

# Bits & Pieces

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

May 2024

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END!

Well, here we are...concluding my second year in the TCSRA presidency, writing my eighteenth newsletter article. The two terms have been busy and rewarding. I began with some trepidation; TCSRA and our parent association, WSSRA, are somewhat complicated organizations! As I learned the ins and outs, I was especially helped by the dedicated and expert guidance of the Executive Board. Thank you all for serving with me and supporting me. You had my back. I appreciate you!

Developing and sustaining relationships was a personal goal I set early and one that I have tried to maintain as a sort of north star. I hope that positive, fruitful, and meaningful relationships have emerged through our programs and activities.

I am proud of Unit 28's achievements, attained through our collective efforts. We are close to 1040 members. Our mini-grant program thrives. Our community service projects strive to meet needs. Our organizational structure is more efficient and flexible after we revised bylaws and job descriptions. Unit 28 is financially strong. We have been responsive to member concerns: informing members about health issues, protecting member privacy, sharing interesting topics through luncheon speakers, and advocating for senior issues with the legislature.

We wish our retiring WSSRA Executive Director, Alan Burke, healthy, fun-filled days ahead. We pledge our support to our new Executive Director, Peter Diedrick.

Thank you for the confidence you placed in me as your president. I will continue as the immediate past president, and I will continue to be an active participant.

Congratulations to newly elected officers for 2024-25: **Patty Gee**, President; **Karen Keller**, Vice President; **Paula Hughart**, Secretary; **Will Gentz**, Treasurer; **ZiNita Carrell**, Membership Treasurer; and **Linda Donnelly** and **Patricia Terhune**, Nominating Committee. Thank you for your willingness to serve. We needed you, and you stepped up!

*Sue Shannon, TCSRA President*

## OUR YEAR'S END PROGRAM

### OFFICER INSTALLATION; MEMBER MEMORIAL

Please join us for our May 17, 2024, luncheon, our final meeting this year. The program will include two important annual events, the installation of new officers and a memorial recognizing TCSRA members who passed away during the year.

We are pleased to welcome Peter Diedrick to officiate the installation. Approved by the WSSRA board in March, Peter is the incoming Executive Director, beginning after the convention, June 3-5, 2024. We feel that we know Peter quite well; he has ably served as WSSRA Legislative Director since 2011 and presented at our luncheons regularly. You may remember his bio from previous issues of *Bits & Pieces*. Peter earned an Associate of Arts and Sciences degree from Everett Community College, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Western Washington University, and a Master of Public Administration from Seattle University. Prior to joining the WSSRA staff, he was an economic data analyst for the Washington Employment Security Department, a legislative aide for the Washington State Senate, and a graduate intern in the United States Department of State.



Membership Treasurer **ZiNita Carrell** will coordinate our memorial ceremony. She will be joined by **Kevan Hagen**, a retired Tumwater School District librarian, and **Erin Mann**, a former paraeducator in North Thurston Public Schools.

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

*Sue Shannon, TCSRA President*



**Friday, May 17, 2024—12 noon**  
**The Ember's Restaurant**  
**Indian Summer Golf and Country Club**

Chicken Caprese  
OR Tofu stir fry (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, May 10**.

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, May 10, 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*



## TCSRA VOTING PROCEDURE 2024-2025 BUDGET

This month we will be voting for the TCSRA budget. The Executive Board recommended the 2024–2025 budget to the membership last month. You can review the specifics on our website.

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. 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 10.**

### THANK YOU, TEACHERS!



Teacher Appreciation Week is May 6–10. 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 3-5 at the WSSRA convention in Wenatchee. Our unit will contribute four baskets to the WSSR Foundation raffle: "Thurston County Products," "Treat Yourself," "Travel Treasures," and "For the Birds." Baskets support scholarships.

We are also looking for items for the silent auction. Items might include a quilt, a painting, or a gift basket. The options are endless.

We will collect items at our May 17 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).

## A SNAPSHOT OF WASHINGTON'S SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

In a past article I shared about our national Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona. I'd now like to highlight our Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, who lives among us in Tumwater.



