



The conduit

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Season's Greetings from your AEA-Retired Board members



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Executive Board: Back Row: Shirley Boswell, Susan Sommer, Ed Bufford, Nancy Putman, Barbara Matteson, Suzan Austin, Julie Horwin, Jean Stephenson, Sally Rosen, Linda Somo, Luci Messing, MaryAnn Goodluck, Liz Hendrickson, Ken Freed. Front Row: Judy Moy, Carmen Peters, Michael Gordy, John Campbell, Steven Linder, Marilyn Freed. Not pictured: Danny Barlow, Kathy Ramage--White



Attend AEA-Retired Annual Meeting April 24th, 2015

Mark your calendar and plan to join your colleagues for a fun-filled, informative day at the 27th AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, which will be held again at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, on Friday, April 24, 2015 from 9:30 – 3:30. For those who wish to be a delegate, the AEA Delegate Assembly will follow, beginning at 6:00 PM on April 24, and continuing on Saturday, April 25.

All AEA-Retired members and their guests are invited to attend the Annual Meeting. Members who wish to also be delegates with voting rights to elect AEA-Retired officers and Board members, will be delegates to the AEA Delegate assembly as well. All AEA-Retired Delegates will be funded for half the cost of a double-occupancy room for the night of April 24th and be reimbursed for mileage that exceeds 100 miles one way.

Included in this issue of *The Conduit* on page 5 is a nomination form to be a delegate to both the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly. In order to participate in the election of AEA-Retired officers and Executive board openings, members must be delegates. Delegates will

be electing a Vice President and five Representatives-at-Large. If you are interested in running for one of these positions, the nomination form is included on page 5 along with the nomination form for being a delegate.

AEA-Retired will be allotted 85 delegates to Delegate Assembly, making our "local" the largest delegation to attend and a major player. If there are fewer nominations than allotted slots, all nominees will automatically be certified as delegates. If more nominations are received than positions available, then voting will take place electronically in February & March. **All nomination forms for delegate positions or AEA-Retired Board must be received by Monday, February 9th.**

One of the highlights of each AEA-Retired Annual Meeting is the presentation of the **Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award**. Please use the information on page 6 to nominate an AEA-retired member worthy of receiving this special award.

Plan on joining your colleagues on April 24th for a great day of entertaining activities, wonderful companionship, and important information. Watch for more information and a registration form in the March issue of *The Conduit*.



AEA Retired Calendar

December 9—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

January 13—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

February 9—Delegate nomination forms due for AEA Delegate Assembly & Annual Meeting; Les Reynolds Award nominations due

February 10—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

March 10—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ



Steve Ramos

ASRS UPDATE *By Steve Ramos*

War on public pensions continues

Phoenix voters blasted Prop 487, a proposition that would have forced the city to close its defined benefit pension system and move new employees into an inferior, riskier and more costly 401k style defined contribution plan. The election outcome was a major victory in the battle to protect all of Arizona’s public pension plans. Prop. 487 was placed on the ballot by the Arizona Free Enterprise Club. This “dark money” group spent \$1.43 million, hoping to make Phoenix the first major sized city to downgrade public employee pensions. A million dollars of that funding was tied to Texas billionaire and former Enron hedge fund manager John Arnold. A coalition of public employee groups, including NEA, and AEA, provided volunteers and political action funds to defeat 487. Thank you to all of our members who helped with this effort.

Your Arizona State Retirement System remains the “good pension” among Arizona’s retirement systems. Currently funded at about 76%, ASRS continues to recover from the economic turmoil of the last several years and is slowly returning to the 80% funding level considered good by today’s standards.

Now that statewide elections are over, we have a better picture of what AEA Retired will face in the up-coming Arizona legislative session. The balance of power remains unchanged in the House and Senate, as AEA was successful in electing and returning some pension friendly legislators to office. They will need our help throughout the session as many of the pension attacks we saw last year will be back. Please spread the news about our efforts and encourage others to join us. A membership form can be found online at <http://www.azedretired.com>. Just click on the membership tab and then the form.

