



Pima County School Retirees' Association

April 2019

We welcome all retired school employees

#REDforED Needs the Support of Retirees



**PCSRA
POEpourri**



At this juncture in the Arizona Legislative season, it **appears** that our Arizona State Retirement System is safe from the forces that would like to weaken it by various means. This DOES NOT mean that legislators can't sneak in some damaging change in the form of "strike everything" amendments in the waning days of the budget and other battles. Remember that nothing is really secure until the Legislature adjourns for the session, usually in late April or May.

AASRA, with several other organizations, is part of the ARSC (AZ Retirement Security Coalition), an organization that is keeping track of the bills and organizations set on de-constructing our ASRS pensions. While no punitive legislation has been filed in this year's legislative session, there is a great expectation that these groups are developing plans to attack the ASRS next year and into the future. Ideas floated previously that could pop up again include permitting the universities or other governments in the state to drop the defined benefits plans as a way to save big money. They would replace it with a "voluntary" plan where the local government could cap their contributions at 6-8%. No studies seem to be available that can show these plans will keep seniors from falling into poverty, but the fees associated with these 401K type plans make for big dreams of profit\$ in the investment industry to go with the government savings.

We do hope that in the budget "negotiations" for this year, the Governor does not forget his promise We will have to wait and see how this budget actually turns out. As of the writing of this message, it appears that the personal income taxes collected by state will increase by about \$155 million due to the changes in the federal tax laws. While AZ Legislative leaders wanted to cut that amount, there does not appear to be enough time as the April 15 filing deadline approaches.

As voting citizens, it is up to us to let our AZ Legislative Representatives and Senator know just how we value the ASRS and our pensions. With the lousy teacher pay ranges in most public and charter schools, what is going to keep good teachers from moving out of state or abandoning their positions except for the pension benefits? Losing those coming into the profession will eventually bankrupt the system. Is there a better way to solve the problem?



March Report

PCSRA Membership: 184

AASRA Membership: 99

Scholarship Fund: \$424.69

May 9th Luncheon at Viscount Suites

Honoring Our Members: Past and Present

\$16.50 each Postmark by May 1 to:
PCSRA Reservations, 3331 E. Waverly St., 85716-3250

A: Taco Salad

B: Arizona Turkey Club w/ Potato Chips

Name _____

Guest _____



Programs

~ Barbara Macpherson



Harpist to Perform in May

The star of our May meeting is Christine Vivona, who plays classical, jazz, and Broadway tunes on her harp. Her music is awesome and her skill on the harp is outstanding. What a perfect ending to our PCSRA year. Have a Happy Summer and see you next September.



Barbara Macpherson, First Vice President

2018-19 PCSRA Scholarships

Lydia Kiriakedis, a University of Arizona junior will be joining us at the April meeting. She is currently doing her student teaching and needs to leave early. However, she is very happy to make a presentation to us.

Abigail Cardenas is obligated to make another presentation at the time of our meeting and won't be able to attend our meeting. She is writing a letter with information about her background, current program and plans for her future. The Scholarship Chair will read the letter to the meeting attendees and publish it in the next newsletter.

Thank you so very much for your donations this year to make a difference in a young educator's life. We just sent a \$1,500 check to the University of Arizona Education Department for a student majoring in education for the 2019-20 school year.

Book Exchange to End Soon

PCSRA Book Exchange will end after the April meeting. It has been fun and we raised about \$100, but there does not seem to be a big demand for used books at our meetings. Thanks to all of you who donated books. We plan to donate the remaining books to Savers and the Tucson Public Library.

PCSRA Book Club Features Engrossing Spring Reads

April's book is **EDUCATED** by Tara Westover. "Unforgettable memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge."

Our May selection is **A GIRL'S GUIDE TO MISSILES** by Karen Piper.

"A surreal and poignant coming of age on a secretive missile facility, and "an incredible view of...life in a town built for war."--*Booklist*

Help Needed Desperately

We need your help immediately to take care of reservations/name tags for the Pima County School Retirees Association.

Although it is impossible to replace her, Marge Stevens needs to be relieved as reservations chair for PCSRA. Her husband Roger is in the early stages of dementia, and she is his primary caregiver.

If you are willing to take over this position, Marge will help you learn what is needed and you may put your own stamp on the work. Perhaps you and a friend would be willing to do it together. Sandra Reynolds will continue as an "assistant".

Please help. In order for this organization to continue, members need to pitch in! Please talk to Steve Poe if you are willing to be part of the team.

Bowling Alleys Need Bus Drivers to Start Program

Bowling alleys want to hire part-time bus drivers so they can start after-school programs for kids. If you know anyone who has a CDL with passenger endorsement and a clean record, please share this information with them. The driver would work approximately 20 hours a week, and generally the hours could be flexible. If someone is interested they should contact Jill at 360-9244 or email lucky@vantagebowlingcenters.com



Legislative News

~ Jerry Holmes

Embattled Legislature Bogged Down Party Lines Entangle Progress

The state legislature has accomplished little in March. Republican leadership in the House has avoided bringing bills to the floor votes because of the very slim margin (30-29) that Republicans had for a period of time in the chamber. A single defection on any vote would lead to defeat of measures that may have taken the leadership months to shepherd through the system to that point.

