

Bits & Pieces

www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/

April 2024

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Springtime finds TCSRA busy with our organization's business: the budget, nominations, program plans, and convention delegate recruitment. The unit also submitted the nominations for three WSSRA annual awards. Let me introduce the nominees and recount some of their accomplishments based on interviews by **Linda Donnelly, Ann Chenhall, and Sally Jones.**

Dorn Barr, nominated for the Patrick Hoban Award, has embraced her role as Membership Chair enthusiastically. She has met with staff at 32 county schools, enlisting 66 new members so far this year. She developed a presentation that emphasizes connections, communication, recognition, and representation. Dorn serves on boards of other organizations and volunteers frequently. She uses these opportunities to extol the benefits of membership in WSSRA and TCSRA. Her work creates a model for strengthening our organization.

Judy Kimeldorf, nominated for the Stan McNaughton award, joined the Little Red Schoolhouse project in 2007 and has worked tirelessly on behalf of students, raising funds to provide supplies, coats, and other items. Over time, she became an ad hoc leader promoting the work of the volunteer group. She serves on other nonprofit boards and volunteers for organizations such as the YWCA and Together, which serve youth and families. She hosts a monthly postcard party, sending cards to local and national policymakers, advocating for issues that impact children's lives.

Keitha Bryson, nominated for the Ester Wilfong award, was recruited for the WSSRA Legislative Committee in 2008. Her mentor was Ester Wilfong. She served in King County legislative districts and joined the efforts in Thurston County when she moved south. She attends meetings with legislators, staff, and other elected officials, in person and on Zoom. She has testified at hearings, especially on the Plan 1 COLA. She is active in the League of Women Voters and started a neighborhood civics education group.

TCSRA is well-represented by these outstanding nominees. We thank them for their service and congratulate them on their nomination for state recognition.

Sue Shannon, TCSRA President

IT'S A PARADE OF PROJECTS!

TCSRA received 40 elementary and 31 middle/high school applications for mini-grants, several from TCSRA members. The applications described a variety of worthwhile projects, covering a wide area of topics. We wish we could fund all the requests, but this year we were able to award a total of \$12,007.

The grant requests included projects ranging from books (lots of books), microscopes, instruments, and composting worm boxes. Others requested paint for a wall mural, STEM camp supplies, and performance rights for an orchestra teacher.

At our luncheon on Friday, April 19, we will look at photos and displays and also hear from a few of these successful applicants. It's fun to learn what is happening in our schools!



Sarah Haseman, Black Lake Elementary, Tumwater School District, was able to buy 32 new books to update her classroom library. "This grant is a powerful secret weapon in the battle to instill a love of reading over electronics."

Bring a friend, and be sure to make reservations for your entire party. [See page 2 for reservation information.]

Nancy Zabel, Elementary Mini-Grant Chair;

Karen Keller, Secondary Mini-Grant Chair



Friday, April 19, 2024 — 12 noon

**The Ember's Restaurant
Indian Summer Golf and Country Club**

Caesar salad with chicken
OR
Caesar salad with plant-based chicken (V)

**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, April 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, or call me **no later than noon on Friday, April 12, at 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



2024–2025 TCSRA BUDGET

At the last meeting the TCSRA Executive Board approved the 2024-2025 proposed budget to be submitted to the membership for a vote. Income/Revenue is projected to be \$70,970.48, a decrease from the 2023-2024 projected \$72,951.48. This decrease is the result of lower carryover, somewhat offset by the maturity of a CD in December that will be valued at about \$4,700.00. Projected expenses next year are \$58,915.00, a decrease from the \$72,713.00 projected for this year. The main difference is that the estimated carryover from next year to the 2025-2026 year is not included as an expense.

Other differences between expenses for this year and next year are the newly added \$1,000.00 premium for D&O Liability Insurance (which protects TCSRA officers and some committee chairs from lawsuits while performing unit business), a \$500.00 increase in mini-grants, increased costs in printing and mailing newsletters and directories of \$719.00, a \$250 increase in membership recruitment and marketing, and \$2,295 more in luncheon expenses. The additional itemizing of luncheon expenses more accurately reports the amount TCSRA subsidizes lunches in order to keep the amount attendees pay at \$20.00 per plate. This subsidized amount now reflects the costs of desserts and taxes in our monthly budget reports. Also, we will be offering two scholarships for \$1,500.00 each and continue donating \$1,000.00 to the Gene Forrester Scholarship fund.

