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Editor's note: There are some photos in this issue for you to enjoy. To get a clearer view, go online to www.azedretired.com/Documents/Conduit/aearconduit0612.pdf and set the size to 200% or more.

Members plan year at AEA-Retired 2nd Annual Committee Day

Serving members' needs, engaging members in positive activities, and protecting and strengthening not only our retirement benefits, but also public education, were the basis of discussions for all committee members during AEA-Retired's second annual Committee Day held at AEA Headquarters in Phoenix on Tuesday, September 12th. Following a get-acquainted activity and presentations from AEA President Andrew Morrill and Expect More Arizona representative Leticia De La Vara, thirty AEA-Retired members spent the rest of the day working in three committees, Membership Outreach, Chapter Development, and Public Relations, to set the course of action for our Association for the next year.



AEA-Retired committees at work.

President Morrill gave details about Proposition 204, the Quality Education and Jobs Act, and encouraged members to support and work for passage of this important education funding bill. De La Vara explained how Expect More Arizona, a non-partisan organization, works to support quality public education and encouraged attendees to get involved.

Any AEA-Retired member can become a committee member and help to determine the direction and activities of the Association by contacting President Linda Somo at lsomo@cox.net or 602-574-1473. (See page 6 for more photos of this event.)

Locals set state-wide AEA Day of Action



Jean Stephenson attends Prop 204 petition turn-in.

Want to promote an override, bond election, or particular school board candidate? Have a favorite AEA recommended legislative candidate? Want to do something to convince voters to support Proposition 204 that will provide crucial funding for public education? Then Saturday, October 13th, has been set as a state-wide Day of Action for all AEA members who want to get involved in this year's elections. AEA-Retired is encouraging all members to help pass Proposition 204, the Quality Education and Jobs Act, which is a major focus of the Day of Action, and to be a part of October 13th, or other proposed dates.

Each active local association has been asked to create their own agenda of campaign items to promote within their own school district or legislative district, or to direct their members to participate elsewhere where needed. Since retired members reside throughout the state, those who want to be involved can find out what's happening in their area by going to www.vote4schoolsaz.com. Members can help in canvassing neighborhoods, phone banking, or other activities as planned in each area. You can make a difference in this election. Support pro-education candidates and ballot propositions, donate your time, talent and money to those campaigns, be an active participant, and most importantly VOTE!!!

AEA Retired Calendar



September 29th—AEA Committee Day

October 9th—AEA-Retired Board Meeting

October 13th—AEA Statewide Day of Action

November 6th—Election Day

November 13th AEA-Retired Board meeting

December 11th—AEA-Retired Board Meeting

ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



Steve Ramos

THE 2013 ARIZONA LEGISLATIVE SESSION BRINGS ASRS PROPOSALS AND CONCERNS

In a recent issue of the Conduit, I encouraged our members to be involved in the primary and general elections, to make sure a more “public employee friendly” legislature takes office in January. We don’t have to wait until November to know what some of those issues will be. The Arizona State Retirement System has made public a proposal for legislative changes it would like to see in the next session. The proposal will go to the Board on September 21st.

The ASRS has recently experienced an almost complete political turnover of The Board of Trustees. Of the nine-member board, six are now Governor Brewer appointees and two seats remain vacant, including the seat designated as the “educator representative”. All ASRS Board members appear highly qualified and maintain a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of members in the management of the fund. AEA Retired looks forward to working with the new ASRS Board.

The 2013 ASRS Legislative Agenda includes issues the ASRS will take to the legislature and issues of concern that may be put forward by others. Because these issues sometimes raise concerns for AEA and AEA Retired members,

our leaders and staff will be closely tracking the following:

ASRS will propose the elimination of the Permanent Benefit Increase for “new employee” members. The ASRS believes the PBI, as a method of providing equitable “cost of living” increases, falls short and at the same time threatens the vitality of the fund.

ASRS will ask the legislature for the ability to move to a “self insured” health insurance program, if the Board determines it would be effective and less expensive

ASRS will seek a more precise Public Information statute to ensure that member information is protected from potential fraud, while maintaining transparency to taxpayers.

ASRS would like the legislature to discuss, no longer allowing charter schools to join ASRS, because the unusual characteristics of charters have led to fund liabilities and appear to have created many cases of abuse involving benefit calculations.

