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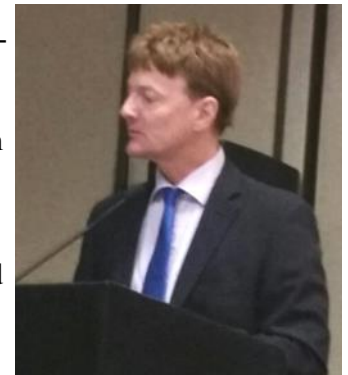
Fun, friendship, and important information were all a part of AEA-Retired's 29th Annual Meeting



Outstanding guest speakers, a delicious luncheon, fun activities, the chance to win fabulous prizes while raising funds for an important cause, and door prizes were all part of the festivities at the 29th AEA-Retired Annual Meeting held May 12 at the Scottsdale Resort. With a theme of *Unite*,

Inspire, Lead, the event centered on how

Paul Matson, ASRS Director, shared his knowledge of ASRS components: long-term disability; health insurance; and defined benefit plans. He stated that as director, he reports to the Board of Trustees, not to the governor, which creates stability in the system. The goal of ASRS is to have perpetual sustainability, and the funding status is moving in that direction. For the first time this year, the "open enrollment" period for healthcare will be the entire month of November.



Steve Ramos accepts the Les Reynolds Award from Connie Wittig, Award Committee Chair, and President Julie Horwin.

retirees can make a difference in their communities, the state and the nation.

President Horwin provided opening remarks, which included sharing that AEA Retired exists to provide and protect all retirees, and to advocate for quality public education for all students.

Delegates elect President, Treasurer, and six Board Members

Retired delegates to the Annual Meeting re-elected **Julie Horwin** for President, and **Steve Linder** for Treasurer, who both ran unopposed. Additionally, delegates elected six At-Large members to the Executive Board. *(article continued on page 5)*

Send your email address to
jhorwin@mindspring.com

WIN \$100

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



AEA-Retired Calendar

- June 27-28 —NEA-Retired Annual Meeting; Boston, MA
- June 30-July 5 —NEA Representative Assembly; Boston, MA
- September 12—AEA-Retired Board Meeting; Phoenix
- September 13—AEA-Retired Committee Day; Phoenix
- October 10—AEA-Retired Board Meeting; Phoenix

ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS



Recent pension plan “reforms” and changes leave ASRS standing alone in Arizona

The Arizona State Retirement System usually gets along just fine without the legislature and the Governor. However, ASRS does depend on both for appointments to the ASRS Board. In November 2016, our nine-member ASRS board dropped to only four members, one short of the quorum needed to do business. The situation caused one board member, in March, to make a public statement that, “*it was imprudent, arguably irresponsible, that we're left like this not being able to carefully vet investment decisions around 35 billion dollars.*” Finally, in May 2017 the Senate approved enough board members to fill eight of the nine seats.

As required by law, one seat member must be an educator. I'm pleased to welcome all the new members to the board and give a special welcome to Michael Miller. Mike is a long time music educator who worked in both the Mesa and Scottsdale school districts before retirement.

In the past few years AEA Retired has watched as the state legislature has systematically enacted major reforms to the non-ASRS state pension plans in Arizona. In 2012, then State Treasurer Ducey completed a study of 401k-type defined contribution plans. The study gave the 2013 legislature the political cover to close the defined benefit Elected Officials Retirement Plan. EORP is now the Elected Officials' Defined Contribution Retirement System, with the state annually appropriating \$3.5 million from the state general fund until 2043, to pay off the unfunded liability in the old plan. Newly elected officials now have a less generous and higher risk 401k-type plan.

In 2016, the legislature, the Governor and his Koch brothers political ally The Reason Foundation, took on reform of the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System. PSPRS covers all law enforce-

ment personnel and firefighters statewide. The plan had accumulated \$6.6 billion in unfunded liabilities. The reform offers new public safety hires a choice of retirement plans, either a 100% 401k-type defined contribution plan or a defined benefit hybrid plan that includes a defined contribution component. The PSPRS liability will be paid by offering a less generous plan and shifting some market risks onto new employees who will now equally share the cost of the plan.

