



## WEA-Retired Delegate Assembly

WEA-Retired held its annual Delegate Assembly in Federal Way on June 4-6, 2013. Forty-four delegates and three guests from across the state attended. Board directors were elected from North Central, Sammamish, Summit, Soundview, WEA-Eastern Washington, WEA-Lower Columbia, WEA MidState and WEA-Southeast. Seattle, WEA Chinook, and WEA Fourth Corner chapters elected board directors prior to the annual meeting. At this time, only Tacoma is without a board director.

Sharon White (WEA Chinook) was re-elected secretary. The 2013-14 at-large members to the Executive Committee are Sandy Kokko (Vancouver), Neva Luke (Sammamish), and Karle Warren (WEA-Southeast). Delegates passed one housekeeping change to the constitution and two changes to the bylaws. Elected officers and board directors will now be able to serve three two-year terms instead of two two-year terms. Delegates also voted to continue the current policy on electing delegates to the WEA

Representative Assembly.

WEA-Retired President Kit Raney reported on the work of the WEA Sustainability Task Force. The task force charge was to determine how to forge a common purpose, create a stronger relationship between state level leaders/managers and local level leaders/staff, and realign resources (money and leader/staff time). Based on the current political climate and financial outlook, changes are seen as imperative if WEA is to continue to be a strong advocate for public education.

Several guests spoke to the delegates.

- Kim Mead addressed the delegates in her role as the newly elected president of WEA.
- John Okamoto, WEA executive director, talked about his time with WEA and his plans for his retirement later this year.
- Mike Ragan, WEA vice president, spoke again of his respect for WEA-Retired and shared a bit of his plans for the future. Kit presented Mike with a card and a red WEA-Retired vest.

• Mary Lindquist, WEA president, spoke to the delegates after making a presentation in Olympia. (The second special session of the state Legislature convened just prior to the start of the annual meeting.) Mary also spoke of her future plans and received a card and a red WEA-Retired vest.

• Randy Parr, WEA lobbyist, shared thoughts on what had and had not been accomplished in the legislative session. Randy, who is also retiring this year, was presented with a card and golfing gift certificate for his many years of service to

WEA, especially regarding retirement issues.

- Justin Fox-Bailey, president of Snohomish EA, gave an informative overview of the new teacher evaluation, indicating that best practices and commonality across the state were strong points in the evaluation process.
- Aimee Iverson, WEA general counsel, brought the delegates up to date on both the gainsharing and Plan 1 uniform COLA lawsuits.

**Highlights of national meetings on pages 4-5**

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# President's Message

Looking through some greeting cards, I came across a card that stopped me in my tracks. On the front: *Our grandparents had pensions. Our parents have 401ks.*

Inside: *I'm banking on a leading role in a "leaked" celebrity sex tape.*

I am not trying to shock or offend any of you and I apologize if I have. I felt that this card is a graphic illustration of the hopelessness that the younger generation feels



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

about financial security when they retire. And that is very sad.

I am lucky to be a member of TRS Plan 1, a pure defined-benefit plan, and could retire after 30 years no matter what my age. I ended

up working 34 years but, after completing year 30, reminded people that I now had "options" ...meaning that I could retire if I wanted to!

I remember when Plan 1 closed in 1977 and new hires became members of TRS Plan 2, which provides full pension benefits only if one retired at or after age 65. I naively thought that Plan 2 would be "fixed" well before Plan 2 members reached retirement age. How wrong I was.

Then there is Plan 3, the hybrid — part defined benefit and part defined contribution. The State "bribed" (my word) members to change from Plan 2 to Plan 3.

None of these changes were done with our cooperation; we opposed them, as well as the elimination of gainsharing and the Uniform COLA. We have taken the state to court to protect our pensions.

The erosion of benefits and the decline of defined-benefit pension plans is not limited to our state. Pension plans have been under attack all over the country. And, Republicans have pressed for years to convert Social Security, a classic defined-benefit pension, into a defined-contribution plan.

