



The Bulletin



Volume LVIX No. 6

The Seattle School Retirees' Association

February-March, 2024

Three Important Messages from SSRA President Pat Cygan

- 1) **This is a major message for Current Seattle Public School Employees:** WSSRA is planning to again offer **2 very popular Pre-Retirement/Retirement Webinars over 2 evenings:**
 - **On March 14th** – Information about **Washington's Department of Retirement Systems + Washington's HCA/PEBB Healthcare Offerings for Retirees**
 - **On March 19th** – Information on **Social Security/MEDICARE and VEBA.****To pre-register or to get more information about these Webinars, contact Tara at WSSRA's office number (1-360-413-5496/then 5) to ask Tara for a printable flyer with the QR code.**
- 2) **A RARE OFFER is now open--only until 6/30/2024--for Seattle District's Employees/Retirees to join SSRA and WSSRA—and to pay just \$42 instead of \$84 for your first year's membership.** Call SSRA's Membership Chair JULEE NEUHART at 206-794-7760 or PAT CYGAN at 206-356-3299 for an application. After filling it out, you'll mail it to WSSRA'S Membership Coordinator MICHELLE HUNTER at WSSRA's address, which is listed on the form. Michele Hunter, who's reachable at 1-360-413-5496, will hold on to your application for the 6 months of your free membership—after which she will send it to either the District's Payroll Department OR Washington's Retirement System for monthly deductions of \$7! Once Michele receives a current employee's application, you'll be eligible to apply for SSRA's SEED/Classroom Grants of up to \$500 per school year (instead of a one-time-offer-of-\$200). **Note that SSRA and WSSRA's mission is to protect and enhance our employment/health/retirement benefits.**
- 3) **Our next SSRA MEMBERS' LUNCHEON and PROGRAM will be held again at The Mountaineer's Facility on Thursday, March 7, 2024 from 11:15 A.M. to @ 2:30 P.M. in the Cascade Rooms at the Mountaineer's Facility in Magnusson Park at 7700 Sand Point Way N., which is inside the area that used to be called the Sand Point Naval Base.**

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 **BEFORE MONDAY, March 4TH WITH YOUR RED BOX LUNCH CHOICES WE'LL AGAIN BE ORDERING FROM LE FOURNIL'S FRENCH BAKERY.** Each attendee will pay \$17 at our luncheon for a *LeFournil Red Box Lunch* + some eating essentials. *Ron and Pat Cygan will need to know each diner's Red Box Lunch Choices NO LATER THAN Sunday, March 3rd so we can pre-order and pay for those meals on Monday, March 4th for a 3/17 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 filling 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.**



In Memoriam

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

Betty Ferguson, Margaret Hartung, Sharon May, Janet Matthews and Marlene Parks



Margaret Hartung



Margaret was born in 1925 and grew up in West Seattle. She later went to rural Ellensburg before moving to Port Orchard.

After graduating from Kitsap High School she attended The University of Washington. She left to get married and lived in various countries around the world before moving to Seattle. Margaret became a special education teacher's aide in different Seattle Public schools for quite a few years. She passed away on January 20th. Margaret was, of course, a member of SSRA.

Breaking News!

This refers to Mary T. Henry. See the article about her on page 9. We just found out that the naming ceremony for the Mary T. Henry Library will be held at South Shore School on April 19th in the afternoon. Please check with the school or with the Seattle Public Schools Central Office for the exact time if you wish to attend.

SSRA Leadership for 2023-2024

President.....Pat Cygan
President-elect.....Someone New
Immediate Past President.....Sue Battin

Recording Secretary.....Mary Wallon
Treasurer.....Sue Battin

Committee Chairs

Audit Review.....Roxanne Trees
Budget.....Jim DeJarnatt
Communications/Outreach.....Ron Cygan
Community Services.....Karen Lam
Drawings and Baskets.....Karen Lam
Health Services.....Myrna Muto
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.

Thought for the Day

"The smallest minority on earth is the individual. Those who deny individual rights cannot claim to be defenders of minorities."