In 2017 the state, again with the help of the Reason Foundation, passed a bill to reform the Corrections Officer Retirement Plan or CORP. The CORP pension reform plan is expected to shift approximately 90% of new hires into a defined contribution retirement plan. To reduce the unfunded liability, employees will see a less generous plan that shifts market risks onto plan members.

Next year, the 2018 legislative session will see only ASRS left standing as a pure defined benefit public employee pension plan. Heading into the next fiscal year, ASRS is experiencing returns on investments exceeding 10% and has a funded ratio of about 77%. This means that ASRS remains one of the best defined benefit public pension plans in the country. I can only hope it stays that way and that the legislature is done with major pension reform. Mention that to your legislators.

I'm sorry to report that this year ASRS was unable to pass Senate Bill 1178, which would have placed statutory protections into law, ensuring that any liabilities incurred by a participating employer leaving ASRS, are not transferred onto all other employers and employees remaining in the ASRS. The bill stalled in the Senate. ASRS plans to introduce it again next year.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JULIE HORWIN



AEA-Retired members can *Lead, Inspire, and Unite*

The work of AEA-Retired never stops and is so critical to the days, months, years and decades ahead. That's why I have always been so proud to be a member of AEA-Retired.

Congratulations to my fellow colleagues elected to the AEA-Retired Executive Council during our Annual Meeting in May: Shirley Boswell; Marilyn Calhoun; Luci Messing; Marilyn Freed; Ann Myers; and Carmen Peters; and to Steven Linder who was re-elected to the office of Treasurer. I look forward to our working together over the next three years.

I am humbled and appreciative to be able to serve you again as the President of what I believe to be the very best local of AEA. Thank you for your trust in me and for the opportunity to continue the work we started 29 years ago when AEA-Retired was begun.

We've come a long way since our beginnings, and we still have a long way to go. But we're educators - - retired teachers, bus drivers, school secretaries, ESP professionals, speech therapists, nurses and school custodians who never gave up on a student.

In our roles now as members of AEA-Retired, we will never give up on our commitment to each other's rights to a secure retirement, to students' rights to a quality public education regardless of their zip code, and to our active colleagues whose only desire is to teach in a safe environment and earn a salary on which they can live.

This is about our mission. It's not easy work. In fact, sometimes it's downright frustrating, exhausting and lately even disheartening. Each of your contributions, whether through activism, advocacy, volunteerism (or that you sustain our work with your dues) are what keeps AEA-Retired strong and our work invaluable. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like our workload is getting any lighter. Public Education is being challenged at rapid speed, as legislators are no longer chipping away at the right for quality education and teachers for all...but rather, they're **chopping** away at it.

BUT, as a retired teacher who, like you, never gave up on a student...I'm sure as heck not giving up now, and

your membership in AEA-Retired tells me neither are you.

Now is the time for retired and active teachers to come together in force. Holding signs at protests won't get it done. Identifying, training and standing behind pro-public education candidates is where we need to put our energies as we prepare for mid-term elections. Carry your protest signs initially, but more importantly organize for power inside every legislative district and elect officials who share our values. Change happens through policy, and much of that policy is made in our legislature. We need to replace the legislators who don't listen to their constituents this coming election in 2018 and every election thereafter.

There is power in numbers and there are A LOT of us. I propose that starting today, we make a commitment to work together in 3 areas:

1. Identifying, recruiting and supporting pro-public education legislative candidates
2. Working on campaigns to ensure their win.
3. Mobilizing more and more retirees to join us in these efforts.

Let's lead the way. We have the numbers. We have the energy. We have the time. And we have the know-how to make Arizona a pro-public education and pro-teacher state. ***We can do this.***

Public education has become the civil rights issue of our time. We have the power to change this. Our leadership, inspiration and commitment to mobilize thousands more retirees, mobilize the newest generation of teachers, and mobilize parents of students to become engaged in campaigns and have their voices heard at the Legislature and in front of the Governor cannot be ignored. Let's do this!

