



# THE CONDUIT

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### Calendar

January 11: State Legislature convenes

January 12: AEA-Retired Board Meeting

February 9: AEA-Retired Board Meeting

February 9: All nomination forms due



## Season's Greetings

### Prop 208 Wins! But...

You marched, went door to door, phone-banked, texted, did social media, lobbied, stayed up all night at the Capitol. You delivered hundreds of thousands of petitions and, finally it made the ballot. Then the court ruled against us. Confusing language it said. Then you went back to doing it all again. Hundreds of thousands of petitions again were delivered and it made the ballot. Then, after campaigning another year in the midst of a pandemic, voters approved Proposition 208. You cheered. Thrilled in victory.

Proposition 208 would raise \$827 million



for education, taxing wealthy people who actually pay less in Arizona than most states. The measure would send monies to the following areas:

- 50% hiring and raising salaries of teachers

- 25% hiring and increasing salaries of student support
- 12% career and technical programs
- 10% programs dedicated to retaining and mentoring teachers
- 3% scholarships for the Arizona Teachers Academy, which waives college tuition for teachers-in-training who commit to work in Arizona schools after graduation

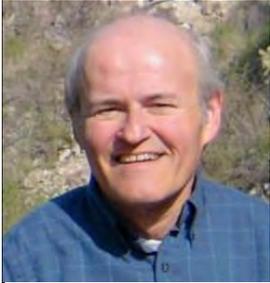
Now. Not one but two roadblocks. One suit advanced by two high ranking legislators, House Speaker Rusty Bowers, Senate President, Karen Fann, and the Goldwater Institute filed a legal challenge to block implementation of 208 and overturn the will of the people. In a separate lawsuit, My Sister's Closet CEO Ann Siner filed the other lawsuit to block 208 declaring "business owners have suffered enough."

Legal papers filed in Maricopa County Superior Court contend that the Arizona Constitution allows only the legislature to impose a new tax and then only by a two-thirds vote. "Because Proposition 208 did not meet either requirement, its new tax was not constitutionally enacted," the lawsuit reads.

In response to the lawsuit trying to stop

*Continued on page 4*

# ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



## Studies show taxpayers can't afford continued dismantling of Arizona's public pensions

As AEA Retired looks ahead to the 2021 Arizona legislative session, members must send a message to our newly elected and re-elected representatives. Dismantling public pensions carries a cost. Legislators pursuing this path would actually increase the burden on taxpayers.

The National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) published a study in March of 2020, *Fortifying Main Street: The Economic Benefit of Public Pension Dollars in Small Towns and Rural America*.

The study reminds us that:

While much of the conversation around public pension plans focuses on the contributions that state and local government employers make to these plans, it is important to remember that these plans ultimately pay benefits to retirees and that the spending of these benefits has a real economic impact in local communities.

In many small towns and rural communities, the largest employer may be a public entity, such as a school district. State and local government employees typically earn a defined benefit pension during their career and many of these public servants stay in their community to collect their pension benefit after they retire. This keeps money in the community when retired public employees spend their pensions at local businesses.

In 2018 The National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS) released a study examining the impact of investment of pension fund assets and spending of pension checks by retirees on state and local economies and revenues. It showed that pension funds play an important role in our economy and are net revenue producers. The 2020 update of that study was released this year. *Unintended Consequences: How Scaling Back Public Pensions Puts Government Revenues at Risk 2020 Update*, builds on the 2018 study and finds that:

The impact pensions have is even more robust now than was determined two years ago. Both the original 2018 and new 2020 studies were done against the backdrop of sustained attacks on public pensions. . . The argument that taxpayers cannot afford public pensions has taken hold with an almost mythological force, seeping into public opinion as an accepted truth. Opponents of public pensions have advanced an us-versus-them storyline in their concerted efforts to undermine and ultimately dismantle public pensions.

Public pensions generate state and local revenues in two ways. First, when pension funds invest their assets in the economy, the economy grows, and tax revenues increase. Second, when retirees spend their pension checks in local economies, the overall economy benefits. Voters can easily understand the basics, but the study examines the broader question of state and local revenues generated by public pensions, and whether these revenues exceed taxpayer contributions to the pensions.

Using state and local data for the last 41 years, this study examines the following questions: How much state and local tax revenue is generated as a result of the existence of public pensions? Do these revenues exceed taxpayer contributions to public pensions? Finally, how much would Arizona taxpayers have to pay in additional taxes if public pensions were dismantled?

