

# The Bulletin



Volume LVIX No. 7

The Seattle School Retirees' Association

April-May, 2024

# **News from SSRA President Pat Cygan**

Change will be the obvious motif of our last SSRA members' luncheon and program on a new day of the week. This luncheon/program will take place on FRIDAY, MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2024. The place is the same—the Cascade Room in the Mountaineers' facility in Magnuson Park located at 7700 Sand Point Way N.E. (in the old Sand Point Naval Base). The SECOND CHANGE is that THE ARRIVAL TIME will be moved to 11:00 to 11:30 to accommodate our speaker, Debbie Dimitre who had scheduled another performance that day. She will have to leave our program early to make it to the next meeting. Check-in will be from 11:00 to 11:30! *Program begins at 11:30 promptly!* 

Debbie's newest program is called "Broken Star" wherein she portrays Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> and then, as that author, she describes the activities of Harriet Tubman, who's famous for helping slaves escape on the Underground Railroad.

After that presentation of these two Harriets, we'll distribute our lunches from LeFournil French Bakery. Since each of the Red Box Lunches would now cost \$19.29, we will be increasing what each attendee will pay to \$18 (except for those who are 85 and older who will receive a free lunch only if they pre-register and inform Pat Cygan of their age).

All 50 of our prospective luncheon guests will need **to pre-register by calling Pat or Ron Cygan** at 206-356-3299 or 206-383-9472 or by email at *rcygan@earthlink.net* **By MONDAY, May 6th** WITH YOUR RED BOX LUNCH CHOICES WE'LL AGAIN ORDER FROM *LE FOURNIL'S FRENCH BAKERY*. Each attendee will pay \$18 at our luncheon for a *LeFournil Red Box Lunch* + some eating essentials. *Ron and Pat Cygan need to know each diner's Lunch Choices NO LATER THAN* Monday, May 6th *so we can pre-order and pay for those meals for a 4/10 delivery*.

Le Fournil's Main Entrée Choices include a Cold Quiche Lorraine OR a Cold Quiche Poireau (=Vegetarian) Or a Chicken Caesar Salad Or ONE of these 11 BAGUETTE SANDWICHES = ROAST BEEF; CHICKEN SALAD; HAM + SWISS; TURKEY + SWISS; SALMON SALAD; CAMEMBERT CHEESE; SLICED HARD-BOILED EGG; TUNA SALAD; HAM, SWISS AND BUTTER; ROASTED VEGETABLES + SWISS CHEESE; PORK AND MUSHROOM PATE WITH CORNICHON (= PATE FORESTER) [Most sandwiches will include lettuce, tomato, mayonnaise and Dijon mustard.] Cold Drink Choices include one bottle of apple juice, orange juice, Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Perrier OR Water.

Dessert Choice Options = a TART with mixed fruit OR lemon OR cheese OR chocolate OR apple OR blueberry OR strawberry fillings; a gluten-free chocolate mousse; a chocolate OR coffee éclair; Madeleine OR shortbread raisin OR assorted COOKIES; a Mille Feuilles OR a Chou a la Crème.

# Why a PAC? by Edith Ruby

Supporting legislative friends in their election campaigns is an important part of WSSRA's lobbying for retiree benefits. Candidates need money to get elected and they remember those who contribute. WSSRA can't legally give money to candidates. That's why WSSR-PAC is a separate organization and needs your contributions to be effective. At present less than 2% of WSSRA's 17,000 members make PAC contributions. All WSSRA members gain when legislators vote in favor of increasing and maintaining school retiree benefits.

With elections coming up in November, the PAC needs your help. You can send a check made out to WSSR-PAC to PAC Treasurer Lora Brabant, 125 West 11<sup>th</sup> St., Port Angeles, WA 98362 or contribute electronically to *http://www.wssr-pac.org*. Many members find a \$3/month automatic deduction from their bank account to be easy on their budget. Thanks for your support!

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# In Memoriam

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

Frieda Kirk, Jeanne MacLean,
Donald T. Smith and Richard VanHaagen



#### Frieda Kirk

Frieda passed away on January 20<sup>th</sup>. She was a long-time member of SSRA who attended a number of luncheons at The Canal Restaurant. She had health problems in recent years which prevented her from attending recent gatherings. Some of you may remember her at The Canal offering to help people use their cell phones.

Frieda was a Native American, part Klamath and part Lakota who grew up in Oregon. Her education included work at Willamette University and earning her bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in 1958 with a major in Spanish language and culture. She taught Spanish, French and English in various schools in Oregon and eventually received a Master's Degree in the French language at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1967.

She worked in various drama productions in Seattle in the 1970's while she taught in the area.





