



John Zavodsky, a celebrity from the past!

by Gloria Smith



John and his wife Jan raised ten children! Both John and Jan had been previously married, and brought five children each into the relationship! Seven of their children were boys, and they laughed as they spoke about the “dormitory” in the full basement of their home. Jan was a stay at home mom with quite a task, and John was a high school teacher, who mostly taught Math, but also taught U.S. History, Washington State History and Global Geography, as needed.

On May 13, 1973, the Evergreen Education Association (EEA) voted to go on strike. The court ordered President Fred Ensmen to ask his members to return to work. He refused, as did Action Committee Chair Dick Johnson, and both of them were jailed. Next up was John Zavodsky, who, as the immediate past President, became the interim president. He also refused

to order the Evergreen teachers to return to work, was jailed and given a 90 day sentence! And, of course, EEA then appointed Betty Colwell, a feisty lady, to be the interim president, and the judge refused to jail her!

I asked John what it was like to spend 43 days in jail with only one ten minute visitation time allowed per week. The three wives would come together to the jail for the visit. John mentioned that he thought it was almost harder for the jailers than it was for him. A couple of them were former students and they knew these men were NOT criminals, but they were forced to uphold these conditions for their prisoners! And, keep in mind, other prisoners had more visitation than our EEA leadership! They also could not see outside and only knew what the weather was like, because they were given Kool-Aid when the weather was warm!

John and the others filled a lot of their time reading the copious amounts of mail they received from around the state. Many WEA members, as well as other people, sent them cards, jokes and letters of support that were very well received and appreciated. John again joked that it was quite a job for their “jailers” as they were tasked with reading all of the mail before it could be passed on to them.

John, Fred, and Dick were released after agreeing the teachers would start school in the fall. Their records show a “civil contempt of court” charge, not a felony charge. This leads me to think about our legislators who have been held in contempt of court, but have received NO consequences for their actions!

On May 13, 2015, John was again involved in a strike action! He was invited to speak at the WEA/Riverside Rally in Vancouver in conjunction with the one day walk-outs occurring statewide. In his speech, he stated, “The Legislature is NOT doing their job! Go after them! Don’t stop!” His advice for our current situation is to continue working with the community, the parents. We need their help. Never give up, find a way to work together to force the legislature to do the right thing! Keep up the momentum!

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From the president's desk

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

One of the privileges of writing my column for WE ... too is that I get to choose what I want to write. I can give my opinion about issues, explain and clarify things or sometimes even nag. The column is my tabula rasa.

I am going use this column to clarify a misconception about WEA-Retired and our relationship with WEA. WEA-Retired is affiliated with WEA which means we are a part of WEA. WEA-Retired has the advantages of, and the support and resources of this wonderful 83,000 member organization.

I feel a need to clarify this because another retired organization continues to misrepresent WEA and WEA-Retired by publishing things such as what Ed Gonion, WSSRA executive director, wrote in their recent magazine. Ed wrote that "WSSRA was the ONLY organization representing retired school personnel to attend and speak AGAINST the proposed PEBB cut."

Ed's statement was in reference to a Senate Ways and Means hearing on the Senate's proposed budget and the cut to our Medicare eligible subsidy. After Ed's statement came out in the *WSSRA Journal*, I got some questions about whether or not WEA-Retired testified at that hearing.

I was sure that our lobbyists were at the hearing but sent an email to confirm. I got a confirmation that WEA had two of our lobbyists at the hearing and one spoke against the Senate's proposed budget.

At a hearing, interested individuals or lobbyists can sign up to speak for or against. They get 90 seconds to speak. So the short answer from our lobbyists was "yes", they spoke at the hearing. Speaking at a hearing is only a very small piece of what WEA has been doing to fight against this cut to our PEBB Medicare eligible subsidy and I thought that WEA-Retired members should know this. Below is the expanded response I got from our WEA staff:



WEA-Retired President, Kit Raney

WEA works extensively with the greater public employee retirement community to protect the interests of public school employees. While WSSRA may want to infer that they are the only ones working on the Medicare subsidy issue – they aren't and there are many ways to communicate to the Legislature beyond the 90 seconds that are allowed for public testimony on the budget bill. While we aren't sure what else WSSRA may be doing other than stating their position for 90 seconds – WEA continues to work directly with legislators and leadership to stop this cut from happening. WEA has regular meetings with the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader in the House and the Senate Minority Leader on this issue, and it has been a regular topic of conversation when WEA meets with legislative leaders twice a week to discuss budget priorities.

We want to thank you for asking this question – as it has pointed out that we should address the perception that the WEA is not actively working on behalf of our retired members. In the future, we will either sign-in separately as WEA and WEA-Retired or offer specific separate written/oral testimony on these types of bills and issues. It is important that our retired members know that we have their backs.

