



Pima County School Retirees' Association

October, 2019

We welcome all retired school employees

History of PCSRA's Luncheon Location's an Eye-opener



POEpourri

Steve Poe



We had a discussion at our PCSRA Executive Board meeting regarding "Fees to Attend Monthly Meetings". You deserve a little background information before I tell you my thoughts and what was decided.

For years, PCSRA paid local churches for the use of their meeting facilities and/or kitchens. The fees were substantial (\$100 or more per month), plus mandatory insurance, and other costs (a/v equipment). Meals were bid out for the lowest price, plus we had to help serve and clean-up after the meetings. Several of our members spent most of their meeting time in the kitchen. Meal costs were kept well under \$10 and often reflected that price.

We had been having two meetings per year at the Viscount Suites, so we looked into using that venue for our monthly meetings. For about \$15 per person, we could use one of their meeting rooms, complete with a microphone and screen. (We supplied our personal computers/projectors). The Viscount staff would do the table set-up, cooking, serving, and clean-up. The monthly fee for room rental was gone, as was the requirement to have our own insurance. Our members (other than the folks who sit out front to collect money, hand out meal tickets, and greet our members) had more time to enjoy themselves.

Over the last three years, the cost of the labor and food has increased. I'm sure the operational costs of the hotel have NOT gone down with the increase in local wages. People who attend our monthly membership meetings do not always participate in the meal, at the current \$18 price. This may be due to dietary restrictions, cost, schedule conflicts, etc. (It's really their business). Yet, the vast majority (usually over 90% of attendees) helps by buying the meal.

We have 80+ PCSRA members who bought LIFE memberships years ago; therefore they are not required to pay dues to our local unit. We encourage all of these folks to enjoy the benefits of this membership, as well as hope that they can support us through other donations (such as our UA scholarship or food bank collections) to keep helping our mission. The main mission, of course, is to protect our pensions from those who want OUR money.

Some believe we should charge those who do not pay for a meal a nominal charge to help pay expenses. I do not agree. We want to ENCOURAGE members to participate in our fellowship with school retirees, receive pertinent information about the ASRS, support our various community efforts (i.e. YOTO, the PCSRA Scholarship program, Community Food Bank, etc.) I believe charging our members for meeting attendance will not produce positive participation results. Your Executive Board voted 8-1 to continue the current practice (of no special fee) for this membership year.

See **Luncheon Cost** on page 2



September Report

PCSRA Membership is currently 185

AASRA (state) membership is 113

Scholarship Fund: \$78

November 14th Luncheon at Viscount Suites

\$18.00 each Postmark by Nov. 6 to:
PCSRA Reservations, 417 N. Maguire Ave, 85710.

- A) Turkey, Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes,
Green Bean Almandine & Brownie OR
- B) Vegetable Lasagna, Green Beans & Brownie

Name _____

Guest _____



Programs

Barbara Macpherson



Youth on Their Own

Thank you for your contributions to Youth on Their Own. You made a difference in the community and helped to keep homeless youth in school.

October Speaker

Our feature speaker today is State Senator David Bradley, minority leader of the Democratic Party and Senator in Legislative District 10. David has always advocated for Tucson's family and youth. He will talk about what he and others hope to accomplish in the coming session including more educational funding.

November Speaker

Sunnyside Superintendent, Steve Holmes, will be our speaker in November. Sunnyside is the second largest school district in Southern Arizona. Steve attended school in the Sunnyside District as a young person. He was principal of Sunnyside High School from 2009-2013. He served as the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction in TUSD before moving to his present position in Sunnyside.

Steve has helped Sunnyside to become a leader in using Computer Technology in the classroom and has pushed for innovative programs for English as a Second Language Learner. His enthusiasm is contagious and we are honored to have him as our guest speaker in November.

Sun Van

If you have a disability, consider applying for Sun Van, Tucson's para transit service. After filling out an American Disability Application, get a doctor to verify your disability. Full Fare is \$3.25 each way, and the Economy fare at \$1.75 each way. The call center will give you a half hour window. The drivers are very courteous. I go many places on Sun Van and would be sitting at home without the service.

Call 520-791-4100 for more information.

