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Editor's note: There are many photos in this issue for you to enjoy. To get a clearer view, go online to www.arizonaaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit1108.pdf and set the size to 200% or more.



AEA-Retired Calendar

- December 9— AEA-Retired Executive Board Meeting
- January 16-18 — NEA Western Leadership Conference, Albuquerque, NM
- January 31— AEA Committee Day
- February 10— AEA-Retired Executive Board Meeting
- March 4— AEA Education Day at the Capitol
- March 10— AEA-Retired Executive Board Meeting

AEA/NEA-recommended candidates do well in general election; AEA-Retired members put in much volunteer time for pro-public education candidates



AEA-Retired members with U.S. Congressman **Harry Mitchell** (center, orange shirt) at the last AEA Committee Day. Harry won reelection in AZ Congressional District 5. He'll be joined in D.C. by 4 other AEA recommended U.S. congressmen.

When the smoke cleared on Election Night, 2008, AEA-recommended pro-public education candidates at the federal level had done very well.

In addition to the historic election of Barack Obama as President, Arizona will be sending five AEA-recommended candidates to the United States House of Representatives. Ed Pastor, Raul Grijalva, Gabrielle Giffords and Harry Mitchell all won reelection, and Anne Kirkpatrick won the open seat in northern Arizona. All have made "fixing and funding" the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) a priority. AEA and NEA look forward to working with them in that endeavor.

From primary season to ballot initiative to the general election, AEA-Retired members were omnipresent in all parts of the state. They worked on individual campaigns, checked petition signatures, made endless phone calls, and walked door-to-door. In the end, their hard work paid off handsomely.



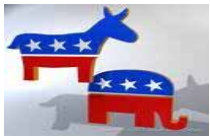
Members **Linda DeMasi** and **Carol Payant** made phone calls in the East Valley.



AEA-Retired board member **Steve Ramos** and **Rep. Harry Mitchell**.

At Tempe High, Steve was one of Harry's first students when Harry began teaching!

Not everything worked as planned, however. Two of AEA's recommended Republican friends, Tom O'Halloran from the northern part of the state and Pete Hershberger from the Tucson area, fell in the primaries. Both were great friends of education and will be missed.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY JULIE HORWIN,
LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

AEA-Retired Members Play Hard, Work Hard

We are all so busy in our retirement! Between wonderful families, duties owed to various organizations to which we belong, travel to other states and countries, increasing skills in our hobbies, caring for elderly parents, enjoying visits to and from grandchildren, and contributing to causes that each of us deems important to making the world a better place, it seems we can't find an extra minute anywhere. I am still looking for that extra time to re-decorate my husband's home office with a fresh color of paint.

Yet despite the above whirlwind of activity, AEA-Retired members had a record turn-out for campaign activities this year. Over 1000 hours of volunteerism have been clocked by AEA-Retired! We engaged in activities such as gathering signatures and \$5.00 donations, phone-calling for candidates or issues, attending forum or meeting with candidates, volunteering on the Ward Connerly Initiative (We won! We kicked it off the ballot.) or State Trust Lands Petition reviews (We lost – it was off the ballot.), walking and talking with neighborhood denizens and distributing literature, and recruiting volunteers for activities. The ages of our volunteers ranged from 53 years to 86 years. The time given for these activities ranged from 3 to 6 hours, all the way up to several contributing



Julie Horwin

over 100 hours!

Congratulations AEA-Retired members!! You sacrificed time from one of the activities mentioned above to make a difference in the lives of every citizen of Arizona. Although you didn't volunteer all of those hours to receive notice or thanks – it is important to acknowledge what you did this summer and early fall.

You haven't retired in order to "take" from Arizona society. You have retired in order to **GIVE**. You continue to give to the children and adults of Arizona just as you gave during your career in public education. You put to shame the myth that retirement is a time to sit back and enjoy life and think of only yourself.