As I write this column, the Legislature is in the second special session. There has been no budget agreement yet but the Senate's "new" budget no longer reduces our PEBB Medicare subsidy from \$150 to \$110. The movement by the Senate was a direct result of the coordinated work of WEA and other public employee unions and their retired members to stop the proposed cut to the Medicare subsidy. Those activities were detailed in one of our emailed "Action Alerts" but included a letter to Andy Hill and John Braun drafted and signed by these organizations, a contribution by WEA to paid web advertising, the launching of a website and tsunami of messages to legislators from our retired members.

I want to reiterate that whether our lobbyists sign in to speak as WEA or WEA-Retired, they have our backs. We have the power and strength of an 83,000 member organization behind us and working for us because we are still WEA and because every one of those 83,000 members will eventually retire.

WEA-RA highlights

by Neva Luke

In April, WEA-Retired members were very active at the WEA Representative Assembly in Bellevue. There were over 30 retired delegates who attended the WEA-Retired mock assembly and took their places on the floor of the Meydenbauer Center to engage in the inspiring democratic process we call RA. There have been several articles in WEA publications about the work done at the RA, the rally in Olympia, and the passion our members have around testing, compensation including pensions, and smaller class size. In addition to participating as delegates, our members also contributed their time and energies in other ways as well.

Several of our delegates worked along side the actives in the successful campaigns to re-elect President Kim Mead and Vice-President Stephen Miller. They contributed baskets for the drawings, volunteered at their campaign tables, and supported the candidates in a myriad of ways.

There were also many WEA-Retired members who volunteered to work at the RA. They were very visible as they supervised the microphones, the doors to the assembly, and the information desk. There were also retired members who were at the front of the assembly by the head table, passing the forms to Kim so that the important work of the RA ran smoothly and orderly. Some of these volunteers had attended RA in the past but for some this was their first time at an RA. They indicated that it was a very meaningful and enjoyable way to be involved with their association and invite others to join them doing this vital work in future RAs.

Every year, there is a dedicated group of WEA-Retired members who are at a membership table to recruit pre-retired members to our organization. They also raise money for the WEA-Retired Scholarship Fund. These members put in countless hours to grow our organization and support actives with these scholarships.

A big shout out to all our members who participated in, and supported, this year's RA and encourage our members to participate in next year's RA which will be held in Spokane.

Are you missing out?

WEA-Retired has improved our ability to communicate with members by using email. We still produce six mailed paper newsletters a year but we have added to that by emailing out a newsletter during the month when a paper newsletter is not produced. In addition, we have been emailing out "Action Alerts" to keep members informed about the Legislative session.

If you are not receiving anything emailed from WEA-Retired, we either do not have a valid email address for you or you have chosen to "unsubscribe" to emails from WEA or WEA-Retired.

If you have not been receiving emails and you would like to, please send an email indicating that to wearetired@washingtonea.org.

Save these dates ... celebrate the 50th anniversary of Medicare and the 80th anniversary of Social Security!

Thursday, July 30, Open House, 4:30–7:30 p.m.

Spokane Community College in the Lair, 1810 N Greens St., Spokane

Saturday, Aug. 8, 1–3 p.m.

Rally at Westlake Park, 4th Avenue & Pine St., Seattle

WEA-Retired annual meeting

by Sandy Kokko



WEA-Retired held its annual meeting in Federal Way on June 3-4. Fifty-two delegates from across the state attended. New board directors were elected from Sammamish, Summit, WEA-Eastern Washington and WEA-Southeast. North Central, Soundview, and WEA-Lower Columbia are without board directors at this time. Kit Raney (Pilchuck) was re-elected president; Neva Luke (Sammamish) was elected vice president. The 2015-16 at-large members to the executive committee will be Evelyn Horne (WEA Riverside), Maureen Ramos (Spokane) and Karle Warren (WEA Southeast).

Kim Mead, WEA president, shared with the delegates some of her experiences while joining locals around the state during the rolling walk-outs. Julie Salvi, WEA lobbyist updated delegates on the overall state of affairs in Olympia and fielded questions.

Delegates viewed two videos. The first was created for WEA-Retired by Eddie Westerman, a member of the WEA Communications Department. *Reasons to Join WEA-Retired: From A to Z*, features WEA-Retired retired and pre-retired members explaining the benefits of WEA-Retired membership. The second video, *Tricks of the Trade*, created by the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, shows common tactics used by scam artists to separate unsuspecting victims from their money. FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority) is “an independent, not-for-profit organization authorized by Congress to protect America’s investors by making sure the securities industry operates fairly and honestly.”

