



# Pima County School Retirees' Association

January, 2020

*We welcome all retired school employees*

## PCSRA POEpourri

Another year and decade have come to a close. As school retirees, we are thankful for a strong AZ State Retirement System and for our ability

to contribute to our Tucson Community with our money, time, and talents. Our Pima County School Retirees Association continues to focus on the well-being of our members as well as the community. Through you, we as a group are on record with our on-going support for Youth on Their Own, the Southern Arizona Food Bank, Sister Jose Women's Center, and, with our yearly scholarship, the University of Arizona College of Education (prospective teacher). We also contributed to the Rincon/University Choir for their upcoming trip to Carnegie Hall in New York, both through a gift for their wonderful Holiday Concert for our December program and from PCSRA members with their AZ tax credit donations.

As the programs for our second Thursday of the month meeting is confirmed in advance and advertised in the monthly newsletter you receive, we begin to set our sights on next year's plans and programs. In the coming months of March-May, we will be making a determination about when/where/what our monthly gatherings should include. There has been much discussion about the rising cost of the lunch menu provided for our members' choice. Is the location at the Viscount Suites still central enough for those who regularly attend? Is the timing (approximately 11:30a.m.-1:30p.m.) still appropriate? All these and more are to be under consideration during the last couple of months of our program year.

If you have any suggestions or thoughts to contribute to this discussion, please do so. You may call any one of your board members. I invite you to contact me, directly, during the next three months about these and any other issues at [sshermanpoe@gmail.com](mailto:sshermanpoe@gmail.com) or 623-810-5228.

You may also contact Terry Bagwell at [tbasketcase@cox.net](mailto: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 location/meal/time for our September-May meetings.

Please speak up. We would like to hear your input.



## President's Desk

~ Steve Poe



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## December Report

PCSRA Membership: 111

AASRA (state) Membership: 30

Scholarship Fund: \$369

### February 13th Luncheon at Viscount Suites

#### Love of Reading

Mail \$18 each by Feb. 4 to: PCSRA Reservations, 417 N. Maguire Ave, Tucson, AZ 85710-2445

A) Barbecue Sandwich, Coleslaw & Beans

B) Vegetarian Chili & Corn Bread. Dessert

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Guest \_\_\_\_\_



## Programs

~ Barbara Macpherson



The featured speaker for our February luncheon will be Thomas Bogart, who will present the “Brand New JTED Innovative High School,” The number of choices in careers that our Tucson students can pick from is amazing. We will have Tucson authors displaying and selling their books before and after the luncheon. If you come early, you will have time to interact with the authors that day. Be prepared to be dazzled by the selection of new books to purchase. See you at the February 13 meeting.

## Round Up Those Volunteer Hours

If you volunteered for any community events or services in 2019, please calculate your time doing the work as well as the time you spent in transport to and from the duty. If you helped family members save money by babysitting, providing respite or daycare, furnishing rides to medical appointments, religious services, or stores, estimate the number of hours consumed by these efforts and report them to us. We compile these volunteer hours, along with our financial contributions to inform our Arizona Legislators of the efforts and money devoted to the community through the generosity of our retirees.

Please send an accounting of your hours and donations to Gail Schuessler at 2025 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Tucson 85719. You may also send them by email at [gschuessler@yahoo.com](mailto:gschuessler@yahoo.com). Gail will collect and organize this information and send it on to Doug Honaker (of the Phoenix/Tempe area), the designated person on the AASRA State Board. Please do it as soon as possible, so we can make this effort a success.

## Calling Authors New to PCSRA

By Ann Reaban

For February’s “Love of Reading,” we are once again inviting all the PCSRA published authors as well as some featured Arizona authors to be honored at our monthly luncheon. If you know of any authors new to our organization, please let Ann Reaban know. We want to be sure to include everyone since the invitations will be sent soon. This will give the authors time to prepare their book displays.

There will be time before and after the regular featured PCSRA speaker to interact with the authors. Members will have the opportunity to learn about the author’s writing style and topics of interest; additionally, members may purchase books and have them autographed. Make plans to come early for the luncheon on February 13, which will allow time to honor our published authors and also get “tips” on how you, too, can become an author!



## Time’s Tickin’ ‘Til Showdown

If you haven’t already, now is the time to get your tickets for the 7 pm. Performance of "SHOWDOWN IN TUCSON" at the Gaslight Theatre on Thurs, Feb. 13. We will be selling the tickets at the January 9th meeting and by phone until the 15th of the month, please call Judy Hokett at 749-4464. Please join us for a fun evening of music, singing and good humor!

