

The Voice



A Newsletter for Yakima County School Retirees

April 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Co-Presidents Nick & Kathy Schultz

OUR APRIL 6, 2020, GENERAL MEETING IS CANCELED!

As we write this message, we are concerned about the spread of the Coronavirus. Many of us are of a certain age with underlying health issues. We are including information from Kaiser Permanente on the guidelines for protecting yourself and your loved ones in this issue of 'The Voice.' Please read the info and stay tuned as more is learned about how we can protect ourselves.

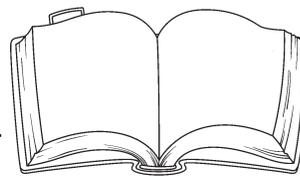
On the lighter side, spring has sprung and daylight savings time has begun. It is encouraging to have warmer weather and the trees and flowers budding. GOOD NEWS! We received word that the Plan 1 COLA has passed! This summer Plan 1 members will see a 3% increase. Significant progress has been made on prescription drug prices. Plan 2/3 retirees will see their usual inflation based increase on July 1st. The Medicare Eligible Healthcare Benefit remains at \$183 per month. Thanks to all of you for your efforts to contact legislators.

We want to welcome new YCSRA board member, Patrick Walsh. He is from Granger. He has stepped up to help Kathy Fletcher with membership enrollments.

A huge thank you to Linda Lockwood, YCRSA member, who has agreed to serve as E5/E6 Coordinating Council Chair, 2020-21. We still need someone who is willing to serve on the WSSRA State Board. This is a 3 year commitment but is a really fun educational experience. Please give it some consideration.

On Saturday, March 7, 2020, YCSRA and Paul Schafer, hosted the annual Retirement Planning workshop at Yakima Valley Museum. We had 90+ participants as well as presenters from DRS, AMBA and Financial Planners. The Health Care Authority canceled due to travel concerns but our YCSRA member on the Health Committee, Bill Bourn, from Prosser filled in. It was a very successful event. A big thank you to the following people who brought salads and desserts and/or helped with registration, set up, serving and cleanup: Peggy Campbell, Millie Stenehjem, Lorry Evert, Jan Saxton, Kathy Fletcher, Norma Haney, Carol Mills, Rosie and Jim Churchley, Jane Butler-Nix, Susan Kaphammer, Peggy Young, Kathy Dyblie, Carolyn Wilson, Willie Sgambelluri, Joann Anderson and Nick and Kathy Schultz.

Governor Inslee declared March 16-20 School Retirees' Appreciation Month. The Yakima School District School Board invited members of the YCSRA Board to a YSD School Board meeting, Tuesday March 17, to be recognized. The recognition is appreciated. Our March meeting featured Inga Wiehl and Mary Lou Rozdilski presenting information on Yakima & Selah Neighbors' Network. They are asking for volunteers and donations. It is a very worthwhile project. It was also president Nick's 75th birthday



Book Corner

Recommended for your reading pleasure

by Nick and Kathy Schultz

"Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owen

"The Tattooist of Auschwitz" Heather Morris

"The Splendid and the Vile" by Erik Larson



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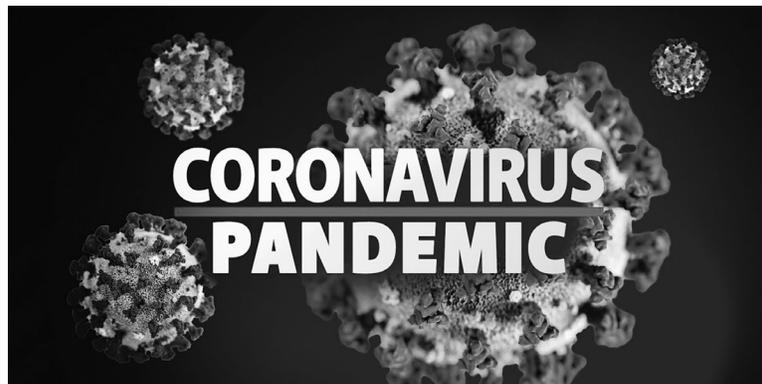
Mini-grants

Kathy Schultz
509 966 9341

MEETING CANCELED

Our April 6, 2020 general meeting has been canceled. The Yakima County Health District declared a Health Emergency on Friday, March 13. President Trump declared a national emergency the same day.

If you feel sick, call your primary physician and ask for advice. DO NOT go to the ER or call 911 unless it is a life threatening emergency. Please use caution and common sense.



Make sure we have your proper email

If you have changed your email address in the last year, please send me a corrected one. Thanks!
Sandy Gavin, sandyg1948@gmail.com

Opinions expressed in **The Voice** are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the view of the YCSRA Board or the editors. Editorial contributions and articles as well as ideas for articles are welcome. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Send information to Kathy Schultz.

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WE SEND OUT WSSRA GREETINGS!

Let's support our members with get well wishes, condolences, thank yous, congratulations, thinking of you and more. Email or call me with names and I'll get the card(s) sent out for you.

