



# THE CONDUIT

Volume 38, Issue 1

June, 2023

## Inside this issue

ASRS Update	<a href="#">2</a>
President's Message	<a href="#">3</a>
Legislative Update	<a href="#">4</a>
Veep talk	<a href="#">5</a>
Amazing Retiree and Membership Report	<a href="#">6</a>
RSJ Committee report and Tombstone Follow-up	<a href="#">7</a>
Book Corner	<a href="#">8</a>
Delegate Assembly pics	<a href="#">9</a>
Cool Nights in Greer, AZ	<a href="#">10</a>
More Pics	<a href="#">11</a>
Chapter News	<a href="#">12</a>

## The 35<sup>th</sup> AEA Retired Annual Meeting highlights "Paving the Way with Unbreakable Solidarity"

The AEA Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly were held at the Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch on May 12-13. President Anna Cicero welcomed and thanked the Annual Meeting committee, delegates and all Board members for their support, followed by the Land Acknowledgement and Community Agreements shared by Janice Dwosh.



Guests of honor, the "Stars," included Past Presidents of AEA, NEA and AEA Retired, who have lifted today's leaders and paved the way for others. Read more about them in the "Walk of Stars" pages and enjoy the photos.

Steve Ramos commemorated the 70<sup>th</sup> ASRS Anniversary with a walk through milestones of the pension-building history. He closed by letting us know the leadership goal is to raise an informed army of AEA Retired members to help us fight to protect our pension and public schools. Steve then introduced David Cannella, Communications Manager for the Arizona State Retirement System. Mr. Cannella described the solid state of the retirement fund, detailing various facets of the ASRS pension fund, health care, and other benefits.

Barb Matteson and Julie Horwin encouraged donations to the NEA and AEA Political Action funds, describing the importance of electing friends of education and retirees.

One of the highlights of every annual meeting is the presentation of the Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award. Nancy Putman, Chair of the Awards Committee, presented the award to this year's recipient, Steve Linder, for his many years of service to AEA Retired and the community.

An important part of the Annual Meeting is the election of officers and board members. This year retired delegates elected Anna Cicero, President and Steve Linder, Treasurer. Lizzie Menefee, Cynthia Charlberg-Hale, Gary Mehok, Cynthia Couture, Nancy Riley and Jeanne Erickson were elected as At-Large Representatives. All positions are for a three year term.

Dennis Van Roekel, former President of the NEA, was the keynote speaker. He has held key positions at all levels of the teacher's union. After delivering an inspirational message bringing the entire room to a standing ovation, murmurs in the audience could be heard... "the man has still got it." He expressed disappointment with the disrespect professional educators experience each day. He left with a message that all leaders should reflect upon and apply... **"Vision without action, changes very little... vision with a plan can change the world."** Let's all get together and continue to plan to keep the walk well paved for future leaders.



Arizona Education Association Retired is a founding member of Arizona Retirement Security Coalition (ARSC). Daniella Smith, ARSC Lobbyist, detailed the past, present and possible future attacks on the state's retirement

[Continued on page 5](#)



## Calendar

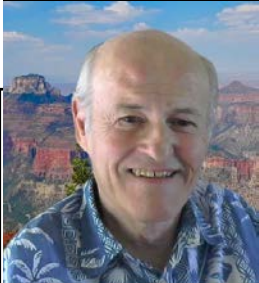
Check the last page for updates of your Chapter meetings.

**June 29 to July 6** NEA Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Delegate Assembly.

**September 12** AEA Retired Board meeting 10 am

# ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS

## ASRS history supports need to protect pensions



In 1912, teachers at age 60 with 25 years of service, got a \$50/month Arizona State pension. There were no member contributions. For the next 40 years, groups of teachers in Phoenix and Tucson, although not officially organized, lobbied for a more actuarially sound retirement. In 1943, the **Arizona Teacher Retirement System** was created, adding employee contributions that would lead to an individual retirement annuity and employer contributions that would now provide the \$50/month pension.



Art Class in 1912



Lowell Elementary Faculty 1958

In 1948, Arizona voters placed an initiative on the ballot to create the **Public Employees Retirement Fund of Arizona**, that would provide for a retirement, plus disability and death benefits. It passed easily, but the scope of the plan was limited and the legislature offered Arizona voters a deal. Repeal the retirement law, and the legislature would write a better one. Voters agreed, and in 1952, the law was repealed and the monthly pension was raised to \$80. In 1953, funds were transferred to the newly created, **Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS)**.

