



The Bulletin



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The Seattle School Retirees' Association

April-May, 2022



April and May's Messages from SSRA's President Pat Cygan (Note: We who hail from Hawaii know that "May Day is Lei Day in Hawaii.")

A lot of SSRA's "normal routines" have been severely curtailed during these last 2 years of our coping with COVID-19's virulent phases. In all likelihood the losses and changes we *education retirees* faced were less shattering than those facing most school staffs and their students who are re-inventing and adapting to new learning environments and hybrid lessons. All are valiant troopers!

Meanwhile during this isolating hiatus, Ron and I opted to take on the daunting tasks of editing SSRA's newest Members' Directory. SSRA's last one was printed in 2011, when SSRA had a paid employee managing our office in the old PEMCO building; she edited membership records and other data before PEMCO's publishing department professionally printed and mailed out our new directories.

In recent years SSRA's Board members reminded ourselves that we needed to produce an updated Members' Directory but time passed and that challenge was unmet. So Ron and I chose to work on that project while prudently isolating ourselves during this pandemic. Ron reformatted WSSRA's membership data into an Excel Program that's compatible with our I-MAC. *WSSRA's Membership Coordinator Michele Hunter* updates that data every month and then mails SSRA's to me. Members' data changed often as we created a new directory--address changes, additions/departures of members, some members' requests to delete some/all of their data, etc. By January we had fully edited 41 pages of data about 933 SSRA members who had not asked to be deleted from our new directory. To those pages I added three extra introductory pages (with a total of 5 columns) of pertinent information about our local unit and WSSRA plus contact information for agencies our members often seek. In those pages I also thanked three members of the *Seattle District's Scholarship Committee* (i.e., Michael DeBell, Eric Benson and Myrna Muto) who'd paved the way for us to print copies of our **2022 SSRA Members' Directory** at the *District's Publishing Services* in the John Stanford Center for a good price.

But I must apologize for a few printing errors on the first 2 pages of our directory that I may have caused. When staff members in the District's Publishing Services CONVERTED what I had originally written, using our I-MAC's WORD PROGRAM, "into their PDF FORMAT," they actually shifted 2 full lines from the tops of each of the next-in-line columns—and thereby filled in the bottom 1-2 lines of columns which I had purposely left blank—at least 3 times! Thus the last line printed at the bottom of the first column which begins with "Seventy five years ago . . ." belongs at the top of the next column. Also moved was the heading, "SSRA'S 2021-2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS," which belongs on the next page's list of names/information for that heading. *I blame myself since my failure to leave the printers a copy of what those two introductory pages should be and look like, they did not catch their printing errors. Also I had not insisted on seeing copies of those pages before the bulk of the directories were printed. Mea Culpa. . . all that is on me! So how can I rectify this?* At first I thought we might print those 2 pages in *this issue of The Bulletin*—even though they'd look odd since they'd be printed sideways or "in landscape," but our editor nixed that. We do have a limited number of printed copies we can send you if you request one—or we can email you one. I have been forced to recall that "if anything can possibly go wrong, it probably will."

A Special Note: If you are willing to do so, please create a basket or find a desirable outing/object to auction off at WSSRA's Sept.12-14 State Convention for funding WSSR-Foundation's scholarships!



In Memoriam

It saddens us to learn that the following members have passed away:

- Joan Armitage, Loye Carrington,**
- Richard Caylor, Shirley Cline,**
- Francis Denton, James Fahselt,**
- Eleanor Hageman, Margaret Haley,**
- Paul Hass, Lucena Lanot,**
- Albert Luhn, and Sally May.**



Joan Armitage

August 18, 1943-February 5, 2022



Joan grew up in Seattle and graduated from West Seattle High School in 1961. She then went to the University of Washington and received her teaching credentials; she worked in West Seattle schools mostly.

Joan continued her education and eventually earned a Master’s Degree as well as Superintendent Certification. She held positions as school principal and, after retirement, was an adjunct professor at Seattle Pacific University.

Joan was a long-time member of SSRA who helped out in the Scholarship Committee and was a regular attendee at our luncheons.