Reykdal graduated summa cum laude from Washington State University with a BA and a teaching certificate. He later earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Reykdal is a former teacher, soccer coach, school board director, state legislator, and executive for our community and technical college system.

Some honors awarded to Reykdal include:

The National Association for Bilingual Education; the State Auditor's Office; the Council of State Governments; Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA); Washington Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA); Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), and MESA USA (Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement).

First elected in 2017, Chris Reykdal is now in his second term as our State Superintendent. He has spearheaded transformational changes in our K–12 public education system, e.g.:

- Helping get historic state investments in services for students with disabilities and market-rate salaries for Washington's teachers
- Increasing free school meals for an additional 465,000 students
- Expanding dual language and tribal language learning programs for young learners
- Lowering student costs for dual credit programs like College in the High School and Advanced Placement
- Helping students earn core credits through Careers and Technical Education (CTE) courses and elective diploma credits through paid work experience
- Adding civics education as a graduation requirement

At OSPI, Reykdal stresses accountability, customer service, and keeping students central to all decision-making. He enjoys hiking, Washington's sports teams, listening to '80s music, or seeing a movie with his wife, Kim, and two children.

*Gery Gerst, Education Committee*

### In Memoriam

We note the passing of **Douglas Beach** and **Barbara Tanner**, and we offer sincere condolences to their family and friends.

## REDUCING OUR EXPOSURE TO PLASTIC IN FOOD, PART 2

In an April 30, 2020, article, "How to Eat Less Plastic," published in *Consumer Reports (CR)*, Kevin Loria gives an estimate by some scientists that "the plastic the average person may be eating and drinking totals as much as 5 grams per week," which is as much plastic as is in a credit card. One 2019 research review calculated that "the average American eats, drinks, and breathes in more than 74,000 microplastic particles every year." Mr. Loria states that more than "10 billion tons of plastic have been produced since 1950s." In 2018, manufacturers created almost 400 million tons of new plastic, and production is expected to almost quadruple by 2050. Most plastic lasts for thousands of years, and when it does break down, it becomes microplastics that enter our water and food chain.

It would be best, says Maricel Maffini, PhD, a chemical safety expert and the author of a recent study of phthalate risks, if manufacturers and regulators made sure our food was safe from plastics, but they don't do this, so it is up to us to do what we can as knowledgeable consumers to lessen some of our plastic intake.

In Lauren F. Friedman's article, "How to Reduce Your Exposure to Plastic in Food (and Everywhere Else)" published in *CR* in January 4, 2024, she suggests ways that we can reduce our consumption of bisphenols and phthalates in plastics.

In our food, we can:

- "Avoid plastic food storage containers." Food placed hot in a plastic container or heated in a microwave in a plastic container may have plastic leached into it. Use glass and steel food storage containers and lids that are not made of plastic.
- "Steer clear of fast foods." *CR* testing found some of the highest levels of phthalates in them, due to their often high-fat content, the use of vinyl gloves by people preparing them, and their packaging.
- "Limit high-fat foods." DEHP (Di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate), the most common phthalate and determined to be a probable human carcinogen by the U.S. EPA, is fat-soluble. For example, one 2020 review states that levels of DEHP were "often five to 10 times higher in cream than they were in milk."
- "Eat fresh, minimally processed and home-cooked food." A healthy diet should include "plenty of unpackaged fruits and vegetables which have fewer chances to have contact with phthalates." Avoid store-bought and processed food that comes in plastic.
- "Choose wood, stainless steel, and silicone for kitchen tools." A plastic cutting board, for example, can emit microplastics when a knife is used to chop foods on it. A wooden or silicone board is better to

use. Also, the use of plastic wrap for leftovers is not advised as the plasticizers in contact with the food may leach into it.

- "Use water bottles made of glass or steel." Avoid plastic water bottles, straws, cups, and lids, which are often made with bisphenols. Reusable stainless steel straws don't contribute plastic to your drinks.

As informed consumers and citizens we can put into effect the above suggestions in our lives and also take actions to ensure that we tell our regulators and legislators that, "most experts agree that big policy changes are needed to address the health risks posed by phthalates and bisphenols," says Ms. Friedman.

