

# Bits & Pieces

[www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/](http://www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/) September 2022

Unit 28 of the Washington State School Retirees' Association

*Serving retired and active school employees and our community.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As incoming president, I appreciate the opportunity to serve you, and I request your support.

A successful organization depends on all of its leaders and the behind-the-scenes workers, who may not want to be out-front in their service. Thank you to those who have agreed to assume leadership positions this coming year as officers and committee chairs, as well as in state association roles. I have to admit filling some of the unit positions has been a challenge for the nominating committee and for me. Therefore, I am grateful to you who will serve with me. At this writing we have two remaining positions to fill, vice-president and hospitality committee chair. Also, Southwest 4 Coordinating Council is without a chair. As we enter our 68th year as an organization, I am hopeful that we can inspire members to take on leadership roles.

An underlying theme for the year that I am personally adopting is **developing and sustaining relationships**. As educators we recognize the importance of relationships in teaching students and reaching them where they are in their development and experience. We also recognize that relationships are key to building and supporting professional learning teams among the faculty and staff in a school or a district. So, please join the TCSRA Board and me this year in developing and sustaining relationships so that we can be successful in our work while having fun along the way.

Thank you for your dedication to students and education throughout your careers and for your years of service. May we continue to make an impact in our world of education.

*Sue Shannon, TCSRA President*

## WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU ... IN PERSON!

Yes, that's right! We plan to meet in person this year. Our first luncheon will be an informal picnic so that we can renew old acquaintances, make new acquaintances, and catch-up with all the news of our unit!

We will be meeting at the Woodland Creek Community Park adjacent to the Lacey Community Center. We will be serving boxed lunches from Bayview Catering.

Subsequent luncheons will be held at the Embers Restaurant at Indian Summer Golf and Country Club. We have an exciting slate of programs. For a list, check page 9 in your new 2022-2023 directory.

Prices have increased this year. In order to keep costs at \$20, the Unit will pick up all fees and gratuities.

As always we are concerned with the well-being of our members. We encourage everyone to continue safety measures such as vaccination, handwashing, wearing masks, and staying home if you are ill.

We look forward to seeing you soon. Bring a friend and be sure to make your reservation! [See page 2.]

*Hospitality Committee*

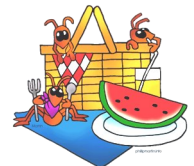
**Friday, September 16, 2022**

**It's a picnic!**

**Woodland Creek Community Park, Shelter B  
Luncheon at Noon**

**Boxed lunches, catered by  
Bayview**

**\$20 per person**



## LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS



I will be sending out emails to remind you of our upcoming luncheon. Please respond to that email if you plan to attend. Our callers will also contact those people who do not have email. Remember that we need our luncheon reservation counts by noon on Friday, September 9, prior to the luncheon. If you **do not receive a call or an email**, or if you **need to cancel or add** a reservation after that date, email me at [dazicar88@gmail.com](mailto:dazicar88@gmail.com), or call me at **253-381-2592 no later than noon on Friday**. Please do not call the restaurant with reservation changes.

If you have special dietary concerns, please let me know.

If you would like to be added to the email list for notification, please send me your email address at [dazicar88@gmail.com](mailto:dazicar88@gmail.com).

*ZiNita Carrell, Telephone/Email Committee Chair*

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT



**Welcome Back – It's Election Season.** Why does autumn always come so fast? The legislative calendar is not dissimilar to the school calendar. Analysts and bill

drafters have returned from summer break and are getting ready for the 2023 legislative session.

In May, this newsletter explained that WSSRA had two tasks to complete over the summer: requesting another Plan 1 COLA and building support for retirees by working with candidates for the legislature. Progress has been made on both fronts.

The Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) started meeting in May this year. The committee is poised to recommend that the legislature pass another Plan 1 COLA. The specifics have not yet been determined. The SCPP has Plan 1 COLA issues on the tentative agenda for the September, October, and November meetings. This is an excellent time to weigh in. If you want the pension committee to address this Plan 1 issue, please send your comments to [state.actuary@leg.wa.gov](mailto:state.actuary@leg.wa.gov) or State Actuary, P.O. Box 40914, Olympia WA 98504-0914. All SCPP meetings are filmed on TVW and tvw.org.

WSSRA's units and the Washington State School Retirees' Political Action Committee (WSSR-PAC)

*(Continued on page 4; see LEGISLATIVE REPORT)*

## EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY SUPPORT



My plans for this article originally focused on an exploration of the idea of arming teachers to help keep our students safe in their schools. America's gun violence epidemic has negatively affected and caused long-lasting consequences for millions of American children.

While searching for information on the effectiveness (or not) of training and arming teachers, I discovered an organization by the name of "Everytown for Gun Safety Support." This large gun safety organization has joined together with the nation's largest educational unions (The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association) to craft a plan focused on intervention that can prevent mass shooting incidents and violence in American schools.

Everytown for Gun Safety Support also includes two groups: "Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America" and "Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America." Using data to paint the full picture of what gun violence looks like on school grounds, plus analyzing research and recommendations from school safety experts, this large group of concerned, dedicated, and knowledgeable people has crafted a plan focused on intervention that can help prevent mass shooting incidents and help end gun violence in our schools.

Some of the components of the plan include:

- Passing Red Flag Laws
- Encouraging Responsible Firearm Storage
- Raising the Age to Purchase Semiautomatic Firearms
- Requiring Background Checks on All Gun Sales
- Creating Threat Assessment Programs in Schools
- Implementing Expert-Endorsed School Security Upgrades
- Initiating Effective Emergency Planning
- Creating Safe and Equitable Schools

By the way, this group definitely does NOT endorse arming teachers! Put simply, an armed teacher cannot, in a moment of extreme duress and confusion, transform into a specially-trained law enforcement officer!

I highly recommend googling "Everytown for Gun Safety Support" to learn more about this important alliance.

*ZiNita Carrell, Education Co-chair*

Each month we will randomly draw the name of one of our “active” (not-yet-retired) members, who will receive a Starbucks gift card in the mail.



This month’s winner is:

**Tamara York**

**Tumwater School District**



Check this box each month to see if YOU are the lucky member.

## ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY MINI-GRANTS



**It’s Mini-Grant time!** If you know teachers or school employees in Thurston County with great ideas for helping students become more successful (and who doesn’t?), remind them to apply for a mini-grant. Applications can be completed on our website beginning **October 3, 2022**. Applications will close on **October 24, 2022**.

Applicants are asked to describe their project, detail the costs, and summarize how the project promotes student learning while meeting district goals.

Apply for elementary, middle, and high schools grants at [www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/](http://www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/)

*Nancy Zabel & Patti Colombo, Elementary Co-chairs*

*Karen Keller, Secondary Chair*

## UNIT MEMBERS NOMINATED FOR PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS



**Ann Chenhall** is our nominee for this year’s *Patrick Hoban Meritorious Award*. Nominees for this award are individuals who have given above and beyond to their units and to the association as a whole, inspiring others to serve.

**Pat Slosson** has been nominated for the *Stan McNaughton Outreach Award*. Nominees are individuals whose tireless and selfless work in the community raises the reputation of school retirees.



The TCSRA Board is pleased to nominate these two members. Recipients of these awards will be announced during the WSSRA Convention Monday night banquet on September 12. Previous unit recipients of these state level awards have been: **Joyce Gillie**, 2015; **Margaret Bland**, 2011; **Bruce Reeves**, 2009; **Gene Forrester**, 2007; **Winnie Olsen**, 2000; and **Mary Farrington**, 1997.

*TCSRA Executive Board*

## HEART HEALTH

Heart disease is this country’s number one killer. Cardiac arrest happens when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. It’s an electrical problem. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked and is a circulation problem. Eighty per cent of cardiovascular diseases may be preventable with education and simple changes in lifestyle.

Learn about your family’s heart history. Know about your risks for heart disease. Do you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or carry too much weight? Know your numbers:

Total cholesterol should be less than 200; body mass index (BMI)—between 18.5 and 24.9; blood pressure—less than 120/80; fasting blood sugar less than or equal to 100mg/dL.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms but raises your risk of stroke, heart attack, heart and kidney failure. High blood pressure occurs when the force of blood flowing through your veins is consistently too high. It can’t be cured, but can be managed. Nearly half of American adults have it. The American Heart Association recommends to limit your sodium intake to 1,500 mg or less a day. Avoid stress by taking advantage of exercise, meditation, etc. Limit alcohol. For women that’s one drink a day. Stop smoking and avoid second-hand smoke.

Cholesterol limits the flow of blood in the body. We have good cholesterol (HDL) and bad cholesterol (LDL). High levels of (HDL) can lower your risk of heart attack and strokes. There are medications for both high blood pressure and high cholesterol if they can’t be managed otherwise.

Get exercise. The heart association recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week or 75 minutes a week of vigorous exercise or a combination. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and eat fewer saturated and total fat foods. There is healthy living information and a recipe hub at [heart.org/recipes](http://heart.org/recipes).

*Gail Feagins, Health Committee*

### *In Memoriam*

We note the passing of **George Barney, Georgia Hays, Edward Stevens, Barbara Van Etten, and John Moench** and we offer sincere condolences to their families and friends.



Please contribute to the WSSR-PAC today!

Online at: [www.wssr-pac.org](http://www.wssr-pac.org)

Mail check to: WSSR-PAC Treasurer  
c/o Lora Brabant  
125 West 11th Street  
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Make check  
payable to:  
WSSR-PAC

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is at the heart of TCSRA. We are not just a group of old friends who get together once a month for lunch. Two years of NOT meeting for lunch during the pandemic attests to our organization's commitment to serving the community. Scholarships were awarded, mini-grants given out, and substantial financial support was donated to the Thurston County Food Bank, the Salvation Army, the Little Red Schoolhouse, and the WSSRA Foundation. The pandemic barely slowed us down, but it did force us to do things differently. For two years we combined the collection of cash and items for the above-mentioned organizations all at once in the fall by the big tree in the old Sears parking lot. TCSRA members' generosity did not falter. We also secured donations and made 45 moms' bags for the Salvation Army's holiday family gift project. Most recently we worked in-person one Saturday morning at the South Sound Reading Foundation.

This fall begins a fresh new era as we resume our luncheons. As community chair, I assume that the membership would agree to continue the long-standing traditions of giving cash donations in November and December to the Food Bank and the Salvation Army and collecting toiletries for The Other Bank.

Now we have the opportunity to consider where we've been and where we'd like to go in serving the community. There are many organizations we could support. It would be helpful to me and the TCSRA Board to hear from you as to what kind of new projects and activities you might like to undertake and whether you would be willing to help organize them. I am particularly interested to know how members feel about "Time vs Treasure." During the pandemic we were limited to donating "treasure," but now we have the opportunity to donate our time once again, something that I personally feel reflects the true spirit of community service.

There will be a survey in October where you can express your opinions and suggest ideas for all of us to consider.

**Sally Jones, Community Service Chair**

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT (Continued from page 2.)

have been busy meeting with candidates for the legislature. The WSSR-PAC has issued contributions to legislative candidates supporting retiree pension and healthcare issues – with PAC money, not WSSRA dues money. The WSSRA Executive Board has issued political endorsements to legislators and candidates striving to achieve retirees' legislative goals. The legislative team thanks everyone who has communicated with political candidates over the summer.

As we move deeper into autumn and winter, the political work will shift fully to bill drafting and lobbying. I will keep you posted along the way.

*Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator*

## HAPPY 68TH BIRTHDAY UNIT #28



TCSRA Unit #28 was organized on September 18, 1954, under the leadership of Mabel Foxwell. A fledgling group of five retired teachers, Jeannie Johnson, Ruby Dingee, Marguerite Melville, and June Ramaker, named themselves the Thurston County Retired Teachers. Ruby at one point wrote, "Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow; this has been true of the TCRTA. There isn't much to tell about those early years except that it was slow to germinate."

Early meetings were held in homes, with members bringing their dues (25¢) and a sack lunch. Meetings were opened with the Lord's Prayer and the flag salute. Later, singing *God Bless America* was added. From the group's inception, pensions, legislation, health insurance, and community service were the main topics of concern.

From that small group of five women, our unit "germinated" and has grown to approximately 1000 retired and still-working members. Here we are in September 2022, still focused on those critical topics of pensions, legislation, health insurance, and community service.

Happy Birthday Unit 28! And here's to many more to come!



***BITS & PIECES***, the newsletter of the Thurston County School Retirees' Association, is published nine times a year, September through May, as a membership service. Editor: Pat Slosson, 360-561-3232. **Information for the October 2022 issue is due by September 12.** Please email copy to [pslosson1@comcast.net](mailto:pslosson1@comcast.net).