I am so proud to be one of you. I know pride is a sin, but I am reveling in it at this moment. I think of the organization I belong to as being the best, most forward-thinking, most organized group in all of Arizona. We don't all march in lock-step and we don't all agree on our candidates or issues. But we all march! We volunteer our time to make a difference! We are the mighty AEA-Retired!

Note: I am writing this in the midst of the campaign activities mentioned above because the due date for this article was prior to the election. So, congratulations to those whose candidates and issues won and regrets to those whose did not.

ASRS Fund Suffers Losses, Return To Work Committee Reaches Conclusion, and the PBI

Steve Ramos, ASRS Committee Chair



Steve Ramos

Recent information presented to the Arizona State Retirement System Board suggests that the ASRS has been more conservative with their investments than other state systems of comparable size.

However, in today's market even the conservative investor feels the pain.

Our retirement fund, on paper, has lost several billion dollars. History tells us that the markets will recover in time. Until then, I want to remind our members that we are in a "defined benefit" plan. That means your pension is a fixed benefit for the rest of your life. Even if the ASRS loses money in the market, they are still obligated to pay your

annuity. This is different than a "defined contribution" plan, which allows participants some control over their own retirement investments but usually leaves them far short of a lifetime benefit. That is why AEA-Retired has fought off attempts to move Social Security and our own retirement system to a defined contribution system.

Despite very negative returns, ASRS continues to be one of the best retirement systems in the country. Recent meetings of the Board have involved discussions about the current and future health of the markets and what ASRS might do to maximize its returns in this difficult economic environment. Attention has also been paid to continuing to improve service to Plan members. ASRS has been given permission to begin hiring staff to replace those lost through attrition during the hiring freeze.

Probably the most significant news for AEA-Retired members is that the ASRS "Return To Work" (RTW) committee has finished its work and has made recommendations to the Board for legislative action early in the 2009 legislative session. AEA-Retired has worked closely with ASRS, other employee groups, employers, and pri-

vate contractors to come up with a plan that accomplishes three things. It protects the solvency of our retirement plan, safeguards our working colleagues' paychecks, and allows some flexibility for retirees and employers that want to take advantage of RTW opportunities.

AEA-Retired and AEA will be taking positions on the new RTW legislation soon and will count on our members to be informed and involved.

The ASRS Board will also re-introduce legislation that failed last year dealing with other changes to the Plan that they feel are necessary reactions to changing demographics and would add stability to the fund. These changes include the following:

1. Changing the calculation of a member's average monthly salary from the highest 3 years to the highest 5 years
2. Raising the points for Normal Retirement from 80 to 85
3. Limiting a member, who terminates employment after five or more years, to a refund of only 25% of their employer's contribution.

(Continued, bottom of page 3)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

The election is finally over! Yahoo!
No more campaign materials in the mail.
No more robo calls from the candidates.
No more campaign ads on radio and TV.
No more polls.

The voters have spoken. We can all breathe a collective sigh of relief and enjoy the calm after the storm, especially those of us who were very involved in working with campaigns and trying to elect the candidates of our choice.

Regardless of whom we supported or whether those candidates were elected, we must now come together as one people, one state and one nation. I realize that many of us were passionately involved in these campaigns. Debate was often heated on the pros and cons for each candidate, and some of us may feel bruised and battered. However, we all have reason to celebrate because our democratic process has again demonstrated to the entire world that American Democracy is alive and well. And come January 20, 2009, we will have a peaceful transfer of government to our 44th President.

Whether our candidate won or lost, we should be proud to be Americans and unite behind a new administration. He will need our support. We need to focus on all that we have in common and forget our differences.

As I mentioned in my last message, our work has just begun. Electing friends of education and of seniors was only the first step. Now we need to work with all elected officials in both parties, regardless of whether we supported them for election. At the state level, a slowing economy and huge budget



President Linda Somo

deficits are looming. We must be vigilant to prevent drastic cuts to education, health care for children, or programs that benefit the elderly. We need to safeguard our ASRS Fund and monitor any legislation that affects it. At the national level, the new administration faces a failing economy, two unresolved wars, and a possible world-wide recession. Additionally, fixing and funding No Child Left Behind, protecting Social Security and Medicare benefits, and providing quality, affordable health care for all Americans are critical issues that must be dealt with.