The poor performance of the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System will continue to put pressure on Arizona to make public pension changes. This issue cuts both ways for ASRS members, as court decisions have recognized our constitutional protections, but those protections also block needed changes to PSPRS. How do we drop our shields to allow one pension system to be fixed, without making ASRS members a vulnerable target for those who want to reduce our benefits? It may require the skills of a starship captain like James T. Kirk for us to navigate that very perilous journey. Stay tuned for future episodes.

Possible data breach could affect 44,000 ASRS retirees

In October, ASRS became aware of a possible data breach that could potentially affect up to 44,000 retirees who purchase their dental insurance through ASRS. Retirees who are currently enrolled in ASRS dental insurance plans provided by Assurant were notified by mail of the situation.

To protect members, ASRS will provide twelve months of services from AllClear ID, which is the company that covers customers who

may have been affected by the security breach at Home Depot. Benefits include credit monitoring and a \$1 million identity theft insurance policy.

Those who are enrolled with Assurant and have received a letter from ASRS regarding this issue can call AllClear ID at 1-800-731-6012, if there is a problem.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JULIE HORWIN

Let's deal with the facts, not an agenda!



We've all seen the steady stream of headlines and heard the sound bites declaring public pension systems a disaster, unsustainable or a failure. To the average citizen these are examples of bloated entitlement programs run amuck. For public retirees, like you and me, these reports portray a nightmare scenario in which our retirement security is in jeopardy. However, to the leadership of AEA-Retired with direct knowledge of our ASRS public retirement system, these reports are most often an inaccurate and highly misleading attack. Often times the reports broadly apply problems that may exist in other retirement systems in our state – or in other states - as if those same alleged problems also exist with the ASRS.

It's important to note that the average ASRS pension amount is \$22,000/year. This fact can't be ignored!

Many of the organizations producing reports that attack our pension system are well known for their opposition to defined benefit pension plans, as well as their hostility toward public employees. The same applies to the columnists and talking heads who regurgitate these unfounded reports as if they're facts.

Thankfully, recent "reforms" have tightened up already well-run public retirement systems by closing potential loopholes and modernizing retirement benefits. Arizona's ASRS public pension now serves as a national model for best practice and oversight. I respect anybody's "Opinion" on these issues, but such opinion should be based on all relevant facts not just facts that support the "Opinion". Otherwise it's not an "Opinion" it's an Agenda!

So why am I bringing this up now after we successfully beat Prop. 487 in November?

The pension attacks promise to return this year in the state legislature, and there are threats that legislators will attempt to break, through referendum, the constitutional protections that

we worked so hard to pass at the ballot over 15 years ago. **I ask that you stay tuned to news from AEA-Retired in order that when we need your help to maintain our protected pensions, we can call on you.** For my part, I promise to keep you informed via articles in *The Conduit*, the online E-Newsletter and our Facebook Page.

Social Security and Medicare

As pensioners, and as an organization of retirees that maintains a focus on related advocacy issues, we are committed to understanding the relevant issues of health care, and its availability and impact on seniors. As such, we are proponents of maintaining Medicare and Social Security and advocating for continuation of the provisions of these programs. I have been pleased to represent these views on your behalf to our congressional representatives.

What Is Excellent In Others

"Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well." – Voltaire

I want to note that our AEA-Retired executive board, committee chairs and members, and chapter chairs are committed to our shared goals of protecting our pensions, keeping our members informed, and connecting our members to political engagement when necessary. And they are the driving force to ensure the best possible benefits for our present and future members.

Front and center to be thanked are Past President Linda Somo, Vice-President Suzan Austin, Treasurer Steve Linder, and Secretary Ken Freed, Conduit Editors Linda Somo, Liz Hendrickson and Jan Nichols, and Facebook Administrator, Steve Ramos. Extremely dedicated as a leadership team, they are the key to focused and effective communication within the organization. Working with them are the committee chairs and chapter chairs, who have made multi-year commitments to their area of endeavor.

What a team we have become, continuing to shepherd growth and development of all facets of AEA-Retired! Among the many highlights of their combined efforts are these: Development of strategic plans that focus on goals of ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION, and MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION.

