



Spring 2018



Connections

NEWS TO KEEP YOU ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION YOU LOVE

Dreamers, DACA and public education

By Barbara Galler

We know that children are at the mercy of their parents' socioeconomic status. As Jonathan Kozol so vividly recounted in his 1991 book *Savage Inequalities*, American schools have enormous discrepancies between rich and poor neighborhoods, promulgated in large part by our country's history of institutional racism in housing and jobs. Now with the uncertain status of immigrant families, public education has the additional responsibility of being a first-responder dealing with children who may lose, or already have lost, one or both parents to deportation.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program initiated by a June 2012, Obama-era immigration policy, shouldn't be confused with a group of about 3.6 million undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, known as the "Dreamers." This acronym stands for the 2001 proposed legislation called the "Development, Relief, and Education Alien Minors" Act. Here's the distinction:

- The Dream Act was intended to grant a path to legal status for illegal immigrants who came to the U.S. as children, and though it was never enacted into law, the name stuck to the population it was supposed to help.
- The DACA program accepted nearly 800,000 mostly young Dreamers, but it gave these children of illegal immigrants "deferred action," not a path to legal status.

The term Dreamers is used because it's awkward to refer to "DACAers" and because they are basically the same group of people.

According to the American Council on Education, to qualify for DACA status, applicants must have been under age 31 as of June 15, 2012; they must have arrived in the U.S. before age 16; they must attain the age of 15 to request an application; they must have lived continuously here since they arrived; they must be enrolled in, completed high school, earned a GED or have been honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces, and they cannot have been convicted of a serious crime.

DACA, continued on page 6.



The President's Corner

By Neva Luke

WEA-Retired President

February is a fascinating month in the Pacific Northwest. Some days are so cold and dreary that it feels like winter will never relinquish its chill to a warmer season. Other days, there is a sudden realization that it's 6 p.m. and a nice spot of light still lingers on the horizon alerting Washingtonians that spring will come in the near future.

I'd like to think that our political landscape is much the same: a brutal, chilling season that will eventually give way to a slight thaw, and a promise of warmer times, that perennial promise of a rebirth in spring. Although the seasons come and go regardless of what we do, the same doesn't hold for the political landscape — this we all are responsible for in our own way.

So much of the news is depressing to say the least, but I find hope and optimism from the amazing people that I deal with daily. I want to share some of the great things I see happening with WEA-Retired members.

Mary Lindsey, WEA-Retired vice president, and I have a goal to visit a retiree gathering in every council this year. So far, we have been to 11 councils. Each gathering has had a great program, yummy food, and fantastic people. I encourage you to attend your local chapter meetings and be inspired by your colleagues. (You can find a list here: www.washingtonea.org/membership/we-are-wea/retired/wea-retired-chapter-meetings/).

There is a large cadre of our members who are devoting their time and energy to pre-retirement seminars for active members. This demands a lot of training and knowledge to deliver the high-quality seminars that is the norm. This service is invaluable and it is extraordinary that our retirees give so much of themselves. (You can find a list here: www.washingtonea.org/membership/we-are-wea/retired/wea-retired-pre-retirement-seminars/).

Having been in Olympia for many lobby days, I have seen active members walking alongside retirees who together tell their compelling stories to the legislators of the needs of public education. Many of our members have continued to return to talk to their legislators year after year to achieve retirement security for all. This is a special kind of persistence that I find inspirational.

The news on any given day reinforces that what is happening in the nation is unprecedented, frightening, and polarizing. However, instead of being frozen in place, out of fear, each of us can act in our own neighborhood, city and state to create a more positive place by the small things we do each day. Let's continue to be part of the change we want to see happen.

The new 2018 tax law's impact on public education

By Barbara Galler

Public education in the U.S. goes back to before we were the United States to when the Articles of Confederation coalition of colonies enacted the Land Ordinance of 1785. Meant to organize the new frontier territories (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan), it also contained a stipulation for the newly minted states to set aside public land for public schools. Thus, a respect for public schools was sown into our country's fabric.

By the end of World War II, college education became a middle-class norm and by the late 1980s, special savings accounts called Section 529s allowed parents to put away money for their children's college costs without paying federal tax on those savings or the interest they gained. Individual states facilitated these accounts and exempted them from state income taxes as well.

The new tax law allows individuals to contribute unlimited amounts to 529s each year, though federal gift taxes do kick in for individuals contributing beyond \$14,000 per year and for couples contributing more than \$28,000 per year. The major change to 529s is that the \$10,000 per year allowable withdrawal is now allowed not just for college, but for private and religious elementary and secondary schools as well.

Many states fear that these expanded uses of the 529 plans will incentivize people to use the plans as an annual tax-break strategy rather than as the originally intended savings for college.

