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May 14 is the date of our annual meeting!



Mark your calendars, and let us know you'll be coming to the chapter's **10th annual meeting**, to be held in Tukwila on Tuesday, May 14. We'll "meet and greet," starting at **11:30 a.m.**, and then have lunch at about noon. The address is **South Center Plaza Conference Room, 635 Andover Park W., Suite 105, Tukwila**. For instructions on how to get there, call **Merrilee Miron** at 206-242-4777 or 866-992-3892 (toll free), or send her an email, mmiron@aftwa.org.

We'll be celebrating the past and looking forward to the future. **Robby Stern**, who knows that "entitlements" are really **earned benefits**, will be our luncheon speaker. Robby is presently the president of the Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) and once was a member of our own Local 1789 "back in the days of **John and Marcia Barton**." He will be speaking about the current state of the social safety net – Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid – and what lies ahead for those programs, if we are vigilant and if we are not.

There will be cake.

Sandra Schroeder will be introducing her successor as president of AFT Washington (election to be held on May 4), and we'll "install" Sandra as a new member of the chapter. We'll let her know about some of our retirement ways – and we do have our ways, don't we!

There will be flowers.

Ross Rieder, President
Susan Levy, Vice President
Roger Carlstrom, Secretary
Mary Hale, Treasurer
John Guevarra, Director
Carol Hamilton, Director
Rachael Levine, Director
Rosemary Thurston, Director

Roger Carlstrom, Editor

Merrilee Miron, AFTWA Staff
Liaison

We'll also consider a proposed bylaws amendment (*see* page 2) seeking to broaden our definition of chapter membership and a proposal asking that members make voluntary contributions to the chapter – *see* **Susan and Mary's** article below.

It's also time to elect officers of the chapter for two-year terms, so we'll be conducting elections for president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and five director positions. Any member is eligible to nominate or be nominated for office.

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Robby Stern

Carol Munger

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There will be decorations.

These annual meetings are always convivial and festive affairs, and we think we have special reason to celebrate this year because the chapter itself is ten years old.

Please join us, and **please let Merrilee Miron know** that you're coming (contact info. above) **not later than Wednesday, May 8**, so she'll be able to order enough food for us to eat.

We'll see you then and there.

A proposal for your consideration By Susan Levy and Mary Hale



Susan Levy

running – and we are!

The chapter Executive Board has been talking about how to raise some money for some time. So far, we have been supported by the AFTWA budget and a few grants from our national organization. We hope to continue relying on their support. But, as we have grown as a chapter and become more active, there is a greater need for our own funding. Currently, we receive no dues from retiree members and no financial support from active locals in AFT Washington.

“Thank yous” are in order as we celebrate our tenth-year anniversary: **Sandra Schroeder**, AFT Washington President, the entire AFTWA Executive Board, and **the staff**. They all have helped us get started with this chapter and helped us keep

Carol Manger

AFT Washington Retiree Chapter Proposed Amendments to Bylaws February 26, 2013

The Executive Board hereby proposes the following amendment to the Chapter Bylaws:

Proposed Amendment: Amend Article IV, Section 1, of the Chapter Bylaws as follows:

ARTICLE IV--MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Retired members of the American Federation of Teachers who reside in the State of Washington and whose locals have reported to the AFT that their membership status has been changed from “working” to “retired, active” shall be members of this Chapter, as shall retired members who otherwise appear on an AFT Washington local’s retiree list and who have been reported as such to AFT Washington. ~~((Retired members of the American Federation of Teachers residing in the State of Washington who do not qualify for membership under either of these standards may upon application belong to the chapter.))~~ Upon application, retirees who once belonged to an AFT Washington local or a WFT local or a WSFT local shall be members of the chapter, as shall be retirees who have been employed by AFTWA/WFT/WSFT and retirees residing in the state of Washington who can demonstrate having had some association with an AFT local outside of this state or with the national American Federation of Teachers. Upon application, the spouses, partners, and/or family members of chapter members ~~((may))~~ shall also belong to the chapter.

Accordingly, we would like to make a proposal to the chapter membership at the annual meeting.

We would propose that members be asked to make donations to the chapter. This would be a one-time request. We believe that this is the simplest way to create a chapter treasury that could be used to make donations to causes that share our interests, help support small projects for



Mary Hale

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local retiree groups, and help keep our retiree chapter in touch with other retiree organizations.

We don't expect huge expenses in the near future, but having a treasury would be an important step in our growth and development as we move forward. We, as retirees, are in this together, and a request for donations would allow each retiree to decide how much to contribute.

We're looking forward to this discussion at our annual meeting and hope you'll be able to attend.

Susan Levy was president of the Washington Federation of Teachers from 1985 through 2000, when she retired both from WFT and Shoreline Community College. Presently, she serves as vice president of the chapter.