Early Arrival Suggested for Open PCSRA Membership Meetings

Our monthly meetings (Sept.-May) are always open to all our members, guests, or retired school employees in the Tucson area. Lunch is served for those who wish to participate and purchase/order meals ahead of these meetings.

While meetings do not begin until 11:30 a.m., our volunteers and officers arrive at the Viscount Suites by about 10:45 a.m. The time before the meeting begins is a good time to "touch base" with your PCSRA friends and acquaintances. The few minutes before the meeting may be the only time you get to talk with them. Besides, those who arrive early get better parking and are able to choose their favorite seats. The registration desk is not as crowded as it gets closer to 11:30.

This year we are keeping our meetings to two hours. Our time for PCSRA business takes place right after the opening ceremonies and before lunch is served. Our featured speaker is scheduled immediately following the meal, usually about 12:30 or 12:35. If you cannot stay for the entire time, we still hope to see you!

To make luncheon reservations, call, mail, or email Margaret Richardson, 417 N. Maguire Ave., 85710-2445, cookiemawr@cox.net, 296-0047.

Luncheon Cost continued from page 1

Since the added costs of entertainment or paid speakers and the meal for presenters are already paid for out of our annual dues, I believe this is something we must budget for out of our dues dollars. After seeing how this pans out over the next few months, we may have to seek another alternative after our current contract with the Viscount Suites is concluded.

The current cost of \$18 per meal is a bit more than I usually spend on myself for a lunch away from home, but remembering that this includes the use of the room, meal, drinks, dessert cookie, tax and tip, just maybe it's not such a bad deal after all. We would appreciate knowing your thoughts on the subject.

“Showdown in Tucson”

By Judy Hokett

Tickets go on sale at our meeting beginning today! This is our big fundraiser for the UA Education Student Scholarship fund. The show will be Thursday, February 13 at 7:00 PM. We have reserved seats in the front of the theatre. Please buy your tickets at the meeting or call Judy Hokett at 749-4464. These \$30 tickets would make great Christmas presents!

The Gaslight Theatre has donated two tickets and cut their price for our group. We are grateful to the Gaslight Theatre for sponsoring a fundraiser for the Scholarship fund.

This Clever New Scam Ensnarers Many Clear-Thinking People

This is very clever. I would probably fall for it if not warned. Give this wide distribution.

This scam is actually very clever. Just when you thought you'd heard it all. Be very careful out there! Beware of people bearing gifts!

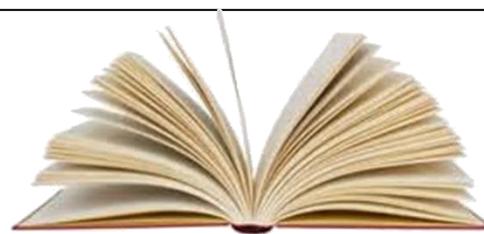
The following is a recounting of the incident from the victim: Wednesday a week ago, I had a phone call from someone saying that he was from some outfit called: "Express Couriers," (The name could be any courier company). He asked if I was going to be home because there was a package for me that required a signature.

The caller said that the delivery would arrive at my home in roughly an hour. Sure enough, about an hour later, a uniformed delivery man turned up with a beautiful basket of flowers and a bottle of wine. I was very surprised since there was no special occasion or holiday, and I certainly didn't expect anything like it. Intrigued, I inquired as to who the sender was.

The courier replied, "I don't know, I'm only delivering the package."

Apparently, a greeting card was being sent separately. (The card has never arrived!) There was also a consignment note with the gift.

See **Scam** on Page 5



PCSRA BOOK CLUB

The October selection is The Nickel Boys: A Novel by Colson Whitehead.

As the Civil Rights movement reaches the black enclave of Frenchtown in segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: He is "as good as anyone." Abandoned by his parents, but kept on the straight and narrow by his grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college.

For a black boy in the Jim Crow South of the early 1960s, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy the future. Elwood is sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, whose mission statement says it provides "physical, intellectual and moral training" so the delinquent boys in their charge can become "honorable and honest men."

The Nickel Academy is really a grotesque chamber of horrors where the sadistic staff beats and sexually abuses the students and any boy who resists is likely to disappear "out back." Stunned to find himself in such a vicious environment, Elwood tries to hold onto Dr. King's ringing assertion "Throw us in jail and we will still love you." His friend Turner thinks Elwood is naive, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble.

The tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Formed in the crucible of the evils Jim Crow wrought, the boys' fates will be determined by what they endured at the Nickel Academy.

Based on the real story of a Florida reform school that operated for one hundred eleven years and warped the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers.

Hope to see each of you on October 24th at 1 p.m. Steve Poe's home, 3331 E. Waverly Street. Jim



Education News

Jerry Holmes



I have had the good fortune to speak with Kathy Hoffman, Arizona's Supt. of Public Instruction, on several occasions. I have always felt that she is sincere in her interests to support public education. I backed another candidate in the primary race for the office. However, once Ms. Hoffman was selected as the Democratic candidate, I supported her in her race against the long-time charter school executive and former California congressman Frank Riggs in the 2018 election.

I tell you this because I want to be clear that I think Kathy Hoffman is doing a good job as the head of the Arizona Dept. of Education. Not for the first time, I have learned that not everyone agrees with me. In last month's PCSRA newsletter, I wrote of a couple of stumbles by Hoffman in her early tenure. Both involved interpretation and application of Arizona's ESA (voucher) statutes and both led to somewhat valid criticisms by state lawmakers.

Then in mid-September I read a roaring critique of Supt. Hoffman by Russell Bowers, the Speaker of the House in Arizona. In his attack, Rep. Bowers accused her of trying to sexualize children with the current sex-ed curriculum in Arizona. I could not imagine the earnest young woman (Hoffman is only 33) I had met trying to corrupt kids so I started looking for more information.

It turns out that there is a lot more going on than I could imagine. (That's not a true statement. I dream about all the ways that the forces of evil can subvert the truth and sway the uninformed. It's why I write this column.) Some of what is behind the scenes is related to the recent headline grabbing problems that Tucson Unified School District had in trying to adopt a new opt-in sex-ed curriculum.

The story starts out years ago. In response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Arizona initiated changes in its adopted sex ed curriculum. It acknowledged that HIV could be contracted through sexual contact. The curriculum also informed students of certain safe

Various Groups All Up in Arms About Sex Education Curriculum

sex practices. However, the changes advocated abstinence as the best preventative measure. In addition, teachers were banned from portraying "homosexuality as a positive alternative life-style" or suggesting there are safe ways to engage in homosexual activities.

Subsequent changes to the state curriculum were initiated by the state legislature that demanded that the curriculum, "promote honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage."

All of this came to a head recently when a Tucson student who is gay and two activist groups filed suit against the Arizona Board of Education and the state legislature (see my Sept. '19 newsletter column). State Attorney General Brnovich made it clear to all that he could not find legal grounds to defend the language in statute. As a result, the legislature and Board of Education removed the emphasis on heterosexuality and the ban on positive portrayal of homosexuality. The only thing that remained in place was the emphasis on abstinence.

Supt. Hoffman, a member of the state board, has urged a more inclusive, comprehensive curriculum and positive portrayal of the LGBTQ spectrum in the curriculum. The Board of Education has stalled in adopting changes to the curriculum. Now the battle has been joined by forces insisting on a medically accurate, comprehensive course and those who would limit the scope and ban various descriptors such as "gender identity".

Much of the opposition to a comprehensive curriculum is fueled by a group based in Gilbert, AZ. Branded by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a "hate group", Family Watch International works to further anti-LGBTQ efforts around the world. Family Watch International has spun off a group focused specifically on efforts in Arizona, Protect Arizona Children Coalition (PACC). The two groups created a video entitled, "Deception: Behind TUSD's Proposed Sex Education Curriculum".

All we have are ...

SEX ED.



... 10-foot poles.



Education News

Jerry Holmes



In that video, Bernadette Gruber, a PACC member who was a board appointed member of the TUSD curriculum committee, makes several claims without providing any evidence. Gruber, the only curriculum committee member who opposes the TUSD plan, says the TUSD proposed sex ed curriculum promotes schools “manufacturing and profiting off transgender kids”, indoctrinating children into “radical gender ideologies” and promotes high risk sexual behaviors.

In a recent public forum at a Gilbert Charter School, that video, which makes other fallacious claims, was viewed by Russell Bowers and State Sen. Sylvia Allen, chair of the Senate Education Committee. In the past, Sen. Allen has made a number of anti-science statements such as the earth is only 10,000 years old.

