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Register now for AEA-Retired Annual Meeting, April 25th, Wigwam Resort: friends, fun, food, and good information



Mark your calendar and fill out your registration form! Join us this year at our new venue for AEA-Retired's Annual Meeting on Friday, April 25th, at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park. This year's theme is "Retired: Standing Strong" and will feature good food, good friends, fun, prizes, and, as usual, great speakers to make you well informed members of a terrific organization.

Our keynote speaker this year will be Alex Lawson, Executive Director of Social Security Works. He will teach attendees how to talk about our Social Security, and pensions, effectively and get their message across to their friends, family, the media, elected officials, staffers, and the general public. This training will couple members' policy knowledge and personal experience with effective strategies for compelling messaging and communication. The presentation is built around a multi-year messaging research project that Social Security Works undertook with the Topos partnership, a world leader in strategic communication development.



Alex Lawson

Attendees will also receive important information from various speakers who will bring them up-to-date on what is happening at the legislature, ASRS, and AEA. Learn about all the bills that directly affect public education and retirees.

A major 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 85 elected delegates (who

are our delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly) may vote in these elections. This year, delegates will elect a new president, treasurer, and six Representatives-at-Large. Plus, there are numerous proposed Constitution & Bylaw changes that delegates will be asked to approve.

Another exciting part of every 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, and outside, of the organization.

For those attendees who are also delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly, which will be held on Friday evening and all day Saturday, AEA-Retired will cover half the cost of a double occupancy room at the Wigwam for the evening of April 25th. When rooming with another delegate, the net result is free lodging for one night. Online reservations for the Wigwam will be available soon for \$106 when using the AEA discount code.

While the guest speakers, a fantastic lunch, and the legendary AEA-Retired Happy Hour at the end of the Annual Meeting are all attractive, the one thing that will make this day perfect is YOU. 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 and the lunch. Fill out the registration form on page 5 and send it in, or register online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2014AEA-RetiredAnnualMtg>. The Annual Meeting is at the Wigwam Resort, 300 E. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park, from 9:30 – 3:30. Hope to see you there!



AEA Retired Calendar

March 19—AEA Day at the Capitol

March 25-27—NEA Retired Organizing Conference (Houston, TX)

April 25—AEA-Retired Annual Meeting (Wigwam Resort)

April 25 –26—AEA Delegate Assembly (Wigwam Resort)

May 13—AEA-Retired Board Meeting

June 27-29—NEA Retired Annual Meeting (Denver, CO)



Steve Ramos

ASRS UPDATE BY STEVE RAMOS

OUR PENSION BENEFITS COME UNDER ATTACK BY THE LEGISLATURE; LEGAL PROTECTIONS ARE CALLED “SENSELESS CONSTITUTIONAL STRAITJACKET” BY THE MEDIA.

A recent Arizona Supreme Court decision on pension benefits is both good news and bad news for AEA-Retired. The decision has confirmed the strength of the pension protection language AEA-Retired help put in the Arizona Constitution. Unfortunately, the decision only reinforces the belief of Representative John Kavanaugh (R) and others, that those constitutional protections go too far. Kavanaugh has introduced **HCR 2001**, a measure he plans to put on the ballot in November of 2014, that would allow for a reduction in member benefits when the legislature feels it is necessary. A decision to push ahead with **HCR 2001** may come in the next few weeks.

In a recent editorial referring to the court's decision affecting all Arizona pension systems, the Arizona Republic said, *“it leaves Arizona taxpayers in a position of disturbing vulnerability, one that begs for a constitutional amendment that will allow lawmakers to make the sorts of changes the justices now say they cannot.”* That opinion was followed with this, from Arizona Republic columnist Bob Robb: *“the mounting problem will be the crowding out effect paying these benefits has on the ability of government to do other things and the pressure that puts on taxes.”*

Preparing for pension attacks, AEA Retired has been working with other public employee groups to form the **Arizona Retirement Security Coalition**, with the purpose of defending and promoting our Defined Benefit pension plans and preparing for any campaign involving **HCR 2001**. We are asking all members to become informed and involved. You can begin that process by going to <http://azretirementsecurity.com>, where you can learn more about the campaign and register to get email updates on news and

activities. Also you can find us on facebook and “like” our page at <https://www.facebook.com/arizonarsc>. Finally, make sure AEA-Retired has your email, so you can receive “call to action” updates directly from AEA-Retired. Send your email address to Julie Horwin at jhorwin@mindspring.com. AEA-Retired may also contact you about “call in” telephone town hall meetings, where information about the coalition campaign can be shared and questions answered.