Mary Hale retired from Edmonds Community College twice, in 2002 (from teaching) and in 2006 (from administration). Presently, she serves as treasurer of the chapter and as the chapter's representative to AFT Washington COPE. She regularly contributes political commentary to this newsletter.

Anniversaries mean something! By Ross Rieder, President



For people who have experienced their high school or college 50th anniversaries and reunions, a tenth anniversary may seem of pretty small significance.

The tenth anniversary of this chapter, however, is meaningful to me because it represents a continuation of activities I have carried out over the past 30 or 40 years in

such causes as education and healthcare. Many of us have joyfully participated in comparable activities, and these activities speak to the meaningfulness of our careers.

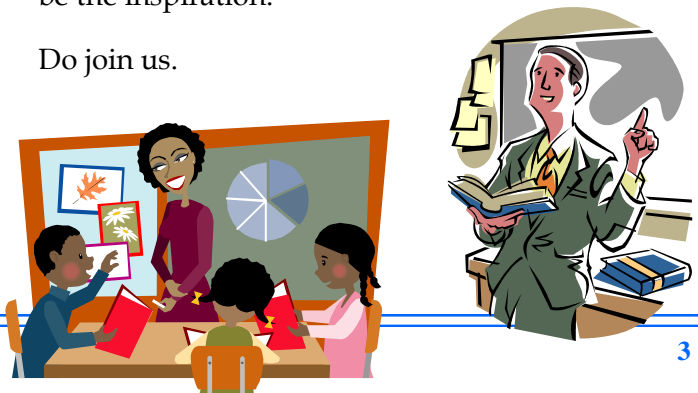
Teaching, educating, has been my family's business.

One of my grandfathers ran a private school in Missouri in the late 19th century. Both my parents were public school teachers – my father for 39.5 years in junior high school. My mother taught English, Spanish, and French in junior high school and high school, took time out to get me out of diapers, and retired from teaching more wisely than my father – she didn't put in nearly as many years! I taught for seven years in junior high before becoming a full-time worker in unions, AFT being the first one. I've always told people I merely moved into adult education.

Even my brother, the poet of the family, tried the ed biz up to the time he was offered tenure in California, when he told authorities they could keep their tenure. He stuck close to the rails, though, ending up in the publishing field with a guy named Fred Praeger (remember those fancy Praeger art books?)

We will gather this May 14 at high noon (for lunch – earlier to "meet & greet") to commemorate the first decade of existence of AFTWA Local 8045R, our statewide local for AFT retirees. It's our tenth Annual General Meeting, and, as noted above, we invite you to join us – the more the merrier. The more there are of us, the greater will be the inspiration.

Do join us.





Here's more about the COLA suit, and some about the Legislature By Mary Hale

As reported in the January/February 2013 issue of the *Retiree Newsletter*, legislative action to deny TRS 1 and PERS 1 pensioners a COLA increase for 2011-2012 was ruled illegal in late 2012 by a Thurston County judge. And, as I thought it would be, the decision is being appealed to the State Supreme Court on behalf of the state.

It may be as long as 12 months before the Court hears the case; but when it does, attorneys working on behalf of TRS 1 and PERS 1 pensioners are very confident that the lower court's decision will be upheld. If so, these pensioners will see an increase in their pensions retroactive to July 2011.

2013 State Legislative Session: As always, AFT Washington staff (with the lobbying support of various locals) has been very active lobbying on behalf of issues of particular concern to members. A few highlights:

- Seeking increased funding for K-12 and higher education
- Allowing community college and technical college unions to bargain over local funds (especially step increases)
- Including a labor representative on community college boards of trustees – currently, the law requires this for technical colleges and the state board
- Raising revenue and not pitting human services funding against education funding



There's another anniversary worth noting! By John James



The Creative Retirement Institute (CRI) of Edmonds Community College celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. It offers non-credit, challenging, and rewarding classes for senior citizens during each quarter of the academic year (September-June).

The CRI's 2013 Spring Catalog lists 32 class offerings. Here is a sampling:

- Afghanistan: Confronting a Change-Resistant Land and People
- All about the Sun: Solar Max, Solar Min, and What it Means
- Arab Spring, European Winter
- Biblical Heroines You Have Never Met
- Classical Music of the Nordic World
- Drought and Flood: What the Disasters of 2012 Mean to the U.S.
- A Glimpse at the Works of Gore Vidal
- Historical Survey of the Aviation/Aerospace Industry
- Homer's *Iliad*
- Solar Systems Beyond our Own

The senior volunteers who help manage and run the Creative Retirement Institute have accurately described it as a "member-driven, self-supporting organization whose mission is to provide affordable, quality, educational opportunities for adults in a supportive environment."

My own involvement with CRI started fifteen years ago when I taught a series on the films of Alfred Hitchcock. Since then I have offered classes on horror films (of the 1930s), movie musicals and classic westerns. I have also taught

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music classes focusing on jazz and popular artists from the '30s, '40s and '50s, including Louis Armstrong, Rosemary Clooney, Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, Billy Eckstine, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Lena Horne, Peggy Lee and Mel Torme. My current classes for winter and spring are "Frank Sinatra, Friends and Rivals Sing the Great American Songbook" and "Grace Kelly at her Best."