The study shows (see the chart below) the total revenue earned from the combined **Investment of Pension Assets** and revenue earned from **Arizona Spending of Pension Checks** versus the **Taxpayer Contributions to Public Pensions**. The Net taxpayer savings **Attributable to Public Pensions**, \$494,143. (All data in the \$1000)

State	State & Local Revenue from Investment of Pension Assets	State & Local Revenue from Spending of Pension Checks	Total State & Local Revenue from Public Pensions	Taxpayer Contribution to Public Pensions	Net State & Local Revenue Attributable to Public Pensions
Arizona	\$545,648	\$2,116,404	\$2,662,052	\$2,167,909	\$494,143

Taxpayers are responsible for government employee salaries, but it must be understood that pension dollars are delayed salary compensation for workers providing public services. Privatization of pensions would cost taxpayers more for the simple reason that the goal of private companies is to make a profit. Pensions play an additional role in the recruitment and retention of a quality public workforce. Attempts to enact "pension reform" are often thinly disguised efforts to dismantle public pensions rather than admitting short-sighted government decisions made in the past and fixing them. Arizona legislators should think twice before they convert our ASRS defined benefit plan into a 401k style, do-it-yourself retirement plan.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JANIE HYDRICK



This year in December, people will celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa; and there are holy days for Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and Wiccans. Yet, as diverse as these observations may be, they have two things in common: hope and optimism. As members of AEA-Retired, you have declared your hope and optimism many times.

Let us celebrate some of those declarations during this holiday season.

Since 2008, we have witnessed billions of dollars cut from public education in Arizona at the same time that larger class sizes, more curricular restraints, and additional non-pedagogical skills, were imposed. Both certified and classified personnel were paid lower salaries through inflation. Although parents seemed more and more appreciative of the extraordinary efforts that school personnel invested in schools and students, the state legislature and even the media chipped away at morale and our sense of self-worth: "...just a teacher...three months off in the summer...could earn more in the private sector...useless higher degrees." What kept many of us in the profession was the optimism that whatever our jobs – bus driver, kindergarten teacher, recess monitor, AP Chem teacher – we were helping students achieve their dreams to make the world a better place one dream at a time. We hoped that our workplace and our salaries would improve, but for the most part, our optimism fueled our determination to stay in our professions.

Then in 2018, educators – classified and certified alike – walked out in solidarity for better-funded public education. Record-high temperatures did not deter hopeful educators from gathering hundreds of thousands of signatures nor from talking to voters about the dire need for restored resources to public education. Hope was indeed very high through the piling high of boxes and boxes of filled petitions. Then hope was dashed in late summer when the initiative was thrown out by the courts.

2020 brought an unprecedented pandemic that would turn the protocols and delivery system of public education inside out. Yet in the midst of the chaos and uncertainty, AEA restored the hopes of classified and certified with Red for Ed for signatures and, on the ballot, Prop 208. Again, AEA-Retired members joined efforts with AEA active members to gather hundreds of thousands of signatures and later the necessary votes with creative, safe-distance measures: parking lot drive-throughs and front porch card tables for signatures and car window painting, pop-up tents with swag and information, singing, and dancing - all in record-high temperatures. These were all consummate examples of hope and optimism. Hurrah for all your efforts! Hurrah for all of us together!

Our state and nation have a growing diversity of visions for education and for its delivery systems as well as a vision of "the greater good." Thus, our struggles for adequate funding and resources for public education will continue. Yet, as all of you have demonstrated in the past and which we will celebrate

this year, our collective hope and optimism will prevail, and we will continue to deliver the best public education system in the world (2019 *US News & World Report*). More importantly, we members of AEA-Retired will continue to inspire the AEA active members with our hope and optimism so that for generations to come, students will have a level playing field as they receive the best public education system in the world.

## Thank you for joining! We invite you to belong!

When you joined AEA-Retired, you made the great decision to retire from your job, not from your profession. You **joined** the power and strength of 20,000 other AEA members and over 3.1 million NEA members.

Now, through Zoom events, you have opportunities to **belong** to multiple chapters and committees within AEA-Retired. We invite you to **belong** to the many communities of your colleagues.

**COVID19 wreaked havoc** with our lives and forced us to monitor and adjust in ways we could never have anticipated. As educators, monitoring and adjusting were the dominant features of everything we did, regardless of our job description. Surprisingly, some of our adjustments to COVID19 as AEA-Retired have actually had some benefits for us as an association such as opening up chapters and committees.

**AEA-Retired is a statewide local, not set in any one city**, so we've had chapters all over the state in Mesa, Tucson, Flagstaff, and other places. Wherever our members lived they could be part of an in-person event. We've also had wonderful, productive committees, but they've always met in Phoenix, definitely disadvantaging members from far-flung areas of the state who wanted to participate.

