

Jean Savidge Receives Award

*by Kit Raney, President,
WEA-Retired*

Jean Savidge was awarded the 2014 NEA-Retired Distinguished Service Award at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June. For all that she has done and continues to do, Jean Savidge’s work with WEA-Retired and NEA-Retired exemplifies the motto of WEA-Retired, “Retire from your position, not your

profession.” At age 83, Jean is an exemplar for every leader in the country, retired or active.

In 1952 Jean began her teaching career in Richland, Washington. Over her career she taught in Bellevue, Cheney and Hoquiam. For many years she served as president of the Hoquiam Education Association

before her retirement in 1983. Upon retirement Jean put into practice “Retire from your position, not your



Jean and Jim Savidge

profession.” She and Gail Kirk attended the first annual meeting of the newly formed NEA-Retired at their own expense. The next year she approached the WEA and NEA seeking organizing support. In 1986 Jean was one of five retired members appointed by WEA President Terry Bergeson

to work on organizing WEA-Retired. The new organization came into existence on June 13, 1987.

In 1988 Jean was elected vice president of WEA-Retired and became president in 1990, serving through 1994. When financial stability threatened the new organization, Jean approached WEA Executive Director Jim Seibert. With his help, WEA and NEA committed to continue support of the fledgling organization

for three more years. The WEA financial and in-kind support exists to this day.

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President's Message

We Need a Bully Pulpit

Public education and public educators need a bully pulpit...This was made evident to me as I was reading *The Bully Pulpit* about Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft and "the golden age of journalism". Roosevelt understood the need to form "powerfully reciprocal relationships with the members of the national press" and used those relationships to get the public behind his initiatives. This was also the time when a major national magazine, *McClure's*, invested time and money in support of lengthy investigative reporting that almost everyone in the nation ended up reading. The writing of the national press and *McClure's* influenced the public and moved Congress to act. Sources of information and news were very limited in his day and Theodore Roosevelt accomplished things as President because he had a bully pulpit.

Over 100 years later instead of a bully pulpit we have NOISE! The almost unlimited number of television channels allows people to find the channel that tells them what they want to hear. Do you believe that Global Warming is a liberal scare tactic? There is a channel that will agree with you on that. Now add in the internet...Do you believe that President Obama is not a citizen of the United States? With very little effort, you'll be able to find websites

and articles that will support your belief. Self-proclaimed experts are interviewed and quoted everywhere and anywhere. There is a plethora of information about everything and anything and it is often difficult to determine what is actually the truth and not fabricated, manipulated or half-truths. And unfortunately, if something is said or printed often enough, in today's world, it must be true.

Take the three subjects that we all care about – public education, Social Security and pension security – There is constant noise that public schools are failing and teachers are to blame, Social Security is going broke and is the cause of the deficit, and defined contribution pension plans will provide retirement security. Oh, yeah...and a standardized test score exists that will accurately identify good and/or bad teachers.

We have no bully pulpit and we have a lot of media and pundits more concerned about ratings than the truth. Just because we hear something over and over does not make it fact. If what you're hearing doesn't jive with what you know, ask questions and look for facts. We can control what we choose to believe and what we know to be true. We can look for facts and not sit quietly when we hear things that are not true. Let's be our own bully pulpit about the things we care about. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Even if you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth."



Kit Raney, WEA-Retired president

Member Activities

Train-trekking, anyone?

by *Cindy Briggs*

Would you like to travel by train in your retirement? For free?

All you need to do is offer your services to speak to passengers as a member of Amtrak's "Trails and Rails" Program which is run in conjunction with the National Park Service. You will look very snappy in your forest green shirt and khaki slacks!

By chance, I heard about the opportunity to be a volunteer on board Amtrak's trains as an interpretive guide. This is a national program, but guides in the Seattle area are lucky to be able to choose to travel either the "Coast Starlight" as far as Portland, Oregon or on the "Empire Builder" across the Rockies as far as north central Montana. Volunteers to Portland take a day trip, while those to Montana spend two and a half days, getting two nights on trains and five free meals.

Our role encourages train ridership and enhances the traveler's experience by presenting topics covering history, culture, climate, geology, geography, topography, flora, and fauna as we pass the great scenery outside the train windows. We also mention the wonders of nearby national parks, such as Mt. Rainier National Park, Olympic National Park, Glacier National Park and even the Klondike National Historical Park near Pioneer Square, to encourage more visits to our national parks. Return passengers often applaud when they see us in uniform since they know they'll have their minds engaged during the trip and the sites we pass explained.

There's an informational meeting each February, explaining the program, and then follow-up training based at the Klondike NHP, and safety training near King Street Station from Amtrak employees. New guides are always sent out with a

trainer for their first six trips since there's a lot to learn in the 60-page route guide, as well as routines to learn on the train.