AEA Retired and ASRS will also continue to have representatives at the Governor’s committee on defined contribution plans, which will begin another series of meetings this fall, before making final recommendations to the legislature. Continued pressure from some members of the legislature to move ASRS away from a defined benefit plan should remain a concern to any member expecting a stable and secure retirement.



Richard Spitzer

ASRS Health Insurance Update by Richard Spitzer

The Arizona State Retirement System finished negotiations with UnitedHealthcare for 2013 in May. Both ASRS and UHC have the option to renegotiate the contract each year. Both Medicare plans will have no premium increase. The in-state, in-network non-Medicare Choice Plan will have a 9.87% increase with 4.00% of it being paid through the Early Retiree Reimbursement Program (ERRP) funds that the ASRS received from the US Dept. of Health and Human Services. As a result, non-Medicare retirees will have a 5.87% increase in premium for the 2013 plan year. No plan provisions are being affected except the Tier 1 copayment in the Medicare Advantage (HMO) plan will be reduced from \$20 to \$10. This is a requirement of the Affordable Care Act.

The Health Insurance Advisory Committee has not met this year, but should be receiving a letter outlining the complete results of the negotiations with UnitedHealthcare soon. The next Open Enrollment period is scheduled for October 2012.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

The invention of the internet has been hailed as one of the most important advancements of the 20th century. It opened up a whole new world of ideas, information, entertainment, music, instructions, and communications for anyone with a computer. It has indeed been a boon to humanity. However, it also brought us some new problems.

Since there is no "truth meter" to tell us whether what we read is fact or fiction, we can often be misled by the stories we receive on our computers. If you're a fan of conspiracy theories, there are enough stories on the internet to satisfy your every whim. As long as people realize that the vast majority of the stories are the product of someone's imagination and have no basis in fact, then there is no harm done. Literally, anyone can say anything in an email, blog, website, or chat room with no obligation to be truthful.

Problems arise when those stories are circulated by trusting individuals who believe that the truth is being told. As we all know, stories can go "viral" and be circulated to millions of people in the blink of an eye. Since anyone can say anything without the need to back it up with facts, how do we decide what, or who, we can believe?

My general rule-of-thumb is that, "if it sounds too good, or too easy, or too crazy, or too outrageous to be true, it probably isn't." We've all received those emails forwarded by a well-meaning friend that warn us about some new danger to be avoided, or some new miracle cure, or some "fact" about a politician. My usual response before forwarding it to other friends is to check out the au-

thenticity by seeking info on a website such as www.snopes.com.

For example, I once received an article that claimed President Obama appeared on national TV on Meet the Press in 2008 and said that he supported replacing the National Anthem with a song like

"I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing." A quick check on snopes.com revealed that this ridiculous claim stemmed from a satirical piece written a few years ago and was totally fiction. Plus we've all received those internet stories that claim to have already been checked out on snopes.com. Don't let that fool you. It only takes a few minutes to check for yourself,

which they obviously never expect you to do. I've found many of those to also be totally false.

Problems with stories on the internet are compounded in an election year when voters are trying to make intelligent decisions about how to mark their ballots. Before you are tempted to believe an article that you read on the internet, hear on the radio, or watch on TV, check it out at www.politifact.com or www.snopes.com. You can also go to government sources or directly to the candidate's website to see what is actually being proposed, and the more complete explanation of proposals (or lack thereof). In short, make your decisions based on FACTS, not internet stories, rumors, drastically slanted half truths, or outright lies. Your vote is far too important to be influenced by such deviousness.



President Linda Somo

A Good Reason to Join AEA-Retired

Jean Stephenson



AEA-Retired Treasurer Jean Stephenson retired from the Isaac School District after 27 years of teaching in a variety of positions including all forms of PE, primary and intermediate elementary, special education, coaching gymnastics and archery, and officiating volleyball. When not playing golf in two different leagues, Jean can be found working on the books for AEA-Retired, volunteering, traveling, playing bridge, gardening, reading, organizing her neighborhood, or recycling.

Jean likes to utilize the educators travel network, host@educatorstravel.com, to help her plan her travels. Since recycling is one of her passions, she often goes out of her way to make a difference by rescuing recyclables that would otherwise end up in a landfill. Jean is our "resident recycler" at all AEA-Retired functions and keeps us cognizant of the importance of recycling. A volunteer Phoenix Neighborhood Patrol participant since 2003, Jean also volunteers her time to help plan neighborhood events for her historic neighborhood in Phoenix, and to provide assistance to seniors with transportation to doctor appointments, grocery shopping, or picking up prescriptions. Jean is an avid political action activist who has volunteered her time and talents by phone banking, canvassing, participating on interview teams to select AEA recommended candidates, and putting up campaign signs for friends of education candidates or issues like Proposition 204. Currently, she is involved in registering new voters on the Phoenix College Campus through Organizing for America and Educators for Obama. Jean Stephenson a good reason to join AEA-Retired.

