



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



## THE NEWSLETTER

### OCSRA WINTER NEWSLETTER JANUARY, 2018

Congratulations to all members receiving this OCSRA Newsletter!! You have joined others who care about and support the retirement benefits negotiated for us by our Washington State Legislators. Healthcare subsidies, COLA's (cost of living) negotiations, and Retirement plans are all legislative issues we have a chance to influence by increasing WSSRA membership and by legislative contact in person or by other methods of communication.

The potential retiree membership of PERS, TRS and SERS in our state is 56,113 strong. Presently WSSRA membership stands at 17,551 or less than one-third of the total. Each month Unit 15 receives detailed reports of membership. As of January 2, 2018, OCSRA Unit 15 has 330 members. It is my hope to increase Unit 15 by 20 new members by June 2018. You can help in this effort. AMBA benefits promoting insurance products, travel, and other options are a great incentive. Both WSSRA and OCSRA provide scholarships for students and grants for active members. If you need more information to promote membership among your colleagues or want to learn more about other items mentioned in the Newsletter contact Marcelle LaGrou @ 826-1929.

### "ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE"

Marcelle LaGrou, Chr., WSSRA Nomination and Review Comm

How do you "accept the challenge" to preserve and enhance your retirement benefits as a member of Washington State School Retirees (WSSRA) and Okanogan County School Retirees (OCSRA)? Make a commitment by supporting local, district, and state volunteers working for you. Our district E-6, made up of Okanogan, Grant, and Chelan-Douglas counties, offers elective position to serve: President-elect of WSSRA. That position is open only to nominees from Eastern Washington units; however, many appointed committee positions from healthcare to legislation are available. All applications (Willingness to Serve forms) are required for the above mentioned opportunities. These forms are available on the WSSRA website or from OCSRA president, Marcelle LaGrou @ 826-1929.

### OCSRA GRANT REPORT

OCSRA is pleased to announce that 8 grants were awarded this past fall! Those **Okanogan County** winners were: Fay Aitcheson, Tonasket Grade 4, for copies of "Your Fantastic Elastic Brain"; Scott Olson, Tonasket Grade 4, teaming with the PTO and others to purchase books so every student could choose a book to take home to start building a home library; Shayla Rauch-Picard, Okanogan Grade 5, STEM lesson plans and supplies; Alicia O'Dell,

Okanogan Grade 1, STEM supplies; Tracy White, Nespelem Grade 2, white boards; Heather Downey, Okanogan PreK-5 Life Skills, independent task supplies; Marilou Baker, Okanogan K-5 Music, small U.S. flags for each child to learn the meaning and respect for our flag and to take home and share with their family; and Mike Spurr, Brewster Grades K-5, for bikes with training wheels for teaching bike safety.

It was our pleasure to be an encouragement to these members of OCSRA as they work to enhance the learning of students in our county. We will be looking forward to awarding 8 more grants this spring. The application is in this newsletter and will be due on February 15, 2018. We hope you will apply. Remember, you must be a member of OCSRA and do NOT have to be a classroom teacher.

### **RETIREMENT SEMINAR UPDATE**

A record-high number of participants attended OCSRA's Retirement Seminar in October with 34 attendees plus 2 requests for printed handouts. Attendees seemed pleased with the information they received and the opportunity to ask specific retirement questions. If you were unable to attend this last seminar and are thinking about retiring, here are some ideas to consider:

- North Central ESD has partnered with Financial Alternatives of Wenatchee to provide all school staff with free retirement help. Phone: 1-800-456-1370 or email Erik Peterson at [epeterson@planmembersec.com](mailto:epeterson@planmembersec.com) or Aaron Bessonette at [abessonette@planmembersec.com](mailto:abessonette@planmembersec.com).
- Washington State Department of Retirement Services (DRS) provides retirement help on its website [www.drs.wa.gov](http://www.drs.wa.gov). At the top of the Homepage, click on *Education* for various resources like live webinars, videos, or information on attending DRS retirement seminars. Click on *Members* followed by *Members Nearing Retirement* to get retirement ideas, checklists, benefit estimators, etc.