Trainees learn a few announcements and build their repertoire over the season, which usually runs from late April till mid-September. Volunteers schedule eight trips over those months, fit into their personal schedules.

Meeting travelers from all over the world is one of the great perks of this volunteer job. In the

dining car, people are seated as they arrive so dinner may be with a tourist from Australia or a wheat farmer from Montana. On the longer trip, a volunteer get a "roomette" in the crew car and a few hours to explore the turn-around town. On the day trip there are a few hours before the return trip to Seattle, so Portland's sights await.

For more information, you could write to me at WEARetired@Washingtonea.org or contact the Ranger at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park at 206-

220-4240 or klse_ranger_activities@nps.gov. Be sure to mention your interested in becoming a "Trails and Rails" volunteer.

You do need a degree of physical fitness, since you will be walking on a moving train, carrying maps and a small sound system and standing for long periods. Having a clear speaking voice and being comfortable with all types of passengers is another asset that many retired teachers would already have. This is an opportunity to check out!



Cindy Briggs

Member Activities

Snowman (a book review)

by Nancy M. Miller, Editor, WEA-too

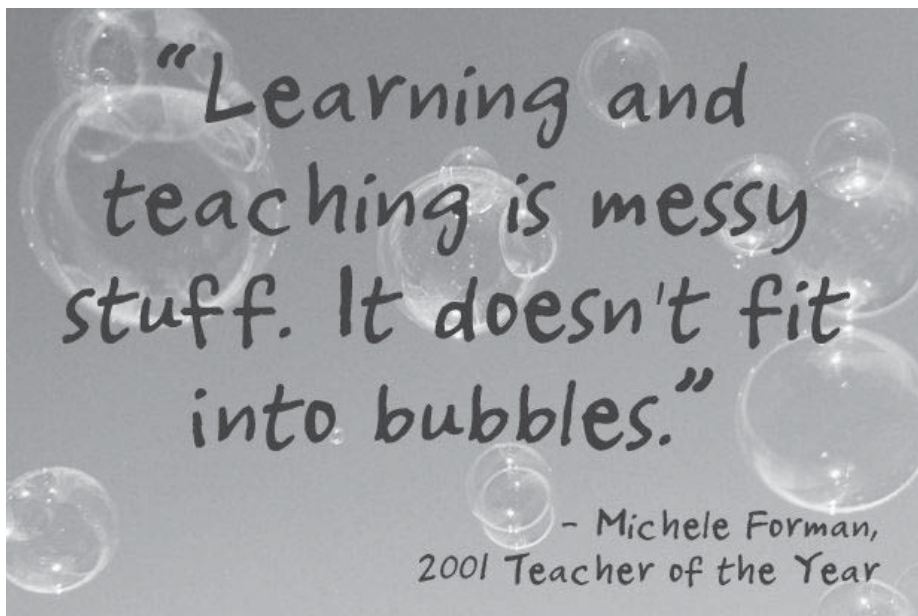
They're so important to us that we have a name for them, although we disguise its importance by calling it a nursery rhyme: Cinderella stories. *The Eighty-Dollar Champion* by Elizabeth Letts is a Cinderella story. Cinderella in this case is good-humored, four-footed, speckled gray horse named Snowman. Harry de Leyer, a WWII immigrant to the USA rescues Snowman from the slaughter-wagon to become a school horse. Snowman, agreeable and gentle-minded, is undistinguished until sold, when he refuses to leave. A half dozen five-foot fences cannot hold him: he'll be back at the school barn for breakfast.

This story, based on interviews with Harry de Leyer and his family, chronicles Snowman's competitive rise from school horse, through the shiny, hot-blooded world of show jumping, to National Horse Show champion show jumper. He was retired at the National Horse Show, covered with a cooler in his stable colors and a blanket of roses. A Breyer horse of Snowman is a collector's item, and a second Breyer horse has been made.

This is a story and a book that grandparent and grandchild can share, and both enjoy.

State Supreme Court

As this newsletter goes to press, the State Supreme Court has not released a ruling on the Gainsharing or Uniform COLA lawsuits. Please know that, as soon as the rulings are released, WEA and WEA-Retired will send the information to members.



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Award Winners

by *Bev Wentz*

At the WEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June, the recipients of the five \$1,000 scholarships were announced.

Cara Byrne was a parent volunteer, an Instructional Aide, and a Para Educator while attending school to get her teaching certification. She is currently a 2nd grade teacher at Samantha Smith Elementary in Lake Washington District. She is in the 4th quarter of her Masters in Education program and should graduate in June of 2015. She will use the scholarship to pay tuition.

Karen Patterson is a Speech/Language 34-year veteran pathologist in Kent School District who has worked in WA state for the past 12 years. She has seen an increase in the number of students who are English Language Learners. She would like to earn her ELL endorsement so she can better work with the increasing number of English Language Learners. She will attend Heritage University this summer and her scholarship will help pay the tuition.