Outreach to Teach

NEA— Retired Annual Meeting & NEA Representative Assembly



AEA—Retired Committee Day



Alliance luncheons honor Congressmen Ed Pastor, Raul Grijalva and Social Security

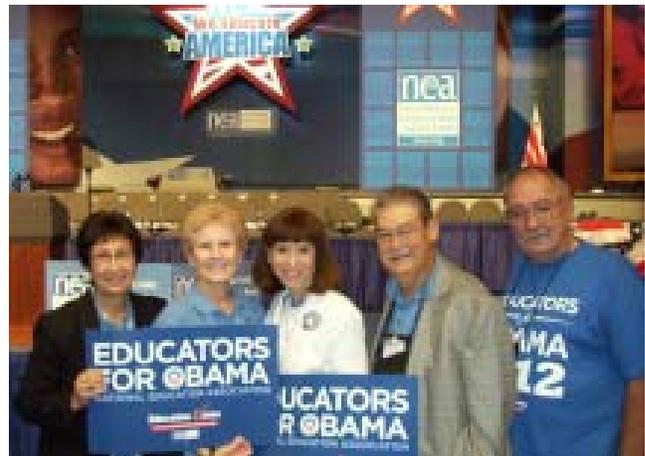


AEA-Retired members join Congressman Ed Pastor at Alliance Phoenix luncheon

The Arizona Alliance, state affiliate of the Alliance for Retired Americans, held two banquets in August to celebrate Social Security and honor two Arizona members of Congress who have been stalwart supporters of Social Security, Ed Pastor and Raul Grijalva. Since AEA-Retired members are also members of the Alliance, AEA-Retired sponsored members to attend each banquet. For Grijalva the event was held in Tucson and attended by Marilyn Freed, Steve Linder and Kay Passmore. The Phoenix luncheon for Ed Pastor was attended by Frank Bing, Linda Somo, Susan Sain, Jean Stephenson, Nancy Putman, Gary Mehok, and Janie Hydrick, AEA member and candidate for state senate in LD18. Also in attendance at the Phoenix event were Lela Alston, AEA-Retired member and candidate for the state house in LD 24, and Kyrsten Sinema, former AEA member and candidate for Congress in CD 9. Attendees at both events were treated to stirring speeches by the Congressmen who vowed to work to strengthen Social Security, not cut it or privatize it.

14 AEA-Retired members attend NEA Retired Annual Meeting; 5 delegates participate in NEA Representative Assembly

AEA-Retired members had a large presence at the NEA Retired Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC, June 27-29. The two-day conference was preceded by the Outreach to Teach and highlighted by presentations from NEA President Dennis Van Roekel and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, items of new business, and election of NEA Retired officers. In a very close election, Julie Horwin, AEA-Retired Secretary, fell one vote short of her quest to represent us on the NEA Board of Directors. Attending the Annual Meeting were: Ken & Marilyn Free, Nancy Putman, Judy Moy, Shirley Boswell, Maryanne Goodluck, Suzan Austin, John & Kathy Campbell, Jean Stephenson, Frank Bing, Barbara Matteson, Julie Horwin, and Linda Somo. Following the Annual Meeting, delegates Julie, Frank, Barbara, John and Linda spent four days participating in the NEA Representative Assembly to set the policies and actions of the NEA for the next year.



AEA-Retired delegates Linda Somo, Julie Horwin, Frank Bing & John Campbell are joined by Jean Stephenson in front of the stage at the NEA RA. Missing from the photo is delegate Barbara Matteson. More photos available on page 4.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Susan Sain

Primary Election Update and Looking Forward to the General Election November 6, 2012

by Susan Sain

Redistricting created opportunities. Opportunities for legislators to jump to congressional races. Opportunities for congressional incumbents to jump districts and challenge each other. The opportunity for 5 out of 9 Arizona's congressional representatives being Democrats by creating a competitive district carved out of the center of Phoenix.