Plan to attend OCSRA's free Retirement Seminar next October. Date and location to be announced.

### **OCSRA SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

OCSRA is again giving a scholarship to a college student who is of at least junior standing and committed to a career in education. The amount this year will be \$1500. The application is simple to prepare. It is just necessary to follow the directions carefully. The application can be found at [www.okanogancsra.com](http://www.okanogancsra.com) and **is due May 1, 2018**. Please help us spread the word in your school districts as it is difficult to get this information out to the public. We very much appreciate your help in this matter. You may have friends, children or grandchildren, nieces or nephews who would qualify for this scholarship.

### **FREE MONEY FOR OCSRA's SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

Good News! The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to OCSRA's scholarship fund for customers who buy items at the AmazonSmile website using OCSRA's charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-1527677>. The AmazonSmile website is operated by Amazon and carries the same selection

of products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. Help us meet our goal to give a \$1500 college scholarship in 2018! Here's the steps to follow:

- Type OCSRA's charity link in your browser: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-1527677>
- Bookmark the link so you can find the site quickly next time you order
- Hit the "enter" key.
- AmazonSmile information should appear. After reading the information, click the "Start Shopping" box.
- Another information page should appear. Click on the "Yes" box to support Okanogan County School Retirees.
- Click on the "Start Shopping" box.
- The homepage for AmazonSmile should appear. Happy shopping!

### **MORE MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

**New Members Welcomed:** From Okanogan Virginia Grainger Elementary: **Kristofer Clark, Amy Sullivan, Shayla Rauch-Picard;** and from Winthrop **Lin Lasater.**

**In Memoriam: Neoma Vandiver** passed away August 23, 2017 at age 89. Neoma taught school in Oroville for many years.

**In Memoriam: James Aos,** age 77, died on November 17, 2017. James was a welding and machine shop teacher at Omak High School.

### **BOARD MEMBER MARKS 20 YEARS**

(Reprinted from the *OMAK PIONEER PRESS*, Jan. 2017)

Along with about 35 years as a teacher--first in Okanogan and then Omak School District, Marjorie Thompson has marked 20 years of service to the district as an Omak School Board member.

She first became a board member in summer 1996, and was recognized for her two decades at the January 2017 board meeting. January is School Board Appreciation Month.

### **COMING EVENTS**

**January 26:** General Meeting, 11:00 Koala Street Grill, Omak; Program - Top Chef

**February 23:** General Meeting, 11:00 Koala Street Grill, Omak; Program - Zachary Spaet, Okanogan FBLA Instructor

**February 26:** E-5,E-6 Coordinating Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Wenatchee Red Lion

**March 30:** General Meeting, Koala Street Grill, 11:00 a.m., Program - Methow Valley Arts Association.

**April 11:** E-5,E-6 Coordinating Council Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Rodeo City Bar-B-Q, Ellensburg

**April 27:** General Meeting, Koala Street Grill, 11:00 a.m., Program - Sergio Duarte, Citizenship Journey

**May 25:** General Meeting, Koala Street Grill, 11:00 a.m., Program - Installation of NEW officers

**June 4-6: WSSRA Convention,** Wenatchee Convention Center

**GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR OCSRA MEMBERS**

**ATTENTION Members of the Okanogan County Retirees' Association (OCSRA) currently employed or volunteering in one of the Association's school districts:**

The Okanogan County School Retirees' Association (OCSRA) offers OCSRA members **16 \$100 GRANTS** to fund projects and materials (excluding field trips) not covered by other financial means. The grants must be used in an OCSRA School District. Eight grants will be awarded in October and eight in February.

**To apply, complete the form below and return it to OCSRA member, Jennie Hedington, PO Box 297, Okanogan, WA 98840, by October 15 or February 15.**

Applicant's  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

School District Mailing  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's e-mail  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Mailing  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level and/or Area of  
Instruction \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students to Benefit from this  
Grant \_\_\_\_\_

Will this Grant provide resources for more than one school  
year? \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes,  
How? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how you will use this grant:

