



Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21 School Retirees' Association November 2017



WSSRA Unit 21 Board Members/Contacts

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*Bonnie Green

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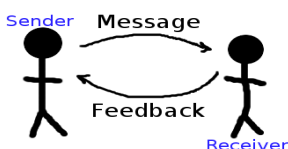
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Social Media Addresses

- **WSSRA.org** (for updated organization news and legislative news)
- **SISRA21.org** (Facebook-Website for local news and updates)



President's Report

I would like to cover 3 areas of news since our August newsletter: 1) what your board has done since the last newsletter: 2) what we are currently working on and 3) some guidance I need from you.

1. Your board met on September 11, 2017 and :

a) finished work on updating the bylaws of Unit 21. While this endeavor took more time than any of us imagined, we were able to prevail and now have a document that more clearly reflects our Unit.

b) agreed to co-host two candidate nights with the League of Women voters. One in Anacortes and one in Burlington. Hopefully you were able to attend the one in your area and got to know the candidates for local offices. A big thank you to Diane Visten and Barbara Robinson for taking the lead with this.

c) agreed to again award mini-grants to school employees from neighboring schools. We have had a number of applications again this year and hope to deliver the \$100 grants personally in November. This is one way that we actively support people in our schools and is also a good way to introduce our organization to others.

2. Currently in the works:

a) Diane Visten is again chairing the Holiday Luncheon to be held at the Skagit Valley Golf and Country Club on December 6. More information follows in this newsletter. Dr. Alan Burke, our new WSSRA executive director and Curtis Horne, our new State President will both be attending and have some valuable information to share with us about the upcoming legislative session.. When I heard Dr. Burke speak at our last NW-1 coordinating council meeting on October 2, he shared some interesting facts about our lack of COLA funding by the last legislature.

b) We plan to host some speakers this winter and spring. This is in response to the survey that was done last summer and reported in our last newsletter.

3. Guidance from you:

I/we the Board need some direction from you as to what type of speaker/s you would like to have at these meetings. During our working days in education, many of us contributed to the United Way, which supports services for helping to find volunteer placement work and also provides assistance to those who are in need of help. (This could especially include those of us that retired years ago and have lost purchasing power due to a lack of COLA.) Would you like to hear from a speaker about either volunteering or assistance that is available? Would you like to hear from a fellow educator who wrote a book about the impact of internment on a Japanese man and his family during WWII? Do you have some other topic that you would especially like to hear more about; would you rather have these meetings during the day or evening? Please e-mail me your thoughts at **bnpboyer@msn.com** so that we can tailor our speakers to best suit your interests during this upcoming winter and spring.

Thanks in advance for your input, **Bruce Boyer, Unit 21 President**

WSSRA Skagit-Island-San Juan Counties Unit 21 presents:

Holiday Luncheon

Date: December 6, 2017
Time: 11:30 am

Place: Skagit Golf and Country Club
16701 Country Club Drive

Come join us for the festivities!

Burlington, Washington

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer: As of July 10, 2017



Checking Balance : \$2309.59 (Funds used for ongoing expenses of Unit 21)

Savings Balance: \$10978.05 (Funds earmarked for scholarship, mini-grants, and community charities; includes money donated for that purpose, money donated as a memorial for a deceased member and a percentage of dues received).

Barbara Landrock, Treasurer

Correspondence/Memorial: The Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21 of the Washington State School Retirees' Association remember our friends and former members :



Renee Smith, Coupeville, WA

Rucilla Bidwell, Mount Vernon

Pat Odlin, Sedro Woolley, WA

Barbara Dow, Mount Vernon

Eloise Stendal, Correspondence Chair

Grants: Mini-grants of \$100 for active school employees were available from October 6 to 20, 2017. Thanks to donations from Skagit-Island-San Juan School Retirees members and the money from our dues, we are able to fund 25 mini-grants this fall.



The committee enjoyed reading all the wonderful ideas presented by those who sent in application. Several members had the pleasure of awarding these grants in person by visiting the schools, plus they get to hear about other wonderful activities that enhance the student's education. Visits to Seattle Museums, headphones for each student, power tools for shop projects, electronic scales for science projects, P.E. equipment, specific books for highly capable readers, and scholarships for those needing support to attend activities like Mountain School are just a few of the valuable and worthwhile activities we help to support. This is an important venue and maintains our feelings about being a part of the education of our young people.

Joyce Moon, Mini Grant Chair,, Barbara Robinson, Membership Chair, Diane Visten, Scholarship Chair, Bruce Boyer, Unit 21 President

Health: Fall is in full swing, meaning colorful foliage, delicious pumpkin treats, and cooler weather. While you may be celebrating the end of summer, it is important to remember that cooler weather can also mean greater risk of getting sick. Cooler weather weakens our immune systems and makes us more susceptible to illness and infection. In addition cool weather toughens the outer shell of viruses making it easier for them to travel from person to person. To add to our risk, ones immune system is further weakened by advanced aging. All that adds to up greater risk for those of us in the senior age category to become ill when the weather turns cooler. For those on Medicare the program recommends that you receive at least the following four vaccines: **Influenza, Shingles, Hepatitis B, and Pneumococcal**. In addition you may want to consider immunization for Tetanus, Meningitis, Chickenpox, Hepatitis A based on your risk of exposure to these conditions. As in all medical issues, consult with your primary care physician and follow their advice.



Historian: Bonnie Greene continues the tradition of collecting documents and/or mementoes about Unit 21's activities in a scrapbook format. Members send pictures, and written material to her for organization and preservation. The books are then stored at the Sedro Woolley Museum.



Retirement: Know anyone who is retiring within the next few years? It's never too early for them to start planning! Let them know about Unit 21's retirement seminar on **March 9, 2018, 5:00–8:30 pm** at NW ESD in Anacortes. This **FREE seminar** is open to all school employees. The featured presenters are Larry Cade, Health Care Authority and Eric Mathieu, Retirement Plan Counselor for the State of WA Deferred Compensation and Defined Contribution Plan, Dept. of Retirement Services. Registration information will be sent to schools the last week of January.



Lonnie Keown, Retirement Chair

Newsletter: Hello, I am your new newsletter "editor" and want to invite each and every one of you to feel free to contribute interesting articles, advertise events, and participate in the production of this communication. **We need your input to make this a successful venture.** Please let me know what you like/don't like. You can reach me at joycevmoon@gmail.com. I will be looking forward to hearing from you. **Thank you.**



Committee reports continued

Legislative:



On July 20th of 2017 the longest session in Washington State history adjourned, after three separate 30 day special sessions that reached an amazing 193 days. Bitterly divided, the two sides finally made drastic changes in the way public schools are funded and organized. Sadly, they totally forgot the retired school employees in their decision, making no forward progress concerning our legislative goals.

Committee member, Tim Knopf, recently met with some legislators from the 21st, 38th, and 44th districts in order to clarify their impressions of the past session and the future for school retirees. Communication with legislators is even more important now, since the capital budget has not been passed. The two sides are at an impasse over water rights, with the Supreme Courts' Hirst Decision at the center of the argument.

House Democrats have proposed a two year moratorium on the decision and Senate Republicans chose to hold out on a "permanent fix". Thus the \$4 billion public construction budget, which includes \$1 billion for schools and puts 10,000 jobs on hold, has not been implemented.

Thus, we feel that telling individual stories to legislator is even more crucial, as the two parties are ideologically divided more than ever. If they hear who we are, and what we care about, it may be harder for them to ignore our issues.

We encourage all members to call, write and e-mail your legislators, in districts 10, 38, 40, 42, and 44 loudly and often. Our voices may be getting older, but we can still be heard, and we need to remember that not "losing anything" is still a loss, since members have been without a COLA since 2010 and the cost of living keeps increasing. Lets make sure that legislators hear from MANY WSSRA members, not just the legislative committee and our lobbyists. They do their best, but YOU are the backbone of the group and we need you

Bruce Boyer, Diane Visten, Barbara Robinson, Legislative Committee Members

Membership: Membership is one of the most important aspects of our organization. It gives us a voice in our own future and our retirement benefits. Unit 21 currently has 548 members, a decrease of 10 from last year. You, as a member of WSSRA, can "talk up" the benefits of membership to help us increase that number! Ask a friend, or that school employee that is still working, to join. It just takes one to enroll one! There is a membership form in your journal, or you can contact babsann09@comcast.net for a form. WSSRA's goal is to maintain and improve pension benefits for ALL school retirees.



Barbara Robinson, Membership Chair, Past Unit 21 Co-President

Outreach:



1) Unit 21 continues to work with the local foodbanks. We collect food and personal hygiene products at every meeting. They are then taken to the central distribution point in Sedro-Woolley and transported to the foodbank of our choice. The collection to be taken in December is earmarked for the Sedro Woolley foodbank.

Reidar Ytgard, Outreach Chair

2) To Be Informed or not to be informed!