After the primary, some of our more controversial politicians were left behind. Gone is Ben Quayle. Gone are Kirk Adams, Ron Gould, Russell Pearce, and Lori Klein.

Going forward are all of the AEA endorsed candidates. Yeah! For an up-to-date list of candidates endorsed by AEA look on the web at www.vote4schoolsaz.com/pro-education-candidates.

But also going forward are many of the same politicians who have voted against public education, public employees, and union issues often using legislation developed by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). But again thanks to redistricting, pro-public education candidates are poised to unseat some of ALEC-influenced incumbents and change the focus of our legislature.

One such race is in Legislative District 18 in the southeast valley. Redistricting created a competitive district with party registration split roughly even between Democrats, Republicans, and Independent voters. One of our own, Dr. Janie Hydrick, is running against incumbent, John McCommish, for State Senator. This is a pivotal race that can tip the balance of power in the Arizona State Senate, taking away the current super majority. Running with Dr. Hydrick for the Arizona House of Representatives are Darin Fisher and Corey Harris who are AEA endorsed candidates.

There are other AEA and AEA-R members who are candidates in various legislative districts such as Jackie Thrasher, LD 20, Lela Alston, LD 24, and Lynne Pancrazi, LD4. CD9 candidate Kyrsten Sinema is a former AEA member.

DOWN BALLOT

This year's ballot will have more than just elections for federal and state lawmakers. These are the items that are farther down the ballot from the more high profile campaigns. Often voters neglect to mark their ballots for these candidates and issues because of lack of interest, knowledge, or just plain fatigue when filling out a lengthy ballot. However, all of these candidates and issues are just as important and need the input of all the electorate.

For instance there are nine ballot propositions including the well known Prop 204 Quality Education & Jobs Act, and Prop 121 Open Government Act. Eight are amendments to the Arizona State Constitution—Props 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121. Seven of those were referred by the State legislature and thus are referenda—Props 114-120. Only two of the propositions are citizen proposed initiatives—Props 121 and 240. Two deal with State Trust lands—Props 118 and 119. Props 116 and 117 propose limits on property tax evaluations. Prop 117 would limit property tax evaluations just like the old California Prop 13 that ended up decimating the California public school system.

Amendments and initiatives are very hard to reverse if what sounded like a good idea at the time ends up having devastating consequences in the future. Therefore, it is very important to get as much information as possible before voting. Two good sources are the Arizona Secretary of State Office website for the complete text of each proposition, www.azsos.gov, and The Arizona Advocacy Network Foundation www.AZadvocacy.org. The Arizona Advocacy Network will not only have the pros and cons, they also list who sponsors the proposition, who supports or opposes it, and who has contributed money to support or oppose this issue. AEA will also be issuing endorsements that again can be found at www.vote4schoolsaz.com

And probably at the very bottom of the ballot will be local school district elections. Although last, these are definitely not the least when talking importance to public education. There are school board seats open and bond issues and overrides. For information about candidates for board elections in Maricopa County www.maricopa.gov/schools/service-home.aspx?sid=17. Elsewhere in the state and regarding bond and override elections, contact your local school district office, your local AEA affiliate or your county superintendent of schools. Many AEA locals endorse candidates and issues and, therefore, are excellent sources of information. So whether you are filling out your early ballot at home on your kitchen table or going to the polls on November 6, make sure to become informed about the candidates and issues and take the time to vote on the entire ballot.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Barbara Matteson

Southern Region Political Action By Barbara Matteson

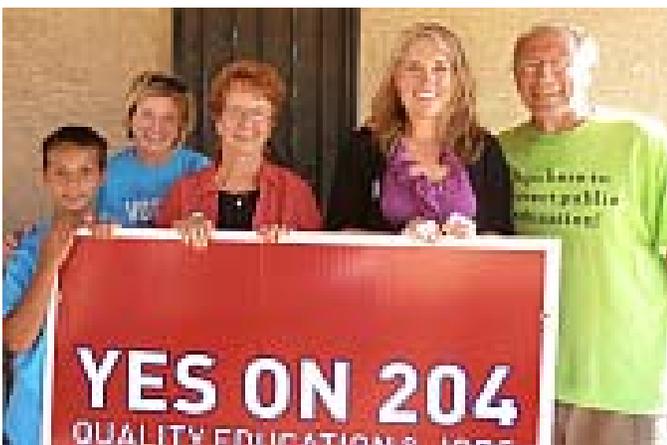


Things are heating up in Baja Arizona. The primary is over and our retired members are engaged in campaigns to elect candidates that support our issues and to help pass Prop 204, which will enable our schools to meet the needs of our kids.

