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Retiree Lobby Day 2014

By LeeAnn Preilipp, Legislative Chair, WEA-Retired

On Feb. 6, following a briefing from a WEA lobbyist, twelve WEA-Retired members took to the hill in Olympia to convince legislators to keep our current retirement plans intact. This is in response to one of our WEA-Retired legislative overarching goals for all TRS, PERS and SERS plans to support defined benefit rather than defined contribution plans.

We had meetings with eleven legislators or staff. We also delivered our pension handout to every legislative office. Our message was, “No change to our current state retirement system.” While many of the legislators were receptive to our concerns, there was mixed response as to what the future may hold.

While our retirement plans escaped change this session, it is clear, based on several proposed bills, that there is a move to alter our state retirement plans. Unfortunately, some legislators believe that if defined contribution plans, or a form of a 401(k) plan are good enough for the private sector (Boeing) they should work for public employees.

Washington state’s defined benefit pension system works. Currently, our state retirement plans are rated among the best nationally in efficiency and value. Investment earnings pay for 84 cents of every pension dollar.

Defined contribution plans or any type of 401 (k) plans undermine retirement security for state employees, have a negative impact on the State Investment Board’s ability to maximize investment growth and such plans cost more to manage for less return.

Please keep in touch with your own legislators throughout the year and remind them of the importance of a stable state retirement system. You may email them, speak out at local meetings or meet individually with your legislators. The more personal stories they know, the more difficult it is for them to lessen the value of our retirement system.

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President's Message

Green Eggs and the Legislature

By Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president



Hear “One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish” and most of us would recognize that as a Dr. Seuss book. Generations of children (and adults) have enjoyed the rhymes and messages in his 44 books. Since March 2, 2014, marks Dr. Seuss’ 110th birthday, I thought it would be fun to use some of his rhymes to add some clarity to the winter of 2014.

“I know it is wet and the sun is not sunny, but we can have lots of good fun that is funny.” I am NOT complaining because, compared to the weather in other parts of the country our weather was mostly just wet. In fact, I think it was record wet. I’ll take that any day over the record cold and ice and snow in other places. And we have a good snow pack to get through the summer!

“Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one.” As I write this, we have not heard the ruling from the State Supreme Court on the gainsharing and uniform COLA lawsuits. I have been saying that it could be any day. So, it could be any day.

“I would not like them here or there. I would not like them anywhere. I do not like green eggs and ham. I do not like them Sam I Am.” Substitute the Legislature for green eggs and ham and that sums up my feelings about this Legislative Session. No matter that there is much evidence that our pension system is healthy and that our defined benefit plans work, we still have Legislators introducing defined contribution plans. This legislation hasn’t gotten much traction but we must remain vigilant. Spread the word that:

Washington State’s Defined Benefit Pension System works:

- Rated among the best nationally in efficiency and value
- Performed in the top 10% of programs nation-wide during past five years
- Earned in excess of 8% growth on investments
- Shared cost by employee and employer
- Investment earnings pay for 84 cents of every pension dollar

The Legislature also did almost nothing towards meeting their constitutional responsibility and paramount duty to fully fund public education. Reducing class size? Nope. Funding the voter approved COLA? Nope. Spending much time and energy trying to mandate using test scores in teacher evaluations? You betcha! Thanks to a lot of work by WEA members and staff, the bills mandating using test scores in evaluations did not pass. And contrary to what you may have read, the State will not lose \$40 million if test scores are not included in evaluations.

Continued from page 2

“So be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact and remember that life’s a Great Balancing Act.” The “Four Way Stop: You Go, No You Go” Legislature couldn’t pass a transportation package meaning our roads and bridges will get even less repairs and maintenance and public transportation will be reduced. At one point there was so much dysfunction in the Legislature that they could not approve a bill that both the Senate and the House overwhelmingly passed because they couldn’t agree who (House or Senate) would get credit for the Legislation. That bill, which allows veterans to pay in-state tuition, finally passed in the last hour of the session. Rumor says they used “rock, paper, scissors” to determine who got credit.

Many of Dr. Seuss’ rhymes are positive and about controlling one’s destiny:

“With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you’re too smart to go down any not-so-good street.”

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Many of us do not like “politics” but it was a vote of the Legislature that took away gainsharing and a vote of the Legislature that took away the Uniform COLA. The Legislators are elected. It is important that we stay informed, pay attention to what is going on and tell our stories to Legislators. Make sure that you have signed up to receive updates from OurVoice at www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org.

And we need to elect the right people. Join WEA-PAC. (There is a membership form in this newsletter.)

