



# THE CONDUIT

Volume 31, Issue 3

March 2017

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## Exciting program set for the 29th AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, May 12th at Scottsdale Resort

"Unite, Inspire, Lead" is the theme of the 29th AEA-Retired Annual Meeting scheduled for May 12th at the Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch in Scottsdale. **(Note the correct date is May 12th, not May 5th as reported in the previous Conduit.)**



Good food, good friends, fun and prizes, await attendees. As usual, great speakers will make you well-informed members of a terrific organization. Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, will be the exciting keynote speaker. Paul Matson, Executive Director of Arizona State Retirement Service, will update attendees on our pension system.

An important part of every Annual Meeting is the election of officers and Representatives-at-Large who comprise the AEA-Retired Executive Board. In keeping with our Constitution & Bylaws, only the 86 elected delegates (who are also delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly) may vote in these elections. This year delegates will elect a President, Treasurer, six Representatives-at-Large, and proposed Constitution/Bylaw amendments.

Another exciting part of each Annual Meeting is the awarding of the Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award to a member who has been an exemplary leader and volunteer within the organization and in the community. Steve Ramos has been selected to be this year's recipient.

For those attendees who are also delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly, which will be held on Friday evening and

all day Saturday, May 13th, AEA-Retired will cover half the cost of a double occupancy room at the Scottsdale Resort for the evening of May 12th. When rooming with another delegate, the net result is free lodging for one night. Online reservations for the Resort will be available mid-March for \$ 113 when using the AEA discount code.

If you've never attended an Annual Meeting, make this the year you do. You're bound to see old friends, and make new ones. There is a nominal Annual Meeting registration fee of \$30, which helps to defray the cost of the meeting room, materials and the lunch. **Fill out the registration form on page 4 and send it in, or register online with a credit card at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017AEA-Retired>**

Fantastic guest speakers, a delicious gourmet-style lunch, and the legendary AEA-Retired Happy Hour all await your presence at the Annual Meeting. Hope to see you there!



Rich Fiesta, ARA



## AEA-Retired Calendar



March 14 —AEA-Retired Board Meeting, Phoenix; Leadership Training

March 15—Leadership Development Training, Phoenix

April 11—AEA-Retired Board Meeting, Phoenix

May 12—AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Scottsdale Resort, Scottsdale

May 12-13—AEA Delegate Assembly, Scottsdale Resort, Scottsdale

## ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



### Defending against legislative attacks and adding more protections for our ASRS plan

At this writing the Arizona Legislature is still in session and recent elections have again given us a legislature that undervalues our traditional public schools and educators. Many in the legislature also believe that some long time government services and the employees who provide them should be privatized and offered 401k-style defined contribution pension plans. These plans save less, cost more and shift risks to the employee. AEA-Retired is lobbying legislators to protect the ASRS defined benefit pension plan and provide more funding for public schools.

This session, ASRS has a bill that protects against what AEA-Retired has labeled "The ASU/ASRS Pension Threat". The threat is when ASU, or any ASRS employer, is allowed to withdraw participation of new employees, or selected current employees, from the ASRS. If this happens, it can cost the ASRS fund millions of dollars in unfunded liabilities. In 2012, legislation was passed that would allow ASRS to charge a non-participating employer a lump sum to cover any liabilities. However, a recent review of state statutes found the 2012 law did not adequately protect the ASRS fund. It failed to identify all the scenarios in which an employer could become non-participating and needed to clearly spell out how these employers would pay off their liabilities. As a result, ASRS is seeking passage of Senate Bill 1178 that would further define a non-participating employer as one who:

- \* Through legislative action has current and/or prospective employees no longer participating in the ASRS.
- \* Has a reduction in participation to the ASRS of 30% over a period of 3 years or 50% over any period of time.

