



Tweetle — ooops .. Tweet Tweet

by Nancy M. Miller, Editor,
WE ...Too, WEA-Retired

Full disclosure: I am a grandparent. I am technologically obsolete before I begin.

So what is Twitter, anyway? As I watch TV, especially the news on Election Night, suddenly I *really* wanted to know where that streaming line across the bottom of the TV came from. So I investigated. (To explore Twitter, go to www.twitter.com. You can sign up for an account, or you can just click around the site for a while.)

Twitter is like mini-e-mail. A message sent through Twitter is a 'tweet'. A tweet is 140 characters or less, and that includes the address, which is formatted '@yourusername'. You may read that Twitter is an SMS. That means "short messaging service" and puts itself in direct lineal descent from the wireless telegraph, although today's meaning is all electronic. (And which explains the demise of spelling and grammar, just like in a telegram.)

Tweets can be sent on your computer or through your smartphone or other mobile device (that is, tablets, pads and the like). Messages on Twitter are super-short but super-popular. Wikipedia tells us that Twitter has 500 million active users and handles over 1.6 billion searches per day. (Is anyone working out there? Of course, some of those are for business purposes. Yes! Twitter has business purposes, but that's another article.)

Tweets often include "hashtags." A hashtag looks like this: #skiiing. Twitter reads anything started with a # and without spaces as a topic. It gathers all the topics. So when someone says, "use hashtag mytaxes", that person is trying to create public pressure or community awareness of that topic by gathering a huge number of messages on the same hashtag.

Imagine that Twitter is a big cocktail party. Anyone can walk by. Anyone can overhear the public conversations. You

have to join the party to send a comment. You can go into a corner and have a private conversation — Twitter calls them DMs (direct messages) but frankly, why do so? The purpose of Twitter seems to be mass communication, and you have snail mail, e-mail, and telephones for private stuff. (To send a DM, put DM followed by a space in your message box before typing in the address. You can also restrict readers of your message by sending a private tweet.)

At the Twitter cocktail party, if you want to hear someone's conversation, you "follow" them. You become a "follower." (There's a button on their page for this.) All their tweets will come onto your newsfeed on your Twitter page. You can reply to them if you want to. How many followers you have is something of a contest: celebrities have followers in the millions.

If you get too many tweets, you can control them by divid-

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President's Message

Elections, Twinkies & Boots on the Ground

I'll admit it: I was extremely nervous on Election Day and I was incredibly happy as the returns came in. I loved Rachel Maddow's day-after-the-election summary of what, by re-electing Barack Obama, is **not** going to happen. Here is her partial list:

- "We are not going to have a Supreme Court that will overturn *Roe vs Wade*."
- "We're not going to repeal Healthcare Reform."
- "We are not going to amend the United States Constitution to stop gay people from getting married."
- "We are not going to spend two trillion dollars on the military that the



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

- "military does not want."
- "We are not scaling back on student loans because . . . you should borrow money from your parents."
- "We are not starting a trade war with China on Inauguration Day . . ."
- "We are not going to have . . . John Bolton [or] Dick Cheney back."
- "We had the choice to do that, as a country, and we said no."

And I would add, we will not have a President who will sign a National Right to Work law.

Big scary news: Hostess is closing down and there will be no more Twinkies, all because greedy union workers went on strike! The truth is that, as the company prepared to file for bankruptcy earlier this year, the then-CEO was awarded a 300% raise (from approximately \$750,000 to \$2,550,000) and at least nine other top executives also received massive pay

raises, while they proposed cutting bakers' salaries by 8% and benefits by 32% on top of previous cuts, and while the company had stopped paying into the workers' pension fund.

The private equity owners did what they came to do: squeeze as much money out of the company as they can for their investors, even if that kills the company and puts over 18,000 employees out of work. As AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, "What's happening with Hostess Brands is a microcosm of what's wrong with America, as Bain-style Wall Street vultures make themselves rich by making America poor." The closing of Hostess is another example of the decades-long attack on unions, workers and the middle class.

The \$6 billion spent on elections in 2012 was the most expensive in history. (\$5.3B was spent in 2008.) Of that \$6 billion, \$1 billion was spending from outside groups and \$307 million from groups not required to disclose donors.

We aren't able to match what our deep-pocketed opponents spend. This year, we were outspent almost 20-to-1 by charter school proponents. We all need to contribute to WEA-PAC (visit www.OurVoiceWashington.org/wea-pac) but we will never have that kind of money.

Post-election, Shoreline EA President David Guthrie wrote about "boots on the ground," a reminder that we win because opponents cannot match our member energy, the boots on the ground. People make phone calls and ring doorbells and make a difference. A headline I saw read "*Big Donors Saw Diminishing Returns in Most Expensive Election in History.*" We experienced returns because of our boots on the ground.

Thanks to everyone whose boots helped this year's election efforts.