That thin line has been brought about due to the imbroglio surrounding Rep. David Stringer (R), one of the Yavapai County Representatives. A year ago, Rep. Stringer was under attack for racist statements made in a speech and then repeated on later occasions. More recently, the weekly **Phoenix New Times** reported that Stringer had been indicted on five charges of sex offenses, including one for possession of child pornography, in Baltimore, MD in 1983. According to the **New Times** Stringer pled guilty to three of the charges. When the issue was addressed by House leadership, Stringer's only defense was to say that he had "never been convicted of any crime". The records of the case were expunged in 1990. Stringer refused to provide the materials that were subpoenaed by the House Ethics Committee and ultimately resigned his seat on March 29th rather than comply with subpoenas.

The Yavapai County Republican Party and the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors quickly appointed former legislator Steve Pierce to the vacant seat. Mr. Pierce says he has no interest in running for the position in 2020. With Rep. Pierce in place, the Republican majority of 31-29 will again attempt to push legislation through the system.

But Stringer's problems were not the only issue causing a slowdown in the House. Ill feelings were created by a remark made by Minority Leader Charlene Fernandez (D) during a joint meeting of Republican and Democratic leadership. Then the Chairman of the Rules Committee was attacked for a backlog of bills in his committee. The Rules Committee is only supposed to vote on the constitutionality of a bill and leave the political merits for other committees to consider. Democrats accused the chairman of holding up Democrat's bills so they could not be heard by the deadline for committee hearings on proposals.

To say that this is a rancorous session would be an understatement. The close margins in both chambers have amped the importance of each legislator's vote. It would appear that Republican leadership is still trying to conduct business as it has in the past by pushing for party line votes rather than crafting bills that would attract members from across the aisle. That reluctance to find a middle ground will most likely lead to larger problems before the session is over. The importance of each vote increases with the critical nature of the legislation – including the state's budget for the following year.

The legislative session is ¾ done. Stay tuned for more intrigue and pitched battles in the weeks to come.

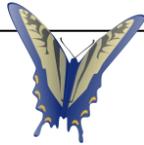
And the Beat Goes on (and on)

In recent columns I have written about the proposal put forth to raise the *sales tax* by an additional 0.6% with that additional income dedicated to education funding. Competing bills were combined and the resulting legislation passed through the House Education Committee. In part because of the slowdowns mentioned above it has gone no farther – yet.

Now the Invest in Ed coalition leaders have come out against the proposed *sales tax* hike. Remember, Invest in Ed had an Initiative to raise *income tax* on high end incomes that was supposed to be on the ballot in the last election. The Arizona Supreme Court removed it at the last minute saying there were technical problems with the wording of the measure.

Invest in Ed's objections to the proposed legislation are two-fold. They say the *sales tax* hike will not raise enough money to adequately fund education in the state and the regressive nature of the tax is harmful to the less advantaged. Sales tax takes up a larger portion of income for the underprivileged than it does for the more affluent.

Farewell



ACKERT, Charles (89) ~ 3/22; Teacher at Orange Grove Jr. High and overseas

ALLIMAN, Richard (71) ~ 3/8; Teacher



BARNETTE, Deborah (65) ~ 3/15; Special Education Teacher at Amphi and Flowing Wells schools as well as at the State prison in Tucson

Friends

BENITES, Patrick 'Pat' (61) ~ 3/30; Teacher and Coach Desert View and Pueblo High Schools



BERNAL, Amanda (100) ~ 3/7; Teacher

BLACKBURN, Mona (78) ~ 3/23; Teacher

FOSTER Jr., William (91) ~ 3/25; School Administrator

Mentors

GOETTSCHE, Billy (88) ~ 3/17; Teacher

GORDIYENKO, Ilya (98) ~ 3/7; Teacher



HAMRICK, Joseph Allen (92) ~ 3/9; Biology Teacher at Saguaro High School

JAMES, Theodore (75) ~ 3/23; Teacher and Coach at Catalina High School

KUHFALE, Rosella (88) ~ 3/8; School Secretary



PATTERSON, Katherine (28) ~ 11/6/15; Teacher at Utterback Middle School

PEARSON, Ken (96) ~ 4/9/08 TUSD Teacher and Coach

Colleagues

STREET, Margaret (94) ~ 3/14; Teacher

URIBE, Lucille (75) ~ 3/2; Teacher

WENTLING, Earl (82) ~ 3/27; Teacher



WILLIS, Judyth (81) ~ 3/14; Teacher

WOODLING, Reesor (83) ~ 3/23; Teacher and Coach at Sunnyside MS

Retirement News

~ Jerry Holmes



Join with AASRA in Staying Vigilant to Protect Pensions

Please take some time to read the upcoming AASRA newsletter. It should be available to you in the next couple of weeks. The AASRA Legislative Liaison, Joe Carter, has written a column about our ongoing collaboration with the Arizona Retirement Security Coalition (ARSC).

AASRA has invested money and time in ARSC in an effort to protect the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS). There are powerful voices in the state who are using the euphemism of “choice” to try to sell the idea of privatizing individual’s contributions to their pension. This is nothing more than a scheme to allow “the market” to make money from an individual’s retirement investments.

Later this month there will be a meeting at ASRS headquarters regarding “the transition to the new Medicare Advantage PPO plan, potential plan design adjustments and changes for the 2020 plan year and a brief presentation from a State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) representative.” I will attend, along with one or two other AASRA representatives. If you have any thoughts about our health insurance please let me know. I will let you know what ASRS is thinking after the meeting.

Member Updates

Member Address change:

William Iveson
6300 E. Speedway, Apt. 1260
Tucson, AZ 85710

New Member

Karen Husted
P.O. Box 1299
Benson, Az 85602
520-212-3202