



Winter 2022



Connections

NEWS TO KEEP YOU ENGAGED IN THE PROFESSION YOU LOVE

WEA-Retired Symposium: Pensions, Legislation, and Next Steps

Join us on May 4 from 10 a.m. to noon for our virtual WEA-Retired Symposium: Pensions, Legislation, and Next Steps! WEA Lobbyist, Jared Mason-Gere, will give an update on this last legislative session. We will discuss pending issues and our next steps in preparing for Legislative Session 2023.

Register today at <https://wea.mobi/2022legislative>.

Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Legislative Conference

By Shirley Hickey, WEA-Retired Vice President & WSARA Secretary

Several WEA-Retired members, as affiliate members of the Washington State Alliance of Retired Americans (WSARA), attended the virtual Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) / AFL-CIO Legislative Conference and Lobby Day on Jan. 28. Union leaders, union members, and pro-union elected officials kicked off the event with a series of rapid-fire presentations about the status of worker conditions and target goals for addressing them.

Representative Liz Berry from the 36th LD and House Labor Committee noted the extreme healthcare staffing shortage. WSLC Legislative Director, Sybill Hyppolite, reported on bills concerning apprenticeship training combining classroom, on-the-job training and course credit. The space industry supports a three-part platform for building IT, state agencies, and sustainability of a pathway to union jobs to raise employment outcomes. As with most political initiatives, there is push and pull tension. One example is that healthcare labor staffing goals are opposed by the Hospital Association administration. An International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) member, Matthew Hepner, noted that journey level electrical labor union jobs went to the Bay area of California and to right-to-work states where it is easier to do the permitting process. Factors that may need to be addressed include the Clean Energy Act, the State Protections Act, energy council storage, job pathway options, and job opportunities.

After hearing from additional speakers, attendees heard the same briefing as WEA and WEA-Retired member lobbyists hear: Get to know priority bills, share your name and area you live in, use your voice and your story to share what matters, and do the “ask.”

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The President's Corner

By Mary Lindsey, 2021-23 WEA-Retired President



If you are receiving this *Connections*, you are a member of WEA/NEA-Retired. Some of you joined very recently, and some of you have been members for decades. Thank you for being a member! We need your help with increasing our membership. Please encourage your friends and colleagues to join as a WEA/NEA-Retired member or pre-retired member! Joining in April can save them even more money as a life member and lock their dues to the 2022 prices.

During the month of April only, we will be offering a \$50 rebate to WEA members who join as a pre-retired life member. We are the only retiree group that offers a life membership. For WEA certificated staff, the life membership is \$550 before the rebate. For WEA ESP staff, life membership is \$430 before the rebate. (Payment plans are available.) If you are a current member of WEA Fourth Corner or Kent UniServs, they are matching the WEA-Retired \$50 rebate for a total of \$100 rebate (at the time of this printing) for their members!

During April, we will also be offering a \$50 rebate to WEA members who retired (or severed employment) without joining WEA/NEA-Retired as a life member. Sometimes people do not realize that members need to officially join WEA-Retired, so this is their opportunity to join at a reduced rate.

Like any other organization, the more members we have, the larger the impact. We work hard with our allies and have made progress this legislative session with another 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for TRS and PERS Plan 1, this time up to \$110 a month. Of course, we need to make this an annual COLA like Plans 2 and 3. A true COLA like Social Security is a goal. We also got the hours increased for retirees going back to work without impacting their monthly pension payments. Are we finished yet? No, a lot of work still needs to be done. Together we can improve our retirement security for current and future retirees, especially in the areas of pensions and healthcare.

Join us on May 4 for a Virtual WEA-Retired Symposium: Pensions, Legislation and Next Steps from 10 to noon. You will receive an update on what we accomplished during the 2022 session and next steps for the 2023 legislative session. It is not too early for us to plan ahead.

Register for the virtual symposium today at <https://wea.mobi/2022legislative>.

Be well,

Mary

2022 Virtual WEA-Retired Annual Meeting nomination information

WEA-Retired will convene its annual meeting (by Zoom) on June 8-9.

- On even-numbered calendar years, we elect our secretary and half of our WEA-Retired Board Directors.
- Every year we nominate delegates to represent chapters/councils throughout the state.
- All nominees must be WEA-Retired members and not currently under contract with a public school district.
- You may nominate yourself and/or another retired member. If you nominate someone other than yourself, you must have the consent of the nominee.

All nominations need to be submitted using the online nomination form:

<https://wea.mobi/2022WEARetiredAnnualMeeting>

Delegates to the Annual Meeting (Elected by the WEA-Retired Board: Submit nominations by **March 29**, as the board meets on March 31. If all delegate slots have not been filled, the board may extend the deadline.)