There will be ways for you to be involved with your UniServ Council this spring and summer. If you need help getting connected with them, email me raneyk@aol.com and I will help you.

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

I know we all care. We would not have spent all those years in public education if we didn’t. Together we can make things better.

Contact Information: WEA-Retired

Email: wea-retired@washingtonea.org or raneyk@aol.com

Website: www.washingtonea.org (click on blue Retirement tab)

Mailing address: P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

Member Benefits

Attorney Referral Program

One of the benefits of being a member of WEA/NEA-Retired is that you still have many of the member benefits you had as an active member. One very valuable benefit is the Attorney Referral Program. My spouse and I used the Attorney Referral Program when updating our Wills in December and saved \$700. Below is information about this program from the WEA website.

DO YOU NEED A LAWYER?

If you need a lawyer, the NEA provides WEA/NEA members with the services of an attorney at a discounted hourly rate. The Attorney Referral Program (ARP) is a service provided to NEA members (active, life, educational support or retired, their spouses and dependent children) who need services of an attorney on personal legal matters, i.e., not employment-related.

Participating ARP attorneys provide each member with two free 30-minute consultation sessions during each year of the program (Sept. 1 through Aug. 31). These two free consultations are taken separately and deal with two different questions. This benefit allows you to discuss your problem with an attorney to determine whether you need additional legal services. Do not expect the attorney to draft or review documents during a consultation. It is important to discuss any fee arrangements at your initial meeting.

If your problem falls within any of the areas listed below, the attorney's fees are discounted 30%:

Real estate matters; Wills and estates; Domestic relations; Consumer protection; or Traffic violations (includes DWI citations).

You may discuss almost any subject during one of your 30-minute conferences, although certain matters are excluded: member's business dealings; preparation of income tax returns; bankruptcies, or defense of criminal violations (other than traffic). The participating attorney will not represent a member in a suit against another member, the WEA, NEA affiliate, or a UniServ Council. The exception to this would be in a separation or dissolution of marriage if your spouse is also a NEA member. Court costs, attorney out-of-pocket expenses, filing and service fees are not covered. If you obtain your own attorney, you will not receive the discounted rate.

Upon your initial visit to the attorney's office, you must present some evidence of NEA membership. Payment for all legal fees is the responsibility of the member.

The participating law firms can be found by going to the WEA website, www.washingtonnea.org. Pull down the menu under Membership and click on Attorney Referral Program.

Membership

	WEA-Retired	WSSRA
Name	Washington Education Association - Retired	Washington State School Retirees' Association
Associated?	WEA-NEA affiliated	
Cost?	\$450: retired lifetime membership \$71/year: retired annual membership \$450: pre-retired membership	\$5/month (= \$60 per year, or \$1200 for 20 years)
Online?	yes	yes
Publication(s)?	Yes – NEA Today: 4x per year; This Active Life: 5x per year; We 2.0 newsletter 4x per year; We . . . too newsletter 6x per year; calendar book and discount publications	Yes – Journal: 5x per year
Benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attorney Referral Program • Classroom Insurance if you choose to return part-time • No-cost financial consultations • NEA Master Card/Visa with no annual fee • NEA Term Life Insurance eligibility • NEA Accidental Death Insurance • NEA Long Term Care Insurance • NEA/WEA Entertainment, Travel and Subscription Discounts • WEA endorsed auto insurance • NEA/WEA endorsed homeowners insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and dental insurance • Long term care insurance • Medicare supplement insurance • Life insurance policy • Cancer treatment supplemental policy • Medical Air Services coverage • Works with Associated Members Benefits Advisors (AMBA) • Discount plans
Pre-retirement membership?	yes	yes
State-wide meetings?	Yes	yes
Local groups?	By Uniserv Council	By county (example Sno-King)

Membership Activities

Paraprosdokians

Gathered by Chris Gray, WEA-Retired, Sammamish Uniserv, Lake Washington Education Association

Paraprosdokians (Winston Churchill loved them) are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently humorous. Enjoy!

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
10. In filling out an application, where it says, 'In case of emergency, Notify: _____', I put 'DOCTOR'.
11. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
12. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
13. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.
14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
15. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
16. You're never too old to learn something stupid.
17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

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Rumor Zone

By Nancy Miller, Editor, We . . . Too, WEA-Retired

You've heard a warning about a new computer virus set to crash your computer with a message that says "Grandmother", or you're commanded to share this picture of a kitten to fulfill the wish of a dying child. If you're going to do something, check on it before you add your bit to all the spam in the world. Use www.snopes.com or urbanlegends.about.com to check, then you can debunk or affirm the fable that was passed on to you.