Several board directors reported on chapter activities this past year. The focus for WEA-Retired for the last two years has been on organizing. Prior to this time there were five chapters across the state that held regular meetings for members. During 2013-14 four more chapters invited members to gatherings. This past year another four chapters held meetings, bringing the total to 13. The goal for 2015-16 is for the eight remaining chapters to provide an opportunity for members to meet.

Maureen Ramos (member of the organizing committee from Spokane) said, “The annual meeting had WEA-Retired members who may not have been part of the process of energizing the organization and not up to date on what was happening ‘out there.’ “ So, for the culminating activity Thursday afternoon, the delegates were divided into three groups to share experiences and to get fresh ideas from non-board members. The discussion questions included: why did you come to the annual meeting, what good things are happening in your chapter, what would you like to see happen in your chapter, and what can be done to support activities and other ideas. When the delegates came back together, each group reported back to the group.

To view the WEA-Retired video, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbAvgVtLA30. For more information on FINRA, visit www.finrafoundation.org. For more on the Investor Protection Campaign, visit www.saveandinvest.org.

The end of the WSSRA phone calls?

by Kit Raney

In the last newsletter I chronicled what I had discovered about calls coming to WEA-Retired members from Washington State School Retirees Association (WSSRA): 1) WSSRA annually sent a letter to school districts asking for the names and phone numbers of recent retirees; 2) Districts were sending that information to WSSRA; and 3) It is illegal for districts to give out that information (RCW 42.56.250). I then sent a letter to all school districts in the state with a copy of the RCW, asking them to stop sending this information to WSSRA. After this most recent article about the WSSRA calls, I got several emails of gratitude. Here is one of them, which I am sharing with the writer's permission:

I want to thank you for investigating and reporting on the phone calls from WSSRA regarding benefits. I received several calls last year from a representative wanting to come to my home to explain benefits to me. I asked for him to just explain over the phone but he insisted he had to talk with me in person. I did not invite him to my home but he was persistent and I had to field phone calls from him for several months. It was annoying, to say the least, and a little concerning, since I did not know who he really represented. So thank you for following up on member concerns and attempting to stop illegal use of retiree information.

Other members took issue with the article. They said that I was "attacking" WSSRA and that I "tattled to the districts" about WSSRA. And some asked why couldn't I have just contacted WSSRA about the phone calls in the first place. I have to believe they missed the first article I wrote on the issue when I said that I called the executive director of WSSRA and left a message about these calls and hoped that we could talk about them. HE NEVER CALLED ME BACK.

My intent in sharing the process was to let members know why they were receiving the phone calls and that the calls should stop. It was not to attack or to tattle on WSSRA. If, at the very beginning, my phone call to WSSRA had been returned, the story might have ended right there.

Pilchuck-Retired

by Marj Njaa

Pilchuck-Retired has enjoyed a variety of programs this year. Most recently we took a field trip to Whidbey Island where we were treated to a tour of Barca's Hummingbird Hill Garden. Annette Barca, a long time member of Pilchuck Retired, is a knowledgeable guide and gracious hostess. The garden is located in an area of Whidbey Island which boasts a Mediterranean microclimate. That particular climate is found in only a few places in the world. Besides the Mediterranean basin, the climate is found in the Western Cape of South Africa, Central Chile, South and Western Australia, and California. At Hummingbird Hill, plantings of specimens from the Mediterranean and southern hemisphere are displayed in a Mediterranean design. The garden features drought tolerant plants, raised stone beds with gravel mulch, garden walls and unique water features. Attractive to wildlife, the garden has many plants that are unusual in NW gardens. As we walked the paths we were delighted to watch the hummingbirds protecting their territories and greedily enjoying the many hummingbird feeders. In the past we have visited the garden in the fall. It was interesting to see what was coming up in the spring. Around the bends in the paths we find hidden water features or a secluded bench, perfect for rest and reflection.

This garden was lovingly designed by Annette's late husband, Robert "Bob" Barca. Bob collected his plants from all over and Annette relates stories of returning from trips with a car full of plants. The garden is managed and maintained in Bob's memory by Annette and her sister Marcia. If you are interested in learning more about Mediterranean gardening, visit: Gardening in Mediterranean Climate Zones Worldwide <http://gimcw.org/about/>, or better yet, just ask Annette Barca. If you are very lucky she might give you a tour of her beautiful garden.



WEA-Retired scholarship winners!

by Bev Wentz

WEA-Retired Scholarships holds a fund-raising and awards banquet the first night of the WEA-Retired annual meeting. At the banquet the recipients of the 2015 WEA-Retired scholarships were announced.

