



WE...too

Washington Education
Association – Retired

July/August 2010 P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100 Volume 22 Number 5

Country mouse or city mouse?

by Nancy Miller
Editor, WE...too
WEA-Retired

Retiring is an avalanche of choices. As dust settles on VEBA, medical plans, Social Security and annuities, someone asks, “are you planning on moving?” Some dream of the desert or an island; others cannot imagine transplanting themselves. Sometimes one has married the other. What to do? How to decide? What’s in it for us?

Let me share my bonafides. I grew up in a mid-sized town and a suburb, lived for decades in Seattle (and a few years in Olympia). Remarriage moved me to another suburb, then back to the city for a couple of years. When we assessed our finances and retired, Dear Husband took a protractor, put its point on Seattle on a map, and drew a circle 60 miles away. “Unless we want to draw down our capital,” he said, “we have to live outside that circle.” My current postal address is

Leavenworth, but it takes me 30 minutes to get to the “city” limits. Although I live in a little community (the metropolis of Plain, Wash., population perhaps 200, is a mere six miles away), my location is definitely rural.

How did we choose? Before you read on, please sit for a minute and list what you would like to get out of your

other hand, retirement has uprooted you from your previous life, and your present place may feel like a loss. Routines can become ruts. Some friends move away, and those who are still working aren’t often available. Moving has costs, both in money to do the deed, and in time to choose the place you will go, and to secure your new residence there.

How do you decide?

retirement: take classes, fly-fish, peace and quiet, visit (or avoid) the grandchildren, mall walk, substitute teach, mountain climb, sail, start a second career — or make a hobby into a vocation. Take your time: ask your spouse. Maybe create a list of things you don’t want: traffic jams, rodeos, rain. Do you dream of life without a car, or life that requires 4WD?

Life where you are has advantages: you know the place; your routines are set; your friends are there. On the

But moving has advantages, too. A transplant can be a revival. There is a new place to learn about, new organizations to join and new people to meet. It is a fresh start, and has the psychological advantage of pushing you to build a new life because you are visibly in a new place. But, if you are happy where you are, if you are unwilling or unable to forge new bonds, moving may lead to isolation.

City life has advantages: shopping, restaurants, and a constant parade of cultural events. If you want another job,

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President's Message

Carl's last column

by Carl Taylor
WEA-Retired president

As my term of office as president of WEA-Retired winds down, I feel a need to reflect on my involvement and long standing relationship with WEA and NEA. I remember the days when teachers had to live within walking distance of



the school where they taught. These were also the days when all teachers were expected to go to church

on a regular basis. Back in these days, teachers met with the superintendent for an annual review which determined how much you would make the following year. Sometimes it was more than the previous year, sometimes less. I returned to school and earned my master's degree and this is where I learned about unions and first heard about collective bargaining.

I found myself working in my district and soon became an officer of my local which led to a membership on the bargaining team. We were fortunate to have a local that embraced the new idea of UniServes in our area. Sitting on the interview teams, I was able to be part of the new UniServ staff being instituted in Washington. I served a total of 20 years on the

WEA Fourth Corner UniServ as a delegate and officer. Let's see, I remember LOUPs, SOUPs, DUCKs or what? Local control or state control?

After teaching for 21 years with "walk on water" evaluations, I got a new administration. Immediately I was labeled as being too old and out-dated. I was 44 at the time. Little did I know that the new administration wanted to eliminate any union activists. WEA came to the rescue and helped to get through the mess of dealing with the new administration. I soon joined the cadre which became the Leadership Cadre, where I was trained and served for 23 years, training new leaders, teaching "change" classes at WEALA, and intervening in school crises throughout the state.

Through WEA recommendation, I was able to work on the "Commission of Student Learning" in the area of social studies. Having a master's in Diverse Education with an emphasis on Native and Hispanic populations, I became very involved in many WEA-sponsored activities: teaching classes, presenting at symposiums, working with districts and schools that had difficulties accepting changes in education, peer supporting and school interventions.

When I retired, I was working as a reading specialist, and NEA trained me and I served as a lobbyist in Washington, D.C. Over the years,

my involvement with WEA/NEA helped me grow personally and professionally. I am looking to the future now. I am looking forward to serving as past-president and working as needed. I will continue to substitute teach, care for my grandchildren, do church work with the homeless, and wait for my wife, Jodie, to retire. ONLY two more years! I am even thinking about organizing a local coalition involving churches, unions and other civic organizations.

What a wonderful range of experiences WEA and NEA have given me! I have learned from all of them. I won't forget the diverse and talented people I've met who devote their lives to make education of our nation's greatest treasure — the children...

Oh, by the way, has anyone read any goodbooks lately?