You can review the budget plan on our website at www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/. Watch for instructions for the voting that takes place in May in the next *Bits & Pieces*. Please direct any questions to Will Gentz at mandwgentz@comcast.net.

Will Gentz, Finance Committee Chair

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

And that's a wrap.

The 2024 Legislature has adjourned. Not every item on WSSRA's wish list was checked off, but retirees had a good legislative session. We are now waiting on Governor Inslee to sign legislation.



Plan 1 retirees will receive another COLA starting in July. It will be a 3% COLA, capped at \$110 per month.

Medical benefits are maintained. The Senate toyed with adjusting retiree medical programs, but the \$183 Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit was fully maintained in the end. The budget includes money for studying less costly structures for PEBB Uniform (Regence) insurance. The plan might be eligible for an additional federal subsidy, resulting in similar benefits with smaller premiums.

The state will also change the current policy and pay the PEBB insurance premium during the month of death. This will save retirees' families a potential catastrophic financial incident from unpaid premiums. Dependents' premiums will not be covered by the state, but dependents will continue to be eligible for PEBB health insurance.

After Governor Inslee signs our legislation, the legislative team will pivot to the 2024 elections and 2025 legislative session. Over two dozen legislators have announced retirement plans. There will be many fresh faces on the campaign trail this summer. Our advocacy team will be asking for your help as we introduce WSSRA to a whole new set of lawmakers.

Thank you for all your help and advocacy. We can't do this without you.

Peter Diedrick, WSSRA Legislative Director



Welcome, New Members:



Active, not-yet-retired, members are underlined.

<u>Corrine Flatz</u>	<u>Midge Livingston</u>
<u>Sonny Foster</u>	<u>Kay Marquez</u>
<u>Greta Gustavson</u>	<u>Brittany Meyer</u>
<u>Tonya Harding</u>	<u>Shari Parsons</u>
<u>Michele Harper</u>	<u>Michelle Reinicke</u>
<u>Rene Herron</u>	<u>Reva Rice</u>
<u>Francie Ishler</u>	<u>Melissa Riedl</u>
<u>Cristina Jacobson</u>	<u>Sarah Roraback</u>
<u>Nicole Kernutt</u>	<u>Julie Ruger</u>
<u>Shauna Kleemeyer</u>	<u>Jimi Sharp</u>
<u>Kory Kumar</u>	<u>Colleen Taylor</u>

Please report any address and telephone number changes to the **WSSRA Office** at:

360-413-5496 or michele@wssra.org

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS



The Nominating Committee is pleased to recommend the following members as officer candidates for 2024–2025:

President: Patty Gee
Vice President: Karen Keller
Secretary: Paula Hughart
Fiscal Treasurer: Will Gentz
Membership Treasurer: ZiNita Carrell
**Nominating Committee: Patricia Terhune,
Linda Donnelly**

NOMINEE BIOGRAPHIES

Karen Keller, Vice President: Born and raised in Tacoma, Karen is a graduate of Wilson High School and of Central Washington University. She enjoyed 28 years of teaching elementary grades K-4 with the Yakima School District. Nearing retirement, she returned to western Washington and spent the last three years of her career in the Clover Park School District. Karen was then hired as an office assistant at the WSSRA office and worked there for 12 years, the last several as the Membership Coordinator. A member of TCSRA since 1998, she has served as retirement planning chair, secretary, the membership chair, vice president, president, and historian. Karen also quilts, and she is passionate about preserving steam railroading.

