



## **WEA and WEA-Retired lobby for you**

by **WEA-Retired President, Kit Raney**

Contrary to an article in the August/September issue of WSSRA’s magazine “The Journal” that stated WSSRA is “the only organization that lobbies Olympia on retirees’ behalf”, WEA and WEA-Retired lobby for you. WEA-Retired is an affiliate of WEA and WEA has four fulltime lobbyists in Olympia tracking and following and lobbying education issues including pension and retiree issues. WEA-Retired also has a robust legislative work team that also actively tracks, follows and lobbies pension and retiree issues.

WSSRA and WEA-Retired have worked together on numerous legislative issues and both are members of PEPR, Public Employees for Pension Responsibility. Reading the inaccurate and misleading quote in “The Journal”, along with information that this is what is said when recruiting new WSSRA members, is very disappointing.

The message to our members and potential members is that we are the only retired organization affiliated with WEA and that we do indeed lobby on retirees’ behalf. This statement is accurate and not misleading.

## **They’re all the same ... aren’t they?**

by **Bruce Williamson**

As teachers we need to think carefully about what we see in the news. Lately there have been numerous news stories about police and teachers both being painted alike with the same brush.

Teachers are lazy, only care about their pay, want tenure so they can can't get fired, etc., etc. We know how much we hate these news stories. Now, think about the hardworking, dedicated, police officer.

We have been flooded lately with news stories about police killings and brutality. These news stories overwhelm the rare story of the good teacher, or good police officer. The bad police officer and the bad teacher are always in the headlines of the news, but make up a very small minority of the whole profession.

Why? Let’s face it, people are attracted to the sensational, not the everyday. So, the news media feeds the people what they want, not often what is the full truth, to sell papers and get ratings. It warps people’s perceptions of reality and creates stereotypes.

We need to read stories about other professions with the same measured reason and skepticism that we wish were applied to stories about us.

President’s Message ..... 2

Gainsharing and Uniform COLA ... 7

Looking toward November and I-1351 ..... 5

Pre-retirement seminars .....3

2015 WEA-RA delegate form ..... 6

# President's Message

## Growing our own

In case you missed it, on Aug. 14, the State Supreme Court finally released its ruling on the Gain Sharing and Uniform COLA lawsuits. The simple summary of the rulings is that we lost. For more detailed information, see the article about the Supreme Court's decision in this newsletter.

These two issues were in the courts because of actions taken by the Legislature. The Legislature voted to eliminate gainsharing and the uniform COLA. I decided to write about this in my column because there is an election in November. Voting is important and who we vote for, and elect, is very important.

According to Plato, "One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors."

We have elected officials making decisions on public education issues and issues concerning retired educators and their only experience is that they attended school and that some of their former educators are retired. In plain English, most have no real experience with our issues.

A solution to this vacuum of knowledge is that we need to **grow our own legislators**. We need people in the caucuses and in the Senate and the House who have walked in our shoes ... people who understand the impact of the decisions that they are debating and who can articulate that to the other legislators. This is way more than the one vote that these educator-legislators have; it is about the influence that they can have on the other legislators by telling about their personal experiences in our schools.

We are fortunate to already have incumbent legislators who are either current or retired educators. These include Steve Bergquist in the 11th Legislative District (LD), a social studies

teacher at Lindberg High School in Renton; Lillian Ortiz-Self in the 21st LD, a counselor at North Middle School in Everett; Monica Stonier in the 17th LD a former middle school teacher and now an instructional coach in Pacific Middle School in Vancouver; and Mike Sells in the 38th LD, a retired teacher from Everett. All four of these legislators have been recommended by WEA-PAC\*. We need to keep these pro-education educators working for public education and for us.

Four educators in the Legislature is good but we need more and this election season we have had three more educators throw their hats into the ring, wear out shoes doorbelling and earn the WEA-PAC recommendation. **Growing our own**, you know!

One of these is Judy Arbogast in the 26th LD. Judy recently retired after teaching for over 30 years in Kitsap County and is a WEA-Retired member.

Mike Wilson in the 44th LD is a Government and US History teacher at Cascade High School in Everett with over 35 years of teaching experience in Snohomish County.

Charles Jensen in the 39th LD teaches at-risk youth at an alternative school in the Sedro Woolley School District.

Returning the incumbent pro-education educators to Olympia and adding these three pro-education educators would do much to get the real story about education and our schools into the places where decisions are made, in the caucuses and on the floor of the Senate and House.



