



Winter 2020



Connections

NEWS TO KEEP YOU ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION YOU LOVE

Please join us for a virtual event! "Our largest WEA-Retired lunch ever" — Jan. 14, 12-2 p.m.

WEA-Retired is fortunate to have booked Madeleine Smithberg, co-creator and producer of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, as well as the talent coordinator and producer of the *Late Night Show with David Letterman*. She shares a lot of stories with a great sense of adventure and humor. Madeleine moved to Seattle in 2018 for two reasons: one was to pursue a new career as a chef after a lifetime passion for cooking, and the other was to reconnect with someone from her past. She launched her *Mad in the Kitchen* YouTube channel this past March.

On Jan. 14, Madeleine will entertain us with her stories while she teaches us how to prepare her pasta with butter, sage, and peas dish in real time at home. WEA Communications staff Eddie Westerman will interview her — and Brooke Mattox-Ball will monitor the chat so you may ask Madeleine questions. **Register for this free event today:** https://action.washingtonea.org/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=426250.

We will send you a confirmation, Zoom link, and the recipe. You will most likely have many of the ingredients in your kitchen. (Or, you may choose to just watch.) After our lunch is prepared, we will gather in breakout Zoom rooms to enjoy our lunch, chat and share information with other WEA-Retired members.



Links to see our presenter before Jan. 14:

Madeline's website: www.madinthekitchen.com

Clip from the 3rd hour of the *Today Show*: https://youtu.be/NWYirC_Bk48

Clip from the *Evening Magazine*: <https://youtu.be/KfmpNQftdzs>

The President's Corner

By Mary Lindsey, 2020-21 WEA-Retired President



Besides the holidays, I really look forward to the winter solstice on Dec. 21 as the day with the fewest hours of daylight. After that, we can count on longer days, even if it is only a minute or two a day. Even with the cold days of winter just beginning, we have the eventual promise of warm spring and summer days ahead. We will have a long winter ahead, but we can do this. We have adapted to staying at home, social distancing, masks, home delivery, reading, doing projects, phoning more and mastering Zoom so we can meet virtually with friends, family, and others. We do know that long winters always end, and we do have the COVID-19 vaccine to look forward to when it is our turn. By next fall, we may be able to meet in person once again. I have especially missed the brief contacts to chat with people that cannot be accomplished in large Zoom meetings.

Speaking of Zoom, I am very thankful that we have been able to use this platform to carry on with our WEA-Retired work. We were able to change gears and hold our two-day WEA-Retired Conference in September. We also will provide our pre-retirement seminars for 2021 retirees on Zoom and plan to return to our 10-hour seminars during the 2021-22 school year. Most of our WEA-Retired chapters are, or will be, conducting chapter meetings virtually. All our committees have been meeting regularly on Zoom.

As we begin 2021, we welcome your participation and interest in virtual WEA-Retired activities. Together we can accomplish so much more! Please consider joining us for the following events. Read more about these opportunities in this issue.

- **You will not want to miss out on “Our largest WEA-Retired lunch ever!” on Jan. 14.** I was able to participate in this *Mad in the Kitchen* activity last August with the WEA Board and thoroughly enjoyed the time. Eating and meeting with other members afterwards also will be a big plus.
- **Jan. 20 is the deadline for submitting the delegate nomination form for the 2021 virtual WEA-RA.** The form is included in this issue of *Connections*. Consider participating, even if you have never attended. The WEA Representative Assembly is the chief policy making body of WEA. Let your voice be heard!
- **You will find the WEA-PAC membership form in this issue of *Connections*.** If you're not a member of WEA-PAC, please join today by filling out the form and returning it.
- **Sign up by Jan. 15 for the 2021 RPEC/WEA-Retired Legislative Day (aka Lobby Day).** This annual event, as well as this legislative session, will be held virtually. Take advantage of being able to attend the **lobby training on Feb. 8 and meetings with legislators virtually throughout the week.** We need WEA-Retired members from each legislative district statewide to join RPEC members in these virtual meetings. We need your help to protect our retirement benefits!

My hope for you is a safe, healthy, enjoyable, and peaceful holiday season! Thank you for belonging to WEA-Retired! You can always contact me at wearetired@washingtonea.org — Mary.

