



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ASRS Report	2
President's Message	3
Legislative Update	4
Committee Day Info	5
Photos	6
News & Notes	7
Chapter News	8

Annual Meeting huge success; delegates select new leadership for AEA-Retired; Constitution/Bylaw changes approved

Julie Horwin ran unopposed and was elected as the next AEA-Retired President by acclamation of the 83 delegates at the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on April 25th. She will begin her duties on June 1st, replacing Linda Somo who served in that office for the past six years.

The change of venue to the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park was well received by all of the 105 AEA-Retired members and guests who attended the annual event. With a theme of "Retirees: Standing Strong", attendees enjoyed an action-packed/information-filled day that included remarks from AEA President Andrew Morrill, a legislative wrap-up from AEA Lobbyist Jennifer Loreda, candidate speeches and elections, presentation of the Les Reynold's Distinguished Senior Service Award to former Vice President Frank Bing, remarks from AEA-Retired President Linda Somo, a fantastic workshop from Social Security Works Executive Director Alex Lawson, an ASRS update from Steve Ramos, and a "Call to Action" from Barbara Matteson and Luci Messing.

Evaluation forms completed by attendees gave overwhelming approval and outstanding marks to the location, the luncheon, and the entire program.

In further voting, AEA-Retired Delegates elected Steve Linder to serve as Treasurer, replacing Jean Stephenson who held that position for the past six years. He will join President Julie Horwin, Vice President Suzan Austin, and Secretary Ken Freed to lead the Association. From the 11 candidates running for six Representative-At-Large positions on the Board, delegates elected: Luci Messing, Jean Stephenson, Kathy Ramage-White, Ed Buford, Marilyn Freed and Sally Rosen. Delegates also approved all of the proposed Constitution and Bylaw changes recommended by the AEA-Retired Board. In keeping with the

new Bylaws passed by the delegates, Carmen Peters will serve the remaining two year term vacated by Julie Horwin, and Michael Gordy will serve the remaining one year term vacated by Steve Linder.

The Annual Meeting luncheon was highlighted by the presentation of The Les Reynold's Distinguished Senior Service Award to Frank Bing. Frank was lauded for his leadership and dedication to AEA-Retired, and his many years of community activism. The meeting also included visits from three candidates for statewide offices. David Garcia and Sharon Thomas, the two candidates seeking the Democratic nomination for Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Terry Goddard, the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State, visited the gathering to ask for support from members.

Retirees play leading role at AEA Delegate Assembly; donate generously to NEA & AEA Funds

During the two-day AEA Delegate Assembly which followed the Annual Meeting, AEA-Retired delegates were active participants in introducing, debating, and deciding 10 New Business items, the Legislative Platform, and changes to the Resolutions. Delegates were treated to special addresses from NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, and Tim Schmaltz, Retired PAFCO Executive Director and 2014 recipient of the AEA Human & Civil Rights Award. *(continued on page 2)*



Frank Bing accepting the Les Reynolds Award

Send your email address to
jhorwin@mindspring.com

WIN \$100

If we already have your email address, you are already entered into the \$100 AEA-Retired Raffle! Good Luck!



AEA Retired

Calendar

June 28-29—NEA Retired Annual Meeting (Denver, CO)

July 1-6 —NEA Representative Assembly (Denver, CO)

August 26 —Primary Election Day

September 9 —AEA-Retired Board Meeting (AEA Headquarters)

September 10 — AEA-Retired Committee Day (AEA Headquarters)



ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS

FALL ELECTIONS BECOME AN EVEN BIGGER PRIORITY WITH PENSION ISSUE ON THE PHOENIX BALLOT.

AZ PENSION CHANGES – Last September, new legislation forced the closing of the Elected Officials defined benefit retirement plan, requiring all new members to enter a 401k style, defined contribution plan. To pay for that closure the state must make contributions equal to 23.5% of employee compensation to the fund, plus pay an extra \$5 million each year for 30 years until the old plan liabilities are paid off. The legislature also eliminated the ASRS Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI) to new members. For the first time since its inception in 1995, a new and ever growing class of ASRS educators will have no protection against inflation after their benefits are set at retirement. The possibility of a PBI for current retirees remains sometime in the future.

PENSION REFORM BATTLES - The battle over pension reform moved to the courts, as The Arizona Supreme Court ruled, in an unanimous decision, that “State lawmakers cannot balance the budget by limiting pension benefit increases.” The court also ruled that, “a voter-approved section of the state constitution makes public pension plans a contractual relationship” and that the ruling applies to all Arizona public pension plans. The ruling leaves the legislature with few options but to change the Arizona Constitution to get what they want. Representative Kavanaugh’s HCR2001, would have asked voters to remove constitutional protections from our state pension plans. That resolution did not move forward this year but will be back next year unless we change some of the faces that represent us in Arizona legislature.