Ayn Rand, American Author (1905-1982)

NEED MONEY FOR YOUR CLASSROOM?
For those of you currently working for Seattle Public Schools, you can re-coop unreimbursed costs by applying for an SSRA S.E.E.D. Grant.

***SEE OUR NEXT PAGE
FOR AN APPLICATION.***



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 ssra44@juno.com. You may also reach SSRA President Pat Cygan directly by phone at 206-356-3299.



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

NAME _____ DATE _____

SSRA MEMBER? ☐ YES ☐ NO Best Phone Number/Times To Reach You? _____

Amount of Request? SSRA MEMBERS MAY REQUEST UP TO \$500 IN A SCHOOL YEAR. _____

A NON-MEMBER MAY REQUEST UP TO \$200 **ONE TIME ONLY**. _____

Your School and Its Address? _____

Your Position/Role? _____ Your e-mail? _____

Grant Amount Requested? _____ Number of Benefitting Students? _____

Mail check to whom and where? _____

Important Alert Notice: Usually each school year falls into 2 calendar years [e.g., Sept. 2023 to June 2024]. If SSRA were to send you SEED Grants of \$600 or more in the same calendar year [=Jan. to Dec.], both SSRA and you would be required by the Internal Revenue Service to fill out a **1099 form**—thereby reporting that sum to be a potential addition to your income for that tax year. **Thus, SSRA Members, if you apply for a SEED grant in 2 different but adjacent school years, please space your requests for S.E.E.D. grants so that the total for both grant requests will not equal \$600 or more dollars between January and December of the same calendar year.**

Is This A Combined Project? ☐ Yes ☐ No If combined, with whom? _____

Is This A Summer School Project? ☐ Yes ☐ No Is This An After-School Project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Briefly describe how this grant will be used to enhance students' learning? (Use back if necessary.)

What specifically do you 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 show this request to your school's PRINCIPAL OR PROGRAM MANAGER FOR HIS/HER SIGNATURE. **YOUR PRINCIPAL/PROGRAM MANAGER'S SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED.**

PRINCIPAL or PROGRAM MANAGER'S SIGNATURE

Please PRINT Principal/Program Manager's Name.

MAIL A PAPER APPLICATION TO John Thorp at 11033 39th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98125 OR
send application by email to jhthorp3@outlook.com
(We must receive the application by May 1, 2024.)



Our State Budget—A Frankenstein's Monster

by Edith Ruby, SSRA Legislative Committee Co-chair

One of WSSRA's contract lobbyists, Michael Moran, commented at our last weekly WSSRA Legislative Committee meeting that watching legislators build the state budget is like watching Dr. Frankenstein building his monster. There are many parts to fit together, some fitting better than others. That monster wanders around during the session in an unfinished state until the session's last days when legislators put it in final form. One can only hope that the monster will not be unfriendly!

Our legislators set the state's two-year budget in odd numbered years during a 105-day session. The following year's short (60 day) session makes minor adjustments and deals with unexpected problems. WSSRA is working hard to see that some of those adjustments benefit our members. Our priorities:

- A one-time 3% COLA for Plan 1 members similar to the COLA written into state law for Plans 2 and 3. **SHB 1985** would give us this COLA. The original bill, HB1985, called for a \$125/month cap on the COLA, but this was decreased to \$110/month in House Appropriations. The House passed **SHB 1985 97-0** on February 6 and it has been referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee.
- Full month of death pension payment. Current DRS policy ends pension payment on day of death. This may not leave enough in that month's pension check to cover PEBB medical insurance premiums. Because we often have high medical bills in our last month of life, the unpaid premium can cause financial disaster for remaining family members left to pay those medical bills no longer covered by insurance. HB 2013 authorizing DRS to pay the full month's pension for month of death has died in House Appropriations. **HB 2481** which only covers the retiree's premium for the month of death may replace 2013. Unless passed, best to die on the last day of the month.
- Maintain or increase the Medicare eligible retiree healthcare benefit. At present the benefit is capped at \$183/month, 50% of base premium payment. **HB 2188**, currently in House Appropriations, increases the cap to 60%, up to \$193/month.
- Plans 2/3 service credit increased for those working over 30 years. **HB 2471** allows 1.5 years of service credit for each year worked past 30.

