is not feasible. This legislature has a lot on its plate and as has been said, **'If you are not at the table, you may be on the menu'**. The need for \$\$\$ is acute. Many state programs, i.e. education, disabled needs, pension contributions, etc., need a share, also. The state budget will be scrutinized to find dollars.*

Please read your new WSSRA Journal, Page 4, to get a prospective on the dilemma as noted by WSSRA Legislative Coordinator, Peter Diedrick. Each of us needs to be vigilant and observant to protect our pension and Medicare subsidies, plus other concerns. Keep in touch with the Representative[s] and Senators in your districts. Now is a good time to send each of them a positive note or e-mail to get your name in front of them. Talk to each about our WSSRA goals as outlined by Peter Diedrick. We need to stress the need to keep the Defined Benefit pension. Mr. Opitz, Asst. State Treasurer, confirms that our WA State pension system has an excellent rating, plus, 84 cents of every pension dollar is paid by the investments of our pension \$\$\$.
BE AT THE TABLE!

Also, remember to watch the actions of your Congress members. Many congresspersons are appearing to be susceptible to trimming Social Security benefits to new and possibly present recipients. This is unnecessary when just simple tweaking would solve most or all of the funding problems. This year, those on Social Security will see a modest 1.7% COLA. Not much but needed by the retirees considering the rising cost of basics: food, utilities, healthcare, etc..

MONEY GIVE AWAY HAPPENING SOON

Put away your purses, YOU Retirees! This info is for current school employees, and is our big outreach project to support local education with mini-grants! Great things have been done with our mini grant projects and we are continuing the tradition.

NEED TO KNOW:

*APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED MARCH 2-14

*EVERY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WILL HAVE A COPY

*OUR WEBSITE WILL HAVE A COPY (sisra21.org)

Retirement Seminar

One of our most important projects is hosting our annual Retirement Seminar for all school employees. It will be held February 20 at the NW ESD 189 in Anacortes from 5:30-8:00 and will be free to all attending.

The deadline to register is February 10. Please forward your name, your school district, phone and email address to Lonnie Keown 716 Orth Way, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284. You can contact her at lonnie.keown@gmail.com or 1-360-856-6498 until February 10th.

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WEBSITE

WHAT? WE HAVE A WEBSITE?
YES, NOT ALL OF US ARE TECHNO-NERDS.
TRY sisra21.org AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

FACEBOOK

GO TO FACEBOOK AND FIND US THERE. YOU MIGHT EVEN "LIKE US"!!!!!!!

EMAIL

ALSO, PART OF THE UP TO DATE SERVICE WE PROVIDE IS
EMAIL NEWSLETTER DELIVERY!!!!

EVERY MEMBER EMAIL ADDRESS THAT WE HAVE HAS BEEN SENT AN EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE LAST SEVERAL ISSUES.

PAPER EMAILS ARE SNAIL-MAILED TO EVERYONE ELSE.

IF YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING THE EMAIL NEWSLETTER AND WOULD LIKE TO, PLEASE CONTACT babsann09@comcast.net.

Obviously using the email service saves us a ton of money that can much better be spent on other items than postage, so please consider giving the email service a try!!!!

THANKS!

WE REMEMBER

*Mary Ann Parker
Patricia Wade*

Leon Greene

This past year we lost a very valuable member. Leon Greene and his wife Bonnie were steadfast members of our active Unit 21 Board. He and Bonnie were at all our events, folding newsletters, helping us host luncheons and were instrumental in setting up an informative well attended Retirement seminar for many years. While Leon is no longer with us he set an example of dedication and professionalism that we will continue to follow. Thank you Leon.

Important Dates:

All members are invited to our Unit 21 Board meetings. Our next meeting is going to be a special April event. Charlene Mackenzie and Lola will visit and present Dogs for the Deaf. The date will be announced at a later date.

Active employees Mini Grants will be offered March 2 thru March 14th.

Retirement Seminar February 20th see the notice inside!

June will be our annual convention in Wenatchee. We would be so pleased to have members attend so let us know if you are interested. It is a time of celebration for the year past and for learning what is on the menu for next year.



Unit 21 Picture Gallery!



Diane Visten with our "goodie bags" for the legislators!



Spry Senior Kay Brown



Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator guiding Diane Visten and I through the legislative corridors.



Red Hot Christmas Mama