Despite all of the challenges that are being faced by our elected leaders, I am optimistic about the future of this state and nation. Call me the eternal optimist, but I believe that we can meet and overcome all obstacles to create a brighter future. As citizens, we must hold government accountable and work with elected officials to make the right decisions about all of these issues. Through NEA/AEA/AEA-Retired, we can make our voices heard at all levels. Join us in this important work as we come together to make a better life for all Americans.

Note: This article was written on the eve of the election.



ASRS Fund... (continued from page 2)

Although these changes would not affect current employees, they would help hold contribution rates down and add stability to the fund. Employees hired after the legislation goes into effect would be subject to the changes. Again AEA-Retired and AEA will study all ASRS proposed legislation and take positions based on our members' interests.

Finally, AEA-Retired continues to hold discussions with ASRS about the Permanent

Benefit Increase (PBI). In a "Bear Market" the likelihood of the PBI formula triggering a benefit is not very good. Many retirees will remember when the PBI was a significant increase and was paid out in consecutive years.

I have attended four chapter meetings around the state to discuss with members possible changes to the PBI. I encourage all members to attend a chapter meeting, learn more about the PBI and take part in these discussions.

DOVE Program

An AEA-endorsed provider since 2001

Discounts On Vehicles for Educators, Support Professionals, and Retirees



Larry Green, AEA member and former car salesman, has created a way to take the hassle out of buying a new or used vehicle. Larry does all the work, but you reap the huge savings.

Visit <http://doveprogram.org> or call Larry at 602.290.6212 or 1.800.881.3683 to get information or to request a quote.

DOVE has been providing quality service since 2001 to teachers, support professionals, and retirees.

NEW! Larry has partnered with Enterprise to provide certified, well-maintained used vehicles as part of his service. Call today.

Two Good Reasons to Join AEA-Retired



Aurora Aber and Helen Arnold

These two energetic ladies from Tucson are not only the backbone of the Tucson Chapter but also have been responsible for all the fundraising projects of AEA-Retired for many years.

Aurora and Helen met when they were both members of TEA's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee and have been good friends ever since.

Both were elementary level teachers in the Tucson district.

The **LES REYNOLDS DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SERVICE AWARD** is presented annually to a member of our association in appreciation for outstanding service to our association, public education, and the community. Please take time to nominate a member you believe meets these criteria. Please 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.



LES REYNOLDS DISTINGUISHED SENIOR SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

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 2 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 nomination form to **Bertha Myers**,
1445 East Monte Vista Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85006, by **January 9, 2009**.

**AEA-RETIRED ELECTION 2009
Region 18**

Pursuant to Article V and VI of the Association’s Constitution, AEA-Retired is currently accepting nominations for the following positions: Vice President and 2 Representatives at Large. The election of Officers and Board Members will be held during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2009, at the Marriott in Mesa. **Nominations are due by January 9, 2009.**

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 _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

Signature of Nominator

Signature of Candidate (Candidate must sign)

Check the office you seek

____ Vice President ____ Representative at Large (2 to be elected)

All terms are for three years.

NOTE: Please mail nomination forms postmarked by **January 9, 2009** to:
AEA-Retired Elections Committee, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004

**NOMINATION FORM FOR AEA-RETIRED DELEGATES, REGION 18,
TO AEA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY**

Concurrent with officer and board nominations, we want and need you to run as a delegate to the AEA-R Annual Meeting and Delegate Assembly. We need a minimum of 75 delegates. You may nominate yourself. AEA-Retired delegates, Region 18, are required to attend both the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2009, and the AEA Delegate Assembly on Friday and Saturday, April 24 and 25, 2009. This is a great opportunity to meet with long-time friends, be updated on happenings around the state and show your support for your statewide local, AEA-Retired. **The deadline for the return of nomination forms is January 9, 2009.** Election of delegates will be by secret ballot. Ballots will be mailed in early February with a return date of early March.

