



THE CONDUIT

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AEA-Retired Annual Meeting on April 22; AZ Attorney General Terry Goddard to keynote; ASRS Executive Director Paul Matson to address retirement system issues; AEA Delegate Assembly follows on April 23-24

Be an active voice in YOUR association's decision making. This year's annual meeting will be on April 22 at the Marriot Hotel and Convention Center in Mesa. We've planned an exciting, engaging day for attendees. We are very fortunate to have scheduled **Terry Goddard**, Arizona Attorney General, and now, gubernatorial candidate, as our keynote speaker. Terry is well known, both in Arizona and nationwide for his vigilance in protecting senior citizens. (See article



Terry Goddard

have. Both Terry and Paul have spoken to us in the past and received glowing reviews.

The program will include results of last year's member survey and an update on the strategic planning process begun at last year's annual meeting. The three goal areas of our Strategic Plan are Political Action, Membership Outreach, and Strengthening Chapters. We will continue the process with round table discussions to elicit your additional ideas.



Paul Matson

Delegates will be electing the AEA-Retired Secretary and five members of the AEA-Retired Executive Board during the Annual Meeting. Additionally, delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly will elect the director to represent retirees on the AEA Board.

Editor's note: There are many photos in this issue for you to enjoy. To get a clearer view, go online to www.arizonaaea.org/pdfs/aear/aearconduit0210.pdf and set the size to 200% or more.

on page 4).

In addition, **Paul Matson**, Executive Director of the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) will update us on proposed changes to the system and to answer any questions we may



AEA-Retired Calendar

- March 2 — NEA Read Across America Day
- March 3 — Education Day at the Capitol
- March 4 — March4Schools Day of Action in all communities across AZ
- March 9 — AEA-Retired Executive Board Mtg., AEA HQ
- April 22 — AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, Mesa Marriott
- April 23-24 — AEA Delegate Assembly, Mesa Convention Center
- May 13 — AEA-Retired Executive Board Mtg., AEA HQ

Voting online begins second year; AEA-Retired had top percentage of voters in the initial year

Last year, when AEA began online voting for delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, AEA-Retired had, by far, the best voter percentage. We hope to exceed those results this year.

Here's how to vote. Go to the AEA web site at www.arizonaaea.org and click on NEA-RA Vote Online, located under Resources on the right side of the page. Login to the safe and secure voting area. Your username is your first initial and full last name (no spaces, commas, or apostrophes). For example, Frank Bing would use FBing for the username. Your password is the last four digits of your social security number. Once you are logged in, you are eligible to vote on any ballot listed for you. Click on the ballot and follow the instructions. You will have a chance to review your choices before you click on the large VOTE button to cast your vote. You will then be given the opportunity to print out a copy of your completed ballot. Nothing could be easier. Voting is open through midnight on April 9.

To request assistance, or to request a paper ballot in lieu of the online ballot, contact AEA Elections Committee staff liaison Chris Mayer at 800-852-5411, or 602-264-1774, ext. 143.

No home computer? No problem!

Free online services are available at every senior center in AZ as well as most public libraries. Call **Julie Horwin**, 480-419-0332, with your home mailing address to receive a listing of all libraries and senior centers and complete, easy-to-follow instructions for getting online.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY STEVE LINDER, LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

AEA-Retired members visit capitol on February 10; visit lawmakers, attend committee meetings

Last year, the state legislature passed oppressive legislation in retaliation for AEA's vocal and physical presence at the capitol. In effect, they prohibited school districts from allowing employees from using release or sick leave time to go to the capitol and exercise their first amendment rights. This cynical ploy has dampened the turnout by active members this year.

AEA-Retired has chosen to take up the slack by scheduling our own lobbying days to let legislators know that educators are keeping an eye on them. Our first effort was on February 10. Twenty of our members responded to our call to action. After an hour briefing by AEA Lobbyist, Jennifer Loreda, on the budget proposals and bills affecting education, our members spent the rest of the day visiting legislators, and attending a senate education committee hearing. During our group lunch, we were visited by Senator Paula

Aboud and Representative Phil Lopes (see photos on page 6). Both legislators gave us more hints on how to make the most out of our lobbying visits.

Following this successful effort, we hope to schedule more lobbying days, and we hope YOU will be able to join us. Watch for announcements in our e-newsletter. See page 6 to make sure you're on our e-mail list.

Finally, check with your local school district's association for this year's March 4 Schools activities. Instead of massing at the capitol, local associations in individual legislative districts will have activities to raise awareness of how legislation is affecting their schools. Your presence is needed and will be welcomed.