Part of the promise of a public service job, i.e., a job in public education, is that you will be able to retire at a reasonable age with an adequate pension. That promise is under attack. Not an all-out attack on our pensions, it is a "chipping away" of benefits such as the attempt during this past legislative session to reduce the PEBB Medicare Subsidy by \$50. The passing of that reduction would have resulted in an additional \$50 out of pocket for insurance for those who can least afford it.

According to a March 19, 2013 report from the Employee Benefit Research Institute, only about half of workers nearing retirement have confidence that they have enough money for an adequate retirement. In 2012, WEA had 11,665 members age 60-69 and 540 members age 70+. How many of those members are continuing to work because they are worried about having enough money for an adequate retirement? How many of those members would like to retire if they could without a major reduction in their pension?

Fighting off cuts to our benefits and fighting for any improvement will be hard because of the cost to the state, and because the Legislature as a whole is allergic to raising any additional revenue. But we must continue fighting. Those who retired before us deserve the benefits that they were promised. Those just starting in our profession deserve a financially secure retirement.

Pay attention. Make phone calls, send emails or write letters to your members in Congress when there are attacks on Social Security and Medicare. Make phone calls, send emails or write letters to your legislators when there are attacks on our pensions and benefits. Tell your story and make sure that it is heard.

## NEA-Retired Delegate Nomination Form for the 2014 and 2015 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA RA

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA Representative Assembly will be held in Denver, Colorado in 2014 and Miami Beach, Florida in 2015.

- ◆ Nominees must be FULLY RETIRED from a teaching/classified position.
- ◆ Nomination forms must be postmarked by **October 15, 2013**.
- ◆ 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 2013 edition of *WE...too*.

**I nominate the following RETIRED member to be a delegate  
to the 2014 and 2015 NEA-Retired Annual Meetings/NEA Representative Assemblies.**

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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 new policy June 8, 2011, regarding the funding of delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meetings/NEA Representative Assemblies. In accord with that policy, WEA-Retired leadership has determined that WEA-Retired can afford to fully fund five (5) delegates to the NEA-Retired Annual Meetings/NEA Representative Assemblies. If there are more than five (5) delegates, then delegates will have some out-of-pocket expenses.

#### 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 WEA Representative Assembly Nomination Forms to:

Jan Curtis  
718 Russell Road  
Snohomish, WA 98290-5617

**DEADLINE:** Forms must be postmarked no later than **October 15, 2013**.

# National Activities

## NEA Annual Meetings

by Maureen Ramos, WEA-Retired Board of Directors, Spokane Education Association

Delegates to the NEA-Retired and NEA Annual Meetings held in Atlanta, Georgia, included Kit Raney (WEA-Retired President), Sharon White, Sandy Kokko, Kathy Wallentine, Karla Kragelund and Maureen Ramos. Also, LeeAnn Prielipp attended the 3-day NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. We were surprised to discover that while we were there it was hotter in Washington state than in Atlanta.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Retired Conference was keynoted by Capt. Mehran S. Massooudi, who focused his remarks on staying healthy as we age. Sharon White said, "One third of the children living in the U.S. now get their medical care through Medicaid," which she found very alarming. Kathy Wallentine noted, "I learned that one can find recommendations about worldwide disease to be used when traveling. This information can be found at the U.S. Public Health Services. A traveler may have to pay for the recommended prevention." If you are wondering about upcoming health care changes, an informative website about the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care) and how it will impact us is [www.healthcare.gov/how-does-the-affordable-care-act-affect-me/](http://www.healthcare.gov/how-does-the-affordable-care-act-affect-me/).

Each year, some NEA-Retired delegates partner with NEA Student group delegates and go to a low income school in the host city which needs a "pick-me-up"! The "Outreach to Teach!" group painted, stenciled, did grounds cleanup and planting for the entire morning. Sharon and Kathy both participated.

Maureen was chosen to be a part of a "conversation" group of about 15 people who were tasked with evaluating *Our Active Life* along with giving additional comments about *NEA Today* (NEA-Retired and NEA Active publications, respectively). It was a lively, facilitated conversation.

Kit, Karla and Lee Ann attended offered training sessions on "The Media Spokesperson" and "Organizing Priorities".

