



THE CONDUIT

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*Season's Greetings from your AEA-Retired
Board members and Chapter Chairs*



Executive Board and Chapter Chairs: **Standing:** J. Campbell, J. Zuniga, S. Rosen, S. Austin, A. Cicero, S. Boswell, T. Coleman, S. Sommer, M. Freed, S. Linder, C. Peters, J. Moy, L. Hendrickson, E. Feldner, L. Wittig, B. Matteson. **Seated:** K. Freed, E. Shamah, D. Barlow, N. Putman, J. Horwin, L. Somo, J. Stephenson, K. Ramage-White, S. Ramos. **Not pictured:** L. Messing, E. Bufford & M. Goodluck.

Send your email address to
jhorwin@mindspring.com

WIN \$100

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

Retired Annual Meeting set for May 6, 2016

Mark your calendar and plan to join your colleagues for a fun-filled, informative day at the 28th AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, which will be held at a new venue, the Scottsdale Resort in Scottsdale on Friday, May 6, 2016. For those who wish to be delegates, the AEA Delegate Assembly will follow, beginning at 6:00 PM on May 6 and continuing on Saturday, May 7.

All AEA-Retired members and guests are invited to attend the Annual Meeting. Members who wish to also be delegates with voting rights to elect officers and Board members, will be delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly as well. All delegates will be funded for half the cost of a double-occupancy room for the night of May 6th, and be reimbursed for mileage that exceeds 100 miles one way.

Included in this issue on page 5 is a nomination form to be a delegate or to be a nominee for an AEA-Retired office. Attendees must be delegates in order to partici-

pate in the election of AEA-Retired officers and Board openings. Delegates will be electing a Secretary and six Representatives At-Large for the Board.

AEA-Retired will be allotted 85 delegates, making us the largest "local" delegation, and a major player, at the AEA Delegate Assembly. If fewer nominations are received than our allotted number, all nominees will automatically be delegates. If more than 85 nominees are received, then voting will take place electronically in February & March.

Nominate a Les Reynolds awardee

On page 6 is a nomination form for the Les Reynolds Award, one of the highlights at each Annual Meeting. Please nominate an AEA-Retired member worthy of receiving this prestigious honor.

Join your colleagues May 6 for a great day of entertaining activities, wonderful companionship and important information. Watch for more details and a registration form in the March issue of *The Conduit*.



AEA Retired Calendar

December 8—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

December 15—Legislative preview AEA & Southern Region Offices

January 11—First day of Legislative Session

January 12—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

February 2—Read Across America Day

February 9—AEA-Retired Board Meeting; AEA HQ

March 8—AEA-Retired Board meeting; AEA HQ

ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



Steve Ramos

AEA-Retired will need an army to counter latest “pension reform” attacks

The Arizona State Retirement System closed its 2015 fiscal year with approximately \$34 billion dollars in the plan and a return on investments of 2.5%. Despite a stingy stock market, that positive return puts ASRS in the top 10% of its peers nationally. The overall funded status of the plan has increased to 77.53% and a new, slightly lower, contribution rate of 11.34% will take effect July 1st of 2016. A slow economic recovery continues to put a Permanent Benefit Increase out of reach.

The 2016 Arizona legislative session is just weeks away and AEA-Retired has prepared all summer for what we believe will be the attack on our public employee defined benefit plans. This time it comes from our own ranks, as the Arizona Board of Regents, and Arizona State University in particular, will ask the legislature to allow them to move new and some existing employees out of the ASRS and into a 401k style retirement plan.

In November AEA-Retired rolled out a PowerPoint presentation that attempts to inform all Arizona citizens of the negative consequences this move would have on ASRS members, retirees and the state’s economy in general. AEA-Retired board members have traveled from Flagstaff to Tucson, and all over the Phoenix area, delivering this presentation to stakeholder groups and others.

It is difficult to get educators and others to focus on the ASRS Pension Threat while so many other important education issues are on the table, but that is exactly why AEA-Retired was created. We must not let our members’ public employee retirement security be over-

looked.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) promotes legislation that would move public employees out of defined benefit plans and into 401k style retirement plans, a major component of their government reform plan. I again urge you to share this information with others and contact your legislators to alert them to this issue, which will be coming up in the 2016 session.

For many years it was enough for me to monitor the performance of ASRS and report back to our members. However, in the last few years my reports have contained less about performance and more about an all out attack on the idea of providing retirement security for Arizona public employees. These attacks come from the same legislators and special interests that want to dismantle our public education system. AEA-Retired will not be deterred from this increasingly difficult battle, but we need your help.

