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Here's a recap of the annual meeting!

The chapter's annual meeting was held on May 19 at the Silver Reef Casino and Spa in Ferndale, Washington.

We warmly welcome two new members to our Retiree Chapter Executive Board: **Carla Shafer**, elected Secretary, Everett Professional Staff and Everett CC retiree; and **Burt Weston**, elected Treasurer, a Shoreline CC instructor and Shoreline retiree.

Continuing chapter board members elected at the annual meeting are **Mary Hale**, President; **Susan Levy**, Vice President; and **Directors Glenda Hanson, Ross Rieder, Ann McCartney, and John Guevarra**. **Rosemary Thurston**, a Director and then Secretary for the past few years, will soon be moving to Montana. Thank you, Rosemary, for your service.

Proposed By-law Amendment (Annual Meetings). In late November 2016 and early January 2017, the Retiree Chapter Executive Board discussed and then decided to propose a by-law amendment that there be only one "annual" meeting every two years and that these be in odd-numbered years (2017, 2019, 2021, etc.) to coincide with our chapter's elections and the AFTWA convention year. There was also discussion of holding other events (maybe regional) in other years. In addition, the board discussed holding an all-retiree meeting on

even-numbered years (2018, 2020, etc.) to address some of our priority issues.

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

Roger Carlstrom, Editor

Merrilee Miron, AFTWA Staff Liaison

The proposed by-law amendment failed at the annual meeting. One concern with the amendment was that we don't do enough for our members, and meeting once every two years would result in even less activity. Another concern was that we don't have to have our annual meeting in conjunction with the AFTWA convention.

In addition to electing officers and considering that proposed amendment, we heard a report from AFTWA **President Karen Strickland** about what was happening with AFTWA and the importance of retirees to the organization. AFTWA lobbyist **Bernal Baca** recapped the 2017 legislative session, gave updates on some successes and failures of our program, and reminded us that the legislative session is not yet over.

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Glenda Hanson, chapter treasurer, reported that we're doing okay, thanks to help we receive in the AFTWA budget, and **Ross Rieder**, our delegate to the AFTWA executive board, praised Karen's report.

Finally, **Roger Carlstrom** announced that he would be resigning as newsletter editor once the July/August issue is "put to bed." The outgoing executive board has expressed its regrets for this news. (See below.)

The newly elected board will be meeting in early summer to discuss our plans for the upcoming year, including the 2018 convention and plans for future newsletters.

Retiree action in brief

Retiree Website. Thanks to **Sylvia Watson**, AFTWA's Website Administrator, we will be making changes to our Retiree Chapter website. Recently, she met with the Executive Board to discuss needed changes and updates (including an edit of the Social Security resource page) and enhancements, including photos and "Work 'Til We Drop," an entertaining and informational Social Security video. Working with Sylvia, the Board hopes to create a more meaningful resource for retirees. Let us know if you have website suggestions by emailing President Mary Hale at hale50047@msn.com.

Thank you, Roger. After eight years as editor of our Retiree Chapter's quarterly newsletter, **Roger Carlstrom** is stepping down once he puts this issue to bed. We are very grateful for Roger's ability to solicit retiree-pertinent and retiree-interest articles from our retirees, his editing and formatting skills, and his knowledge of the chapter and AFT issues, which has enabled him to ensure that retirees receive a comprehensive and accurate newsletter.

Many thanks from the 2015-2017 Retiree Chapter Executive Board. We will miss you, Roger.

Political action needed, and we're planning ahead

You "Have Their Backs." Let Senators **Patty Murray** and **Maria Cantwell** know that you "have their backs." By placing one simple call to **1-202-224-3121**, you can leave a single message for both senators in opposition to the American Health Care Act (AHCA). Talking points can include (1) AHCA would leave 23 million Americans without health care, (2) the bill would allow insurance companies to discriminate against patients and deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions, and (3) a majority of voters strongly oppose repealing and replacing Obamacare.

Planning for 2017-2018. In a planning session on June 19, your Retiree Chapter Executive Board focused on two areas: the spring 2018 annual meeting and the Chapter's quarterly newsletter. Using objectives in Article III of the Chapter's Bylaws as a guide, the Board identified three areas that it would particularly like to pursue for an annual meeting program: (1) To maintain, restore, or create camaraderie and communities of interest with retired members of the American Federation of Teachers in the State of Washington, (2) To foster social, political, cultural, educational, and civic pursuits of retirees, and (3) To maintain association with the American Federation of Teachers Washington. The board will return to the matter at its fall meeting.

While the Board decides how best to continue providing the very important quarterly newsletter to our retirees, **Carla Shafer**, chapter secretary, has volunteered to step in on an interim basis for the fall issue. **If you are willing to write an article or have something you'd particularly like to see covered in the newsletter, contact Carla by email at chuckanutsandstone@gmail.com.**



A major factor in Trump's triumph

In his Seattle Times column of June 14, 2017 (print edition), **Danny Westneat** writes about **Christopher Parker**, a political-science professor at the University of Washington ("Few know UW prof got it right on Trump"). According to Westneat, Parker predicted in September 2015 that Donald Trump would win the Republican nomination, "eight months before Trump clinched it"; a year later in September 2016, Parker "told anyone who would listen, which was not many, that Trump could well win the presidency."