By 1967, a coalition of public employee associations, including the **Arizona Education Association**, representing active teachers, began to play a bigger role in lobbying benefits.

In 1970, the legislature created the first ASRS defined benefit retirement plan. ASRS members could remain in the old defined contribution "System" or move to "The Plan."

Eighty percent chose "The Plan." Today, only 824 System members or beneficiaries, are still receiving System benefits. Their average age is 84 and

the last actively contributing member retired in 2020.

From 1976-1987, the legislature made several limited adjustments to pension benefits. In 1987, the **AEA Retired** was created by the AEA Delegate Assembly. In 1989 and 1990, members of **AEA Retired** lobbied and won a 2% Cost Of Living Adjustment. As the funded status of ASRS rose above 100%, the legislature created the ASRS Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI). It would use excess ASRS earnings to increase retiree benefits. PBIs were applied from 1990-2005 and in 2022.

In 1998, AEA Retired led a coalition of government employee groups to pass Prop. 100, adding constitutional protections to Arizona public pensions. However, in 2016 the legislature found a way to modify those protections with ballot referendums 124 and 125. Voters approved.



Carolyn Warner, Superintendent Of Public Instruction 1975-1987



Steve Ramos (left) and David Cannella of ASRS presenting at Annual Meeting



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## BY ANNA CICERO

### Moving forward what we have started



Shortly after I adjourned the 35<sup>th</sup> AEA Retired Annual Meeting, I mingled with participants to hear their conversations. One of our respected long-time board members approached me and quietly said, "This was the best AEA Retired Annual Meeting I have attended in many years," to which I responded with gratitude.

As I wrap up my two appointed years of serving as the AEA Retired President, I reflect on your encouraging words, hard work and motivation. I feel you have given me the motivation to move forward with what we have started with unbreakable solidarity.

I ran for a second term unopposed as did Treasurer Steve Linder, therefore, we were elected by acclamation making the meeting agenda move a bit faster. Hard work ahead awaits all leaders on the Board to who will need to spend long hours and quality time moving goals forward. Among the many goals, a very important one is to increase membership. That is the lifeblood that gives us member power and resources needed to deliver good results. I thank you for your trust and allowing me to be your AEA President for the next three years.

**What's ahead this summer?** Believe me, the 2023-2024 AEA-R Board agenda is **action** packed!

**AEA Retired Strategic Planning/Rebranding Retreat** was held on June 7 and 8 giving work groups time to focus on goals, outcomes, strategies and activities to develop a plan trending towards improvement. We celebrate what is working and rendering good results. I am excited to represent, engage and consider your feedback obtained from the data from surveys to continue our AEA Retired goals and strategies. The outcome is a relevant **6 year Strategic Plan** for AEA Retired. This was also a time to build relationships with newly elected At-Large Representatives and officers. Let's move forward!

**NEA Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly**, June 29 to July 6, in Orlando, Florida. Delegates will represent you nationally and bring back ideas to strengthen the AEA Retired work plans. **Luci Messing, Julie Horwin and Anna Cicero** were elected as delegates. We are honored to represent members at these national events.

**NEA Racial and Social Justice Conference (RSJ) and Leaders for Just Schools**, June 28 to July 1 and July 18 to 21, will provide our RSJ chair, **Janice Dwosh**, an amazing experience. AEA Retired Committee strategies will be enriched and enable the monitoring of RSJ issues and develop action plans.

**Site Visit Action: Recruit, Recruit, Recruit!** During June and July, AEA Retired Adopt-a-Local volunteers working with local education associations to begin implementing strategies. At the end of June and most of July, many retired educators led by liaisons in various districts will participate in endeavoring to bring all associations toward Majority Status and Super Majority Status. AEA Retired supports these efforts. In time, these same educators will build the retired group capacity. Contact your Chapter Chair in your area if you wish to be part of this action. Contact information can be found at [azedretired.com](http://azedretired.com).

