

# Bits & Pieces

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

May 2023

Unit 28 of the Washington State School Retirees' Association  
*Serving retired and active school employees and our community.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

May 2023 marks the end of my term as TCSRA president; how quickly the year has gone! A brief recap of 2022-2023: As we emerged from the COVID-imposed shut down, we welcomed our members back in-person at September's birthday picnic. Beginning in October, we have met at Indian Summer, a new venue for us, for the remaining luncheons. Our programs covered a wide-range of topics. We learned from two Native American speakers, Jared Koepp and Hanford McCloud, and we met Tom Paine in the context of Art Dolan's presentation. We heard from Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke, the new president of Saint Martin's University, and we enjoyed holiday music from the Timberline High School choir. We hosted some of our mini-grant recipients at the first "Parade of Projects" luncheon in three years. We continued to be active in supporting legislation. We also achieved goals related to membership and community service.

A significant undertaking this year was a review of the TCSRA bylaws. Many changes were made to reflect current policy and practice, to clarify intent, and to add topics that were missing. The vote to accept the amended bylaws will be held this month remotely via email or USPS.

The WSSRA Convention will be June 5-7, 2023, at the Pasco Red Lion. The keynote speaker will be Teacher of the Year for 2023, Dana Miles, Washington School for the Deaf teacher of Work Experience and English Language Arts. A number of delegates will represent Unit 28 at the Delegate Assembly, and we will celebrate the installation of Ron Crawford as incoming WSSRA president.

**Officer elections:** Congratulations to **Sue Shannon**, President; **Patty Gee**, President-elect; **Lorene Rang**, Secretary; **Will Gentz**, Fiscal Treasurer; and **ZiNita Carrell**, Membership Treasurer. The Executive Board has appointed **Nancy Peebles** to the Nominating Committee.

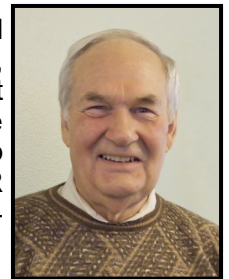
Thank you to all the members of TCSRA. I appreciate your support of our work. What an amazing year!

*Sue Shannon, TCSRA President*

## OFFICER INSTALLATION; MEMBER MEMORIAL

Please join us on May 19 for the final luncheon of the year. Ron Crawford, president-elect for WSSRA and a TCSRA member, will install our 2023-2024 officers.

A long-time member of WSSRA and TCSRA, Ron has been vice president, president, and past president of Unit 28. At the state level he was on the retirement and the scholarship committees. He served as a WSSR Foundation Trustee and as SW-4 Board representative.



After graduating from Willapa Valley High School, Ron attended WSU where he earned both a BS and master's degree. Ron was a teacher and an administrator in the Toledo School District. He was involved in agriculture programs, both at the district and state levels. He finished out his career at OSPI as the state program supervisor in Agricultural Education.

Ron will be installed as WSSRA president at the June convention in Pasco.

At this luncheon we will also honor and express our gratitude to our members who passed away this year.

Be sure to make reservations for your entire party.  
[See page 2 for reservation information]

*Sue Shannon, TCSRA President*

Friday, May 19, 2023—12 noon

*The Ember's Restaurant*

**Indian Summer Golf and Country Club**

Chicken Caprese: sauteed chicken with Roma tomatoes, fresh basil, and mozzarella, with balsamic reduction, and fingerling potatoes

OR

Veggie Stir Fry, soy and ginger marinated tofu fried with white rice and vegetables

**Dessert:** Chef's Choice  
**(\$20 includes tax and gratuity)**

## 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. We need our reservation count by **noon on Friday, May 12.**

If you **do not receive an email**, or if you **need to cancel or add to your** reservation, email me at [dazicar88@gmail.com](mailto:dazicar88@gmail.com), or call me **no later than noon on Friday (253-381-2592)**. Please do not call the restaurant with reservation changes.

To be added to the email list for notification, please send me your email address.

*ZiNita Carrell, Email Committee Chair*



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT



By the time this newsletter reaches you, the 2023 Legislative Session will have adjourned. It's been a long session, literally and figuratively. This is a 105-day budget writing session—next January's will be a 60-day supplemental. Seventeen hundred bills have been sponsored by Washington state legislators since January. Several thousand amendments have been written.

**PLAN 1 COLA:** The odds of a TRS/PERS Plan 1 COLA look good. The current proposal is for a 3% COLA capped at \$110 per month. This is not locked in, and WSSRA's advocacy team is still lobbying hard to make sure it's retained in the budget.