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

### WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

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

<u>Kimberly Whiteman</u>	<u>Frank Ehresmann</u>
<u>Denise Whitesel Mallek</u>	<u>Kaylene Hanley</u>
<u>Isaac Williams</u>	<u>Scott Haurly</u>
Patricia Delacruz	<u>Aaron Houk</u>
Casey Rouse	<u>Suzanne Jones</u>
Tamera Shannon-Wright	<u>Rylee Moore</u>
<u>Chris Woods</u>	<u>Douglas Peltier</u>
<u>Jessica Allman</u>	<u>Wendy Potkonjak</u>
<u>Kristine Andrews-Brown</u>	<u>Rachel Roberts</u>
<u>Kat Beattie</u>	<u>Amy Thompson-Emerson</u>
<u>Jennifer Billings</u>	<u>Heide Toepke</u>
<u>Shannon Bond</u>	<u>Tina Williams</u>
<u>Danielle Cearns</u>	<u>Keri O'Hara</u>
<u>Sean Dotson</u>	<u>Susanne Champion</u>
<u>Joey Easlet</u>	<u>Lisa Crowell</u>
<u>Issa Elhayek</u>	<u>Chris Lavack</u>
<u>Kymberly Greene</u>	<u>Sarah Stone</u>
<u>Jodi Jarmin</u>	<u>Heather Van Zant</u>
<u>Jenelle Kidrick</u>	<u>Holly Grabow</u>
<u>Mylisha Lanegan</u>	<u>Lorraine Racus</u>
<u>Jessica Martin</u>	<u>Ronald Racus</u>
<u>Renee Cruickshank</u>	<u>Gwen Cruz</u>
<u>Heather Dockery</u>	<u>Carolyn Schilter</u>

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

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

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:

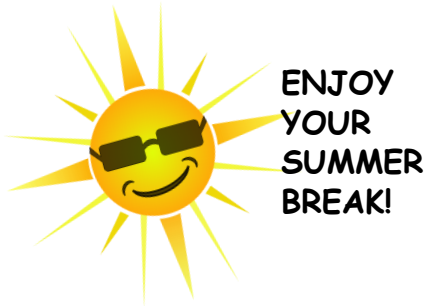
**Nani Duvall**  
**North Thurston Public Schools**

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

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

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## **RECYCLING AS COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Landfills all over the country are filling up more than ever since we can't send our trash to China anymore, which was a morally repugnant practice anyway. I would suggest that we can do community service by recycling and re-using, more than faithfully putting paper and cans in the bin every other week.

I am referring to downsizing and de-cluttering our homes, which has become a fad of sorts since the publication of Marie Kondo's bestseller *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. "Do you really love it?"

For some, downsizing is necessary for health reasons; others just get tired of yardwork, home repairs and cleaning a big house with three bathrooms. So, should you choose to downsize or de-clutter, why not look for places that will re-use or recycle your treasures, even if it is hard emotionally? I cried when they hauled away our '93 Saab that I had donated to NPR.

Got Junk is an option, but probably too drastic. Instead there are stores that take donations to re-sell, such as Goodwill, Value Village, Budd Bay Bargains at the Senior Center, Seattle Children's Olympia Bargain Boutique, and Habitat for Humanity. The last three are my favorites because even though they do sell donated items, the profits benefit their specific causes.

Olympia also has many charities that distribute goods

for free. You can pass on clothing, household furnishings, toys, books, tools, furniture, old eyeglasses, medical supplies, and more. The following organizations accept donations: The Other Bank, Union Gospel Mission, St. Michael's Clothing Bank, City Gates, Sacred Heart Church, Rosie's Place, Adventist Community Service Center, the tiny Free Store at the west side Olympia Co-op, Interfaith Works, Furniture Bank of Thurston County, Thurston County Medical Equipment Bank, Family Education and Support Services, Family Support Center of South Sound, Safe Place, South Sound Reading Foundation, Lions Club, and Friends of the Library. Most state what they can use and have specific days and hours when they accept donations; Google and the telephone will help you get that information.

I hope these suggestions help you get started on a recycling frenzy! For the sake of community service, of course.

**Sally Jones, Community Service Chair**

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