#### **We are stronger together!**

Zoom meetings will also be part of our regional planning. AEA Retired will continue to monitor developing news on legislation, vetoes and budget related advocacy actions. Elections will absorb a great deal of time and work by the Political Action Committee, which will begin preparing the 2023-2024 AEA Retired work plans for the year.

**Website and social media:** Check out the website [azedretired.com](http://azedretired.com). It is the quickest resource for reaching us and finding membership forms, minutes, and highlights.

Remember, you are always invited to join us as a guest at any of the monthly meetings, which occur on the **second Tuesday of each month** starting in September at 10 a.m. in AEA Headquarters, 345 E. Palm Lane, Phoenix, Arizona. We are always happy to engage with more members. Contact your local chapter and attend their meetings or zooms.

Until we meet again, keep safe and out of the heat. We love our state even though the summer can be a bit too hot!

***Join us! We are ready to move forward with what we have started.***



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE BY LUCI MESSING



## We have a budget!

After months of negotiations between Democratic and Republican lawmakers, the 2024 state budget was signed into law by Governor Hobbs.

**The 2024 Budget Contains Numerous Wins**, here are some of the highlights:

- **\$341.9M** for school facility repairs
- **\$300M** one-time infusion to Arizona’s K-12 schools
- **\$150M** for the Housing Trust Fund - the largest deposit ever!
- **\$88.6M** in new ongoing K-12 funding
- **\$85M** for Arizona’s universities
- **\$60M** for homeless shelters & services
- **\$67M** for infrastructure projects in Arizona’s tribal communities
- **\$30M** for Arizona’s community colleges
- **\$5M** for PFAS Water Cleanup
- **\$5M** for the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

Also negotiated was a waiver of the Aggregate Expenditure Limit for Arizona's K-12 schools, averting school closures next year. Less than three weeks ago, many of these items were *not* a part of the budget.

While this budget is far from perfect, it represents a significant step in the right direction as legislative Democrats prioritized uplifting everyday Arizonans under a broken Republican framework. We are disappointed that the budget does not include a cap on the voucher program, however, there will be a new committee to look at who is receiving vouchers and where and how they are being used.

A piece of good news is that Attorney General Kris Mayes said her office will investigate potential fraud, waste and abuse in Arizona's universal school voucher program. "There are no controls on this program. There's no accountability, and they're spending hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money," Mayes said during an interview on Sunday Square Off.

We were fortunate this year that there were no major attacks on our pensions. And when there was an attempt, we were immediately successful in contacting our legislators to stop it. Our work with the Arizona Retirement Security Coalition has been successful and a huge thanks goes out to our lobbyist, Daniella Smith for her incredible work.

The Arizona State Legislature is currently on recess until June 12. They are on break because some legislators went on vacation. However, 90 bills were dropped on the Governor’s desk before legislators left. Governor Hobbs has vetoed 94 bad bills at this writing. And more than likely it will be necessary for her to veto more.

Please reach out to Governor Hobbs and thank her for all her work on our behalf. It’s important to let her know that we support her and we want her to continue to look out for the citizens of Arizona.

We need to continue to follow Civic Engagement Beyond Voting and updates from AEA. There is a great deal of information that is useful but too much to include here.

Thank you for being active, engaged and persistent in our work on behalf of public education and our pensions!

### Education Matters!



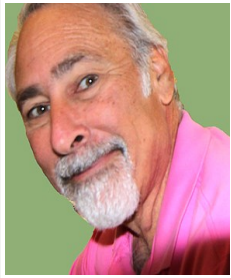
Francis Banales, Governor Hobbs, and Luci Messing

*“Education is the powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*  
**Nelson Mandela**



Luci Messing, Secretary of State Fontes and Marci Morrison

## VEEP TALK BY KEN FREED Wrap Up of 2022-23



This may seem to be a very unconventional wrap up to the AEA-Retired year. You'll see, it has a loose format.

First, thank you to Lou for replying to my last edition's request for responses. I too spent a lot of time in the suburbs. From age 2 to 16, Long Island was home. With you being from the Bronx, I assume

you were a Yankee fan. However, I grew up mostly at Ebbets Field and then the Bums moved.

