



UNION SPOTLIGHT

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

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July 2015

VICTORY CELEBRATION!!



We have great BREAKING NEWS for our members about our top legislative priorities! The Governor signed off on a compromise biennium operating budget that, over the next two years, will provide:



**4.8% COLAs for CTC
faculty and K-12 and
higher education
classified
employees!**

**Access to local
funds for
bargaining
faculty step
increases!**



We appreciate the support of our "star-studded" coalition of members, community organizations, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Trustees, and the labor community. We have more to do beyond 2017, but this budget is a step in the right direction.

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Delegates elect slate of officers, term begins July 15



Photo by Christine Landon

Elected at convention the 2015-2017 AFT Washington officers. From left: Margaret West, Simone Terrell, Richard Moore, Karen Strickland, Tracy Lai, Kevin Asman, Janet Watson, Barbara Randall-Saleh, Janet Morgan, and Lila Harper. Not pictured: Kenneth Pimpleton, Andromeda Aguirre De Alcaide, Todd Hahn, and Elizabeth Williamson.

President:

Karen Strickland
AFT Seattle Colleges Faculty

Secretary:

Lila Harper
United Faculty of Central Washington University*

Treasurer:

Kenneth Pimpleton
Tacoma CC Faculty**

At-Large VP:

Andromeda Aguirre De Alcaide
AFT Kent Classified**

At-Large VP:

Richard Moore
UW English Language Faculty**

At-Large VP

Barb Randall-Saleh
Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators

VP for COPE

Todd Hahn
AFT Renton Classified*

VP, Legal Defense:

Margaret West
Edmonds CC Federation of Teachers

VP, Legislative Affairs

Kevin Asman
South Puget Sound CC Federation of Teachers*

VP, Human Rights

Tracy Lai
AFT Seattle Colleges Faculty

VP, 4-year Colleges and Universities

Elizabeth Williamson
United Faculty of Evergreen State College

VP, Community and Technical Colleges

Simone Terrell
Renton TC Federation of Teachers**

VP, Paraprofessional Classified Personnel

Janet Morgan
Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators

VP, Higher Ed Classified
Vacant

VP, School-Related Personnel

Janet Watson
AFT Renton Classified*

VP, Contingent Faculty
To be filled in the fall (new position)

Retiree Chapter Rep
Ross Rieder, Director

** Board member who ran for and changed positions on the board*

***New board member*

Board meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms.

AFT Washington represents over 6,500 members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.5 million members nationwide.

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Karen Strickland

President's Column

The Business of Our Union

As I said in my last Spotlight column, “Our biennial convention is an important time for us to take a look at the past and make decisions for our future.” Delegates representing you at this year’s convention had a terrific time and accomplished a lot in the 24 hours we spent together. I appreciate their commitment to furthering the work of AFT Washington. I also want to thank the staff – our office was busy as a beehive in the weeks prior to convention.

Special thanks are due the Labor Education and Research Center, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association for sharing their labor history exhibits. These displays offered the opportunity to reflect on the labor movement’s powerful history, and I hope each of the delegates felt a sense of pride, inspiration, and motivation.

Our keynote speaker, **Senator Pramila Jayapal**, inspired me as she spoke to labor’s essential role in moving a political and policy agenda of economic opportunity and social justice. She emphasized how movements are interconnected like the roots of a tree. This reflects our perspective and launched us into our work the next day.

We approved adding another position

to the AFT Washington executive board, Vice President for Contingent Faculty. While contingent faculty are represented by other higher education board positions, this recognizes their unique working conditions, warranting particular attention. The board will appoint a member to this position in early fall.

Please see page 2 for all newly elected officers, including four new board members. Thank you to officers who have retired or opted not to run for office again for your years of commitment: **Karen Patjens** (Bates Technical College), **Amy Kinsel** (Shoreline Community College), and **Glenda Hanson** (Renton Technical College).

Resolutions are one of the most interesting deliberations at our conventions. They highlight the issues members care about and pertain directly to our members’ workplaces as well as the broader social justice agenda. For example, our two resolutions related to Social Security and Medicare reflect our commitment to reclaim the promise of a secure retirement by engaging our members to work with allies to “scrap the cap.” These appeared to be “no-brainers” to delegates as they passed unanimously without comment.

Similarly, our belief in equitable healthcare coverage for all of our members was reflected in our resolution to promote transgender healthcare equity. We will work with allies to urge enforcement of nondiscrimination laws and advocate within AFT for full inclusion of healthcare benefits in AFT’s LGBT

Bill of Rights. (Your local can take action to sign on to this Bill of Rights. Please contact **Tracey Whitten** at twhitten@aftwa.org to learn more about this.)

