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We'll be 10 in May!



May 2, 2013, will be the tenth anniversary of the formation of the **Washington Federation of Teachers Retiree Chapter** (now the **AFT Washington Retiree Chapter**). We plan to celebrate this anniversary at our **Annual Meeting**, which will be held in the Seattle area on **Tuesday, May 14, 2013**.

On that second day of May nearly ten years ago, eighteen retirees from WFT (*see* page 2) gathered at the Radisson Hotel in SeaTac to adopt a Reso-

lution Supporting Formation of a Retirees' Chapter, to adopt bylaws, and to elect a nine-member executive board.

Retiree Membership dues were set by the WFT Constitution at one dollar per member per month. The charter members had the idea that dues for most chapter members would be paid by locals from which they retired, provided that individual retirees could join if their locals did not pay their dues. Over time, these dues arrangements proved to be burdensome for AFT Washington's record keeping and more costly to administer than beneficial. Accordingly, upon our request, the AFT Washington Bylaws were amended in 2010 to eliminate the flat-rate \$1.00/month affiliation fee for retirees. At present, dues are not required for membership in the chapter.

From the original eighteen charter members, the chapter has grown to more than 500 members.

Here's what we're trying to do:

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

- Maintain, restore or create camaraderie and communities of interest with AFT retirees
- Foster social, political, cultural, educational and civic pursuits for retirees
- Maintain association with AFT Washington
- Support the aims, goals, and objectives of both AFT Washington and the national AFT
- Promote mutual assistance and cooperation with other organizations with which we may be associated
- Gather and disseminate information of interest to our members

Inside this issue
Ross Rieder: What We've Done
Our Charter Members
Rachael Levine: Doors We've Opened
Mary Hale: Retiree Political Involvement & Good COLA News
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To read our bylaws, go to <http://wa.aft.org/retirees/aft-washington-retiree-chapter-bylaws>.

As President **Ross Rieder** explains below, we have many accomplishments of which we can well be proud, and we want to acknowledge the importance of the help and support AFT Washington President **Sandra Schroeder**, the AFTWA **Executive Board**, and the AFTWA **membership at large** have provided us. Without that assistance, our accomplishments would be fewer indeed.

Thank you all!

We've done some things! By Ross Rieder, President



As many of you know, I was president of what was known as the **Washington State Federation of Teachers**, from late 1967 through early spring of 1975, and, while I had not been a member since 1975, I was pleased to help form the retiree chapter ten years ago with many of my former colleagues.

I think I was first elected a Director at the charter meeting in 2003. Later, someone talked me into becoming vice president. I accepted with the caveat that I would not become president because I still had some pretty heavy full-time commitments. I should have known better. I became president.

In the life of the chapter, we have made starts on some pretty exciting avenues of activity for members of the chapter.

We've held a workshop on "the language of financial planners and other peddlers" and one on retirement calculators. We've held two workshops on retiree lifestyles, though we're currently trying

The Charter Members

R.K. Smith*	Antonia D. Clark
Ross K. Rieder*	William D. Faller
Al Brisbois**	Liliane Gilbert
Susan Levy**	John G. Guevarra
Paul Anderson	Rachael Levine
Sharon C. Benson	K. Ann McCartney
Virginia Bishop	Rhea Nagle
Roger Carlstrom	Sid Smith
Ron Cass	Burt Weston

*Past President, WSFT

**Past President, WFT

to decide whether those workshops should be tailored for people contemplating retirement or those who are already retired!

We've published the *Retiree Newsletter* on at least a quarterly basis since late 2009, and we've sponsored a campus luncheon or two with retirees from a given AFTWA local. Recently, we met with the campus retirement group from **Bates Technical College**.

As president of the chapter, I have served on the **AFT Washington Executive Board**, as did my predecessor, **Ann McCartney**, who also serves as parliamentarian for that body.

In the political arena, we have been heavily involved, thanks especially to the hard and persistent work of **Susan Levy**, in **Social Security Works Washington**, and, thanks again to Susan and to **Mary Hale**, we have participated in AFT Washington phone banks. Mary has also served us well as our representative to **AFT Washington COPE**.

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Finally, the executive board has held meetings on roughly a quarterly basis, and each spring we have held an annual meeting. The next one, as noted above, will celebrate our tenth anniversary. **BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS** for that event—**May 14, 2013**, in the Seattle area. Lunch, as always, will be provided!

We are here to help you keep active in education interests if you wish to be so involved. Every day's news reports demonstrate that what we cared for in our life's work **STILL NEEDS CARING FOR**. We're also here to have a lot of fun, and we do!

