



Fall 2021

Connections

NEWS TO KEEP YOU ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION YOU LOVE

Thank you for being a WEA-Retired member!

WEA-Retired started this school year off with our second annual virtual WEA-Retired Conference. The theme was, “It’s not too late; you still have time to do what you want.” (Save Sept. 21-22, 2022 for our third annual conference!) On Oct. 27, we had a virtual “WEA-Retired Health Care Talk ... Medicare & PEBB Retire Plans.” On Nov. 16, WEA-Retired members showed up virtually once again at the Select Committee on Pension Policy meeting to speak or listen to testimony concerning the Plan 1 COLA. On Dec. 9, WEA-Retired presented a virtual “Pensions, Legislation, and Collective Action Talk.”

If you signed up and showed up for any or all of the above events, we thank you for your interest and participation! Now, what do we have in store for January 2022 and beyond?

We will have a virtual “Lobby Week” with WEA-Retired & RPEC (Retired Public Employees Council) members on Jan. 31- Feb. 4. There will be a training day on Jan. 31 and scheduled legislative district meetings with legislators and WEA-Retired/RPEC members throughout the week. Hopefully, you have already signed up for this event, as the deadline is Jan. 10 to accommodate the scheduling of our legislators. Sign up at <https://wea.mobi/WEARetired-LobbyDayRegistration>.

The WEA Representative Assembly will be held virtually on April 7-9. Please consider submitting your name to be a delegate representing WEA-Retired. WEA-Retired is eligible for over 100 delegates. See the nomination form on page 7 of this issue.

WEA-Retired also elects delegates this year for a two-year term as an NEA-RA and NEA-Retired Annual Meeting delegate. See the last page of this issue “Notice of NEA-RA & NEA Retired Annual Meeting Nominations for (7) WEA-Retired Delegates” for the timeline.

The print edition of the WEA-Retired *Connections* is mailed to your home four times a year. Our legislative bulletin, *Actively Retired*, is emailed monthly after our monthly Legislative Work Team meetings. Also, please look for issues of the *e-Connections* and other emails giving you information about special events or timely topics. If you are not receiving emails from us, please send your current email address to Mary Lindsey at WEARetired@washingtonea.org. We do not want you to miss out!

The President's Corner

By Mary Lindsey, 2019-20 WEA-Retired President



This is always the time of the year when we reflect on what has happened during the last year and look forward to the year ahead.

During 2021, we started off the year by virtually having “Our Largest WEA-Retired Lunch Ever” with professional chef, Madeleine Smithberg (Mad in the Kitchen). We even invited her back in May to have another lunch where we also invited new retirees who had not yet joined us. We received a lot of positive feedback, as members enjoyed cooking with her and seeing each other on Zoom.

In January 2021, we had our first virtual Lobby Week with our union siblings, Retired Public Employees Council (RPEC). We had a joint legislative training session as well as virtual meetings with our legislators. Seventy members signed up to attend, which was almost double from the previous year, because the virtual format made it easier to participate.

In March, we acknowledged our first full year in a global pandemic. The annual March NEA Leadership Summit & the NEA-Retired Conference became a virtual event. Twenty-three of our members participated instead of the usual two, as was our custom due to the cost of flights and lodging.

In April, we attended an expanded virtual WEA Representative Assembly that once again included New Business Items (NBIs). We had more than 40 WEA-Retired delegates, which was about a 25 percent increase in participation.

In June, we had our second virtual WEA-Retired Annual Meeting with delegates from each chapter. In June & July, we had an expanded virtual NEA Representative Assembly & NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. Our delegate allocation is seven WEA-Retired delegates. At the state level, WEA-Retired has ongoing working committees, teams, and affiliate representatives.

- The Legislative Work Team meets monthly, consisting of 17 members working for you.
- The Membership Committee meets monthly to discuss membership engagement & recruitment.
- The WEA-Retired Board has 22 board directors, one for each UniServ Council area.
- The WEA-Retired Board also includes our officers, committee chairs, and affiliate reps.
- We have WEA-Retired representatives on the Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA), Senior Citizen Lobby, and the WEA-Retired Scholarship Boards.
- Other active committees include: Audit, WEA-Retired Awards, and Nominations/Elections.
- The WEA-Retired Pre-Retirement Seminars’ program has committee members and over 40 trained seminar presenters.
- WEA-Retired has members serving on NEA-Retired committees: NEA-PAC, communications, membership, and legislative.

HELP WANTED! WEA-Retired currently has open board director positions in the following chapters: North Central, Summit and Lower Columbia. If you are interested in applying for these positions or would like to help develop these local chapters, please contact Mary Lindsey at WEARetired@washingtonea.org.

We always are in need of more pre-retirement seminar trainers. Please contact Karle Warren at karle1989warren@gmail.com if you are interested in joining the team.

