



# WE...too

Washington Education  
Association – Retired

May/June 2011

P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

Volume 23 Number 5

## WEA Representative Assembly

by Kit Raney,  
WEA-Retired President

One of my friends, Christyna Paris, an active WEA member from Aberdeen, posted the following on her Facebook page after getting home from the WEA Representative Assembly:

***Home from WEA Rep Assembly and lounging about. Reflecting on the determination our educators have to keep doing the best job even in the worst circumstances. And on the fact that they're tired of having their losses ignored while their efforts are belittled. I can see why people are fed up. Just ... what are we willing to do about it?***

Her posting was so perfect that I reposted it on my Facebook page. And it seemed like a good place to start our newsletter article about the 2011 WEA Representative Assembly (RA).

I've been attending the RAs since 1980. With the huge budget deficit in our state, the education reform agenda and the attacks to teachers and public education, I knew that this year's RA could be filled with anger and frustration and could get "interesting." I had no idea that the excitement would begin very early in the first evening when the agenda

was being adopted. A motion was made to amend the agenda to schedule a march on Olympia the next morning. After much passionate debate, the amend-



ment was defeated and the agenda was adopted as printed. That was the first of many items that were passionately presented and debated. In the end, your representatives at the annual meeting in Tacoma adopted a number of new action items, including:

- ◆ Encourage locals to engage members in a series of local events to draw attention to the impact of budget cuts on our

schools, as well as a statewide day of action next year;

- ◆ Continue our advocacy for an improved ESEA;
- ◆ Encourage locals to bargain aggressively and adopt a "reduced pay means reduced days" position;
- ◆ Express no confidence in Arne Duncan and competitive education reforms; and
- ◆ Invite legislators back to school for a day for a first-hand look at an educator's day.

The New Business Item introduced by WEA-Retired, which asked WEA to join NEA, NEA-Retired and WEA-Retired as a member of the "Coalition to Strengthen Social Security... Don't Cut It", was adopted by the delegates.

Gov. Chris Gregoire, House Speaker Frank Chopp and U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell all addressed the assembly and spoke about their commitment to collective bargaining and public sector union rights.

WEA President Mary Lindquist did an excellent job of running the meeting and gave an outstanding speech that seemed to resonate with every

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# President's Message

## Our growing numbers

A few years ago, during WEA's *Take the Lead* campaign, members were encouraged to complete a "What's Your Number?" activity. WEA members came up with statements such as "My number is 33, the number of students I have in my second grade class." This activity was in support of the effort to get the statewide numbers such as Washington having the third largest class sizes in the nation, out to the public.



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

Lately I've been noticing a lot of numbers that should be of interest to WEA-Retired members and I'd like to share some of those with you. The first number comes from DRS – there are still **5,402 Plan 1 members** working in our state. Considering the fact that Plan 1 closed to new members on October

1, 1977, almost all of these 5,402 educators could probably retire today. A good chunk of them are probably WEA members and, if we don't get them signed up as WEA-Retired members, we will lose our connection with them at a time when we most need everyone to be a member of WEA-Retired.

As a result of a New Business Item from the 2010 Representative Assembly, the Transitioning from Active to Retired Membership Task Force was formed. From a survey of WEA members that came out of that Task Force, **less than 1%** of the respondents said that WEA-Retired was "highly visible among current educators and **almost 80%** responded that WEA-Retired was either "somewhat visible, not very visible or for all practical purposes not visible at all among current educators." OUCH! We have got to do a better job of getting our message out to current educators.

An article in the May 19 *Seattle Times*, "Boomers Delivering Rising Tides of Seniors," reported

on the following findings: "The number for **Washington residents 65 or older grew 25 percent** in the last decade, compared to a 14 percent increase in the state's overall population; The growth rate was higher among older seniors, with **the number of residents 85 or older increasing nearly 40 percent**; steeper still was the growth of senior-citizens-to-be, reflected by a whopping **81 percent increase among those 60 to 64.**"

An article in the May 24 *Seattle Times* talked about the "Worth of Your Major," a report from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. To quote the article – "Over a lifetime, the earnings of workers who have majored in engineering, computer science or business are as much as **50 percent higher** than the earnings of those who major in the humanities, the arts, education and psychology according to an analysis by researchers." This is, of course, not a surprise to any of us who majored in, and worked in, the field of education, but we have our pensions, right?

