



WEA-Retired offers scholarships for WEA Actives

by Bev Wentz, Chair
WEA-Retired Scholarship Committee

WEA- Retired is offering up to five \$1,000 non-renewable scholarships to aid WEA members in enhancing skills in a specific education area and/or attaining a teaching certificate.

If you know an active teacher deserving of financial assistance, please let him/her know about this opportunity.

If you have applied before but have not received a scholarship, you are eligible to apply again. This scholarship cannot be used to pay for classes already taken or for bills incurred because you are taking classes.

Please request a scholarship application from the WEA-Retired Scholarship committee at the address listed below and indicate at that time whether you are 1) certificated,

2) classified, or 3) a student WEA (SWEA) member. You may also go online (www.washingtonea.org/retired) and follow the link to scholarships to obtain the application

you need and further information that will be required, such as the cover form that must accompany your scholarship letter.

The completed cover form and application letter must be received by April 16, 2014.

The recipients of the scholarships will be notified by May 14, 2014, by the scholarship chair.

WEA-Retired Scholarship Committee
51 SE Bayview Lane
Shelton, WA 98584

or write to: mbwentz@earthlink.net



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President's Message

Retirement? Impossible?

I attended my 45th High School Reunion in September and had a wonderful time visiting and catching up with friends and classmates. Considering our ages, it was no surprise that a lot of conversations started with a question about working and/or retirement. Mostly the



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

questions seemed to be a variation of "Are you retired yet?" ...

When this question was posed in a conversation with one of my classmates and I said that I was retired, he responded with a shake

of his head and proceeded to tell me a sad story which started with "I should have been able to retire eight years ago."

It seems that when he started his union job (he is not an educator), he was in a defined benefit pension plan and would be able to retire with a defined benefit after 30 years. A few years into his career a push was made to change the pension plan to a defined contribution plan.

Slick presentations were made that showed how much *more* they would all make by investing the defined contribution. The members of his union voted to change to the defined contribution plan.

His exact words to me, "We were

stupid. We all thought we'd become millionaires." With the defined benefit plan he would have retired 8 years ago. He still has two more years to work before he will retire at age 65. He is not going to be a millionaire.

I am sharing this story because, in addition to protecting what we have, we have to protect the retirement security of those who come behind us. This from Money Magazine:

The percentage of workers in the private sector whose only retirement account is a defined benefit pension plan is now 10%, down from 60% in the early 1980s. About 30% of companies offer a combination of both types.

Meanwhile, the few employers that still offer traditional pensions — typically industries with a strong union presence, such as the airline and auto sectors — are working overtime to cut deals to either reduce or eliminate their plans.

On October 24, the State Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the Uniform COLA and Gainsharing lawsuits. This means that when the Court releases

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Contact Information for 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

Member of the Year Awards

by Ken Mortland, WEA-Retired Vice President (WEA-Cascade)

Every successful organization is run by individuals who do much more work than most. WEA-Retired is no different. Virtually all those who work for us are volunteers. No one gets paid. And yet, even among these hard working volunteers, there are members who perform far more than others. WEA-Retired seeks to recognize that dedicated effort with its “Member of the Year” awards.

Recently, we have formalized the process for nominating members for these awards. There are three awards at this time: “**Pre-Retired Member of the Year**”, “**Retired Member of the Year**”, and “**Media Award**”. The descriptions of what a member must do in order to be nominated are at the top of each form. Forms are available on the WEA-Retired page of the WEA website at:

www.washingtonea.org/content/docs/retired/nominatnform.pdf

You are encouraged to look at these award forms and read the descriptions. Members who might deserve this award may do things like recruit pre-retired members, volunteer to support chapter organization or scheduled meetings, raise money for scholarships, or is the proverbial helping hand and cheerful voice.

If you believe that a member is eligible for nomination, use the form to send in the information. A committee of six WEA-Retired Board members will review nominations and determine if an award is appropriate. If no nominations come in, or if none of the nominations meet the required standards, the committee is empowered to select a recipient on its own.

Nomination forms received either electronically or by postal service by April 1, 2014 will be considered for the 2014 awards.