Giving back to their communities

WEA-Retired members from Soundview & Fourth Corner

Caring for Kids in Lakewood, started by Diane Formoso 47 years ago, was inspired by one student in need who rode her school bus when Diane was a bus driver for the Clover Park School District. This all-volunteer organization, which has grown considerably over the years, held its Holiday Fair 2021 on Dec. 11. A total of 700 families were given toys, books, clothes, shoes, and other needed items at this event.

Caring for Kids works directly with public schools in the area, as well as other community organizations, to provide assistance to students and families in need. The organization depends on countless volunteers. WEA-Retired Soundview members Lois Perkins, Dalice Snider, and Quincy Cook were among the many volunteers who helped make the Holiday Fair 2021 a success. Diane Formoso is still running the year-around program 47 years after its inception. She has helped countless children and families for many, many years. And, she is a life member of WEA-Retired!



Pictured from left to right: Dalice Snider and Lois Perkins. Setting up for Holiday Fair 2021. Dalice, Diane Formoso and Lois Perkins.



Families in the Birchwood neighborhood in Bellingham have lived in a food desert since their neighborhood grocery store closed a few years ago. Many mini-food banks have been set up in the neighborhood. Terri McKee, WEA-Retired Fourth Corner member, has organized a “birthday cake gift bag” to distribute to the mini-food banks. Each gift bag consists of a cake mix, canned frosting, candles, and birthday horns. The cake bags have become a popular item, as everyone has a birthday!

Connecting with our allies: WSARA & Senior Lobby

Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans WSARA fall conference highlights

By Pam Fuelling, WEA-Retired Pilchuck Chapter

The Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA), a statewide nonprofit organization with over 90,000 members, educates the membership, the public, and elected officials about the issues that affect the well-being of Washington's senior citizens. WEA-Retired is a member of WSARA; Mary Lindsey is a vice-president and Shirley Hickey serves as secretary on WSARA's executive board. The 2021 WSARA Convention and 20th Anniversary Celebration of fighting for retirement security was held this year on Oct. 5. Twelve WEA-Retired members attended the virtual meeting.

Larry Brown, president of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), highlighted key issues for the upcoming 2022 legislative session. Legislation includes overtime pay for farm workers in Washington, high earners paying some tax through capital gains, health care transparency, labor standards to protect healthcare workers, those working for a living being paid at least minimum wage, the prohibition of building any new private detention centers, protection for whistle blowers, and the passing of police reform bills.

Rich Fiesta, Executive Director at the Alliance for Retired Americans, is an expert in retirement security issues, including Social Security, Medicare, pensions and health care. He spoke about the American Rescue Plan.

Dr. Kim Schrier, representative from the 8th Congressional District, received the WSARA Hero Award for her dedication to representing seniors and retirees in Congress. She recounted senior issues near and dear to her heart, including the Build Back Better Bill to reduce high drug costs and, with a rise in scamming, a bill to cut down on robocalls. She also has proposed the Medicare Vision Bill which would expand vision coverage for seniors and include hearing and dental coverage as well.

The Convention ended with a review of the 20-year history of WSARA and its desire to connect retirees back to their unions. WSARA continues to work on growing the organization.

Senior Citizens' Foundation 2021 virtual fall conference

By Phyllis Farrell, WEA-Retired Chinook

The Washington State Senior Citizens Lobby is a coalition of 37 public service groups, government agencies, and nonprofit and private groups striving to advocate on senior issues. The Senior Lobby has been in existence since 1977. WEA-Retired has member representation, and I represent WEA-Retired as one of the seven members on the Board of Directors.

Connecting with our allies: WSARA & Senior Lobby continued

This fall conference was a virtual, one-day meeting on Oct. 21. There were 208 participants registered. Three WEA-retired members attended this year. We usually have more members participate, but this year the conference and the WEA-Retired board meeting were held on the same day. The Senior Lobby Conference was interesting and very informative.

Governor Inslee was the keynote speaker, and some of the presenters and topics included:

- Darryl Means, Regional Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- David Mancuso, DSHS, Washington Age Wave and Senior Demographics
- David Schumacher, Office of Financial Management, State Budget and Revenue
- Andy Nicholas, Washington State Budget and Policy Center, Reforming Washington's Tax Code to Advance Racial and Economic Injustice
- Jessica Bonebright, Puget Sound Alliance for Retirement Action, Making Retirement Work for Everyone
- Madeline Foutch, Long Term Care in Washington State
- Cynthia Stewart, League of Women Voters Washington, Washington Redistricting 2021

Mike Kreidler, Washington State Insurance Commissioner, and Senator Karen Keiser participated in a "Health Care in Washington" panel.

To view the entire Senior Lobby Conference, a YouTube link is provided: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN5QNMfl5LM>.

Notice of NEA-RA & NEA-Retired Annual Meeting nominations for (7) WEA-Retired delegates

Dec. 2021 / Jan. 2022: Notice to all WEA-Retired members of election & dates.