She grew up as a child of Swedish immigrants who was very proud of her Scandinavian heritage.

Correction!

A ways back we wrote that Howard Morrill had passed away. That was wrong! He is still with us.

Sorry for our mistake!

SSRA Leadership for 2021-2022

- President.....Pat Cygan
- President-elect.....Someone New
- Immediate Past President.....Sharon Green
- Recording Secretary.....Mary Wallon
- Treasurer.....Sue Battin

Committee Chairs

- Audit Review.....Roxanne Trees
- Budget.....Jim DeJarnatt
- Communications/Outreach.....Ron Cygan
- Community Services.....Marilynn Miller
- Drawings and Baskets.....Marilynn Miller
- Health Services.....Myrna Muto
- Historian.....Julee Neuhart
- Legislative.....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon
- May Luncheon.....Margaret Nelson
- Membership.....ALL SSRA MEMBERS
- Parliamentarian.....Edith Ruby
- Programs.....Pat Cygan
- Resolutions/Bylaws.....SSRA’s Board
- Retirement Seminar Planning.....Julee Neuhart
- Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan
- Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants.....Kathy Purcell
- WSSRA-PAC.....Mary Wallon and Edith Ruby
- WSSRA’s NW-2 Representative -Patricia MacGowan

NOTE: If you are willing to become SSRA’s next President or a Co-President, please call SSRA’s President Pat Cygan at 206 383-9472.

Ester Wilfong

August 28, 1929-February 2, 2022



As many of you probably heard, Ester Wilfong passed away in February. *Continued on page 7*

The Bulletin is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees’ Association. **Membership meetings** used to be held on the first Tuesdays from September through May (not in January nor February); in April we met on the 2nd Tuesday) with a buffet lunch served at twelve noon—with a meeting and guest speaker/program following our buffet luncheon at **The Canal Restaurant** located at 5300 34th Ave. N.W. No lunches have been served since March of 2020. Our SODO office is rarely staffed, but you can reach us at 206 521-5170 and leave a message or by e-mail at ssra44@juno.com.



Who Got the Oreos?

by Edith Ruby, WSSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

Summarizing the 2022 legislative session, one of our WSSRA lobbyists compared it to a car full of small children with a super-size bag of Oreos. With more than \$5 billion in new revenue to be divided up, supplementing last year's \$59 billion two-year budget, it's not hard to imagine the scramble for each to get their share, or more, of the goodies.

WSSRA had four priorities for the session:

- Protect retiree healthcare benefits. Ensure that the \$183/month Medicare eligible insurance subsidy that helps keep health insurance affordable for retirees continues.
- Amend and pass the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP) recommended 3% one-time COLA for Plan 1 retirees.
- Increase the number of hours per year retired school retirees are allowed to substitute without temporary loss of pension from 867 hours (123 days) to 1040 hours (148 days).
- Give new Plan 2 retirees the same right to defer PEBB medical insurance at time of retirement if they have other coverage that is now allowed to Plan 3 retirees.

We are happy that there was no attempt by legislators to eliminate or decrease the Medicare eligible insurance supplement. This will continue at \$183/month.

The one time 3% Plan 1 COLA bill (SB 5676) was approved unanimously by both Houses. Plan 1 retirees' July 1 pension checks will show an increase of 3%, up to a maximum of \$110/month. Despite WSSRA's efforts to increase the 3% to a figure closer to the present nearly 8% inflation rate, we were not successful. Legislators pay close attention to SCPP recommendations and rarely deviate from them. WSSRA staff have already spoken to SCPP about the need for a larger percent increase in the 2023 session. (Plans 2 and 3 members receive an up to 3% COLA each year. In years when inflation is less than 3%, they continue to receive the whole 3% until what they have lost through higher inflation is made up. Plan 1 COLAs are dependent on the whim of legislators who have given them only three times in the past twelve years.)

Legislators approved HB 1699 allowing school retirees to work up to 1040 hours per year without penalty until July 1, 2025.

Legislation allowing Plan 2 members the same right to defer access to PEBB retiree medical insurance that is given to Plan 3 members did not pass. It requested a change to correct this inequity in the two plans. WSSRA will again advocate for legislation to remove the inequity in the 2023 session.