**Through Zoom, you can meet with any chapter in the state.** Belong to any and all AEA-Retired chapters. When I was active, I looked forward to the annual Delegate Assembly for hugs and catching up with MaryAnn Goodluck, Danny Barlow, and Lenny Reed who taught in Chinle. Still no hugs, but with their Zoom Chapter meeting, I can keep up with these three dear friends and, as a bonus, work with them to elect some great pro public education candidates and pass Prop 208. I joined the Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter Zoom meeting last week and didn't think I would know anyone, but I did! And I had a wonderful, laugh-filled 90 minutes.

**Through Zoom, you can belong to any AEA-Retired Committee** and not have to travel beyond your living room. We need members from all over Arizona to help us develop **Membership** in Yuma and Prescott. We need input to **Political Advocacy** from Apache Junction and Lake Havasu. There are many more committees available, and each one would welcome your belonging.

Please consider venturing past being a member. Each chapter and committee invites you to belong to its community. We welcome your presence, your ideas, your participation.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



## Become Politically Active in Different Ways This Year By Luci Messing

2021 will be a very different year of engaging and interacting with our elected representatives. The State Legislature will begin the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislative session on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. We must prepare

and ensure that our voices are heard even if we are not in the same room.

Depending on when you receive this newsletter, AEA-Retired had our annual Advocacy/Lobbying Training. If you were not able to attend and would be interested in this training, send me an email, and let me know.

Meanwhile, we are asking for each and every one of you to send postcards to Governor Ducey and all three of your State Legislators. Send to 1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007. We are hoping that this action can take place before the Legislative session begins. If you would like for us to mail to you the postcards, please send me an email and include your address. Depending on how your representative votes, you can use any of the following talking points:

- Identify yourself as an AEA-Retired member
- Protect our pensions and allow educators to retire with respect and dignity.
- We want a fair and transparent process regarding redistricting.

Public schools need assistance during this pandemic and require immediate attention.

And of course, it is always a best practice, colleagues, to share your personal story regarding the three above points.

The Request To Speak system will be more important than ever during the time of COVID. Many of you already have an account and will be ready to go once bills are assigned to committee. For those of you who need to set up an account, send us your email at [lucibmessing@cox.net](mailto:lucibmessing@cox.net) and request an RTS system account to be set up for you. Whether you have an account or intend to activate one, you can go to [azleg.gov](http://azleg.gov), click on Request to Speak, then click again on Request to Speak. You will see the main page for using RTS. On the left-hand side, click on RTS manual and learn everything you need to know about using this system.

It is our mission to help you stay informed and to be active to positively impact public education issues, our pensions, and COVID-19 relief. Our representatives at the state legislature need to hear directly from us. We intend to do just that. **Join us in this effort.**

Continued from [page 1](#)

Proposition 208 from becoming law, Joe Thomas, President of the Arizona Education Association released the following statement: "As of today, there are 1.675 million answers to these absurd claims. That's the number of Arizona voters who voted to pass Proposition 208. No Arizona child will get a better education because of this second lawsuit. No teacher will earn a penny more. It won't buy books or classroom supplies. The people behind this frivolous lawsuit lost their first lawsuit and they lost at the ballot box despite spending nearly \$20 million. So ask yourself, what's this really about?"

Teachers, support staff, students, parents, administrators, boards of education will rise to this occasion. There's no time to get discouraged or tired. Our students deserve better.



## Biden-Harris Campaign becomes the Biden-Harris Administration!

After a nail-biting, white knuckle night or two waiting for the election results, the Biden-Harris ticket won. With this incoming administration, new hope for our public schools is issued in with the vision that our schools will get what they need to serve all students and their families. Included in this vision is the anticipation of a U.S. Department of Education Secretary who is responsive to all sectors of our diverse nation. Congratulations to President Elect Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. We look forward to working with you to establishing commitment and support for these inclusive programs.



## Nichols and Cents by Jan Nichols



### 'Tis the season to be.....scammed!

In the middle of all the excitement of the holidays and the limitations of the pandemic, it's easy to be less vigilant about online shopping. Few of these scams are related to the holidays, most are just a new version of the everyday frauds. Many are doing more shopping online than ever, and retailers are hoping to recoup losses from absence of in-person shopping. The roll-out of great deals from reputable sources is tainted with phishing, spoofing sites and fake posts from non-existent companies. The sad thing is that wonderful present, so cheap, envisioned for a loved one might never arrive. Many of these malwares will steal your card number and personal identity information.

Phishing refers to cyber criminals sending an email that looks credible and reputable to get your information or money.

Spoofing is rerouting internet traffic/customers to a malware site aimed at stealing identity and personal information.