Our efforts require an ever-increasing commitment of time and resources. We need your help to expand our membership base and to strengthen our voice. Please reach out to your retired colleagues and ask them to join the fight. Offer them a chance to continue to make a difference, as a lifelong public education supporter, by becoming a new and sustaining member of AEA-Retired. You can download a membership form from our website at www.azedretired.com, or contact President Julie Horwin at jhorwin@mindspring.com, or call 602-320-3093.

Thanks for your help. Together, we can win this war.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JULIE HORWIN



WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO SMALL TALK?

I miss those casual conversations on the checkout line or while waiting for an elevator. Don't you?

The line stretched out in the post office. Darn. If I'd ordered my grandson's present online, I could have avoided this long wait. None of us said a word. We just stared straight ahead, shifting our feet. Then, a little boy standing behind me asked his mom, "Why are we waiting so long?"

I broke the public silence and said, "I'm in line to mail a birthday present to a boy who is turning 10 next week. How old are you?"

Suddenly, we were no longer silent customers, but companions passing time. The line seemed to move much more quickly as we began to chat.

It hit me that small talk is one of life's little pleasures, one that seems sadly lacking today. Technology makes it easy to avoid casual conversations with strangers. Email and social media often mean that we are talking only to our personal friends and family.

When someone in line asked me what I did, I proudly said that I am a retired teacher – and that I am concerned about the lack of support for public schools by our state legislature. Much to my surprise, my line neighbor said that she, too, was concerned because she would soon need to make a decision about where to send her son to school. The whole line of customers became engaged in our conversation! One grandparent said it seemed that public schools were functioning on the lowest support - \$3300/per student as compared to the \$5500 per student from the next lowest supporting state. The average is \$7000. We agreed that because our students get only one chance for each grade level, our kids – her child and my grandchildren — can't wait.

We both agreed that when we were in school, things were much different. I remember that my teachers had enough paper, new textbooks, and a fully qualified teacher in every classroom. That is not the case now.

So, yes, I miss the casual conversations. Small talk may start out with pleasantries about the weather, but a conversation while waiting for an elevator can lead to conversations about how important public schools are to our democ-

racy. **We will all have a chance on May 17, 2016 to show our support of public education – and without raising taxes!** The Inflation Settlement ballot issue will put back some (but only a portion) of the inflation monies that Arizonaans voted for, and the state legislature did not fund over the past 5 years.

Happy Endings. And it's pretty darn great!

Back in the playpen of my 40s, I used to look at women of my present age and think: "How do they *stand* it? Is there life after sixty?" I wonder if you agree with me. I love being old. Not senior, not golden-aged, not "chronologically gifted," as my grocery store would like to call me (I shudder at the phrase, though happily take their discount). Never before have I had such good friends as I have now, and so many. They're the result of years of accumulation, cultivation, and yes, elimination. *Finally*, the anxiety of getting old is gone and I revel in my age. My mother, who is over 90, revels in her solitude, as do I. She says it's a gift: a time to refuel, to acquire information and new skills from a variety of sources. She has the warm sun on her back as she weeds her garden, and like me, has a calendar full of invitations from which she chooses activities. But what gives us the security and positive outlook? It is the financial independence our ASRS pension affords us. We earned it throughout our careers in public education.

Pension Threat: Governor Ducey and ASU President Crowe may have plans to allow new ASU hires to default to a 401K type plan. If this occurs, the other universities, the community colleges and other ASRS groups will go the same way. The contribution rate for current employees will go up, and another Permanent Benefit Increase (ASRS version of a "cost of living" increase.) would be far in the future.

Please give me a call and I will arrange for someone to come to you to share a presentation that an AEA-Retired team (Linda Somo, Steve Ramos and myself) have created in order to quickly inform you and others about this potential legislative change for higher education new employees. Contact me at jhorwin@mindspring.com, or leave a phone message at 602-320-3093.

Wishing you the happiness of this holiday season.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Barbara Matteson and Larry Wittig



Most districts pass overrides and bonds; work begins on 2016 elections



The elections are over and there is some good news. The success of most of the school override elections across the state is very good news for many kids and teachers. Thanks to all of you who helped in this effort.

Now we start working for the 2016 elections. Electing great public school advocates will be at the top of our agenda. And we need to do everything we can to help them win. Getting people registered to vote and then **GETTING THEM TO VOTE** will make a difference. The number of registered voters that actually voted in recent elections is diminishing. We need to encourage people that support our issues to vote or we will continue to see legislators elected that do not support our issues **and** see harmful legislation passed. Our recommended candidates are looking for support. We hope you, our retired members, will step up and work for a candidate or two.