Published by Washington Education Association-Retired (WEA-Retired) six times per year. We invite your comments and contributions. Send to:

Editor: Nancy Miller at editor.WE.Too@hotmail.com

Editorial Board: Lee Ann Prielipp, Carl Taylor, Jean Savidge, Sandy Kokko and Stacia Bilsland

*Mailing Address:
WEA-Retired, P.O. Box 9100
Federal Way, WA 98063-9100*

President's Message

Kit's first column

by Kit Raney
WEA-Retired president-elect

I am Kit Raney and, at the WEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June, I was honored to be elected president of WEA-Retired. Like many of you, I was an Association activist for my entire 34 year career. I served as a building rep, Snohomish Education Association president, Pilchuck Council president, WEA Board and Executive Committee member and just about everything in between. I loved Association work because I felt that the work we did made a positive difference for members and public education.

I ran for president of WEA-Retired because I want to continue making a positive difference. I clearly remember Marty Terzieff, former WEA-Retired president, saying, "Retire from your position and not from your profes-

sion." I took that to heart when I retired two years ago. I have been a member of the WEA-Retired Legislative Action Committee and co-chair of the WEA Lifelong Compensation Task Force. It was exciting to have the WEA-Retired organization as a vehicle to continue my involvement. The bottom of my business card reads "continuing to work for members and public education" and that's what I am doing.

My goals as WEA-Retired president are to continue building on what the WEA-Retired leadership has worked hard to put in place.

◆Build membership by working with local Association presidents to put a major emphasis on signing up pre-retired members throughout

the year.

◆Build on the relationships with the state Department of Retirement Systems, coalitions such as Public Employees for Pension Reform and other appropriate groups so that our voice is heard.

◆Build on the relationship with WEA actives to form a seamless partnership to work together to improve things for *all* members. We can help each other!

◆Build on the work of current WEA-Retired leadership and WEA Communications to provide improved online resources for members.

I am excited about the opportunity to serve as president of WEA-Retired. Please feel free to contact me at raneyk@aol.com, if you have any questions or comments about WEA-Retired.



Why Join WEA-R? Do your friends know?

Pension watch
Retirement seminars
Insurance continuity
Access to WEA and NEA benefits for life:
◆NEA Master Card/Visa with no annual fee
◆NEA Term Life Insurance eligibility
◆NEA Accidental Death Insurance
◆NEA Longterm Care Insurance
◆NEA/WEA entertainment and travel discounts, NEA magazine subscription service; WEA-endorsed auto and

NEA/WEA-endorsed home-owners insurance, and attorney referral program
◆Classroom insurance, if you choose to return part time.

As a WEA-Retired member you will receive the following publications: *NEA Today*, *This Active Life*, *We 2.0*, *WE ...too*; WEA calendar book and WEA/NEA consumer and retirement publications.

WEA-Retired is the ONLY retirement organization associated with WEA.



Will Rogers

WikiCommons

Wit and wisdom of Will Rogers

From WEA-Retired, Chinook

Never slap a man who is chewing tobacco.

Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.

Never miss a good chance to shut up.

Always drink upstream from the herd.

If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.

There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence and find out for themselves.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.

Warning: There's more in the water than meets the eye

From WEA-Retired, Chinook, March 2010

Bottom line personal, Jan. 1, 2010:
"Flavored waters weaken teeth. Acid levels in flavored waters, such as Propel, Fit Water, SoBe Life Water and Vitamin Water, can soften tooth enamel leading to erosion, enamel loss and increased sensitivity. If you drink flavored waters wait at least 30 minutes to brush your teeth so that tooth enamel has time to reharden. Better, drink plain water.

Mark Wolff, DDS, PhD, professor and chair, associate dean for predoctoral clinical education, Department of Cardiology and Comprehensive Care, New York University College of Dentistry.

Did you know...

Social Security represents a smaller share of GDP now than it did in **Ronald Reagan's** first term as president?

- Huffingtonpost.com

Safety while driving

by Nancy Miller, Editor, WE ...too, WEA-Retired

We all know that texting while driving is illegal, but do you know that Washington's law is one of the most encompassing? Only eight states, including Washington, make even holding a cell phone while driving illegal. And police no longer have to stop you on another violation. Using a cell phone while driving is a primary offense. You can be stopped and ticketed just for that. In some places, "texting while driving" isn't a specific offense, but "distracted driving" is. In many states, Washington included, young drivers have further restrictions. Be sure you know the specifics before you take your grandchild out to practice.