In May, I attended the AEA Retired Annual Meeting and AEA Delegate Assembly. There are a couple of noteworthy items I wish to share. AEA Retired is lucky to have many hardworking members. I want to tell you about one who stands out and does an exceptional job for you. Steve Ramos has made himself an expert on the Arizona State Retirement System. He represents us at all of their meetings and then brings the up-to-date and detailed information back to the Association. He did a great job of introducing the ASRS's David Cannella, who reported on the retirement system status. If you see Steve, thank him. He deserves our thanks!

This year, our keynote speaker was familiar to us all, Dennis Van Roekel. Most of us know DVR as the past Paradise Valley Education Association President, AEA President and the NEA President. Most of us also know him as a friend and as a great public speaker. I've heard him many times, yet this time was his best. I couldn't do the speech or the speaker justice by trying to summarize, so I will just say great job Dennis and thank you!

The Delegate Assembly was, the Delegate Assembly. The business of the Association is sometimes not all that exciting, but always necessary. However, a big thank you to President Marisol Garcia for inviting Governor Hobbs and Secretary of State Fontes to speak to the Assembly. Both, in different ways, were inspiring to hear. We are fortunate that we were smart and elected them. The alternatives were downright scary. Next year, register to be a delegate. The food is good, the company wonderful, the information worth knowing and your participation is appreciated.

Finally, congratulations to the recently elected members of your AEA-Retired Board. They are At-large members, Nancy Riley, Lizzie Menefee, Gary Mehok, Jeanne Erickson, Cynthia Couture, and Cynthia Challberg-Hale. Officers re-elected are Steve Linder, Treasurer and Anna Cicero, President.

**To all, have a wonderful, healthy, restful summer!  
Stay safe.**

[Continued from page 1](#)

system. The work of ARSC has stopped detrimental bills to ASRS. She cautioned retirees to remain vigilant and active to protect pensions.

AEA lobbyist, Isela Blanc, echoed many similar concerns as she delivered the Legislative Update. We must celebrate all the wins our efforts have delivered and know that other wins will come. It will take time and continued action. She also encouraged members to engage and stay informed because we are stronger together.

Steve Linder, Treasurer, reported on the current budget and introduced the adopted budget for 2023-24.

As the Annual Meeting adjourned, we remained confident because of the evaluations; feedback that our participants felt welcomed, inspired, informed and shared that it was evident that AEA Retired Board showed great teamwork. We will see you again next year!

### **AEA Delegate Assembly followed:**

Luci Messing, AEA Retired Political Action Chair and member of the AEA Board of Directors, led the AEA Retired Caucus agenda and provided information to delegates about credentials.

In January, we lost Chris Mayes, the beloved AEA Executive Assistant for many years. A moving tribute to Chris was delivered by her husband, Larry.

In addition, delegates heard inspirational speeches from the AEA President Marisol Garcia, Vice President Angela Philpot, Treasurer Amber Gould, AEA Executive Director Randy Parraz.

Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs and Secretary of State Adrian Fontes were featured speakers concluding the first session.

During Saturday's session, delegates debated and voted on new business, resolution amendments and Constitutional Amendments.

The 35th Retired Annual Meeting received high marks and positive comments from attendees.



## Ann Meyers

### An Amazing Retiree

In high school, I wrote a fantastic story about an American spy in East Germany. Sixty years later I can't recall any more of the story other than the spy's shoe clattered to the ground while he was escaping over the Berlin Wall. Mr. Haas strongly suggested that I write about what I know. That was code for this story is absolute nonsense.

I graduated from a very small rural school, so I chose the largest university in my state: The Ohio State University with its 50,000 students. In May 1969, I walked out of Art 201 for Elementary Teachers into flying rocks and tear gas. A few days later, as the noise was lessening, four students were killed 100 miles away at Kent State, and the campus blew up again. I worked part time in the Administration Building, encircled by the National Guard, boys my age, holding rifles. Everyday, my boss had to escort me through the line because I didn't have a staff ID.

When I graduated in 1971, my husband and I moved to Arizona for the higher pay and snowless winters. I began teaching 6th grade in Mesa. Over the years, our family grew by three daughters, while Arizona pay decreased. Governor Symington promised teachers that they'd be rewarded when the economy improved. He and I apparently had different definitions of reward.