We are working hard to elect candidates at all levels, federal, state, and local. We need President Obama to continue the fight for the middle class. Electing Dr. Rich Carmona as our U.S. Senator and electing Raul Grijalva, Ron Barber, Ed Pastor, and Ann Kirkpatrick as our Congressional Representatives can give us a voice of reason and integrity in Washington.

Our members are also involved in the races of our recommended candidates for the state legislature where voices of reason are sorely needed. We are walking, phoning, holding house parties and speaking out to friends and family urging everyone to vote for reason. But our job is not done. We still have Prop 204, Bond Elections and School Board races. Our plates are overflowing but we are up to the job. I urge everyone to get involved in some manner. If some changes are not made we are in a lot of trouble. Lack of funding for quality education and health care will drastically hurt our children. Privatizing Social Security and changing Medicare to a voucher program will hurt our seniors. And keeping the same people in charge in the AZ Legislature will hurt all of us.

AEA RETIRED MEMBERS, PLEASE, take action and help us win in November.



AEA-Retired members Barbara Matteson and Michael Gordy join Ann Eve Pederson, Chairwoman, and a public school parent & student at the Tucson launch of the campaign for passage of Proposition 204, the Quality Education & Jobs Act.



The Conduit



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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 Chapters Chairperson **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- All members are welcome at our meetings. The next meeting will be Thursday October 4th, at Iron Works Restaurant, 17233 N. 45th Avenue, Phoenix. Medicare will be the main topic for the guest speaker. For more information call Susie Sommer at 623-931-6209 or e-mail ssommer114@aol.com

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Chapter members met September 19 to hear guest speaker Donna Davis from Expect More Arizona, an education based non-partisan advocacy group. The next scheduled meeting is set for November 14th at the Sunrise Bank Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Contact **Steve Ramos** at steveramos2@cox.net or (480) 213-5677 for information.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: The Chapter meets at 10 AM the 3rd Tuesday of the month from August through May. The meetings alternate between the AEA Southern Region Office and the TEA Office. Next scheduled meeting will be on at the Southern region office Go to <http://www.azedretired.com/TUCSON/index.html> for more information, or contact Chip Parsons at chipp@cox.net

Phoenix Chapter: The next chapter meeting will be at Metro Tech HS in the Culinary Department on Tuesday, September 25th, beginning at 10:30 AM. The featured speaker will discuss Medicare. For information, or to reserve a spot, contact **Barb Joseph** at (602) 765-0788 or btjoseph@cox.net.

White Mountain Chapter: For information about this chapter, contact **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net.

Prescott Chapter: The Prescott Chapter of AEA-Retired met at Coco's on Friday, September 14th. Ted Coleman presented highlights of the two day AEA-Retired Executive Board meeting & Committee Day. Changes in insurance rates were discussed and most of Steve Ramos's ASRS report. It was decided that the chapter would meet every other month for a total of four or five meetings a school year. Ted Coleman will continue to act as liaison to and from AEA-Retired. The next meeting will be Saturday, November 10th, at Coco's for a 9:00 AM breakfast. Contact Ted at tdashfork@azwildblue.com for more information.

Yuma Chapter: Please contact **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net if you are interested in reestablishing this chapter.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: The next meeting will be on Monday, September 24th, from 11AM- 1PM, at Macayo's on N. Scottsdale Rd. Antonio Galindo from NEA Member Benefits will be the guest speaker. For information contact **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>.

Southeast Chapter: The chapter met on August 24, 2012, at 5:00 pm at the Olive Garden in Sierra Vista. Our dinner was attended by a record thirty-two retirees (well, thirty-one, and one reluctant son and former student of many.) Next meeting will be on Friday, October 26th, at the Ricardo's in Hereford. Ricardo has just opened his newly rebuilt restaurant which had been destroyed by the Mountain Fire. Please RSVP to azcatsally@aol.com. Hope to see everyone there.

Northern Arizona/ Rez Chapter: The next chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, Sept. 19th, 2012, from 9:00 — 12:00 pm at the Thunderbird Cafeteria in Chinle. Discussion will include inviting speakers to up-coming meetings. Contact **Maryanne Goodluck** at magoodluck55@yahoo.com for further details.