VICTORIES - AEA Retired members and leaders have had great success at the capitol this session, speaking out against bills that would create future liabilities in our ASRS fund and threaten the retirement security of all of our members. Multiple bills weakening our ASRS fund were defeated.

FIGHTING BACK – The newly formed **Arizona Retirement Security Coalition** worked together in the last weeks of the legislative session to help kill anti-public pension bills. AEA and AEA-Retired, working in the Coalition, will now focus on the next battle, stopping a City of Phoenix ballot issue on pensions. The issue would turn the existing defined benefit plan over to Wall Street brokers and depend on risky 401k plans for retirement security. Outside interest groups plan to spend big to pass this issue. The election is November 4th, but early ballots will be out in October. We will continue to inform our members why this issue threatens our ASRS plan and how our members can help public employees in Phoenix defeat this issue. Go to <http://azretirementsecurity.com>, to get the facts and sign up for email alerts. Also, find us on facebook and “like” our page at <https://www.facebook.com/arizonarsc>

ASRS HEALTHCARE – Bids went out for a new health care contract in December. We anticipate costs going up, but at a slower rate. The option of using the Affordable Care Act became a reality in 2013 for non-Medicare members. If costs go up again in 2015, more members may want to carefully consider the ACA as a less expensive option. Medicare age members should also consider outside sources for healthcare, if escalating ASRS plan costs become an issue.

NEW AND IMPROVED - ASRS continued to adapt to new technology and trends with a new Facebook page, updated website and twitter account. The website features new colors, interactive graphics that make it easier to navigate among different areas, improved access to documents, calculators and informational videos. Check out the new PBI link on the Retiree page. For more info go to <http://azasrs.gov>.

(continued from page 1) With 83 delegates at the Delegate Assembly, AEA-Retired was only 2 shy of a full delegation, and was by far the largest group in attendance. As experienced members, AEA-Retired delegates know the importance of electing pro-public education / pro-retiree candidates to public office, and gave generously to both the NEA Fund and the AEA Fund, the political action arms of NEA and AEA. During the one-day Annual Meeting, members contributed \$4,195 to the NEA Fund, which is used to help elect candidates to Congress. Following that, AEA-Retired delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly contributed an additional \$5,670 to the AEA Fund to help elect candidates to state-wide offices and the Arizona Legislature.

Many thanks to Suzan Austin, Annual Meeting Chairperson, and her helpers, Liz Hendrickson and AnnJi Craig Wooton, for helping to coordinate another highly successful Annual Meeting. **Mark your calendar and plan to attend next year’s event which will again be held at the Wigwam Resort on Friday, April 24, 2015. Don’t miss it!**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

As Julie Horwin becomes our newly elected President on June 1st, I want to thank you all for the honor and pleasure of serving as your President for the past six years. My last message is a shortened version of the speech I gave at our AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on April 25th.

“Retirees: Standing Strong” may seem like an oxymoron at first glance. After all, many of us have difficulty just standing up, let alone standing strong. It seems the older I get, the longer it takes to stand up and start moving after sitting for any length of time. I’m sure it must be a law of physics.

So you may, legitimately, ask, “What in the world are you talking about when you refer to retirees standing strong?” Let me explain by way of some examples of just a few of your colleagues. I believe that many of you display three very distinct ways that you are Standing Strong.



The first way is standing strong in a personal crisis.

Some, like former Vice President Frank Bing, have faced devastating health issues that threatened their very existence, but they didn’t give up, and fought their way back to health. They demonstrated a personal strength that they may not even have known they had. They are **Standing Strong**

Members like Renee Newman and Kathy Ramage-White, who refuse to allow their Multiple Sclerosis to stop them from being activists and advocates for important issues, are **Standing Strong**.

The second way is standing strong in our communities.

We have **many** members who volunteer in their communities, to serve on the Boards of non-profit community agencies, or raise money for charitable organizations. Some volunteer at hospitals or nursing homes. Judy Moy volunteers at a hospital reception area. John Campbell cuddles and rocks drug-addicted preemie babies in a pediatric ward of a hospital. Nancy Putman serves as President of a non-profit charitable foundation for her former school district. Barb Joseph volunteers as a docent at the state Capitol Museum. Carol Trudgen is a temporary foster mom to newborn infants waiting for permanent placement with a family. They, and **many others**, are all **Standing Strong**.