Finally, I add my thanks to all of you for your caring, energy, expertise, and support for your professional organization. Thank you for your continued membership.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE *by Luci Messing*



Some bright spots for Seniors and education from election day

Luci Messing

The 2014 election is over and, though the results of the statewide races were quite disappointing, there were a number of positive outcomes. The Phoenix pension reform proposition (487) was defeated soundly. In addition, the balance of power in the state legislature remains basically the same which means we should be able to work with our representatives to protect our pensions.

Also, the majority of our school districts passed their overrides and were able to elect pro public education governing board members. We need to take the opportunity to celebrate the victories.

Thanks go out to the many members who participated in election events and activities.

However, our work is not over. It is more important than ever that we remain active and vigilant in monitoring the new legislature. It is entirely possible that there could be another attempt to attack our pensions and we must be prepared to respond.

What you can do to help

There are a couple of things that you can do now to stay informed and support AEA-Retired. Sign up to receive the *AEA Legislative Update*. Go to www.arizonaea.org, click on "Subscribe to the AEA Legislative Update" on the right side of the home page. Become a PAC contributor to help elect friends of education. Read the *AEA Advocate* and *The Conduit* on a consistent basis. Keep the conversation going with family and friends about the issues surrounding pensions, public education, and relevant issues.

Attend opening day of Legislature

We want to extend an invitation to our members to join us on **Monday, January 12th**, for the opening day of the Legislature at the Capitol. It's important to have a presence so that our representatives know that we will be watching. Contact me at lucimessing@cox.net if you are interested in attending.

Trusting Seniors still targeted for many types of scams

Scammers are constantly creating new ways to target Senior Citizens, which means we have to always be vigilant. Some of the most recent include:

- A phone call from an "official" of the local court system saying that you are guilty of missing a call to jury duty and requiring you to provide a credit card number over the phone to pay for your "fine"
- A phone call from the IRS that you didn't pay enough in your taxes and to avoid further penalties you need to provide a credit card number to pay the appropriate amount, or risk being "fined", "jailed", etc.
- You receive a call to expect a delivery (flowers, package, etc.) and schedule a time to be home; when the delivery arrives, you are asked to sign for it and pay a small fee around \$3.00, which can only be paid by a credit card; the scammer then has your credit card number and your signature.

To avoid being taken advantage of, remember that NO official government agency, like the IRS, Social Security, or Medicare, will contact you by phone or email, or ask for credit card information. Only the US mail is used by government agencies to notify individuals of official business. And with the holiday season in full swing, be especially careful of any possible holiday related scams.

AEA RETIRED ELECTIONS 2015

Pursuant to Article V and VI of the Association’s Constitution, AEA-Retired is currently accepting nominations for the following positions: **AEA-Retired Vice President, and 5 At-Large Representatives**. The election will be held during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting that is scheduled for Friday, April 24, 2015, at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park. **Nominations must be received by February 9, 2015.**

NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA RETIRED EXECUTIVE BOARD

- You may self-nominate for only ONE of the vacant offices.
- If you nominate someone other than yourself, you must have his or her signed permission.

CANDIDATE _____ PHONE _____

Email Address: _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

Signature of Nominator

Signature of Candidate (Candidate must sign)

Check the office you seek:

____ **AEA-Retired Vice President**

____ **Representative at Large (5 to be elected)**

All terms are for three years.

NOTE: Please mail nomination forms, postmarked by **February 6, 2015** to:

AEA-Retired Elections Committee, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004

----- *Cut along this line to separate nomination forms* -----

NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA RETIRED DELEGATES TO AEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

Concurrent with officer and board nominations, we want and need you to run as a delegate to the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting and Delegate Assembly. We need a minimum of 85 delegates nominated. You may nominate yourself. AEA Retired delegates are required to attend both the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015, and the AEA Delegate Assembly on the evening of April 24 and the day of April 25, 2015. This is a great opportunity to meet with long-time friends, be updated on happenings around the state, and be part of the decision making for AEA & AEA-Retired. The deadline for the return of nomination forms is **February 9, 2015**. If you submit your name, chances are high you will be a delegate, due to the fact that over the last few years an election of delegates has not been necessary when fewer nominations have been submitted than seats allotted. If an election is necessary, it will be held electronically in February & March.

