



# AFT Washington Retiree Chapter

## RETIREE NEWSLETTER

*A Union of Professionals*

AFT Washington Retiree Chapter, Local 8045R  
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### Legislate this, boys & girls!

By Ross Rieder  
Chapter President



Our legislature is in session. Like every other session, it provides an opportunity for truly progressive legislation like a progressive income tax (and other significant fairness-producing changes) to be considered and adopted. My message to my two representatives

and my state senator (all Rs) in my legislative district has been to suggest they all do this "right" thing so both parties get blamed and the voters can't get even with anybody.

Yeah, I know—I chuckle at it, too.

And that brings me to another far out and far away issue. The first time I visited Australia (OZ) in 1982, I was shocked to discover that workers there received an extended vacation from their jobs, no matter whether it was at McDonalds or the University of Melbourne (OZ tongues pronounce it "Melbun") every ten years. Imagine: all workers got a sabbatical

of a sort.

This was one of my first epiphanies about my own homeland: we are a backward lot when it comes to human-comfort legislation.

Then in the late '90s, the Liberals (who aren't even as liberal

as our Democrats but mostly less conservative than our Republicans) took over the federal government

and tried all sorts of radical damage to OZ society. After all that, the Labor Party took over about five years ago.

**Andrew Vickers**, General Secretary of the Mine Workers union in OZ reported in the December 2011 issue of the union's magazine that new legislation regarding Long Service Leave, for the first time since the introduction of the Long Service Leave scheme, "makes the entitlement to 13 weeks of Long Service Leave after 8 years service a minimum legal entitlement, regardless of whether you are covered by an Award or Enterprise Agreement." Moreover, he reported that "new laws also introduce significant important changes to make the scheme work better - including the introduction of 'aggregate' rather than 'continuous' service as the basis for the entitlement and the treatment of all workers equally, regardless of whether you are a casual, part-timer, employee of a labour hire company or an apprentice."

So, members, friends and neighbors, that's why I say "Legislate This, Boys and Girls." And, of course, I remind you: this type of leave is not limited to just academics! Go, Legislature! And, Good On Ya, OZ Labor Party.

### Inside this issue

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### Switch from snail mail to e-mail

If you receive this newsletter via the US Postal Service, please consider switching to email delivery. You'd receive the newsletter sooner, it would look great on your screen, and it would help AFT Washington save some money on paper, postage and labor. Let **Susan Levy** know that you'd like to make the switch by sending her an email: [aftwarsjl@gmail.com](mailto:aftwarsjl@gmail.com). She'll do the rest.

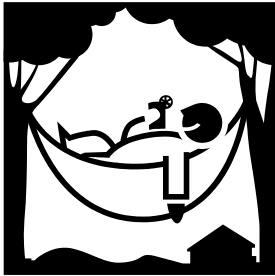


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### Here's a "heads up" on events coming in the spring



On the **first or second Saturday of April**, in the Puget Sound area, we will hold our second annual **Retiree Lifestyles Workshop**. This two-hour workshop will be an informal round-table discussion of **what it's like to be retired**. Some-

thing like 8 to 10 retirees will describe their experiences in retirement with such matters as

- Adjusting to life without work
- Living within one's means without a paycheck coming in
- Going to places you couldn't go when you were working and doing things you couldn't do before
- Making mistakes and overcoming them
- Deciding to go back to work or finding new work of some kind
- Finding ways of going out in the world for stimulation and bringing that stimulation back home with you
- And whatever else they might want to talk about

**Anyone in AFT who is considering retirement, either sooner or later**, will be invited to attend. We'll send details out to local union presidents just as soon as those details are completed. Last year's workshop was informative and great fun for both retirees and attendees. That should be the case this time too!

### The Annual Meeting

Sometime in **late April or early May**, we'll be holding our annual meeting somewhere in the Puget Sound area. At press time, the chapter executive board had not yet decided the when and where of it all. Stay tuned. We'll send you details just as soon as we can.



### Retirees have an important role to play

By **Mary Hale**  
Chapter Treasurer



With a roughly \$1.5 billion budget shortfall for the biennium, higher education funding is threatened once again by possible cuts of 13-17% to community and technical colleges and 4-year universities. During the

current 60-day legislative session (January 9-March 2), AFT Washington will focus on doing what we can to minimize the extent of the cuts and also support any measures or referenda that can reinstate lost funding for education.

You can help in these efforts.

AFT Washington will be organizing members to make phone calls, send emails, write letters, testify at hearings, and meet face-to-face with legislators during the session. If you can help, just contact **Kristin Elia**, State Affiliate Political Organizer, by phone, **206-432-8085**, or by email, [kelia@aftwa.org](mailto:kelia@aftwa.org), and let her know what you'd like to do.

In addition, you can stay informed by signing up for AFT Washington's weekly **Legislative Alerts**. Contact **Sylvia Watson** at **206-432-8084** and let her know your email address, *which will not be shared* with other groups, businesses, etc.