Email: cmstenehjem@msn.com or 509-966-3409. Leave a message if no one answers.

~ Millie Stenehjem

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

Coronavirus Information and Reminders About Getting Care from Kaiser Permanente Protect yourself and your loved ones

Here's what you can do to help prevent illness and avoid spreading illness to others.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick (except to get medical care). Keep sick children home from school.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. If you use a tissue, wash your hands afterward.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Antibiotics won't help with a cold, the flu, or a coronavirus infection because they aren't effective against viruses.

Get care when you need it.

If you or a family member have a cold or flu like symptoms and you want to be seen by a doctor for medical care, it's important to call the clinic first. Calling ahead helps ensure that you're directed to the most appropriate care and know what precau-

tions to take to protect other patients and health care staff.

Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs

- Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs include*:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or inability to arouse
 - Bluish lips or face

**This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.*



RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP

By Paul Schafer

The Annual Retirement Planning workshop was held Saturday, March 7, 2020, at the Yakima Valley Museum. There were over 80 registered people and more than 90 attendees. It was very successful.

Special thanks to the YCSRA volunteers who helped with registration: Kathy Fletcher, Carol Mills, Rosie & Jim Churchly, Willy Sgambelluri, Kevin Enzminger, and Carolyn Wilson. Also, thanks to Catherine Cadoo, Bill Bourn, Jeff Burgess, Dr. Alan Burke, and Financial Planners who presented valuable retirement information. The following people helped with food donations of salads and desserts, set up, serving, and clean up: Millie Stenhjem, Kathy Fletcher, Rosie and Jim Churchly, Carol Mills, Lorry Evert, Jan Saxton, Norma Haney, Jane Butler-Nix, Peggy Campbell, Susan Kaphammer, Peggy Young, Kathy Dyblie, Carolyn Wilson, Willie Sgambelluri, Joann Anderson, and Nick and Kathy Schultz.

A great big thank you to Myrna Pitts, museum employee, who provided invaluable assistance in ensuring the workshop needs were met. Great job everyone.

Question of the Month

Compiled by Judy Markham

What span of years did you attend elementary/high school?
(Ex: 1950 -1962) What was the high school from which you graduated?
Are students receiving a better education now than when you attended school? Give an example.



A small school in a small Montana town- Corvallis High School. Not necessarily getting a better education. Today they may have the opportunity for more advanced and varied learning experiences. But my education in basic general knowledge and skills prepared me better for college and life than many of today's students are prepared. ~ **Susan Kaphammer**

1952-1965 K-12. Graduated from Eisenhower High School in 1965. I am not sure if it is better, but I am pleased my 3 grandchildren do well in school and love it! That makes me happy.
~ **Kathy Schultz**

I graduated from Edmonds High School. I am not sure if students are getting a better education now but certainly different. All my grandkids are getting a great education. ~ **Nick Schultz**

1953-1965. I graduated from Eisenhower in 1965. It depends. Grammar is no longer taught. I don't believe the tests to graduate really show competency. ~ **Kathy Dyblie**

I graduated from West Valley High School in Yakima. (1950-1963) Overall I don't think so, they are lacking in geography and physics plus numerous social skills. ~ **Linda Trepanier**

I graduated from Walla Walla High School. Classes are different now. I always felt well prepared for college then, but with changing needs...electronics, the world wide web, etc. I wouldn't be prepared for those careers. ~ **Norma Haney**

1953-1966. I graduated from Highland High School. I think the general education is similar as far as content. However, our students are lacking certain social skills, manners, coping skills, work ethics, etc. ~ **Sandra Gavin**

1952-1966. I graduated from St. Joseph Academy. In my humble opinion (IMHO)-you get out of your education what you are willing to put into it! Students need life skills in today's schools.
~ **Linda Lockwood**

1944-1956. I graduated from Lincoln High School in Seattle. Yes, special needs students are receiving education that will more closely meet their needs. ~ **Barb Metz**

Gooding High in Gooding, Idaho. I am not aware of the present day programs. ~ **Jane Butler-Nix**

St. Placid/St. Martin' High Schools in Olympia, Washington. No, I took 4 years of English, Foreign language, Math and History.
~ **Pam Hornstein**

1959-1971. Harvard H.S., Harvard, Illinois - self proclaimed "milk center of the world". Well, my classmates and I knew the difference among cities, states, countries and continents before (and after) 8th grade. Can the same be said today? ~ **Rosemary Saul**

I graduated from Everett High School. No, we have lost the need to spell correctly, to write cursive, the knowledge of local and national history, also correct grammar. ~ **Peggy Young**

1945-1957. Twin Valley P. S., Minnesota. (Twin Valley: population 850) I don't think it is any better. We had fabulous (for such a small town) teachers all the way through (except for one P.E. Teacher).
~ **Millie Stenehjem**