Congratulations to Jerry Helms who had the winning bid for the two tickets donated by the Gaslight Theatre.

## PCSRA Book Club Turns Three

Dear Friends,

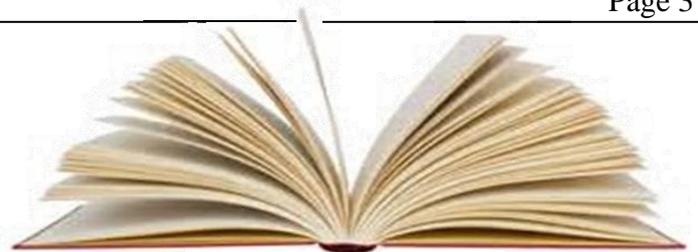
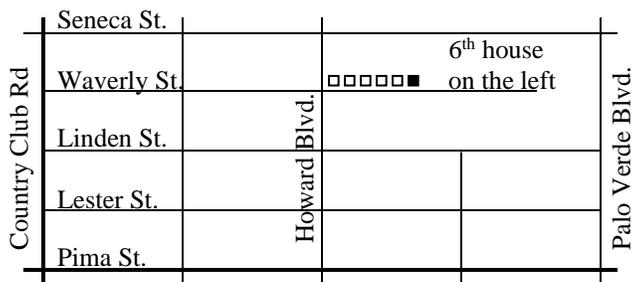
A Gentleman in Moscow is the ... entertaining second novel from the author of Rules of Civility. Amor Towles ... transports us to The Metropol, the famed Moscow hotel where movie stars and Russian royalty hobnob, where Bolsheviks plot revolutions and intellectuals discuss the merits of contemporary Russian writers, where spies spy, thieves thieve, and the danger of twentieth-century Russia lurks outside its marbled walls. It's also where wealthy Count Alexander Rostov lives under house arrest for a poem deemed incendiary by the Bolsheviks, and meets Nina.

Nina is a precocious and wide-eyed young girl who holds the keys to the entire hotel, wonders what it means to be a princess, and will irrevocably change his life. Despite being confined to the hallways of the hotel, the Count lives an absorbing, adventure-filled existence, filled with capers, conspiracies and culture.

Alexander Rostov is a character for the ages--like Kay Thompson's Eloise and Wes Anderson's M. Gustav, he is unflinchingly (and hilariously) devoted to his station, even when forced to wait tables, play hide and seek with a young girl, or confront communism. Towles magnificently conjures the grandeur of the Russian hotel and the vibrancy of the characters that call it home.

--Al Woodworth, *The Amazon Book Review*

Steve Poe will host our January 23 meeting at 3331 E. Waverly Street (east of Country Club) between Pima and Grant. Contact Jim Marr at 520 885-8958 OR jbm500@cox.net.



## PCSRA BOOK CLUB

February: Lady in the Lake by Laura Lippman. In 1966, Baltimore is a city of secrets that everyone seems to know—everyone except Madeline “Maddie” Schwartz. Last year, she was a happy, pampered housewife. This year, she’s bolted from her marriage of almost twenty years, determined to make good on her youthful ambitions to live a passionate, meaningful life.

Maddie wants to matter, to leave her mark on a swiftly changing world. Drawing on her own secrets, she helps the police find a murdered girl—assistance that leads to a job at the city’s afternoon newspaper, the *Star*. Working at the newspaper offers Maddie the opportunity to make her name, and she has found just the story to do it: a missing woman whose body was discovered in the fountain of a city park lake.

Cleo Sherwood was a young black woman who liked to have a good time. No one seems to know or care why she was killed except Maddie. She’s going to find the truth about Cleo’s life and death. Cleo’s ghost, privy to Maddie’s poking and prying, wants to be left alone.

Maddie’s investigation brings her into contact with people that used to be on the periphery of her life—a jewelry store clerk, a waitress, a rising star on the Baltimore Orioles, a cop, a hardened female reporter, a lonely man in a movie theater. But Maddie often fails to see the people right in front of her. Her inability to look beyond her own needs will lead to tragedy and turmoil for all sorts of people—including the man who shares her bed, a black police officer who cares for Maddie more than she knows.

Best wishes,  
Jim



## Education in Arizona

Jerry Holmes



## Superintendent Working to Repeal Prop. 203 that Segregates Students

Almost 20 years ago, voters passed Prop. 203 mandating English immersion for non-English

speaking students in schools. The measure passed at the polls despite an overwhelming amount of research showing a bilingual approach to language acquisition was more effective.