****Only Delegates are eligible to vote in AEA-Retired elections during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on Friday, April 24.***

NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA-RETIRED DELEGATES TO AEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

CANDIDATE _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

Signature of Nominator

Signature of Candidate (Candidate must sign)

Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award Nomination Form

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 and Frank Bing. Please take time to nominate a member you believe meets these criteria. Be specific in completing the form, either in typewritten or word-processor form. You may attach additional information. The committee will not consider partially completed forms.

Nominee Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____ Phone (_____) - _____

Nominator's Name _____ Phone _____

Nominee Information: Please use this format and use a typewriter or word processor. 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 at AEA- Retired, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004 by February 9, 2015.

Tax credits can help local schools

Tax credits do great things! Want to help your local school? A single person or head of household can contribute \$200, and married couples have a maximum of \$400. It is possible to direct the tax credit to specific departments: band, chorus, drama or any extra-curricular education programs. Forms can be obtained from local schools or online at [Arizona School Tax Credits - Homepage](http://www.arizonaschooltaxcredit.com) www.arizonaschooltaxcredit.com. Tax credits

are a direct deduction from your tax liability. Contributions must be received by Dec. 31st.





Valley Wide Mixer huge success

The third annual Valley Wide Mixer for the Phoenix, West Valley, East Valley, Kyrene/Tempe and Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapters was held at AEA Headquarters on October 20th. Keynote speakers were **Antonio Galindo**, who detailed NEA Member Benefits, and **Dr. Janie Hydrick**, who gave a TEF (Taxes, Economic Development, & Funding for Education) presentation. Attendees had high praise for

both presentations, and enjoyed socializing with colleagues from other chapters.

The most requested topics for future meetings were legislative updates, ASRS information, how to live on a pension, and Medicare/health insurance information. More time for socializing was also requested. The Phoenix Metro area Chapter Chairs invited their members to attend and helped to make it a success. Thanks go to President Julie Horwin, and Vice President Suzan Austin for organizing and running such a great meeting.



Chapter Chairs: Suzan Austin, Sally Rosen, MaryAnn Goodluck, Ellen Shamah, Aurora Aber, Barbara Joseph, Susan Sommers, Ted Coleman, Gary Mehok, Not pictured Chip Parsons & Janie Hydrick

East Valley Chapter members get election recap & legislative preview



Jennifer Loreda, AEA Lobbyist, details election results and previews the upcoming legislative session at the Nov. 12, East Valley Chapter meeting.



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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 scheduled for 4 PM on February 5 and May 7. We will 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.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Jennifer Loreda, AEA Lobbyist, and Steve Ramos, ASRS liaison, were the guest speakers for the meeting held on Nov. 12th. Meetings scheduled for 2015 are Jan. 14, Mar. 11, and May 13, at 11 a.m. on the 8th floor of the Mesa Public Schools 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: Future meetings will be Jan. 27th, Mar. 24th, and May 19th, 2015 at the Beattitudes in Phoenix. For more information contact **Barb Joseph** at (602) 765-0788 or btjoseph@cox.net.

Yavapai Chapter: The Yavapai Chapter of AEA-R will meet at the IHOP in Prescott Valley on January 10th. The speaker from Chino Valley will talk about the forest fees, Yavapai Teacher of the Year and classroom grants. Contact **Ted Coleman** at theodorecoleman76@gmail.com for more information.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: The last meeting was Nov. 17 at Denny's on N. Scottsdale Rd. in Scottsdale. David Ramirez, Public Information Officer for Sky Harbor Airport was the speaker. Members donated books and magazines to the Lodestar Learning Center along with cash donations to the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship Fund. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19th. For information contact **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>. Everyone is welcome.

Southeast Arizona Chapter: The Southeastern Arizona Chapter will meet next in January, day, time and place to be announced. For more information contact **Sally Rosen** at 520-459-0430 or azcatsally@aol.com.. Hope to see everyone there.

Northern Arizona/ Rez Chapter: Contact **Maryanne Goodluck** at magoodluck55@yahoo.com for information and future meeting dates.

Kyrene Chapter: Meetings are held at Native New Yorker, on Ray Rd. in Chandler. For more information and future meeting dates, please contact **Ellen Shamah** at 480-345-7664 or eshamah@cox.net.