MoneyTips notes that, "The change is more targeted at tax savings than at building nest eggs. Traditionally, the concept of a 529 plan was to allow parents to start early and generate enough tax-free earnings to offset some of the skyrocketing costs of college. If funds are used for elementary and high school costs instead, contributions will have a shorter time to accumulate tax-free earnings and the tuition benefits are diminished."

"However, by funneling K-12 tuition costs through a 529 program in their state, families can claim whatever tax break is available. Parents now have even greater incentive to use 529 programs, and the number of state residents claiming the tax break could expand rapidly without a proportionate benefit to state government."

While Washington state doesn't have an income tax, most other states do. These states are now in a "last minute budgetary bind," with loss of tax revenue when voters who send their kids to private schools may stop voting for state/local taxes. The 529 savings contributions always favored the already economically-advantaged parents who have more disposable income at hand. K-12 tax-free tuition money for private/religious schools is a huge tax-avoiding asset for them at the expense of the First Amendment guarantee separating church and state, and the right of income-tax states to fairly collect revenues. The ideal of public schools valued by our country's founders is being undermined.

Retirees and the WEA Unity Agenda

WEA-Retired members have been actively lobbying alongside WEA active members in Olympia for our issues as well as in support of WEA's Unity Agenda, which covers K-12, higher education, aspiring educators, and students.

Retiree issues were highlighted on February 5 when WEA-Retired members from around the state descended on Olympia to talk with legislators along with their counterparts from the Retired Public Employees Council (RPEC). This was the second year WEA-Retired partnered with RPEC for this event.

Almost every legislator was reminded of the responsibility to provide retirement security for their constituents who had earned their pension over a lifetime of hard work. Specifically, legislators were asked to support the following:

- COLA for Plan 1 retirees
- Enhanced Medicare supplement
- Make Plan 2 the default retirement plan, not Plan 3, for new-hires
- Allow all classified and certified Plans 2 and 3 members who retired under the 2008 Early Retirement Factors (ERFS) to substitute up to 867 hours AND eliminate the sunset provision of this as written in a previous law

At the time of this writing, these retirement provisions were still either in a bill and/or were being considered for the budget. This short legislative session is scheduled to end on March 8. We won't know the outcome of these bills until the gavel falls. The best way to keep up with these issues is to check www.washingtonea.org/ourvoice, the WEA OurVoice webpage. Not only will you see current legislative information, the site enables you to quickly email your legislators on these issues as well.

Pictured:

WEA-Retired members
lobby in Olympia
during the 2018
Legislative Session.



WEA-Retired Awards

WEA-Retired can support public education staff and students in Washington state only through the hard work and dedication of people who believe in its goals and objectives. It is the practice of WEA-Retired to acknowledge these supporters each year at its annual meeting.

Below are descriptions of the four WEA-Retired awards.

Pre-Retired Member of the Year

Some active WEA members join WEA-Retired while they are still working to retain their member benefits when they retire. Others actively promote WEA-Retired and its programs. These are the members we recognize with the Pre-Retired Member award. The qualifications:

- Encouraging pre-retirement membership
- Helping in his/her UniServ Council as we set up new chapters
- Advertising and setting up WEA-Retired pre-retirement workshops
- Raising money for the WEA-Retired Scholarship program
- Welcoming us wherever we can be a helping hand or offering one

Retired-Member of the Year

There are those who work tirelessly in their efforts to promote the organization: helping with membership promotion, scholarship activities, lobbying, meetings and committee work among other activities. Many times, these are not names that appear in the newsletter or that others know much about, but they are always there and ready to work to get the job done.

Advocate of the Year Award

This award is given to people who, although they do not qualify for WEA-Retired membership, provide invaluable help to the organization over time by educating and/or providing support in a variety of ways.

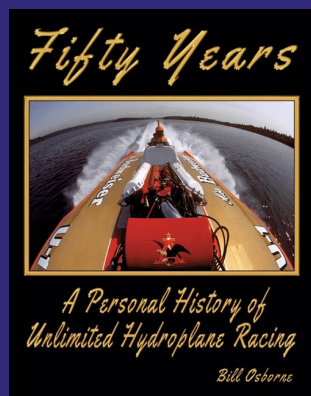
Media Award

People in the communications field can provide the public, WEA active members or WEA-Retired members with information about the WEA-Retired programs and goals. This can be done through publications and communications such as newsletters, e-news, blogs, or websites.

To enter, a completed form should be sent to WEA-Retired, P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way WA 98063-9100 or emailed to WEARetired@washingtonewa.org by April 19. To access the necessary form and for more information visit the www.washingtonewa.org/retired page.

And away he goes!