As former teachers, we remember our English Language Learner (ELL) students being forced into four-hour blocks of classes designed to hasten their fluency with the English language. They were supposed to attain proficiency within one year and then join their peers in traditional classes. The reality was that ELL students remained in those blocks for years and never caught up to their peers.

A recent study by the Arizona Dept. of Education shows the English immersion model segregates students “both physically and academically” and does not allow students access to more rigorous courses. It called the idea of a one-year transition to mainstream classes unrealistic. Currently, Arizona has about 83,000 ELL students. Only about 4% of Limited English Proficient students are reaching proficiency in English and 9% of ELL students are showing proficiency in math on the AZ Merit test. One should keep in mind that the math tests contain word problems that test reading more than math skills.

Supt. of Instruction, Kathy Hoffman, is pushing for a repeal of the ill-conceived, anti-immigrant mandate in the coming legislative session. Because the original measure, Prop 203, was passed by the voters, only the voters can kill the plan. In Arizona, Initiatives passed by voters can be modified, but not reversed by the legislature. The current plan is to pass a resolution in the Arizona House and Senate to refer the issue to the voters on the ballot in 2020.

Supt. Hoffman came very close in last year’s session to achieving the policy reversal only to be thwarted by the budget delay. A bill introduced by Rep. Paul Boyer (R) was passed and signed into law that reduced the required block to two hours per day. The bill that would have referred a repeal of the mandate to voters was passed 59-1 in House, but never made it to the floor of the Senate.

Supt. Hoffman hopes that both houses pass the mandate override and refer the matter to the voters during the upcoming session. Ongoing research and a large body of past research that shows the efficacy of other styles of instruction are convincing to legislators on both sides of the aisle.

## Committee Recommendations Increasing Funding for GATE Programs

Students identified as Gifted make up about 8% of the student population in Arizona. As part of the budget cuts implemented during the economic recession, Arizona cut all funding for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) in 2010. That cut remained in place for years.

During the last two legislative sessions, \$1 million was allotted for GATE. A committee of legislators was formed to study the needs and make recommendations for funding of GATE. That committee adopted recommendations that the \$1 million annual allotment continue as a permanent allocation or there be a one-time \$5 million allocation and the legislature conduct annual debates on allotments. The committee’s recommendation will go to the House this Spring.

## Arizona Congress Members Finagle Around Voters' Choice

As part of the Invest in Ed movement of 2018, petitions were circulated to put a proposition on the ballot to increase the income tax on the wealthiest earners in the state. Those additional funds would have been dedicated to education funding. More than enough signatures were gathered to put the item on the ballot, but a legal challenge thwarted the effort.

Now the issue of raising taxes to support education is being raised again by the Invest in Ed group. The group might focus on the legislature first rather than the ballot box to achieve their goals. One of the ideas rejected by the coalition was to raise Arizona's sales tax in order to increase Education funding. Because sales tax takes a larger proportion of income from the poor than the wealthy, it is viewed as a regressive tax. That regressive nature was cited as the primary cause for rejecting the sales tax increase in the past.

Now Invest in Ed groups are talking about a hybrid tax. Various forms of taxation are being considered. One plan would raise income taxes on higher earners slightly and increase the sales tax slightly. Supporters of the plan talk about a tax credit for poor taxpayers to offset the impact of a sales tax increase.

Comments from various legislators and state leaders indicate polling shows that Arizonans would be open to a tax increase to fund education. The idea of a tax credit offset makes the plan more palatable to many. However, at this point no one has a draft that they are ready to put forward.

Many oppose the idea of raising the sales tax despite the proposed offsets. Studies have shown that "the lowest income Arizonans pay nearly three times more in taxes as a percentage of their income than do the state's wealthiest earners".

Any proposal for a tax increase would have to go on the ballot in 2020 whether referred by the legislature or proposed as an initiative. In 1992, Arizona approved Prop 108 which mandated any future tax increase must have a 2/3 majority in both legislative houses and receive the governor's signature to be enacted. That standard is just too high to attain in both houses.

However, only a simple majority of the voters need to approve a ballot proposition for tax increases to be implemented. Since Prop 108, nearly all tax increases have been achieved at the ballot box rather than in the legislature. The ballot in 2020 will be huge in both candidates and propositions as well as its import to Arizona's future.

## Retirement

Here are a few statistics on Arizona public pensions, recently released and accessible at [www.nirsonline.org](http://www.nirsonline.org) from the National Institute on Retirement Security.

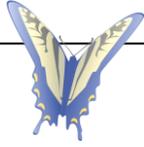
State and local public pensions paid \$4.6 billion to Arizona residents in 2016.

That amount of income generated \$7.1 billion in economic activity in the state.

