

OKANOGAN COUNTY SCHOOL RETIREES ASSOCIATION SPRING NEWSLETTER

May, 2018

HAPPY JULY!!

Marcelle LaGrou, President OCSRA

As this United Emirates aircraft carries me to Dubai, I am thinking about and being thankful for members of WSSRA who have worked so diligently to improve the retirement benefits for our members: Peter Diedrick, our two lobbyists, legislative committee members, and certainly, our state legislators for the 7th and 12th districts. The monetary increase that many retirees will see in their July and continuing benefit amounts is a direct result of their work. Those members who continue to receive health care via PEBB (Public Employees Benefit Board) will also realize added assistance in payment of health insurance premiums beginning January 1, 2019. In particular and on behalf of OCSRA I extend our thanks to Denise Perkins and Mary Perkins who have traveled to Olympia during “the session” to meet with our legislators.

NEWS FROM THE 2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

We will open this newsletter with a bit of news pertaining to school retirees’ benefits passed during the 2018 Legislative session. This information comes from the E-5, E-6 Coordinating Council meeting held April 11th in Ellensburg.

- On July 1st, Plan 1 retirees who qualify for Minimum Benefit will receive a 3% increase; Alternative Minimum Benefit recipients will have their gross monthly benefit increased to \$1902.
- All other Plan 1 retirees grossing less than \$50,000 a year will see a 1.5% increase on July 1st. Plan 1 retirees grossing more than \$50,000 a year will get a yearly increase of \$750.
- All Plan 1 retirees over 65 years of age on PEBB Medical insurance will get a \$13 monthly increase in Medicare Eligible Insurance premium totaling \$168 a month beginning January 2019.
- Full actuarially recommended contribution to the State Pension Fund was made; however, an unfunded liability in Plan 1 TRS & PERS remains.

In other news from the E-6 District Report April 11th:

There were 14 E-6 Scholarship applicants this year. E-6 Scholarship winners have been selected. All applicants and their schools have been notified of the outcome. This year’s E-6 PEMCO scholarship winners are: Reilly Schoening, Cashmere, and Sarah Dixon, Okanogan. Each \$900 PEMCO scholarship is renewable up to 4 years. Zane Scott, Oroville, won this year’s \$2500 Foundation Scholarship.

The Board was reminded to tell Units to keep track of their members nearing their 90th birthdays so those individuals may be recommended to the Board for honorary membership—contingent upon active association involvement and a continuous 20-year membership.

Two bylaws proposals will come before June’s General Assembly:

- One concerning dissolution of the State Outreach Committee (which was discussed at the last Coordinating Council meeting)
- One concerning the enabling of the Foundation to grant College level scholarships (Passage would allow establishing a one-year trial of awarding eight \$1,000 scholarships to college level students who are about to student teach)

OCSRA SPRING GRANTS 2018

It has been our pleasure to award three \$100 grants this spring. **Rose Corso** from Tonasket School District received a grant to help with their plans to design art work to be painted on the fence slats to bring attention to their school garden. **Gail Morris**, also from Tonasket School District received a grant for Boomwhackers for her music students. To discover what Boomwhackers are I would suggest you go to Google to find out. Also we are hoping to have her students present a program for OCSRA next year. Come and see for yourself! **Kris Clark**, Okanogan, received a grant to purchase STEM supplies for his fifth grade students. We were disappointed that only 3 people applied for our grants this spring. The grant application forms are simple to fill out. Be ready to apply for one of the eight grants this fall.

OCSRA 2018 SCHOLARSHIP

Each year OCSRA gives a scholarship to a college junior who is committed to a career in education. This year the amount is \$1500. We are pleased to announce that our winner is **Ashley Wolf**. Ashley has been working toward a career in Special Education. It has taken some time for her to get to this point in her journey and we are very happy to help her pursue her dream. Congratulations, Ashley!

OCSRA MEETING PROGRAMS

OCSRA Programs have been well received this year. We would be very happy to see more of you coming out to enjoy these informative and inspiring programs. Our WSSRA President, **Curt Horne**, spoke to us in September; **Alex Eppel** told us about the Tonasket School Garden; Omak teacher **Joy Wilson** with student **Victoria Beaver** gave an interesting presentation of the Family and Consumer Science classes at Omak H.S., including telling us about their Top Chef competition with some other county schools. Okanogan FBLA teacher **Zach Spaet** brought five students who told us about their experiences at FBLA Conference and how they earned money to get there. **Bruce Morrison** from the Methow Valley Art Association provided us with art work of students and an explanation of how their program works. Our April program was a very interesting talk from **Sergio Duarte** and his journey to becoming a United States citizen. These programs have been educational, inspiring and have made us feel good about what great things are happening in our county! We have some great programs planned for next year as well and we invite you to come, learn, and enjoy!

OCSRA COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

OCSRA has in the past given monetary donations to various groups, and this year we voted to give four \$100 grants. The recipients are:

- **Jim Anderson** and his 5th grade students at Virginia Grainger Elementary School for their school garden. This is a new project for them this year.

- **Okanogan Valley Music Camp** directed by retired Omak music teacher **Don Pearce**. Two music camps are scheduled in July at Camp Desautel, one for middle school students and one for high school students. Any student in Okanogan County may attend.
- **Wenatchee Valley College Foundation** for gas cards for WVC Omak low income students to make it easier for them to attend classes.
- **Zach Spaet** and his FBLA students for conference expenses.

OCSRA OFFICERS 2018-2019

PRESIDENT: Marcelle LaGrou	VICE PRESIDENT: Jennie Hedington
SECRETARY: Maralee Bowling	TREASURER: Penny Garrison
FRESHMAN SCHOLARSHIP TRUSTEE: Donna Sanford	

MEMBERSHIP NEWS – 5/8/18

Membership Compilation on 5/1/18: OCSRA had 328 members: 11 cash payers; 203 retirees on DRS deductions; and 114 actively working in school districts. WSSRA membership: 17,501.

New Members Welcomed: **Sheila Corson**, Communications Officer with Omak School District, and WVC Omak retiree, **Barbara Christensen**, Omak. Welcome Ladies!

In Memoriam: **James W. Derting** of Okanogan died March 22, 2018 at age 84. After teaching 5th and 6th grades at Okanogan, Jim was principal at Virginia Grainger School for 26 years.

SOME TIDBITS FROM PRESIDENT MARCELLE’S TRIP

(CONTINUED FROM OPENING REMARKS)

Safari Thoughts: We left the tall buildings and incredible architecture of Dubai for South Africa. My thought was some would like to read a few lines about the experience in S. Africa. Our point of entry was Durban, SA, with several road trips to reach our destinations. Two weeks of safari time was spent at two reserves: Zulu Nyala and Arathusa. Two game drives per day began by approximately 5:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. There are rules for the drivers and trackers who are working together for the guests to see the protected wildlife in their natural environment. Unexpected sightings were a leopard with her two cubs, a pride of 14 lions snoozing with full bellies, an unhappy elephant charging because we viewers were too close. These can be shared through photos and video; however, the experience of the native people, their lands and other travelers met along the way are treasured as well.

My daughter, Evon and I spent 2 weeks in South Africa. We then met my sister in Nice and spent several days there and in the surrounding area. We spent a day of sailing on the Mediterranean Sea with a private charter firm from Cannes. From Nice we go to southern France, then on to London before we return home.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Wenatchee at the WSSRA convention.

WSSRA CONVENTION, JUNE 4-6, WENATCHEE