So what about our pensions? The Economic Opportunity Institute released a comprehensive report in May, "Public Pensions in Washington State: Insuring Economic Security for Retirees." This document is available at <http://tinyurl.com/PensionSecurityReport>.

Here are some numbers of interest from that report:

- ◆ "Washington has 99% of its public pension obligations funded – the state's public pensions are in good financial shape. These combined pensions have net assets of \$57.6 billion (as of June 30, 2010), having gained \$5.5 billion in the past year;

- ◆ The current **median public pension benefit is \$18,182 a year**. 78 percent of public pensions are less than \$30,000 a year;

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Website: [www.washingtonea.org/retired](http://www.washingtonea.org/retired)

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

# Nominations

## NEA-Retired Delegate Nomination Form for the 2012 and 2013 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA RA

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA Representative Assembly will be held in Washington, DC in 2012 and in Atlanta, Georgia in 2013.

- Nominees must be FULLY RETIRED from a teaching/classified position.
- Nomination forms must be postmarked by **October 1, 2011**.
- Nominees must agree to attend all sessions.
- All nominations must have the consent of the nominee. **Self-nomination is acceptable.**
- Delegates are elected to serve for two years.
- Delegates can submit a biography of 50 words or less. These will be printed in the November/December 2011 edition of *WE...too*.

**I nominate the following RETIRED member to be a delegate  
to the 2012 and 2013 NEA-Retired Annual Meetings/NEA Representative Assemblies.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail if available \_\_\_\_\_

UniServ Council: \_\_\_\_\_ WEA ID# \_\_\_\_\_  
(ID number listed on your membership card is needed by WEA for verification of membership)

Retirement Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

### CHANGE IN DELEGATE FUNDING

WEA-Retired Board of Directors approved a revised policy on June 8, 2011, regarding the funding of delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meetings. In the past, WEA-Retired paid for lodging and meals for the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, which is held prior to the NEA Representative Assembly. In accordance with the revised policy, WEA-Retired leadership has determined that WEA-Retired will fund up to \$3,000 for the 5 delegates to the 2012 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. If the cost for lodging and meals is expected to exceed \$3,000, then delegates will have some out-of-pocket expenses. (Note: WEA-Retired delegates are funded as WEA State Delegates for the NEA Representative Assembly and WEA pays for travel, hotel and meals for those 7 days. The revised policy only addresses the funding for the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting.)

#### Please check one of the following statements:

I understand I could have some out of pocket expenses and I am willing to cover those expenses.

I understand I could have some out of pocket expenses and I would prefer my name be removed if that is the case.

Return NEA Representative Assembly Nomination Forms to: **Jan Curtis,**  
**718 Russell Road**  
**Snohomish, WA 98290-5617**

**DEADLINE:** Forms must be postmarked no later than **October 1, 2011**.

# Member Activities

## WEA-Retired Delegate Assembly

by Sandy Kokko

WEA-Retired held its 25<sup>th</sup> annual Delegate Assembly in Federal Way on June 8 -9, 2011. Forty-one delegates from across the state attended.

New board directors were elected from Sammamish and WEA-Southeast.

Rainier, Soundview, Summit, WEA-Eastern Washington, and WEA-Lower Columbia are without board directors at this time.

Sharon White (WEA Chinook) was elected secretary. The 2011-12 at-large members to the Executive Committee are Sandy Kokko (Vancouver), Ken Mortland (WEA-Cascade), and Carl Taylor (WEA Fourth Corner). WEA-Retired's new representa-

tive on the WEA-PAC board will be Maureen Ramos (Spokane).