One major issue of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress is the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act). Maureen noted that over two-thirds of Congress members have never taken a vote on this issue, and while it currently does get rid of AYP, it still doesn't ensure equity, and continues to micromanage public education. As a result, NEA remains in opposition at this time.



Maureen Ramos

"Who's our Goalie?" The question refers to who in power can stop the anti-public education/union bashing oozing from the Koch brothers type of legislation which is out there. We were urged to participate in the electing of "goalies" and we can thank Gov. Inslee for being ours. *Noteworthy – 18% of active members participated in the 2012 election, while 28% of retired members participated!*

NEA Secretary-Treasurer Becky Pringle brought her passionate "Organize, Organize, Organize" to the meeting and gave a heads up regarding the NEA budget. The loss of membership as the result of governors' actions in states like Wisconsin dramatically impacted NEA. *The fastest growing group in the NEA family is NEA-Retired!*



## NEA-Retired annual meeting

by Maureen Ramos, WEA-Retired Board of Directors, Spokane Education Association

During the 93rd NEA Representative Assembly and Annual Meeting, 10,305 delegates RAISED THEIR HANDS to be ORGANIZED, ENERGIZED AND UNITED for public education!

One idea resonated above the rest: when it comes to leading a movement for student success that is real and sustainable, no one is more equipped than educators. President Van Roekel said, “But if we don’t empower educators to take control of how to define quality, then who will? Congress? Governors? State politicians? Michelle Rhee? Maybe the Koch Brothers?”

The “Raise Your Hand for Public Education” campaign is designed to help educators across the nation become leaders in a national movement for public education ... and it began at the RA! There will be a renewed focus on providing educators with new programs, professional training and support, and collaboration with other educators.

A host of dynamic and respected educators — from the classroom and from the research community — engaged a standing-room-only crowd in professional rejuvenation and educator empowerment. Seattle Education Association President Jonathan Knapp presented SEA’s member organizing efforts and the “Scrap the MAP” resistance which began at Seattle’s Garfield High School and spread nationwide. Linda Darling-Hammond, formerly of UW, presented her research on quality schools in conjunction with Knapp. Education and educators in Washington state were well represented. Other highlights included:

- 2013 Teacher of the Year Jeff Charbonneau of Zillah High School, Yakima Valley, spoke to the RA. Everyone was inspired and energized by this incredible teacher!
- Friend of Education Award Winner Senator Patty Murray thanked educators for their work and dedication.
- America’s Greatest Education Governor Award was presented to the Honorable Governor Jerry Brown who reminded the Assembly of his signing of the collective bargaining law in California during his first terms as governor.
- There were 93 new business Items. The delegates voted to approve a bylaw amendment to

increase dues by a special assessment of three dollars a year which will be allocated to a Special Fund to assist NEA affiliates advance great public schools for all students.

- NEA Policy Statements on digital learning, charter schools and Kindergarten and Pre-K were modified. The modifications can be found on the websites listed below. These websites will take you to links of videos, complete transcripts of actions and speeches, and election results. At next year’s RA, elections will be held for the officers of NEA. The nomination form for WEA’s election of delegates to the 2014 and 2015 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA RA is in this newsletter (see page 3).

Contact websites: [www.nea.org/grants/1357.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/1357.htm), [www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUoWqTQOdb0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUoWqTQOdb0), [www.nea.org/grants/56060.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/56060.htm).

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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

## Lobbying protects health coverage

by Lee Ann Prielipp, WEA-Retired Legislative Chair

With the state budget finally in place, retirees will continue to receive the \$150 subsidy if enrolled in a PEBB Medicare program. This amount underwent numerous threats of being lessened or totally removed through a means testing (if your retirement benefit exceeded a certain formula you would lose the \$150 contribution). Thank goodness many, many of you contacted your legislators and told them how essential the subsidy is for retirees who remain on a fixed income!

