



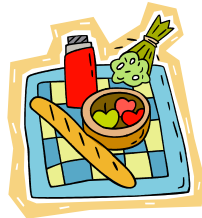
A Union of Professionals

AFT Washington Retiree Chapter, Local 8045R
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RETIREE NEWSLETTER

April 2011

Annual luncheon & meeting will be held May 18 in Tukwila



This spring's annual luncheon and meeting will begin at **11:30 a.m.** on **May 18**, at **635 Andover Park West, Suite 105**, in **Tukwila**. A buffet lunch will begin at about noon—and it'll be free!

As is our custom, the emphasis will be on conversation and conviviality. There will be just a small bit of business, namely the **nomination and election of officers**, and there will be a presentation by **Ann McCartney, Norm Lindquist, and Don and Sandi McVay** regarding **Earthwatch** (please see Ann's article below).

The chapter executive board is comprised of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and five directors. **All members in good standing are eligible to nominate and be nominated for office.** The term of office is two (2) years, commencing at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

Please **mark your calendars and plan to attend.** As the date comes closer, we'll send you a reminder, along with driving instructions.

Retiree lifestyles workshop was a grand success!



On Saturday, April 2, at Renton Technical College, eight retirees from the chapter met informally with several currently-working employees who are considering retirement. The central question: **“What’s it like to be retired?”** The conversation was lively and sustained, the questions were good, and two hours flew by as if they were about 15 minutes. The retiree “panel” was comprised of **Burt Weston, Rosemary Thurston, Robert Petersen, Rhea Nagle, Larry Lowther, Michael Kischner, Bob Jenkins, and Roger Carlstrom.** (Rachael Levine was ill and could not participate.) An information sheet regarding the panelists and what they are doing in retirement has been posted on the AFT Washington website: <http://wa.aft.org>. Click on “Retirees” in the left-hand margin to access the sheet.

Many thanks to all for a job well done.



**You can reach any
U.S. senator at a
single 800 number.**



Political activist and chapter executive-board member **John Guevarra** has informed us that you can leave a message for any U.S. senator by calling **1-866-251-4044**. That would include our own two senators, **Patty Murray** and **Maria Cantwell**, of course, but also the other 98. It's not so easy with members of the House of Representatives. But then, there are a lot more of them than there are senators.

**Earthwatch will be
discussed at the
chapter's annual
luncheon meeting**

**By K. Ann McCartney
Exec. Board Member**



For over 30 years, Don and Sandi McVay, Norm Lindquist, and I have had amazing adventures around the world, working with scientific researchers on Earthwatch expeditions. At the AFT Washington Retiree Chapter annual luncheon and meeting, we will tell about our adventures and how what Earthwatch does makes a difference in the world. The organization contributes to peer-reviewed scientific knowledge, it is a great tax write off, and it creates an opportunity to live and work with ordinary people in a country.

Earthwatch is a non-profit corporation that brings together an inclusive community of scientists, corporate and non-profit partners,

teachers, students and everyday citizens to help change the world. Earthwatch funds the projects, volunteers sign up for them and pay Earthwatch, and the projects provide training, housing, and meals for the volunteers.

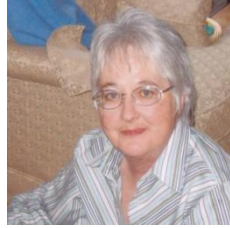
Some of the nineteen Earthwatches (12 for Don and Sandi; 7 for Norm and me) have included: tracking timber wolves in Minnesota, digging for the road in the Tsar's horse cemetery in St. Petersburg, Russia, gathering data on wildlife in the Peruvian Amazon, archeological explorations of an Etruscan farmhouse in Tuscany and Aboriginal rock shelters in Australia, and riding bicycles to observe the European Roller in Provence. These are but a few of the adventures that can await an Earthwatch participant.

Please come to hear our presentation. We think you'll enjoy it!

K. Ann McCartney began teaching at Shoreline Community College in 1967 and retired in 1996. She taught public speaking, interpersonal communication, group discussion, voice and articulation, marriage and the family, death and dying, and multicultural issues. She was instrumental in helping to form the AFT Washington Retiree Chapter in 2003 and has served as secretary, as president and as an executive board director of the chapter. She has also served as the chapter's representative to the AFT Washington Executive Board.