In the spirit of the above Skagit-Island-San Juan School retirees Unit 21 continued their partnership with the League of Women Voters of Skagit County to host two events that provided a chance for the public to be informed about their local candidates. On September 14th League and Retiree members hosted a Meet and Greet the Candidates of Anacortes. Candidates for the City of Anacortes and Port Authority spoke for three minutes on questions that were presented to them before-hand. They each then joined a small group of public attendees to speak to questions in a more informal way.

On October 9th, at the Burlington Public Library, candidates for City Councils from Sedro Woolley, Burlington, and Mount Vernon had the opportunity to also speak to questions presented to them ahead of time and then join small groups for more personal conversions. It was like speed dating the candidates as our moderator timed the small groups, rang a bell and we exchanged candidates. This way we were able to speak to each and every candidate.

This was a great way to hold a "forum", as it encouraged participation due to the small group setting and helped those who may have felt constrained to speak out in a larger arena. It was my experience that it made a difference in the way I would vote. Hearing each candidate cleared up many questions of "are they qualified" or do they have the "experience or maturity" to fill the duties of the office. It was informative and fun to be a part of the event. Next year we plan to sponsor more of this kind of event so keep watching and plan to attend.

Barbara Robinson, Membership Chair, Legislative Committee

“Refrigerator Poster” SISJSRA Calendar

Event	Date	Time	Location
Unit 21 Holiday Lunch 	December 6, 2017	11:30 am	Skagit Golf and Country Club 16701 Country Club Drive Burlington, WA
NW-1 Coordinating Council Meeting (lunch provided for Unit 21 members)	January 8, 2018	9:30 am	Royal Star Buffet Restaurant 2300 Freeway Drive Mount Vernon, WA
Unit 21 SISJ Board Meeting	February 19, 2018	10:00 am	Creekside Continuing Care Community 400 Gilkey Road Burlington, WA
Retirement Seminar	March 9, 2018	5:30-8:30 pm	Northwest ESD #189 1601 “R” Avenue Anacortes, WA
WSSRA Annual State Convention	June 4-6		Wenatchee, Washington

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If you would like this service please contact:

Bruce Boyer
bnpboyer@msn.com
Thank You!

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please let us know if you have moved and have a new address.

Send new addresses or contact information to :

babsann09@comcast.net
Or
bnpboyer@msn.com
Thank you!

Please support your **WSSR-PAC** with a check today. Your dues do not go to support this valuable service; they depend totally on fund raising events and individual contributions. Make checks payable to:

WSSRA-PAC Treasurer :
WSSRA-PAC
1928 Circle Loop
Lacey, WA 98503

November is the month to review your health coverage. Open enrollment is from November 1-30 and is your only chance to change your coverage. Your Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) has announced the following changes for 2018: Medical plan benefits, medical and dental plan premiums, contribution amounts for the health savings account (HAS) and PEB Board policy resolutions. If you have questions about your plan contact the PEBB Program at 1-800-200-1004 or your plan directly.

During the open enrollment period you can learn more about your health plan and other insurance options by attending one of the PEBB Program benefits fairs. You can pick up information and speak personally with representatives from the health plans, the PEBB Program, Department of Retirement Systems, and other vendors that administer benefits for PEBB members. Benefit Fairs in our area are:

Mount Vernon, WA

Nov.16, 2017—1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
 Best Western Plus, Skagit Valleys Inn Convention Center
 Fidalgo Room
 2300 Market Street
 (Retiree Presentation: 2 to 3 p.m. , San Juan Room)

Bellingham, WA

Nov. 16, 2017—8:3— to 11 a.m.
 Western Washington University
 Viking Union Building, Rooms C120 A & B
 3000 Landerholm Circle SE
 (Retiree Presentation: 9 to 10 a.m., Rooms 565 A/B/C)



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Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21
WSSRA School Retirees'
P. O. Box 66 U.S.
Burlington, WA 98233



*Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21
Washington State School Retirees' Association*

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

When: December 6, 2017

Where: Skagit Golf and Country Club

Time: 11:30 am

16701 Country Club Drive

Cost: \$17.00

Burlington, Washington



Menu: Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetable, Rolls, Butter, Coffee
Cake to be provided by Unit 21

Entertainment: Celtic music by "Ceol Charaid" (Music duo in Gaelic)

Activity: Basket raffle for the benefit of the mini grant program

Food Bank Contribution: Please donate items of food and/or personal hygiene products for those in need.

RSVP to Diane Visten at dvisten@wavecable.com or phone 360-387-1348 no later than December 1, 2017

*Please remember that we pay for the number of reservations made and if you do not keep your reservation it costs the unit money that would go to fund a special project in the classroom.
Thank you*

*We hope to see you all! For a
joyous time together*