We are ready to step up and ***lead, inspire and unite*** our newest generation of educators, their students' parents, and our colleagues. Thank you for all that you do, and will do to create the change.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Barbara Matteson



There are many ways for members to become politically involved to influence future outcomes

This has been a tough year. We have a Secretary of Education that wants to privatize education. All education. We have many members of Congress that agree with her. And we have state leg-

islators and a governor who passed legislation that provides funding for vouchers to families to use to send their children to any type of school, private, parochial, charters, or home schools. Funding that will take much needed money from already poorly funded public education.

Changing the makeup of Congress and our state elected officials is absolutely necessary if we want to see change that will benefit public education and seniors, and move our state in a forward thinking direction.

We need to become involved in efforts to elect pro public education/pro senior citizen officials in 2018. Many Senators, as well as all Congressional Representatives, must run for election. Plus, all our state legislators and other elected officials, including our governor, are up for election.

We need everyone to step up. There are many ways to become involved. Become a precinct committeeman, join a campaign of someone running for office, join one of the many groups working to make positive changes that would benefit the citizens of our state and of our nation. Respond when AEA and NEA ask for your help.

It has been said by many people that the office of Precinct Committee Person is the most important office because it is the closest to the registered voter. Grassroot politics is a powerful movement lately and seems to be the most effective in the ability to message, activate and combat the influence of corporate and outside money. PCs influence policies of the party at every level of city, state and federal government. Becoming a PC is easy, and devoted engagement can take many forms and different levels of involvement.

Here is a general outline of how to become a PC in your legislative district and become active.

* Go to the county recorder's website in your particular county. Follow instructions to find your legislative district and precinct.

* Then, proceed to the specific choice of political party's website. On the index bar, select county legislative district chairs. Information provided will give you chair's

name, telephone number and other contact information.

* Attend a legislative district meeting which is usually held monthly. The chair will instruct you on how to proceed to become a PC.

* Additional information on the legislative district can also be found on Facebook and Google.

In addition to legislative district activity, there is a plethora of political clubs in and around local neighborhoods, focusing on issues pertaining specifically to that locale. Those can be Googled by political party affiliation and specific areas. Also, check with the county political party for more information.

Several initiatives/referenda petitions are being circulated right now involving repealing school voucher expansion, repealing new restrictive language about petitions, and others important to the educational community and the public in general. Many groups are involved, and they only have until August 8 to turn in 75,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's Office. If you wish to be involved in this, Facebook has a number of groups listed that are collecting signatures.

Please do everything you can for a win in November, 2018. **AND START NOW!!**

AEA-Retired members participated in the BYOB (Bring Your Own Boat) Rally at the Capital to urge legislators to include a 4% raise in the budget for all public school teachers. Unfortunately, the legislature only adopted a 2% raise to be paid out over 2 years (1% per year).



Annual Meeting continued from page 1

(continued from page 1)

Luci Messing, Carmen Peters, Marilyn Freed, Ann Myers, Marilyn Calhoun, and Shirley Boswell were all elected to three-year terms beginning June 1st, when they will join the other Board members and officers.



Steve Ramos honored as Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Recipient.

Steve Ramos was selected as this year's recipient of the Les Reynolds Distinguished Senior Service Award for his many years of service as AEA-Retired's ASRS Liaison, his management of the Association's Facebook page, his tireless advocacy of our retirement system, his community activism, and many other services.



ing back bad legislation and indicated that the NEA appreciates how invaluable retirees are to everything the NEA tries to accomplish for public education.

Stephanie Parra, AEA Lobbyist, presented a legislative wrap up and stated that despite the passage of some bad legislation, there were even more terrible bills that AEA and our allies were able to stop.

Speakers enthrall attendees

Keynote speaker **Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the National Alliance for Retired Americans**, provided valuable information on the history of labor activism and how retirees can continue in that proud tradition to protect the things important to us all. He stressed that Social Security does not contribute to the deficit, cannot borrow money, and can dramatically have its sustainability increased by simply raising the taxable income cap.