Candidate Statements

Candidate Statements for election of delegates to the 2014 and 2015 NEA-Retired Annual Meeting/NEA Representative Assembly

Ballots will be mailed to every member shortly after this newsletter is mailed. Watch for your ballots the following week. Keep this page to reference while voting.

Evelyn Horne (WEA-Riverside)

I am retired from the Evergreen District and I am currently serving as the WEA-Retired Board Director from WEA-Riverside. I am also a member of the Organizing Committee to increase member involvement. I would be honored to represent WEA-Retired at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly.

Sandy Kokko (Vancouver)

It is my belief that retirees are the history and continuity of NEA and that it is important for WEA-Retired to be represented at the national meetings. I currently serve as: board director, pre-retired seminar presenter, and WEA-Retired's event coordinator. I would like to represent you for two more years.

Karla Kragelund (WEA-Riverside)

Since I retired, I have been active as a past WEA-Retired Board Director and a lead trainer for the Pre-Retired Seminars. This experience has allowed me to stay connected with active member issues as well as issues important to retired members.

I would appreciate your vote. Thank you.

Linda Lease (WEA Fourth Corner)

I am experienced at the local, regional, state and national levels. I firmly believe that there is room for improvement in our retirement plight. Please elect me to be your voice at national assembly. You can count on me to be an active participant in my representation of you.

Ken Mortland (WEA-Cascade)

37 year classroom veteran
43 year WEA veteran
7 years as WEA RA Rules Chair
5 years as WEA-Cascade Rep/WEA-Retired
4 years on WEA-Retired Exec Comm
2 years as WEA-Retired VP
6 years NEA Republican Leaders Conference
30 years as liaison between WEA & Mainstream Republicans
10 years as blogger

Ann O'Connell (Soundview)

I am the WEA-Retired Board Director for Soundview, am actively involved

Candidate Statements

in supporting the National Board Certified Teachers Program and very active politically. I would appreciate your vote.

W – Willing
E – Eager
A – Activist

R – Recruiter
E – Energetic
T – Totally jazzed
I – Interested
R – Responsible
E – Earnest
D – Dedicated

Joe Ramos (Spokane)

Local, State and National Experience: Spokane Education Association: Executive Board, ESP Chair, various Committees; WEA: Board of Directors, ACT Chair, Benefits/NEA Planning/ WEA Planning Committees, member of newly created Organizing team. I would appreciate your vote to represent you at the NEA-RA. Thank you.

Maureen Ramos (Spokane)

Local, State and National Experience: Spokane Education Association: President, Executive Board, WEA-PAC Board; WEA Board of Directors, various Committees; NEA Board of Directors; WEA-Retired: Board member, WEA-PAC-Retired member, Organizing team. I will actively represent Washington's retired

members and would appreciate your vote.

Kit Raney (Pilchuck)

I am currently President of WEA-Retired, have been active at all levels of WEA and WEA-Retired and have been a delegate to NEA Representative Assembly for many years. My experience will help me effectively represent you at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly. I would appreciate your vote.

Karle Warren (WEA-Southeast)

Karle is an active retired member at the local, state and national levels. Being a representative assembly delegate is important in sharing the voices of WEA-Retired, enhancing knowledge, and repaying the membership with time and effort. Karle wants to continue to be an active retired member to make a difference.

Sharon White (WEA Chinook)

My name is Sharon White and I am asking for your vote to represent you at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. I am currently your WEA-Retired secretary, vice chair on the Legislative Work team and have been active in WEA-Retired since I retired in 2006. Please elect me. Thanks!

Member Activities

Surviving the holiday meal

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

As Sgt. Joe Friday used to say, "The names have been changed to protect the innocent."

I read a FaceBook posting from an acquaintance recently, featuring crotchety old Maxine, and it said, "Let's have a family gathering for the remaining family members who still speak to each other."

With the holidays rapidly approaching, that drew my thoughts to Thanksgiving and Hanukkah and Christmas and New Year's — all times when friends and families gather in traditional ways, or times when families are sad that they aren't together.

So how to handle that upcoming holiday meal?

There's Uncle Ferd who bosses everybody around and who waxes eloquent about better meals, prettier houses, and "humble brags" about invitations he has declined in order to be with you. Pretty soon the room that he is in is empty, but then he's on the prowl.