The expenditures of public pensioners in Arizona supported over 49,000 jobs.

Public pensioners paid over \$1.2 billion in federal and state tax revenues in Arizona.

## Farewell



**BASURTO**, Leonard (76) ~ 12/29;  
Art Teacher at Pistor MS, Roberts  
Elementary Principal



**BOICE**, Janet (91) ~ 12/15; Teacher

**DAVIS**, Ruth Ann (94) ~ 12/6; Teacher

**FARWELL** Jr., Lemuel (92) ~ 12/4; Teacher

**GARTY**, Beverly (76) ~ 12/9; Teacher's aide

**HOLMES**, Jeanette (81) ~ 11/9;  
Office Manager and Secretary TUSD



**IRSKINS**, Lucille (87) ~ 12/4;  
Sewing Teacher at Townsend MS

**JONES**, Gretchen (91) ~ 10/30; Teacher

**KATUSZ**, Joseph (92) ~ 12/22;  
Wrestling coach, Teacher and Principal



**MAYO**, David (88) ~ 12/1; Teacher

**NAGORE**, Mary Louise (90) ~ 12/14; Teacher

**REITER**, Nancy (71) ~ 11/13; Teacher TUSD

**WOODS**, Barbara (72) ~ 12/22; Teacher,  
Reading Specialist, Principal of Blenman Elem.

## Celebrations!

Two of our members became centenarians last month. Both of these women still attend nearly every PCSRA monthly meeting. Kathryn Bossuyt was 100 on December 25! Teri Berg was 100 on December 30!

Wouldn't it be nice to shower them with birthday cards? (if you didn't send one before!)

Kathryn Bossuyt  
535 W. Calle Lindero  
Tucson, AZ 85704-3947

Teri Berg  
2411 E. Lind Rd.  
Tucson, AZ 85719

*Imagine what these ladies have lived through, starting with 17 presidents from Wilson to Trump!*

## Automatic Recurring Deductions for Dues as Easy as ABC for Many

We have included an extra page on this issue of the newsletter to allow members to establish automatic payments. This membership form now allows members to have their dues automatically deducted from their ASRS monthly check. Just circle the appropriate items. If you have questions about how you, as a specific member, should complete the form, email me ([tbasketcase@cox.net](mailto:tbasketcase@cox.net)) and I'll look up your data. If you choose to have your dues paid automatically through ASRS deduction, it saves us lots of bookkeeping time and, in some cases, postage.

If you still choose to pay annually by check, make it to PCSRA for \$36 (or for \$42 if you wish to have the newsletter mailed to you).

Please mail all items to PCSRA, 5902 E. Hawthorne St., Tucson, AZ 85711 ~ Terry Bagwell



# All Arizona School Retirees Association AASRA

Fill out this state and local membership form. PLEASE PRINT neatly. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**A**

Birth Year \_\_\_\_\_ (50-89 Pay membership dues, 90+ free membership)

Position now or at retirement: Teacher Administrator Support Staff Other:

**A**

Level at Retirement or now: K-8 High School District University/College Other

Are You an AARP Member: Yes No

**AASRA Annual dues \$20 OR Friends of AASRA \$12 State Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**S**

**Circle local unit:**

**KRTA (Sedona) \$15 PCSRA (Pima County) \$16 All Other Units \$10**

Join: Local Unit \_\_\_\_\_ or Member-at-large (assign if one in your area) **Local Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**R**

**Total Dues = State + Local = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**A**

### Payment Option 1: Automatic Dues Deduction (Only ASRS Retirees)

I authorize the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) to DEDUCT any association dues as indicated below. I understand ASRS will forward each authorized deduction to the ALL Arizona School Retirees Association (AASRA) office. I understand the monthly deduction will continue until I notify the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS), in writing, to the contrary. Your dues deductions will appear on your record statement under DEDUCTIONS as: Dues.

I authorize the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) to deduct the following amount from my monthly pension check (please circle one):

Sedona \$2.92 Pima County \$3.00 Pima County, Life Members \$1.67 All other units \$2.50

**For Automatic Dues Deduction (ADD) ASRS requires your social security number.**

My Social Security Number is \_\_\_\_\_ (Privacy Protected)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Option 2: Personal Check

\_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to pay by check the yearly dues. **Please make all checks payable to All Arizona School Retirees Association or AASRA. Total = State dues plus local dues.**

Mail this form and check, (if applicable) to: **All Arizona School Retirees Association or AASRA, 7250 North 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 302, Phoenix, AZ 85020-5279.**

*Thank you for your interest and support.* Recruited by \_\_\_\_\_