The Arizona Legislative Session begins on January 11. We will be closely watching for legislative action (or attacks) on our retirement fund. We have a good, solid fund, but Governor Ducey and others are threatening the security of our fund (see President's Message). Be ready to join us in fighting any legislation that attacks our fund. We have power when working together. You can keep

track of everything that happens at the Legislature by logging onto www.azleg.org, where you can track bills, check committee agendas, and even comment on proposed legislation. Be sure to sign up for the weekly *AEA Legislative Alert* by contacting Sheenae Shannon at sheenae.shannon@arizonaaea.org.

You can also make a difference by donating to the AEA Education Improvement Fund (EIF) and the AEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Your donation to EIF helps support ballot measures that support public education and helps oppose those that will harm public education. The Fund for Children and Public Education helps elect our recommended candidates who pledge to work for a quality public education for all of Arizona's students, and who support issues important to seniors. Go to: www.vote4schools.com to donate, or use the form .

You can find out what issues we will be dealing with at the legislature by attending the **AEA Legislative Preview on December 15 from 5 to 7 pm**. You can attend in person at the AEA Building in Phoenix or the AEA Southern Region Office in Tucson or on line. Go to the following link for more information and to register. <https://www.regonline.com/aea-legislative151200>

Cut out and send to: Arizona Education Association, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004
Attention: Education Improvement Fund, or AEA Fund for Children (specify which)

Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Form of Payment

Amount: _____

Check (payable to the AEA Education Improvement Fund, or AEA Fund for Children –specify which)

AEA-RETIRED ELECTIONS 2016

Pursuant to Article V and VI of the Association’s Constitution, AEA-Retired is currently accepting nominations for the following positions: **AEA-Retired Secretary, and 6 At-Large Representatives**. The election will be held during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting that is scheduled for **Friday, May 6, 2016** at the Scottsdale Resort, 7700 E. McCormick Parkway. **Nominations must be received by February 8, 2016.**

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 Secretary**

_____ **Representative at Large (6 to be elected)**

All terms are for three years.

NOTE: Please mail nomination forms, postmarked by **February 5, 2016** 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, May 6, 2016, and the AEA Delegate Assembly on the evening of May 6 and the day of May 7, 2016** at the Scottsdale Resort, 7700 E. McCormick Parkway, Scottsdale. 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 8, 2016**. 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, May 6th.***

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)

NOTE: Nomination forms are due by **February 8, 2016**; please mail by **February 5, 2016**

Mail to: **AEA-Retired Elections Committee, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004**
AEA-RETIRED ELECTIONS 2016

Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award

The **Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award** is named in honor of Les Reynolds, the first president of AEA-Retired. This award is presented annually to a member of AEA-Retired in appreciation for exemplary service to AEA-Retired, public education, and the community in general. Previous recipients have been: Robert Bloom, Bertha Myers, John Campbell, Ralph Lara, Barbara Matteson, Marion Pickens, Mary Bishop, Connie Wittig, Kathy Campbell, Frank Bing and Frank Sacco.

Please take time to nominate a member you believe meets these criteria. All questions must be answered and the form returned in a typewritten/printed format. You may attach one additional page if needed. **The committee will not consider partially completed forms or forms postmarked later than February 6, 2016. Please mail your completed form to: Larry Wittig, AEA-Retired, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004.**

Nominee Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Nominator's Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Nominee criteria: Please complete the six questions shown below using a separate sheet of paper.

- 1. Number of years the nominee has been an AEA-Retired member**
- 2. Association positions held at the local, state, and national levels**
- 3. Positions held in other professional or service organizations**
- 4. Community Service**
- 5. Describe and list the nominee's involvement in activities which were beneficial to AEA-Retired, public education and his/her community**
- 6. Other pertinent information**

Stretching muscles important in helping to prevent aging

As people age, muscles tighten and mobility is compromised. Simple tasks become difficult and lead to inconvenience at the very least and lost capabilities at the most. It is important for everyone to stretch to stay limber and flexible, but even more so for older people. The elderly don't respond or recover as quickly. So, tenacity and dedication to stretching is important for keeping joints fluid, enhancing coordination and balance and increasing circulation. All good things!