Here are some of the most prevalent scams of the season:

- Charity scams. Most of us know the Nigerian prince is a scam, but other charities operate under a guise and exploit Americans' sense of goodwill by using fake websites and telemarketers.
- Delivery scams. While a holiday package is anticipated and a scammer sends out an email disguised as Fed X, UPS or the U.S. Postal Service linking you to a phony sign in, describing an attempt to deliver or sending you to a link to track packages. Sometimes with a warning against phishing scams coaxing the recipient into a false sense of security. Shipping companies don't send a link. Beware the message that suggests there is a problem with delivery.
- Travel scams. Spoofing sites vow to deliver travel packages at a really good price, but actually only take personal information and credit card information.
- Letter from Santa scams. A custom letter from one of Santa's jolly elves will personalize a special present for your kids or grandkids. Information about these loved ones is shared and utilized by the scammers, sometimes years later.
- Social media scams are prevalent, especially in the holiday season. A spiffy apparel item looks trendy, sophisticated and inexpensive. The photos show front, back, side views. You order and the package arrives a little late. You open it only to find out it is not quality and it's three sizes smaller than you order. Then, you find out there is no return, or you only get a partial refund if any at all.

Watch out for huge discounts on hot items, especially on social media posts. Look for spelling errors and grammatical errors. If there is no phone number or street address for the site, beware. If it's a random ad and has the address or phone, call the number, look up the address. In fact, research the company first.

### Things to remember while shopping online

- Display the URL address in the browser. Don't click on a link until you're sure it's legitimate.
- Pay by credit card. That way you can dispute the charges and limit the damage if you were scammed.
- Research the company. Look at reviews
- Look at the return and return policy. A legitimate company will accept returns, make adjustments.
- If you buy gift cards online, buy them directly from the issuing business. If you buy at the supermarket or store, look on the back to make sure the card was not tampered or altered.
- Don't order anything online when in a public Wi-Fi network.
- Don't buy anything online asking for a wire transfer, gift card or prepaid card.

If you suspect a scam message or want to check the validity of a message, you can forward them to the following email addresses:

UPS: [fraud@ups.com](mailto:fraud@ups.com)

FedEx: [abuse@fedex.com](mailto:abuse@fedex.com)

Amazon: [stop-spoofing@amazon.com](mailto:stop-spoofing@amazon.com)

DHL: [phishing-dpdhl@dhl.com](mailto:phishing-dpdhl@dhl.com)

Scam text messages can be reported to all carriers by forwarding message to: **7726 (SPAM)**

The holiday is a joyful time. Just be aware that scammers want to be joyful too and they will take advantage of your personal information and steal your money.

Sources: AARP Fraud Resource Center, 11-20-2020 Arizona Republic, Ken Colburn, 12-7-2020

## A Unique Getaway

By Jan Nichols

Still need a drive-about to keep your sanity? Here is a day trip you might enjoy. Begin by driving north approximately 70 miles on I-17 to the Cordes Junction Turnoff. The first stop is at Arcosanti.



**Arcosanti** is just off the highway and a step away to a magical place. Arcosanti was built by the late Italian architect, Paolo Soleri, who proposed the concept of minimizing destruction of the environment in urban settlements. His plans included less reliance on fossil fuels, developing solar energy, increasing natural living spaces, all in a densely populated, mixed use design. Soleri influenced many young architects who lived and studied on site. Over 8,000 volunteers, since 1970 have also contributed to this unique experiment. Take a tour, browse in the gift shop and luncheon in the rustic restaurant for a fascinating getaway. Next stop, Fort Verde.



Traveling north on I-17 from Cordes Junction, it's a short thirty mile jaunt to the Camp Verde turnoff from Arcosanti. **Fort Verde** is one of the best well-preserved examples of the Indian Wars fort in Arizona. The original military headquarters is now a museum which houses many artifacts, photos, videos focused on the history and lives of those who served at Fort Verde. Three of the original homes along Officer's Row still remain furnished with artifacts as they were in the 1880's. Take a picnic lunch, tour the buildings and the Visitor Center. Take a step back in time, enjoy the scenery of tall Cottonwood trees and a rich riparian habitat. A relaxing afternoon awaits. Head back to the I-17 north, to **Camp Verde**.

A mere nine minutes north of Camp Verde is the turnoff to Montezuma's Castle and Montezuma's Well. This is one of the best preserved cliff dwellings in North America. Considered by some to be "prehistoric high rise complexes," the ruins are precariously poised on a 90 foot sheer limestone cliff. The structure is five stories tall and is comprised of 45 – 60 rooms. The pre-Columbian Sinagua people built this over a period of three centuries.