WEA-Retired President Kit Raney reported on the work of the task force that was formed as a result of a new business item passed at the 2010 WEA Representative Assembly. The task force charge was to determine how to involve newly retired members in WEA-Retired. Kit reported that news articles have been sent to local leaders and e-mails with links to membership information have been sent to local leaders. Kit and Tim Brittell, WEA-Cascade president, will

present to council presidents about WEA-Retired. Kit also reported that it is important to increase the number of accurate e-mail addresses for our members since e-mail is a vital means of communication. She has applied for a grant to send a mail-



*Tom Curran (center), NEA-Retired Vice President, was a guest at the annual meeting this week. With him in the picture are Tom's long-time friends Jim and Jean Savidge.*

ing to WEA-Retired members to increase this number.

Kim Mead, NEA Board director, told the delegates about several issues that will be addressed at the NEA Representative Assembly this summer. John Okamoto, WEA executive director, described the attacks on public education and public school employees. He shared the WEA comprehensive strategy for combating the attacks. Even with the challenging time we are in, Mary Lindquist, WEA president, said Washington state is looked upon by NEA as being

on the cutting edge of issues such as how to improve failing schools and organize and support members. The WEA plan for organizing educational support personnel is being used as a blueprint by other states.

Randy Parr, WEA lobbyist, talked about both the good and not so good things that came out of the Legislature this year. The two most significant losses for retirees were eliminating of the Plan 1 uniform cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) and limiting the number of hours retirees can work to 867 for all plans, with just a few exceptions.

Aimee Iverson, WEA general counsel, brought the delegates up to date on the gainsharing lawsuit. She also said that WEA and other state employee groups are working together to determine how best to deal with the loss of the Plan 1 uniform COLA.

Tom Curran, NEA-Retired vice president, reported on Alabama retirees' campaign to sign up active members after the state legislature eliminated dues payroll deduction. He also talked about attempts in Maine and Florida to pass legislation to suppress the vote.

## Dottie Watson & Lee Ann Prielipp



*Dottie Watson, WEA Communications staff, and Lee Ann Prielipp, former WEA president, honored at WEA-Retired annual banquet.*

**Dottie Watson** received the 2011 Media Award, a recognition that is not presented every year. Dottie is one of the most energetic, positive and incredibly helpful people on the WEA staff.

Dottie has helped us with our newsletters for years. She has helped put together a presidential newsletter on two days notice and has been there to help each of our editors fit articles into spaces too big or too small.

She has gently guided us towards adopting better formatting standards, quality paper, and quality pictures. She has made it possible for all of our ballots and other needs be fitted into the newsletter as timelines encroached on deadlines. Dottie has made the arrangements with the printer and with the mailing service.

To say that we thank her for all her hard work is an understatement. That she has always helped with that wide smile and sparkling eyes was a treasured bonus.

**Lee Ann Prielipp**, a WEA-Retired member from Federal Way, was the recipient of the 2011 WEA-Retired Member of the Year award.

Lee Ann has served as the chair of our Legislative Work Team, one of WEA-Retired's most active groups, for many years. All of us know how legislation, both good and bad, can effect our lives so the work of this group is very important.

As chair, Lee Ann organizes and leads the monthly meetings where they set Legislative Goals for the year, meet with Legislators and plan and schedule the annual WEA-Retired Lobby Day.

Besides chairing this Work Team, Lee Ann is willing and able to assist whenever she can, whether it is writing an article for our newsletter, testifying in Olympia, or any other task. We are lucky to have Lee Ann as an active member of WEA-Retired and the WEA-Retired Member of the Year award is very well-deserved. Congratulations Lee Ann!



*Four new delegates attended the annual meeting June 8-9: Karle Warren, Neva Luke, Terri Inge and Peggy Stewart.*

### Got extra time on your hands?

Get involved in NEA's Priority Schools Campaign by volunteering at a priority school, mentoring teachers, tutoring a struggling student, helping a school write a grant, and speaking up at school board meetings. For more information on NEA's Priority Schools Campaign, visit [www.nea.org/priorityschools](http://www.nea.org/priorityschools).