*Remember that current and retired faculty and classified staff are the best messengers when it comes to letting legislators know that our students, higher education employees, and communities cannot survive another round of cuts.*

I also urge you to become a Committee on Political Education (COPE) **donor**. COPE helps support our labor and education champions in their bids for election and re-election. Contact **Kristin** at the above phone number or email address for more information.

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Finally, **leave messages** for your legislators on the **Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000**. It's quick and easy, and it can be effective. Hotline operators will ask for your name, address, and telephone number, and will provide you with your legislators' names based on the address information that you provide. I left my first message on the first day of the session: *Please, no more cuts to higher education.*

### How collective bargaining came to Eastern Washington University

*Ed. Note: In the October-November 2011 issue of the Retiree Newsletter, J. Kaye Faulkner wrote of his experiences with trying to bring collective bargaining to faculties in the state's four-year colleges and universities during the 1970s. At the end of his article, I noted that "In the 1990s, he helped to organize the faculty at Eastern Washington University, who ultimately elected a merged AFT/WEA union as their bargaining representative."*

*Al Brisbois, who is a former WFT President and who served on the Board of Trustees of EWU in the 1990s, wrote an email to Kaye and me in response, and I asked Al if he would allow me in this issue to include an edited (for brevity) version of what he wrote. He agreed. I also asked Kaye if he would write an account of the EWU organizing effort from his perspective.*

*What follows, then, is a picture of what most of us would see as a most remarkable event in the annals of collective bargaining for faculty.*

RC

### We had a great opportunity! By Al Brisbois



In 1990, I was appointed to fill the remaining term of someone from Seattle on the Board of Trustees at Eastern Washington University. As I recollect, on the first day of the Board's monthly meeting in September, we all ate breakfast

with the faculty. I was introduced and given time to address them. I remember saying that I was an alumnus and the former president of the Washington Federation of Teachers. I went on to say that the last time I had been on the campus in an official capacity as president of WFT I was asked to leave the campus, as I had challenged their decision to take a court suit. (In 1990, I remembered what the suit was about; but I can't remember now.) Someone from AFT, the legal department, I think, was also given the boot. I told the faculty that first day that I had been trying to organize the Eastern faculty for several years but hadn't had success because there was no collective bargaining law in place. Now that I was on the other side as management, however, I thought maybe it was time for the faculty to get a contract without a law. I remember **Vinnie Russell** used to say, if a union were well organized, it didn't need a law.

Since I was appointed in the late spring, I had had some good talks with **Mark Drummond**, who was acting president of the university at the time. He said he was amenable to the faculty having a contract because he wanted all the policies of the university in one place. That idea would "grease the skids" for the faculty, I thought.

On the board at the time was **Jim Kirschbaum**, who was my sponsor from Seattle; the mayor of Spokane **Jack Geraghty**; **Mike Ormsby**, who is now Federal attorney from Spokane; **Joe Jackson**, the first black mayor of Pasco, also known by labor as "Mr. Democrat"; **Julian Torres**, a high school principal from Yakima, **Jean Beschel**, a professional volunteer from Spokane; and myself from Seattle. It was a very liberal board.

I think the four-year colleges and universities might not have had a law today if it hadn't been for Eastern University faculty stepping forward. Initially, I had my doubts that the faculty could actually get it all together, but as time went by, I became very pleasantly surprised.

*Al Brisbois was a junior high school teacher in the Tacoma School District from 1958 until 1975 and was president of*

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*the Tacoma Federation of Teachers, Local 461. In 1975, he was elected president of the Washington Federation of Teachers and served in that capacity until 1985, when he was elected Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, a position he held until 1993. He subsequently moved to Orcas Island, where he served first as a substitute teacher in the school system and then as athletic director for the school district for five years. He then returned to Tacoma, where he has been ever since. His main vocation nowadays appears to be riding a bicycle that currently has 27,000 miles on it, all of which he has put on himself, he says.*

### It was a time to act

By J. Kaye Faulkner



After my return from three years in New Zealand in 1993, I called **Al Brisbois** to renew our old friendship. Al had been the Washington Federation of Teachers president and later secretary treasurer of the State Labor Council. He was now on the Board of Trustees at Eastern Washington University and told me that the board was amenable to a collective bargaining agreement with the faculty union, even though there was no collective bargaining law in place. With this news, I called my colleague, **Vincent Russell**, also a national representative with AFT. We were both eager to gain recognition for the local AFT Union as the exclusive bargaining representative for the faculty at Eastern, and so he arranged with AFT to have himself assigned to Eastern and to provide a half-time assignment there for me.

It was March, already late in the academic year, and we did not have much time in the year to complete the collection of cards calling for a bargaining-representative election. **Dave Daugherty**, a faculty member at Eastern and long-time faculty-union activist, would play an important role in our efforts.

Our analysis of the situation led us to conclude that we should try to put together a local that was merged with the WEA organization on the campus so as to avoid inevitable fights that would arise between the two groups in a collective-bargaining election. Accordingly, we along with WFT President **Susan Levy**, arranged to meet with people from the WEA, and all of us agreed that a merger would be in the best interests of everyone.

As I recall, we asked the League of Women Voters to count signature cards calling for an election and to certify the number.