The name is a misnomer. The "castle" was actually abandoned more than forty years before the conqueror Montezuma was born. Settlers first observed the ruins in the 1800's. Even though Montezuma had no connection with this site, the mythology was so strong, the name prevailed. Several clans, Hopi and Yavapai communities, trace their ancestry to this region of the Verde Valley.

Montezuma Well is separate from the castle, but nearby. There are plenty of signs to indicate access the well. Various settlers claimed and sold the land to a series of parties in the 1870's until it was finally turned into a tourist attraction by the Back family, who owned and maintained the land around the Well for more than 60 years. The family sought Congressional approval, granted in 1943, to sell the land to the National Park Service. It officially became another National Park in 1947. Although many of the buildings were removed, several remain intact. It is easy to imagine what life was like when the Sinagua people accessed Beaver Creek, creating irrigation canals to utilize that water in farming. The area is considered also a rich habitat for over 200 species of birds, among them Lucy's Warbler and Ash-throated Fly-catcher.

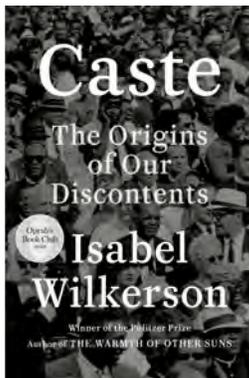


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## The Book Corner

by Ann Myers and Janice Dwosh



The Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee co-chairs Ann Myers and Janice Dwosh have established a book discussion group. Nine members met in October to discuss their first selection, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson. It is a new, important book that defines African-American slavery as a caste system. She describes the elements of caste and compares the system to those of Nazi Germany toward the Jews in the early 20th century; the Dalits, the Untouchables in India. The lingering effects of caste in the United States influence social discrimination and racial tensions of 2020. Ten years ago, Isabel Wilkerson authored another fascinating book about the Black experience with her book, *The Warmth of Other Suns*. This tells the story of the Great Migration of Black families from the South to the North from 1915 to 1970. She interviewed thousands of people, but settled on relating the experiences of three families and the courage it took to leave Jim Crow South. Despite the hardships, these families were able to give their children a life beyond sharecropping.

The group will be meeting about every six weeks. If you are interested in being a part of a book group with a theme of social justice, contact Ann Myers [azann@mac.com](mailto:azann@mac.com) or Janice Dwosh

[jdwosh27@gmail.com](mailto:jdwosh27@gmail.com)

Are you a Podcast fan? Janice Dwosh, Julie Cieniawski and 40 other NEA Leaders attended the first of two podcast discussions on *Nice White Parents*, an expose and discussion of inequities in the New York City schools over the past 60 years. It is a free podcast from the New York Times available to anyone, and Janice is willing to facilitate a podcast discussion with AEA Retired members in December or January. There are five 50-60minute episodes, and you can listen to them at home, in your vehicle, or anywhere you have access to audio podcasts. Please contact Janice at [jdwosh27@gmail.com](mailto:jdwosh27@gmail.com) to express your interest in this podcast discussion. Here is a link to the information about Nice White Parents <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/23/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial.html>



## Nomination for AEA-Retired Board Positions

2021 Nomination forms Due on or before February 9, 2021 at 5:00pm

Delegates will vote for the following positions:

1. Vice-President
2. At-Large representatives, 6 positions available

You may nominate yourself for one position only, either At-Large Representative or Vice-President.

Name of Nominee:

Email address:

Phone number:

Check the position you seek.  
Each position has a term of 3 years.

- AEA-Retired Vice President
- AEA-Retired At-Large Representative

Detach the form and deliver to:

AEA-Retired Elections  
c/o Steve Linder  
7425 N. Mona Lisa Rd. #46  
Tucson, AZ 85741

**No need for paper, pencil, envelope or stamp.**

**Nominate yourself for AEA-Retired Board positions online here:**

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021Delegate\\_BoardNominations](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021Delegate_BoardNominations)

Call Julie Horwin 602-320-3093 for help.

## Winter Membership Drive

The AEA Retired Membership Team has organized a Winter Membership Drive that will start this winter. The goal is to recruit newly retired members who are eligible to join us in AEA-Retired.

Membership dues of \$105 annually are broken out in three parts, NEA (\$35), AEA (\$35), and AEA-Retired (\$35). We are offering to reimburse new members the dues for membership in NEA and AEA for one year, a total of \$70.00, reducing the cost for the first year to \$35.00 for AEA-Retired dues. This plan is offered to the first 150 members who sign up and choose to pay by ASRS payroll deduction from the member's pension.

