

# NEWSLETTER



## Washington State School Retirees' Association

Rather than the usual president's message I've decided to share a story. It is our hope that other members will share with us those moments that make life so interesting. I know there must be a ton of stories out there, especially from the unusual year we have had.

During 40 years of teaching I certainly took my share of field trips with my class. One would think that having a day without lesson plans would be easy and relaxing but somehow I was usually more exhausted when we returned to school. Over the years there were unexpected things such as a bus driver that insisted her way to biotech company we were touring near Lake Union was better than the directions I had been given. We wound up getting wedged between delivery trucks in a busy alley near the stadiums. I even got left behind one time when both bus drivers assumed I was on the other bus. My most unusual field trip, however was over 40 years ago but it still sticks in my memory, as you will see.

It was a trip to the Seattle Aquarium. The visit itself was enjoyable with only one incident. The bus driver had asked one of the parents to put the keys to her new car in their purse for safe keeping. Unfortunately, while getting something out of her purse and the keys fell down a grate into who knows what. The bus driver's husband had an extra set and could meet her at the bus barn, so all was not lost but we should have known that was an omen for what was to come.

On the return trip the bus got too close and took off a car's mirror on 2nd Ave. After a difficult time finding a spot to pull over she and I returned to exchange information. While we were settling the matter a parent came running and said the bus was filling up with smoke - should they get the kids off? To this day, I still think that was the strangest question.

So here we were with a disabled bus and sixty 1st and 2nd graders on a sidewalk in what one could call not the nicest part of Seattle. We would need to wait for a new bus to come and get us. Of course, it also started to rain and we became very interesting & magnetic to people passing on the street. Luckily, a minister who was locking up a mission across the street saw our plight and offered the building as a place to stay until our bus came if we would lock up. It was now pouring and we gladly accepted.

We arrived back at school after 5 PM and some kids had parents waiting for them. The others needed to be dropped off at their homes. At the time most of our clientele lived in a new development called Mill Creek. This was not our bus driver's usual route and 40 years ago Mill Creek's subdivisions were a complex maze to me. It didn't help that only a few of the 6 and 7 year olds knew where they actually lived. It was 7:30 when we dropped the last child off. The bus driver was turning around in a cul-de-sac when there was a crash of breaking glass at the back of the bus. Some teenagers had thrown a rock and were running into the woods. I still remember the bus driver's last words when she dropped me off at school "next time you have a field trip could you please specifically request not to have me?"

So what's your story? Please share. Contact David Davis (editor) at [veto55@comcast.net](mailto:veto55@comcast.net) or myself, Ken at [kenwes55@comcast.net](mailto:kenwes55@comcast.net)

### Join us for "brunch" at Sno-Isle's first Zoom gathering.

Arthur Krull is a native of Seattle and a graduate of the University of Washington. He has had a successful career as a civil, military, and commercial pilot. His being hijacked to Cuba in 1980, while as a Second Officer on a Delta Airlines flight, changed his life. In the years since, he has told the story of his hijacking as a motivational speaker to audiences who've often encourage him to write a book about the experience.

Now retired, Art lives with his wife near Paine Field in Everett, where he began his flying in 1967. He is a Volunteer Ambassador at the Boeing Future of Flight Aviation Center, and he writes articles about aviation for its volunteer newsletter.

**Autographed copy of Hijacked available at [www.aviation-stories.net](http://www.aviation-stories.net) and at Amazon.**

WSSRA is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Sno-Isle Brunch Club

Time: Apr 20, 2021 10:30 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95277449868?pwd=SUVqcitCSG9mUE5QUUnQxUEpjS2Yxdz09>

By phone:

+1 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 952 7744 9868

Passcode: 599720

## Legislative Report for March 27, 2021

The 2021 session of the Washington State Legislature has rounded its final turn and begun its plunge toward the finish line. At the time of this writing (March 27) it is day 76 of the regular 105-day session. This past Thursday afternoon the Senate released its 944-page operating budget proposal to spend \$59.2 billion over the next two years. The following afternoon the House released its \$58 billion operating budget proposal. (For the purpose of comparison, our current biennial budget is \$53.7 billion.)

A major element of the session's remaining days will be the largely secret budget negotiations between Senate and House leadership to reach a budget on which both houses can agree. With the two plans separated by a billion dollars, leaders will have much to discuss.