**WEA-Retired President, Kit Raney**

*continued on page 3*

*continued ... President's Message*

Every education decision these days is a political decision. To quote Charles de Gaulle, "I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians." Let's make sure we elect pro-education educators to make sure our voices are heard. Have you ever thought about running for office? Do you know of an educator or former educator who would make a good elected official? Let's all help to **grow our own** ...

\*WEA-PAC, WEA's Political Action Committee, recommends state and local candidates based on face-to-face interviews and the candidate's responses to the WEA-PAC candidate questionnaire. Recommended candidates are pro-education candidates. Find more recommended candidates and information at [www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org/wea-pac/](http://www.ourvoicewashingtonea.org/wea-pac/).



***WEA-Retired member Evelyn Horne and 17th Legislative District Representative, Monica Stonier. Horne has been helping on Monica's re-election campaign.***

## **WEA-Retired pre-retirement seminars**

*Take charge of your future*

***by Sandy Kokko and Kit Raney***

Some of you may be very familiar with this program because you attended a seminar so you would be better prepared for retirement. "Taking Charge of Your Future" is a 10-hour seminar, usually presented over two days, put on by WEA-Retired members and sponsored by uniserv councils or local associations. Last year the seminar cadre put on more than 35 seminars and already have 36 seminars scheduled this year with more to be added. Between 1,200 and 1,500 WEA members and spouses attend the seminars each year.

The pre-retirement seminar program was developed by WEA-Retired in 1992 under the guidance of Jean Savidge and, cadre members pride themselves in being able to present accurate information. To make sure they are up to date on new developments, cadre members attend a two-day training every September. The training this year was held at WEA Headquarters Sept. 10-11. WEA General Counsel Aimee Iverson shared information and answered questions on the recent state supreme court decisions regarding gainsharing and the Plan 1 Uniform COLA. There were presentations by staff from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS), Health Care Authority/PEBB, VEBA and VALIC.

The September training also allows cadre members to ask questions among themselves, share ideas of what works for them, and hear from seminar chair Linda Mortland and vice chair Karle Warren. The aim is always to make the seminars the best they can be.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the pre-retirement seminar cadre and helping WEA members prepare for retirement, send an email to [WEARetired@washingtonea.org](mailto:WEARetired@washingtonea.org) and either Linda or Karle will contact you.

## Pictures worth sharing



*Outgoing NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, NEA-Retired President Tom Curran and WEA-Retired President Kit Raney at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting this past summer.*



*Escorted to the podium by WEA President Kim Mead and WEA-Retired President Kit Raney, WEA-Retired member Jean Savidge was awarded the NEA-Retired 2014 Distinguished Member by NEA-Retired President Tom Curran, this past summer.*



*WEA-Retired members, this past summer at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting. Pictured with them is outgoing NEA President Van Roekel and NEA-Retired President Curran.*

*If your story isn't here, send it to us. Vacation, volunteering, reading, recovering?*

*We want to hear about it! Please share with [WEARetired@Washingtonnea.org](mailto:WEARetired@Washingtonnea.org)*



# Looking toward November and I-1351

by *WEA-Retired Vice President, Ken Mortland*

“Retire from your position, not your profession” is the motto of WEA-Retired and you certainly proved that during the I-1351 petition drive. You turned in twice as many petition signatures as expected! That was a great start. Now, it’s time to turn our attention to getting voters to approve the initiative in November.

Over the last two decades the Washington State Legislature has allowed our class sizes to rise, partly because of the recession and partly through lack of funding in good times. I-1351 will address that problem by telling the Legislature it must lower class sizes at all grade levels as part of the effort to address the Washington State Supreme Court’s McCleary decision.

Why lower class sizes? Whenever we want the people attending a large public meeting to have a greater chance to share their ideas, we break the larger group into smaller “breakout sessions.” It’s an accepted technique because it works. And, it’s the equivalent of lowering class size.

David Zyngier (2014) examined 112 peer-reviewed studies and the overwhelming majority of these studies found that “smaller classes have a significant impact on student achievement and narrowing the achievement gap.”

J. D. Finn, (2005) found, “for all students combined, 4 years of a small class in K–3 were associated with a significant increase in the likelihood of graduating from high school ...”. “Furthermore, the impact of attending a small class was especially noteworthy for students from low-income homes. Three years or more of small classes affected the graduation rates of low-SES students, increasing the odds of graduating by about 67% for 3 years and more than doubling the odds for 4 years.”