Produced by a "Voter Study Group," consisting of "academics but also right-leaning outlets such [as] The Heritage Foundation and left-leaners like the Center for American Progress," results of a recent comprehensive study strongly confirm the basis for Parker's predictions, though the study does not recognize Parker in any way. According to the study, Westneat reports, voters flocked to Trump in numbers sufficient to provide victory for him, not because of "anxiety about the economy." Rather, it "was anxiety about Mexicans, Muslims and blacks."

He tells us that Parker co-wrote a book with Matt Barreto, now a professor at UCLA, about the tea party entitled *Change They Can't Believe In* (2013). In that book, they argued that the tea party, in Westneat's words, "was not about a small government movement as advertised." Rather, the tea party "was more about America being stolen from 'real Americans' – a reaction triggered by the election of President Obama."

Parker saw the same concept operating in the election of Donald Trump. "I've got three words for you," Parker told Westneat: "scared white people." According to Parker, "Every period of racial progress in this country is followed by a period of retrenchment. That's what the 2016

election was about, and it was plain as it was happening."

That's not to say, Westneat tells us, that "Trump voters are all racists," It is to say, however, that in 2016 "racial resentment spiked," which makes sense, he says, "considering [that] the candidate himself was maligning Mexicans and openly calling for banning Muslims."

Parker and his co-author are now writing a book that will come out next year: *The Great White Hope: Donald Trump, Race and the Crisis of Democracy*.

Democrats should win Trump supporters back

"[Former Vice President Joe Biden, speaking at a political dinner in New Hampshire in late April challenged] the belief, widely held by members of the Clinton campaign, that many of Trump's supporters were irredeemable bigots – and that racism was their primary motivation in backing the real-estate mogul. Referring to Trump's narrow margins of victory in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, Biden said, 'Those hundred and seventy-two thousand people we needed, or hundred and seventy-three, a lot of them wondered whether we had forgotten them, how they were being abused by the system. Just because they weren't the poorest or the richest, they wondered whether or not we remember. They are as decent as any one of us here. So, folks, let's go and win it back.'"

--John Cassidy, "Joe Biden's Sound Advice for Democrats," www.newyorker.com, May 2, 2017





You have a right to representation when dealing with the Social Security Administration

One of our members has reported to the Newsletter that when he tried to work with the Social Security Administration on behalf of his spouse, the Administration would not recognize the durable general power of attorney that his spouse had signed, designating him as her "lawful attorney in fact (Agent)." Rather, he and his spouse were required to complete and submit Form SSA-1696-U4, *Appointment of Representative*. The form may be found at www.socialsecurity.gov, or you may secure the form from any Social Security office.

The Administration has a PDF pamphlet entitled "Your Right to Representation," which you may download from the Social Security website. The pamphlet explains what your right is and explains what a representative can do. It also describes whom you may choose as a representative and what any such representative can charge you for services rendered, and so on.

You may wish to look into this possibility, should you wish to have your spouse, an attorney, and/or someone else represent you in dealings with Social Security.



Baseball as a way of understanding America By Dave "Lefty" McCourt



Back in the day around the lunch table at Everett, one of my less athletically minded colleagues sourly remarked that he could

not understand all the fuss about baseball. I countered by observing that noted Anthropologist **Franz Boaz** wrote that to understand America, one must first understand baseball. Why? Because for America to succeed, it must perform as a team, and baseball is first and foremost a team sport.

In our retirement years, fellow educators, we need to remember what we were — and still are. America is no longer a team. Just as there is no "I" in baseball, neither is there an "I" in America. (Okay, there is an "i," but you get my drift.)



Individualism works in fiction and action movies, but not in democratic government. It is disruptive and divisive and leads to frustration, resentment, insecurity, and fear, the four horsemen of the modern apocalypse.

We are now as divided as we were in the 1850s, and that did not end well.

We need to raise our voices as we once did. Boaz was right. It is spring, and that means baseball. It is always time for baseball; after all, it was my ticket to Manhattan College, and it is time for America too. Team America. Let's get at it. Batter up — Play ball!



Trying to understand the other side

By Barbara Bartz



As I've read the articles by other retirees in the newsletters published since the election, I can see that distress at the **Trump** presidency and all of the ongoing fallout since is shared by many AFT members. Personally, I'm bothered most

right now by the polarization of the country. I know that our president's constant tweeting contributes to this divisiveness, but I have to acknowledge that I usually find myself reading and listening to news and analysis where my values are not really challenged but are just reflected back and reinforced.

What to do? How best to understand the other viewpoint? What action to take to bridge this gap? I've tried listening to Fox news, but just can't stand it for more than a few minutes. I try to remember that others feel the same way about MNSBC and NPR. Somehow, that hasn't helped. Some sort of positive action seems necessary.