Don Smith above and Frieda Kirk at left

# SSRA Leadership for 2023-2024

President.....Pat Cygan

President-elect for 2024-2025	Someone New	
Immediate Past President	Sue Battin	
Recording Secretary	Mary Wallon	
Treasurer		
Committee Chairs		
Audit Review	Roxanne Trees	
Budget	Jim DeJarnatt	
Communications/Outreach	Ron Cygan	
Community Services	Karen Lam	
Drawings and Baskets		
Health Services		

Historian.....Julee Neuhart

Legislative.....Edith Ruby and Mary Wallon

May Luncheon......Margaret Nelson

Membership......Julee Neuhart

Parliamentarian Edith Ruby

Programs......Pat Cygan

Resolutions/Bylaws......SSRA's Board

Scholarships.....Patricia MacGowan

Burbank Rideout/SEED Grants......John Thorp

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 in 2024, please call SSRA's President Pat Cygan at 206 356-3299.

#### Don Smith

Another long-time member of SSRA who passed away recently was Donald T. Smith, former teacher at Nathan Hale High School.

He was born and raised in Seattle where he graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1958. He earned his bachelor's degree from Western Washington University in 1963, where he would say "Magna Cum Lucky." After teaching elsewhere, Don would eventually work at Nathan Hale for his last 26 years of teaching mostly in business education classes.

**SSRA's Bulletin** is published five times per year by the Seattle School Retirees' Association. We used to hold members' meetings/programs on the first Tuesday of most months from September to May. We held no meetings from March, 2020 until recently due to COVID issues. We hope to hold at least 4 members' meetings for the 2023-2024 school year. If each one proves to be safe and reasonably attended, we'll schedule others in the future. Even though our SODO office is rarely staffed, you can leave messages for us at the office number (206 521-5170) or by email at <a href="mailto:ssra44@juno.com">ssra44@juno.com</a>. You may also reach SSRA President Pat Cygan directly by phone at 206-356-3299.

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# Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend (or S.E.E.D. Grant) Classroom Grant Application September 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024

NAME	DATE	
SSRA MEMBER?	YESNO Best Phone Number/Times To Reach You?	
Amount of Request?	SSRA MEMBERS MAY REQUEST UP TO \$500 IN A SCHOOL YEAR	
A	A NON-MEMBER MAY REQUEST UP TO \$200 ONE TIME ONLY.	
Your School and Its Ac	ldress?	
Your Position/Role?	Your e-mail?	
Grant Amount Request	ed? Number of Benefitting Students?	
SSRA were to send you you would be required potential addition to you 2 different but adjaces	d where?  e: Usually each school year falls into 2 calendar years [e.g., Sept. 2023 to June 2024]. If SEED Grants of \$600 or more in the same calendar year [=Jan. to Dec.], both SSRA and by the Internal Revenue Service to fill out a 1099 form—thereby reporting that sum to be a ur income for that tax year. Thus, SSRA Members, if you apply for a SEED grant in at school years, please space your requests for S.E.E.D. grants so that the total for both the equal \$600 or more dollars between January and December of the same calendar year.	
Is This A Combined Pr	oject? Yes No If combined, with whom?	
Is This A Summer Scho	ool Project?YesNo	
Briefly describe how th	is grant will be used to enhance students' learning? (Use back if necessary.)	
What specifically do yo	ou plan to purchase with this S.E.E.D. grant? (Use back of this sheet if necessary.)	
Project's Start Date =	Project's Finish Date =	
Next, you will need to she	++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++	
PRINCIPAL or PROGI	RAM MANAGER'S SIGNATURE Please PRINT Principal/Program Manager's Name.	

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#### 2024 Legislative Session: What We Got, What We Didn't

by Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

Our rating of this year's session? "Not a great year but not bad."

- For the second year in a row Plan 1 retirees will receive, starting in their July pension checks, a 3% COLA of up to
  a maximum of \$110/month. Legislators rejected request to raise maximum to \$125. That's now 5 cost of living
  increases in 14 years.
- Payment of PEBB medical insurance premium for month of death. HB 2013 asked for the full month's pension payment for the month a member passes away. Payment now stops on day of death. HB 2013 was replaced by HB 2481 which pays the PEBB insurance premium but not the full month's pension for the death month.
- PEBB Medicare eligible retiree healthcare benefit will continue at 50% of base premium, up to \$183/month. Governor Inslee's budget proposed an increase to 60%, \$193/month, but legislators did not agree.
- HB 2471 increasing Plans 2/3 service credit to 1.5 years for each year worked past 30 died in committee.