Editor's note: Recently we began sharing retirees' new and continuing hobbies and adventures, such as a woodworker and, a Guatemalan volunteer. This time we present Bill Osborne, a WEA-Retired Kent member. If you wish to contact him, his email is billophoto@aol.com.



For more than 50 years, as a side business to supplement my teacher salary, I have photographed and written about the sport of unlimited hydroplane racing. In fact, I often integrated the math, science and technology of unlimited hydroplane racing into my lessons at Cedar Valley Elementary in Kent. During the five decades of my involvement, I proudly supplied images to team owners, sponsors and national magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Look*, *Powerboat* and *Extreme Boats Magazine*.

Then, six years ago, I began compiling my images and transcribing notes for a book about the sport's history from my amateur perspective. The book is 312 pages and contains more than 400 color images. Rather than a — ahem — “lap-by-lap” accounting of the sport's history, I share my personal observations and connections about the people who have made the sport what it is today. Among the hydroplane racers in this sport, I profiled Bill Muncey, Bernie Little, Chip Hanauer and Dave Villwock.

Aside from the gratification of pursuing hydroplaning, I've enjoyed the hours of planning my observation sites, watching the races and meeting this sport's greats. But the icing on the cake is that last year I printed 500 books which sold out in seven weeks, and in June, I printed a second set of 500 books which have also recently sold out! Talk about a fast-moving hobby!

DACA, continued from page 1.

In return, DACA acceptees were granted working permits, a Social Security card, a driver's license, and deferred deportation. Corey Mitchell, writing for *Education Week*, notes: “The Washington-based Migration Policy Institute estimates that 250,000 students have become DACA eligible since ... 2012, and that about 9,000 undocumented, DACA-protected teachers work in U.S. schools.”

President Trump rescinded DACA on Sept. 5, 2017, but he delayed ending it until March 5, 2018, hoping Congress will create new and permanent immigration laws. ICE is proactively deporting illegal immigrants, some of whom have been here since childhood and who know no other country. American-born children of these immigrants are losing parents and their material well-being. Unless Congress enacts legislation, “an estimated 790,000 current DACA permits will begin to expire on a rolling basis after March 5, with approximately 33,000 individuals losing protection, on average, each month.” (American Council on Education). And let's not forget the 9,000 educators who may be deported, leaving our schools understaffed. While some bipartisan effort is being made in Congress to resurrect a new Dream Act (Sens. Dick Durbin and Lindsey Graham), the bad news is that deportation is happening now.

WEA-Retired scholarships

This year, WEA-Retired is offering up to eight \$1,000 non-renewable scholarships to aid WEA members in enhancing skills in specific education areas and/or to attain or maintain a teaching certificate. The scholarships cannot be used to pay for incurred debt for past classes or reimbursement for pre-paid classes. You must be a WEA member to apply. The completed coversheet and application must be received by April 6. Visit www.washingtonea.org/retired for more information.

WEA-Retired Scholarships is a registered not-for-profit with the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Consider donating to WEA-Retired Scholarships in your own name or in honor of someone else. Your gift is tax-deductible. Donations may be sent to WEA-Retired Scholarships, P.O. Box 820708, Vancouver, WA 98628.

Follow up on nominations and elections

Forty-four delegates to the WEA-Representative Assembly (WEA-RA) were elected at the January Board Meeting; too many to list here. Look for stories about the WEA-RA in future, *Connections*.

Seventeen delegates were also elected to attend the WEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June. There they will join board directors, executive committee members, and committee chairs at the meeting. A new secretary and new board members will be elected at the annual meeting.

The following will be representing us at the NEA-Representative Assembly (NEA-RA) / NEA-Retired Annual Meeting: Evelyn Horne, Linda Hoff Lease, Mary Lindsey, Neva Luke, Karen Quinn, Kit Raney and Karle Warren.

A big thanks goes to those who ran for office, the WEA-RA, the WEA-Retired Annual Meeting, NEA-RA and the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. As volunteers, your time and efforts is what makes our organization so great.

Education quotes

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” — Nelson Mandela

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener.” — Robert Frost

“True teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross; then, having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create their own.” — Nikos Kazantzakis

“Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow. Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human.” — Malala Yousafzai



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Important dates

March 8: Last day of the regular 2018 Legislative Session

April 6: Due date for application for WEA-Retired Scholarships

April 19: Due date for WEA-Retired Award nominations

April 19: WEA-Retired Mock RA, Spokane

April 19-21: WEA-Representative Assembly, Spokane

April 25: WEA-Retired Executive Committee, Federal Way

June 6: WEA-Retired Executive Committee, Federal Way

June 6-7: WEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Federal Way

June 27-28: NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Minneapolis

June 30 - July 5: NEA Representative Assembly, Minneapolis

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Connections is published by Washington Education Association-Retired four times a year. We invite your comments and contributions.

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