Sometimes I liked teaching and sometimes I didn't. I always—nearly always, loved the children. In 2004, I retired and needed new opportunities. I'm repelled by politics, but once you've been hit with tear gas and disparaged by anti-public education officials, there's a self destructive urge to fly into the light bulb.

AEA-Retired was a perfect fit; people in education are the most generous, caring people in the world; a union is the best life protection; and retired educators are tenacious bulldogs in politics.

Walking door to door is my retiree skill. Physically, I'd much rather feel 25, but there is joy in older age, and grandchildren provide much of that happiness. My soul-soother is music. After a hiatus of 33 years, my clarinet and I joined the Scottsdale Concert Band. Every day on my own, and every week with the band, I play music while my brain heals. We'll have a public concert in the fall or you can listen to excerpts here:

<http://www.scottsdaleconcertband.org/home.html>

Life is a smattering of semi-forgotten experiences, wrong paths, pretty good decisions, delightful people, and mostly attempts to write about what you know.



## Membership

By Shirley Boswell, Nancy Putman and Michele Smith

The AEA Retired Membership Committee and Executive Board Members participated in retirement recruitment events in May. Marana EA, Paradise Valley EA and Phoenix Union CTA members received gift cards, membership forms and AEA Retired Swag items at these events. Committee members will continue to provide assistance to active locals who contact us.

At the 2023 Delegate Assembly, volunteers enlisted 11 new AEA Retired Members and 6 NEA Life Members who will join the retired group when they retire.

AEA Retired Executive Board and active members have participated in AEA New Educator events at Chandler, Mesa, Kyrene, Gilbert, Queen Creek and Higley Local Associations. We anticipate additional AEA Locals will be contacting AEA Retired to participate in their events.

AEA Retired leadership partners with AEA to help recruit new active members. At the time of the recruitment meeting, AEA Retired members are introduced and allowed to pass out membership forms and posters about the retired association. In partnership with AEA leadership, AEA Retired members can be compensated for recruiting new AEA members. If you are interested in helping, contact AEA Retired President Anna Cicero to find out details for scheduled events. AEA Retired Adopt-A-Local Presidents and their local associations are a top priority.



Delegates Mary Ann Goodluck (left) and from top clockwise, Mike Aicone, Aurora Aber, Sally Rosen and Juan Zuniga.



## Racial and Social Justice Committee

By Janice Dwosh

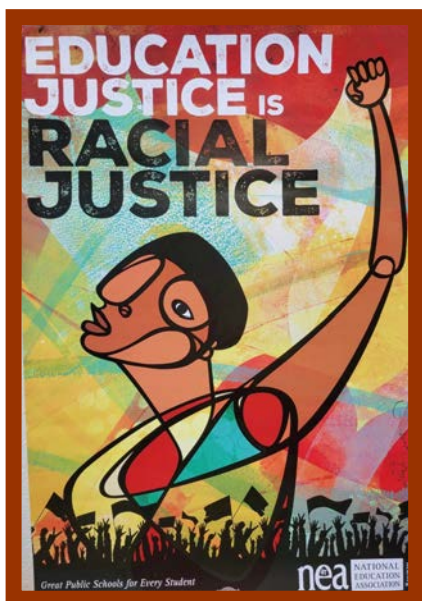
During Teacher Appreciation Week, two students I taught several years ago, sent me notes to express thanks for inspiring them as they graduate with scholarships to top universities. I cried happy tears, of course!

This made me reflect on the past few months and my journey to learn and share about racial and social justice issues. In March, I presented “Bringing Racial and Social Justice Leadership and the Power of Community to your state retired affiliate” in San Francisco at the NEA Retired Organizing Conference. Over 50 participants attended my workshop sessions and many positive reviews were posted during and after the conference. I hope by leading these RSJ workshops we can begin to inspire members throughout the association to reflect on their journeys and increase awareness of racial and social justice in public education and throughout our daily encounters.

I continue participation in the NEA Transformational Journey for Racial Justice Co-Conspirators, which will conclude this year at the NEA RSJ conference in Orlando. Recently, I completed the Nebraska State Ed Association “Conversations on Race and Belonging” with other AEA and NEA members. This six-month workshop has been eye opening! AEA Retired members continue to meet for RSJ book discussions, and would enjoy more participants with different life stories and viewpoints to share.