Our lobbyists tell us that we likely would not have had the success we did in 2024 without the voices of the hundreds of retirees who sent emails and made phone calls to legislators as well as electronically registering in favor of our bills at House and Senate hearings. We are strongest when we all pitch in together!

So, what now? The next legislative session, starting in January, 2025, will be a longer session to set the state budget for the next two years. It is forecast that Plan 1 pension plans will be fully funded by 2026. With legislators about to lose the excuse of Plan 1's unfunded liability to deny Plan 1 members an automatic COLA similar to that of all other plans, this will be the year to double down on giving our oldest members assurance of some yearly protection against continuing inflation.

The cost of PEBB medical insurance premiums, especially Uniform Medical, is an ongoing concern. A coalition of retiree lobbying groups is meeting with the state Health Care Authority to find ways to decrease UMP premiums. This is difficult because the federal government subsidizes the cost of Medicare Advantage plans but not traditional Medicare. Our senators and representatives in Washington, D.C. need to be urged to equalize benefits between Medicare Advantage plans and traditional Medicare. (UMP is traditional Medicare plus a medigap policy.)

While the bill to give a pension "bonus" to Plan 2/3 members working more than 30 years made no progress this session, WSSRA will continue to support bills encouraging current educators to carry on their service beyond 30 years.

A serious threat in 2025 to WSSRA's efforts to pass legislation helping our members financially as well as to protect past gains is two initiatives on the November ballot. If voters choose to get rid of the capital gains tax on the wealthy and the Climate Commitment Act which brings money to the state through carbon auctions we will see a substantial decrease in our state's revenues. Legislators will be looking for budget cuts rather than enhancements.

All House seats and half of the Senate are on the ballot this November. The 2025 legislature will look different from recent years. The House has eleven open seats to fill and the Senate has five. Most new legislators will know nothing about the needs of school retirees. Campaign events offer a good opportunity for all our members to meet new candidates, explain retiree issues, and ask for their support if elected. Current legislators running for reelection need to be thanked for their support of our 2024 bills and urged to continue and increase their help in 2025.

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#### **SSRA's Committee Reports**

Health Committee

Myrna Muto, Chair

#### Alcohol Use

According to American Addiction Centers, statistics show that alcohol is the most used substance among adults aged 65 and older. It is estimated that one third of older people suffering from alcohol use disorder developed the problem later in life. In 2021, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Survey showed that 11% of US adults had at least one binge drinking episode within a month of surveying. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines binge drinking as consuming enough alcohol to bring a person's blood alcohol to 0.08g/dl or above. For women, it means consuming 4 or more drinks in a 2-hour period. For men, it means consuming 5 or more drinks within 2 hours. The same survey showed that nearly 3% of adults 65 and older drank heavily, defined by CDC as 15 or more drinks per week for men and 8 drinks per week for women.

Per National Institutes of Health (NIH), as one grows older, health problems or prescribed medicines may require drinking less alcohol or avoid drinking it completely. Some older people feel the effects of alcohol more strongly without increasing the amount they drink. This might result in more accidents such as falls, fractures and car crashes. Life changes later in life, such as death of a spouse, or other loved ones, moving to a new environment, or failing health might lead to a harmful reliance on alcohol. Depression in older adults often align with drinking too much.

Drinking too much alcohol can damage the body over time:

- Lead to some kinds of cancer, liver damage, immune system disorders and brain damage
- Worsen some conditions such as osteoporosis, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, ulcers, memory loss and mood disorders
- Make some medical conditions hard for doctors to accurately diagnose and treat For example, alcohol causes changes in the heart and blood vessels. These changes can dull pain that might be a warning sign of a heart attack
- Cause some older people to be forgetful and confused, symptoms that could be mistaken for signs of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

Some people have no trouble cutting back drinking; others need help. If someone you know is thinking of changing their habits around alcohol, see the "Rethinking Drinking website" hosted by National Health Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).



#### Bad Joke About Drinking and Driving

Ralph was stopped by the Seattle police after he was wandering in his lane.

The policewoman asked Ralph if her had been drinking. Ralph paused before saying: "Of course I have been drinking and driving. I'm certainly in no condition to walk."

The officer than asked Ralph to step out of the car.

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(committee reports continued)

Scholarship Committee

Patricia MacGowan, Chair

#### WSSRA SCHOLARSHIPS

The Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) also sponsors a scholarship program for student teachers and for high school students. Remember, these are separate from the ones given out by SSRA.