Retirees would prefer an automatic annual COLA or one that matched this year's 8% inflation rate. Legislators seem uninterested in addressing the issue in a wholistic way this session. WSSRA will continue that fight for this into the interim and next session.

**MEDICAL BENEFITS (ALL PENSION PLANS):** The Governor, the State Healthcare Authority, the House of Representatives, and the Senate are all on board with continuing the \$183 monthly Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit. This is good news. The benefit is noncontractual and must be reapproved every two years.

**PLAN 1 FUNDING:** For years retirees have advocated for the elimination of the TRS 1 and PERS 1 pension unfunded liability. Those funding gaps are one of the often-cited reasons for not restoring a permanent Plan 1 COLA. The current payment plan would have the

### *In Memoriam*

We note the passing of **James Horacek** and **Shirley Sainsbury**, and we offer sincere condolences to their family and friends.

TRS 1 and PERS 1 unfunded liabilities paid off by the year 2026. Payments would then cause the funded status to surge past over 150% in the 2030s—a scenario that would be fine for WSSRA but that, understandably, would cause heartburn for legislators with budgeting responsibilities.


Legislators prefer a different scenario. Appropriators are trying to finesse the payment structure to provide 100% funding this decade and then smooth contributions so funding stays at 100% in the future. WSSRA believes those pension contribution savings should be used to fund an automatic COLA for TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees. Many legislators disagree. This matter is part of the final budget negotiations.

### **TRS & SERS PLANS 2/3 ENHANCEMENTS**

WSSRA has been working on passage of two bills to improve and equalize benefits within TRS 2/3 and

*(Continued on page 4. See "LEGISLATIVE REPORT.")*

## THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM

Usually in this column I look outward, at conditions in and around our schools. Now I'd like to look introspectively at educators, at **US**. Active or retired (not expired!), we have improved society, one person at a time.  We helped human "becomings" that came our way. And when asked what we "do", instead of replying with our job description, we can rightfully/proudly say "I nurture the future."

Arrogance? No! But pride in our collective roles and contributions? Oh yes! In my experience, many people (even us) tend to create a hierarchy in our minds when it comes to education. I've heard, "I'm just a bus driver, food service worker, custodian, PE teacher," etc. Even some teachers at times put Admins on a pedestal and secretaries on a lower rung. Wrong!

Each role, from counselors to therapists, fine/performing arts to ELL teachers to school crossing guards, ETC. are in the SAME role: building relationships with students. Admins help create the environment that supports that, and they at times deal 1-1 with students too. Student store and cafeteria staff, office secretaries, coaches...all build relationships with youth, help empower them, guide them, and open up doors within and in front of them.

Which is more important on a ship? The rivets, the rudder, the sail, the captain, the yeomen? Every role in education is vital. There's no hierarchy; rather, a symphony. Is the oboe less than the cymbals? The string section less important than the conductor? Together we create a concert that resonates anew daily.

When asked what "your job" was/is, instead of citing your grade level, subject or role, try proudly saying: "Kids, and the future. Great, right?"

**Gery Gerst, Education Co-chair**

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



This month’s winner is:



**Colleen Mott**

*Tumwater School District*

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

## “HOW TO ATTRACT FUN”

Do you know about TED talks? TED’s mission is to explore ideas worth spreading, and ideas abound at this site under Tech, Business, Arts + Design, Science, and We Humans, and are expressed in short, powerful talks with a maximum length of 18 minutes on any topic.

At [ideas.ted.com](http://ideas.ted.com), Catherine Price gives a TED talk and writes an essay titled, “We all know people who seem to attract fun—here’s how you can do it too.” While interviewing people for her new book, *The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again*, Catherine Price asked: Describe characteristics of “fun people” in your life. Some answers were:

- \*They’re spontaneous.
- \*They’re at ease with themselves and comfortable in their own skin.
- \*They’re not afraid to be silly.
- \*They’re not afraid to try new things and to be a beginner.
- \*They’re not afraid to be vulnerable.
- \*They’re appreciative of the small things.
- \*They find joy in being alive.”

### How did fun people treat others?

- \*They never make you feel judged.
- \*They make everyone feel included.
- \*They’re considerate of others’ feelings.
- \*They get excited with you.
- \*They create wonderful, shared memories.”

People who attract fun have a “fun mindset.” They approach life by creating or appreciating playfulness; by making connections with others through special shared experiences, and by being in the zone or flow. They laugh easily, say “yes, and,” add playfulness to everyday activities, and send out play signals.