Rather than charging the non-participating employers millions of dollars in a lump sum, as re-

quired by current statutes, SB1178 would:

- \* Set up a separate fund inside the ASRS fund just for the nonparticipating employer with their own share of assets and liabilities in the plan.
- \* Through payroll deductions, employers and employees of nonparticipating employers will continue to have the same contribution rates as all other participants in the ASRS.
- \* Any share of the annual liability amount not received through payroll will be billed to the employer only and must be paid within the same fiscal year as when it was billed.

SB1178 will protect our members by ensuring that the liabilities incurred by a nonparticipating employer are not transferred onto all other employers and employees remaining in the ASRS.

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**AEA-Retired members joined with other AZ Alliance members at a rally at the Capitol January 31 to support Medicare and the Affordable Care Act. Attendees urged passage of a state resolution that would demand that Congress not repeal the ACA without a replacement.**



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JULIE HORWIN



## Retirees are fearless leaders when it comes to getting things done!

So many people ask me, "How do you do all of things you are doing?" My answer is easy and it is mostly the same, after I say that I put one foot in front of the other and just keep going step-by-step. I'm inspired by the mission of AEA-Retired – that WE, the members, accept the trust that has been placed in us. That we advocate for each other's dignified retirement, Arizona students, and our active colleagues in schools.

You and I don't wait for anyone's permission. We take the lead in advocating for our schools, and our retirement security. We are fearless in speaking up for what we have worked for and believed in our whole working careers and now in retirement: ***schools are the greatest window of opportunity for every student.***

You are not intimidated by the change in U.S. leadership. You are not intimidated by anyone who holds any office in our state. In January and February more 90 of us met at the state capitol to let our legislators know that we are watching and we are speaking up. We met one on one with many of our legislators.

In February I testified in the Senate Appropriations committee against a bill that would strip funding from our neediest schools in our state. Public education has become the civil rights issue of our time. We didn't make it the issue – it was made for us through a planned decimation of funding year after year, decade after decade. ***And we are ready to step up and lead, inspire and unite our newest generation of educators, their parents and our colleagues.***

As president of AEA-Retired, I've talked a lot about keeping our retirement system (ASRS) strong, and about funding schools appropriately and with equity. And I've talked to everyone. It is because I have the strength of your membership, your voices, your fearlessness that makes my voice heard. You are on the phones, at the voting booth and you are a member the largest local of AEA.

"Politics ain't bean-bag." That came from an Irish writer in 1895. He meant it's not a child's game. It's mean and hard, and if you're going to be in it, you'd better be in it to win. We know that. It's why we've never been silent in politics. The policies being set are those that have immediate impact on our lives. That is why I don't give myself permission to grow tired. That is why I continually lean on you and your membership to make me lace up my walking shoes every day.

I ask you to direct your colleagues who retired along with you or in the years before or after you to go to our website and click on "Join Now" and add their voices to ours. We need them. The time has passed when we can sit on our laurels. People can say a lot of things about retired members of AEA, but what they can't say is that we are cowards. So please, make it your part to ask your colleagues to join AEA-Retired.

We have won some significant battles recently. So far we have stopped Michael Crow from removing ASU from the ASRS pension system. We stopped a bill that would force a new young teacher to make an uninformed choice between ASRS and a 401K system. We are at the legislature every time there is a bill that will impact our pension and the schools that our grandkids and children we love attend. Will these bills come back? I know they will, and you and I will be there to stop them.

***I know who you are because you are me.*** We've laughed together at the same things. We've cried together. We've talked about our schools and our travels, and our families. And we know that what we do matters.

***We are the ones who unite, inspire and lead. That's who we are.***

When you receive an email, a postcard, or a phone call with a call to action, please consider answering with a "yes." ***We are fearless. We are what organizing looks like. Now is the time.***



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*By Barbara Matteson*



### Contact your elected officials to express your opinions on important issues. Make a difference!

Are you as frustrated and overwhelmed as I am with all the political activity at the local, state and national levels?

Legislation to expand school vouchers, legislation to make it very difficult for citizens to put an initiative and referendum on the ballot, legislation to suppress votes, legislation to cut health care, are only a few of the important issues being considered at some level.