Sometimes resolutions need revision to be viable. The resolution “Supporting Full Funding of Washington State Community and Technical Colleges” spawned a discussion among delegates to find the language that provided the “teeth” but was also do-able. Members would really like to see a “*McCleary*” action for higher education. Since higher education isn’t considered “basic” education, that outcome may not be achievable. We can, however, explore the full range of options for achieving adequate and stable funding and pursue those that make the most sense, with our allies of course!

Finally, we passed a resolution to promote and increase voter engagement among youth and communities of color. The discussion was rich and made me proud to be part of AFT Washington. Many of our students and families don’t vote, resulting in elected candidates who fail to represent the needs of working people, communities of color, our public education systems, and our environment. Delegates amended this resolution to support citizenship classes and advocate for restoring voting rights for ex-felons. This resolution makes real the statement “stronger together,” recognizing that labor’s Shared Prosperity Agenda is good for all of us and victory requires solidarity among all stakeholders.

During the next two years, we

(Continued on pg. 8)

Raffle for education scholarship brought in over \$1,700 at our convention

One of the fun highlights of our convention is when we hold our fundraiser for the AFT Washington/Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt Education Scholarship, co-sponsored by one of the largest union-side labor and employment law firms in this region. This scholarship was initiated in 2005 to help improve access to higher education and awareness of labor rights among our members and their families. In nine years, 30 people have received \$1,000 scholarships for their college education.

We are pleased to report that this year we raised \$1,720 from our basket raffle and cash contributions.

There were creative baskets from locals. For example, the Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators Local 461 donated individual painted



L-R: Amy Kinsel and Simone Terrell enjoying the fundraiser

canning jars full of flowers and a bouquet of gift cards, and the state federation staff basket had a fair trade theme with a variety of foods and dishes from countries around the world. Ironically, Karen Strickland won it, and donated it back to be auctioned off, bringing in an additional \$100 for the scholarship fund. One of our vendors, Sunrise Dental, contributed a 40-inch flatscreen multimedia television which was donated by winner Gary

Neill to be auctioned off, adding another \$250 to the pot.

Kudos to the following locals and individuals for contributing to the scholarship fund: **Shoreline Community College Federation of Teachers Local 1950;** **Bates Technical College Faculty Local 4184;** **Edmonds Community College Federation of**

Teachers Local 4254; **Amy Kinsel,** Shoreline Community College Federation of Teachers Local 1950; **Gary Neill,** Renton Technical College Federation of Teachers Local 3914; **Peter Messinger,** UW English Language Faculty Local 6486; and AFT Washington staff. With the law firm's \$1,500 contribution, we have over \$3,000 to award \$1,000 scholarships to three eligible contenders; see below.

By Christine Landon, Data Manager

Three deserving winners will receive \$1,000 AFT Washington/Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt scholarships in support of their higher education goals this year. Our congratulations to:

Levi Moore, son of UW English Language Faculty local 6486 past president Richard Moore and Louise Spiegler, member of Cascadia Community College Federation of Teachers local 6191. Levi plans to enter the University of Washington Seattle this fall;

Kathryn Severson, daughter of Cascadia Community College Federation of Teachers local 6191 member Heather Severson, who plans to enter the apparel merchandising program at Seattle Pacific University ; and

Emma Finnsson, daughter of United Faculty of Green River local 2195 member Lisa Finnsson, who plans to study mechanical engineering at Washington State University this fall.

Our thanks to all members and locals who donated to support this year's scholarships, and particularly to our friends and allies at Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt, LLC.

Congratulations to members for outstanding union work



Convention delegates representing their locals receive a Political Action Award (From left: Annamary Fitzgerald, Amy Kinsel, Gary Neill, David Shapiro, Jim Howe, Tina Smith-Klahn, Tracy Lai, and Kimberly McRae. Also pictured are Karen Strickland, Kristin Elia, and Bernal Baca.)

