



Pima County School Retirees' Association

January 2018

We welcome all retired school employees

PCSRA POEpourri

We have now made it through another full year and look forward to the many exciting things that will happen in 2018. Hopefully, joining your PCSRA friends at one of our monthly luncheon meetings will be among the things on your list of “things to do in 2018”. We are always ready to assist you in making an appearance on the second Thursday of each month at 11:30 a.m. at the Viscount Suites Hotel on E. Broadway Road.

PCSRA was able to make significant donations to the Southern Arizona Food Bank, Sister Jose Women’s Shelter, and the Rincon-University High School Choraliers due to your generosity in December. Members collected many bags of items that were then immediately delivered to Sister Jose’s for the homeless women the facility attempts to serve. A monetary collection at the December luncheon provided \$139 for the food bank, which was warmly received for the holiday season. After the Rincon/University High School Choraliers performed admirably at our December meeting, we made a donation to their fund for their upcoming summer trip abroad. Thanks to all of you who helped with these seasonal efforts.

One additional request, if you are so inclined: Your PCSRA Board has been discussing the use of the “PCSRA Song” that was sung at the end of meetings in previous years. It was sung to the tune of the song “School Days” from the early 20th century. Some on the board think it is a tradition that we should continue, at least occasionally, if not on a monthly basis. Another group feels that the song may be too far removed from the generations of those who have more recently retired and is “corny”.

We would like to know where you fall on this issue. Should we use it on occasion, regularly, or simply forego the group singing of this song? Please contact me at sshermanpoe@gmail.com or 623-810-5228 **OR** contact Terry Bagwell at tbasketcase@cox.net or 520-331-1715. We will be reporting the results to the board as the decision is made regarding the future of the “PCSRA Song”. Your input is desired.



President's Desk

~ Steve Poe



The Time Has Come, Once Again, to Send Those Volunteer Hours in!

PCSRA members received volunteer hours tally sheets this fall. Please review your 2017 calendars and record the hours spent helping individuals or organizations since last New Year’s Day. On the back of the sheet, please provide a list of ways in which you accrued those volunteer hours. PCSRA must report the number of members’ volunteer hours to its parent organization, AASRA by January 31.

Send your form to Gail Schuessler at 2025 E. 3rd St., Tucson, AZ 85719-5104 or email it to gschuessler@yahoo.com.



December Report

PCSRA Membership: 170

AASRA (state) Membership: 92

Scholarship Fund: \$1542.12

February 8th Luncheon at Viscount Suites

Arizona Women Pioneers

\$15.00 each Postmark by Feb. 1 to:
PCSRA Reservations, 4315 E. Seneca St., 85712.

A - Tuna Stuffed Tomato w/Fresh Fruit

B - Cheeseburger w/Fries

Name _____

Guest _____

Jan Cleere Knows Women Who Made History in AZ

Our February speaker is Jan Cleere, award-winning author, historian, and lecturer. Her five historical books reflect her love of the West and her skill as a researcher and writer, to bring the story of real women to life. Jan also writes a monthly column for the AZ Daily Star on Western Women. She will be sharing stories from her book, "Levi & Lace, Arizona Women Who Made History." One of the 35 women, is Larcena Pennington who escaped from the Apache and walked bare foot in the snow to safety.



Betty Stauffer, the Executive Director of Literacy Connects, will give February's Community Presentation. There is a great need for tutors to teach literacy skills.

American Red Cross Needs You

Donor Ambassadors are the face of the American Red Cross. They warmly welcome blood donors and guide them through the donation registration process by providing instruction, reading material, and excellent customer service. Our volunteers can positively impact the donor's experience with their caring attitude and professional demeanor.

After the donation process, these volunteers serve refreshments, present recognition and promotional items, encourage future donation appointments, alert staff when a donor is not feeling well and maintain frequent communication with the blood drive staff. They foster a positive environment and impression of the American Red Cross.

There are blood drives all around the community throughout the month and every day at our fixed donation centers on Broadway and in the Foothills Mall. For information on these opportunities, please contact Lisa Jenk at 480-352-3146 or lisa.jenk@redcross.org.



We Can Build Our Community, 1 Pull-Tab, 1 Stamp at a Time

Various organizations are requesting items that people normally throw away. You don't even have to deliver or mail the items; just bring them to any one of our monthly PCSRA meetings!

Cancelled stamps: Members of the Philatelic Society clean and package them for classroom visits where they discuss stamp collecting and geography.

Pull-tabs from aluminum cans: Pull-tabs are easily saved in a small area and sold for income to support the Ronald McDonald House where families stay for free while their children receive treatment for cancer.

Eyeglasses: The Lions Clubs use the frames for their vision programs.

Used printer cartridges: Turned in to a local business which makes a donation to Tucson Clean and Beautiful.