WSSRA's volunteer legislative team is composed of eighteen members from throughout the state, including Seattle members Patricia MacGowan, Mary Wallon, and Edith Ruby. Team members, along with Legislative Director Peter Diedrick, Executive Director Alan Burke, and WSSRA's two paid lobbyists, were active throughout the session, meeting by Zoom with legislators from districts in their areas of the state to push for passage of WSSRA's priority legislation. The Zoom meetings worked well enabling us to meet virtually with as many or more legislators than we have met with personally in past sessions in Olympia.

The 2022 legislative glass can be seen as half empty or half full. Many of our needs are still unmet. Particularly troubling is the lack of a permanent Plan 1 COLA. WSSRA's legislative team advocates for legislation to help our members, but legislators also need to hear from each of you who vote in their districts. The most effective thing you can do to influence your district's legislators is to speak to them personally about your needs or send a message. All of Washington's House members and half of its senators are running for election this fall. Candidates want your vote! There are many hands reaching for the Oreos. Each of us needs to tell our legislators why we who have spent our careers working for the state, with too few Oreos in our pay checks, deserve a fair share in our retirement.

SSRA's Committee Reports

- Health Committee

Myrna Muto, Chair



To Mask or Not to Mask: May 2022

If I'm the only person wearing a mask on a plane or subway train, in a store or at another location, am I really protected from infection?

It's true that masks work best when everyone around you is wearing one. That's because when an infected person wears a mask, a large percentage of the infectious particles he or she exhales are trapped, stopping viral spread at the source. And when fewer viral particles are floating around the room, the masks others are wearing are likely to block those particles that have escaped.

But there is also plenty of evidence showing that masks protect the wearer, even when others around them are mask-free. The amount of protection depends on the quality of the mask and how well it fits. Health experts recommend using an N95, KN95 or KF94 to protect yourself against the Omicron subvariant BA.2, which is now the dominant version of the coronavirus and is far more infectious than previous strains.

Other variables, such as how much time you are exposed to an infected person and how well a space is ventilated, also will affect your risk. On most planes, the cabin air is frequently pumped through HEPA filters that are good at reducing virus transmissions. But that doesn't completely eliminate your risk. In a December 2021 study, researchers found that passengers sitting in the same row or one row away from a person who had Covid-19 still had a high risk of being infected through direct respiratory droplets. Wearing a mask reduced the risk of infection by 54 percent.

In closed settings like a plane, it can be hard to avoid a mixed group of vaccinated and unvaccinated people, symptomatic or asymptomatic people, all of whom may transmit the coronavirus at varying levels. The flight may not even be the riskiest part of the trip. Air circulation may be running at low strength or completely turned off during boarding and deplaning, so those periods, as well as the time you spend at the airport, may be when you are at most risk of exposure and may benefit from wearing a mask.

According to Lindsey Marr, a Virginia Tech expert on airborne transmission of viruses, "buses are probably the riskiest, then trains and then planes, in order of highest risk to lowest. Planes have great ventilation filtration that greatly helps reduce the risk of transmission, but the virus is going to be in the air, no question in my mind, because there's still large numbers of cases."

A number of laboratory studies have documented that a mask protects the person who is wearing it, though the level of that protection can vary depending on the type of mask and the material it's made from. Based on the findings, Dr. Marr and her colleagues concluded that a two-layer cloth mask made of flexible, tightly woven fabric, combined with a filter material (like a coffee filter or surgical mask), could offer good protection, reducing 70 percent of the most penetrating particles and trapping 90 percent or more of the larger particles. They also found that head straps or ties created a better fit than ear loops.

While many lab studies test masks using mannequin heads, a 2008 study used real people to measure how well masks could protect the wearer against a respiratory virus. In this study, cloth masks reduced exposure by 60 percent, surgical masks by 76 percent and N95 masks by 99 percent.

(Article continues on p. 5.)

Health Article on Masks - Continued from Previous Page:

While the lab studies all show a mask can protect the wearer, how well masks will perform in the real world depends on a number of variables, including how consistently people use them, whether a person is in high-risk situations and the rate of infection in the community.

