



Spotlight on Retirees in Action

President's Message

Good Day, Retirees!

I want to thank all of you who participated in our survey. We have the results here in this month's Retiree insert.

As I have said before, we are looking to fill a Board Director's position since Debby Dodd stepped down. The position will run through May of 2023. The Board meets every quarter and works through topics that affect retirees or events that we think retirees would be interested in and how best to communicate to all our retirees. The next meeting is July 20th. Unless a Board member volunteers to be on a committee, the Board meeting is all that is required to participate. If you have some time that you can give for the good of the retiree membership,

please join us! If you are interested, you can contact me at Merrilee.miron@gmail.com or Cortney Marabetta at cmarabetta@aftwa.org.

For immediate communications that we from time to time want to get out to our membership as quickly as possible, we need e-mail addresses. I know many do not want to be bothered by unnecessary emails – I do understand! We only send things we feel are important and time sensitive. Please send your email to Cortney Marabetta. We will only use it as necessary for retiree updates.

In Solidarity,
Merrilee Miron

Keeping In Touch: What You Wanted

By Sandra Schroeder, Treasurer

You should have received a mailing earlier this year with a survey for AFT local retirees for whom we have mailing addresses. As a new board and president came into office, we wanted to get a sense from our past co-workers of how or if you'd like to stay connected with your former union. We asked about the types of communication forms you used, whether you wanted to hear from us through social media, and what you are interested in hearing more about.

As often is true in surveys, the return rate wasn't overwhelming, but we heard from 25 of you and you gave us some important information. First, it was clear that communication through email was much preferred over any type of social media. Most of you had also seen and read the retiree insert in the Spotlight. Because of this, we hope to use those as our primary forms of communication. We want to have specific and reliable information coming to you. We are currently working on plans to increase and diversify our email communications. The Spotlight, now being published three times a year, will contain an insert like this one with articles and information. On occasion, we will send out longer email pieces if important issues need longer discussion.

As always with surveys, people have differing opinions. One person wanted no politics, for instance, while another wanted more. Our chapter's communications can't directly recommend

candidates or ballot measures, but we can and will talk about issues that are educational, retiree-based, or even political. We hope this strikes a good balance. For advice on voting, AFT Washington COPE, found on the website, can provide guidance. You'll find a link under the Action and Events tab, then click Take Action.

We hope, over time and with more volunteers, to explore other activities for retirees. One person expressed an interest in art. We would like to be able to offer information on retiree classes, discounts, lectures, volunteer opportunities, and tours in the future. If you would like to help with finding such items of interest, please contact Cortney Marabetta at cmarabetta@aftwa.org.

Thanks to those who responded to the survey. If you didn't receive it, you might not be on our mailing list. If you'd like to make sure we keep in touch with you, just fill out a membership form on AFT Washington's website. Click on the Membership tab and then on Retirees. You can also see who is on our current board there. Please join us. In these perilous times, when more of us are becoming somewhat housebound, hearing from familiar sources like AFT can be helpful.

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Restore Voting Rights

By Renee G. Potter, Director

This statement is on a bumper sticker I received from the Southern Poverty Law Center at the time Barack Obama was running for President, and I put it up in my front window.

It is now 2022 and the phrase Restore Voting Rights is joined by another: Voter Suppression.

So, what is voter suppression? If one lives in a state like Washington, where mail-in ballots have been in place since 2005 for most Washingtonians, we do not think much about the issue of suppression of voter rights. However, we Washingtonians are not alone, and we all have friends and family who live in other states where voting might be altogether different. All voters affect all who do or do not vote.

I am a member of the national AFT Retirees Program and Policy Council, and, currently, some of us are looking closely at the issue of voting as various states conduct primary elections and all states move toward the mid-term elections in November. Among the resources we will use are the Brennan Center for Justice (brennancenter.org) and Vote.org.

There are 20 to 30 retirees who are active in the Voter Suppression Working Group. We plan to look closely at voter rights and suppression by doing research to determine just what each state requires for voter registration. Further, we want to find out what each state legally can and cannot ask a voter to provide or do at polling places.

At the same time we research today's voting process, we will look over the honest history of voter suppression in each state. There are many different forms of suppression, ranging from the subtle to the overt and outrageous. Think, water vendors near lines of voters on hot-weather days.

Our project will cover each state and will report detailed information about registration and what one can expect when one votes, whether by mail or in person at a polling place. We also plan to include documented stories found in book form or other published material.

Healthcare Is a Human Right

By Jim Howe, Director

Healthcare Is a Human Right is currently focused, with PSARA, on fighting attempts at privatizing Medicare, although staffers for moderate Democrats see the ACO Reach program as a way to get providers to set standards for cost and access in the fee-for-service model used by traditional Medicare.

Rep. DelBene replied to the Social Security 2100 petition that she is a co-sponsor of the House bill and will work for it in Ways and Means.

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The Revolutionary Non-Violence Seminar

By Susan Levy, Director

Revolutionary Nonviolence: Organizing for Freedom is the name of a book about James M. Lawson written by Michael K. Honey (UW Tacoma) and Kent Wong (Director of the UCLA Labor Center). It is also the theme of a seminar taught by Honey and Wong on Lawson's teaching about non-violence and organizing that the AFT Washington Retiree Chapter co-sponsored.

Lawson was one of the Black freedom movement's leading theoreticians and tacticians ... a unique combination of "thinking" and "action". He was a teacher, a minister, and an activist in the 1960s and was involved in the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, the Memphis Sanitation strike, etc., as well a strong advocate for worker and immigrant rights movements in Los Angeles.

The seminar focused on Lawson's 4 steps of a nonviolent protest of Movement:

- Focus: Focus, investigate, research and educate on an issue.
- Negotiations: Engage the opposition; present demands and plan for direct action
- Direct Action campaigns: Start creative, flexible direct-action campaigns.
- Follow-up: Retrench, and move forward from new position.

The seminar showed how each of these steps were used in planning the lunch sit-ins and Justice for Janitors campaigns.

Non-Violent Direct Action is a hard, thoughtful process and many examples of how it worked were discussed. It doesn't happen by chance or in the spur of the moment. Students and labor activists discussed these methods and were able to ask questions of each other, Honey and Wong.

I am glad to have attended and been a part of this seminar. I highly recommend the book *Revolutionary Non-violence: Organizing for Freedom*. The Retiree chapter has copies of the book if you'd like to purchase one. Contact Cortney Marabetta at cmarabetta@aftwa.org to do so.

After the 2020 Census, some Congressional and Washington Legislative districts have re-aligned. This is a good time, before the elections, to learn who your legislators and candidates are, and contact them with your Retiree, education, healthcare, and labor concerns. The easiest way to do this is to search for Find My Legislator on Google. *Ballotpedia* publishes Legislators' "scorecards" (how they voted in each session) by various advocacy groups, including the WA State Labor Council. You can also find AFT Washington's legislative scorecard on the website under Actions and Events > Legislation.