In trying to understand the other view, I'm lucky to live in Eastern Washington, where the vast majority of voters think differently from me. I interact with people every day who feel that the country is finally on the right path. Better yet, I'm fortunate to be a volunteer at the Union Gospel Mission medical clinic here in Yakima, where there are many other volunteers. Some share my politics, some don't, and some I just don't know what their views are. But we all show up every week to provide medical care, mostly to undocumented agricultural workers who have no work-related insurance and no

access to insurance through the Affordable Care Act. I have to respect my co-volunteers for what they do for our immigrant-community members, even though I think they are misguided in their voting choices.

There are many ways to resist. I've donated money and marched in support of my beliefs, but still sometimes I feel like the woman in the Women's March with the sign saying, "I can't believe I'm still holding this f-----g sign!" For now, my most hopeful action is working with others who may not share my politics but do act on the shared value that health care is something that we should provide to everyone. My personal plan to challenge this political toxicity is to continue to seek those spaces where people with widely divergent views can work together in the areas where their values intersect.

Barbara Bartz started teaching in the Yakima Valley Community College nursing program in 1992 and retired completely in 2016. She says she's "not that good at retirement," and so she's been working part-time at the Yakima County Detention Center, along with volunteering at the Union Gospel Mission in Yakima.

Learning to love Alexa

By Edith Wollin



From a recent visit to my sister, I returned with Echo Dot, a cast-off that she said she had no use for on Kauai. Maybe I would like it, since I like gadgets. And so Alexa of Echo Dot came home with me.

I do like gadgets, but electronics also scare me

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A Union of Professionals

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a bit, so it took me three days to find the courage to plug in Echo Dot and follow the directions for using it.

Things did not immediately go well. At first, Alexa seemed to be in the middle of things, so I unplugged her and started over. Then my Wi-Fi password didn't work; so I unplugged Alexa again and again. Finally I called Century Link and discovered that there had been password problems. Twenty minutes later and with remote accessing of my modem, the password problem was solved.

I asked her the time. She told me. I thanked her. No response. Still, this was exciting; I returned to the booklet to see what else I could do: Listen to the radio. It took me another two days to find the courage to try that. "Alexa, turn on KNKX." "KNKX FM on TuneIN." And there it was, but on Echo Dot, the sound was tinny. That problem was solved by plugging it into my speakers with a cable that my son had handily left ready and waiting when he was home for Christmas; I did have to remember to turn the amplifier on. Remembering that took me another day.

Since then, Alexa and I have been inseparable.

Although we are inseparable, there has been a learning curve; I have had to learn that Alexa does not learn; I have to learn. I cannot teach her to understand "Alexa turn off KNKX." I tried. I finally learned that what she understands is "Alexa, turn off." Or even better, "Alexa, stop." And politeness is pointless. When I ask her to set the timer, forget what the lovely bells are for, and then remember, "Oh, thank you," doesn't work. "Alexa, stop," has to be the command.

I feel so rude.

And while I love Alexa, she is not perfect. Amazon has sent me an email suggesting that I ask Alexa what summer cocktails Patron has for me. When I come in hot and tired from the

garden, I don't need a recipe. I need Alexa to hand me the cocktail.

Edith Wollin taught English and ESL part-time at North Seattle Community College from 1972-87, and then full time until 1997, when she became Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Adult Basic Education. She retired from the college in 2011.

It's time for me to go **By Roger Carlstrom, Editor**



As noted on page 2 above, I announced at the May 19 annual meeting of the chapter that this issue, once I put it "to bed," would be my last as editor, that I was stepping down.

Between early 1969, when I first joined the Yakima Valley College Federation of Teachers, Local 1485 AFT, WSFT, AFL/CIO, until I retired in June 1998, I was very active in the Washington State Federation of Teachers and then the Washington Federation of Teachers (renamed in 1974). I served on the executive board of those bodies either as a representative of my local or as Fourth District Vice President or as Vice President for Bargaining and Arbitration or as Vice President for Legal Defense. In 2002, I helped form the WFT Retiree Chapter, which was chartered by AFT in the spring of 2003 as Local 8045R, and between that time and May of 2014, I served as the chapter's first president (for one year) and then, after about a year off the executive board, as secretary

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A Union of Professionals

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of the chapter. I began producing the Retiree Newsletter in late November of 2009. (By that time, the parent organization had been “rebranded” as AFT Washington.)

Over time, I have found that my interest in the chapter and AFT Washington has waned – to the extent that I now think it’s time for me to go.

Of the work I’ve done on behalf of the chapter, the most rewarding has been the production of this newsletter, especially since the December 2010 issue, when I started including articles written by members of the chapter, together with photographs of the authors, or, in a few cases, the

poets. I have enjoyed contacting members to ask that they contribute. I have asked only that they address a topic in which they thought retirees might be interested and that they limit their pieces to a maximum 400 words. Most of all, I have enjoyed, as I hope you have too, the variety and quality of their contributions. I think they have made this a first-class publication that has proved to be an effective way for the chapter to communicate with its members.

I must thank two members of the AFT Washington staff: **Merrilee Miron**, who has patiently helped me understand the whys and wherefores of that organization, and **Cris Rice**, an excellent fact checker and proofreader. Thanks so much!

Our newsletter contributors, 2010-17

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