As we write this on February 6, a month before end of session, only the COLA bill has passed the House. **No bill** has passed the Senate. Your WSSRA Legislative Committee members are actively lobbying, but it is likely that not all bills will even get out of committee. Our highest priority in this short session is the Plan 1 COLA, but we have members who need the help given in other priority bills as well. WSSRA will continue to work now and in future sessions to pass all our priority bills.

SSRA's Legislative Committee members, Mary Wallon, Patricia MacGowan, and Edith Ruby, are contacting legislators to urge passage of these bills, but legislators listen best to their own constituents. If you care about these bills, contact your district's legislators and tell them how passing a specific bill will help you. To find your legislative district and legislators' names, go to www.leg.wa.gov, click on Find Your District, and key in your home address. Many voices are imploring legislators for help. As school retirees, we must speak loudly and clearly about what we need for a secure retirement after years of working to educate Washington's children.

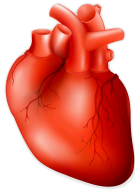
By the time you read this, changes in bill status will have taken place. For the latest information check the Legislative page on WSSRA's web site, www.wssra.org. Nothing is final until the legislature adjourns!

And hope for the best from this year's monster.

SSRA's Committee Reports

- Health Committee

Myrna Muto, Chair



February Is American Heart Month



By 1963, diseases of the heart and the circulatory system were responsible for over one-half of the deaths occurring annually. This caused both physical and economic loss to the nation. The American Heart Association teamed with the National Heart Institute and the Heart Disease Control Program to develop research and education programs. On December 30, 1963, the Congress of the United States, approved a joint resolution requesting that the President issue annually a proclamation designating February as American Heart Month. As a result, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed the month of February, 1964 the first "American Heart Month."

On the morning of January 30, my health care provider asked me to submit my blood pressure numbers. That afternoon, I attended a Webinar. At the end, one of the speakers shared that she recently lost four good friends to heart attacks. She reminded us to wear red on Thursday, Feb. 2. "Wear Red Day" was started in 2004 by the American Heart Association to raise awareness about heart disease in women. I asked my husband to take my blood pressure that evening. I submitted my number online and 30 minutes later the phone rang. The nurse was concerned at how high it was. The next morning, my doctor's office called. "Could I be there in an hour?"

According to the CDC, when blood is pumped throughout, there is pressure pushing against the walls of the arteries. High blood pressure (hypertension) is blood pressure that is higher than normal. The higher the pressure levels one is at risk for other health problems such as heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Measuring one's blood pressure is the only way to know if one has high blood pressure. I am now taking a little pill daily and will try to exercise 150 minutes a week, eat a healthier diet, limit my sodium and alcohol intake, keep a healthy weight [doctor told me not to lose any weight] and manage my stress. Increasing my physical activity will help with lowering stress.

What is your blood pressure?

(committee reports continued)

- Scholarship Committee

Patricia MacGowan, Chair

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Thank you to our Scholarships donor, **Carmen Tsuboi Chan**, in memory of *Terry Acena, Pamela Ames, Marie Cervantes-Waldmann, Elizabeth Clare Ferguson, Sally Hill, Kari Sellers, Bud Turner and Benjamin Yorita*, as well as for a separate check to honor *Kelly Aramaki*.

Thank you for your donation to our SEED/Classroom Mini-Grant Fund, **Oleine Hedeon**.

WSSRA SCHOLARSHIPS

The Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) sponsors a Scholarship Program for student teachers who are planning to work in a K-12 school in Washington State. It does so through **WSSR-Foundation Scholarships**, which are \$2500 each (for a total of 16 when two are provided to each of WSSRA's geographical districts.)

High School Seniors interested in education careers can apply for these scholarships that range from \$3,000 to \$900 per year (when that \$900 can be renewable for 4 years). To complete an application, the applicant needs to go to www.wssra.org under *Foundation and Scholarships*.