The news is mostly bad for retirees, both statewide and nationally

By Mary Hale
Exec. Board Member



As a 2011-2013 budget balancing measure, the 2011 Washington State Legislature is now considering **elimination of COLAs** for retirees in **TRS 1** and **PERS 1** (HB 2021). Governor Gregoire included this COLA elimination in her mid-December 2010 budget proposal to the Legislature. The proposal would also **reduce the current subsidy** provided to retirees **for purchasing health benefits** from the state.

If this cost-saving measure is included in the 2011-2013 budget (and subsequently upheld in expected court challenges), savings to the state are estimated to be approximately \$415 million dollars. The fact that previous legislatures failed to put away adequate dollars to fund these systems probably won't "hold much water" in this budget crisis. Quite a number of AFT Washington retirees and their spouses would be affected by this COLA elimination.

AFT Washington lobbyists think that there is little hope of the measure being defeated.

On the national level, it appears unlikely that we'll receive a Social Security COLA for the third year in a row. At the same time, Medicare Part B deductions continue to increase.

But here's some positive news!

During this 2011 legislative session, AFT Washington retirees have participated in **letter-writing sessions** to their own district legislators about the need to close tax loopholes and use the resulting revenues for education, health care, and social services. Retirees also participated in a **March 17 rally in Olympia** (140 nonprofit and labor organizations involved) to ask legislators to end some of the \$9 billion in tax exemptions that big corporations get in this state. Thank you **Rachael Levine, Rita Smilkstein, Susan Levy, Garet Munger, Bonnie Flahavan-Aghai, Nancy Moore, Don Hale, John James, John Guevarra, Robin Guevarra, Carol Hamilton, and Earl Hamilton** for all your good work!

Mary Hale is the chapter executive board's liaison to AFT Washington COPE.

Progressive talk radio provides alternatives to Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh

By Norm Lindquist



I have been listening to **progressive talk radio** for about two months. I had not realized that we had an alternative to Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh here in Bellingham. It has been enlightening to follow the recent activities from Madison, Wisconsin from a positive, non Union-busting point of view. It is in our best interest to support this programming and to inform others of a progressive voice on the radio.

Here is a list of current stations that provide a pro Union voice:

Aberdeen, KXRO, 1320 AM

Bellingham, KBAI, 930 AM

Seattle, KTPK, 1090 AM

Spokane, KTPQ, 1280 AM

Portland, OR, KPOJ, 620 AM

The commentators include **Ed Schultz**, **Stephanie Miller**, **Thom Hartman**, and **Randi Rhodes**.

Norm Lindquist began teaching Mathematics at Western Washington University in June 1967. He retired in January 2008.

**Let's not forget
what unions have
done for all of us**

By Dave Daugharty



The union movement is directly responsible for the eight-hour workday, the five-day workweek, overtime pay, pension plans and child labor laws. Unions are advocates of health care for all, social security, the Wagner labor act, veteran's benefits, Medicare, OSHA, and public education. Unions have worked to eliminate unfair management labor practices, such as discrimination, cronyism and sexual harassment. Fifty years ago, teachers experienced unequal pay for equal work, as the principal had no principles and so gave more money to the sycophants. Women

teachers did not receive the favored status men had because they were the wrong gender.

A quick review of working conditions in the United States before unions became powerful and active in the United States will reveal the terrible conditions where people labored. Read, for instance, *Labor's Untold Story* by R.O. Morays and H.M. Boyer, which documents incidents like the Ludlow Massacre, or the horrors inflicted on workers by the Pinkertons. This writer has known a person who had an eye poked out by those goons, and a family that was forced to leave a coal mining town in Montana in the middle of the night because the father, a miner, was threatened with death for advocating an eight hour work day.

I have been quite amazed by the anti-union actions of several Republican Governors and the support they have received from opinion pieces occurring in most newspapers. In particular, the venom has been directed toward state employees as well as the state governors and legislators that have supported collective bargaining.

I find it unfathomable that people would oppose the union movement in our country. The union movement has been responsible for supporting and advocating for most if not all of the social gains we have.

My list of social issues here that unions have supported is in no way inclusive, but I hope it will prompt everyone to consider more positively his or her view of unions while the present anti-union movement makes organized workers more necessary than ever.