Laboratory studies showed that a high-quality medical mask--like an N95, KN95 or KF94--works best. While vaccination and two booster shots are the best protection against infection with the coronavirus, even vaccinated people should be cautious around crowds or large groups indoors when the vaccination status of others isn't known.

Dr. Marr recommends wearing the highest-quality mask possible when you can't keep your distance or be outdoors—or when nobody around you is masking up. That means an N95 or equivalent.

Information from Tara-Parker-Pope and Knvul Sheikh: "Does My Mask Protect Me If Nobody Else Is Wearing One?" New York Times, September 21, 2021 and updated April 19, 2022

- Scholarship Committee

Patricia MacGowan, Chair

We offer scholarship opportunities for High School Seniors and Teacher Interns. All applications are available on our website: www.seattlesra.org.

THE LYNN FULLER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP provides a great opportunity for all SSRA members to nominate a student who is graduating and/or has graduated from the Seattle School District and is interested in pursuing the field of elementary education. FOUR \$2500 scholarships are available.

THE PHIL KONKEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP provides two \$2500 scholarships for Seattle high school students who are interested in secondary education.

All that is required for *either* the Lynn Fuller Scholarship or the Phil Konkkel scholarship is a brief letter explaining why the nominator thinks the student is worthy of the scholarship as well as a short essay from the student regarding his or her goals in the field of education.

Nominations are DUE BY MARY 31ST and recipients will be notified by June 15th, 2022. Two \$2500 awards are made annually and sent directly to the recipient's post-secondary institution.

SSRA TEACHING INTERNSHIP SCHOLARSHIP: Six \$5000 scholarships are available for future teachers who are student teaching during the academic year 2022-2023 through a college/university program and who are working on initial certification in an educational field. Applications are DUE BY SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2022.

Questions? Contact Patricia MacGowan, Scholarship Chair pmac@uw.edu or call (206) 851-0232.

Thanks so much to this major donor to SSRA's Scholarship 501 (c-3) Tax-Deductible Fund:
Joanne Franey for the Lynn Fuller Scholarship Fund

- Community Services

Marilynn Miller, Chair

The needs in the Seattle Community seem to be greater than ever. And because of COVID, we are not having luncheons so members can't give to us directly. So please continue to give to local organizations we value any way you can. We still support **Mary's Place** as well as **Operation Nightwatch**. But the list of worthwhile charities in the Seattle area is almost endless. Your area's Food Banks are valued places that need our help—and even volunteer assistance. Do what you can; all contributions in these times are appreciated!

(Committee Reports from Pages 4 and 5 Continue Below)

- SSRA's Historian

Julee Neuhart



To begin my position as Historian for our organization, I thought it would be good to visit the Seattle School District archives. I met with *Librarian and Archivist Melinda Goodleaf* at her “library” in the John Stanford Center. Melinda has a very spacious suite of rooms which house historical documents from the earliest days of the district.

The school board agendas and meeting minutes from more than a century ago are housed in a refrigerated room. They are in large volumes cooled to keep the documents from dying from old age. While in the room, I asked Melinda to show me documents from 50 years ago, 1972, a year within my early career with the district. She gave me copies of *The Guide*, the weekly staff news bulletin, a stack of high school year books, and a book--*Without a Court Order: The Desegregation of Seattle Schools* by Ann LeGrelus Sigueland.

I had forgotten about *The Guide*, but I remembered as I browsed through them how helpful *The Guides* had been to me as a new employee. So much information: lists of staff development classes; notes from the personnel office about deadlines for submitting credits for salary changes/placements; requests from the superintendent to support United Good Neighbors (now called United Way); meeting times and dates of district bowling league games at the Sunset Bowl; announcements of transfer opportunities at the semester break; department head meetings; and guidelines for holiday decorations in classrooms and around the school buildings. And much, much more.