In our recent AEA Delegate Assembly, new business items were adopted to ensure students have the freedom to choose what they read and learn. Also discussed was the ability to teach truth in history, as well as continuing to fight for our LGBTQ+ students and families. Our NEA and AEA leaders are passionate about public education, racial and social justice for students, members and community! That is the reason I still belong and lead others in AEA Retired; to learn, share, and grow together to bring justice to our members, students and communities!

Please let me know if you would like to join us in this lifelong endeavor. We need your voices too!

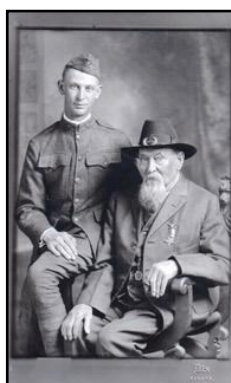


## A Tombstone Follow Up

By Larry Wittig

I enjoyed reading the article in the last *Conduit* about “The Town too Tough to Die.” My Wittig family has history there. My great-grandfather, Edward August Heinrich, a German immigrant and violinist, was music director of the Bird Cage Theater the entire years of its existence. At the time, Tombstone was home to about 23,000 people, the largest town in Arizona at the time, and was on the regular concert artist route across the U.S. which included St. Louis, Tombstone and San Francisco. His son, Edward Albert Emile, followed him from Leadville, Colorado, and, with a partner, operated a barbershop in Tombstone. After the mines flooded, making operations impossible, the Wittigs moved to Bisbee continuing in their trades as a barber and musician respectively. Heinrich died in October of 1913. He had also been a Musician First Class during the Civil War. My grandfather, Edward Albert, ran the Pioneer Barbershop on Main Street. He died in 1941 when I was 4 years old. His wife, Katherine, lived with my family from the age of 80 until she died at 92.

Unfortunately, much of Tombstone’s history has been obliterated by “Johnnies come lately” interested in milking a quick buck from the town via Hollywood.



My father Earl Wittig with his Grandfather Heinrich



Edward August Heinrich, violinist, composer and conductor.



My grandparents Edward and Katherine



In 300 BC Euclid invented geometry. . . and the grade F.

Unknown



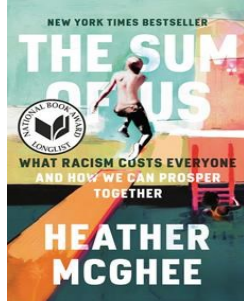
## Book Corner

By Ann Myers

Our racial and social justice book group took a detour this month from a book to an oral podcast. It was a tech stretch for some of us, but we made our grandchildren proud.

To check it out go to: <https://www.thesumofuspodcast.com/>

Heather McGhee, author and legal expert, and economic policy advocate for Demos, a progressive think tank, quit to travel the country collecting stories of racial interaction. In 2021, she unveiled her book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. This is not a gloom and doom book, telling shocking stories of discrimination and hate, but also communities working together to make life better. The book is eye opening and life changing, but “The Sum of Us” podcast, a series of six episodes, is magical storytelling.



Episode 5 is from Lewiston, Maine, a city whose families have lived there for generations. Even a Mainer from another county is considered from “away.” When a group of Muslim Somali refugees came to live in Lewiston in the early 2000s, they were more than from away. “You come here; you leave your culture at the door. Don’t try to insert your culture, which obviously isn’t working, into ours which does,” said Mayor MacDonald in 2011. Governor LePage ended Maine’s refugee program in 2016 because asylum seekers “were the biggest problem in our state.”

Lewiston’s farm families were losing their way of life just as small family farms all around the U.S. The Somali were lifelong farmers wanting to continue what they knew best. Land for sale suddenly became unavailable when the Somalis tried to buy it. Politicians called them “the enemy,” insisting Somalis came to the U. S. only for welfare; at the same time denying them work opportunities.

Lewiston’s economy and population were dwindling. Somalis turned boarded up store fronts into restaurants and businesses. Vacant apartments were refurbished and rented. All resulting in an improved city economy.

In the beginning, Somalis were able to lease only two acres to grow hardy African flint corn. With the help of friendly Mainers, grants and work of the Somalis, they set up Liberation Farms, cooperatives allowing Somalis to do the work they loved. Work and profits shared with their partner, Agrarian Farms, have become a model for local family farms.