Burton on travel

Quoted in Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton by Edward Rice, pg 359

Of the gladdest moments in human life, methinks, is the departure upon a distant journey into unknown lands. Shaking off with one mighty effort the fetters of Habit, the leaden weight of Routine, the cloak of many Cares and the slavery of Home, one feels once more happy. The blood flows with the fast circulation of childhood. A journey, in fact, appeals to Imagination, to Memory, to Hope, the three sister Graces of our moral being.

WEA PAC Your Voice – Your Vote Membership Form

Washington Education Association Political Action Committee

Membership Information (required)

Name _____ Home E-mail Address or Phone Number _____
 Home Address _____ School District/Employer _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Local Association _____
 Job Title _____

Contribution Options – There are two ways to become a member:

Option 1: Easy Pay – A monthly WEA-PAC contribution from your checking account

VOIDED CHECK REQUIRED IF CHOOSING OPTION 1

Make the minimum contribution by choosing your employee category.

- K-12 certificated staff, full-time higher education staff, WEA staff, UniServ or affiliated staff: **\$1.67 per month.**
 ESP staff, part-time higher education staff, WEA-Retired or WEA Student: **\$1.25 per month.**

OR help us speak louder and choose a higher monthly contribution.

- \$4 \$6 \$10 (silver) \$20 (gold)

AND support national efforts by adding a monthly contribution to your federal PAC, The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

- \$1 \$2 \$5 \$10

VOIDED CHECK REQUIRED IF CHOOSING OPTION 1

I hereby authorize the WASHINGTON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (WEA) to initiate debit entries to my checking account indicated below and the credit union/bank named below, hereinafter called BANK, to debit the same to such account. I will not hold BANK liable for any erroneous debits made by the WEA.

Conditions: This authorization is to remain in full force and effect until BANK has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford BANK a reasonable opportunity to act on it. A customer has the right to stop payment of a debit entry by notification to BANK prior to charging account. After account has been charged, a customer has the right to have the amount of the erroneous debit immediately credited to his/her account by BANK up to fifteen (15) days following issuance of statement or forty-five (45) days after the charge, whichever occurs first. Deductions will be made on the 10th day of the month, except when the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday, in which case the deduction will occur on the next business day.

Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for joining WEA-PAC. Your contribution works to support children and public education.

Signature (required)

Conditions: I understand that contributions to WEA-PAC and to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education ("NEA Fund") are voluntary; making a contribution is neither a condition of membership in the Association nor of employment; and that members have a right to refuse to contribute without suffering any reprisal. WEA-PAC and NEA Fund use the contributions which they collect for political purposes, including, but not limited to, in the case of WEA-PAC supporting friends of public education who are candidates for state and local office, and in the case of NEA Fund making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of candidates for federal office. Although NEA Fund suggests an annual contribution of \$12.00, this is only a suggestion; a member may contribute more or less than the suggested amount or not at all without affecting his or her membership status, rights, or benefits in NEA or WEA.

Federal law requires The NEA Fund to use its best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

Contributions or gifts to the WEA-PAC and NEA Fund for Children and Public Education are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

Tear off top (white) copy and return to WEA-PAC in the envelope provided or mail to: WEA-PAC, P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

Option 2: Annual Contribution

The WEA-PAC membership year is September through August.

If using Option 2, choose your method of payment:

- Cash Check VISA MasterCard

If you prefer to make your contribution as a lump sum, choose your employee category.

- K-12 certificated staff, full-time higher education staff, WEA staff, UniServ or affiliated staff: **\$20 annual.**
 ESP staff, part-time higher education staff, WEA-Retired or WEA Student: **\$15 annual.**

OR help us speak louder and choose a higher contribution.

- \$48 \$72 \$120 (silver) \$240 (gold) Other \$ _____
 (Make **separate** check payable to WEA-PAC.)

AND support national efforts by adding a contribution to your federal PAC, The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.

- \$12 \$24 \$60 \$120 Other \$ _____
 (Make **separate** check payable to NEA-FCPE.)

If using a credit card, fill in the following:

Account number _____

Expiration date ____/____

Exact name on card _____

Signature of cardholder _____

NEW Automatic Credit Card Renewal Option

- I hereby authorize WEA-PAC to deduct the amount indicated above annually in the month of September from the credit card listed above. Such deductions will cease upon written notification no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled deduction date.

Note: Credit card information obtained from WEA members is used only to charge credit card accounts for authorized contributions to WEA-PAC and/or The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. This information is held in strict confidentiality and will under no circumstances be transferred to third parties.



WEA
Retired

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*“The legislator should
direct his attention above
all to the education of
youth.” — Aristotle*

The only retired organization affiliated with WEA and NEA