The third way combines that community activism with political action.

Connie & Larry Wittig have always been activists in their own church, but they have expanded that by being part of the Valley Interfaith Project, advocating for social justice issues that affect all Arizonans. Connie & Larry are **Standing Strong**

When she retired, Pam Simon went to work as Community Outreach Coordinator for Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. Pam was critically wounded along with Gabby during that horrific shooting in Tucson three years ago. Now she is an activist working for common-sense gun legislation that would help to prevent future tragedies. She was recently honored at the White House for her work in this area. Pam is **Standing Strong**

Janie Hydrick threw her whole heart & soul into a grueling campaign two years ago to win a seat as a state senator in order to be an advocate for quality public education, children and seniors. Unfortunately Janie lost that hard fought battle, but she is willing to do it all over again and is running once more. Janie is **Standing Strong**

Julie Horwin decided that what we need in AZ are candidates who understand the needs of students, seniors, and the middle class. Instead of just bemoaning the fact that we don’t have enough of such candidates, she started her own non-profit organization to recruit and train potential progressive candidates to run for office. Julie is **Standing Strong**

Members like Frank Sacco, Luci Messing, Marilyn Freed, Marion Pickens, Lenny Reed, and Barbara Matteson have been political activists for most of their lives. They all continue to **Stand Strong**

Many of you have taken the time to email, write or call your elected officials at the local, state or national levels regarding public education and senior issues. You write letters to the editor. You have carried petitions; walked or phoned on behalf of candidates you support; donated to campaigns; talked to your family, friends and neighbors about important issues or encouraged them to vote for candidates that you support. **Most importantly, you vote.**

Each time you do **any one** of these, **you are Standing Strong**

There are times when we may get discouraged and feel that we can’t make a difference, or that no one really appreciates what we do. Fortunately, we can gain strength from our numbers and our solidarity. Through our Association, we have the means to amplify our voices and our actions to indeed make a difference, as we have done this year at the legislature.

So even though it may take us a few minutes to get into that upright position, retirees know how to Stand Strong. We’ve been doing it for most of our lives. We have been the strongest advocates for our students, for quality public education for all, and now for senior issues: protecting our pensions, strengthening Social Security, and safeguarding Medicare.

Like all of the members that I mentioned, and the many that I didn’t name, **you** have proven that you are able to stand strong for yourself, your community, and your future. I invite you to keep on **Standing Strong**.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Jennifer Loredo
Thanks to Jennifer Loredo, AEA Lobbyist, for supplying this Legislative Report

AEA plays crucial role during Legislative session

The 2014 legislative session adjourned with no real education policy impact passing through the House and Senate. That is a victory alone to educators who have seen past policies handed down with no regard to the effect on the classroom. Success was achieved by working with legislators in **both** parties to defeat numerous policies that would have further drained state resources to an unaccountable private education agenda.

The triumphs listed below would not have been possible without AEA's active lobbying at the capitol in support of public education and retirees. Without AEA's, and AEA-Retired's, direct work with legislators, things would have looked much different for next school year, and for retirees. The 2014 elections bring forth new opportunities to elect pro-public education legislators so that a positive agenda for education can emerge in 2015. Vote for AEA's recommended candidates to elect Friends of Public Education. Watch for the list of recommended candidates from AEA publications.

2014 Legislative Victories

Overwhelmingly defeated measures in both chambers that attempted to expand the state's private school ESA voucher program to a majority of students in the state (any students in a Title 1 school, or select zip codes). Arizona's legislators sided with the AEA saying that these large expansion measures were bad public policy and went too far.

- * Defeated the requirement for school districts to sell or lease unused buildings to charter and private schools
- * Stopped attempts to eliminate a school district's ability to seek bond and override approval by voters, as well as legislation that would have prevented districts from going back out for bond or override approval after an initial defeat
- * Restored AEA members' ability to pay dues

through payroll deduction and eliminated attempts to restrict that personal right

- * Ensured inflation was funded for the 2014-2015 school year. Still await the outcome of AEA's lawsuit to require the base funding level to be reset due to failure to pay inflation for past three years. This could result in \$236.34 in additional funding per student for inflation

- * Retained local control by stopping legislation to restrict teacher in-service training to only occurring on a Monday or Friday, or on Election Days

- * Passed clarifying legislation to stop Superintendent Huppenthal from misinterpreting statute by giving the charter additional assistance funds to all voucher recipients

- * Defeated all attempts to eliminate the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards

- * Encouraged Governor Brewer to veto a bill that expanded the corporate tax credit program for private schools (vetoed SB 1048)

- * Prevented the spread of private school vouchers to higher education

- * Defeated an attempt to arm school employees with firearms as a new school safety program

- * Rejected an attempt to send a ballot referral to the voters which would have jeopardized Proposition 301/Classroom Site Fund dollars

- * Passed legislation that repealed problematic election law changes that attempted to purge voters off the permanent early voter list and hinder the ability of citizens to vote. This removes the need to engage in a ballot fight over this issue in November.