K-12. 1955-1968. Graduated from Watchung Hills Regional H.S., Warren, New Jersey. Not sure if kids are getting a better education. My math class in high school was better than college. Remember elementary recess? Many current elementary students will not be able to remember having a recess. ~ **Jane Watson**

K-12 1945-1958. I had a better than most education and knew by 3rd grade I wanted to be a teacher. Most students now get more information from a computer than a classroom and look no further to enhance what they have found or challenge it.
~ **Larry Evert-Gavin**

1953-1965. Ellensburg High. I hope that they are receiving more of the STEM subjects and that more kids have the opportunity to take them. ~ **Peggy Campbell-Davis**

1958-1970. I graduated from Crescent Consolidate. It is better now because of technology and no longer being a school where teachers go to retire. ~ **Chris Their**

I graduated from Cusick High School, Cusick, Washington. Probably better-more funding available now-more variety of classes available. ~ **Sheila Wilson**

I attended school K-12 from 1945-1958 and graduated from Toppenish High School. I went to school to socialize. I learned rapidly and forgot at the same pace. My time was centered in the art room and not the English class. Please excuse my errors. I appreciate your corrections. I am still not sure about when to use then and than. Sorry. I am too busy engaging in my artistic pursuits to take the time to take a class at YVC on grammar and punctuation. But just keep correcting me and I will get better. ~ **Judy Markham**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Larry Scholl, Legislative Committee Chair

The Washington State Legislature's short 60 day session adjourned on March 12, 2020. The one major goal of the WSSRA was to get a Cost-of-Living-Adjustment passed this session. Members of Plan 1 Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) have seen only one 1.5% COLA since 2010.

The WSSRA lobbying team successfully managed to get the legislature to pass a onetime 3% COLA for Plan 1 TRS and PERS. It is based approximately on the first \$25,000 of your retirement benefit. For most members, it will be approximately \$62 per month beginning July 1st, 2020. As a one-time COLA, that amount will remain part of your monthly benefit from that point on but will not increase another 3% without new legislation in a future session of the legislature. The final budget also includes the \$183 per month for the Medicare Eligible Benefit for those in PEBB.

WSSRA was also successful in lobbying for the passage of SB 6383, which will give Plan 3 members the opportunity to invest their deferred compensation in the state investment board's commingled retirement investment funds. These funds have always performed well and this is a great opportunity for active Plan 3 members.

Now that the session is over, we need to be looking ahead. Remember, the COLA bill that passed the legislature is a one-time COLA. All other state retirement systems have an automatic COLA every year. TRS and PERS are the only state systems that do not have that feature. Unfortunately, those systems were created in the 1930's when inflation was not a factor so a COLA was not part of the plan. We need an ongoing effort to remedy the situation and get a permanent "fix" to this inequity.

As you are surely aware, this is an election year. Many of our local legislative positions are up for re-election. All of our local Senators and Representatives were very supportive of WSSRA's efforts to attain a COLA this session and all voted "YES" when they had the opportunity to vote. As your lobbyist, I always felt warmly welcomed into their offices and their legislative assistants kept me promptly informed of any legislative action pertaining to Plan 1 retirees. This wasn't necessarily the case in legislative districts in other parts of the state. Please take the time to thank each one of our legislators.

Last year I did not ask for any PAC (Political Action Committee) money. However, this year we may need to help some of our local legislators, and maybe some in other parts of the state, to financially run their campaigns for re-election. These legislators were very important in our efforts this session in getting the 3% COLA. We, in turn, need to support them.

Unfortunately, "Money" is the name of the game in politics. We have over 1,700 members of WSSRA in Yakima County. In the past, only about 35 members have been willing to contribute to the PAC. We must do much better than that. I am hoping for at least 25% of you to contribute this spring. Please contribute as generously as you are able. You may bring your checks to the next unit meeting or mail your checks to me. The check must be made payable to: WSSR-PAC (not WSSRA-PAC). If you cannot attend a unit meeting, please mail checks to me at: 5910 West Lincoln Avenue, #39, Yakima, WA. 98908

Thank you for your support.



APRIL 6 MEETING IS CANCELED

CANCELED Monday, April 6, 2020 YCSRA general meeting.

In an abundance of caution and concern, we feel it is prudent to avoid gatherings of a vulnerable population.

Visit www.cdc.gov for updated coronavirus information.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Kathy Fletcher

This past school year, two membership teams have been working hard to increase the number of members in YCSRA. We are the largest unit in the state and want to continue to hold on to that distinction. Naches, Highland, Grandview, Sunnyside, Granger School Districts and Eisenhower High School of Yakima have welcomed us to speak at a staff meeting. To date we have enrolled 130+ new active members to Unit 34. We thank the school superintendents and school principals who have made our visits possible. We welcome these new members and hope that many of them will apply for a grant in the fall. Remember, membership is important and is the responsibility of all of us. It is OUR pension that needs protecting, and WSSRA is the necessary squeaky wheel that works tirelessly to get the job done.

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