# WEA Rep Assembly

## WEA RA recap

*continued from page 1*

delegate. Some highlights from Mary's speech:

*"We are at a defining moment in our history as a union. The challenge confronting us is unique and it is urgent. Never have we been called upon to rise, again and again, to fight for those values we hold most dear: The value that says every child deserves a quality public education regardless of their race, their gender, their birthplace, or their economic status; The value that says that every student deserves to be in a classroom where he or she is not the 34<sup>th</sup> child sitting in the back corner; The value of professional recognition for our members and respect for our collective voice; The value that states every educator deserves a living wage; The value that says an opportunity gap for any child, anywhere, is unacceptable; And the value of our work as educators, rewarding that work with dignity, respect – and the resources to make our schools the best in the nation; These are the values we defend, now and forever."*

Mary's *e-chalk* on May 26 contained a link to her entire speech. It's worth reading even without the benefit of her passionate delivery.

Here is what some of our other WEA-Retired delegates had to say:

*"I was so excited by the passion voiced at this year's RA. So many negative hits on education have really inspired the members to unite and take action in their local communities. I haven't heard that level of debate since the RA's of yesteryear, when debate went into the wee hours of the morning. Our power is truly in our commitment to provide the best education possible for our community's students, and not settle for anything less! It was fun!"*

–Pam Sebelien, WEA Southeast

*"WEA RA is always a stimulating experience every year I go! It is a wonderful opportunity for delegates to see, hear, and discuss with colleagues to get the true feel*



WEA-Retired member Maureen Ramos spoke passionately during debate at WEA RA.

*of where education is going directed by us and where we don't want to travel with the best interest of the association, students and public education. I am proud to be part of the WEA family and extremely thankful I am still a contributing/learning member of WEA Retired!"*

–Karle Warren, WEA Southeast

The annual WEA Representative Assembly is democracy in action and has something of interest for every Association member. Consider running to be a WEA-Retired delegate to the RA next year!

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## President's message

*continued from Page 2*

◆ **475,000 workers and retirees are members of these public pension systems** — one out of every 14 residents in Washington state;

◆ Pension benefits result in \$3.5 billion a year in state economic activity, as well as 23,000 jobs. **For every dollar contributed by public employers for pensions, over nine dollars is generated in our economy."**

So what can we make of all of these numbers? My summary is this: There are a lot of us and the number is growing. Our pension benefits make a major contribution to the economy of our state. And, if we are organized, we can be a force to be reckoned with. To quote Denise Klein, Executive Director of Senior Services of Seattle/King County, from the May 19 *Seattle Times* article: "The generation that's turning 65 now are activists," she said. "They were marching for civil rights; they were protesting the Vietnam War. We see all sorts of signs that they want to be engaged."

Denise Klein is talking about **us**. Do you want to be engaged? There is much work to be done. Our pensions are not "too rich" as some have suggested, and our pension system is in good shape. We must continue to grow our WEA-Retired membership. And we must share these numbers with our elected officials. Visit [www.ourvoicewashington.org/](http://www.ourvoicewashington.org/) often and take action. Be sure that you are a WEA-PAC member. The story of the loss of the Uniform COLA is not over. We vote and are a force to be reckoned with.

# NEA-Retired Seminar

## NEA-Retired regional meeting — April 9-11, Albuquerque

By Maureen Ramos and Dottie Watson

Nearly 200 retired educators and the staff liaisons for states west of the Mississippi gathered in Albuquerque in April to share thoughts and ideas, and get the latest word from NEA regarding the challenges facing public education. From start to finish, the energy and passion during the three-day conference was both refreshing and exhausting at the same time. We learned many things, some of which are:

- Washington state is lucky to have continuing membership options and agency fee for active members. We do not (currently) have to recruit and re-sign members on an annual basis, as some states do.

- Despite the rhetoric in the media, our pension plans and Social Security are solvent, and we DESERVE every penny in those plans. We worked hard our entire careers so that we would have a comfortable retirement. We don't need to apologize for our pensions.