2024's APPLICATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 1, 2024.

SEATTLE SCHOOL RETIREES' ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Seattle Schools Retirees' Association (SSRA) offers graduating seniors these 4 scholarships:

Two **\$3000 Phil Konkel Scholarships** for students interested in *secondary education* careers.

Two **\$3000 Lynn Fuller Scholarships** for students interested in *elementary education* careers.

APPLICATIONS FOR THOSE 4 SCHOLARSHIPS ARE DUE JUNE 1ST, 2024

SSSR also offers **Six \$5,000 Scholarships for College-level Teacher Interns**. Applicants for these must be scheduled to do their student teaching experience within the 2024-2025 school year. THESE ARE DUE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024. *All applications for SSRA Scholarships are available from Patricia MacGowan at pmac@uw.edu. OR by calling (206) 851-0232.]*

SEATTLE SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In May/June, 2024 the Seattle Schools Scholarship Fund will provide **four \$7500 scholarships to graduating seniors in each of the Seattle High Schools**. *These scholarships recognize students who have overcome significant life challenges and have contributed leadership to their schools and communities. These scholarships support tuition expenses at any college or university or vocational training program of the student's choice.*

Scholarships for these are partially funded from a yearly \$25,000 donation by the Seattle School Retirees Association as well as generous donations from other community members.

- Drawings and Baskets

Karen Lam, Chair

If you will attend our March 7th luncheon, please consider bringing items for a basket that will be auctioned off. Or you may instead wish to bring items such as a plant or other item that we can use in the auction. Money raised will be sent to either *Mary's Place* or to *Nightwatch*. Thanks.

(committee reports continued)

- S.E.E.D./Classroom Grants

John Thorp, Chair

We are still receiving applications for SEED/Classroom Grants. *If you too seek a classroom grant to help pay for unreimbursed expenses for this school year, please fill out A COPY OF THE FORM you'll find on page three of this "Bulletin" and then send it to me, John Thorp, as shown at the bottom of the application. (Since we haven't been able to update our website, you can still use the form shown on the website but send the application only to me—not to Pat or Cathy.*

Applications should be sent in to John Thorpe no later than May 1 of this year.

- 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

After our recent phone call with **David Horsey**, Seattle's well-known and admired political cartoonist, it became apparent he will be unable to be our March 7th speaker because of other commitments. But he is willing to take up our offer in the 2024-2025 school year.

*Since this 2024 Election Year is grabbing a lot of press and interest, I thought it would be wise to find a speaker for our **March 7th Luncheon** who is well versed on the various ways we can use our votes/voices to advance political causes that benefit all students as well as our SSRA members and families. I chose **WSSRA's Executive Director Alan Burke** to do that for us. Alan Burke will present some reasonable ways we can promote and maybe demand wise education policies as well as promote educator-retiree benefits in the 2024 Election Cycle. What local, state, national and international policies/decisions-to-be-made should we consider? What candidates should we back—and WHY/HOW? How do we get out "our messages" with the biggest impacts? [Please note that on March 12th Washington voters will be voting in Washington's Presidential Primary.] Alan Burke has a gift for explaining complicated issues well. He'll answer our questions and inspire us to ACT!*

On **Friday, May 10th** we'll be holding our last SSRA Members' Luncheon Program of this school year—at the same times and place. *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. Let an SSRA Board member know if you plan to attend. More information is on the WSSRA website.

Street Named in Honor of the Late Cheryl Chow*by Ron Cygan*

Most of you know that Cheryl Chow, long-time Seattle Public School administrator and SSRA member, passed away in March of 2013. She was only 66 but had been battling cancer for a number of years. What most people don't know is that a Seattle street was named in her honor—Cheryl Chow Boulevard—at the intersection of South Mount Baker Boulevard and 31st Avenue South. This is close to Franklin High School where Cheryl graduated from in 1964. She later returned there as principal. Besides being a public school administrator, she was well-known in the Interntional District for leading an award-winning drill team.