I thoroughly enjoy teaching and taking CRI classes. The students are inquisitive, intelligent, and eager-to-learn, and they bring an incredible range of life experience to the classroom. I also enjoy teaching without having to worry about grades and correcting papers.

If you are interested in learning more about the Creative Retirement Institute, as either a student or teacher, contact the Institute at (425) 640-1830 or through its website, www.edcc.edu/cri.

John James served as a librarian at Shoreline Community College from 1975 until 2004, when he retired. He last appeared in the December 2010 Retiree Newsletter with an article on a gathering of Shoreline retirees at a pizza joint in October of that year.

The root cause By Marilyn Smith



On that late, happy September summer day, my life was about to trip on an unseen small root on one of Greenlake's dirt paths. I flew so fast through the air that I had no time to catch myself. Landing on my right hand, I knew that something dreadful had

happened to my left arm.

As I struggled to pull it down alongside my body, a crowd gathered around me, like Sequoia trees I had photographed, kind faces asking if I needed an ambulance. "Oh not for an arm," I said. "If you'll just help me get up, I'll walk to my car and head home." My plan was to take a pill for pain and be done with this mishap.

Walking forward, I had to call the ambulance myself. The resident at the emergency room of the nearest hospital confirmed what I already knew though not by name: that the crown of my left arm's *humerus* had cracked severely. "You are now able to go home," the cocky doc announced.

Incredulous, I asked him how I was to care for myself and for my husband. "Pain pills," he said. "If we put fractures in the hospital, we'd have no room for anyone else. Besides, we have no beds available here."

My body heard his words and the cosmos kicked in. At exactly that time, I began throwing up blood – my ticket, I knew, to treatment at another hospital. Eleven days later, I came home to the care and love of my husband, our children, friends, and some help from an agency; I was grateful that I had three working limbs and most especially, my right hand and arm.

With intense pain, an hour becomes the length of a day. One must pay the gatekeeper's price for any movement – and that price is stabbing, breath-stopping pain. Weeks of healing are overcome minute by minute. One doubts time or the pain will ever pass.

The real scar from those weeks is the knowledge, reaffirmed, of how one's life can turn in an instant from autonomy to near-total dependence.

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You cannot drive with one arm in a sling. A walk in a place I love turned me onto a path and pain I could not have imagined. It has also increased my awe for those whose injuries are so much more severe and whose days might forever be stamped by incapacity.

Marilyn Smith holds the title of Faculty Emeritus and in 2008 retired from North Seattle Community College, where she taught a wide variety of courses in English and the Humanities as well as in integrated studies programs. Her article, "We pile on the years," appeared in the January/February 2012 Retiree Newsletter.

You tell me! By Roger Carlstrom, Editor



I spent time over the winter examining Jonathan Haidt's thoughts about "The Conservative Advantage," to use the chapter 8 title of his 2012 book, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. He speaks of "moral systems" as "interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, technologies, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate self-interest and make cooperative societies possible" (270).

He sets forth a "moral matrix" having six values: (1) Care/harm, (2) Liberty/oppression, (3) Fairness/cheating, (4) Loyalty/betrayal, (5) Authority/subversion, and (6) Sanctity/degradation.

The "Most Sacred Value" for liberals, he says, is "Care for victims of oppression"; liberals are concerned primarily with the first two values and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the third. They pretty

much disregard the others (297). Conservatives, on the other hand, view all six values pretty much equally, and their "Most Sacred Value" is "Preserve the institutions and traditions that sustain a moral community" (306).

Presently, are there *any* "conservatives" in Congress at all?

As I told a couple of friends of mine with whom I went to college, we're not hearing from "conservatives" now; we're hearing from radical reactionaries who, as far as I can tell, proceed from the "sanctity" of deficit reduction and the "sanctity" of not letting Obama have anything. (I've thought all along that just plain racism is the basis for the latter.) They appear to be seeking the destruction of government itself. These reactionaries prevail over those who might consider themselves to be "conservative" by threatening to run a reactionary against them in primary elections — "conservatives" know they'll be beaten by "the base" in those primaries.

In this context, and in the context of the outcomes in the 2012 national elections, I have difficulty applying Haidt's formulations to what's going on now. I can't see, for example, whether Obama's victory was a triumph of "liberalism," as defined by Haidt, a triumph of "conservatism," or something else. I think it's something else, but I can't say what.

Perhaps, voters were just fed up with the extremism; perhaps they're beginning to see that, to borrow from the title of Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein's 2012 book, "it's even worse than it looks."

For back issues of the Newsletter, go to <http://wa.aft.org> and click on "Retiree Members"

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