In addition to these members, nine locals received **Political Action Awards** for their work on our Board of Trustees (BOT) action, which involved local members attending their board of trustees meetings at the college and asking for BOT support using local funds for bargaining increments and sharing their story about the impacts of going without salary increases for almost eight years. Locals that stepped up to carry this out are:

Bates TC Faculty Local 4184

Cascadia CC Faculty Local 6191

Centralia College Faculty Local 4469

Green River United Faculty Local 2195

Shoreline CC Federation Local 1950

So. Puget Sound CC Federation Local 4603

AFT Seattle Colleges Faculty Local 1789

Renton TC Federation of Teachers Local 3914

Lake Washington Institute of Technology Faculty Local 3533

Last, but certainly not least, a **COPE Award** was given to Renton TC Federation of Teachers Local 3914 for increasing their COPE contributors.



Union Stewardship Award to Kevin Asman (Pictured from left Annamary Fitzgerald, Kevin Asman, and Karen Strickland)

At our convention this year, several members were nominated for Executive Board awards by their locals or the state executive board for their dedicated work on behalf of our union and members. Let's give a round of applause for the following members:

César Chávez Human Rights Award
Kshama Sawant, AFT Seattle Colleges Local 1789

Treasurer's Excellence Award
Susan Grigsby, AFT Everett Faculty Local 1873

Treasurer's Excellence Award
Todd Hahn, AFT Renton Classified Local 6367

Treasurer's Excellence Award
Juliet Lovejoy, Shoreline CC Federation of Teachers Local 1950

Treasurer's Excellence Award
John Lucas, Pierce College Federation of Teachers Local 4821

Union Stewardship Award
Kevin Asman, South Puget Sound CC Federation of Teachers Local 4603

Union Stewardship Award
Barbara Randall-Saleh, Tacoma Federation of ParaEducators Local 461



Union Stewardship Award to Barbara Randall-Saleh (center)

Photos by Christine Landon

**Without U
We aren't US**

If you'd like to go green and get Union Spotlight electronically, please contact Christine Landon, 206-432-8075 or clandon@aftwa.org.

Ross Rieder, Retiree Chapter President, steps down – sort of

By Nancy Kennedy, Labor Relations Specialist

Ross Rieder was recognized at our recent AFT Washington convention in honor of his long-standing advocacy on behalf of workers and their issues.

Ross' history with AFT Washington goes back to when the organization was called the Washington State Federation of Teachers (WSFT) and many of our locals were working to get bargaining rights. Ross was there when faculty at Yakima tried four times to get enough votes to win a representation election. When faculty came to Ross after multiple failures and asked what they needed to do, Ross answered, "Get more votes." It was sound advice, and

they succeeded in their next election attempt.

Ross' extensive contributions to the labor movement are too numerous for the space we have here but Ross has been very instrumental and, while he says he is "really retiring this time," he will remain involved.

Ross, a K-12 teacher before becoming president of WSFT in 1967, more recently was president of both the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association (PNLHA) and the AFT Washington Retiree Chapter. He has stepped down as



Photo by Christine Landon

Thank you Ross for all your dedicated effort and time.

president from both organizations but remains on the board of the retiree chapter as a director and as a retiree representative on the AFT Washington executive board.

Addressing student debt among members



How many of you are struggling under a pile of student debt? How many of you have incomes low enough that you qualify for programs in our social safety net? AFT Washington and other education stakeholders have long fought to keep higher education affordable.

In spite of our efforts, tuition continued to skyrocket and one of the consequences is \$1.3 TRILLION dollars of national student debt shared by people just like you.

At the same time, salaries have not kept up with inflation.

Since public funding hasn't been sufficient, AFT Washington is beginning a program to help our members with their student debt along with continued efforts at increasing public funding for education.

We need you to complete the survey at bit.ly/student-debt-survey to find out how prevalent student debt is among our members. It will also help us more effectively address your needs in our legislative and policy work.

Watch our website and your email (send us your personal e-mail address if you haven't already) for an announcement of **(Un)Popular Economics** – a student debt workshop – in the next few months. If you can't complete the online survey, please contact **Christine Landon** at **206-432-8075** or clandon@aftwa.org to request a paper survey.

Ever Since I Was Hired



Photo courtesy of Roger Carlstrom

By Bernal Baca, Lobbyist and past president of YVCFT Local 1485

A newsletter article isn't enough space to honor a retired union leader in our AFT family. It could take an entire book! This article is about a man who dedicated his entire career, starting at age 25, to strengthening the rights of teachers.

Roger Carlstrom began teaching English at Yakima Valley College (YVC) in January 1968 and joined the YVC Federation of Teachers (YVCFT) Local 1485. He chose YVCFT because, as he put it, "I wanted to protect my job!"

It was in the basement of a member's house that he attended his first union meeting where he had an epiphany. He knew even as a novice that he would lead this union to unimaginable places.

