



**AFT Washington
Retiree Chapter
Local 8045R**

Retiree Newsletter

A Union of Professionals

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April/May 2016

It's spring—time for the annual meeting!

Plan to attend & bring family & friends

**Wednesday, May 18, 2016
from 11:30 a.m. till 2:00 p.m.**

**The Bridge at Village Cove
6846 Woodlawn Avenue NE, Suite 3B**

**Lunch (from 11:45 a.m. until 12:30)
will be FREE!**

**RSVP by Wed., May 11, to
Merrilee Miron
(mmiron@aftwa.org or 206-423-8083)**



Mary Hale, President
Susan Levy, Vice President & Liaison to Other Retiree Organizations
Rosemary Thurston, Secretary
Glenda Hanson, Treasurer & Chapter Rep. to AFTWA COPE
John Guevarra, Director
Ann McCartney, Director
Ross Rieder, Director & Chapter Rep. to AFTWA Exec. Board

Roger Carlstrom, Editor

Merrilee Miron, AFTWA Staff Liaison

After a very brief business meeting and lunch, the chapter Executive Board will provide a program that focuses on the 2016 elections.

We'll have three speakers

State Senator Pramila Jayapal, who is running for Washington's 7th Congressional District and who has been endorsed by AFT

AFT Regional Director Gerard Friesz, who will provide thoughts and insights on the 2016 presidential campaign

Kristin Elia, AFT Washington Political Organizer, who will describe AFTWA's process for candidate- and ballot endorsements and contributions

When you RSVP to Merrilee

Let her know how many of you there will be for lunch, and she'll give you directions to the place (if you need them) and info on where to park.



What's Inside

- Retiree Action in Brief
- Glenda Hanson on COPE
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- Mary Hale Sings the COLA Blues
- "Microaggression" in Higher Education
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- Jeffrey Toobin on Justice Scalia
- Marcia Barton on Throwing Rocks
- Roger Carlstrom on ODR



Retiree action in brief

During the 2016 winter months, our chapter's Executive Board

- Contacted Washington State Insurance Commissioner **Mike Kreidler**, urging him to reject Zoom Health Insurance as a health insurance corporation in the state. The Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (one of our "partners" in advocating for retirees) discovered that Zoom+Care clinics do not accept Medicare or Medicaid patients. Instead, Zoom cherry picks the young and healthy ones and leaves the older and sicker and low-income patients to other providers.
- Contacted our U.S. senators **Murray** and **Cantwell** and our congressional delegation in opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a binding pact that would pose significant threats to American jobs and wages, the environment, food safety and public health, and falls far short of establishing the high standards that the U.S. should require in a 21st century trade agreement.
- Voted to contribute \$50 from our Retiree Contribution account for the Museum of Northwest Art's first Xicano Poetry Reading series in conjunction with the Art show titled Pacific Northwest Mexicano and Xicano Art that was to be held on March 25-26 in LaConner. The request came from **Angelica Guillen**, an AFT retiree and a 2010 winner of AFTWA's **Cesar Chavez Award**. We also offered to provide retiree email addresses in the area to help boost participation.



Here's an update on AFTWA COPE activities By Glenda Hanson, Treasurer



The Committee on Political Education met in February to evaluate the candidates for the Seventh U.S. Congressional District vacancy. After reviewing responses to our questionnaire and interviewing candidates, the Committee recommended

to the AFT Washington Executive Board that state senator **Pramila Jayapal** be endorsed for the vacancy. The Executive Board ultimately approved the recommendation at its March 5 meeting and sent it on to the national AFT, which officially adopted it. (As noted on page 1 above, Senator Jayapal will be a featured speaker at our annual meeting on May 18.)