AEA Retired members and leaders have had some success at the capitol this session, speaking out against bills that would create future liabilities in our ASRS fund and threaten the retirement security of all of our members: **HB 2049**, a bill that would have restricted pension calculations to an employee's base pay, excluding performance pay, bonus pay and other extra pay categories, was killed in committee.

HB 2090 a bill that would have allowed new hires to choose between the current Defined Benefit plan and a really bad 401k style Defined Contribution plan, was killed in committee.

HB 2056 would eliminate the ability of retirees to Return to Work, either part time or full time. After AEA Retired expressed opposition, the bill disappeared and popped up in the Senate as **SB1240**, with language focused only on leased employees. The bill passed the Education Committee and is being watched closely.

This spring, ASRS will launch it's new, improved, interactive website, for all members. Watch for it at <https://www.azasrs.gov>. Use the ASRS website's “bill tracker” now, to follow important legislation.

(For more information on ASRS or to check on your own account, go to www.azasrs.gov .

Voice your opinion on ASRS dental coverage

Some AEA-Retired members have found that ASRS dental coverage has become problematic and confusing. What is covered? What are the co-pays? Which dentists are in the program? In order to give specific feedback to ASRS on the dental options, we are surveying our members with specific questions. If you would like to participate in this survey to voice your opinions and concerns, please go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Assurant_Member_Survey If your experience has been good, or if it has been frustrating, feedback is a vital part of keeping ASRS informed.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA SOMO

Continue the Legacy: Support Stronger Education Standards

You can take the teacher out of the classroom, but you can't take the classroom out of the teacher. The same old adage can probably be applied to so many of us, no matter our calling, but I know this to be especially true of my colleagues. Certainly, as the years go by, we may not be able to remember the name of each and every student we taught, but a teacher, even a retired one, never stops thinking about his or her students and hoping for their success. Every day, teachers witness and



President Linda Somo

experience the power of impacting young people; when we help create strong, successful students, we are not only impacting their future, but also the future of our entire society.

We are all affected by and responsible for the continued growth of our young people, and for leaving the world better off for those who stand to inherit it. For many years, we have been proud to be able to say that we have accomplished this, but it is no longer true. The generations following ours are facing economic and employment instability. When our young adults leave school, many of them aren't prepared for college or careers and the technological changes requiring very different skills of the workforce. Most jobs in Arizona – more than 8 out of 10 in high growth, high wage fields – currently require some type of postsecondary education or training that demands these higher-level skills, yet we are not preparing our students for this new reality.

For our students to be successful in the workforce, competitive in the ever-growing global economy and positive contributors to our local communities, we must ensure our students have the best education we can provide for them. Arizona's new standards help us fulfill this obligation by raising expectations for all students and by fostering independent critical thinkers who are flexible in their analyses and problem solving skills. Supporting Arizona's efforts to implement higher academic standards for students through Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards (based on the Common Core State Standards) is vital to the success of our community as a whole.

To implement these standards appropriately, teachers must be given quality professional development, input into selecting appropriate teaching materials, time to develop the curriculums to match the standards, and freedom from being professionally evaluated by standardized student tests that have yet to be fully developed. To accomplish all of this requires time and funding.

As retirees, we may not be interacting with today's students as directly as we once were, but ensuring their success as they enter the workforce will always remain a priority for us. We will rely on these young people in a few short years. They are the professionals who will help rebuild the strong economy that we toiled so hard to build and maintain ourselves. We may have retired from our positions, but we will never retire from our profession, or from advocating for a quality public education for all of Arizona's students. The vehicle that will help to prepare our students for future success is Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards.

Failing Schools: Fact or Fiction?

Many of our active AEA-Retired members started their teaching careers decades ago, and although teaching has never been easy, it was a career that was respected and rewarding. When asked, "What do you do?" answering, "I teach" always brought a smile and a nod. Sadly, that has changed.

Years ago a neighbor, a self-appointed expert on education lectured, "Teachers need to be held accountable!". Accountable? When had teachers not been accountable for what they taught? That became a buzzword which translated as teachers were good-for-nothing-only-working-nine-months moochers.

In Dean Paton's article for Yes.org, online magazine, "The Myth Behind Public School Failure", <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-uprising/the-myth-behind-public-school-failure>, he exposes the sources and motives for the attacks on public schools and public school teachers. The myth is about money, or rather profit. Corporations discovered that public education was an untapped source to riches.