Roger Carlstrom (left) presents AFT **President Al Shanker** with a check for \$9,000 from YVCFT Local 1485 to reimburse AFT for the Legal Defense grant provided for the *Carlstrom v State of Washington* Supreme Court case. At that time, Secretary-Treasurer **Bob Porter** said no other local had ever returned Legal Defense grant money in the history of AFT.

He began taking on leadership responsibilities until he declared his presidency in 1973 at an all-faculty meeting. His confidence in the union was projected in his speech to the faculty where he exclaimed, "This year the union will be going to heights never achieved by any man or woman!" In the same year, YVCFT won bargaining rights and became the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for the faculty.

The importance of bargaining came into play. There wasn't a state federation then that would assist with bargaining; every local learned to bargain on their own, according to Roger. So Roger mastered the art of bargaining, and from 1973-1997 he served as an advocate for Local 1485 as chief negotiator, grievance representative, and as an advocate for their union and members with arbitration. He won nine straight arbitration

cases! Roger had many accomplishments, but two stand out as his most significant.

In 1978 he worked to secure faculty status for four counselors who were people of color. These counselors were performing the duties of counselors but the college denied them the pay, status, or benefits. Native American counselor **Bonnie Labbee** said, "Thanks to Roger and YVCFT for fighting for our rights and preparing us for arbitration. When the judge would ask the question about how long we had been doing these counseling duties, our pat answer was "ever since I was hired!"

The other feather in his cap happened in 1985 in the case of *Carlstrom vs State of Washington*. The State Supreme Court held 8-0 that the college was obligated to pay a seven percent raise to faculty even though the legislature rolled back the funding for the raise that year. The absence of "contingent upon" language was deliberate on Roger's part and was persuasive with the Supreme Court.

Roger retired in June 1998 at the age of 55-1/2. He and his wife Connie have one son, a daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters. He is now a volunteer mediator and enjoys a lot of time on his power boat.

Retiree Chapter Elects New Officers

By Merrilee Miron, Labor Relations Specialist and Staff for the Retiree Chapter

The AFT Washington Retiree Chapter held their annual luncheon on May 15 at the Hotel Murano in conjunction with our 2015 Convention. It was a wonderful setting and the weather worked in everyone's favor for traveling.

At the meeting the retirees held elections for the coming year's officers. Elected for the 2015-2016 year are:

President: **Mary Hale**
Vice President: **Susan Levy**
Treasurer: **Rosemary Thurston**
Directors: **Ross Rieder, John Guevarra, Rita Smilkstein, Ann McCartney, and Glenda Hanson.**

The Secretary position is unfilled at this time.

Additionally, we passed an amendment to the bylaws.

After lunch, several members went to the Washington State Museum of History. The staff at the museum were awesome and listening to Ross' stories always makes for a great day!



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President's Column *(from pg. 3)*

will continue to build our relationships with labor and community partners so that we can realize the goals of our resolutions as well as our strategic goals – building healthy locals and developing strong leadership - and fulfilling our legislative and electoral priorities.

I'd like to extend one more thank you to leaders and activists in our 39 locals. You have committed your time to the well-being of your membership. Many of you are also active with the state federation. You may sometimes feel as though your contribution goes unnoticed; it does not. The labor movement is strengthened by it, and I

deeply appreciate that.

On that note, our annual **AFT Northwest Leadership Forum** is scheduled in Vancouver, Washington, from **July 30th - August 2nd**. This is a great opportunity to connect with your AFT sisters and brothers from our state as well as from Oregon, Alaska, Utah, and Nevada and to develop the skills and knowledge needed as an active union member. Please look at the course offerings (<http://bit.ly/2015NWLF>) and consider joining us in Vancouver or sending another member or two from your local.

I wish you all the best for a rejuvenating and fun summer!

CALENDAR

July 30 – Aug. 2

**AFT Northwest Leadership Forum
Vancouver Hilton, Vancouver, WA**

More info and registration at www.bit.ly.com/2015NWLF

Aug. 8

Medicare's 50th Birthday and Social Security's 80th Birthday Event Celebrating Decades of Success!

1 – 3 PM at Westlake Plaza, 4th Ave. and Pine St., Seattle

Sept. 11

AFT Washington Executive Board Meeting

4 – 9 PM
Location TBD

Sept. 12

State/Local Leadership Retreat

9 AM – 3 PM
Location TBD
For info, call 206-242-4777 or send email to aftwashington@aftwa.org