The Committee is now in the process of finalizing our 2016 legislative candidate endorsement questionnaires, and they will be sent out to candidates on April 15 with a deadline for return of May 1. The Committee will use a rubric to evaluate and make recommendations for endorsements and contributions sent to the Executive Board for a final vote at their June 4 meeting. In addition to the legislative races, we will be sending out questionnaires to candidates running for Governor. This year the Committee will also consider conducting our own endorsement process for the other eight state executive offices that are up for election

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in 2016. In previous years, due to capacity, the Committee has followed the recommendations of the Washington State Labor Council’s COPE endorsements for these statewide executive offices. That process is very thorough, beginning with questionnaires and interviews at the central labor councils and concluding with final votes by delegates at the WSLC’s COPE Convention. The other eight statewide executive offices include:

- Lt. Governor
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Auditor
- Attorney General
- Natural Resources Commission
- Insurance Commissioner

Finally, I recently discovered a website called Ballotpedia, which is “a nonprofit and nonpartisan collaborative encyclopedia designed to connect people to politics.” Featured information includes elections, politicians and candidates at all levels of government: elections, Congress, state executive officials, state legislatures, recall elections, ballot measures and school boards. This website was very helpful for looking at what is happening in government. I recommend that you check this easy-to-use website out: <https://ballotpedia.org/>.



Look what happens when the price of drugs is negotiable! By Rosemary Thurston, Secretary



This is the first year that I have had a deductible on my Medicare Part D Insurance. After going to <https://www.medicare.gov/> and choosing Part D, I found that keeping my previous insurance was a better choice over the year than changing to a different plan, even

though I had a \$300 deductible. I am aware that the Congress has not allowed Medicare to negotiate drug costs, but the insurance companies that offer Part D do. By February, I had met the \$300 deductible and here is what I found:

Drug	MFG Cost	Negotiated Cost	% of Orig. Cost Paid
Flecainide	\$200.89	\$32.99	16%
Atenolol	\$37.49	\$19.81	52%
Potassium	\$71.89	\$16.13	22%
Restasis	\$563.99	\$225.74	40%*

*The last one was only what was left of the deductible and thus not the full cost borne by the insurance company.

There was one other that I haven't included, so it doesn't quite add up to \$300 for you math wizards. I called to find out why I wasn't paying the full cost and was told that the negotiated cost was the full cost to the insurance company and thus became my deductible cost.

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My husband and I both got the flu in February, and we each got *Tamiflu*. He pays less for his insurance premium with a lesser known company, but he paid more for the drug, so I am assuming the larger the insurance company, the more clout they have to negotiate.

Even though this is one story, I am sure that it is a pretty common one shared by all of us. Why shouldn't we all have the benefits of negotiated reductions in drug costs?

The only conclusion that I can come up with is that we must *lobby the Congress* to allow Medicare to negotiate drug costs for all of us. Contact your Senators and Representatives in Washington, DC, and ask them to allow Medicare to negotiate drug costs!

Singing the COLA blues By Mary Hale, President



Some (a few?) of you may have followed my Teachers Retirement System 1 (TRS 1) and Public Employees Retirement System 1 (PERS 1) COLA updates in the

political columns that I have written for this newsletter in the past.

To quickly review: During its 2011 legislative session, the state legislature voted not to continue to provide COLAs to retirees in those two state retirement systems. Upon appeal, two lower courts determined that this denial was wrong; but the State Supreme Court ruled otherwise. So, TRS 1 and PERS 1 retirees have not received a state retirement COLA increase since July 2011.

Members in these two retiree groups are the oldest and least likely to be able to secure part-

time or full-time jobs to make up for their decreases in income. Making matters worse, of course, is that there is no Social Security COLA for 2016.