I travelled to Spokane on Mondays and spent weeks through the summer of 1993 collecting cards. I had a lot of help from Daugherty and other faculty members on the campus and from time to time from the WEA representative, **Steve Pulkkinen**, and from the WEA office. If we needed anything typed or printed, the Spokane office of WEA was accommodating. Ultimately, we collected enough cards to satisfy the Board of Trustees, though I've forgotten the number.

An election was held, and the merged local won. Subsequently, a collective bargaining agreement was negotiated, the first for four-year faculty in the state. It was an important victory!





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#### Please help me tell the story of Local 1789

By Carol Hamilton



My local, AFT SEATTLE—1789, was formed in 1967 at Seattle Central when it became a community college (no longer the Edison Technical School) in the Community College Act of 1967. Our union had a major role in the past 40 years working for better working conditions, salary details, and delivery of a superior education for the students. Those of us

around for the “golden starting years” need to leave a history for those who follow. Younger colleagues don’t know the “stories” or the struggles that are represented in contracts negotiated and strikes threatened or enacted; they don’t know the historical fossils represented in the words of a contract.

How can we tell the story?

In most cases the story is hidden in the snippets of papers that have been accumulated by the union over time and that reside in dusty boxes in a dark corner of our District office basement where black mold grows on the concrete floor.

For an “archivist” of the union’s history, as I would like to be, the question becomes how to go about the task of sorting through these snippets.

In the Fall of 2010, two months before I retired after 35 years teaching at community colleges, I met with **Conor Casey**, the new Labor Archivist at the UW Library, and he began to educate me about archiving. Essentially, I would have to do the “sorting, organizing and interviewing” necessary to get this project going, and it would be a several-years-long project. Thus, I am slowly going through the boxes—sometimes at home away from the dark and damp—to find the gems in “kept” records that would otherwise be tossed and to find the valuable papers that will become part of the archive at the UW Library.

He also advised me to collect interviews—audio or video—with colleagues from the first years of the local. Thus far, my favorite experience with this project has been interviewing the first President of Local 1789, **Lloyd Frissell**, and his wife, **Roberta**, who were both there in the beginning years of Seattle Central and North Seattle and have wonderful stories to tell.

If you have a history with Local 1789, I would love to have such an interview with you. Please get in touch with me by email, [carolhamilton@gmail.com](mailto:carolhamilton@gmail.com).

*Carol Hamilton taught part time at Seattle Central & South Community Colleges and at Edmonds Community College from 1974-79, and then she taught English full time at North Seattle Community College from 1979 until her retirement in 2010. She was active in AFT unions at both Edmonds and SCCD.*

#### We pile on the years

By Marilyn Smith



In the early 1980s, in a course I developed for seniors on Reading and Writing Autobiography, I had my first close-up view of the internal process of piling on the years.

Now I have an even closer view. I’ve often said that each of us ages for the first time—and we do it alone. We can’t catch a shocking glance of this old person in a mirror or a photo and say, “Oh, don’t you remember how stunned you were to see yourself the last time you got older?”

Years ago I used to wonder if some unquestionable success could offer its author an award of lifetime achievement, a peaceful oasis on which to know that you have wrapped up your mark in the world and to rest your life on its merits. I learned, vicariously, that creating something of great value only drives the desire for another success, and another.

Retirement withdraws the structure of meaning that a routine of work provides. Without the frame of re-

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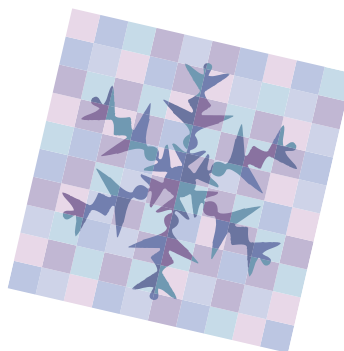
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quirements and responsibilities, a person has to make most of it up. Where does meaning and accomplishment now reside?

In the years since the automatic structures of students, colleagues, and routine have disappeared from my days, I have more time to think about what creates and carries meaning for me—and what doesn't. I now sometimes feel profound meaning in the color of flowers and the autumn leaves, in the daily designs of the sky, in meeting old friends and the chance gift of a new friend. I contemplate the lessons I learn rather than those I've designed: the courage of my friends who have lost children and partners to go on living; the power to endure an illness or an injury; the delight of grandchildren becoming young adults; my husband's steady breathing when I am awake at night; the truths I discover through other lives that lasso in words what I've known but not articulated; the satisfaction of a long walk.

All the years are still inside me. I reflect on the graveyards and camps and monuments to the dead that I have seen in my travels, reflecting lives that struggled to find their place and their meaning while they had the time. I am part of this vast and unrelenting march. I wonder: How much time do I still have to carve out meaning behind the façade of my new old face?

*Marilyn Smith taught a wide variety of courses in English and the Humanities as well as in integrated studies programs at North Seattle Community College from 1969 to 2008, when she retired. She holds the title, Faculty Emeritus, English and Humanities. One of her many activities in retirement is teaching a monthly course to senior adults in writing memoirs.*



*Winter*

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and click on "Retiree Members"