Kent (3), Lake Washington (1), **North Central (3)**, **Puget Sound (8)**, **Rainier (5)**, Seattle (7), Soundview (2), **Spokane (4)**, Summit (4), **Vancouver (5)**, **WEA Cascade (7)**, WEA Eastern Washington (7), WEA Lower Columbia (4), **WEA MidState (6)**, **WEA Olympic (8)**, **WEA Riverside (6)**, WEA Sammamish (10), and WEA Southeast (7).

Delegates to the Annual Meeting (Elected by the chapter: Submit nominations by **April 29**)

Pilchuck (10), Tacoma (5), WEA Chinook (12), and WEA Fourth Corner (10).

Chapters in bold print are electing board directors this year. (Terms are for two years and limited to three consecutive terms.) The position of secretary is up for election this cycle. Direct questions to WEARetired@WashingtonEA.org.

Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Legislative Conference

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At the start of my virtual 47th LD lobby breakout session, I met my two teammates, Jeremy, a member of the Amalgamated Transit Union, and Misha, a member of the Office and Professional Employees International Union. Jeremy drives a King County bus and is concerned about finding support for solutions for the working and safety conditions for drivers and passengers due to alarmingly increasing numbers of riders refusing to pay fares and using massive quantities of drugs. Misha works in a medical provider union partnership department office and said that she was unsure of doing her first ever lobby day, but she ended up speaking expertly about healthcare access and staffing needs. As a WSARA representative and retired educator, I stayed on the WSLC priority issues. I highlighted the need for staffing standards, breaks for workers, and support for learn-while-you-earn apprenticeship programs.

Standing on the shoulders of those who came before us

Remembering Jean Savidge

By Sandy Kokko

In June of 1983, NEA-Retired held its first annual meeting in Philadelphia. Two delegates from Washington, Gail Kirk and Jean Savidge, attended at their own expense.

These two women had an idea: create an organization in Washington state for retired educators to continue serving students and staff in public education. Working with former WEA Presidents Reese Lindquist and Terry Bergeson and former WEA Executive Director Jim Seibert, WEA-Retired held its first meeting in June 1987. During her lifetime of service, Jean served as WEA-Retired president, vice president, board director and editor of the WEA-Retired News.

In 1993, she and Lee Gillam started the WEA-Retired pre-retirement seminar program, “Taking Charge of Your Future.” This program grew from five seminars during the first year to more than 50 seminars today.

In 1994, she was selected as the WEA-Retired Member of the Year for her contributions to the organization. In 2014, she received the NEA-Retired Distinguished Service award in special recognition of her extraordinary support of NEA-Retired's ongoing advocacy work.

Perhaps Jean's biggest legacy was her encouragement of involvement. She recruited people her entire life to join the organization, to take a leadership position, to become a seminar presenter. And once she got you involved, she did not walk away. She made sure you succeeded.

LEFT: Jean Savidge (pictured second from the left) receives the Senior Advocate award from Jackie Boschok, WSARA president, at the 2018 Senior Champions Awards Luncheon. RIGHT: Jean Savidge (pictured in front) with other WEA-Retired delegates to 2019 WSARA Convention at WEA Headquarters in Federal Way.



Remembering Jean Savidge

Jean Savidge was a founder of WEA-Retired and remained very active throughout her 80s as a member of the WEA-Retired Legislative Work Team, lobbying in Olympia, attending WEA Fourth Corner meetings and participating in pre-retirement seminar trainings. Jean was also a regular attendee at the WEA Representative Assemblies as a delegate, and she staffed the WEA-Retired table to answer questions and encourage other delegates to join WEA-Retired.

By Mary Lindsey

Jean Savidge started teaching in 1950 in Richland at a salary of \$1,700 a year. During her teaching career, she also taught in Bellevue, Yakima, Westport, Cheney and Portland. She retired from the Hoquiam School District in 1982. Her retirement was short lived, as she moved on to Grays Harbor Community College to teach reading.

I did not meet Jean until about 2010 when she and her husband, Jim, moved to Blaine. After having been involved in the WEA Chinook chapter, as well as WEA-Retired and NEA-Retired, she wanted to get involved in WEA-Retired Fourth Corner activities. And get involved she did. Throughout her 80s, she taught retirement sessions on healthcare and the state retirement plans and helped organize trainings. We worked as a team to provide active WEA members with the information they needed to transition to their retirement years. She often said that when she first started the pre-retirement seminars, she wanted to make that transition easier for those who followed her. She was an expert on our state retirement system and healthcare. She knew the answer to any question asked of her. When a member needed someone to talk to about retirement issues, I would always call her. She was always willing to get in touch with the member to assist them.