It can seem overwhelming, but we need to stay strong and vigilant and do what we can to protect and improve public education, protect our civil rights, provide quality health care, protect our environment, protect Social Security and Medicare, and so much more.

Do you have your list of phone numbers and email addresses for your members of the United States Congress and your state Representatives and Senators right next to your computer and in your phone? We need to firmly, but professionally, keep them informed of rational reasons for them to vote in a way that will help children, seniors and all Arizona citizens. You must be ready to act when AEA, AEA-Retired, and NEA contact you about an issue that needs attention. We are paying espe-

cially close attention to any legislation affecting public education, as well as any retirement issues that may come up. At the federal level we have to be concerned about attempts to destroy Medicare as we know it, attempts to suppress the vote, and attempts to take away protection of our environment and state and federal lands.

Elected officials DO pay attention to comments from their constituents. Phone calls are the most effective. When you call, you will most likely speak to the assistant. Be sure to leave your name and the fact that you are a constituent. When calling a member of the US Congress, leave your zip code which helps identify you as one of their voters. Leave a short, concise message with the assistant as to why the legislator should or should not support a specific bill or issue. An email is also a good way to contact an elected official. One state legislator told me that he keeps a folder on each issue and any emails that come in, get filed by issue, and then are reviewed by him. The more pros and cons received from constituents on a particular issue can affect the outcome.

**Please do as much as you can to help us get some positive results.**

#### **AEA-Retired Annual Meeting at the Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch**

**7700 E McCormick Pkwy, Scottsdale, AZ 85258**

**Friday, May 12, 2017 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM**

Registration Form: The \$30 non-refundable registration fee is payable by check, or money order, to AEA-Retired, and be received **before Friday, May 5, 2017**, or online with credit card at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2017AEA-Retired>

Mail to: AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, 345 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1532.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one of three choices for entre: 1. Achiotte rubbed chicken breast 2. Baked Pacific salmon 3. Vegetable Wellington  
Each of the above choices includes Flourless Chocolate Cake, Rolls and butter, iced tea, coffee/decaf.

Registering another? Great! Each registrant must pay \$30 registration fee.

2<sup>nd</sup> Name \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One Entre: Chicken Salmon Vegetable

# Quilt raffle offers best odds ever!

*By Marilyn Freed*

Better than the Lottery! Better than Las Vegas! Even better than Publisher's Clearing House!

Now that we have your attention, the AEA-Retired is again raffling a quilt at this year's Delegate Assembly. This is a very special quilt, made especially for AEA members. It is a handmade Dr. Seuss quilt that would look great in your child's or grandchild's bedroom. Additionally, we have a large cancer awareness afghan that will also be raffled.

You are undoubtedly asking yourself, "How do I get a chance to win these wonderful gifts?" A great question to be sure. All you need to do is see any member of the AEA-Retired Board, including Chapter Chairs, and they will be happy to provide you with tickets, or visit our fundraising table at the AEA Delegate Assembly in May. Also, some members of the AEA Board will have them available.

Now you are undoubtedly asking, "What's the cost?" Another great question, and more wonderful news. The price has NOT gone up from last year! That's right, still 1 ticket for \$2, 3 for \$5, 7 for \$10, or the best deal ever,

28 tickets for \$30!! That's like getting a bunch for free.

So, come on, take a chance! Buy a ticket! In fact, buy a lot of tickets and improve your odds of winning these great prizes. We'll see you at the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly on May 12 and 13 at the Scottsdale Resort.



## Proposed Amendments to AEA-Retired Constitution & Bylaws

Delegates will vote on the following proposals during the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on May 12th. A complete copy of the Constitution & Bylaws can be accessed at the AEA-Retired website at [www.azedretired.com](http://www.azedretired.com).