Jan. 17 - Jan. 31: Nominations are open (go to WEA-Retired webpage in January for link to submit nomination)

Jan. 31: NOMINATIONS DEADLINE FOR NEA-RA & NEA-RETIRED ANNUAL MEETING DELEGATES

Feb. 7 - March 1: Online Election

Mar. 4-5: WEA Board & WEA-Retired Board will receive election results

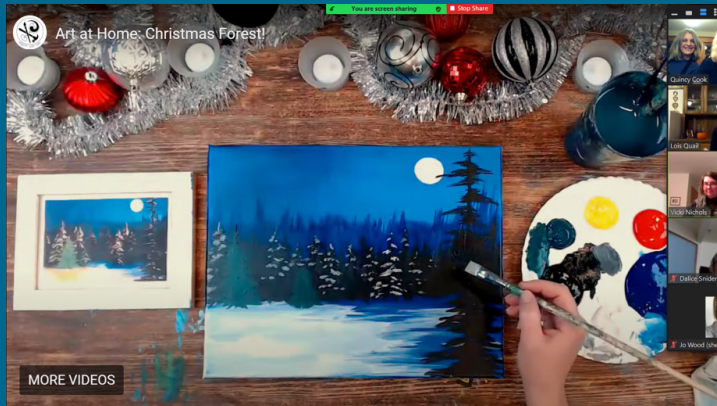
Mar. 7-21: Run-off online election, if necessary

As of Dec. 17, the specifics of the NEA meetings are unknown. We do know that it will not be held in Dallas. Other in-person locations, which follow COVID protocols, have not yet been identified. The meetings may end up being virtual, or a combination of in-person & virtual. WEA-Retired is following the same voting schedule as WEA.

Contact Nominations & Election Chair, Diane Kanda if you have any questions at mdkanda@yahoo.com.

An afternoon of painting through Uncorked Canvas

By Quincy Cook, WEA-Retired Soundview



The Soundview Chapter met through Zoom on Nov. 9 for an afternoon of painting. Through Uncorked Canvas in Tacoma, we chose a painting called “Christmas Forest,” and all current members, including pre-retired, were invited to sign up for this event. Nine interested members signed up, and a big thank you to the Soundview UniServ Council who paid for and ordered the kits. The kits were picked up at Uncorked Canvas in

downtown Tacoma, and those who were participating picked them up at my home since the Soundview offices are still closed due to Covid. It was so wonderful to see members in person, if only for a short time. Each kit contained the 14x26 canvas, the specific paint and brushes needed, butcher paper to protect the painting surface, an apron, information on how to log on to the tutorial, and even a piece of candy.

We met online at 3:15 to get organized and chat and began the tutorial at 3:30. Everyone had a great time and appreciated doing something other than a meeting. Some who attended, and others who were not able to, have asked to do it again.



Fourth Corner virtual book study

Racial and social justice emphasis

By Carol Jimeno, WEA-Retired Fourth Corner

In over one year of focusing on deepening our awareness of the social, cultural, political and financial effects of racism in America, these are some of the books we have read.



We have strived to create a safe space so our members can risk sharing past experiences and can expand their understanding of each other. This has allowed us to confront our own unconscious biases, stereotypes, and possible discriminatory behaviors towards others in a safe, supportive environment.

In addition to our monthly chapter meetings, our book study meets one or two times per book, depending on the content. Our book study has become an integral part of our chapter programming.

WEA-Retired delegate nominations to the virtual 2022 WEA-Representative Assembly

- You may submit your WEA-RA nominations online by going to:
<https://wea.mobi/WEARetiredDelegate>
- **The WEA-Representative Assembly will be held virtually, April 7-9, 2022.**
- 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. 19.**
- 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 on Jan. 20.

Your name _____ Retirement/separation date _____
Your email _____ Phone number _____
Are you a BIPOC member? _____

I nominate the following member(s) to be a delegate to the 2022 Virtual WEA Representative Assembly:

NOMINEE	CHAPTER	EMAIL
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

1. Preferably, submit your nomination(s) by visiting this website and completing the online form:
<https://wea.mobi/WEARetiredDelegate>.

2. Or, mail the completed form from this edition of Connections to Diane Kanda, 4595 Wynn Road, Bellingham, WA 98226. Direct questions to Diane Kanda (Nominations & Elections Chair) at mdkanda@yahoo.com. *Nomination(s) must be received by Jan. 19.*



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Important dates

Jan. 10: Registration deadline for virtual WEA-Retired/RPEC Lobby Week
Jan. 19: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee
Jan. 19: Nominations deadline for WEA-Retired RA delegates
Jan. 20: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting
Jan. 31: Nominations deadline for NEA-RA and NEA-Retired annual meeting delegates
Jan. 31: Virtual WEA-Retired/RPEC Legislative Training Day
Jan. 31-Feb. 4 : Virtual Lobby Meetings with Legislators
Mar. 30: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee
Mar. 31: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting
April 7-9: Virtual WEA Representative Assembly

Do we have your current mailing address, email, and phone number? If not, please send it to WEARetired@WashingtonEA.org.

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

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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