Or there's Aunt Bess, who is a dear and a darling and too infirm to cook, but wants to supervise the kitchen.

Then there's brother Sidney, newlywed to Sammi,

who used to be married to Cousin Frank ... before she ran away from him, or was stolen, depending on whose version of the drama you are listening to. Or perhaps you have Joe and Thelma, who won't be in the same room with their son Gerrod since he came out of the closet. Or Cousin Flo, who is so tone-deaf to the harm in what



she is saying that it seems a wonder that she survives in the civilized world.

Every advice-giver in the world will say, "Be calm", "Stay centered on your own issues", "Be prepared to take a break" or "Don't take it personally". Make a plan about what you are going to say; decide what you are going to do "if". What they don't explain is how to take their advice. Because these folks are family, their issues *are* our issues; we'd love to love them; they know us per-

sonally, and where our buttons are; the trouble-makers are darn likely to do "if", just like they always do.

I heard a younger member of the family on the telephone recently, arranging a Friends-giving for a bunch of friends who live in the city and won't be able to make it home for the holiday due to work schedules. What a

perfect solution! Start your own tradition. But short of banning certain members of the family from attending meals, it isn't a solution that works for those of us settled in our place and retired. (They can find us.)

So I stumbled over a Polish proverb that doesn't require that I center myself or maintain a preternatural calm. I just repeat to myself, "Not my circus, not my monkeys". Somehow that just hit the spot of my understanding.

Joe and Thelma ignoring Gerrod? Not my circus. Sidney-Frank-Sammi triangle in the living room? Not my monkeys.

Pass the turkey, please. Yes, you may help clear the table. Nice to see you, Auntie Bess; sit right here and let's chat.

Not my circus, not my monkeys. Happy holidays, one and all.

President's Message, cont.

its decision in January (probably), this particular fight against these attacks on our pensions will end. Just to remind you, Gainsharing was eliminated in 2007 and the Uniform COLA in 2011. Both were heard separately at the Superior Court level and were appealed to the State Supreme Court.

The *Seattle Times* weighed in with an editorial encouraging the Supreme Court to rule against the pension lawsuits because the state needs to use the money to fund the McCleary (Paramount Duty) ruling to fully fund public education. Read it here: <http://tiny.cc/892a6w>

I wrote the following Letter to the Editor which was *not* published by the *Times*:

As ESPN's Lee Corso would say, Not so fast, Seattle Times!"

You are telling the Supreme Court to ignore the Bakenhus Decision that pension benefits are a contractually based right and that it's an unconstitutional impairment of contract to take benefits away unless they are replaced by a comparable benefit. And you are telling them to do this because the Supreme Court

ruled that the State was not meeting its paramount duty to fully fund public education and needs to find money.

This is robbing Peter to pay Paul in the worst sense. You are recommending that the Supreme Court take constitutionally guaranteed money away from retired educators in order to meet the constitutional mandate to fully fund schools.

It's faulty logic. It is not fair. Why should one constitutional right be more constitutional than the other?

We can be pretty sure that in every future Legislative session at least one bill will be introduced that will attempt to weaken the current pension systems and/or put future employees in a less attractive pension. We must continue to protect what we have even if that means taking the State to court as we have had to do when they passed legislation taking away gainsharing and the Uniform COLA. We also need to protect the financial security of future educational employees and make sure that they will be able to retire at a reasonable age with a reasonable pension. As evidenced by the *Times* editorial, we will be fighting a strategy aimed at pitting one set of financial needs against another.

As I get ready to send this off to our newsletter editor, the Legislature has found the will to pass tax breaks worth billions of dollars for Boeing while Boeing makes record profits. This happens while Boeing presents a contract offer to its workers that would gut (my word) their pension system.

Stay tuned...

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Candidate Statements
for election of delegates
to the 2014 and 2015
NEA-Retired Annual
Meeting/NEA
Representative Assembly
on pages 4 and 5

The only retired organization affiliated with WEA and NEA



At the recent Senior Lobby conference, the WEA retirees attending were, left to right, Mary Jo Reintsma, Sharon White, Eleanor Gilmore and Lee Ann Prielipp. Not pictured is Karen Robbins.