Thanks to the Northwest II scholarship committee members who met April 11 to select the scholars for WSSRA for 2024. This includes Patricia MacGowan (as Chair) and NW II Representatives, Don Bunger (from Southwest King), Robert Fletcher (from East King), Pat Jovag (from East King), Myrna Muto (from Seattle), Robin Stroben (from Southeast King), and Bill Tracy (Southwest King). The committee selected two Handy Scholars who will receive \$900 per year for up to four years as well as two Foundation scholars for \$3000 and \$1000 plus an alternative recipient. These winners will be recognized at the WSSRA State Convention in June

#### SEATTLE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Seattle School Retirees' Association provides the following scholarships: two \$3000 Phil Konkel Scholarships for Seattle high school students interested in secondary education and two \$3000 Lynn Fuller Scholarships for Seattle high school students interested in elementary education. Applications for both of these are due JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> of this year.

Six \$5000 scholarships are available for teacher interns with applications DUE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024. All applications are available from Patricia MacGowan at <a href="mac@uw.edu">pmac@uw.edu</a> or call her at (206) 851-0232. Also check the SSRA website: <a href="www.seattlesra.org">www.seattlesra.org</a>.

AGAIN, MANY THANKS TO ALL DONORS to SSRA's scholarship and S.E.E.D. grants

#### Drawings and Baskets

Karen Lam, Chair

If you will attend our May10th luncheon, please consider bringing items items that will be auctioned off. Bring items such as a plant or other items that we can use in the auction. Money raised will be sent to *Mary's Place* and/or to *Nightwatch*. Thanks.

# • S.E.E.D./Classroom Grants

John Thorp, Chair

We are still receiving applications for S.E.E.D. Grants. We have approved 16 grants so far this school year. Ten were for high school educators, two for middle school and four for elementary school. The S.E.E.D. Grant application is again provided on page 3 for those who need it.

(committee reports continued)

#### Community Services

Karen Lam, Chair

As mentioned in the last edition of *The Bulletin*, SSRA as well as many SSRA members have contributed money and goods to **Nightwatch** and **Mary's Place**. **Nightwatch** (formerly *Operation Nightwatch*) seeks donations to help the homeless and those in limited-income housing. **Mary's Place's** outreach program helps local young people and families by giving them sundry necessities to assist them. **Please bring items to the luncheon OR make out checks for either or both groups.** 

# • Program Committee

Pat Cygan, Chair



At our March 7<sup>th</sup> luncheon our guest speaker was Dr. Alan Burke, Executive Director of WSSRA. Since he will be leaving his position soon, Patricia Cygan gave him a gift from her and SSRA. At left he is pictured receiving the gift. Patricia MacGowan also presented him with a gift but this time a joke gift for his work at cleaning up around the WSSRA grounds after some homeless people were removed.

Dr. Burke gave a talk on politics, both local and state-wide, about issues affecting our members and what WSSRA has lobbied for this past year. He showed how complicated lobbying for issues that matter to us can be.

As explained on page 1 in The President's message, on **Friday, May 10**<sup>th</sup> we'll be holding our last SSRA Members' Luncheon Program of this school year—same place but at an earlier time (as explained on page 1).. *One difference is that our members who are 85 years old or older will get a free lunch that day—if they've pre-ordered it and given us their age/birthday.* As Program Chair, I've booked **Debbie Dimitre** to present/perform in one of the original plays she's written about famous American women. SSRA's Board and I selected *Debbie Dimitre's "Broken Star"* to be the play she'll stage for us. In "*Broken Star"* we'll "meet" **Harriet Beecher Stowe**, the author of the pre-Civil War classic, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* PLUS Stowe will then introduce us to the most well-known/successful *Conductor of the Underground Railroad*, **Harriet Tubman**. Thus, we'll be getting some real insights about *two significant Harriets of the U. S. Civil War*!

# Save the Dates for the 2024 WSSRA State Convention

The convention will take place from June 3-5 at the Wenatchee Convention Center. The main hotel will be the Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel. When registering make sure to mention you are coming for the WSSRA State Convention to receive a room discount. Let an SSRA Board member know if you plan to attend. More information is on the WSSRA website.

If you have questions, particularly if you wil be a first-time attendee, please call Michele Hunter at WSSRA.

Remember: Wenatchee is "The Apple Capital of the World."

# SSRA's Website Is Up and Running

### by Ron Cygan

Our website hasn't been up for a number of months because our webmaster, Ken Kohnhorst, died unexpectedly and left no provision in his estate for his GraphicOne business which included a number of websites including ours. We went through a number of attempts to purchase the SSRA domain name but kept running in to dead ends. Without having access to the domain name you cannot change anything on the website; thus it remained the same, out-of-date site for months.