ASRS Board Accepts Attorney General's Opinion On "System" Benefits by Steve Ramos, ASRS Chair



Steve Ramos

In 1998 Arizona Education Association-Retired spearheaded the passage of Proposition 100, a constitutional amendment that not only protected our retirement funds from being raided by a future legislature in a budget crisis, but also added language preventing retirement benefits from being "diminished or impaired". The wisdom of our efforts became very clear in 2008 as the economic markets crashed.

In the past year I was asked many times by AEA-Retired members if our benefit checks were secure. My answer was always a comforting "yes". But recent actions taken by the Arizona State Retirement System Board served as a good reminder that the ASRS consists of two separate funds, and they are very different. Most of us are members of the "Plan", a defined benefit plan created by the legislature in 1971. However, 1,800 members remain part of the original retirement "System", a defined contribution plan created by the legislature in 1953.

cently as June 30, 2008 was 102% funded. While "System" members have only seen benefit increases over the past 50 years, 1953 enabling legislation also provided that member benefits could be reduced if funding fell below 95%. By June 30, 2009 the "System" was only 77% funded. ASRS staff, having projected a reduction in funded status, had asked the Arizona Attorney General in December of 2008, if Proposition 100 changes also applied to members in the "System"? The Board would have to wait 11 months for the answer.

On December 18th, 2009 the ASRS Board voted to accept Attorney General Terry Goddard's formal legal opinion that the Arizona Constitution also protects members of the "System". A second question of who would be liable for any shortfalls in monthly benefit payments was answered by placing the ultimate responsibility for payments on the State of Arizona through legislative appropriation. Now all of our members can enjoy a secure retirement.



The "System" has served its members well and as re-

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

The economic outlook in Arizona continues to be grim, with projected budget deficits equaling over one-third of the state’s budget for 2011, and at least another \$1.5 billion for 2010. The Republican leadership in the Legislature is insisting on more tax cuts to “stimulate” the economy, even though the historic tax cuts of 2006 did nothing to help Arizona’s economy grow. So far, the only new revenue source they have considered is a one cent sales tax, which they are referring to a public vote. They continue to push for budget cuts to deal with the fiscal crisis. As the Governor stated in a recent speech, anyone who believes that they can cut their way out of this deficit must be “smoking something.”



President Linda Somo

I don’t need to tell you how difficult it is to do more with less. You have been living with that for years, especially since we stopped receiving any annual increase through the PBI (Permanent Benefit Increase) of ASRS, and this year no Social Security increase. With the cost of gasoline, heating & cooling, food, healthcare, medicine, etc. constantly increasing, you are adept at doing more with less.

Unfortunately, our public schools are being asked to do more with less. Imagine having larger class sizes, no resources, no supplies, pay & healthcare cuts, while at the same time implementing higher expectations for students. That is what’s happening in our schools. The future of our children, grandchildren, and all of Arizona are at stake.

In conversations with our working colleagues, I have heard about outlandish class sizes, such as 35 in a kindergarten class, 45 in a German class, and 40 in an algebra class. Many districts have implemented “furlough days” for all employees, cut teaching and classified positions, or given across-the-board salary cuts. Besides the misery that this causes for employees, the students are the ones who are suffering the most.

Many legislators do not see the need for increased school funding because they don’t know the difficulty of the work performed in our schools, and they fail to see the importance of quality public schools for all children. We know because we served in those schools. Legislators may not know how vital funds are applied to direct classroom instruction, curriculum support, and the implementation of math and literacy skills. They see a large sum of money for public education with a misunderstanding of what that money is for, and it’s just too tempting to allocate it elsewhere, especially in a budget crunch when the state is incurring huge deficits.

So what do we do? We advocate! We educate! We put people in office whose values align with our own – no matter to what political party they belong. **We stop wringing our hands and hoping the world at large will realize how important education funding is.** We go out and make *sure* they know the importance. We are the ones who know, and we need to share that knowledge with whomever will listen.

Decide what you can do to effect change – and do it! Please don’t remain silent and uncounted. Support a pro-education candidate with your time, talent, and treasure. Candidates like Penny Kotterman (AEA’s recommended candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction), need your support. The future of Arizona’s children, and indeed our own future, is at stake. We can make a difference, my retired friends, if we act now and throughout the coming year.