A tiger's tale

By Ellen Heaney (speaking about Leo Heaney, WEA-Retired Summit member, author, and Vietnam vet)

My husband, Leo, and I are both retired educators. Leo has worn many hats over the years, but his most unexpected was author. Leo served in the Vietnam War as a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division. After attending several reunions with his fellow veterans, he became passionate about recounting the history and stories of this highly decorated group of comrades and their elite unit known as Tiger Force. Retirement finally gave him the gift of time to complete a book that filled an open spot in history: *Tiger Force "Inward Season Three ... Over*. Leo and I met at Penn State after his service with Tiger Force. Yet, after 45 years of marriage, I still knew little of the details of his Vietnam experience. The stories came to life for me as I completed the first edit of his memoir. Leo's goal was to write an accurate account of the Force and the men who volunteered for it, vetting the details for many years with his comrades, and doing painstaking research to dig out additional and interesting facts. I also realized the book would be important for the extended families of these men, who also likely knew little about their family member's participation in the Force. It was a true gift to give to our own children. After including a glossary, the book further evolved to become more understandable for non-military readers. The result was a book that could be used for high school as well as college students studying a multitude of aspects and controversies involved in the Vietnam conflict.



Leo's author's voice is engaging and entertaining with his Irish blend of humor. Although he chose to accentuate the many positive sides of his wartime experience, the sad reality and emotional side of combat is also present. His memoir sheds light on the complicated issues of warfare and how choices made by the press can have life-long effects on individuals. There is insight into the daily challenges and personal exploits of the men. Whether fishing with grenades, facing off with a water buffalo, sleeping in the middle of a stream, crawling into a VC tunnel, discussing Latin with a monk, walking into a minefield, or watching friends fall in battle, Leo makes you feel like you are right there with his team. He introduces you to over 100 memorable personalities who have proudly worn the Tiger Force Badge.

Continued on page 4.

A tiger's tale

Here's an excerpt from the book:

“Even though contact with the NVA was light, there were some contentious moments, not specifically related to interactions with the enemy. One afternoon, a few days into the operation, we entered into a farmstead with a few thatched roof structures. A vast expanse of dry rice paddies, speckled with islands of vegetation and small groups of water buffalos, lay off to our left. I hadn't given much notice to the mammoth buffalo about twenty yards away until it started pawing the ground with its hooves. It earned my undivided attention when it put its head down and charged towards me. The animal drew up about four feet from me, just on the other side of a small sapling about two inches in diameter. When the buffalo moved to its right, I moved to my right. When it went left, I moved left. Several times we may-poled around the sapling, and ultimately we froze transfixed on each other. The looming, blue-grey critter, dripping fluid from its nostrils, apparently hadn't considered that it could just bowl over the sapling to get at me. And, I wasn't inclined to dispatch the buffalo; neither was the rest of the squad. Killing what more than likely was some farmer's draft animal wouldn't endear us to the local residents. The proverbial Mexican standoff had evolved.

While I was examining my options for vacating the temporary protection provided by the sapling, a solution to my situation presented itself—one without having to shoot the water buffalo. From one of the nearby hooches, a small lanky Vietnamese child of maybe seven or eight years emerged. In route to us, he picked up a branch, casually approached the beast, swatted the giant, lumbering beast on the nose and buttocks, and drove it back into the paddy. Then the little Vietnamese David discarded his “olive branch” and continued on down the trail along the paddies and out of sight, never uttering a word.

As the buffalo lumbered off into the paddy, I rejoined the rest of my squad. They had been standing by, ready to intercede with force if things went south. A few chuckles and smiles greeted me. The rough American paratrooper image that I so carefully groomed and guarded since joining the Army had just been slightly emulsified by a small child with a tree branch. I had just experienced one of life's lessons on establishing win-win situations.”

One of most insidious results of the Vietnam War was the use of Agent Orange, a carcinogen that still continues to follow the soldiers, their families, and the Vietnamese population. Agent Orange was one of the herbicide defoliants dispersed on portions of the Vietnam landscape that can lead to specific illnesses, death, and even genetic defects through successive generations. One of Leo's closest friends from Vietnam was one of the soldiers to initiate a lawsuit about Agent Orange, and which eventually became a class action suit. He made one of the first videotaped depositions in Pennsylvania because he knew he would not live to actively participate. Eventually, the Agent Orange Registry was set up for soldiers who were exposed and might suffer from specific diseases.