Plastic lids: A thousand lids provide one session of kidney dialysis for a child. The lids may be from jars, water bottles, medicine bottles, anything as long as they are made of plastic.

Used cell phones & tablets: Cell Phones for Soldiers, a national nonprofit, serves troops and veterans with free communication services and emergency funding. Founded in '04 by Robbie and Brittany Bergquist at the ages of 12 and 13, Cell Phones for Soldiers has provided more than 300 million minutes of talk time to our troops serving around the world through the Minutes That Matter program. We also participate in Helping Heroes Home via emergency funds that, so far, have assisted more than 3,100 veterans.

It's Fun! It's Free! It's Next Week!

The Lovin' Life After 50 Tucson Expo will be at the Reid Park Doubletree Hotel, 445 S. Alvernon Way from 9:00 -1:00 on Tuesday, January 16, 2018. Check out the vendors and enjoy listening to the Duttons, a family singing group from Branson.

Tucson Society of the Blind will have a booth there; so stop by and say Hi to Barb. Lucky winners will receive \$100 each hour and food for purchase will be available. See you there!

PCSRA's Book Club Turns One!

By Jim Marr

Our book club is reading **GRANT** by **Ron Chernow**. It is fascinating history, written in an engaging style. The length of this book is somewhat daunting, but that hasn't stopped me from continuing. I encourage you to explore this book, especially if you enjoy the details of U. S. history or The Civil War.

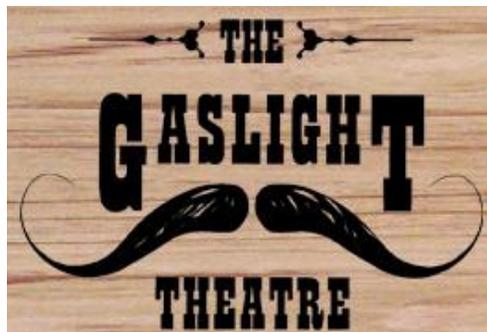
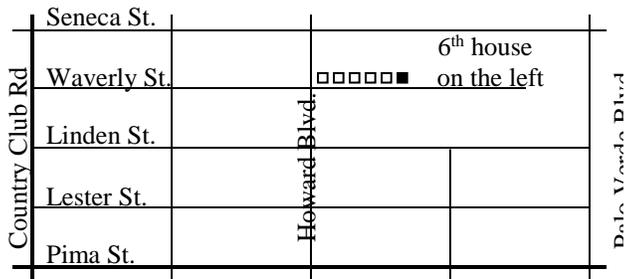
I hope you will join us on **January 18 at 1:00** for what will be a lively discussion of the politics that surrounded Ulysses S. Grant. We will be meeting at Steve Poe's home, at 3331 E. Waverly Street (east of Country Club) between Pima and Grant.

"To rise above craftsmanship, one must work with abundant, varied and complicated facts. Chernow does that, presenting research that bulks Grant to nearly 1,000 pages of narrative. It allows him to write a rich and sensitive portrait of the inner Grant -- from reluctant West Point cadet to civilian failure to triumphant general. He exhaustively investigates Grant's alcoholism and fraught relationships with his family. I admire Chernow's honesty about contradictory evidence as well as Grant's mistakes.

We read biography to know a life but also to ratify our conviction that the individual matters. This forces the biographer to be researcher, writer and historian simultaneously. How does the world shape the individual, and the individual the world? To what extent are convictions, judgment and personality merely typical, embedded in a larger context -- and where does the individual wriggle free? A biography that succeeds as art combines scholarly and literary virtues. It explains, interprets and carries a reader fully into a human existence. It offers illumination and immersion."

- By T. J. Stiles, *The Washington Post*, 11/6/17

Please email or call if you need additional info. Jim Marr at 520 885-8958 OR jbm500@cox.net.



Sell, Sell, Sell Those Tickets!

We are quickly approaching the deadline for the sale of the Gaslight Theatre tickets, February 4th. This fundraiser is to increase our scholarship fund as well as to provide a fun time for our members. "The Lone Stranger" is scheduled for Sunday, February 18 at 3:00 PM. The doors open at 2:15 PM. We have reserved excellent seats for 54 people. It's a great way to celebrate Rodeo Week too!

Tickets are \$27 and can be purchased at our next PCSRA meeting on January 11 or by contacting, Terry Bagwell at 748-1720, Paris Rebl at 885-7724 or Judy Hokett at 740-4464. Make your checks out to PCSRA. Cash is fine too. We hope to see you at the Gaslight Theatre!!!

You Can Raise Scholarship Fun(d)

Did you receive new and wonderful items for the holidays? Would someone else like to own the item you replaced?



it for our Secret Ticket Drawing!