### **Constitution: Article VII, New Section B**

The Documents Committee will review all submissions of proposed amendments and make recommendations to the AEA-Retired Board as to the possible inclusion in the document. The Board will then determine which, if any, of the proposals to refer to a vote of the AEA-Retired delegates at the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting. (Current sections B & C will become sections C & D if this new section is adopted)

### **Bylaws: Article VIII, new paragraph 2 placed between current paragraphs 1 and 2**

The Documents Committee will review all submissions of proposed amendments and make recommendations to the AEA-Retired Board as to the possible inclusion in the document. The Board will then determine which, if any, of the proposals to refer to a vote of the AEA-Retired delegates at the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting.

## Members meet with Southern AZ legislators



AEA-Retired members Marilyn Calhoun (left) and Luci Messing (right) pose with Sen. Dalessandro.

The annual legislative reception in Southern Arizona was held on Saturday, February 4th. It was a pleasure to have

Sen. Dalessandro (LD2), Rep. Gabaldon (LD2), Rep. Saldate (LD3), Sen. Farley (LD9), Rep. Powers-Hannley (LD9), Sen. Bradley (LD10), Rep. Engel (LD10), and Rep. Clodfelter (LD10) join us for this event.

Each representative spoke for a few minutes to the members regarding what they were specifically working on in the legislature. In addition, each shared with us the areas that they felt required our attention. All legislators present went on record as having a concern regarding the voucher expansion bill.

Members were able to engage with their legislators in an informal setting to discuss concerns regarding legislation moving through the Senate and the House. AEA-Retired members felt the reception was very beneficial, and they were pleased to be able to speak directly with their representatives.

## Retirees flock to Lobby Days at the Capitol

More than 90 AEA-Retired members attended two Lobby Days at the Capitol on January 24th and February 15th to learn about pending legislation, meet with their legislators and advocate for retiree issues and public education. The two events, coordinated by the AEA-Retired Political Action Committee and led by Luci Messing, were a huge success. Attendees were given specific information and talking points on proposed legislation by AEA Lobbyist Stephanie Parra, attended the Republican and Democratic Caucuses, heard from a multitude of legislators at lunch, and were introduced from the galleries in the House and Senate during the floor sessions. Many members also met individually with their own legislators to personally discuss pending legislation.



Left: Stephanie Parra instructs attendees on legislative issues; Below: Representative Rios, House Minority Leader, addresses members at lunch, while Marian Pickens (former legislator) listens.



Representatives Fernandez, Powers, and Rios join AEA-Retired members for a Q & A session.



AEA-Retired members listen intently and take notes to prepare for meetings with legislators and the day's activities.



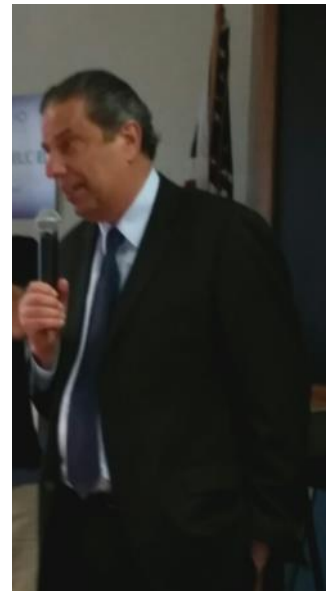
# M.O.R.E. (Mobilize, Organize, Recruit, Engage) Mixers in Phoenix and Tucson are huge success in bringing together AEA-Retired and NEA-Retired members.

“Extremely informative; exciting; entertaining; fun”, were only some of the glowing adjectives used by attendees to describe the MORE Socials held in Phoenix and Tucson on Feb. 21 and 22. Nearly 100 AEA-Retired, NEA-Retired and other activists gathered to get to know each other and our organization, while learning how to preserve and protect Social Security and Medicare.

The M.O.R.E. mixers featured Alex Lawson, from Social Security Works in Washington, DC, as the dynamic keynote speaker. He was as entertaining as he was informative. An additional treat was an appearance by Jon “Bowzer” Bauman from the popular 60’s singing group Sha Na Na. He is working with Alex on a project to organize retiree groups throughout the U.S. to prevent “reforms” that will hurt older citizens. He brought along a professional studio film crew because he is making a documentary of his work and wishes to highlight Arizona. “Bowzer” delighted everyone with several piano selections and knowledge of the topics.