AFTWA is Working with Others to Address COLA Denials. Our AFT Washington lobbyist, **Bernal Baca**, is part of a coalition of representatives from state public employee groups to analyze the fiscal impact of COLA denial to PERS 1 and TERS 1 retirees. The coalition has been meeting for a couple of years and will meet again soon. **If you or your spouse or partner are in one of these two retirement systems, please send an email to Bernal (bbaca@aftwa.org) to share the fiscal impact on your family with him.**

A Personal Perspective. Recently, I calculated (as closely as possible) the financial impact of no PERS 1 COLA increases since July 1, 2011, on my husband **Don** and me. He is a PERS 1 System retiree, and we are both on fixed retirement incomes. I used January 2014 as my starting point because information was readily available. (That is, of course, two-and-a half years after the state COLA denial.) I don't know how much the cost of groceries and medications have increased in the past 2+ years, but I used this time span because January 2014 through early 2016 cost increase information was readily available to me. The following captures some of our increased basic, non-discretionary **monthly** expenses, but not all:

- Property Taxes +\$1,775
- Home Insurance +\$22.83
- Secondary Health Insurance +\$88.
- Everett Utilities (water and sewer): +\$3.32
- Garbage pickup and recycling +\$1.16
- Public Utility District: +6.2%
- Car Insurance: +\$6.05

It's awful to sing the COLA blues, and it's easy to see why AFTWA's efforts with other organizations in this cause are so important.



Great sighs of relief in higher education circles



Ed. note: "The campus free expression act," House Bill 2488, was introduced during the 2016 regular session of the state legislature by thirteen Republican representatives.

The bill would have permitted governing boards of higher education institutions to establish outdoor areas considered to be "traditional public forums." The bill would have permitted these institutions to "impose content-neutral and viewpoint-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions on the use of" these areas for "expressive activities that are necessary to serve a compelling state interest." The restrictions "must allow members of the institution community to spontaneously and contemporaneously assemble." Under the proposed act, the terms "expression," "expressive activity," or "expressive activities" would include "all forms of peaceful assembly, protest, speech, distributing literature, carrying signs, and circulating petitions." "Fighting words," "libelous statements," or "obscene material" would be excluded from protection under the act.

The act would require that these institutions "allow a faculty or staff member to use trigger warnings at the faculty or staff member's discretion" but would prevent institutions from taking "punitive action against a faculty or staff member, with respect to tenure, promotion, or disciplinary action, for not using trigger warnings." Moreover, the act would prevent the institutions from making or maintaining "a policy or rule that would allow them to take "adverse action against, discipline, or otherwise punish a student or a faculty or staff member for using microaggressions."

The bill did not make it out of committee.

Sid Smith (pictured above), our peripatetic investigator, has uncovered the following Department of Higher Education memorandum by

Director Shep Smith (no relation), describing the great relief that came to administrators when it became clear that the bill would not become law. It's not clear to the Newsletter whether this is the complete memorandum or just the first part of one; we pass it on to you, nonetheless, for your information.

Memo: "Measuring Microaggression"
To: University, College and Community College Presidents
From: Shep Smith, Director,
Washington State Department of Higher Education

After House Bill 2488 (An act relating to creating an academic bill of rights) died in committee, college and university presidents are breathing easier and beginning to mull how best they can move to curtail and possibly eliminate microaggressions, which represent a growing problem at institutions of higher education across the country.

A central question raised by those who supported HB2488 was, "how can a microaggression be assumed to happen since it occurs in the mind of the student who may feel it?" Those who raise this question and who claim academia should be a place for the free expression of ideas should be chastened by a recommendation from a state Higher Education Council committee : "Disciplinary Action in Regard to Microaggressions."

In the first half of the report, "Measuring Mental Abuse through Microaggression," the committee recommends campuses hire an administrator to oversee the development and implementation of a microaggression management system (MMS). The administrator will seek students, on a voluntary basis, who will wear to classes a small cap (developed by neuroscientists from Microsoft) that will measure brain activity and fear levels. The signals then will be sent to receivers in each

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classroom's TV monitor and collected at the end of the day by the MMS administrator's staff.

Once the MMS is in place, the instructor's behavior, primarily (but not limited to) speech, can be correlated with the moment fear/anxiety levels spike (i.e., microaggression) in the students' brains, as recorded by the cap.