- * Defeated legislation to prohibit any performance pay from being included in the salary component for the purpose of determining a person's pension benefit

- * Protected the ASRS (Defined Benefit retirement system) by rejecting an attempt to create a Defined Contribution pension program that would have left retirees financially insecure upon retirement eligibility

- * Rejected an attempt to send a ballot referral to the voters which would have permitted employee retirement contribution rates to increase and allow benefits to be reduced

- * Prevented retirement contribution rates from increasing by defeating legislation that would have set a cap on salaries

- * Preserved the right of school districts to hire retirees and defeated legislation that prohibited any form of a return to work program once a person retires.

Members attend NEA Retired Organizing Conference in Houston



“Raise Your Hand: Commit, Recruit Retired, Act” was the theme of the NEA Retired Organizing Conference in Houston, TX, March 25-27. Twelve AEA-Retired members joined 350 of their colleagues from around the country in Houston to participate in this year’s conference. Held at the Westin Galleria Houston, the conference offered numerous informative workshops, plenary sessions, and important training for retired leaders. Representing AEA-Retired at the conference were: Suzan Austin, Kathy Campbell, John Campbell, Michael Gordy, Julie Horwin, Barbara Matteson, Gary Mehok, Judy Moy, Carmen Peters, Nancy Putman, Linda Somo, and Jean Stephenson.



Through the workshops and plenary presentations, members gained new knowledge and valuable insights into important issues that affect retirees, and learned strategies for applying that knowledge to help others and to improve the Association.



Volunteer to serve on AEA-Retired committee; attend Committee Day, Wednesday, September 10, at AEA HQ



Do you want to have a voice in setting the direction of your Association? Would you like to be an active participant in the activities of a vibrant, growing organization? Volunteer to serve on an AEA-Retired committee and be an integral part in helping to move the Association forward. Committee meetings are normally held following the AEA-Retired Board meetings which take place the second Tuesday of each month from September through May. Most committees do not meet every month, and may only meet once or twice a year, or as needed.

The first meeting for all committees will be during AEA-Retired’s Committee Day scheduled for Wednesday, September 10, from 10 AM to 3 PM at AEA Headquarters, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix. Lunch will be provided.

Committees that are in need of participants are: Membership Outreach, Public Relations, Political Action, and Chapter Chair Development. To add your name to a committee, or to volunteer for any Association activities, contact President Julie Horwin at jhorwin@mindspring.com or call 602-574-1473.

2014 AEA-Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly



News and Notes for Seniors

*** According to an Op Ed in the May issue of the *AARP Bulletin*, claims from pharmaceutical companies justifying the high cost of cancer drugs, simply do not add up.** Donald W. Light, a network fellow at Harvard University's E.J. Safra Center for Ethics and a professor at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Hagop Kantarjian, a professor and chair of the Department of Leukemia at MD Anderson Cancer Center, the \$1.3 billion figure cited by drug companies as the cost to bring a new drug to market is really closer to \$125 million. Citing vastly inflated costs, the authors state, "Overall, investment in basic research by pharmaceutical companies to discover new drugs is quite small – about one-sixth of overall company research costs and about 1.3 percent of revenues after deducting for taxpayer subsidies." They further explain that the "market spiral pricing strategy" (continually raising prices across the whole market, regardless of value or cost) results in companies erroneously raising prices on some of their older drugs by 20 – 25 percent a year. "In the past year, they have almost doubled their prices for cancer drugs."

***Are you a caretaker for a family member? Are you in need of a respite?** Arizona has a variety of resources available through a toll-free call to the **Arizona Caregiver Coalition at 888-737-7494**. Through the coalition, seniors can access a caregiver resource center at azcaregiver.org, and a new voucher program to assist family caregivers. Another great resource for Arizonans is the **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)**, which uses federal and state funds to help caregivers of those 60 or older find respite at reduced or no cost based on income. The AAA, which provides a variety of other services which assist senior citizens, can be reached at 888-783-7500. Additionally, Arizonans can seek assistance through the **Arizona Division of Aging and Adult Services**, which has provided over 1,000 caregivers with federally funded, need-based vouchers worth up to \$1,200 a year. For more information, call 888-737-7494.