Youth have extra regulations, but age poses extra challenges while driving as well. Eyesight becomes an issue for many as we age. Many of us lose our ability to handle glare from the sun. There are extensions and screens that can be attached to the wind shield or sun visor to help with this problem. Night vision often becomes problematic for seniors. Consult with your optometrist if driving in the dark is becoming a problem. There are prescriptions for glasses that can improve night blindness. Cataracts can fog or dim vision and make driving dangerous. This condition is common and usually very treatable. If tunnel vision is becoming evident, there are also "field extension" prescriptions that can help widen the visual area. Don't endanger yourself by staying on the road when seeing is difficult, but don't stay home when a solution is available!

If age or injury makes it hard for you to turn your head fully, there are rearview mirror extenders and wide-angle, panoramic mirrors that reveal what lies behind without requiring a full swivel. A friend of mine who was recovering from serious injuries added a panoramic, rearview mirror that meant the difference between driving again or not.

Arthritic or weakened hands can be helped by steering wheel covers that thicken the size of the wheel while providing a better grabbing surface. You can also have an extender attached to your seat belt buckle to make it easier to reach.

If you are in doubt about your driving skills, or would like some refresher training but don't want to consult with your kids, don't forget that a driving school would be happy to help and instruct you for a few hours. Be sure that your skills are sharp enough so that you and your passengers are safe on the road.

Where should you retire?

(continued from page 1)

there are many possibilities. Usually a college offers classes, often at a discount for seniors. For those new friendships, there are plenty of people around. And despite all those people, there is usually more privacy, and tolerance of — or opportunity for — oddity. A city usually has a major airport, and maybe a train station: travel connections are easier. Many cities have transportation infrastructure and you may not need a car. There is an array of hospitals and medical specialists; part-time care can be obtained. Neighborhoods are established, their characters known and laws regulate land use, firearms, and loose animals.

On the other hand, cities are crowded, noisy, and full of light even at night. There are cars, often heavy traffic, and lots of pollution. Your neighbors are very close. Costs are likely higher for daily living, for acquiring a residence and for taxes. Cities have a reputation for higher crime rates, and there may be some neighborhoods or times of day to avoid. You may be limited to patio or balcony gardening, or have to share a p-patch some distance from home. Pets must be restrained, or kept indoors. And, among all those people, anonymity is pervasive.

Our rural nest near Plain is

in a small, scattered community; there is not much traffic, but what traffic is unusual, is noticed. In small communities, organizations overlap and news travels fast. People's first reaction is generosity, and they step forward when help is needed. There is plenty of open space for pets and plants. In fact, gar-



dening is one of the community bonds. The air is clear and the scenic surroundings are dramatic. A smaller community will take its identity from its setting. Is hunting, painting or casino-play a common activity? Will there be times the village is crowded with tourists or is rural isolation rarely interrupted? Are winters long, dark and weather-bound? Is there a hurricane, flood or fire season? Is the community itself seasonal

— would you be living among snow-birds or be one yourself?

On the other hand, although the people are scattered physically, the rural community is closer. Everyone knows everyone else's politics and religion, although — as things our moms told us were not for polite conversation — they are

not much discussed except with fellow travelers. The village newspaper focuses on local news and metropolitan dailies may not deliver there. For professional theater or professional sports, expect to travel some. Life is less pressured and people stop to chat and ask about your children, but they will also leave you alone. You will have to step forward graciously to connect with people, to

invite and be invited.

What's on that list of dreams that you and your spouse wrote out after reading the third paragraph? What are you looking for? If you think you found it, visit the place in all seasons and subscribe to that local paper. Give yourself a while, but when you decide, move into the new community with the vigor and joy of a sturdy plant taking root in a new garden.

People we admire ...

Dottie Watson **WEA Communications** **Coordinator**

Susan G. Komen Cancer Survivor of the Year

We, who are active in WEA-Retired, know Dottie as the staunch support and miracle worker who helps us do what we must do. The world knows her as a brave, active, glowing woman and has recognized her qualities by making her the 2010 Komen Puget Sound Race for the Cure Cancer Survivor of the Year.

Congratulations, Dottie.



Randy Parr **WEA Lobbyist**

WEA-Retired selected WEA staff member Randy Parr as WEA-Retired's Educator of the Year. Many, many thanks to Randy for the long and difficult hours that he puts in on behalf of our members and on behalf of better education for Washington's children.



WEA-Retired Newsletter
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Unions:

**The people who brought
you the weekend.**

**What do today's young
adults know about where
their benefits come from?**

**The only retired organization affiliated with NEA and
the Washington Education Association**

VA warns U.S. veterans about phone prescription scam

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is telling veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information. Some callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say the VA recently changed procedures for giving out prescriptions and ask for the Veteran's credit card number. Veterans with questions about any VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call toll-free at 877-222-8387.

Also, remember the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program is Washington state's Senior Medicare Patrol project. We can help clients prevent, detect and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. Encourage clients to contact 800-562-6900, if they have questions.