For over thirty years public schools have taken the heat for never doing enough, but Dean's article points out that that was the point. Educators were naïve, and the corporations were the tailors, a la, "The Emperor's New Clothes". They sold expensive, unworkable programs and technologies to desperate districts. When they didn't work, it was the teacher's fault, because teachers just didn't try hard enough. Teachers left teaching and even the most idealistic young people are not willing to enter the profession.

Forty years ago, advertising experts Jack Trout and Al Reis, wrote that word-of-mouth is the best way of spreading the truth, and it still can't be bought by huge companies at any price. Please consider sharing or posting Dean Paton's article where the heroic public educators triumph over the lust for profit.

Liz Hendrickson

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



By Barbara Matteson

Good News from the White House

President Obama's Fiscal 2015 Budget will **not** include a switch to the Chained CPI formula that limits cost of living increases in Social Security. Many of you, along with groups all over the country, worked diligently to stop this change from being implemented. It was a victory for Seniors and a victory for grassroots politics. Now we need to work to expand Social Security so that it fits the retirement security needs of today.

Bad News from the State House

So many bad bills have been introduced in our state legislature this year. Let's start with the debacle, SB 1062, which became the headline story across the nation causing Arizona's reputation to sink to a new low. Thankfully, Governor Brewer vetoed this hateful bill. The opposition to this bill from the majority of Arizona citizens, businesses and corporations was overwhelming, and will help to restore our image as a great state. This was another victory for grassroots politics.

There are many other bad bills that need our attention: bills that attack public education and education employees, and bills that attack our retirement system. One that we are watching carefully is HCR 2001, which would amend our state constitution to allow for reducing retirement benefits for those public employees currently retired or still working in the system. If this referendum passes the legislature, it will be on the November, 2014 ballot and could overturn our constitutional guarantees that were passed in 1998 with Proposition 100. Recent columns and editorials in the *Arizona Republic* newspaper have expressed support for such a change in the constitution, and also

changing to a Defined Contribution (401k) type of pension plan from our current superior Defined Benefit pension program.

We need your support. We need you to stay informed about pending legislation and the status of introduced bills, and then take action by supporting positive bills and taking action to oppose the many bad bills.

To stay informed you can sign up for the AEA and NEA Legislative Updates and join the ARSC.

To receive the NEA Education Votes go to: www.nea.org/lac and then click on "Become a cyber lobbyist and subscribe to our weekly newsletter."

To receive the AEA Legislative Update go to: www.arizonaaea.org and on the left of the home page you can click on Sign up for AEA Legislative Update.

To join the ARSC (Arizona Retirement Security Coalition) for the latest information on protecting our retirement system, go to: www.AZRetirementSecurity.com. AEA and AEA Retired are very active members of this coalition.

And then get involved in the upcoming election. We have many great candidates running for office in November who are friends of public education and retirees. Volunteer for one or more candidate's campaign. Electing these supportive candidates in November can make a huge difference in this state, and **we must change the tone in Arizona.**

Please, get involved. Together we *can* make a difference.

Scam Alert; just call me Nana

Recently overheard a woman who had been called by her grandson saying he was being held in jail in Nogales. The woman had heard about this scam, but played along. "Will you send the money, Grandma?" She said, no, very kindly. Then he bullied, "You'll let me rot in jail?" She said, "You aren't my grandson." Her grandson had only called her, "Nana."



**AEA-Retired Annual Meeting
Wigwam Resort Conference Center
300 E. Wigwam Blvd., Litchfield Park, AZ
Friday, April 25, 2014 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

Registration Form

The **\$30** non-refundable registration **fee** is payable by check or money order to **AEA-Retired** and must accompany this form on or before Friday, **April 11, 2014**.

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

Registration fee & form are required of each member and each guest.

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) _____

E-mail _____

***Please circle your choice of luncheon entrée so we have an accurate lunch count

(uncircled forms will receive chicken): **Chicken Breast w/mushroom sauce, Herb Tilapia, Wild Mushroom Ravioli**

Require or use special accommodations? Yes No

If yes, please help us to make you welcome; explain? _____

Below and on the next page, are the proposed changes to the AEA-Retired Constitution & Bylaws. These changes are being recommended by the AEA-Retired Executive Board and will be voted on by the delegates at the Annual Meeting on April 25th. For a complete set of the AEA-Retired Constitution & Bylaws as they currently exist, go to

http://www.azedretired.com/Documents/2013_AEA-R_Constitution_and_Bylaws_Word_doc-1_copy.doc. Proposed new language is in italics and deletions are set off by brackets [].

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1.

Membership shall be open to any person who was formerly employed *by* a school *district*, college, university, educational institution, or *related* agency.

Section 5.