***Software firm Juniper Networks reported a sixfold increase in malware threats to mobile devices last year, and predicts that 2014 will see even more attacks with smartphones, especially Androids, being targeted.** Sid Kirchheimer, author of *Scam-Proof Your Life* published by AARP Books/Sterling, suggests twelve ways to stay safe and protect your phone. A few examples are: if your phone offers encryption, enable it; use security software recommended by your carrier or phone manufacturer; when using your smartphone to shop, use retailers' dedicated apps; before installing apps, read their reviews and stick with trusted vendors like Google or Apple; think twice about public Wi-Fi networks; and much more.

(Refer to the May issue of the AARP Bulletin for the complete stories on the above items)

A special thank you to Linda Somo for her help, guidance and kindness in teaching me the ropes here at *the Conduit*. The following quote exemplifies Linda.

Liz Hendrickson

"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

Steven Spielberg



The Conduit



A Publication of AEA-Retired

An affiliate of NEA Retired

345 E. Palm Lane

Phoenix, AZ 85004

602-574-1473

azedretired.com

aea.retired@arizonaaea.org

Julie Horwin	President
Suzan Austin	Vice President
Ken Freed	Secretary
Steve Linder	Treasurer
Linda Somo	Past President

The Conduit

Linda Somo & Liz Hendrickson Co-Editors

AEA-Retired Chapter News

Chapters are an attempt to bring AEA-Retired closer to members. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include an information program, business meeting, lunch or dinner, and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinators **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 suzanaustin@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- All members are welcome at our meetings. Steve Ramos spoke at the May 1st meeting. We meet at the Iron Works Restaurant, 17233 N. 45th Avenue, Phoenix. For more information call **Susie Sommer** at 623-931-6209 or e-mail ssommer114@aol.com Next meeting will be, Thurs., Oct. 2nd, 2014.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Chapter members met on Wed., May 14. Guest speaker was Antonio Galindo, speaking about things to know as you get older, "Things to check off, before you check out", and NEA Member Benefits specific to retirees. Meetings scheduled 2014, are Sept. 17th, Nov., 12th. Meetings for 2015 are Jan. 14, Mar. 11, and May 13, at the Sunrise Bank Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at Hydrick@aol.com or (480) 628-1845 for information.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: Meetings are the third Tues. of Sept.—May, starting at 10:00 at TEA. Go to <http://www.azedretired.com/TUCSON/index.html> for more information, or contact **Chip Parsons** at chipp@cox.net

Phoenix Chapter: May meeting was held on the 20th at the Beatitudes in Phoenix. For more information contact **Barb Joseph** at (602) 765-0788 or btjoseph@cox.net.

Yavapai Chapter: The Yavapai Chapter of AEA-R met at IHOP in Prescott Valley on May 17, and including three people who are retiring this year. Next meeting will be on August 23, 2104 11:30 AM to socialize and plan events for the coming school year. Contact **Ted Coleman** at tdashfork@azwildblue.com for more information.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: Our last meeting for this school year was held on May 12, 2014. Victoria Mogilner, a licensed acupuncturist and acupressurist, was our guest speaker. Everyone loved her interactive presentation on relieving stress. The calendar for next year was set. We plan to meet from 11 AM to 1 PM for lunch at the Miracle Mile Deli, 7435 E. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd., Scottsdale, on Sept. 15, Nov. 17, Jan. 19, March 16, and May 18. We will continue to collect books and magazines to donate to the Lodestar Learning Center and take contributions for CIS. For information contact **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>. Everyone is welcome.

Southeast Arizona Chapter: met on Tuesday, May 12 at the Sierra Vista Pizza House Bistro. Sixteen members attended. Next meeting will be in August. For information on the next meeting date & location, please RSVP to **Sally Rosen** at 520-459-0430 or azcatsally@aol.com. Hope to see everyone there.

Northern Arizona/ Rez Chapter: Met on May 21st. Contact **Maryanne Goodluck** at magoodluck55@yahoo.com for information and future meeting dates, including a possible summer meeting.

Kyrene Chapter: Met on May 20th. Guest speaker was Mitzi Epstein, who is a candidate for the Statehouse in LD 18. For more information and future meeting dates, please contact **Ellen Shamah** at 480-345-7664 or eshamah@cox.net.