We've opened some doors **By Rachael Levine**



Our Retiree chapter has endeavored to open doors for retirees to come together and renew friendships or overcome old grudges. We have identified ways to share our experienced perspectives and support our front line colleagues. We make use of the talents of members as we lobby and represent concerns in other organizations. Having a Labor historian as our president, we are grounded in the history of this Movement that gave us muscle at the bargaining table and demanded quality for our students.

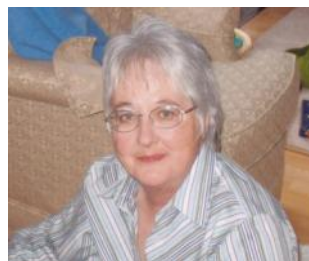
That said, our *Retiree Newsletter* documents these activities in a regular, delightful, and accessible way. (Frankly, who doesn't like to see her or his name in print?) This is an opportunity carefully tended by our resident writer/editor and advisor, who encourages everyone to contribute. These locally-produced articles, those published by AFT Washington, and those produced by the

AFT nationally produce a sturdy soap box on which to take a stand about public education. Active participants are needed to protect the rights we know to be the foundation of a healthy society.

These words do not produce amazing statistical proof. They convey what is most important in any organization—the personal relationships and dedication to commonly held values that still can stoke the "fire in the belly" or needle one's conscience to act.

Rachael Levine retired from teaching at Seattle Central Community College in 1991. She is a charter member of the chapter and presently serves on our executive board.

Retirees have contributed time and money, and the COLA lawsuit looks good **By Mary Hale**



Kristin Elia (the political organizer for AFT Washington) has been out of the office for many weeks (she returns in early January, I believe), and so I'm not able to provide any information about the

AFT Washington legislative focus for this coming session--something that I'd normally do for the January newsletter.

I have the following, however:

Retiree Political Involvement. As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our retiree chapter, let's reflect on some of the political contributions made by our retirees over the past decade through AFT Washington and/or the Washington State Labor Council:

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- Many, many hours of Labor-to-Neighbor doorbelling
- Many, many hours of phone banking
- Participation in Olympia lobby days
- Letter writing to state legislators by legislative district
- Phone calls, emails, and letters to state and national legislators in response to "action alerts"
- Monetary contributions to the Committee for Political Education (COPE)
- Political organizing for the 2008 presidential and gubernatorial campaigns (contacts with AFT Washington locals by 14 retirees)
- Retiree chapter board members' active involvement in AFT Washington COPE recommendations (endorsements and contributions to the AFT Washington Executive Board)
- Participation in political rallies

Retirees have been very generous with their time and money and have undoubtedly helped influence campaign outcomes.

COLA Lawsuit Update: On November 9, 2012, the Court (Thurston County judge) ruled in favor of three union groups that challenged state legislators' decision not to grant a COLA to TRS 1 and PERS 1 pensioners for 2011-2012. The Court held that the legislators' action was illegal. As reported on the **Retired Public Employees Council of Washington** website: "The full effect of (the) determination is a little uncertain as to those who retired before 1996, but on the law it is a clear victory."

I'm assuming that this lower court's decision will be appealed to the State Supreme Court. Thus, the fat lady has not yet sung.



My retirement is a work in progress By Rosemary Thurston



When 2009 rolled around, I was looking forward to 2010 when I could retire and leave the long days behind, when I could go on vacation and not take work with me and not get up early in the morning! Yea!

In my mind, I kept thinking about all the various options I would have in terms of working: places where I could work and where it wouldn't be too stressful; I could go home at the end of the day, and my work would be done. But then . . . *I wouldn't have to work.* What was I thinking?

After I retired, my mind was going over all the things that I didn't have finished . . . and I wanted it all done—NOW! Well, of course that didn't happen. Getting caught up was a priority, and slowly things got done—not everything of course! Travel was important, and I had several places I wanted to go, like Rome and St. Petersburg, and after I had done enough genealogy research, there were ancestral sites that I would like to visit too.

Where am I now? Well, I am sitting here typing this article!

What have I done?

My husband and I have spent lots of summer time at Flathead Lake in Montana with our children and grandchildren, being served food that the grandkids cooked for us (after we had helped them), like in a restaurant—and tipping

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them too. We've gone tubing with them on the back of the boat and watched the dogs swim in the water; and we've enjoyed immensely the quiet sunsets each evening. I have connected with family in Nova Scotia and plan to visit next summer when we are not at the Lake.

