

# **Arizona State University Retirees Association**

**Report from the Board 2008-2009**

## **Annual Meeting**

**April 16, 2009**

**1:00 p.m.**

**ASU Tempe Campus  
Memorial Union  
Alumni Lounge MU 202**



**ASU Tempe Campus - 1919**



## ASURA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2012

<u>Term Expires 4/2012</u>	<u>Term Expires 4/2011</u>	<u>Term Expires 4/2010</u>	<u>Ex-Officio Members</u>
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Lonnie Ostrom 3026 E. Sierra Vista Dr. Phoenix, AZ 85016 (602) 228-5264 lostrom@asu.edu	William Stasi 5345 E. McLellen Rd. #8 Mesa, AZ 85205 (480) 396-6608 wstasi@asu.edu	Lou Weschler 15 E. Concorda Drive Tempe, AZ 85282 (480) 968-4955 22Robby33@cox.net	Christine Cervantes Human Resources Mail Code: 5612 (480) 965-4250 Christine.Cervantes@asu.edu

### IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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<b>P.O. Box 873308</b>	
<b>Tempe, AZ 85287-3308</b>	
<b>ASURA FAX</b>	<b>(480) 965-7807</b>
<b>ASURA WEBSITE</b>	<b>http://asura.asu.edu</b>
<b>ARIZONA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM</b>	<b>(602) 240-2000</b>
<b>3500 North Central</b>	<b>or</b>
<b>Phoenix, AZ 85012</b>	<b>1-800-621-3778</b>
<b>ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>(602) 542-4900</b>
<b>100 North 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>	
<b>Phoenix, AZ 85007</b>	
<b>AREA CODES:</b>	<b>602 – Phoenix and North Phoenix</b>
	<b>480 – East Valley</b>
	<b>623 – West Valley</b>
	<b>520 – Tucson and</b>
	<b>928 – All other locations in AZ</b>
	<b>Southern AZ</b>

## OFFICE VOLUNTEERS



Carolyn Minner



Carol Moore

We appreciate all of our volunteers. These dedicated members keep our office running smoothly, and each is always ready and willing to serve on committees and provide assistance when we have events and activities to plan. Some even go a step further and serve on the Board.

We are very fortunate to have such an energetic and talented group but we always welcome any and all assistance from those interested in getting involved. Our office hours are 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. If you are interested in joining our volunteer staff, please contact us at (480) 965-7668. Carol Moore is the Office Coordinator.

### Office Volunteer Shifts

Monday A.M.	Carol Berg
Monday P.M.	Betty Norris
Tuesday A.M.	Carol Moore
Tuesday P.M.	Linda Van Scoy
Wednesday A.M.	Ed Scannell Jack Sarrett
Wednesday P.M.	Available
Thursday A.M.	Maxine LaRoux
Thursday P.M.	Kathy Sweeney
Friday A.M.	Anna-Marie Shivers Linda Howard
Friday P.M.	Available
Substitute	Helen Seaton
Recently Retired	Bob Beeman



Carol Berg



Betty Norris



Linda Van Scoy



Jack Sarrett



Ed Scannell



Maxine LaRoux



Linda Howard



Anna-Marie Shivers



Kathy Sweeney



Helen Seaton



Bob Beeman

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Val Peterson

Most of us worked hard during our years as wage earners. To some in our group their work was in the classroom. To others it was in the office. And to still others it was in the shop or equipment rooms. But wherever we worked we worked hard. And most of us looked forward to our retirement years.

Eventually we retired. But after *goofing off* for a time, a goodly number of us tired of “fun and games” of retirement. Some of us missed the structure of a job. Others missed former friends and acquaintances. And still others wanted something meaningful to do. But whatever the reason we all ended up members of ASU’s Retirees Association—each of us perhaps for different reasons.

Some of us joined because we wanted to ensure that we received maximum retirement benefits and wanted to have a say in matters affecting our retirement benefits. Others were motivated with a desire to work to improve the retirement program at ASU or at least to be made fully aware of the nature and extent of those benefits. Others wanted a forum to provide input about issues that concerned them as retired persons. Still others wanted to remain close to the activities of ASU and continue to receive certain University benefits similar to those enjoyed as employees. Perhaps some of us wanted a means to help further the programs and objectives of the University. And still others wanted to be involved in helping to sponsor educational, charitable, recreational, service and other programs relating to the interests of retired people.

So whatever the reason we all ended up members of ASURA because that organization promotes all of the above mentioned activities. And still, the organization is flexible enough to be the vehicle for untold kinds of activities and ventures.