She was the person who got me involved in the Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans (WSARA). At the time, she served on the WSARA board and wanted to step down. Before I knew it, I was replacing her on the board, and I have never regretted it. It is a strong group made up of many union members and organizations. It makes sense, as she was a strong woman who worked on behalf of union members and organizations.

Jean Savidge would have celebrated her 92nd birthday in March 2022. She passed away in fall of 2021. She leaves behind her husband of 39 years, Jim; a son; a step-daughter; two granddaughters; four step-grandchildren; and a combination of seven great-grandchildren. For those wishing to do so, Jim suggested that donating to the WEA Children's Fund would be a wonderful way to honor Jean's legacy.

Jean Savidge (pictured far right) lobbying with the 42nd LD WEA-Retired & RPEC members in 2017.



Time to nominate the 2022 WEA-Retired Award winners

By Maureen Ramos, WEA-Retired Awards Chair

WEA-Retired can support public education staff and students in Washington 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 during its annual meeting.

As a WEA-Retired member or pre-retired member, you know many who would be deserving of one of these awards. Wouldn't it be nice if that person were nominated, and even nicer if they won? It is very easy.

Below are descriptions of the four WEA-Retired awards. **The due date to submit your nomination(s) is May 20.**

Pre-Retired Member of the Year. Some active WEA members join WEA-Retired while they are still working in order 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.

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. 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. People in the communications field have the ability to provide information about WEA-Retired programs and goals to the general public, WEA-Active members, or WEA-Retired members. This can be accomplished through publications and communications such as newsletters, blogs, or websites.

Nominate someone today: <https://wea.mobi/2022WEARetiredAwards>. The deadline is May 20.

Last year's award winners

Retired Member of the Year: Mary Lindsey

Mary has always been a leader in WEA Fourth Corner UniServ. The list of her association accomplishments before retirement led her right into active participation in WEA-Retired. In 2017, Mary Lindsey was elected as vice president of WEA-Retired, supporting Neva Luke, who was then president. In 2019, Mary was elected president ... then the pandemic arrived.

Zoom became the norm and she was off to the races! A few highlights include holding virtual board meetings and board chats, sending a monthly email (Mary's Memo), holding the first annual September conference with more than 130 members and guests in attendance, keeping WEA-Retired visible to recruit new members, working closely with Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans, and communicating with members through e-Connections and *Connections*. Mary dedicated herself to doing an amazing job!

Last year's award winners

Pre-Retired Member of the Year: Team Kent

The 2021 Pre-Retired Member(s) of the Year went to Kent UniServ: WEA-Retired board member Mogi Haggin and Kent EA members Christie Padilla, Becca Ritchie and Tim Martin. WEA-Retired Kent Board Director Mogi Haggin reached out to the Kent EA Executive Board with a reminder about the special, limited-time \$50 enrollment fee price deduction to join WEA-Retired. KEA President Christie Padilla, KEA President-Elect Tim Martin and member Becca Richie worked to convince the Kent EA Executive Board to match the \$50 price deduction. Kent's enrollees saved \$100 when they joined as a pre-retired member of WEA-Retired! Additionally, other UniServs followed suit!

Media: Eddie Westerman

Now retired, Eddie Westerman supported WEA members for more than 30 years. Those of you who spent time with her know it is not just creativity, association knowledge or skillset that is worthy of applause – Eddie is FUN! We have seen her work at WEA Representative Assembly (the music and much more!), and WEA events and activities from strike lines, to bussing to the capital, to developing eye-catching campaign materials.

Ikebana (Japanese Flower Arrangement) for WEA-Retired Kent members

By Mogi Haggin, WEA-Retired Kent

For our monthly meeting in December 2021, the members of the Kent chapter attended an Ikebana demonstration and guided lesson presented by one of our own members who is a certified Ikebana teacher. We did a flower arrangement in the Japanese style which focused on the three basic principles of Ikebana — line, mass, and color. It was a fun, interactive, and

creative activity that met our objective for diverse, hands-on activities for our membership this year.





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Important dates

March 30: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee
March 31: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting
April 7-9: Virtual WEA Representative Assembly
May 4: Virtual WEA-Retired Symposium, Pensions, Legislation,
and Next Steps (Register here: <https://wea.mobi/2022legislative>)
May 5: WEA-Retired Executive Committee Meeting
June 7: Virtual WEA-Retired Executive Committee Meeting
June 8: Virtual WEA-Retired Board Meeting
June 8-9: Virtual WEA-Retired Annual Meeting
June 29-30: NEA-Retired Annual Meeting
July 2-6: NEA Representative Assembly
Sept. 21-22: WEA-Retired Virtual Annual September Conference

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 InsuranceBenefit 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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