CANDIDATE _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

Signature of Candidate

NOTE: Please mail nomination forms postmarked by **January 9, 2009** to:
AEA-Retired Elections Committee, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004

AEA-Retired: News and Views You Can Use

AZ IMPACT Intergenerational Mentoring Program embarks on fundraising program; goal is to become self-sustaining

By Julie Horwin

Janice always dreamed of being a teacher. But she was up against some pretty daunting odds. She'd heard about the overwhelming time commitment, the lack of decent pay and the constant political action to pass laws that would harm rather than help the teaching environment. She sometimes felt as though she should throw in the towel. So what kept Janice's dream alive? Her belief that she is meant to help students develop a love of learning and become the best they can be. Yes, Janice is in the education college for all of the right reasons.

How can you help Janice traverse the rough waters on the way to her first classroom? Give a tax-deductible donation to the AEA-Retired Intergenerational Mentoring Program, known as AZ IMPACT. It provides the funds to team up a retired educator with a junior or senior-year education student in his/her student teaching year and through the first five years in the classroom. AZ IMPACT gives AEA-Retired mentors

and protégés the supplies and tools they need to forge a one-on-one relationship that gives the new teacher someone to talk to and receive help from with out fear of evaluation — someone to nurture a dream just like the one Janice has.

Unfortunately our grant funding for the highly successful Phoenix AZ IMPACT group ends this year. Therefore, AEA-Retired wants to raise \$20,000 to sustain the program.

We hope we can count on you for a generous donation of \$50 or more. However, please note that any donation amount is always welcomed. Please also check for matching funds through your employer.

There are also many ways to gather donations from others, and we are very willing to help you do so. For instance, consider making AZ IMPACT one of your local AEA-Retired Chapter giving projects.

How to make a donation

You can donate online by going to <http://www.arizonaaea.org/foundation.php>

www.arizonaaea.org/foundation.php. If you are making your donation in the form of a check, please make it payable to: Arizona Education Association Foundation for Teaching and Learning: AZ IMPACT. Send it to AEA-Retired, 345 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004.

If you require additional information about AZ IMPACT, please contact **Julie Horwin** at 480-419-0332 or **Paula Grigsby** at 928-535-4353 and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

We thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to whatever support you can provide.

Sincerest regards,

The AZ IMPACT TEAM

- Paula Grigsby**, Chair
- Claudia Jensen**, Tucson Coordinator
- Linda Thieken**, Phoenix Coordinator
- Julie Horwin**, Fundraising
- Linda Somo**, President

AEA-Retired Pre-retirement seminar in Globe



Steve Ramos and **Frank Bing** travelled to Globe on October 22 to present AEA-Retired's Pre-Retirement seminar to active members of Globe EA. **Jeanne Polentz**, the local president, said the turnout was better than expected. The presentation was well-received.

Chapter meeting photos



Prescott Valley Chapter



Phoenix Chapter



Mesa Chapter

See more Chapter News on page 8.

New Chapter Opens!

Under the leadership of **Sally Rosen**, we have opened a new chapter in Sierra Vista in southeast Arizona. We hope to have photos for you in the next issue. Meanwhile, keep sending photos from your chapters.

Cruisin' '08, AEA-Retired members (and friends) enjoy a colorful fall foliage cruise in the Northeast

AEA-retired members and friends took a cruise from October 11-18 through the Northeast and Canada to see the fall foliage change colors. They had a great time as you can see below. Those attending were Mary and Arblee Bishop, Bertha Myers, John and Kathy Campbell, John and Barbara Matteson, Jean Stephenson, Stella Garcia, AnnJi Craig-Wooten, Daina Swinford, Shirley Boswell, Joan FitzRandolph, Nancy Heeren, Margaret Marcia, Sally Miller, Joy Arnold, Emily Ferguson, Bobby Griffin, Cindy Michels, Connie Jensen, Goldye Hart, Joan Hunter, Jenny Lee-Richardson, Linda and Roger Jackson, Patricia Derx, and Ananian and Madeline Mason.