Contact Information:
WEA-Retired

E-mail
WEARetired@washingtonea.org
or raneyk@aol.com

Website
www.washingtonea.org/retired

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

WEA-Retired elections for officer, board directors, and annual meeting delegates

WEA-Retired will convene an Annual Meeting, June 5-6, 2013. This year delegates will elect a secretary as well as board directors from Sammamish, Soundview, Summit, WEA-Eastern Washington, WEA-Lower Columbia, and WEA-Southeast (all non-chapters).

This form is for nominating non-chapter delegates, non-chapter board directors, and secretary. Fifty words or less biography for each nominee is optional. Non-chapter delegates will be elected at the Feb. 27, 2013, WEA-Retired Board of Directors meeting. Non-chapter board directors and secretary will be elected at the annual meeting in June.

Non-chapter units are: WEA-Cascade (3), WEA-EasternWashington (4), Kent (1), WEA-Lower Columbia (3), WEA MidState (5), North Central (1), WEA Olympic (6), Rainier (2), WEA-Riverside (3), Sammamish (8), Soundview (1), WEA-Southeast (5), Spokane (2), Summit (1), and Vancouver (3). The number in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director.

All nominees must be WEA-Retired members. More than one name can be submitted to be a non-chapter delegate. You can nominate yourself or another retired member. If you nominate someone other than yourself, you must have the consent of the nominee.

**Mail the nomination form to: Jan Curtis, 718 Russell Road, Snohomish, WA 98290-5617.
Nomination forms must be postmarked no later than February 22, 2013.**

2013 WEA-Retired Annual Meeting Nomination Form—Multiple Positions

Your Name _____ Date of Retirement _____

Your e-mail _____ Phone number _____

I nominate the following retired members for:

Non-chapter delegate:

Non-chapter WEA-Retired Board Director:

Name

Name

UniServ Council

UniServ Council

WEA-Retired Secretary:

Name

Chapter units are: WEA Chinook (11), WEA Fourth Corner (7), Pilchuck (5), Puget Sound (5), Seattle (5), and Tacoma (3). The numbers in parenthesis is the number of delegates the chapter is allowed in addition to the board director. WEA Chinook, WEA Fourth Corner, Seattle, and Tacoma will elect board directors for the 2013-15 term. Chapter units should elect their delegates before March 15, 2013.

This nomination form must be postmarked no later than February 22, 2013.

Member Activities

What can we do next? A modest proposal

I-1240 has passed, if only by a slim margin. The Washington State School Board will meet to establish the application protocols. The governor will begin appointing members to the Charter Schools Commission. And applicants like K-12 and the Spokane School District will begin lining up. One of the most poorly supervised education reform measures in recent decades will soon be under way in Washington state. What do we do now?

To protect our students, our standards, and our schools, it seems to me that the most productive course of action is to develop the personnel and mechanisms to shine the light of day on every action. In conjunction with WEA's professional legislative and government relations staffers, we need to provide monitors for every level of decision making. Focusing mostly upon the Charter Schools Commission, each individual applicant, and the resulting charter schools, we need to recruit WEA members in every community that has a charter school entity to monitor the actions of those entities. In effect, we will be creating a "shadow government", in which WEA members shadow every aspect of the process of approving and operating charter schools.

And no one is better positioned to do this than WEA-Retired. Our members are all across the state. We have the discretionary time to be able to attend daytime and evening functions. We have experienced educators with the institutional memories and wisdom to analyze decisions and report on them in the media. We can keep the spotlight on each and every charter school endeavor.

I'm ready to commit to this undertaking. How many of you are also ready? If you are, contact Ken Mortland, WEA-Retired VP at WEARetired@washingtonea.org.



by Ken Mortland
WEA-Retired Vice President

NOTICE TO READERS:

Due to scheduling complications, there will not be a Jan/Feb 2013 issue of *WE...Too*.
The next issue will be March/April.

Member Activities

Campaign Volunteer Photo Gallery

Lobby Day 2013 scheduled

by LeeAnn Prielipp, WEA-Retired,
Legislative Committee Chair



Kent Retired members making phone calls: Marlla Mhoon, Sandy LaBelle, Shirley Hickey and Mary Myers



Jeanette Marquardt, WEA-Retired Board Director for WEA-Cascade, volunteered her time at a campaign phone bank.

March 6 has been selected as our 2013 Lobby Day. The Legislative Work Team will have a short meeting followed by a briefing from WEA legislative staff at 9:30 a.m. for all lobbying participants. This will take place at the Chinoook UniServ Council office. We will then proceed to the Hill for meetings with legislators.

This legislative session we will concentrate on three priorities from our legislative goals: the Plan I unfunded liability; allowing new hires the choice of retirement Plans 2 or 3; and allowing five-year vesting for Plan 3 participants.