The son of a World War II veteran, Leo served in Vietnam from April 1966 to July 1968; 17 months of that was with Tiger Force. At Penn State, he participated in ROTC and placed first of 1,600 cadets at the 1971 ROTC summer camp. After leaving the army, he received his education degree from the University of Puget Sound, and then he retired after 30 years as a social studies teacher. Today his passion is guiding a small white ball around the local golf courses. His book is available at Amazon. You may contact Leo at heaneylj@gmail.com.

WEA-Retired delegate nomination form

Virtual WEA-RA 2021

The WEA-Representative Assembly will be held virtually, April 16-18.

- Nominees for WEA-Retired delegate must be classified as retired, and may not hold a contract with a public school district.
- Nomination forms must be received by Jan. 20.
- Nominees must agree to attend all sessions.
- All nominations must have the consent of the nominee. Self-nomination is also acceptable.
- Delegates are elected annually to serve one year.
- Delegate nominations will be presented to the WEA-Retired Board in January.

Your name _____ Retirement/separation date _____

Your email _____ Cell phone (____) _____

I nominate the following RETIRED member(s) to be a delegate to the 2021 WEA Representative Assembly.

| | Nominee | Chapter | Email |
|---|---------|---------|-------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 6 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 7 | _____ | _____ | _____ |

DELEGATE FUNDING will not be needed for this virtual RA.

This nomination form must be received by Jan. 20. Mail to Diane Kanda, 4595 Wynn Road, Bellingham, WA 98226. Questions can be sent to at mdkanda@yahoo.com.

WEA-Retired scholarships

WEA-Retired scholarships, in partnership with WEA-Retired, is offering up to ten \$1000 non-renewable scholarships for 2021. These scholarships are available for WEA members only: Certificated, Classified/ESP, SWEA (those currently enrolled in a college or university pursuing a degree in education). The scholarships cannot be used for past classes or to cover rent or gas.

There are three parts to the application:

- a cover sheet that all must complete
- a narrative based on questions for your classification
- a letter of recommendation

The application is posted on the WEA-Retired webpage, www.washingtonea.org/retired.

The application must be received by March 10, 2021 either by email or snail mail using the contact information listed below.

Questions? Contact Bev at the email below.

barwentz@comcast.net

or

WEA-Retired Scholarships
51 SE Bayview Lane
Shelton, WA 98584

**Retired Public Employees Council of Washington
in collaboration with WEA-Retired
invite you to register for our**

2021 LEGISLATIVE DAY VIRTUAL EVENT



THE LARGER THE TURNOUT, THE LOUDER OUR VOICE!

WHEN: Feb. 8

9:30 a.m.: Online check in

10 a.m.: Training session

WHEN: Feb. 8-12

Various times: Legislative meetings with legislators and members

WHERE: Zoom virtual meeting from your home or anywhere!

(Login information will be provided before the meetings.)

WHY: To protect our retirement benefits

Register today! Complete your registration online here:

[https://action.washingtonea.org/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=426251.](https://action.washingtonea.org/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=426251)



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Important dates

Jan. 14: WEA-Retired has booked "Mad in the Kitchen" with Madeleine Smithberg. You will not want to miss this event in real time. It will be "Our largest WEA-Retired lunch ever!"

Jan. 27: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee Meeting

Jan. 28: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting

Feb. 8: Virtual WEA-Retired/RPEC (Retired Public Employees Council) Lobby Day

March 12-13: Virtual NEA Leadership Summit & NEA-Retired Meeting

March 24: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee Meeting

March 25: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting

April 15-17: Virtual WEA-RA

Let's keep in touch

- Email is the best way to contact us. Message us at WEARetired@washingtonea.org.
- Do we have your current mailing address, email, and phone number? You are missing out if we do not.
- If you are on Facebook, please join our private WEA-Retired page.
- Please consider submitting an article of interest to our membership for publication in an upcoming Connections. Send to WEARetired@washingtonea.org.

Connections

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Connections is published by Washington Education Association-Retired four times a year. We invite your comments and contributions. During other months, a newsletter is sent to your email address. If you're not receiving those, please send an email to WEARetired@WashingtonEA.org.

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98063-9100 / www.WashingtonEA.org/retired or 800-622-3393, ext. 7067

Agency contact information

Department of Retirement Systems
www.drs.wa.gov or 800-547-6657

Health Care Authority (PEBB)
www.pebb.hca.wa.gov or 800-200-1004
Medicare

www.medicare.gov or 800-633-4227

Social Security

www.ssa.gov or 800-772-1213

SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance
Benefit Advisors) 800-562-6900