The Seattle City Council approved the renaming of the street some time ago, but the unveiling of the street sign occurred in late January. After retirement, Cheryl lobbied the state legislature to include LGBTQ issues in State curriculum standards.

Above are pictured Cheryl Chow and the new street sign, Cheryl Chow Boulevard.

Special Dates in February and March

All of February: Black History Month Originated by Charles G. Woodson, pictured here. He grew up poor but worked hard in school and eventually earned a Master's Degree in History from the University of Chicago and a Doctorate from Harvard. He promoted Negro History Week in the 1920's which eventually became Black History Month in 1976.

February 10th-24th: Lunar New Year (observed in many parts of Asia and is determined by the second new moon after the winter solstice—December 21st)

February 12th: Abraham Lincoln's birthday

February 14th: Valentine's Day

February 22nd: George Washington's birthday

March 17th: St. Patrick's Day

March 18th-24th: Proclamation from the Governor for School Retirees' Appreciation Week.



History Notes: Honoring Mary T. Henry by Julee Neuhart, SSRA Historian



Retired librarian and SSRA member, Mary T. Henry, who served as a Seattle Public School librarian for twenty-six years, will be honored for her eighteen years of exemplary service to students and staff at South Shore Middle School. South Shore's library will be named the "Mary T. Henry Library" with a plaque and photo at the entrance of the library.

Mary enjoyed working with students and especially teaching about Seattle history. During Black History month each February she created

games to teach students about Black American citizens whose names were given to Seattle landmarks, parks and other public spaces. Students were often familiar with the landmarks but not why a name was given to that landmark. This aspect of history was of special interest to Mary for many years.

Mary's passion has now resulted in two books she authored detailing places in Seattle that bear a Black American's name. Her first edition, *Tribute, Seattle Public Places Named for Black People*, came out in 1997 and identified twenty-three sites named for African-Americans. In 2022, Mary published an expanded edition. This one includes sixty-eight sites honoring fifty-three different people. Both editions are currently available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Each entry has information about each site's street address and biographical information about its honoree.

Mary Henry has been recognized for this achievement in Seattle history by several organizations. She has been a speaker at MOHAI (The Museum of History and Industry), the Black Heritage Society and the Sunset Club of Seattle where she was happily surprised to see a "standing room only" crowd.

Mary was raised in a segregated St. Louis where she attended segregated schools including Stowe Teachers' College (now named Harris-Stowe State University). After graduating from there she decided to become a librarian rather than a classroom teacher. However, St. Louis had no opportunities for library training or jobs for Black women librarians. So she went to Atlanta and earned a Master's Degree in Library Science. After that she worked as a librarian at Bennett College in North Carolina before moving to Seattle.

Mary Henry, who is currently one hundred and a half years old, has this message for her fellow retirees: *use your retirement years to pursue what you love and follow your dreams and your heart.*

Some Famous Authors' Quotes about Reading

Mark Twain: *"Good friends, good books and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life."*

James Baldwin: *"You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read."*

Dr. Seuss: *"The more that you read, the more things you know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."*

Maya Angelou: *"Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him."*

Victor Hugo: *"To learn to read is to light a fire, every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."*



Seattle School Retirees' Association
151 South Lander St. #C
Seattle, WA 98134

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SSRA Scholarship and/or S.E.E.D. Grant Fund Donation Form

Date _____

Enclosed is my gift for:

SCHOLARSHIP FUND ☐



Helps provide scholarships for post-secondary education and training for graduates of Seattle Public Schools.

BURBANK RIDEOUT SEED FUND ☐



Seattle Education Enhancement Dividend provides mini-grants to school employees for special classroom projects.

If a box is not checked above, your donation 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 _____

Please make checks payable to SSRA Scholarship and Grant Fund

Mail to: SSRA, 151 S. Lander St. (Suite C) Seattle, WA 98134

Donations are tax deductible as a charitable contribution to the extent allowed by law. You may double your gift by enclosing a matching donor form from your (or your spouse's) employer. Please check here ☐ if you would like information about including the Scholarship and/or Burbank Rideout SEED Fund in your estate planning.