Lobby day is open to all WEA-Retired members and we encourage participation. Please contact Lee Ann Prielipp (leannwa@comcast.net) or 253-839-9753) for further information or to indicate your attendance. We look forward to seeing many of you on March 6.

Litigation update

by Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

Last issue we had an article on our Gainsharing and Uniform COLA lawsuits against the State. Here is the latest update and it includes some great news.

We received a favorable opinion from Thurston County Judge Chris Wickham in our Uniform COLA case. He said the Reservation of Rights was invalid and that the State could not eliminate Uniform COLA benefits for those who worked since its passage in 1995.

The Court dismissed the claim for a Uniform COLA for those who have not worked since 1995, stating that they have no standing since they had not worked since the passage of the Uniform COLA in 1995. This means that those who have been receiving the Uniform COLA as part of their pension will continue to receive the Uniform COLA but it will not increase.

The State will most likely appeal the court's decision to reinstate the Uniform COLA for those who worked since its passage in 1995. That appeal may go directly to the State Supreme Court. If we prevail on appeal, the Uniform COLA benefits will be reinstated.

The date for the oral argument in the appeal in the Gainsharing lawsuit has not been set, but it will most like be heard by the State Supreme Court sometime in the summer or early next fall.

Election results

*"Election Day, Nov. 6, was a day to celebrate for our public school students and educators. An overwhelming majority of WEA-PAC-backed pro-education candidates won election to office — **starting at the top of the ballot with our Governor-elect Jay Inslee!**"* (See stories at www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org)

November 6, a great day for public education, union rights, civil rights and many important issues, was carried by the efforts of WEA and WEA-Retired members across the state. Members' campaign activities made a difference.

Of eight WEA-PAC-endorsed statewide candidates for executive offices, all eight were elected. All three endorsed candidates for the State Supreme Court were elected. Of the WEA-PAC endorsed candidates for the State Legislature, 69 were elected, 16 lost and, as this newsletter goes to press, three races (Stonier, Probst and Sizemore) are still too close to call.

Nationally, candidates backed by the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education won in our state. With President Obama, Washington also re-elected Senator Cantwell and elected all seven of the endorsed Congressional candidates.

WEA Board had positions on three ballot measures: support for Referendum 74 (marriage equality), and opposition to Initiative 1185 (Eyman's latest 2/3 vote for taxes) and Initiative 1240 (charter schools). Referendum 74 passed, as did the two initiatives. Charter Schools Initiative barely squeaked by and cannot be seen as a *mandate* for Charter Schools; this situation will doubtless develop over time.

For a complete list of election results, visit www.OurVoiceWashingtonEA.org.

Tiny tips to enjoy the holidays

by Nancy M. Miller

The holiday season is always a stressful one, as we have known all of our lives. Now, as oldsters or as family members who are providing for an even more senior generation, sometimes what we need to enjoy the season has changed.

Here are some hints to ease your holiday stress:

1. Don't hesitate to tell your family what you need, plan, or are experiencing.
2. Bring or have photo albums

available: folks who may not remember yesterday very well can tell fascinating tales about years and people long gone.

3. Involve everyone in the preparation: people of all ages and skills can chop, stir, or set the table.
4. While you child-proof the house also think of the oldsters: make sure that surfaces are smooth, wires are removed, and throw rugs are firmly fastened or removed.

5. Be aware of possible interaction between medicines and alcohol: age makes some folks even more sensitive.
6. Don't be locked in the house. Even if it's cold outside, there is nothing like a little sunshine or exercise to chase away the holiday blues.



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Editor: Nancy Miller
njmcmliller@hotmail.com

Editorial Board: Lee Ann Prielipp, Kit Raney, Jean Savidge, Sandy Kokko and Stacia Bilsland

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

Twitter

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ing your followers into lists. Name the list with the relevant characteristic to you (stamp collectors; grandchildren). You can read messages from that list by clicking on the list name on your Twitter page. If you want more activity, you can use the search function to locate people or topics that you can follow.

You can "retweet." There's a place on the message to click "retweet," which sends the message on to everyone who receives your tweets. If the message is interesting, they will also retweet it. This is how messages "go viral" ("viral" is related to the term "virus" — it means the message has spread fast and far).

Finally, you have a Twitter profile. Fill this in with infor-

mation that you want Twitter followers to know. You are not obligated to reveal every wart and wish, any more than you would to a stranger at a cocktail party. But when you make a comment, someone may click on your handle (username) to find out who you are; this profile is what they see. Tell them what you are interested in so you know if you want to have a conversation.

There's lots you can do to personalize your Twitter page, or subscribe to Tweetdeck or Tweepy or Tweepi in order to add to your "Twitter experience." You can subscribe to *bit.ly* in order to shorten those URLs you are linking to in your tweets ... but if you are at that level of expertise, YOU write the next article. C U online.



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