E. Individual Chapters will be responsible for setting their own dues (if any), agenda for meetings and programs, *and their own governance document as they deem necessary.*

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

Section 2.

All officers shall be elected by secret ballot by the AEA- Retired elected delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly. Newly elected officers shall enter upon their duties [immediately following the Annual Meeting] *on June 1st.*

Section 3.

Officers shall serve for a term of three years, but limited to no more than six (6)

consecutive years in the same office. *If an individual has been appointed to serve more than one-half of a term, it shall be considered a full term.*

Section 7.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of *vice president*, recording secretary and/or the treasurer, the president, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall choose a member of the Executive Board to serve in that capacity for the remainder of the term. More than half a term shall be considered a full term and individuals are then permitted to serve only one additional term. (revised 4/26/13)

Section 8

In the event of a vacancy in the position of representative-at-large, the president, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall appoint an AEA-Retired member to serve for the remainder of the term. *More than half a term shall be considered a full term and individuals are then permitted to serve only one additional term.* **(Continued on page 6)**

(Constitution & Bylaw proposed amendments continued from page 5)**Section 9**

Should an officer of the AEA-Retired be elected to a different office on the Board during the regularly scheduled Annual Meeting, an election to fill the now vacated position shall take place prior to the adjournment of the Annual Meeting.

Section 10

Should a Representative-at-Large of the AEA-Retired be elected as an officer of the Board at a regularly scheduled Annual Meeting, the candidate with the most votes in the Representative-at-Large election who was not elected will automatically assume the vacant position.

ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE BOARD**Section 1**

f. Any duly elected officer of NEA-Retired Executive Council

g. Any AEA-Retired members elected to the NEA Board of Directors

A. Representatives-at-Large shall be elected by secret ballot for a term of three

(3) years, and may only serve for two (2) consecutive terms for a total of six

(6) years. Representation shall be one (1) for each one hundred and twenty-five (125) members, or significant portion thereof. The minimum number of representatives shall be fifteen (15). Newly elected representatives shall enter upon their duties *on June 1st*. [immediately following the Annual General Meeting]. (4/12)

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

A. Amendments can be made by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of AEA-Retired elected delegates to the AEA Delegate Assembly voting in a regular election held at the General Membership Annual Meeting.

Note: All references to General Membership Meeting will be changed to General Membership Annual Meeting throughout the document.

BYLAWS**ARTICLE I. MEETINGS**

Section 2. General Membership

[B. Special meetings of the membership may be called by the president or upon request of one-quarter (1/4) of the members for a special purpose; but no business other than that for which the meeting is called may be transacted.]

Section 3. Order of Business

The [order of] business of the General Membership Annual Meeting shall [be] include:

[B. Correspondence]

ARTICLE III. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**Section 1. President**

A. With input from the Executive Board, set the agenda for all Executive Board and General Membership Annual meetings;

B. Fill all Board vacancies as delineated in the Constitution, Article V, with the approval of the Board.

Section 4. Treasurer

A. Submit a written report each meeting of the Executive Board and General Membership Annual Meeting;

Section 5. Representative- at -Large

The Representatives – at – Large shall:

A. [Meet with the Attend Executive Board meetings [n a regular basis.]

B. Be available to Chair at least one Standing or Ad Hoc Committee

C. Assist with member recruitment and program development/delivery

D. Assist the Annual Meetings Committee in planning and implementing the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE IV. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Provide input to the president for setting [Set] the agenda for all Executive Board and General Membership Annual Meetings [and specially called meetings];

B. Set the annual dues.

C. Vote to approve the President's recommendation of [Appoint] an AEA-Retired member to fill vacancies [until the next regularly scheduled election.] for the remainder of the term.

Section 5. Standing Committees & Responsibilities**B. Public Relations Committee**

[2. In cooperation with the Social Committee and the Annual Meeting Committee, be responsible for the location and arrangements for the General Membership meetings];

B. Social Committee

[1. Shall be responsible, with the Public Relations Committee and the Annual Meeting Committee, for the location and arrangements for all General Membership Meetings];

[2. Shall be responsible for all social functions of AEA- Retired;]

C. [Legislative] Political Action [Committee]

[1. Shall be responsible for the preparation of legislation of benefit to members;]

2. Inform members of pending bills and work in cooperation with the Arizona Education Association's legislative goals;

3. On behalf of AEA-Retired, lobby legislators, other elected officials, and policy-makers as directed by the Executive Board.

[4. And as directed by the Executive Board.]

E. Annual Meeting Committee

a. Coordinate with the Public Relations Committee and Social Committees to keep members informed of Annual Meeting details.