The second half of the report directs the MMS administrator to prepare a file on each instructor with the college's Deans of Instruction charting the levels of microaggression and fear the students (on a voluntary basis) have recorded. Finally, the report outlines how the college's disciplinary committee shall proceed in recommending actions to be taken against the instructor.

The chronicle of a Native American tribal elder By Al Brisbois



I have spent a lot of time writing a chronicle of my life story to share with my children and grandchildren. I have enjoyed recreating my early remembrances and telling them to my dog, Rip. (Yes, I have chosen to reminisce with my dog who shared so many experiences with me.) Moreover, this project has allowed me to provide some family history

about my father's side of the family.

While my children and grandchildren know I call myself an American Indian who grew up on an Indian Reservation, that's about all they know. While telling my story, I do speak of a humble beginning, yet it was a life full of child-like wonderment and rip-roaring events like creating

our own rodeos by riding calves in a corral, playing town-team baseball, engaging in high school sports, dancing to real cowboy music, and going to movies for the first time. Unlike Chiefs Joseph, Geronimo, or Cochise, I had no reason to resist, so I took off my cowboy boots, spurs and Stetson and then joined the White man's world: the military, college, marriages, rearing children, learning to fly, teaching, coaching, working as a union leader, and experiencing other fascinating happenings.

In my chronicle, there's a vignette about an old Indian neighbor who rode his most beautiful Appaloosa horse to our home and asked my dad and mom over coffee and dessert if he could marry my oldest sister, and he offered my dad twenty beautiful Appaloosa horses for her hand.

In another, I tell of Homer Moore and his lack of hearing that would send everyone into hysterics when he came over to visit his old rodeo partner, my dad.

I've told of the time when my dog Rip and I met real Basque shepherds, who were driving hundreds of sheep to summer pastures along our nearby state highway and giving us meals prepared in a real chuck wagon, just like in the Old West.

There are stories too of keeping in touch with high school friends, who through hard work and maybe some luck became millionaires. Stories of flying military aircraft solo without touching the controls. I attended college with my first-grade teacher.

Some of my stories are comically amusing, others very sad, especially about the past relationship of our Native culture with the federal government.

This project has been a hoot!





Retiree Newsletter

Take us out to the ballgame!

As we did a year ago, the *Newsletter* met in March with community-college-baseball coaching legend **Bill Faller** for his thoughts about the Mariners, based on what he's seen in spring training.

Because the AL West is such a competitive division, he thinks the Ms will have a fight on their hands staying out of last place. He expects Houston to be very strong and the Angels and the Rangers. It will come down, he thinks, to whether Oakland or Seattle finishes last. It's realistic to think that the Mariners can win half their games over the season.



Pitching is most worrisome. The starting rotation has apparently been settled: **Felix Hernandez**, **Hisashi Iwakuma**, **Wade Miley**, **Taijuan Walker**, and **Nathan Karns**. Both Miley and Karns are proven major-league pitchers, and he says it's thought by many observers that Safeco Field will be a big help for Miley, who previously pitched for the Diamondbacks and most recently the Red Sox. The bullpen, on the other hand, is problematic.

He thinks **Mike Montgomery** will continue with the team, especially until **Charlie Furbish** is ready to play as a setup pitcher, especially against left-handed hitters; but Bill has no idea who might be the closer. The bullpen, you could say, is very much a work in progress.*

The infield appears to be in good shape with **Adam Lind** being a significant improvement over **Logan Morrison** last year. **Dae-Ho Lee** is a solid backup. As he did last year, Bill continues to lament that **Robinson Cano**, with his towering fielding prowess, isn't playing shortstop. (Cano's

a born shortstop who couldn't play there because **Derek Jeter** was the Yankee shortstop.)

The outfield too seems strong. If **Leonys Martin** can be moderately successful at the plate, he will be a terrific addition in center field, where he is fleet afoot and has an arm not to be fooled with by baserunners. Left fielder **Norichika Aoki** is a proven major league outfielder with a solid bat. **Seth Smith** has a good bat too and was productive last year. **Nelson Cruz** will be used primarily as a DH.