Paula Hughart, Secretary: I am a Washingtonian born and bred. I was born in Aberdeen but moved to Olympia in time to enter first grade. After completing my entire elementary, junior, and high school education in the Olympia School District, I went on to graduate from the University of the Pacific (BA Inter-American Studies and Spanish), University of Northern Iowa (MA Spanish), and University of Texas at Austin (MLIS). My professional experience has been as an ESL instructor in Honduras and Olympia, Spanish teacher at Timberline High School in Lacey, children's librarian with the Harris County Library System in Houston, substitute librarian for the Timberland Regional Library and district librarian/Spanish teacher for the Onalaska School District in Onalaska, Washington. My interests in retirement are genealogy, crafts, maintaining and improving my Spanish and Czech language skills, reading, and most important, staying connected with friends and family near and far.

Patricia Terhune, Nominating Committee: I retired after 30 years as an Instructional para educator at the elementary level. Twenty two of those years were at Seven Oaks Elementary for North Thurston Public Schools. I continue volunteering and substituting at various NTPS schools.

Linda Donnelly, Nominating Committee: In 1972 my teaching career began at Timberline High School

where I remained until 2005 teaching Art and English. I coached boys' swimming and was also an assistant track coach. After retiring I continued to substitute in NTPS for 13 years. My more memorable learning and teaching experiences were going to school at Oxford University and being able to teach 6th grade while in England. My favorite pastime is swimming. I have been a longtime member of the YMCA women's Master Synchro team, competing at the national level and winning a gold medal in figures. My daughter carries on the love of teaching as a tenured professor of art history at the University of Sussex in England. I look forward to working with the members of TCSRA.

Biographies of the other nominees for office—**Patty Gee, Will Gentz, and ZiNita Carrell**—are available at www.wssra-units.org/thurstoncounty/. If you would like a printed copy, please call Sharon Dennis at 360-438-5351.

OFFICER ELECTION PROCEDURE

Officer elections will be done via email and USPS mail. Those of you for whom we have email addresses will receive a message from **ZiNita Carrell**, asking you to vote "Yes" or "No" on the slate of candidates. Please reply to her. If you don't receive an election email from ZiNita, send your vote to dazicar88@gmail.com or mail a written response to TCSRA, PO Box 3051, Lacey, WA 98509-3051.

The deadline for voting is April 12.

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:

Susan Buchmiller
Yelm Community Schools

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

2024-2025 DIRECTORY

After considerable deliberation, the TCSRA Executive Board voted in favor of making a major change to next year's directory. Breaking with a long tradition, we will list only the names of members, instead of including addresses, telephone numbers, or email addresses. We will continue, however, to include contact information for officers and committee members.

We are making this change for the safety and privacy of our members, which seems particularly important for those who are still working in schools. As a bonus, printing and mailing costs will be significantly lower.


A few members have asked not to be listed in our directory at all, and we will continue to honor those requests.

Sharon Dennis, Communications Chair

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



If you are returning from your Snowbird location, please let the WSSRA office know to change your address or to restart your mailings.

Email michele@wssra.org
or call [360-413-5496](tel:360-413-5496), option 116.

Remember, the Post Office charges our unit for each forwarded or returned *Bits & Pieces*.

FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE BASKETS & SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

The WSSR Foundation works to grow school employees of the future through our scholarship program. An important part of the scholarship program funding comes from the basket raffle and silent auction at our yearly convention. We like pairing a good cause with a fun event.

We are all beginning to think about our WSSRA Convention in Wenatchee this coming June, in particular our gift baskets and silent auction items! Our TCSRA board has already been brain storming. We decided on four baskets this year: "Thurston County Products", "Treat Yourself", "Travel Treasures," and "For the Birds."

Silent Auction items are usually more expensive, often craft items.

Please bring any items for the baskets or for the silent auction to the April or May luncheons. Contact Ann Chenhall annlc325@gmail.com if you have any questions.

COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWS

The generosity of our membership continues to be amazing. At just the last two luncheons you contributed 256 items for **All Kids Win**, mostly chili and tuna. Kudos!

Let's continue to collect toiletries for **The Other Bank**. They now accept larger hygiene and cleaning products, as well.

The **Food Bank** can always use clean large plastic and brown paper bags and egg cartons.

I will deliver whatever you bring.

Sally Jones, Community Service Chair

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Information for the May 2024 issue is due by April 15.

Please email copy to editortcsra@gmail.com