A Good Reason to Join AEA-Retired



Jim Aborne

Jim recently created a web page for the Glendale Chapter of AEA-Retired. It looks great and keeps the members well-informed. It is believed to be the first such web site for a local chapter in the United States!

Jim and his wife Karen are very active members who can be counted on to participate in activities like Lobbying Day, Delegate Assembly, and the AEA-Retired Annual Meeting.

Endorsed Provider Advertisement



The NEA MemberCare Medicare Supplement provides all of the same plan options and benefits of other Medicare supplement programs. However, the Program offers you more advantages including discounts on dental care, chiropractic care, vision care, hearing care, and vitamins.

The NEA MemberCare Medicare Supplement Program is underwritten and self-insured by the NEA Members Insurance Trust. This means you can count on us to give you the best benefits at the best price since we serve only you, our members, exclusively. The NEA Members Insurance Trust has been serving members with quality insurance since 1978.

For more information, call **Sean Mabey**, NEAMB Regional rep
1-(866)-903-0440

Attorney General Goddard presents Senior Anti-Crime University in Sun City West

By Frank Bing

On January 6, a free program was presented in Sun City West to educate senior citizens on a variety of topics including avoiding scams, personal safety, life care planning,, identity theft, safeguarding seniors from neglect and abuse, financial exploitation and investment fraud, senior internet safety, Medicare fraud, and more. The activity was very well-attended and those who were there received a "diploma" at the end of the sessions.

In addition to the workshops, there was an opportunity to become a Senior Sleuth. These are folks who actually attend those "free" luncheons and dinners which flood your mailboxes regularly. They then report back to the AG's office to let them know what's being pushed at the meetings. It's just one more way Goddard's office looks out for seniors.

You can find out more about general resources offered by the Attorney General by going to www.azag.gov on the web.

Here are some resources which are available.
Elder Help Line, 602.542.2124 www.azag.gov/seniors



Terry Goddard chats with an attendee at the Senior Anti-Crime University

Medicaid Fraud, 602.542.3881

Crime, Fraud, & Victim Resource Center, 602.542.2123
resourcecenter@azag.gov

Consumer Information & Complaints, 602.542.5763 (Phx),
520.628.6504 (Tucson), 1.800.352.8431 (In state toll-free)
umerinfo@azag.gov

AEA-Retired Annual Meeting Thursday, April 22, 2010 Registration Form

The **\$30** non-refundable registration **fee** is payable by check or money order to **AEA-Retired** and must accompany this form by **Wednesday, April 7, 2010.**

Send to: **AEA- Retired, Attention: Annual Meeting, 345 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004**
Registration fee & form are required of all members and guests.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State AZ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Enclosed: Check/ Money order Amount: _____

Help us to make your day pleasant.

Please circle: Require a vegetarian lunch? Yes No

Require or use special accommodations? Yes No

If so, describe _____

AEA-Retired: News and Views You Can Use

Tucson IMPACT members share good times at their most recent meeting with their protégés and each other.

Earthquake Relief in Haiti



We invite you to financially support the Education International (EI) Solidarity Fund for Haiti; directing the funds to the recovery efforts of teachers there. Checks can be made out to the National Education Association; which will be forwarded directly to EI for humanitarian assistance to CNEH. These can be sent to:

Haiti Earthquake Recovery
National Education Association
1201 16th Street NW, Suite 614
Washington DC 20036

Cash donations are the most efficient and effective way to help the relief effort in Haiti right now. They allow humanitarian organizations to purchase (often within the affected region itself) the exact type and quantity of items needed by those affected by the crisis. We thank you, in advance, for your generosity.




AEA has a channel on YouTube

AEA is online on You Tube. You can view a number of videos regarding current issues in education by going to www.youtube.com/. Then type AZ Education Association in the search box. Take a look !



Photo Gallery & More News You Need

February Lobby Day

On February 10, twenty of your fellow members went to the capitol to let the legislators know we're still paying careful attention to the highjinks in both houses of the Legislature. Right, our intrepid group: Below left, State Senator Paula Aboud addresses us at lunch: Below, center; State Representative Phil Lopes at the luncheon: other photos from the day



AEA-Retired members volunteered at the NEA Western States Leader's Conference. We handled all of registration and were recognized for our efforts at the closing luncheon.



