



Skagit-Island-San Juan
Unit 21
School Retirees' Association
February, 2109



**WSSRA Unit 21
Board Members/Contacts**

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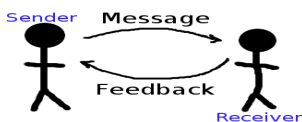
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babsann09@comcast.com

Social Media Addresses

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



President's Message

Put the following date and time on your calendar: Saturday, **March 23, 2019;** **11:00 am.** Your WSSRA Skagit/Island/San Juan Unit 21 will again be hosting a general membership meeting at the Royal Star Buffet in Mount Vernon. We will have two speakers, with the main one being Sandra Vea, a fellow educator from Snohomish County that I worked with at Mariner High School. She will talk about her book: Masao: A Nisei Soldier's Secret and Heroic Role in WWII. In this book she follows a Japanese/American named Masao Abe through his family's internment and Masao's joining the U.S. Army and serving in the Military Intelligence Service in the South Pacific during WWII.

The second speaker will be Diane Visten, who will share with us the current status of WSSRA supported bills in the Washington State Legislature. Diane and Barbara Robinson traveled to Olympia at the end of January (see their article in this newsletter) and they will share current information with us about their experience as citizen lobbyists in Olympia.

This general membership meeting is open to all WSSRA members and any of your former colleagues. We encourage you to bring a friend and share this time with former coworkers and catch up with what is happening this legislative session as well as reconnect with former friends. Cost of this event will, again, be **\$5 for each attendee** with your unit paying for the additional \$5+ for your meal, beverage, and dessert. **We hope to see you there.**

Also, as a reminder, your WSSRA Unit 21 is hosting a **Retirement Seminar at the Burlington Public Library on Friday, March 8, 2019 from 5-8:30 pm.** This seminar is aimed toward those in TRS and PERS Plans 2 and 3. It is free to those attending. Main speakers will be: Eric Mathieu, a retirement counselor for the State of Washington, and Jamie Lane and Jeff Dixon, specialists from the state Health Care Authority, I attended this seminar last year (with these same speakers) and was amazed at the depth and breadth of the material they covered. I found myself wishing that I had attended one like it earlier during my own career. Bruce Boyer, Unit 21

Volunteer Opportunities:

Skagit/Island/San Juan Unit 21 WSSRA—Unit 21 is currently in need of volunteers for the following positions:

- Treasurer,
- Historian,
- Retirement Seminar Coordinator

Museum of Northwest Art (MONA) -

- New Tour Leaders (to work with and connect public school students to the world of art). Contact person: Marlene Vioria (marlenev@museumofnwart.org). General information available at info@museumofnwart.org

Mid Winter Report of Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21 Activities

At our general membership meeting on **November 5, 2018** the superintendent of the Mount Vernon School District, Doctor Carl Bruner, was our main speaker. For those of you who were not there, he pointed out that the MVSD has 975 employees and is the 3rd largest employer in Skagit County. In dealing with the changes in growth and ethnicity of the student population (over 55% of the students are Hispanic or multiracial and 69% qualify for free/reduced lunch), the district is working to remove barriers to opportunity and he shared with us some examples of how they are doing that. Later in the week I was able to walk the campus at MVHS prior to presenting two of our mini-grants to staff during their staff meeting. It was a rewarding experience all the way around. The students that I met on campus were polite and courteous. The staff was welcoming to me and, best of all, the two recipients of a mini-grant were thrilled to receive the \$150 to be used to help them work with students.

During our November board meeting your board revised how we deal with the death of one of our members. In the past money was transferred from our savings account to our scholarship fund in memory of the deceased member. Now we will give the donation to the WSSRA Scholarship Foundation in their name. We will also have that person's name listed in the quarterly WSSRA Journal through that donation. We know that some of our members don't live in our area anymore and this should help them keep current as well as be a state wide recognition of those we lose over time. A final thought is that if you know of a member or former colleague's passing please contact me so that we can be sure to have that information. Don't worry if you are not sure they are a member of WSSRA, as we do have a monthly membership list to refer to.

Our Holiday Luncheon was held on **December 5, 2018** at the Skagit Golf and Country Club. The meal was a traditional turkey dinner and our entertainment, provided by Kelly Visten and Ria Vanderpool, added a very festive holiday feel as they sang and led us in a sing along. Guest speakers were our WSSRA president, Linda Averill, and legislative director, Peter Diedrick. As is our tradition, guests brought food items to be donated to the valley food banks

Bruce Boyer, Unite 21 President

Unit 21 Business/Committee Reports

Treasurer Report—August 27, 2018

Checking account =

Savings account =

Upcoming Unit 21 Meetings:

- February 12, 2019—Board Meeting at Bruce's home, Stanwood, WA
- March 8, 2019—Retirement Seminar At the Burlington Public Library, 820 E. Washington, Burlington, WA
- March 23, 2019—General meeting at the Royal Star Buffett, Mount Vernon, 11:00 am

Coordinating Council Meetings (at the Royal Star in Mount Vernon, 9:30 am)

- March 11, 2019

We fondly remember those of our members who have passed away.:

*Janet Booth Jean Copeland Allen Evans Margaret Gangler Anne Gillett
Geraldine Hofer Dorothy Latting Berniece Leaf Charles Martin
Dixie Otis Terrance Schlosser Eloise Stendal Gary Storme*

A donation has been made to the WSSRA Scholarship Foundation in honor of each of these individuals.