Todd Crenshaw, NEA Organizing Specialist, explained how the MORE Project is helping to organize members for action. President Julie Horwin gave an overview of AEA, AEA-Retired, Committees, and State Chapters and encouraged more participation. Steve Ramos and Luci Messing presented legislative updates which were followed by a training for strategizing for successful action led by President Horwin.

These important meetings were made possible through funding from an NEA grant.



Top: Todd Crenshaw, of NEA;  
Above: Alex Lawson, of Social Security Works;  
Right: Jon “Bowzer” Bauman, of Sha Na Na



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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 on topics such as health care, legislative updates, retirement options, and all aspects of the educational system; a business meeting; lunch or dinner; and that very important time for socializing with friends and colleagues.** Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinators **Susan Sommer**, [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com) or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 [suzanaustin@cox.net](mailto:suzanaustin@cox.net).

**Glendale/West Valley Chapter-** Last met Feb. 2nd, and next meeting will be April 6th. All members are invited to join us for a social and informative gathering. If you live on the Westside of I-17 in the Valley of the Sun, join us. For more information call **Susie Sommer** at 623-628-1935 or e-mail [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com).

**Mesa / East Valley Chapter:** Meets in the 8th floor conference room at the Sunrise Bank Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Last meeting was Jan. 11, with guest speaker author Lawn Griffiths. Future meetings are March 8, and May 10 at 10:45 AM. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at [Hydrick@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:marilyn13148@q.com).

**Phoenix Chapter:** Meets every other month in Elaines's Dining Room at the Beatitudes at 1610 W. Glendale Ave. in Phoenix from 10:30 –12:30. Our next meeting will be March 21 with guest speaker Donna Davis from Expect More AZ. Please RSVP your attendance to Chapter Chair **Michele Smith** at 602-463-1624 or [mms7997@msn.com](mailto:mms7997@msn.com).

**Yavapai Chapter:** Met Feb. 28th, with guest speakers Suzan Austin & Susie Sommer. Contact Chairperson **Rob Johan** at [johanica31@gmail.com](mailto:johanica31@gmail.com) or 630-430-8902 for information about future meetings.

**Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter:** Will meet March 20 at 11 a.m. at Denny's Restaurant on Mayo Blvd. Guest speaker will be from Sister Cities. Many school districts are represented by our group, so if you're looking for a chapter in the north Valley, please join us. For information contact either **Co-Chairs: Nancy Riley, 480-596-1144** or **Ann Myers, 480-510-8098**, or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>. Everyone is welcome.

**Southeast Arizona Chapter:** Will meet on Thursday, March 23 at the Peacock Restaurant on Fry Blvd. in Sierra Vista. Contact **Sally Rosen** at 520-459-0430 or [azcatsally@aol.com](mailto:azcatsally@aol.com) for more information and future meeting dates.

**Kyrene/Tempe Chapter:** Will meet Wed., March 15 at the Pyle Center of the Tempe Public Library in Tempe. Contact **Ellie Feldner** at [teachgift@gmail.com](mailto:teachgift@gmail.com), or 480-220-3355 for more information and future meeting dates.

**Flagstaff Chapter:** If you live in the Flagstaff area, you can't afford to miss out on our AEA-Retired chapter meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month, 10 AM to noon, in the basement room of Flagstaff Federated Church. We work to stay informed and support Arizona's retirees, educators and students through service projects, political action, and constant monitoring of retirement issues at the state and national levels. We hope you will join us and lend your expertise to our efforts to support our profession and the people we serve. For more information and to RSVP, contact **Tricia Roach** at [trrteach6@mac.com](mailto:trrteach6@mac.com) or call 928-525-1997.

**New Yuma Chapter:** The newest chapter is forming. Contact Chapter Co-Chairs **Ricki & Jim Gribble** at [rickigribble@msncom](mailto:rickigribble@msncom) or call 928-344-1157 for information about how you can participate in this new chapter.