I come from a family line of farmers. In 1950, my father and his 100 acres supported a family. By 1980, my brother, with more than 2000 acres, was unable to compete with the corporate farms and lost the work he loved. My cousins sold acreage and cows to avoid bankruptcy. I became a teacher needing more security than a farm provided. I understand the tie to the land and heartbreak of losing it. The Somalis’ Liberation Farms are one solution to disappearing family farms. We should cheer and recognize their success. See pictures at <https://somalibantumaine.org/liberation-farms/>.

Our next selection is a real book, *Charity Girl* by Michael Lowenthal. If you’d like to join us, or help with podcasts, contact me at 480-510-8098 or [azann@mac.com](mailto:azann@mac.com).



Daniella Smith, left,  
ASRC Lobbyist



Isela Blanc, right,  
AEA Lobbyist

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—this is the goal of true education.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Send your email address to

[julie.horwin@gmail.com](mailto:julie.horwin@gmail.com)

Win \$100



If we already have your e-mail address, you are entered in the \$100 AEA-Retired Raffle.

Good luck!



*The Conduit*



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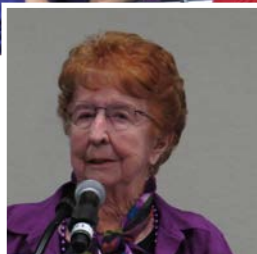
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*The Conduit* Editors  
Jan Nichols and Bart James





**Walk of Stars and Delegates Paving the Way with Unbreakable Solidarity**



## Cool Nights and Mild Days, a Summer Getaway in Greer

By Jan Nichols



Thinking of getting out of town and the heat this summer? Greer is a delightful getaway with creeks and forests, lots of greenery and accommodations for a traveler who wants to envelop in serenity and cool weather. Greer is an unincorporated, scenic town in Apache County, Arizona. Located within the White Mountains of Arizona and surrounded by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Greer is the highest town in the state at an elevation of approximately 8,400 feet. It has a population of 122 and was founded circa 1879 by Mormon settlers from Utah.



The weather in Greer is delightful in Summer and cold in the Winter with activities to match whichever season. It rarely sees a temperature over 75 degrees during summer months and averages eight inches of rain in wonderful, short drizzles. In this warm weather, hiking trails, fishing in streams, camping and cabins are available.

The snowfall averages 8 feet. Just sitting in the lodge watching the activities with a drink of your choice and maybe a book doesn't require much skill. Hot tubs, warm fireplaces await weary skiers, snow-

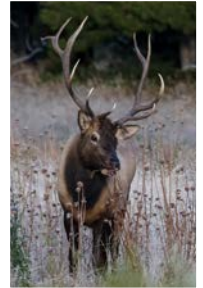
boarders and snowmobilers in rustic lodges.



Photo by Richard Jenkins



Wildlife is abundant. There are two rivers that converge and are surrounded by the White Mountains. Deer, elk and a plethora of other animals and birds call this place home. Watch for bears too.



My family took several trips to Greer when I was growing up. Dad would take his fishing pole; mother would make date loaf cake and potato salad and brought meat for hamburgers. We camped where there was a barbeque pit and water nearby, which we drank with cupped hands. When quiet hour came at sunset, my dad, a great storyteller, would start his tall tales. I knew then this was heaven on earth.



As a mother of a teenager, I decided to treat my son to the winter wonderland of Greer. It did not disappoint. He skied as I observed from the warmth of the fireplace in the lodge. We snowmobiled, saw John Wayne's cabin, and wound our way to remote places deep in the forest, encountering wildlife along the way. It was Christmas and it was a festive, fun place to spend the holiday. An adventure!

No one drives through Greer on the way to somewhere else. It is called the town on "The Road to Nowhere." To get to Greer, take Highway 260 heading east of the Sunrise Ski Area turnoff, after a quick 8 miles, take the exit for Highway 373. Head south. The town resides at the dead-end of five-mile long Highway 373.

The town of Greer is just 4 hours from Scottsdale or Tucson, making it easily accessible for a quick weekend. Greer is open for business 365 days a year. In the Winter, nearby skiing slopes at **Sunrise Park** are inviting and invigorating. The ski runs are open from Thanksgiving to Easter most years. If you are not a skier, try snow tubing. And, there's a lift, so no need to lug a tube.