New members have two enrollment options:

1. Annual membership of \$105 (\$35 NEA, \$35 AEA, \$35 AEA-Retired), a monthly deduction of \$8.75.
2. Annual membership of \$70, if the member chooses to pay NEA Life Membership dues (a one-time payment of \$300) or has paid it in the past, (\$35.00 AEA, \$35.00 AEA-Retired), a monthly deduction of \$5.83.

After the membership has been processed, a check for \$70.00 will be mailed to the new member. The Membership Team is asking all AEA Retired members to reach out to friends and colleagues who are planning to retire this year or have previously done so, but did not join AEA-Retired. If a retired member signs up a new member, that member will be eligible for a \$10 gift card. This is a great opportunity for them to join our terrific organization and SAVE!

## AEA-Retired What We Do

### Socialize and Learn



### Advocate for Education



### Protect Retirement Security



### Lead and Mentor



And so much more!

## Howard Johnson

### Amazing Retiree And New AEA-Retired Treasurer



My name is Howard Johnson. I am currently serving as the Treasurer of AEA-Retired. I am humbled to have been elected and I appreciate the confidence that you have in my ability to maintain and execute the duties of this important position. Saying that, I think you should know a bit about me.

I retired in 2012 from the Mesa Public School system where I was a teacher of Career and Technical

Education classes at both junior and senior high schools. The primary classes I taught were Robotics, Electronics, Welding and Automotive repair. This was done over a period of fifteen years. Before this work, I had taught in the Bolivar Missouri School District (MSD) four years and a year in the Springfield Missouri Public School System. My total teaching experience in three public school systems was 20 years.

More importantly, what is my background in finance? In the early 70's, my college major was accounting. I did that for several years but was distracted by motorcycles, much to my mother's dismay, and moved into jobs that were technical in nature. Eventually, in 1979, I received a degree in Manufacturing Engineering from Memphis University. I ended up working in the textile industry in Georgia a few years before taking an engineering position in South Carolina. While there, I became a member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, Greenville/Spartanburg Chapter. I did work as the treasurer with this organization before resigning to move to Springfield, Missouri. Also, while working at this position in South Carolina, I was promoted from Engineering to Plant Superintendent. In this position, I was responsible for a budget that kept a hundred people employed making various automobile parts.

After moving to Springfield, I worked several odd jobs before getting a teaching certificate from Missouri State University in 1989. I did not go into teaching right away, but went into outside sales for three years. I then began my teaching career at Bolivar MSD.

After my retirement in 2012, I went to Greeley, Colorado to care for my parents for several years. After settling their affairs, I returned to Arizona and became more active with AEA-Retired.

I have attended most meetings of the AEA-Retired Executive Board for the past three years, and last year was elected to the Executive Board. I have also taken on responsibilities with other organizations and am presently the property manager for the Humanist Society of Greater Phoenix.

Thank you again for the confidence you have placed in me. My commitment is to each of you.

Do you know someone who has done great things for AEA-Retired and the community? Please nominate this individual for the Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Award. The nomination form is on page 9.

## THE LES REYNOLDS DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SERVICE AWARD

The LES REYNOLDS DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SERVICE AWARD is named for Les Reynolds, the first president of AEA-Retired. The award is presented annually to a member of our association in appreciation for outstanding service to our Association, public education, and the community. Previous recipients are Robert Bloom, Bertha Myers, John Campbell, Ralph Lara, Barbara Matteson, Marion Pickens, Mary Bishop, Connie Wittig, Kathy Campbell, Frank Bing, Frank Sacco, Linda Somo, Steve Ramos, Suzan Austin, and Luci Messing.

Please take time to nominate a member you believe meets these criteria. Be specific in completing the form which must be in a typewritten format. You may attach additional information. The committee will not consider partially completed forms. **Nomination deadline is February 9, 2021.**

### LES REYNOLDS DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Nominee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Information: All information must be in a typewritten format.

Attach an additional page, if necessary. There is a two page maximum.

1. Number of years as an AEA-Retired member: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Association positions held at the local, state, and national levels:
3. Positions held in other professional and/or social organizations:
4. Community service:
5. List and describe the nominee's involvement in activities that were beneficial to AEA-Retired, education and/ or his/her community:
6. Other relevant information:

Please return a completed form to:

**Connie Wittig**  
**c/o AEA-Retired**  
**345 E. Palm Lane**  
**Phoenix, AZ 85004**

**Nomination forms are due by February 9, 2021.**

## SARAH SAYS

By Sarah Borgman, NEA-Retired President



“It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” and it’s beginning to look as though we might make it through a rather difficult year. I’ve read, as I’m sure you have also, a lot of articles about staying positive, look on the bright side of things, keep your mind busy, don’t bellyache, etc., but the truth is---it has been a *tough year!* I remember in the beginning thinking, “Oh, this will just go away” ... yeh, right. We have all lost loved ones, suffered anxiety and real fear, and still wonder how long till the vaccine is available, till the Association can actually have face to face meetings... Lands, how I miss you!!! and when will things return to some semblance of normal? No one really knows. Wishes abound, however.