Do you create things? Do you know other people who do? Ask them to donate for our fund raiser in March and April! Decorative items, A day of work, Jewelry, Hand-crocheted scarves, Some hours of genealogical research, Specially baked items, Quilt, Blown glass, Restaurant gift card, Art work!



it for our Secret Ticket Drawing!

Bring items to the February meeting, and give them to Terry Bagwell, Judy Hokett, Paris Rebl or Sue Ellen Coltrin. You could also call one of us to arrange to drop items off at our homes.



Education News

~ Jerry Holmes

**If you're not OUTRAGED
you're not paying attention**

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As the World Turns, Education in Arizona Sinks Lower and Lower

The Arizona School Personnel Administrators Assn. surveyed 172 Arizona school districts in November, asking about unfilled teaching positions and other issues. The resulting report was a devastating picture of the current state of education in Arizona. Nearly 2000 teaching positions are vacant in the state, either unfilled since the beginning of the year or as a result of the 866 teachers abandoning their post or not showing up to a position for which they were hired. Of that 866, 83 never reported to work, 156 simply stopped showing up and 627 resigned and were released from their contract by a district.

More than 3400 jobs are filled by people who do not meet the required qualifications: substitutes, student teachers, those awaiting certification, individuals with emergency certification, and interns pursuing alternative certification. Teachers are giving up planning periods and dealing with enormous class sizes in an effort to deal with the situation. Teachers hired from other countries and given a visa to work here filled 234 jobs.

The list of causes for the shortage often start with low teacher pay – elementary teachers in Arizona have the lowest average salary in the country and high school teachers average salary is 48th. Classroom size and other issues are also a factor. Daniel Scarpinato, spokesperson for Gov. Ducey, commented, “The governor is committed to get more dollars and support to teachers every year he is in office.”

However, Gov. Ducey has staunchly opposed a tax hike to raise salaries or help with conditions. The governor has already told department heads and agency chiefs to look at their own budgets to see what can be cut so it can be added to education funding for next year’s budget. But, not everyone agrees with the governor. Remember that Proposition 301, approved by voters in 2000, established a .6 % sales tax to support education. That sales tax will expire in 2021, unless renewed or expanded by the legislature or voters. Gov. Ducey has finally come out and said that he supports making the current law permanent. While that is a small step in the right direction, advocates for education say that it is not enough.

A coalition of business leaders, most from the Phoenix area, have made it clear that they support raising the sales tax to 1.5% to better fund education. That group has already drafted legislation and is looking for a sponsor to introduce the bill in this year’s legislature. The proposal would set aside \$340 million annually for teacher pay and would fund an immediate 10% raise for teachers. Gov. Ducey and the legislature approved a pay raise of 1.06% for teachers in the last session.

The proposal also sets aside \$300 million for the formula to fund new facilities, maintenance and repairs. An additional allocation of \$240 million would be set aside to fund full-day kindergarten statewide. Finally, \$190 million would be allocated to help restore some cuts made to state universities.

Finding a sponsor to initiate the bill and gaining majority support in both houses will be a huge challenge. House Speaker JD Mesnard, speaking of expanding the sales tax, said, “...there might be some, and I might be one of those, who will still not embrace that as a last resort. Not because we don’t care about K-12 and don’t consider it a priority... but it’s no small thing when you’re taking more money from the general public.”

If the business coalition is unable to push their measure through the legislature, they would be happy to take the proposal to the voters – but not in 2018. The group would wait to seek signatures to get the measure on the ballot in 2020 and attempt to gain voter approval. Several reasons are given for the proposed delay.

One reason is that every state office will be up for election in 2018 and the dynamics of the legislature may shift depending on the outcome. Another is that the ballot referral to void expansion of the voucher system, as approved by the legislature in 2017, will be up for voters’ approval in 2018. The language of that measure will require a “NO” vote to prevent expanding the voucher system. A proposal to raise taxes to support education would require a “YES” vote and everyone feels the language issues would create confusion for voters.

The ACLU of Arizona's Report -- Charter Schools Pick and Choose

The ACLU of AZ's December report details how charter schools in AZ have been selecting students rather than allowing any student to attend. Charter schools are public schools and should, by law, "enroll all eligible pupils who submit a timely application". No student can be discriminated against on the basis of "ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language or athletic ability". If more students apply than can be accepted, charter schools can select students through a lottery system.

The Arizona Charter School Association says that in '16-'17 there were 556 charter schools in Arizona. The ACLU-AZ analyzed 471 (72 schools did not provide information to be analyzed – a violation of the law) and found that at least 262 (56%) "have policies that are clear violations of the law or that may discourage the enrollment of certain students". Exclusionary practices include an academic/behavioral probation period before enrollment is finalized (Southern Arizona Community Academy), treating any coursework outside the charter as elective (BASIS) and showing verification of a successful (all passing grades) semester at another school (Youthworks Charter High School).