The Public Employees Benefits Board will be voting on the recommended premiums on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The average premium increase is 1.8%. Assuming the recommendations are accepted, these will be the estimated 2014 Medicare retiree premiums for enrollees after the \$150 contribution: UMP \$223.87; Group Health \$137.42; Kaiser \$152.99; Premera Medicare Supplement F \$106.37. The proposed non-Medicare UMP retiree premium is \$551.00.

There is also a recommendation to eliminate the prescription drug ancillary charge on Tier 3 drugs for the UMP Medicare program. No proposed benefit changes are recommended for Group Health or Kaiser Medicare programs.

Further information will be available on the HCA website: [www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov).



Lee Ann Prielipp, WEA-Retired  
Legislative Chair

## Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby to meet in Tacoma

by Eleanor Gilmore, member, WEA-Retired

WEA-Retired has been a member of the Washington State Senior Citizen's Lobby for about 20 years and Eleanor Gilmore is the representative on the board. There are 27 member organizations supporting senior issues with educating and lobbying.

The 2013 Annual Meeting will be held on Oct. 18, 2013 from 8:30 to 4:30 at Hotel Moreno in Tacoma, WA.

This year the conference will include Roll-out of Washington State Health Care Reform in 2014 – Changes in Medicare and Medicaid, Budget and Revenue Impact on Seniors, Consumer Fraud, and Elder Abuse.

Governor Jay Inslee has been invited and Attorney General Bob Ferguson will lead the discussion on Consumer Protection Issues. The agenda will also include several well known speakers and moderated forums and will be covered by TVW.

A block of rooms is reserved at the Hotel Murano for Thursday evening, and more information can be found at [www.waseniorlobby.org](http://www.waseniorlobby.org). Cost for attendance is \$50 and you can register online.

## Litigation Update from DRS

The Washington State Supreme Court has agreed to accept direct review of litigation over discontinuation of annual benefit increases for retirees from two of the state's older pension plans — and will hear that case in conjunction with arguments over a separate lawsuit related to gain sharing and early retirement provisions in other pension plans. The arguments will be heard on October 24.

Under an order signed June 4 by Chief Justice Barbara Madsen, the court will hear arguments on the gain sharing and annual increase cases together. On July 8, the court confirmed that oral arguments in both cases will be heard Oct. 24, 2013.

The order also set forth an accelerated schedule for the parties in the annual increase case to submit written briefs to the court.

In May, the court agreed to accept direct review of lower court rulings on a 2007 law which repealed gain sharing provisions for members of certain state retirement plans and replaced them with other pension-related benefits, including options for early retirement. In approving the replacement benefits, the Legislature made them contingent on the successful repeal of gain sharing.

A King County Superior Court ruling found that the repeal of gain sharing was invalid, but it also held that the state can terminate the replacement benefits if gain sharing is ultimately reinstated.

Under the law, the replacement benefits continue to be available until there is legal certainty regarding all issues of the case. Legal certainty is not reached until all parties have used up their opportunities for appeal.

The other case that will go before the Supreme Court concerns a 2011 law which discontinued an annual increase provided to certain retirees and beneficiaries in the Public Employees' Retirement System Plan 1 (PERS 1) and the Teachers' Retirement System Plan 1 (TRS 1). Both plans have been closed to new members since 1977.

A ruling in Thurston County Superior Court found that the Legislature improperly repealed the increases. When the annual increases were approved in 1995, the Legislature specified that they were not a contractual right and that the state reserved the right to amend or repeal them. The trial court ruled, however, that the repeal was a violation of the state constitution.

Following the ruling, the state petitioned the Supreme Court to take direct review of the annual increases case.

The court has agreed to hear the gain sharing and annual increase lawsuits as companion cases. It is not known how long it will take for a ruling to be issued after oral arguments are heard.

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***NEA-Retired Delegate  
Nomination Form  
for the 2014 and 2015  
NEA-Retired Annual  
Meeting and NEA RA  
on pg. 3***

**The only retired organization affiliated with WEA and NEA**



*Washington State Retired delegates to NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA RA were, left to right: Kathy Wallentine, Maureen Ramos, Kit Raney, Karla Kragelund, Lee Ann Prielipp, Sandy Kokko and Sharon White.*