



Okanogan County School Retirees' Association
A Unit of the Washington State School Retirees' Association



THE NEWSLETTER

FALL NEWSLETTER
2018-2019

A FRESH START

“A Fresh Start” can be interpreted in many ways: a new job, a new project, a new relationship, or a new “what”? Some think of it as a place on the calendar such as January 1 with a list of resolutions or July 1 to begin a new fiscal year.

September is a special time for our active members as they prepare for eager learners in our schools. It is also a time for us, Okanogan County School Retirees’ Association (OCSRA) and Washington State School Retirees’ Association (WSSRA) to inform you of our active support for all **classified and certified** staff members as well as school retirees. In this newsletter you may read about \$200 grants to active members, the October retirement seminar for all school employees and scholarships for students pursuing careers in our common schools. Member discounts and services are also available through our Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA). Benefits from travel and computer purchases to health and investment programs are useful to our membership. Membership forms are available by contacting: Marcelle LaGrou at 509-826-1929 or any OCSRA member.

MINI GRANTS

One of Okanogan County School Retirees’ Association’s most pleasant projects is giving out mini grants to deserving members of our organization. However, this year our mini grants will not be quite so “mini”. Our grants will be \$200 each. Eight grants will be awarded in the fall and 8 in the spring. We hope this will encourage more members to apply. The due date for the fall grant is earlier this year so that we can make the awards in early October instead of waiting for November when the snow sometimes gets in the way of awarding these grants in person. **THE DUE DATE IS SEPTEMBER 23rd**. We have made the application in a bright color at the end of this newsletter or you can find it on line at okanogancsra.com.

We welcome a new Grants’ Chairman in the person of Scott Clark. His contact information is on the attached Grant Application.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We know that spring is a long way off but we want to ask that you help us watch for possible students from Okanogan County who are of at least college junior standing and going into an educational field who would be interested in applying for our \$1500 scholarship. It is difficult to get the word out to everyone so we are asking for your help. You may know someone who would be eligible to apply. The application is not due until May 1, 2019. We’ll appreciate your help in this matter.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership Compilation on August 1, 2018: OCSRA had 329 members enrolled: 12 paying cash dues; 204 retirees on DRS deductions, and 112 actively working members on payroll deduction. WSSRA enrollment is 17,378 with 161 new members pending.

In Memoriam: Tam Hutchinson of Oroville passed away July 25, 2018 at age 69. Besides teaching history, Tam was Oroville's head football and baseball coach for many years and later became Athletic Director. Our condolences to his family and friends.

RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR

ATTENTION ALL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES: Whether you're retiring soon or just beginning your career, you need to know your pension plan's benefits and the steps to take to insure a stable financial future. This information—and more—will be covered at OCSRA's free Retirement Planning Seminar on **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 4-6 P.M., AT THE OKANOGAN HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY.** Presenters are Erik Peterson and Aaron Bessonette of Financial Alternatives, Wenatchee, and Penny Garrison, E-6 Representative, WSSRA Retirement Planning Committee. For more information: Penny Garrison, 509-422-3393.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS FROM WSSRA

August, 2018

The Washington State School Retirees' Association (WSSRA) is made up of 18,000 active and retired school personnel. WSSRA's mission is to develop, propose, and support action benefiting all school retirees. The following is a list of WSSRA legislative priorities for 2019:

- **TRS 1 & PERS 1 Pension Recovery** – Plan 1 retirees have had one Cost of Living Adjustment since 2010. Plan 1 retirees have lost up to 33% of their purchasing power due to inflation. In 2018, the Washington State Legislature granted a one-time 1.5% COLA; however, inflation is expected to be 3.3% in 2018. Therefore, retirees continue to lose money.
- **Restore Retiree Healthcare Benefits** – The Legislature lowered the Medicare Healthcare Benefit from \$183 to \$150 in 2011. In 2018 we successfully lobbied for an increase to \$168 per month. Restoring the Medical Benefit to \$183 per month will mitigate against the loss of purchasing power from increasing healthcare premiums.
- **Expand and Equalize the Full Retirement Age in Plans 2 & 3** – The current full retirement age in Plans 2 & 3 is age 65. Employees can leave at age 62 but are penalized for working part-time in schools or local governments. We are advocating for eliminating those work penalties as well as dropping the retirement age to 60 – similar to public safety employees.
- **Protect Retirees in Transition to New Health Providers** – The State has created a School Employee Benefits Board (SEBB) and is studying the possibility of removing school retirees from the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) and putting them in new plans under the SEBB. Any changes must maintain or improve current benefits.

OCSRA OFFICERS 2018-19

President, Marcelle LaGrou
Secretary, Maralee Bowling

Vice President, Jennie Hedington
Treasurer, Penny Garrison

OCSRA COMMITTEES 2018-2019

Communications: Journal, Rita Figlenski; **Website**, Penny Garrison; **Newsletter**, Maralee Bowling
Community Service: Jennie Hedington, Carol Payne **Grants**: Scott Clark **Health**: Colleen Pock, Helen Lees **Historian**: Chuck Pecha, Ida Laurie **Legislative**: to be announced later
Membership: Marcelle La Grou, Eleanor Markell, Evon LaGrou **Retirement Planning**: Penny Garrison **Scholarship Trustee Board**: Donna Sanford, Dee Blank

OCSRA PROGRAMS 2018-2019

We have scheduled some interesting programs for our meetings this coming year and we encourage members to come and enjoy them with us. Hey! And bring another retired school person with you who isn't yet a member.

2018

Sept. 28 Executive Director, WSSRA, Alan Burke
Oct. 26 Peter Diedrick, Legislative Director WSSRA & Rohn Rutledge, AMBA Representative
Nov. 16 Card making/Christmas event—no meeting

2019

Jan. 25 A local orchardist (changes/etc. in their business)
Feb. 22 Washington State Patrol, Safe Driving for US!
Mar. 29 To Be Announced
Apr. 26 Field trip to Tonasket restaurant & school to witness Boom Whackers & the student garden –both of which OCSRA has supported with grants in past years.
May 17 Regular meeting with Installation of Officers & a sing along

WE HOPE YOU WILL COME JOIN US!!

Please Note: Our former meeting place, Koala Street Grill, is now known as **Roadhouse 97**. We will continue meeting there; however, our meeting time will now begin at **11:30 a.m.** Please try to be there at 11:15 to facilitate ordering lunch.

E5/E6 COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING

The first E5/E6 Coordinating Council Meeting will take place Wednesday, October 10 at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club in East Wenatchee. Attend to learn more about our organization and to meet members from other Units! E5/E6 extends from the Canadian Border through the Yakima Valley. Call Marcelle LaGrou 826-1929 to secure a spot and a ride. Brunch and ride are at no cost to individuals attending.

REMINDER FOR AMAZON SHOPPERS

When you shop on Amazon please remember to use OCSRA's charity link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-1527677> in your browser so OCSRA can get free scholarship money on purchases. Thanks very much.