AEA President Joe Thomas brought greetings and stated that the members of AEA-Retired hold the institutional knowledge of the AEA. Thomas indicated that the recently passed voucher bill is creating an opportunity, since many Republican voters are becoming concerned about the direction that the legislature is taking in educating Arizona's children. This is causing them to rethink their position on education in our state. Thomas believes that in the next election cycle, Arizona may be receiving substantially more money to attempt to better Arizona's educational system.

Todd Crenshaw, NEA Organizer, gave a presentation on "The Active and Retired Relationship." He reminded all that the retirees are fighting for the actives and the students, and that this relationship is similar to a marriage. There may be ups and down, but ultimately, we all have to pull in the same direction. He credited retirees for beat-



***The 108 members and guests** who attended raised \$4500 for the NEA Fund political action committee to support pro public education candidates at the national level. The next day at the AEA Delegate Assembly, the 83 retired delegates actively participated in all the business of the Delegate Assembly, and contributed over \$6500 to the AEA Fund to help elect pro public education candidates at the state level.

***The quilt raffle** raised \$1718 for the NEA Jack Kinnaman Scholarship Fund and the AEA-Retired budget.

***Many thanks to Suzan Austin, Annual Meeting Chair, and her helpers AnnJi Craig -Wooton, Anna Cicero, and Norma Jimenez** for all their hard work in coordinating the Annual Meeting and hospitality suite.



Anna Cicero honored by AzSCA

Board member, Political Action Co-Chair, and retired counselor **Anna Cicero** was named by the AZ School Counselors Association as the Advocate of the Year. Besides



serving on the AEA-Retired Board as an At-Large Representative, Anna also serves on the AzSCA Board as Advocacy Chair. Anna is a strong advocate for all of Arizona's students, school counselors, educators, and retirees at the state and national levels. Anna is a 2010 ACTEaz School Counselor of the Year. She can often be found talking to elected

officials, at rallies, and providing coordination between AEA-Retired and other education groups.

Congratulations Anna!

Submit email address to enter drawing for \$100

If you are not already on the email list to receive important information from AEA-Retired, send an email to President Julie Horwin at jhorwin@mindspring.com to get on the list. Not only will you be kept informed, but you will also be entered into a drawing for \$100. Each year, a member's email address is randomly selected for the member to receive the cash prize, which is announced at the Annual Meeting held in May. This year, **Mary Evans** was the lucky winner. Congratulations to Mary!

Don't delay! Send an email to Julie today, and next year you could be the winner.

Quilt raffle winners announced at AEA Delegate Assembly

AEA-Retired's quilt raffle drawing raised \$1,718 for the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship Fund and the AEA-Retired budget. Both quilts were won by retired members. **Obdulia Gonzalez** won the pink afghan, and **Linda Somo** won the Dr. Suess quilt. Thanks to all who purchased tickets and contributed to this worthy cause.

Summertime and the Travelin' is Easy by Jan Nichols

On your way to San Diego and to the beach, you might want to take a look at Yuma. You know, that place where you gas up, maybe eat lunch and then proceed on to the promise of the ocean. Well, Yuma is interesting in its own right. There are many things to do. Plan a trip to S.D. and stay all night in Yuma enroute. It breaks up the monotony of the desert drive.

Some of the things to do in Yuma: The Yuma Territorial Prison for those of you who like Western movies, "Red River Valley," "Rambo III," & "The Badlanders" come to mind. Lots of myths and real stories to enjoy.

Downtown Yuma at night has boutique shops, restaurants, wineries and music. One of the wineries, the Wine Cellar, offers daily wine tasting. Those of you who prefer craft beer, visit the Prison Hill Brewing Company.

Take a tour—on foot, or board a trolley to the Sanguinetti House Museum, highlighting the life of the Merchant Prince of Yuma in the Victorian age. If you play golf, the courses are verdant and excellent. The Colorado River, "America's Nile," offers kayaking, paddle boarding, and canoeing. Check it out, enjoy, and spend a little money in Arizona!