## *How can you help?*

- You can learn as much as possible about how lower class sizes will help students learn better.
- You can take that knowledge on the road by volunteering to speak at local events and to local groups.
- You can contact your local education association or uniserv council and volunteer to doorbell, leaflet, and work the phone banks. Email **WEARetired@Washingtonnea.org** if you need to know who to contact in your area.
- You can submit letters to the editor, starting in late September.
- You can host neighborhood meetings to talk about class size reduction.
- And you can vote YES on Initiative 1351 in November.

If we approach this opportunity to help our profession with the same determination as the petition drive, we can make a meaningful difference in the outcome.

## Vest or sweater; what’s your pleasure?

We’re placing an order for WEA-Retired clothing. We want to know if you’d order one (you’ll be responsible to pay for it) and which one you like best.

Please take the time to complete a survey, <http://tinyurl.com/wearetiredclothing>.

# WEA-Retired delegate nomination form for the 2015 WEA-RA

WEA Representative Assembly will be held in Bellevue, April 23-25, 2015.

- Nominees for WEA-Retired Delegate must be retired and not hold a contract with a public school district.
- Nomination forms must be postmarked by Nov. 10, 2014.
- Nominees must agree to attend all sessions.
- All nominations must have the consent of the nominee. Self-nomination is acceptable..
- Delegates are elected annually to serve one year.
- Biography of 50 words or less is optional and will be used only if a run-off election is necessary.

I nominate the following RETIRED member to be a delegate to the 2015 WEA Representative Assembly.

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

City/state/zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address if available \_\_\_\_\_

UniServ Council \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security or ID# \_\_\_\_\_

(Social Security number or ID number listed on your membership card are needed by WEA for verification of membership)

Retirement month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

## DELEGATE FUNDING

WEA-Retired Board of Directors approved a policy June 9, 2010, regarding the funding of delegates to the WEA Representative Assembly. In accord with that policy, WEA-Retired leadership has determined that WEA-Retired can afford to fully fund 20 delegates to the WEA Representative Assembly. If there are more than 20 nominees, 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 Nov. 10, 2014.

# Gainsharing and Uniform COLA

Most of you are already aware of the Aug. 14 State Supreme Court decision which upheld legislation eliminating gainsharing and the Uniform COLA. These decisions made the news reports on TV and radio and stories appeared in newspapers across the state. WEA also sent out an email with details about the decision and there is an article in the summer 2014 issue of the WEA magazine, **WE 2.0**.

If you would like to read the press release issued by WEA, go to <http://tinyurl.com/wearelease>. The press release also contains links to the actual court decisions.

While this decision was a very, very disappointing, we are very proud of WEA for taking the lead in this fight to protect our pensions. In the press release, WEA President Kim Mead denounced the decision to reduce educators' pensions. "It's not right for the Legislature to unilaterally cut retirement benefits it promised — and to take away what educators already earned," Mead said.

WEA and WEA-Retired are on the side of doing what is right for our members. This time the Washington State Supreme Court was not.

## Opportunity: Newsletter editor

WEA-Retired's Newsletter, WE...too, is in need of a new editor. Here's an opportunity to keep your hand in like Goldilocks: not too much and not too little: just enough!

Ever wanted to: write some articles? Exercise your creativity in layout? Keep up with current developments? Communicate with other concerned educators?

Contact Kit Raney [WEARetired@washingtonea.org](mailto:WEARetired@washingtonea.org) about the open position as WE...too editor.

## Something new

On Aug. 13, many of you received the first issue of our new online newsletter. A second e-newsletter was sent to you Sept. 29. This online newsletter will allow us to get information out to WEA-Retired members in-between issues of our printed and mailed, WE...too, newsletter. One of the bonuses of an online newsletter is the ability to include links to longer articles and videos, which can provide even more information for our members.

If you did not receive this online newsletter, we may not have a correct email address for you. You can have your email address updated by sending your name and email address to [WEARetired@washingtonea.org](mailto:WEARetired@washingtonea.org).

### Website:

[www.WashingtonEA.org/Retired](http://www.WashingtonEA.org/Retired)

### Mailing address:

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

Published by Washington Education Association-Retired six times per year. We invite your comments and contributions.

### Send to:

**Editor:** Open  
[editor.WE.To@hotmail.com](mailto:editor.WE.To@hotmail.com)

**Editorial Board:** Lee Ann Prielipp, Kit Raney, Sandy Kokko and Bruce Williamson

### Contact Information:

WEA-Retired

### E-mail:

[WEARetired@washingtonea.org](mailto:WEARetired@washingtonea.org)  
or [raneyk@aol.com](mailto:raneyk@aol.com)



WEA-Retired Newsletter  
P.O. Box 9100  
Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

© 2012

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Seattle WA  
Permit #6907

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