There's good news too behind the plate, Bill says. Both **Chris Iannetta** and **Steve Clevenger** are proven major league catchers, and **Rob Brantley** is solid too, but Bill doesn't think the team will keep three catchers.

What's left from here is to see how the season plays out. World Series? Not in the picture!

Subsequent to our conversation, the Mariners traded for a right-handed bullpen pitcher from San Diego, **Nick Vincent, and identified who else would be in the bullpen: right-handers **Steve Cishek** (closer), **Joaquin Benoit**, **Tony Zych**, and **Joel Peralta**; and left-handers **Mike Montgomery** and **Vidal Nuno**.*





Solidarity Day was a big, big deal! By Ross Rieder



In the summer of 1981, while working at the Washington State Labor Council as a political action coordinator, I was assigned the duty of organizing our state attendance at an AFL/CIO Solidarity Day in Washington, D.C, on September 19, 1981. The day-long rally was to

iterate labor dislike for labor- and social policies emanating from the Reagan government. The late and great organizer **Will Parry** was added so we could reach out to area local unions for both financial support and participation.

At the time of assignment, we had about 100 days before departure. My first dream was to price how to rent a Boeing product to get our (ultimately) 50 or so people there and back. But, before I could get to the phone, **President Reagan** had fired all the national air traffic controllers for going on strike. There was no way we would cross that picket line!

Our new strategy was to fly through Canadian air to Toronto and take the Greyhound to D.C. About 50 of us car-caravanned to the Vancouver, BC airport on the evening of September 17, arriving at Toronto and hopping onto a Greyhound Bus for the drive from Toronto through Pennsylvania to D.C. Because we had come the longest distance to the event, we were greeted by national television crews who had waited over three hours for us to arrive at our expected time – dinner time. (Our driver had lost the way, and the overheated cooling system on the bus required service in Wheeling, PA.) Congressman **Jim McDermott** was there too.

According to Labor Historian **Timothy J. Minchin**, from 400,000 to 500,000 people participated in this event, which is still the largest US labor-organized rally in US history. “Solidarity Day,” he says, “was able to channel the anger felt by many Americans against Reagan’s policies.”

Our busload contained a wonderful mixture of labor culture: union members from the building trades and the public sector were there, as were culinary workers, machinists, teachers, telephone workers, etc. I still vividly remember watching two culinary workers braiding the hair of a steelworker, sleeping off his Saturday night. After he woke up, it took him awhile to figure out why everyone around him was smiling.

On the return trip on the bus, my wife at the time, **Evelyn Rieder**, became the navigator/guide for our driver, and we were able to have lunch in Wheeling and visit Niagara Falls.

In the next issue of this newsletter, I’ll tell you more about the Solidarity event itself and its meaning for today.



Jeffrey Toobin on Justice Scalia

“Antonin Scalia, who died this month, after nearly three decades on the Supreme Court, devoted his professional life to making the United States a less fair, less tolerant, and less admirable democracy. Fortunately, he mostly failed.”

“Comment,” in The Talk of the Town, The New Yorker, Feb. 26, 2016



The story of Santino

By Marcia Barton



A few years ago, I read a story in the New York Times about **Santino**, the dominant male chimpanzee in the zoo in Furuvik, Sweden. Every day, Santino would collect rocks in his enclosure, which is located on a moated island. He would gather his missiles

near the spot where visitors could stand to observe him, and when they came, he would hurl the stones across the moat.

The zookeepers must have been appalled. What if Santino hit someone? What if he hurt a child? Should he be rusticated, kept out of sight, or moved to some sanctuary or another zoo? Or even put down, if he couldn't be kept from stoning his audience?