The proposals from both houses rely on an unexpectedly good recent revenue forecast for the next two years and on a controversial 7% tax on capital gains over \$250,000. That bill passed the Senate in a 25-24 vote and is currently in the House Appropriations Committee. If passed into law, the capital gains tax will likely be challenged in court by opponents who see it as the first step toward an eventual state income tax.

WSSRA Legislative Committee members happily learned on Friday afternoon of two very exciting and positive aspects of the Senate Operating Budget Proposal. The \$183 per month PEBB Medical Benefit seems safe for the next two years. Even more thrilling is the Senate's proposal to not just make the state's actuarially recommended payment toward the pension fund but to pay an amazing \$800 million toward the underfunded TRS-1 retirement plan deficit. That deficit is currently \$2.8 billion, so if this proposal makes it into the final state budget (if, if, if!), it could knock that deficit down by over 28%. That would reduce the surcharge that the state has to pay on the underfunded plan, saving the state money, and would speed up the time by which the TRS-1 plan will be made whole again. That should make it much easier in the future to ask for an ongoing Cost of Living Adjustment for Plan 1 members!

As of today, we don't know what the House's proposed budget has in store for retired school employees. How budget negotiations will affect retired school employees lies in the murky future. As you can imagine, everything is completely fluid now as new insights are revealed daily. However, late Thursday, WSSRA Executive Director Alan Burke was so pleased by the Senate's budget proposal that he issued a memo to WSSRA Executive Board Members praising the efforts of Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair Christine Rolfe and Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig.

Meanwhile several bills of political allies that we support for being beneficial to retirees are making good progress. These include:

### **Senate Bill 5021- *Eliminating Pension Reductions from 2020 Furloughs***

(It passed the Senate and also just passed the House by 65-32.)

### **Senate Bill 5203- *Drug Bulk Purchasing Arrangements***

(It passed the Senate and is scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee March 30<sup>th</sup>.)

### **House Bill 1218- *Long-Term Care Patients' Bill of Rights***

(It passed the House and is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on March 31<sup>st</sup>.)

### **House Bill 1438- *Expanding Senior Property Tax Exemptions***

(This bill passed the House and was voted out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and on to the Senate Rules Committee on March 19<sup>th</sup>, a prelude to a possible floor vote.)

### **House Bill 1336- *Treating Broadband as a Utility***

(This bill passed the House and was referred to the Senate Rules Committee on March 26<sup>th</sup>)

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Several critical procedural deadlines have been passed by this point, causing a number of good bills that we supported to sadly fall victim and die for the remainder of this session. These include:

**House Bill 1032- *Reducing Early Retirement Penalties During the Covid-19 Pandemic***

**House Bill 1040- *Providing PEBB Retiree Health Plan Access for Members Locked Out***

**Senate Bill 5020- *Penalties for Unnecessary Drug Price Increases***

**Senate Bill 5075- *Expanding Pharmacy Access***

**Senate Bill 5076- *Reducing Mail Order Prescription Costs***

**House Bill 1420- *Prioritizing K-12 Staff for Covid-19 Vaccine***

**House Bill 1460- *Expanding Internet and Phone Access to Seniors***

As stated earlier, right now everything is in flux and changing with astounding speed. That makes it difficult to report accurately. A good source of up-to-date information are the Legislative Insights released by WSSRA Peter Diedrick on the WSSRA Website at [wssra.org](http://wssra.org). Please know that your WSSRA leadership and Legislative Committee will continue to do their best on your behalf right through to the end of the session.

Respectfully Submitted by Tim Knopf

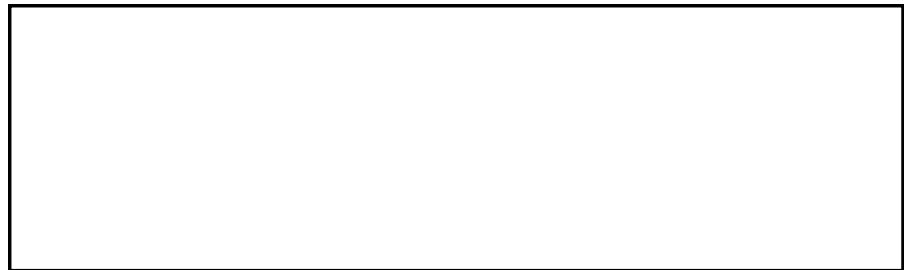
**SNO-ISLE  
WSSRA UNIT #22**

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**2019-2020 SNO-ISLE REPRESENTATIVES TO STATE WSSRA**

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Tim Knopf, Legislative Committee  
Kay Bishop, District 1 Representative