Summertime, bring a fishing rod, swim trunks and hiking boots. Stick your toes in the cold, pristine creek.

**Relax! Leave the world behind!**

# Past Leaders and AEA Road Crew



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

## *AEA-Retired Chapter News*

Chapters bring AEA-Retired together. This year we expect to meet in person. Some chapters may choose to add a virtual meeting now and then or offer Zoom meetings as well. Each chapter governs itself in order to meet the needs of its members. Meetings usually include information programs and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. This is a great way to keep in touch with the latest issues in our community. Any one interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinator **Susan Sommer**, (623) 628-1935, [ssommer114@aol.com](mailto:ssommer114@aol.com).

All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live.

When Chapters meet via Zoom, connection is a simple process. All you need to do is click the link you receive from your Chapter Chair via e-mail. We welcome your attendance and participation.

**Glendale/West Valley Chapter:** This year our meetings are being held in person at 10 am at Biscuit's Café, 19420 N. 59th Ave., Glendale, AZ. We use a private room, enjoy a good brunch and good conversation. Meetings will be on September 21, November 16, January 18 and March 21. For more information call, text or email **Marshall Militano** at 602-882-3260 or [mmilitano1@gmail.com](mailto:mmilitano1@gmail.com).

**Greater Tucson Area Chapter:** We are meeting the third Tuesday of the month, August through May. Meetings begin at 10am at the Southern AEA office, 6873 N. Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85704. Please e-mail Chapter Chair Peter Coston at [pcoston1@cox.net](mailto:pcoston1@cox.net) for Zoom meeting links.

**Kyrene Chapter:** Welcome to any educator, active or retired, who lives in the East Valley! AEA-Retired/Active Kyrene Chapter is back at The Hub Grill and Bar 14205 South 50th Street, Phoenix 85044! Meetings are at 4:30pm on August 25, October 27, December 1, January 26 and March 22. If you are on our mailing list, you will receive a reminder of the date, time, and venue. For more information contact Chapter Chair **Ellen Shamah** at [eshamah@cox.net](mailto:eshamah@cox.net)

**Mesa/East Valley Chapter:** Welcome to any educator who lives in the East Valley or anywhere else! AEA-Retired East Valley Chapter is back on the 8th floor of 63 East Main Street, Mesa! Meetings are from 11:15 to 1:00 on September 20, November 15, January 17, March 20, May 15. For more information or to be sure you are on the mailing list, contact Chapter Chair **Janie Hydrick** at [hydrick@aol.com](mailto:hydrick@aol.com)

**Phoenix Chapter:** Suzan Austin and Gary Mehok are re-initiating this chapter in September. Meetings will be held at the Beatitudes, 1610 W. Glendale Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85021. Contact **Suzan Austin** at [suzanaustin@cox.net](mailto:suzanaustin@cox.net) or **Gary Mehok** at [lojo40@cox.net](mailto:lojo40@cox.net) for more information.

**Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter:** Until further notice, all meetings will be held on the **third Monday** of each month at 1:00, September through April (excluding December). If you're not on our mailing list, please contact **Nancy Riley** 480-600-8559 or [rileyfam@cox.net](mailto:rileyfam@cox.net).

**Southeast Arizona Chapter:** The Southeast Arizona AEA-Retired Chapter is located in Cochise County and is comprised of districts in Sierra Vista, Tombstone, Huachuca City, Naco, Palominas, Elgin, and Ft. Huachuca, and retirees from other states who have moved to Cochise County. Please contact Sally if you would like to be added to the email contact list, our only method of communication during the pandemic. Contact Chapter Chair **Sally Rosén** at 520-249-0233, [azcatsally@aol.com](mailto:azcatsally@aol.com) for details.

**Interstate/Flagstaff/Northern Arizona/Reservation Chapter (INFARC).** Meetings will be held on the third Thursday of the month at 2pm (MST). Meetings will be held on Zoom. Please contact Daniel Barlow at [dsjbarlow@yahoo.com](mailto:dsjbarlow@yahoo.com). A link will be sent to you to connect to the meetings.