



Skagit-Island-San Juan

Unit 21

Washington State School Retirees' Association

November 2020



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**Now is the
time to
review your
medical
coverage.**

President's Report

We are trying to get this newsletter out earlier than planned in order to get some timely medical insurance information out to you before the end of Nov. WSSRA recently did a **Health Care (PEBB) webinar** featuring Ellen Wolfhagen, the senior account manager for state employee medical coverage. If you missed it, you can go to our **WSSRA.org** website and find and watch the recorded webinar. If you find that you would like to have the power point sheets in your hand, you can email Bruce Boyer and he can send them to you as an attachment to your email request. The long and short of it is that **PEBB now has a new medical insurance plan available that is similar to the current Uniform medical option, but a lower premium.** You will need to do your own comparisons to determine if you want to change plans before Nov. 30.

Other news is now that I am the president elect for WSSRA, I get to be on more committees as well as the Executive Board. Thus I will have more up to date information that I will be able to pass along to you. This also means that more of my time will be spent working outside of our unit, which means *we have an increasing need for our unit members to help keep us moving forward.* It doesn't take a lot of time, just being available to give input to the board, which we are doing via ZOOM. Or maybe you would be interested in being our treasurer, historian or willing to help one of our committee chairs. During this COVID isolation time, I find working with our Unit 21 a good way to be in touch with others which, as a by product, gives me a positive energy from knowing that I am doing something to make a difference for others.

One more item to pass along is that Bill De Hon, our Unit's financial guru has recently been named to the WSSRA Finance Committee. Unit 21 has several members who are active on WSSRA State Committees. Barbara Robinson, Diane Visten and I are active on the Legislative Committee. Barbara Robinson is also serving on the Membership Committee. Diane Visten is involved on the Retirement Committee. We are proud of our Unit's active involvement on these committees and their commitment to the betterment and protection of your retirement benefits.

On November 9, several of us joined forces with other friends of Gay Barker and did a "drive by" to help her celebrate her 90th birthday.

Bruce Boyer, Unit 21 President



A strong and sturdy crew to help a very special person celebrate a very special birthday during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021





Thinking About Retirement??

Pre-Retirement Zoom Webinar
Thursday, February 18th, 2021

5:00-7:30 PM

Sponsored by WSSRA

Certificated and Classified Employees: If you are within 1-5 years of retirement, you will want to attend this virtual webinar to learn about your retirement plans (Plan 2 or Plan 3), medical/dental options, sick leave buyout (VEBA), Social Security options, and Medicare.

The seminar will feature presentations from the following agencies:

- WA State Dept. of Retirement Systems (Plan 2 and Plan 3)
- WA State Health Care Authority, PEBB (your medical/dental options)
- Social Security and Medicare
- VEBA: Your sick leave buyout options

To register email Tara@wssra.org.

An agenda with Zoom instructions will be sent out before the event.





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

Annabelle Birkestol of Stanwood, WA

Patricia Kelly of Woodenville, WA

Carol Kirby of Yuma, AZ

Alfred Bonnelle of Seattle, WA

Talton Johnson of Issaquah, WA

Arnold Torseth of Mount Vernon, WA

It Is That Time!

Skagit/Island/San Juan School Retirees' Membership Drive

We are offering you, our active member, the opportunity to support our membership drive by making each of you this proposal:

You, as an active member can reach out to your co-workers, be they co-teacher, secretary, bus driver, kitchen crew or any other school employee. We cannot come into the buildings at this time but you, as an active WSSRA member, can communicate with those prospective members .

When you, as an active WSSRA, Unit 21 member, use the enclosed ADD form and gain a new member you will receive a \$10.00 cash bonus. If you can recruit more than one new member you will receive the same \$10 bonus for each member you recruit. In addition each potential new member that fills out and sends in the ADD form will also receive a \$10.00 cash bonus. What a win-win situation for all involved!

Enclosed you will find an ADD form and a brochure that explains just who we are and why this is a good way to invest just \$7.00 per month in one's future. It will be time well spent and the bonus (besides the \$10 cash) is that we will be adding more voices/power to those that speak to our legislators when it comes time to protect and improve our pension benefits.

Questions? Thoughts? Call me at 360-708-9046 or email at babsann09@comcast.net.

Barbara Robinson, Membership Chair, Skagit, Island, San Juan WSSRA Unit 21

Mini-Grant Program

Skagit/Island/San Juan Unit 21 is pleased to tell all you faithful members that your dues went to support 28 mini-grant requests that represented six school districts, nine schools and 28 classrooms or programs. Applications were submitted by one superintendent, two principals and one school librarian as well as classroom teachers and paraeducators. . The requests ranged from the usual classroom enrichment items/programs to more basic help to offset the unusual circumstances we all find ourselves in during this pandemic. Many requests asked for support for the poorest and neediest of their students such as basic food, clothing, and shelter. It became abundantly clear how needy and at-risk our students are. Many find themselves without permanent (let alone safe) homes. Many are lacking regular meals and depend on their school districts for food. Attendance for the classrooms that are open is sporadic due to some of the personal safety issues the students, and parents, find themselves facing.

All requests were amazing in the strategies that our on-the-job school personnel are improvising and implementing in their attempt to offset the hardships their students are undergoing.

The total requests funded were \$5580.00. Thank you, each and every one, for your contribution to this program.

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WSSRA School Retirees'
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Ho Ho Ho! In past years at this time we would be getting ready for our annual Holiday Luncheon, and preparing goodies to take for baskets. Alas, this year is not an ordinary one, so we are wishing all of our members and friends a Merry Christmas” from afar----

However ———We can still enjoy the Christmas spirit of giving by substituting a donation to a local food bank, or a local charity that needs our help. Don't forget the red pots in front of the stores as well. We all have much to be thankful for, in spite of our enforced distances and we urge all of our members to give generously in that spirit.

Next year will be a better one for us all, we hope, and so, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your friends in Unit 21 ! HO HO HO!

May you all have a safe and happy holiday season!