After viewing the video, Speaker Bowers told the crowd that Supt. Hoffman promotes sex education that is “radicalizing children’s sexuality”. Later in the same week, he said that based on what he saw in Gilbert the state sex ed curriculum uses materials that “are grooming children to be sexualized”.

Supt. Hoffman responded that Bowers’ comments have no basis in reality. She went on to say that her “... department is focused on finding solutions to the real crises facing education in this state like our persistent shortage of highly qualified teachers, one of the lowest rates of per pupil spending in the nation and the physical safety and mental health of our students”. She urged Speaker Bowers to join her in that fight rather than “spending his time amplifying conspiracy theories being pushed by known hate groups.”

More than ever, I’m still supporting Supt. Hoffman.

Scam continued from Page 3

He then went on to explain that because the gift contained alcohol, there was a \$3.50 "delivery/verification charge," providing proof that he had actually delivered the package to an adult (of legal drinking age), and not just left it on the doorstep where it could be stolen or taken by anyone, especially a minor.

This sounded logical and I offered to pay him cash. He then said that the delivery company required payment to be by credit or debit card only, so that everything is properly accounted for, and this would help in keeping a legal record of the transaction.

He added, "Couriers don't carry cash to avoid loss or likely targets for robbery."

My husband, who by this time was standing beside me, pulled out his credit card, and the "delivery man," asked him to swipe the card on a small mobile card machine with a small screen and keypad. Frank, my husband, was asked to enter his PIN number and a receipt was printed out. He was given a copy of the transaction.

The guy said everything was in order, and wished us good day.

To our horrible surprise, between Thursday and the following Monday, \$4,000 had been charged/withdrawn from our credit/debit account at various ATM machines.

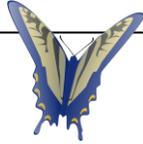
Apparently the "mobile credit card machine," which the deliveryman carried now had all the info necessary to create a "dummy" card with all our card details including the PIN number.

Upon finding out about the illegal transactions on our card, we immediately notified the bank which issued us a new card, and our credit/debit account was closed.

We also personally went to the police, where it was confirmed that it is definitely a scam because several households had been similarly hit.

See **Scam** on Page 6

Farewell



ATTERSON, David (72) ~ 9/17; Teacher at
Flowing Wells Middle & High Schools

EVANS, Fern (90) ~ 9/21;
Elementary School Teacher



HICKS, Nadene (83) ~ 8/22; Teacher TUSD

* **HORN, Mildred ~ June**



SIERRA, Alfred (86) ~ 7/24;
Sunnyside School District

VALENZUELA LOPEZ, Martha (70) ~ 9/27;
Teacher

* **VERBOUT, Marie (98) ~ 9/17;**
Librarian at Pueblo High, Palo Verde High,
and TUSD Library Technical Services

WAGER, Maxwell Homer (84) ~ 9/21;
Spanish, Drama, & English Teacher
at Sunnyside High



* PCSRA member

Address Changes

Mary Lou Rankin
2500 N. Rosemont Blvd, #411
Tucson, AZ 85712-6100

Edith Balceris
4338 E. Corral Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85044-5577

Does anybody know where to find
Betty Griste? She used to live at the Forum.

ARIZONA: Advance Directives

When emergency responders treat an incapacitated person, they often lack documentation on the patient's wishes for resuscitation, power of attorney and end-of-life care.

Every adult can write an advance directive, such as a living will or health care power of attorney, to make personal preferences clear and legally binding. But fewer than 4 in 10 Arizona adults have done so.

Medical personnel will resuscitate by default. Advocates say there's often a disconnect between patients' wishes and the care they receive.

AARP Arizona urges residents to keep advance directives at hand for caregivers and emergency responders.

Information and advance directive forms are on the state attorney general's website, azsos.gov/services/advance-directives.

AARP Bulletin, June 2019

Scam continued from Page 5

WARNING: Be wary of accepting any "surprise gift or package," which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything if you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of who the sender is.

Above all, the only time you should give out any personal credit/debit card information is when you, yourself, initiated the purchase or transaction!

PLEASE, pass this on, it may just prevent someone else getting scammed.