Dave Daugharty began teaching mathematics at Eastern Washington University in 1965 as an adjunct faculty member. He became a full-time instructor of mathematics in 1966 and retired as a full professor at the end of 1995. He was president of the local at EWU “when no one else would take the position,” he says, because achieving collective bargaining “looked hopeless.” When he was not president, he served as chair of the grievance committee. He also was an active member of the Washington Federation of Teachers executive board.

Why I am no longer a liberal

By Ross Rieder
Chapter President



For decades, in fact since I was a teenager, I considered myself a liberal. Mercifully, I won't regale you with my liberal activities and thoughts.

That category—the “liberal class,” as Chris Hedges calls it—is a category I can no longer abide.

At the beginning of Chapter 5 in his latest book, *Death of the Liberal Class*, Hedges asserts that the liberal class has long since disposed of “its most independent and courageous members.” As long as the liberal class “remained accountable to the citizenry, managed power with a degree of responsibility and justice, governed so that it could still respond to the common good, and accepted some of the piecemeal reforms proposed by the liberal class,” he says, this

attrition was “affordable.” The purge “was completed with ruthless efficiency over the past thirty years,” however, as “the state was slowly hijacked by corporations.” Beginning with Ronald Reagan's presidency, liberal thought assimilated “corporate ideology” and thus “the principle tenets of liberalism” were discarded. Controlled by corporations, the institution of the liberal class “was soon mouthing the corporate mantra that economics and the marketplace, rather than human beings, should guide political and economic behavior. Liberal thought, he says, had become defined by “Free market capitalism,” a belief system that was “distinctly illiberal.”

I can't think of a better summing up of why I no longer consider myself a liberal.

Now, I admit that I will not necessarily sever my connections with some liberal institutions, like the three unions with which I am associated, the public access radio station on which I produce a program, my frequent vote for NOTA (“None Of The Above.”) But from the “institution of liberalism” and the liberal class, I have granted myself an extended vacation.

I recommend highly that you read *Death of the Liberal Class*.



The lives we lead are stories

By Marcia Barton
Chapter Treasurer



*You are/who you are, right now,
And the mind is so scared it closes its eyes
And then forgets it has eyes. . .*

Ron Padgett

In the early 60's when I was a young mother and novice teacher, I was aware of the story of how my life was supposed to work. I had a household, children, and a teaching job, and each was supposed to run smoothly: Unless the household were serene and the children happy and civilized, I was falling down on the job. The teaching, it was assumed, would naturally take care of itself. Of course, it all had to look easy.

In retirement, there's another story about the good life, familiar to everyone. In this story, elders lead active, healthy lives among good companions. We enjoy independence, because our wits and our savings will last out our time. At the end, we might echo the words of the prayer book: Grant us a quiet night and a peaceful end.

Early retirement years may well bear out that happy story of the good life, but in time, aging shifts the ground under our feet. Energies and interests diminish. Family ties and friendships loosen or dissolve. Resources run out. Companions change or are beyond our reach. This is not the story of our happy, hardy old age. Somewhere, something must have gone wrong – and it's really scary.

Accommodating those changes requires reinventing ourselves, factoring in our altered capabilities and circumstances to maintain a balance. How do we make less-than-ideal aging bearable? Inevitably, we must find the answers for ourselves. Some are life-long pleasures: for me, good music and good reading matter greatly, both made better by being shared. Some are unexpected: I have stumbled into a weekly writing group that enlivens and enriches every Monday afternoon.

I'm grateful for those benefits and for every day that NPR survives and public libraries stay open, despite municipal budgets. I'm fortunate to have grandchildren nearby; the chance to glimpse the world through young eyes is a privilege, a perspective that offsets all-too-available gloom.

Finally, about gloom: long experience and well-honed insight make the sorry state of the world so clear to us. It's almost irresistible to share hard-won wisdom. But younger people have to live in that world, learning from their own experiences; calling the world hopeless is unkind and unproductive.

Marcia Barton taught writing, literature and some creative writing at Seattle Community College from 1966 until 1999, when she retired. She was also part of teams teaching Women's studies and global studies, as well as some coordinated studies. She served as a campus vice president for Local 1789, working "fairly intensely," she says, "with faculty development and through that function with faculty-initiated student evaluation."