In improv comedy, one uses the “yes, and” technique to respond to new ideas by agreeing with them and building on them. Catherine cites Tina Fey’s example in “Bossy Pants.” “If I start a scene with ‘I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,’ and you just say, ‘Yeah ...’ we’re kind of at a standstill. But if I say, ‘I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,’ and you say, ‘What did you expect? We’re in hell.’ Or if I say, ‘I can’t believe it’s so hot in here,’ and you say, ‘Yes, this can’t be good for the wax figurines,’ now we’re getting somewhere.”

What play signals do is invite a safe, emotional connection, says Dr. Stuart Brown in “Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul.” It could be brief eye contact combined with a smile and a comment that invites conversation. It could be a sincere compliment, a remark about the weather, a joke, or a sympathetic observation. “It transforms a grim, fearful, and lonely world into a lively one.”

In summary in her TED talk, Catherine Price says that when she asked people to tell her about the times that they had fun, they would tell her about some of the most joyful and treasured memories of their lives. She concludes that fun is energizing, keeps us in the present, unites us, makes us healthier, helps us feel like we are actually alive, and fills us with joy and happiness.

*Pat McLachlan, Member & Health Service Co-chair*

## TCSRA VOTING PROCEDURE 2023-2024 BUDGET/AMENDED BYLAWS

This month we will be voting for **both** the TCSRA budget and for approval of the amended TCSRA Bylaws. The Executive Board recommended the 2023–2024 budget to the membership last month. You can review the specifics on our website.

The Executive Board has also posted our proposed amended bylaws on the TCSRA website. Additionally, copies were made available at our April luncheon.

Members for whom we have email addresses will receive a message from **ZiNita Carrell**, asking you to vote “**Yes**” or “**No**” on the proposed budget and the bylaws. Please reply to her with your response.

If you don’t receive an email from ZiNita, please send your votes to [dazicar88@gmail.com](mailto:dazicar88@gmail.com) or mail a written response to TCSRA, PO Box 3051, Lacey, WA 98509 -3051. **The deadline for voting is May 15.**

## 2023–2024 DIRECTORY

**Please let us know by June 10 if you’d like to make a change in your 2023–2024 Directory listing.** Please consider the following, keeping in mind that you may have 4 lines for your listing:

- Our standard listing is name, address, and phone number. *If that is acceptable to you, no action on your part is necessary, if your information is correct.*
- You may list your email address instead of your home address and/or phone number. Some members want only their names listed, and a few prefer not to be listed at all.

Please contact us at [sed6501@outlook.com](mailto:sed6501@outlook.com) or at 360-438-5351 to request changes.

**Thurston County School Retirees' Association**  
P. O. Box 3051  
Lacey, WA 98509-3051

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**PRSRT STD  
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Please advise the WSSRA office of any address, email, or phone number changes by June 10, so that our new directory will have correct information.

360-413-5496, or  
[michele@wssra.org](mailto:michele@wssra.org)

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT** (Continued from page 2.)

SERS 2/3. Both bills are technical and somewhat boring; but both will provide real benefits to retirees. House Bill 1008 has passed the legislature! This bill will allow all future retirees to defer their PEBB retiree insurance if they separate from service early without drawing a retirement.

House Bill 1056 is on the verge of passing. It equalizes return-to-work rules so all retirees, even administrators and general government employees, will be able to work a minimum of 867 hours in retirement without jeopardizing their pension payments.

**CONCLUSION:** Visit the WSSRA webpage [www.wssra.org](http://www.wssra.org) or the WSSRA Facebook page for the final wrap-up.

*Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Coordinator*

## **THANK YOU, TEACHERS!**



Teacher Appreciation Week is May 8–12. TCSRA wishes to thank our active teachers for their unwavering devotion of time, energy, and talent for the sake of our children. Their efforts contribute so much to making this world a better place.

## **WSSR FOUNDATION BASKETS**

We are looking forward to June 5-7 at the Pasco Red Lion. Our unit will contribute three baskets to the WSSR Foundation raffle: a gardening basket, a spa basket (all those things to pamper yourself), and a 4th of July basket. Baskets support the scholarship program.

We are also looking for items for the silent auction. Items might include a quilt, a painting, wood-working items such as an intricately carved box, or a gift basket with gift cards included. The options are endless.

We will collect items at our May 19 luncheon. If you have an item to donate to a basket or to the silent auction after this date, please call Ann Chenhall (360-481-6152) or Sally Jones (360-866-8039).

***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 September 2023 issue is due by August 11.**

Please email copy to [editortcsra@gmail.com](mailto:editortcsra@gmail.com)