Section 6. Ad Hoc Committees

[A. A regional Ad Hoc Committee shall be formed and be responsible for development of regional participation and representation in AEA-Retired through the formation of Clusters.]

Let your voice be heard! Elect AEA-Retired members to attend NEA Representative Assembly in July; vote online or request a ballot from AEA; deadline to vote is April 10th



During March and April, you have the opportunity to help elect three AEA-Retired members to represent you at the NEA Representative Assembly July 1- 6 in Denver Colorado. Online voting began February 28 and will last until 5 p.m. April 10th. You can cast your ballot from any computer anywhere that has an internet connection.

HERE'S HOW:

- (1.) Go to the AEA website at www.arizonaaea.org
- (2.) Click on the "NEA-RA Vote Online", located on the right side of the page
- (3.) Login to the safe and secure voting area
 - Your **Username** = first initial + full last name (e.g., John Doe username = JDoe)
 - Your **Password** = the last four digits of your social security number
- (4.) Once logged in, you are eligible to vote on any ballot listed for you
- (5.) Click on the ballot and follow the voting instructions
- (6.) Make sure that you click the SUBMIT button after you check the box above it to cast your ballot

To request a paper ballot in lieu of voting online or any other assistance, contact the AEA Elections Committee Staff Liaison, Chris Mayer, at 800-352-5411 or 602-264-1774, x143.



To Bob Bloom,

Please accept our sincere apology for leaving you, the 2005 winner of the Les Reynolds Award, off the list of winners.

Humbly,
The Conduit Staff



The Conduit



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AEA-Retired Chapter News

Chapters are an attempt to bring AEA-Retired closer to members. All AEA-Retired members are eligible to join a chapter where they worked or currently live. Meetings usually include an information program, business meeting, lunch or dinner, and time for socializing with friends and colleagues. Anyone interested in forming a new chapter should contact Chapter Coordinators **Gary Mehok** at LOJO40@cox.net or **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 suzanaustin@cox.net.

Glendale/West Valley Chapter- All members are welcome at our meetings. We meet at the Iron Works Restaurant, 17233 N. 45th Avenue, Phoenix. For more information call **Susie Sommer** at 623-931-6209 or e-mail ssomer114@aol.com

Mesa / East Valley Chapter: Chapter members met on Wed., March 12. Guest speaker was Jonathan Alanis, speaking about ALEC in Arizona, and the Bill Moyer's documentary, "The Voice of Corporate Special Interests in the Halls of Arizona's Legislature." The next scheduled meeting is set for 10:45 AM May 14, at the Sunrise Bank Bldg., 63 E. Main Street in Mesa. Contact **Janie Hydrick** at Hydrick@aol.com or (480) 628-1845 for information.

Greater Tucson Area Chapter: Meetings are the third Tues. of Sept.—May. The next meeting will be March 18. Go to <http://www.azedretired.com/TUCSON/index.html> for more information, or contact **Chip Parsons** at chipp@cox.net

Phoenix Chapter: For more information contact **Barb Joseph** at (602) 765-0788 or btjoseph@cox.net.

Yavapai Chapter: The last meeting was Feb. 26th at Culver's on route 69 in Prescott. Next meeting will be on Wed., March 19th at the Golden Corral on route 69. Three chapter members are planning on attending AEA and NEA meetings in the next few months. Contact **Ted Coleman** at tdashfork@azwildblue.com for more information about date & location of the next meeting.

Scottsdale/Paradise Valley Chapter: Due to growing membership the chapter has found a larger facility for our meetings. For information contact **Suzan Austin** at (480) 947-2089 or visit <http://www.azedretired.com/SCOTTSDALE/index.html>. Everyone is welcome.

Southeast Chapter: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25th at the Sierra Vista Pizza House Bistro. For information on the next meeting date & location, please RSVP to **Sally Rosen** 520-459-0430 or azcatsally@aol.com; or Cathy Milkie, 520-366-5482 or cmilkiec@aol.com. Hope to see everyone there.

Northern Arizona/ Rez Chapter: Contact **Maryanne Goodluck** at magoodluck55@yahoo.com for information and future meeting dates.

Kyrene Chapter: On February 18th we had our very first AEA-R Kyrene meeting at lunchtime in the Native New Yorker, Ahwatukee. With 10 of us in attendance, we discussed our annual delegate assembly, time preferences, dues, volunteering opportunities, speakers, and where and how often to meet. It was suggested that we meet at the same restaurant at 4:00PM to accommodate those retired teachers that are still working. We also decided to include Tempe Elementary and Tempe Union School Districts. After the meeting we stayed and socialized.