This one thing I know for sure. In spite of---not because of--- all the COVID-19 traumas, our affiliates, state and local, have continued working, planning, and moving ahead. That spirit and movement is what is needed. What doesn’t kill us (and I don’t say that lightly) makes us stronger! As Winston Churchill said, “Never, never, never give up!” I know you won’t, and I won’t either!!! Because: wait for it--- *“We are NEA Retired; our commitment continues, and we are needed NOW more than ever!”*



In a news conference on Wednesday, December 2, Governor Ducey announced the arrival of COVID-19 vaccine to Arizona in the next two or three weeks. He signed an executive order directing the vaccine to be free to all Arizonans. Teachers

will be included in the first group of people eligible for the vaccine, along with health care workers and vulnerable populations.” Daniella Yaloz Smith

Send your email address to

[julie.horwin@gmail.com](mailto:julie.horwin@gmail.com)

Win\$100



If we already have your e-mail address, you are entered in the \$100 AEA-Retired Raffle.

Good luck!

Do you know a retired teacher or educational support person who is amazing? Do you have an educational article you would like to share? Have you participated in a notable event, read a great book? We would like to hear about it. Send it in to the co-editors of the Conduit. Include a photograph, logo or graph with a text limit of 300 words. Jan Nichols: [jmnichol5@yahoo.com](mailto:jmnichol5@yahoo.com)  
Bart James: [bjames52@yahoo.com](mailto:bjames52@yahoo.com)

## VIP Update by Larry Wittig

Even in the midst of the pandemic and a polarizing election, **Valley Interfaith Project** leaders found ways to continue to bridge partisan divides and develop solutions for Arizona families. Some of the key progress:

- VIP increased accessibility to COVID-19 testing and flu vaccinations in underserved communities, launching congregational testing sites and flu vaccine clinics across the county—especially in areas hardest hit by the virus.
- VIP engaged voters and helped to pass key public education initiatives by working alongside our statewide Arizona Interfaith Network to educate voters on Proposition 208 and local overrides and bonds. Together, we helped to ensure our schools and teachers have the support they need.
- The VIP Voter Engagement Project increased voter participation among low-propensity voters by texting and making personal calls for quality voter engagement in targeted precincts. Our efforts led to an 8% increase in voting amongst our targeted voters!
- VIP Clergy, along with their statewide colleagues, engaged Corrections Director David Shinn, urging him to protect life in Arizona's correctional facilities. To date, they have achieved universal testing of inmates and staff, personal protective equipment for all in the prison community, and, importantly, anti-retaliation hotlines for anonymous reporting.
- Arizona Career Pathways, VIP’s workforce development initiative, has supported over 260 students to graduation in the last two years. The graduates have gone from earning \$11 an hour to over \$24 an hour! VIP continues to build a pathway to success for struggling families and is actively helping to shape the post-COVID economy with ACP.



The Conduit



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Howard Johnson Treasurer  
Julie Horwin Past President

The Conduit Editors  
Jan Nichols and Bart James

## NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA-RETIRED DELEGATES TO THE 2021 AEA-R ANNUAL MEETING AND THE AEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

**Forms are due on or before February 9, 2021 at 5:00 pm.**

Nominees must be an AEA-Retired to become a delegate.










No need for paper, pencil, envelope or stamp.

Nominate for Delegate Assembly online here:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/  
r/2021Delegate\\_BoardNominations](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021Delegate_BoardNominations)

Are you willing to have your contact information shared with the other delegates?

Yes  No

By submitting this nomination form, and if elected, I will commit to attending the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, and the AEA Delegate Assembly on Friday, May 7 through Saturday, May 8, 2021.

Yes, I will attend all meetings on Friday, May 7 and Saturday May 8

Will you "go green" or do you wish to have the delegate packet printed for you? Going green means that you will download the AEA Delegate Assembly book onto your tablet or computer. A copy of the materials will not be given to you. Note: New Business Items will be copied and passed out during the Delegate Assembly

Yes, I will go green. Do not print the delegate book for me.

No, I prefer to have Delegate Book printed for me.

**Detach this form and send to:**

**AEA-Retired Elections  
c/o Steve Linder  
7425 N. Mona Lisa Rd., #46  
Tucson, AZ 85741**

NOTE: As of December 7, 2020, the AEA Board of Directors has not decided whether the Delegate Assembly will be in-person or virtual (most likely). So, we are unable to provide the usual information in this issue. However, the AEA-Retired Constitution requires that we nominate and elect our delegates before our next publication date. AEA-Retired will keep you informed.