- Save money at your pre-retired seminars or other meetings by asking a local business to sponsor the lunch or dinner. Many businesses will jump at

the chance to sponsor in exchange for the opportunity to speak to your group for five minutes. Try it!

- Tips to recruit members:
  - ✓ one-on-one contact; stress strength in numbers in lobbying for retirees and actives;
  - ✓ recognize chapters in the statewide newsletter;
  - ✓ incentives, such as rebate part of the dues;
  - ✓ highlight benefits from NEA MB (see sidebar on Member Benefits);
  - ✓ pay mileage for a carload of members to come to pre-retirement seminars;
  - ✓ get monthly printouts from DRS of members who: retired/new hires/deaths/changes;
  - ✓ use the word "belonging" instead of "joining" — it is so much more personal and relevant;
  - ✓ hold book swaps at meetings or pre-retirement seminars;
  - ✓ apply for an NEA grant (we have, and are waiting for response);
  - ✓ contact presidents of Active locals asking for names of members who will be retiring and make personal contacts (we contacted presidents this past month).

- How to keep Retireds involved: Communicating and

educating about pension and retirement issues. Most retired members still care about actives' issues, so information regarding legislative actions is important. Social networking and political action remains an interest. Information on legal issues and estate planning workshops will bring people in. E-alerts and e-mails are more effective than snail mail.

- Need extra cash? You can earn up to \$125 per day helping NEA recruit members in other states (currently Nevada, Alabama and Florida). Contact Bob Eagan ([reagan@nea.org](mailto:reagan@nea.org)) or Nathan Allen ([nallen@nea.org](mailto:nallen@nea.org)) for more information.

- Like politics? Help your active locals with phone banking, doorbelling, testifying in Olympia, recruiting WEA-PAC members and writing letters to legislators. Political advocacy is exciting, rewarding, and always interesting!

### Take advantage of NEA Member Benefits

Did you know you can get insurance for your pet for \$19/month? Did you know you can receive a \$15 gift card from Target just for getting a quote from NEA Auto & Home? Did you know ID Theft Protection is available for under \$20 per YEAR? Did you know you can enter once a month for a \$2,000 scholarship ([www.neamb.com/prize](http://www.neamb.com/prize))? Go to [www.neamb.com](http://www.neamb.com) and check out all the discounts available to you through your NEA/WEA Retired membership.

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*Only a fool would try  
to deprive working  
men and working  
women of the right to  
join the union of their  
choice.*

*-Dwight David  
Eisenhower*

## Dollars for Scholars scholarship winners



*Stephanie Dilbeck, Denise Zetterberg, and Molly Studley attended the banquet to receive their scholarship awards. Tammie Le and Pamela Lane were unable to attend*

At the WEA-Retired banquet, Bev Wentz, Chair of the scholarship committee, announced the five individuals who are the recipients of \$1000 scholarships. It is an honor to be able to assist them as they pursue their goal of teaching the children of Washington.

**Stephanie Dilbeck** is a full-time student at Western Washington University. She is the SWEA President and a SWEA WEA Board member. Stephanie

will be graduating in the spring of 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Special Education and Elementary Education.

**Denise Zetterberg** is a classified staff member in the University Place School District for the past eight years. In 2006 she became a Paraeducator for special education students. This spring she will graduate from the UW-Tacoma and 10 days later will begin the Special Ed/General Ed certification program also at UW-Tacoma.

**Molly Studley** is a Paraeducator in the English Language Learner department for the Kent School District. Molly put a career on hold for seven years and raised a family. She is now on an accelerated Master's program through Jones International University to become an ELL teacher.

**Tammie Le** is an English Language Learner and Title 1 Paraeducator for Lakeridge Elementary in Renton. She is also a Vietnamese interpreter for the district. Tammie will be working towards a Masters in elementary education at UW. Her endorsement will be in elementary teaching and ELL.

**Pamela Lane** is in her third year of teaching in a special education program to support students on the autism spectrum. She is a member of the Mukilto Education Association. Her scholarship will assist with the tuition for her Master's degree at City University of Seattle.