U.S.G.S. Senior Lifetime Pass available for purchase

For those heading to our National Parks, consider buying a Senior Lifetime Pass. For only \$10, (\$20 when processed by mail or online) citizens or permanent residents age 62 or older can purchase a Lifetime Pass. It may be obtained in person at a federal recreation site or through the mail using the application form, and it provides entrance or access to pass owner and accompanying passengers in a single, private, non-commercial vehicle at Federal operated recreation sites across the country. Passes are non-refundable, non-transferable, and cannot be replaced if lost or stolen. Applications can be obtained online or through a paper application mailed to the USGS. The pass may even provide a 50% discount on some amenity fees charged for facilities and services, such as camping, swimming, boat launch and specialized interpretive services.

Retired dues set to increase Sept. 1st

AEA-Retired dues will increase for all members on September 1st of this year. Here's what you need to know:

- Current dues of \$90 annually will change to \$105. Our Association is part of a unified membership of NEA/AEA/AEA-Retired, and each of those three parts will increase from the current \$30 annual dues to \$35 annually.
- Those who pay their dues on an annual basis by credit card or check will receive their renewal forms in late August with the new annual membership fee of \$105, an increase of \$15 over current dues.
- Those who are NEA-Retired Lifetime members will only pay \$10 more per year (an increase of \$5 each for AEA and AEA-Retired, since NEA dues are already paid for life).
- Members who pay their dues through monthly pension deduction will see a slight increase to \$5.83 a month from the current \$5.00 (for those who are NEA Retired Lifetime Members), or \$8.75 a month from the current \$7.50 (for those who did not purchase the NEA-Retired Lifetime Membership).



Above: AEA-Retired members gather for a group photo at an AEA Lobby Day in March.

Right: Norma Jimenez participates in the BYOB (Bring Your Own Boat) Rally at the capitol to support pay increases for teachers.




Austin, Horwin and Matteson elected to represent AEA-Retired at NEA Rep Assembly

VP Suzan Austin, President Julie Horwin, and Board member Barbara Matteson were elected through a state-wide ballot of AEA-Retired members to be our representatives at the NEA Retired Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly which will be held in Boston, MA this June and July.




Connie & Larry Wittig join Suzan Austin & Julie Horwin at the state capitol.

Additionally, President Horwin is running for re-election to the NEA-Retired Executive Council, on which she currently serves. That election will take place June 28 during the Retired Annual Meeting, where delegates will also be electing a new NEA-Retired President, and Barbara Matteson will receive the Distinguished Senior Service Award.



Now More Than Ever,
The Commitment Continues

The Conduit



Your Retired
Statewide Local

A Publication of AEA-Retired
An affiliate of NEA Retired

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Linda Somo	Past President

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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 or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 suzanaustin@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- Last meeting for this year was April 6th. All members are invited to join us for a social and informative gathering at our dinner meetings which are held at the Iron Works Restaurant. 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.

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Meets in the 8th floor conference room at the Mesa Public Schools Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Last meeting for this year was May 10. Janie Hydrick presented information about the efforts to combat the Citizens United court ruling and “Dark Money” in politics. Future meetings are scheduled for: 9/20, 11/15, 1/10/18, 3/7, and 5/9 at 10:45 AM. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at Hydrick@aol.com or (480) 628-1845 for more information or to RSVP.

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

Phoenix Chapter: Meets five times yearly in Elaines’s Dining Room at the Beatitudes at 1610 W. Glendale Ave. in Phoenix from 10:30 –12:30. We discuss important information related to education, retirement and legislative concerns, and also make time for a great lunch and socializing. Lunch is \$10. If you live in central Phoenix, please join us. Meetings are scheduled for 9/19, 11/21, 1/16/18, 3/20, and 5/15. Please RSVP your attendance to Chapter Chair **Michele Smith** at 602-463-1624 or mms7997@msn.com.

Yavapai Chapter: Contact Chairperson **Rob Johan** at johanica31@gmail.com or 630-430-8902 for information about future meetings.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: Met March 20 at 11 a.m. at Denny’s Restaurant on Mayo Blvd. Guest speaker was from Sister Cities. Many school districts are represented by our group, so if you’re looking for a chapter in the Northeast 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: Met 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. 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 or call 928-525-1997.