AEA Retired, YOUR STATEWIDE LOCAL  
Affiliated with Arizona Education Association  
345 East Palm Lane  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

## *AEA-Retired Chapter News*

Chapters bring AEA-Retired together, although for the present time, virtually. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include informational programs and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. This is a great way to keep in touch with the latest issues in our community. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinator Susan Sommer, **623-628-1935, [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com)**.

Note that Chapters will be meeting via Zoom this year. If you are new to virtual meetings with this app, you must first download the Zoom application from the "app store" for your device. You may choose to set up a Zoom account, but it is not required for participating in a meeting. All you need to do is click the link you receive from your Chapter Chair. You are welcome to attend any and all Chapter meetings, regardless of where you are in Arizona, or the world. We welcome your attendance and participation.

**Flagstaff Chapter:** For more information, contact **Tricia Roach** at **[trrteach6@mac.com](mailto:trrteach6@mac.com)**

**Glendale/West Valley Chapter**— This year our meetings will be held on Zoom. You will receive an invitation to join us a couple weeks before our meeting dates: February 4, 2021 at 10am, and April 1, 2021 at 10am. For more information call, text or email **Susie Sommer** at **623-628-1935, [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com)**

**Mesa/East Valley Chapter:** We are scheduling all of our chapter meetings on Zoom. Please add the following dates and times to your calendars: **12/16, 2/17, and 4/21** each will be from noon to 1pm. Around the first of each month, we'll send you an email about the speaker as well as the computer links and telephone numbers for joining us on Zoom. Invite anyone else you'd like to join us. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at **480-963-1848, [hydrick@aol.com](mailto:hydrick@aol.com)** to make sure you receive the Zoom links.

**Greater Tucson Area Chapter:** Meetings are held the third Tuesday of September—May, at 10:00 a.m. Please contact **Marion Pickens** at **520-296-5908 or [marionpeterpickens@gmail.com](mailto:marionpeterpickens@gmail.com)** to received the Zoom meeting links.

**Kyrene Chapter:** We are scheduling all of our chapter meetings on Zoom. Please add the following dates and times to your calendars: **1/19, 3/16, and 5/18** from 4:30 to 5:30pm. Around the first of each month, we'll send you an email about the speaker as well as the computer links and telephone numbers for joining us on Zoom. Invite anyone else you'd like to join us.

The November meeting was very informative with our guest speaker Mark Robert Gordon, an election attorney. Contact **Ellen Shamah** at **[eshamah@cox.net](mailto:eshamah@cox.net)** or **Janie Hydrick** at **480-963-1848, [hydrick@aol.com](mailto:hydrick@aol.com)** to make sure you receive the Zoom links.

**Phoenix Chapter:** Meetings are scheduled on Zoom for the following dates: 1/19, and 3/16 each from 10:30 to noon. Make sure to give your email address to Chapter Chair **Michele Smith** at **602-463-1624 or [mms7997@msn.com](mailto:mms7997@msn.com)** to make sure you get the Zoom links.

**Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter:** The Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter met virtually on Monday, November 16 at 1:00. We suspended our usual business meeting and instead celebrated with our speaker, NEA Vice-President Princess Moss. Ms Moss congratulated our retirees for their selfless work to pass Proposition 208, Invest in Ed, and their work for our pro public education candidates.

Until we can meet in person, we have a monthly Zoom meeting, the third Monday of each month (excluding December) at 1:00. Our next meeting is January 18 at 1:00, although you may log on between 12:45 and 1:00 for a social "gathering." Our speaker will be Jason Schechterle, a police officer who was badly burned in 2001.

Please RSVP to either co-chair to be given the Zoom link. If you have questions or difficulties with Zoom, please call us for help at least a day before our meeting. We will be glad to help you. We welcome any AEA-Retired member or potential member to our chapter. Nancy Riley 480-600-8559 or **[rileyfam@cox.net](mailto:rileyfam@cox.net)**, or Ann Myers 480-510-8098, **[azann@mac.com](mailto:azann@mac.com)**.

**Southeast Arizona Chapter:** The Southeast Arizona AEA-Retired Chapter is located in Cochise County and is comprised of districts in Sierra Vista, Tombstone, Huachuca City, Naco, Palominas, Elgin, and Ft. Huachuca, and retirees from other states who have moved to Cochise County. Please contact Sally if you would like to be added to the email contact list-our only method of communication during the pandemic period. Contact Chapter Chair Sally Rosén at **520-249-0233, [azcatsally@aol.com](mailto:azcatsally@aol.com)** for details.