Nineteen-seventy-two was a good year for the high school drama departments, I learned. Ballard students put on the play *The Boyfriend*. Roosevelt performed *Under Milkwood*, *The Bald Soprano*, and *The Thurber Carnival*. Queen Anne did *Every Sunday*. Sports were big in every high school. Rainier Beach had a winning season in football (6-1-1) and basketball (14-2). Sealth had a harder season and ended 4-3. Cleveland held a 30-mile walk-a-thon and raised \$1600.

The book, *Without a Court Order*, captures a great deal about the desegregation history from 1971-1976. The author includes verbatim quotes from school board members debating various plans that would change the racial distribution of students across the District. This tumultuous time saw three superintendents facing the issue: Forbes Bottomly, Loren Troxel and David Moberly.

For my next visit to the archives I'll look at documents about events in ages that parallel my life's changes. I next hope to learn and discuss: What was happening in the district in the 1940's before I started school?

- Program Committee

Pat Cygan, Chair

NO members' luncheons or programs have been held in-person since March, 2020 when we learned that a virulent COVID-19 pandemic threatened our world. Hopefully, we will return to in-person luncheons/programs this fall. Two potential programs may feature *Dr. Lance Rhoades* or *Debbie Dimitre*. However, SSRA's next scheduled meetings are actually two WSSRA ones. The first will take place June 15th using a ZOOM format; the second will be an in-person gathering at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound (a few miles south of Olympia on Interstate-5) from Sept. 12-14. To join either meeting, please follow details outlined on WSSRA's website, www.wssra.org. Call Pat Cygan at 206-383-9472 if you wish to be a delegate representing SSRA for the second meeting.

• S.E.E.D. /Classroom Grants Committee

Kathy Purcell, Chair

Our Classroom Grants Committee is no longer accepting new S.E.E.D. Grant applications at this time for the 2021-2022 school year; we will process those already sent to us by April 15th. We will announce new information on these grants in the next edition of *The Bulletin* for next school year.

Continuation of *The Obituary Regarding WSSRA's Esteemed Ester Wilfong* From Page 2

Ester Wilfong was a long-time WSSRA member and legislative advocate. He grew up in Oregon but moved to Tacoma early in his career, where he worked not only as a classroom teacher but also as an administrator. Ester was very active in both local and state education organizations from the onset of his move into Tacoma Public Schools—even intensifying his lobbying efforts after he retired from the District. In 1982 he became a member of WSSRA and soon thereafter volunteered to serve on WSSRA's Legislative Committee--on which he worked diligently until quite recently. No one in our state legislature or on WSSRA's Legislative Committee since 1982 is unaware of all of his decisive legislative efforts on behalf of public employees. For a more in-depth look at Ester's extraordinary life please read the article on this remarkable man in the March-April edition of the *WSSRA Journal*.

News from "Operation Nightwatch"

Operation Nightwatch (now referred to as *Nightwatch*) recently announced the retirement of Reverend Rick Reynolds, their longtime Executive Director. For the past 28 years Reverend Reynolds worked tirelessly with this organization which helped the homeless in the downtown area of Seattle and in the SODO neighborhood. During his first year at *Nightwatch*, the group found 453 homeless in those areas. Now it's many times that. Reverend Rick Reynolds spoke at one of our luncheons a few years ago and impressed us with the work he and his staff do on a daily basis to help the many people who are down-and-out in our region. Over the years our members have sent funds, socks, cleaning supplies, etc. to help in his outreaches to Seattle's needy.

The new Executive Director is Deacon Frank DiGirolamo who has been involved with *Nightwatch* since 2014. We wish Deacon DiGirolamo the best as he takes on *Nightwatch's* challenges .

Quiz on Events of the 21st Century

Can you name each of these?

1. Terrorists attack this New York City site.
2. The United States attacks this country and topples the Taliban.
3. He becomes the first African-American U.S. President
4. This U.S. military prison is established in the Caribbean.
5. This U. S. space shuttle is destroyed upon reentry.
6. The "Orange Revolution" takes place in this country.
7. This, the world's largest and most powerful particle collider, is completed.
8. This structure, the world's tallest skyscraper, is completed in Dubai.
9. This terrorist leader is killed by U.S. Navy Seals.

(answers below—upside down)