One critical area of concern for older folks is posture; not getting the rounded back syndrome. Teachers who graded papers and bent over bookwork for decades are often subject to this problem. Here are a couple of exercises designed for strengthening shoulders and back:

Standing Cat-Camel stretch:

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and knees bent
- Lean forward placing hands above knees
- Round the back so chest is closed and shoulders are curved forward
- Then arch back so chest opens and shoulders roll back
- Repeat

Door Jam stretch:

- Stand in door way, put arm on the jam at 45 degree angle
- Place foot next to door jam in front of the other foot
- Lean slightly forward. Gentle pressure should be on shoulder

Hold each for about a minute and repeat several times.

A stretching regimen is easy to establish. No fancy equipment, no classes. Just a few minutes a day and the benefit is recognizable right away. Doesn't matter if you stretch before or after exercise, it is just important to stretch.

Members learn grassroots organizing to help increase education funding



Joe Rubio, of Valley Interfaith Project, engages participants at the training in Phoenix.

Joe Rubio, of Valley Interfaith Project, was the featured speaker at two AEA-Retired workshops, one in Tucson, October 12 and one in Phoenix, November 12. Rubio, a community organizer for VIP and a parent of four students in the Scottsdale Unified School District, lent his expertise to the workshops to promote efforts in messaging, engaging and coordinating the electorate to effect change in funding of public schools. The presentation began with a history of State funding and cuts over the last 25 years.

One of the first challenges faced by public school advocates is counteracting the beliefs perpetuated by profit-seeking reformers. One of those memes is the idea that public schools are top-heavy with administrative costs. In reality, in the state of Arizona, administrative costs are low, averaging 8-12% of budget.

Other persistent notions that have been proven false are that schools are inferior to charters, that poverty is addressed by defunding public schools turning them into charters, and “bad” teachers continue to taint the system.

Planning actionable strategies for a “grassroots” campaign were emphasized. In order to effect change, public schools will have to have more revenue in the future. Legislators who are pro-public schools will have to be elected. Alliance and expansion with other sectors is important, specifically coordination with parent and community groups.

It was agreed after the workshop that the group needed more training and needed to recruit more participants. We look forward to another workshop with Mr. Rubio in the near future.





The Conduit

Your Statewide Local



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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 **Susan Sommer**, ssommer114@aol.com or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 suzanaustin@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- All members are welcome at our meetings. We meet at the Iron Works Restaurant, 17233 N. 45th Avenue, Phoenix. Meetings are bi-monthly on Thursdays at 4:30 PM. For more information and future meeting dates call **Susie Sommer** at 623-628-1935 or e-mail ssommer114@aol.com.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Chapter members met Wednesday, Nov. 18th, at the Mesa Public Schools Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Guest speaker was Dr. Eric Meyer, Minority Leader in the AZ House of Representatives. Future meetings are scheduled for Jan.13, March 9, & May 11. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at Hydrick@aol.com or (480) 628-1845 for more information or to RSVP.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: Meetings are the third Tues. of Sept.—May, at 10:00 AM, and alternating sites between the TEA office and the Southern Region office. Go to <http://www.azedretired.com/TUCSON/index.html> for more information, or contact Chapter Chair **Marilyn Calhoun** at 520-744-0399 or marilyn13148@q.com.

Phoenix Chapter: Will meet at the Beatitudes in Phoenix from 10:30 –12:30 on Tuesday, Jan. 26, March 22, and May 24. The speaker last month was Jim Hall from Arizona for Charter School Accountability. For more information or to RSVP your attendance, contact Chapter Chair **Michele Smith** at 602-463-1624 or mms7972@msn.com.

Yavapai Chapter: Contact **Ted Coleman** at theodorecoleman76@gmail.com for information about future meetings.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: Meetings for this year are scheduled for Jan. 18th, March 21st, and May 16th. For information contact **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>. Everyone is welcome.

Southeast Arizona Chapter: Contact **Sally Rosen** at 520-459-0430 or azcatsally@aol.com. for information and future meeting dates.

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

Kyrene/Tempe Chapter: Met on Nov. 18th, at Mimi's Restaurant, 2800 W. Chandler Blvd., Chandler (east of the 101). Guest speaker was Steve Ramos, who presented information about the threat to our pensions posed by the withdrawal of ASU employees from the system. Everyone who is eligible for AEA-retired membership, and their guests, are welcome to the meetings. Contact **Ellie Feldner** at teachgift@gmail.com, for more information and future meeting dates.

Flagstaff Chapter: Will meet the first Tuesday of every month at 10 AM at the Federated Church, at Aspen & Sitgreaves. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 5th. For more information and to RSVP, contact **Tricia Roach** at trrteach6@mac.com or call 928-525-1997.