The visitors, however, were delighted. Not a bad thing for a provincial zoo, one would imagine. The numbers increased, and everyone wanted to see Santino at his most bellicose. Unsurprisingly, he was very strong, so he had no difficulty getting his rocks across the moat, but he threw underhand, and his aim was terrible. The crowd was even more amused by the bad pitches, and they would hoot and jeer and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Every day his keepers learned to search out Santino's arsenals and remove them, hoping to disarm him. But he was resourceful. He would find the cracks and broken places in the concrete of his enclosure. He could simply knock down sections and break them into appropriately-sized chunks, thus procuring new armaments.

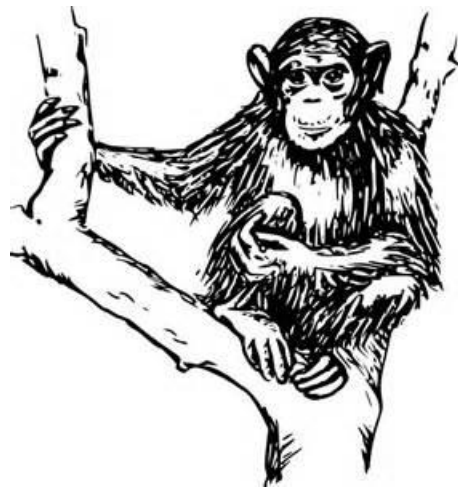
Animal behaviorists who came to study Santino found that he was moving hay from an inside

area and placing it where it would be ready for use to camouflage his stockpiles. The strategy apparently worked quite well, and the observers were delighted to see this evidence that cognitive ability for forward planning is not a uniquely human capability. Not a bad thing to remember.

And it seems to me that, considering some of the ordure that simians residing in zoos have been known to fling, the stones and bits of broken structures might be thought preferable.

I was also, I admit, absolutely tickled by the story. No doubt I was projecting a parallel state of mind in which I might gather up suitable projectiles to hurl at annoying folk or objects. And I imagined that if ever Santino had a lucky hit, he would be absolutely gleeful. I surely would be, and his pitching could not possibly be worse than mine would.

I wonder whether he could run for public office.





You have a dispute?

Try ODR!

By Roger Carlstrom, Editor



I have been a certified volunteer mediator with the Dispute Resolution Center of Yakima & Kittitas Counties for more than twenty-one years. It's an endeavor I have enjoyed very much, for its challenges,

its complexity, and the satisfaction it brings when I've been able to help people resolve their differences, primarily in the areas of parenting and marriage dissolutions. My fellow volunteer mediators feel very much the same about their work, which, for all of us, represents a labor of love.

Thus, I anticipate considerable heartburn among them when I report in May about a presentation regarding **Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)** that I attended at the University of Washington's 22nd Annual Northwest Conference on Dispute Resolution earlier this spring.

ODR can be defined as "the intelligent application of information technology."

The premise is that technology can be employed to resolve disputes between parties without intervention by mediators at all. It's already being employed this way in some business/consumer disputes. For example, according to one researcher, "eBay, the poster child for ODR, is handling over 60 million disputes per year, 90% of which are handled with no human intervention." The same researcher reported that the American Arbitration Association "has announced a partnership with an ODR provider to handle as many as 100,000 arbitrations per year in New York state alone."

ODR sessions can be "synchronous," where the parties and a mediator, say, are all viewing the same screen at the same time, regardless of their locations. In "asynchronous" sessions, where the parties are not viewing the same screen simultaneously, data may be entered at any time.

Mediators have a role to play in ODR when the algorithms show from data entered that the parties haven't or can't resolve their issues without help. In such cases, the mediator could interact with the parties either together or separately or both and try to help them find resolution. Before such an intervention, however, the algorithms would suggest possible solutions to the parties.

I can see how, eventually, ODR could be used in helping parties develop parenting plans and dissolve their marriages, quite possibly without the aid of a mediator. The technology doesn't appear to be available quite yet for this to happen, but I shall not be surprised if it comes sooner than later.

When I make my report in May, I'll take TUMS with me. My fellow mediators may thank me for them.



Contact us:
retireenews@aftwa.org

For back issues of the Newsletter, go to <http://wa.aft.org/retirees>

labor donated