Special education students are often excluded from enrollment at charter schools through various practices. "Our Special Education department is full, per guidelines set by the Arizona Department of Educ." (The Rising School). No such guidelines exist and would be unethical as well as illegal. "Special Education placements are limited to a capacity of ten students for each school site." (AmeriSchools). BASIS schools had a complaint filed with the US Dept. of Educ. in 2014 for "... not modifying curriculum for students with disabilities".

Many charter schools have behavioral requirements for initial or continued enrollment. The same is true of English language proficiency. Many charters in their enrollment process discourage enrollment by children whose primary language is other than English. At least 56 charters ask for a child's Social Security number and at least 25 charters ask for the parents' Social Security numbers. It is illegal to seek a Social Security number and these questions would seem to be in place to dissuade undocumented families or children.

Although barred by state law at least 88 charter schools require a pre-enrollment essay or interview. At least 46 charters require parents to commit to volunteer a certain number of hours annually. Some of those allow parents to "buy out" of that commitment. BASIS Schools ask parents to donate \$1500 annually per child or a monthly pledge of \$150. Those families that make the donation are honored by name in a brochure annually and those that donate \$2500 or more are honored on a plaque at the school. All of this, of course, makes it obvious who did not donate the requested amount. Some schools charge non-refundable fees per student or refundable textbook deposits even though such stipulations are disallowed by state law.

The response from the Arizona Charter Schools Association President and CEO Eileen Sigmund was simple. "The ACLU has an anti-charter agenda," The complete report can be found at https://www.acluaz.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/schools_choosing_students_web.pdf. The lack of charter school oversight and accountability is also the focus of an organization I just recently learned about. Arizonans for Charter School Accountability has pages of research and dozens of links to derogatory information regarding Arizona charter schools at <http://www.azcsa.org/about-us.html>.

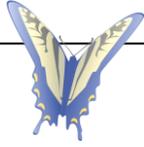
Washington Post -- the Rise and Fall of Defined Benefit Pension Plans

The Washington Post published a powerful article about pensions and the decline of Defined Benefit plans in the US on 12/23/17. It claims the first private sector US pensions were granted by American Express when it was a stagecoach delivery service in 1875. Traditional Defined Benefit pensions grew slowly until the last quarter of the 20th century. According to the National Public Pension Coalition from 1975 to 2005, the number of private-sector workers with a defined benefit pension dropped from 88% to 33%.

The article can be found at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/i-hope-i-can-quit-working-in-a-few-years-a-preview-of-the-us-without-pensions/2017/12/22/5cc9fdf6-cf09-11e7-81bc-c55a220c8cbe_story.html?tid=sm_fb&utm_term=.cce31932f12f.

To read more about our own ASRS pensions be sure to read my column in the January AASRA newsletter.

Farewell



BECK, Robert (68) ~ 12/11;
Computer Tech, Marana



COX, Carmela (82) ~ 12/1; Teacher, TUSD

Del ROSARIO, Jesus (90) ~ 12/20; Teacher

DOTEN, Cynthia (81) ~ 12/21;
Reading Teacher, Amphi



DUFFY, Lawrence (84) ~ 12/5; TUSD bus driver

HUDSON, Delia (80) ~ 12/12;
Administrator, Marana

ISLAS, Porfirio (86) ~ 12/8; Educator



LINKHART, Bennie (86) ~ 12/19;
TUSD Teacher, Asst. Superintendent

MAYE, Georgiana (89) ~ 11/29; Teacher

* **PARKER, Margaret (94)** ~ 12/21;
TUSD Secretary, Myers Ganoung

SALIMAN, Jean (98) ~ 12/4;
Teacher, Hearing Impaired



* **SCRIVNER, Antonia (84)** ~ 12/20; Teacher

VANDYKE, Joan (80) ~ 12/22; Teacher, Head Start

* PCSRA Member



“a poem for Anthony”

when I do an addition problem for my teacher
she gives me a gold star
because I know that five and five are ten

but at home

when you scream at me
and tell me how bad I am

I add up what you say to me
and I think that I must be bad
because

you are my aunt

because

you are bigger than me

because

you are louder than me

because

I'm just a seven-year-old kid
so you must be right
and in ten years

I will try to erase away my pain
with a joint or a six-pack
and

in twenty years

I'll scream at my kid

because

your branding iron burned deep into my little-boy heart
and

maybe

someday

I will learn to forgive you

when I learn how to add things up
a better way

than the time when I was seven
and I will finally get the math right
and subtraction will be the new math
that I'll use with my son:

family

minus

screaming

equals

happiness

“a poem for Anthony” Backstory

As a volunteer at a local magnet school, I listened to the concerns of the students I tutored. As a poet, I gave a “voice” to some of the concerns of these children. Having been profoundly affected by one particular second grader’s concerns, I wrote a poem entitled “a poem for Anthony.”