We also have finished our patio that sat for a few years after we "bumped out" our kitchen, as well as other things around the house. I volunteer one morning a week at the elementary school down the street.

Is it ALL done? No! Does it still have to be done now? No! Do I have to see Rome and St. Petersburg? Maybe!

I think I have finally relaxed and things are getting done more now than ever. Am I done with the process? I think not.

Rosemary Thurston started teaching Surgical Technology at Renton Technical College in 1989, and she retired in 2010.

Consider the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project By Elaine Smith



When you think of the Yakima Valley, you may think of apples, wine grapes, chilies, watermelon and pumpkins. But you may perhaps not think of it as an irrigated desert, which it has been for over 100 years.

For those of you who follow legislative matters, I thought you might like to know about the **Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project** or YRBWEP, which will be presented in the State Legislature this session. The project is in **Governor Gregoire's** budget, and it

has the support of the governor-elect **Jay Inslee**, an active supporter of water supply improvement and fish restoration since the early 1990s. The study's purpose is a sustainable water supply for agriculture, fish restoration, and public consumption.

The possibility of prolonged drought has been a concern in the valley since the late 1970s. In the 1980s, the League of Women Voters of Washington studied the issue of water use, ecological preservation, and fish restoration in the State with emphasis on the Columbia River and the Yakima River Basin. Over the last three years, I have been a public observer of the preparation of the latest YRBWEP proposal. I believe that the proposed legislation reflects the ideas of the League's study of 1989-91 which gave rise to the League's consensus position on water use in the state.

The current YRBWEP proposal is available on the Bureau of Reclamation's website (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/index.html>). While it is lengthy and detailed, to say the least, there are interesting charts and graphs which make the intention of the proposal clear.

As a resident gardener, I have found it engrossing to learn about the river basin. As an observer of the study process, I have found it dramatic to watch the group of 20 "stake-holders" work their way toward the "consensus" required for progress. City and county public officials, irrigation system officers, Yakima tribal representatives, federal and state fisheries representatives, an ecologist, all representing politically incompatible positions, all were required to make concessions in order to achieve the goal of a sustainable water supply for the region.

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If you are a member of an organization that might be interested in the proposal, you can contact **Michael Schwisow** (mschwisow@aol.com) with the Columbia Basin Development League to arrange a presentation.

Elaine Smith began teaching English composition and literature at Yakima Valley College in 1965 and retired in 1993.

In memory of Mildred McBride By Roger Carlstrom, Editor



On the Thursday following Election Day in November, my wife **Connie** and I returned home from out of town and found a message on our answering machine from **Terri Ryan** about her mother, **Mildred McBride**. Her mother, Terri said, was near death in a local hospital, and she thought it would mean a lot to her mother if I came to the hospital to say goodbye. Terri said that her mother thought a lot of me.

I tried to return the call but received no answer and so rushed to the hospital, where the "gatekeepers" could not find Mildred's name on their lists. I learned later that evening that she had died the day before. (Terri had called on Monday.)

Given the relationship Mildred and I had over the years, this was a remarkable matter. You see, Mildred and I were adversaries at Yakima Valley College who did not speak to one another, even though we both taught in the English Department. She was AHE and I AFT. We in the AFT, after five elections, unseated the AHE as bargaining representative in 1973 and narrowly won another election in 1977 when the AHE tried to un-

seat us. The rivalry between the two organizations continued for years. Bitterly, for the most part.

By the time I retired in 1998, she and I no longer viewed ourselves as adversaries, but we didn't have many conversations either.

After she retired in 2002, I heard that she was not very happy in retirement, and so I called her, and we talked for awhile. She missed teaching a lot. I called her another time, and she still was not content. Now and then, she would call me to say that she enjoyed a letter to the editor of the local fish wrapper that I had written.

I last talked with her on October 2, when she called to say that she liked a letter I had written about Romney and Bain Capital. She sounded great, and I detected no sign in her voice of the discontent in retirement that had so concerned me.



Mildred McBride, with Grandson Chris, in 1987

Mildred would have been surprised to see herself the subject of an AFT article like this, but I hope she would have felt honored too, as honored as I felt when I learned of the regard she had for me.

Life changes in retirement. What mattered long ago doesn't now.

Mildred McBride died on November 7, 2012, at the age of 80 in Yakima. She taught English at Yakima Valley College for 40 years. She is survived by her two daughters, Terri Ryan and Ginny Beard, and three grandchildren: Chris Ryan, Jason Beard, and Becky Beard.

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