Retirement Seminar: Do you know someone who is thinking about retirement or maybe even it's you. Join us for our Retirement Seminar, **March 8 at the Burlington Public Library, 5:00 to 8:30 pm**. Our presenters include Eric Mathieu, Retirement Plan Counselor for the State of Washington. He will cover defined benefits, defined contributions, and deferred compensation plans. Also presenting will be Jamie Lane, Benefits Rep from the Health Care Authority. Topics to be covered include eligibility for PEEB retiree benefits, health care options, rates and timelines.

The program is offered **FREE** but we request that you register so that we can make sure enough seating and handouts are available. Register by email to lonnie.keown@gmail.com. Registration information will be in all schools by February 6, 2019.

SENIORS MATTER! That is the cry of your WSSRA Legislative Committee for the 2019 session in Olympia. Diane Visten and Barbara Robinson joined other dedicated citizen lobbyists in spreading our message to legislators from all over the state. We visited Representatives and Senators from the 10th, 39th, 40th, and 42nd districts armed with a few letters from constituents and our desire to acquaint them, (or re-acquaint them) with our goals for this session.

1. TRS and PERS 1 Cola of 3%. Already there are two bills toward that aim, HB 1390 and SB 5400, sponsored by Senator Barbara Bailey.
2. Restore Retiree Healthcare Benefits from the present \$168 per month to \$183 per month
3. Improve Retirement Plans 2 and 3 by lowering the age of retirement from 62 to 60. HB 1388 and SB 5430 will accomplish this goal, if passed.
4. Protect Retirees in Transition to New Health Providers. SEBB is being studied as an option for the future and there are some problems which need to be solved before this occurs. Any changes must maintain or improve current benefits for retirees.

We both enjoyed meeting several new legislators from the 40th (Debra Lekanoff), 42nd (Sharon Shewmake), and 10th (Dave Paul) districts. We were not able to visit with Robert Sutherland from the 39th and hope to meet him in March when we return to Olympia.

Visiting with them and veteran legislators gave us hope that this session could be a time where we are successful in achieving many of our goals. We must be a priority and deserve equity was our refrain, and all seemed to agree. Stressing how much buying power we have lost since 2011 was another point we shared.

We urge you, as concerned retirees, to keep track of the bills being considered in the legislature by checking online at the leg.wa.gov/legislature website and also to find your legislator at leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/address. Please contact your legislator with your concerns, and let them know that this is our year! The toll-free number is 1-800-562-6000. Messages are even more effective than e-mails.

We will be returning to Olympia in March and hope to be able to report many positive things, but your help is invaluable in bringing progress to all retirees. **We need your help.**

Diane Visten and Barbara Robinson, Legislative Committee,

It Makes A Difference! Now is the time to write, call, or email your WA State Senator and Representative in support of these bills!

Not sure who represents you? Use the contact information below to help you.

State Legislature: All cards to Representatives are to PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 989504

10th District

Sen. Barbara Bailey (R)[®]
407 Legislative Bldg.
Cherberg Bldg
PO Box 40410
360-786-7618

Rep. Norma Smith (R)
435 JLOB Bldg
360-786-7884

Rep. Dave Paul (D)
309 JLOB Bldg
360-786-7884

39th District

Sen. Keith Wagoner (R)[®]
109 A Irv Newhouse Bldg
PO Box 40439
Olympia, WA 98504
360-786-7676

Rep. Robert Sutherland (R)[®]
405 JLOB Bldg
360-786-7961

Rep. Carolyn Eslick (R)[®]
409 JLOB Bldg
360-786-7961

40th District

Sen. (to be determined)
215 John A
PO Box 40440
Olympia, WA 98504
360-786-7678

Rep. Debra Lekanoff (D)
422 JLOB Bldg
360-786-7800

Rep. Jeff Morris (D)
436 A Legislative Bldg
360-786-7970

District Finder:
Washington State Legislature

PRSR1 Auto U.S Postage PAID
Bow, WA Permit No. 5

Skagit-Island-San Juan Unit 21
WSSRA School Retirees'
5024 324th St NW



Your
Skagit/Island/San Juan
Unit 21 Legislative
Committee Members braving
the rigors of cold weather and
elusive legislators in Olympia
during the January 2019
session.