The Conduit

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345 E. Palm Lane
Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-574-1473
aea.retired@arizonaaea.org

- Linda Somo President
- Frank Bing Vice President
- Julie Horwin Secretary
- Jean Stephenson Treasurer

Conduit co-editors
Suzan Austin Frank Bing

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. The 2007-2008 Chair of the Chapters Task Force is **Gary Mehok**. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter can contact Gary at LO-JO40@cox.net. *We would love to have chapters in the northern part of the state. Currently, our northernmost chapter is in Prescott Valley.*

Glendale Chapter: Our fall meeting was held on Sept. 11 and **Steve Ramos** discussed ASRS with the 19 members in attendance. At the Nov. 13 meeting AEA-Retired President **Linda Somo** talked with members. The next meeting will be held on Feb. 12 at 4 pm at the Ironworks Restaurant at Bellair Golf Course, 17233 N. 45th Avenue (1/4 mile north of Bell Road at the Bellair Golf Course). For more information contact **Susie Sommer** at 623-931-6209 or ssommer114@aol.com.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: The second meeting of the year was held on Nov. 12 at 11:00 am on the 8th floor of the Mesa Bank Building, 63 E. Main St. Sean Mabrey from AEA Member Benefits spoke to the group. The meetings for the rest of the year are scheduled on Jan. 14, March 11, and May 13. For information contact **Steve Ramos** at steveramos2@cox.net or 480-924-0771.

Tucson Chapter: There was a meeting on October 15 at the Southern Region AEA Office. Our speaker was Karen Francis-Begay from the U of A. She presented a power point on SOLUTION-through Higher Education. **Gary Mehok** joined us. Our next meeting is scheduled for November 19 and Pat Klein from ASRS will speak on health insurance. We will meet at 2:00 pm at the TEA office, 4625 E. 2nd Street, Tucson. Contact **Aurora Aber** at TheAbers@cox.net or 520-721-7547 for more information.

Phoenix Chapter: There were 19 members at the meeting on Tues. October 21 at 10:30 am at the Hometown Buffet on the southwest corner of 15th Avenue and Bethany Home Road. **Steve Ramos** spoke and answered questions about the Arizona State Retirement System. Old cell phones and eye glasses were collected for the Lions Club, teddy bears for the police department, and empty pill bottles for the homeless shelter. The next meeting will be January 20 at the same time and location. For information contact **Frank Sacco** at 602-279-5196 or fsacco1@cox.net.

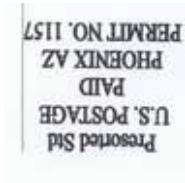
White Mountain Chapter: For information about joining this chapter, contact **Paula Grigsby** (Overgaard) at 928-535-4353 or (pkgrigsby@frontiernet.net).

Prescott Chapter: The group met on Oct. 22 at 11:00 am at the China Buffet on Hwy. 69 in Prescott. It was the largest meeting so far! Discussion centered on ASRS and health insurance concerns. **Gary Mehok** was a guest. To join this chapter contact **Helga Krantz** at bcdhelga@gmail.com.

Yuma Chapter: Please contact **Bernadette Presloid** at 928-782-7691 or dettep@juno.com if you are interested in participating in this chapter.

Paradise Valley/ Scottsdale Chapter: Contact **Linda Thieken** 602-996-4398 or **Julie Horwin** 480-419-0332 for information on this chapter.

Sierra Vista: Our *newest chapter* held its' organizational meeting on October 28 at 5:30. **Sally Rosen** (azcatsally@aol.com) is looking for new members. Contact her for info regarding the next meeting on Wednesday, January 14, at 6:00 PM, location TBA.



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