WIN \$100 !
 Send your email address to
jhorwin@mindspring.com

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

IMPACT Updates

Both the Tucson and Phoenix-based IMPACT programs are having great years. The Phoenix group had a Saturday morning program for the protégés in December. The sessions were led by AEA OC for North Central, Lisa Guzman, and Sean Mabey, NEA Member Benefits regional representative. There were dynamic sessions on writing resumes and interviewing. Each protégé went through a mock interview with mentors. All agreed that this was very beneficial and will definitely help down the road. The other sessions revolved around classroom management. The sessions had to end by noon because of street closing, and everyone left wanting more. There was a lot of talk about “doing this again”, and “having more time to interact with one another.”



These photos were taken at the December IMPACT meeting in Phoenix.

As the AZ IMPACT mentoring project finishes its third year at The University of Arizona, we would like to highlight one of our mentor/protégé teams. **Cathy Rowlette** is a retired kindergarten teacher who taught in the Marana Unified School District. She became a mentor in the fall of 2008 when she met Tiffany Cook. Tiffany was a junior at the University of Arizona who had tried various fields of study, including nursing, before choosing to become a teacher.

Tiffany attended an AEA-Student recruitment picnic in the fall of 2008, hoping to learn more about AZ IMPACT. She first heard of the program in a class at Pima Community College and again in a class at the University of Arizona. After meeting at the picnic, she and Cathy began talking on the phone, emailing, meeting for lunch, and attending organized IMPACT events together. Tiffany is so enthusiastic about the program that she even attends events when Cathy is unable to join her!

Now that Cathy is an experienced mentor and Tiffany is a senior, they are taking their relationship one step farther by teaming up to mentor Christine Gentry, a junior who joined the program at the end of fall semester. We would like to share some pictures of Cathy and Tiffany during the two years they have been together. (See pg. 5 for more pictures of the Tucson IMPACT group.)



Cathy Rowlette and Tiffany Cook flank Claudia Jensen at IMPACT event.

Hey! Who dat Cat in dat hat?

Tucson Public Schools celebrate Love of Reading Week in February each year around Valentine’s Day. This year, AEA-Retired member **Aurora Aber** put on her Cat in the Hat costume and went to Reynolds Elementary where she taught before retirement. She had 13 teacher requests for her to read, and she did them all. Aurora said she, “had a ball.”



NEA-Retired
Now More Than Ever,
The Commitment Continues

The Conduit *aea*
Your Retired
Statewide Local

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Frank Bing	Vice President
Julie Horwin	Secretary
Jean Stephenson	Treasurer
Kathy Campbell	Past President

Conduit Editor
Frank Bing

Chapter News

Chapters are an attempt to bring AEA-Retired closer to members. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include an information program, business meeting, lunch or dinner, and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter can contact Chairperson **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net. *We would love to have chapters in the northern part of the state. Currently, our northernmost chapter is in Prescott Valley.*

Glendale Chapter: Our next meeting will be 5/13. Contact Susie Sommer for info at (623) 931-6209 or at ssommer114@aol.com.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: The remaining meeting dates for this year are 3/10 and 5/12. For information contact **Steve Ramos** at steveramos2@cox.net or 480-924-0771. Penny Kotterman, candidate for Superintendent of Public Instruction, will be the guest speaker at the March 10th meeting.

Tucson Chapter: Tucson Chapter will not meet in March. Next meeting will be on April 20 at the AEA Southern Region offices. The speaker will be Sean Mabey from NEA Member Benefits. Contact **Aurora Aber** at TheAbers@cox.net or 520-721-7547 for Additional information.

Phoenix Chapter: Met on 1/21, at Metro Tech HS. The speaker was Superintendent of Public Instruction candidate Penny Kotterman, who was dynamic and received contributions from members. Please feel free to bring friends and spouses/ partners to our next meeting on Thursday, 3/5 at Metro Tech. Contact **Mark Rosin** at 602-859-0165 or rosin_mark@yahoo.com.

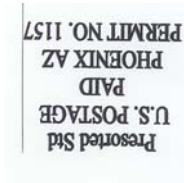
White Mountain Chapter: For information about this chapter, contact **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net.

Prescott Chapter: To join this chapter contact **Helga Krantz** at bdhelga@gmail.com.

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

Paradise Valley/ Scottsdale Chapter: Met on 2/15 at Red Robin in Scottsdale. The speaker was Linda Somo, AEA-Retired President, who addressed congressional issues. Please bring fellow retirees, members or not, to the next meeting in May. For more info, call **Suzan Austin** 480-947-2089, suzanaustin@cox.net.

Sierra Vista: Please call Sally Rosen at (520)249-0233 or e-mail her at Azcatsally@aol.com for more info on the time and dates for the next meetings.



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