Finally I received a call from a webmaster in Florida who was in touch with Ken Kohnhorst's daughter who wanted to do the right thing and have the sites continue. That webmaster got our website up and running. We now have a number of features up-to-date including the newsletter, the events column, all the scholarship information as well as the current S.E.E.D. Grant Application. There is still more to do, but any of you who wish may access the site using the old electronic address: <a href="https://www.seattlesra.org">www.seattlesra.org</a>.

#### Special Dates in April and May

April 28<sup>th</sup>: National Arbor Day (Plant a tree!)

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Commemorates workers struggle against big business Or celebrate rites of spring around the world Or enjoy Lei Day celebrated mainly in Hawaii

May 5<sup>th</sup>: Cinco de Mayo which celebrates the victory of Mexican armed forces against the French army in The Battle of Puebla in 1862

May 12th: Mother's Day Originally promoted by Anna Reeves Jarvis and her daughter, Anna Maria Jarvis, to become a national holiday as early as 1908 but didn't become an official national holiday until President Wilson promoted it in Congress which passed it in 1914 to be observed on the second Sunday in May





Anna Reeves Jarvis at far left daughter Anna Maria Jarvis pictured to the right

May 28th National Armed Forces Day—first proclaimed by President John F. Kennedy in March of 1961

# History Notes: Who Was Ida Culver? by Julee Neuhart, SSRA Historian



I have written about several Seattle Schools that bear the names of prominent Seattleites who now are unfamiliar to most of us. Another building in that same vein is The Ida Culver House (ICH). Most Seattle retirees are somewhat familiar with the ICH but do not know where the name comes from. It is one of Seattle's oldest retirement residences, established more than 90 years ago.

Ida Culver (pictured at left) was born in 1875 in Iowa. She graduated

at age 17 from high school in Clarion, Iowa and started teaching elementary school with only her high school diploma, which was not uncommon at that time. From 1900 to 1904 Ida studied at the Iowa Normal School—now called Iowa University. There she earned her bachelor's degree and her teaching certificate for teaching K-12 as well as a principal's certification.

Ida was interest in moving to Seattle and first applied for a teaching job here in 1908 at age 33. She was finally hired for the 1911-12 school year and began teaching third grade at John B. Allen School—now called the Phinney Neighborhood Center. She later transferred to Hawthorne School where she taught third grade until her death in 1936 at age 61. During her years at Hawthorne, she took one year off and travelled in Europe on a sabbatical.

Ida was very active in Seattle education organizations including the Seattle Grade Teachers' Club, the Seattle Classroom Teachers' Association, the Seattle Teachers' League, the WEA, the NEA, the Seattle Teachers' Association and the PTA. Outside of the classroom she was a member of the Seattle Business and Professional Women's Club and the American Association of University Women. A very busy Lady!

In 1928 Ida joined a group of teachers who were concerned about the living conditions of retired Seattle teachers. There were no Social Security benefits at that time. The group formed the Seattle Education Auxiliary, a non-profit group so they could raise money to buy a home for retired teachers and for teachers needing a place to stay following illness or injury. Ida was instrumental in writing up documents necessary to meet Washington's Secretary of State's requirements to become a non-profit and financial organization. Because of Ida's leadership, the Auxiliary elected her to the original Board of Directors.

The group began gathering funds from active teachers and in 1933 they were able to purchase a site at 1004 Queen Anne Avenue. The group made the down payment of \$7500 and carried a mortgage of \$2700. After a remodel, eleven retired teachers and a housekeeper moved in.

Ida died of a heart attack in 1936 at age 61. She never got to live in the retirement home. However, in 1937 the Auxiliary received a generous bequest from her estate and chose to name the home in recognition for her years of work and generosity in making the retirement home a reality.

In 1945 the Queen Anne location was bursting at the seams and a larger home was needed. The new site at 2315 N.E. 65<sup>th</sup> Street was purchased and construction began in 1949. The site is about to close for a major remodel. However, the Broadview ICH on Greenwood Avenue continues to operate and carry Ida's name (but no longer is connected to our group).



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SSRA Scholarship and/or S.E.E.D. Grant Fund Donation Form		
Enclosed is my gift for:	Date	
SCHOLARSHIP FUND	BURBANK RIDEOUT SEED FUND	
Helps provide scholarships for post-secondary education and training for graduates of Seattle Public Schools.	Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend provides mini-grants to school employees for special classroom projects. on will be placed where the need is greatest.	
Amount enclosed: \$	Person or family (and address) to be notified of my gift:	
In honor of		
or In memory of		
My name		
a matching donor form from your (or your spouse's) employer. Please check here $\Box$ if you would like information about including the Scholarship and/or Burbank Rideout SEED Fund in your estate planning.		