Nancy Henley is a technology assistant at Thomas Jefferson Middle School and at Felida Elementary in Vancouver. This is her first job in the educational field. Nancy is working full time and attending PCC to earn her CIS certification. She has one more class in the fall to complete her Network Security Certification and hopes to eventually secure a job in the ITS department in Vancouver School District. She will use the scholarship for tuition.

Austin Schlichting is a MIT student at Western WA University. Austin describes his past as “a very unorthodox background in going into education”. He earned his undergrad and masters in music composition and was accepted to a doctoral program. Instead, he went to Las Vegas to get a substitute teaching license. Quote: “I have found working with students can be a very difficult process, but when things work out it makes the whole experience worthwhile.”

He decided that teaching felt natural and rewarding and decided to earn his teaching certificate. He will use the scholarship for textbooks and tuition.

Logan Birgenheier plans to be a secondary social studies teacher at a low SES school. He is the state president of SWEA and attends Western Washington University. He works with the specialized programs at Seattle Parks and Recreation with special needs students. Bellingham EA president said: “Logan has a calling to teach in an inclusive and diverse high school where student’s learning is the central focus of his work, to be a contributing member of the school and community and to grow professionally while learning about school system abroad.” Logan will use the scholarship to help towards tuition this fall as he will be student teaching in England.

The scholarship committee wishes to thank all who applied. We would like to assist them all. If an applicant was not chosen this year, we encourage him/her to apply during the next school year. Our applications go on line by November. Application deadline is April 16.



Scholarship recipients, l to r, Austin Schlichtin, Karen Patterson, and Logan Birgenheier

Transitions

In memory

Delegates to the WEA-Retired annual meeting voted to send \$250 to the WEA Children's Fund in memory of those members we have lost this year.

One of those members was Gale Spicer. Gale was one of the early organizers of WEA-Retired. She served four years as vice president with Jean Savidge, then four years as president. She was one of the first seminar presenters.

Gale worked hard to spread the word about WEA-Retired and was instrumental in membership growth, especially in the Mid-State and North Central areas. She was most adamant that WEA-Retired be a resource for active colleagues. She made sure that we were on the picket lines with them and that we provided refreshments for them.

Gale was a great friend to WEA-Retired. She will be missed by all with whom she crossed paths.

(We would appreciate being notified when a member passes away since this information does not always reach WEA-Retired leadership in a timely way.)

Worth reading

"The best thing for being sad," replied Merlin, beginning to puff and blow, "is to learn something. That's the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then — to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you. Look what a lot of things there are to learn." — T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*

I-1351



#I1351. WEA-Retired member Marj Njaa collected signatures near the Mukilteo ferry line.

Thanks to all of you who helped get signatures for Initiative 1351.

We are still making a difference for students and public education.

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

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Jean Savidge, cont.

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During her time in office, WEA-Retired:

- gained control of its own finances was granted membership on the WEA Pulse Board (political action, now WEA-PAC)
- received approval from the IRS for tax exempt status
- reorganized itself along the lines of WEA UniServ councils
- received recognition from WEA as the only “sanctioned retiree organization for its retired members.”

After serving as WEA-Retired president, Jean became a member of the NEA-Retired Board, serving as secretary and then as a member at large on the NEA Advisory Council. Jean reported regularly to the WEA-Retired board on developments at the national level. She managed the WEA-Retired newsletter committee from 1994 to 1998. Jean reported on the Washington State Legislature’s Joint Committee on Pension Policy meetings, wrote articles for *WEA Action*, visited UniServ councils to talk about WEA-Retired, and attended NEA-Retired regional meetings, WEA Representative Assemblies, NEA Representative Assemblies and NEA-Retired annual meetings. She served as guide and mentor for officers who came after her. She is still an active member of the WEA-Retired legislative work team.

Jean developed one of WEA-Retired’s biggest programs, “Taking Charge of Your Future”, a 10-hour pre-retirement seminar that helps members make the transition from active to retired status. This endeavor, perhaps more than any other, shows Jean’s commitment all our members.

Jean and Lee Gillam started presenting seminars in 1992. They demonstrated pre-retirement seminars at NEA regional meetings. In 1996, Marian Conrad, then NEA-Retired president, reported on pre-retired workshops across the United States and noted that WEA-Retired was far ahead of the rest of the country.

Jean chaired the seminar committee until 2008. The program has grown from a handful of seminars a year to almost 60, reaching over 1500 members in 2012-13. Today she is active recruiting new presenters and leading seminars from one corner of the state to the other.

Jean has worked her whole life to make certain that educators are well represented. WEA-Retired is proud of Jean and all she has done to bring honor and expertise to our profession and organization. She is an exemplar of the intent of the NEA-Retired Distinguished Service Award.



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