- **Jessica Jackson** (SWEA) is the president of Washington State University SWEA unit. She is completing her elementary education degree, specializing in special education.
- **Ongelie Holmes** (Soundview) works as a food service employee as well as a crossing guard for University Place School District. She is enrolled in an early care and education program at Clover Park Technical College.
- **Jodie Carter** (WEA Chinook) is currently teaching a 2/3 combination in the Quinault School District. She is working on her master's degree in library and information science.
- **Jenny Sepulveda** (WEA Fourth Corner) worked for 5 years in various substitute assignments before being offered her first full-time contract. She is currently teaching third grade in the Stanwood School District. She is working on her National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- **Sonja Hanchar** (Vancouver) is completing her third year in a self-contained special education pre-school classroom in the Vancouver School District. She will start work this summer on her National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Bev Wentz, WEA-Retired Scholarship chair, said, "It becomes very difficult to choose only five recipients. We have so many deserving applicants and my hope is that, if they still need help, they will apply next year."

Banquet attendees had an opportunity to participate in both silent and live auctions. Two hotly contested items this year were a two-night stay on Whidbey Island donated by Annette Barca and a stained-glass panel donated by Jerry Keltner. The other scholarship fundraiser held earlier this year was a cash prize drawing. The names of the winners were drawn and announced during the 2015 WEA Representative Assembly. Mike Kokko, Gary Willis and and Cindy Shearard won \$300, \$200 and \$100, respectively.

WEA-Retired Member of the Year!

by Ken Mortland

At its annual scholarship fund raising banquet on June 3, WEA-Retired recognized the lengthy and profoundly important work of long time member Sandy Kokko of Vancouver (WA) with the "Retired Member of the Year" award. Sandy is deeply involved in many aspects of WEA-Retired; including planning all meetings and events, being treasurer of the scholarship fund, presenting WEA-Retired retirement seminars all over the state, researching and updating our history and developing language to update our organic documents. As chairperson of the Awards Committee, I would say that Sandy is the driving force behind much of what WEA-Retired accomplishes each year.

We had no nominations what-so-ever from local chapters this year, but the committee is authorized to select award recipients, in the event there are no nominations. The award, approved by a committee upon which Sandy sits, was carefully keep a secret from her by the committee until the award presentation.

We are gratefully for Sandy's exceptional service. We would be much less successful without her.

Sandy exemplifies WEA-Retired's motto; "Retire from your position, not your profession. Congratulations, Sandy.



Tacoma-Retired

by Judy Jarvits



*"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."
- Chinese Proverb.*

Pictured: Claudy Randolph, Marian Griffin, Patty Maruca, Carmela St. Pierre, Robert Brown, Back David Clogston, Bob Aline and Judy Jarvits.

Tacoma-Retired is a small but enthusiastic and active group whose members were employed by the Tacoma School District or reside in the greater Tacoma area. We meet during the school year on the third Friday of each month at the TEA office on South 36th Street and discuss the ways in which we can help advance Washington education. The Tacoma Education Association (TEA) has been very gracious in welcoming us for meetings, and we are fortunate that the TEA officers and staff occasionally drop in to share information and visit. After our business meetings we discuss travel, grandchildren, books, movies and other topics of interest to retirees, and we often go to lunch together in fellowship.

At our November meeting and luncheon, our WEA-Retired President Kit Raney shared recent WEA-Retired successes, concerns and strategies with our group and debriefed us regarding the legislative makeup in Olympia following the November election. Guest speaker and Legislative Work Team Chairperson Lee Anne Prielipp, talked to around 20 of us about the Work Team's plan for the 2014-15 legislative sessions, and what we could do to help support it.

Feb. 20-21 were the dates for Tacoma's pre-retirement seminar. Sandy Kokko and her knowledgeable team presented a successful seminar to 26 prospective retirees. Tacoma Retired volunteered to provide planning, shopping, prepared food, and meal service and snacks for the seminar.

As this year draws to a close we are planning a new member event on Oct. 16, at the TEA UniServ office. We will be inviting the retired lifetime members as well as association members who plan on retiring this year. The WEA-Tacoma UniServ Council Executive Board has generously given us a budget for invitations, postage, food, and hospitality. Guest speakers Kit Raney, Lee Ann Prielipp and WEA lobbyist Julie Salvi have been invited as well as members of the Tacoma UniServ Council and staff.

As each school year starts anew, Tacoma's individual educators sow rice in the classrooms that they teach in. Working together as a unit, teachers spend more than a decade ensuring that the seeds they plant become strong and ready for life. Tacoma Retired's goal is to continue its work in helping advance the gift of education, and helping people plan for a lifetime.

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