During the past year we have continued many of the excellent programs that make ASURA worthwhile to our members, to the University and to the community at large. Even though the downturn of the economy had a negative impact on programs such as our popular Veteran’s Day Golf Tournament that had to be cancelled, most other areas seemed to gain momentum and become even stronger.

Successful areas again this year were the Adopt-A-Family program headed by Joan Leard and the Scholarship program managed by Sue Blumer both activities intended to give back to our community and University. Our vigilant trio of Alan Johnson, Jerry Aronson and Dick Murra kept us informed in such critical areas as the state retirement system, legislative actions and insurance options. Dave Scheatzle used Prime Times to keep members informed of a variety of matters that members needed to know. Mary Stevens shepherded our Activities Committee with Jo Madonna planning luncheons and social activities and William Stasi organizing trips and travel opportunities. Bob Barnhill’s Education Committee planned and carried out an excellent Retirees Day activity. The Membership Committee under Elmer Gooding turned out some timely and creative work on the membership form and membership renewal drives. And our Video History Project made a sudden spurt of progress under the leadership of Linda Van Scoy with the assistance of Bob Francis. Jim Fordemwalt got us up to speed working with the University Club.

While it is difficult for me to single out certain areas over others there were some preeminent achievements within ASURA this past year which are worthy of special comment. This recognition in no means detracts from the other accomplishments within the association, but nevertheless noteworthy.

**ASURA Web Site.** Our website found at <http://asura.asu.edu> changed to its current format about a year ago. The site contains over 150 pages of material that includes schedules, synopsis of events and

activities, general information and photos. It has a “user friendly” format and the site is fairly well used by both members and the general public. The design and layout of the website has been performed by Connie McNeill who enjoys utilizing her computer skills and Internet knowledge. We can all be proud of the first-class website that brings our organization into state-of-the-art website design. Connie’s expertise and skills have been used to benefit our group and bring us into the high-tech world.

**Bylaws Update.** Back in 2002-2003 the officers and board of ASURA attempted to update the original association bylaws but for some unknown reason the process was never completed. The need to update the bylaws was evident and Mary Stevens, vice president of ASURA was asked to chair a committee to update the bylaws. She organized her committee which met regularly during the past fiscal year to consider needed changes. Once the committee was agreed on the changes in bylaws, the changes were discussed and re-discussed by the Board of Directors and refined to final form. In accordance with the bylaws, the changes were submitted to the membership for vote and were subsequently approved. ASURA’s bylaws are now current and can carry the organization well into the future.

**Data Base and E-Mail Distribution.** Prior to this year we relied exclusively on a desktop Rolodex file to maintain information on our members. During the past year or so that information has been transferred from a paper-based system to an electronic database. With input and help from Elmer Gooding, Dave Scheatzle, Carolyn Minner and others, Connie McNeill has developed a membership database that can be utilized in a number of different ways, including an e-mail distribution list for all members for whom we have e-mail addresses for about 2/3 of our current membership. This move has paid great dividends in our ability to maintain and upgrade current information on members and to communicate with them at very little or no cost.

**Budget.** The ASU Retiree’s Association was formed in 1991 although the idea and desire of forming such an association dates back to the 1940s. Its membership dues were initially set at \$10 per year and have never changed. The reason the organization could operate on such a small amount was that various entities within ASU helped to fund its ongoing operations by providing office space, furniture, equipment and some operating expenses. Volunteerism has always been a part of the operation and costs were kept at a minimum. While records of income and expenses of available funds were accurately tabulated, a formal operating budget was never developed or mandated. For the good of the organization and in fairness to ASU, a budget was needed to better define income and expenditures. With the help of Carolyn Minner, business manager, a budget for 2008-2009 was developed, presented to the Board of Directors and adopted. Over time this budget will need to be refined and updated to meet the needs of the organization, but we now have the means to better justify and account for the funds needed and used for ASURA and its programs. It gives a degree of accountability that is needed for the association.

## ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE



The major activities for ASURA members this year were planned by the Luncheon and Travel Committees. Evelyn Partridge worked diligently to arrange a workshop on writing personal histories with a faculty member from the Polytechnic campus but unfortunately, there were not a sufficient number of enrollees to proceed. Many members indicate on their membership applications that they are interested in this activity and ASURA will again attempt to make

arrangements to provide a workshop or guidance in this regard in the coming year. Following are the reports of the Luncheon and Travel Committees.

Marv Stevens

The Luncheon Committee organized three luncheons for the ASURA membership during FY 2008-2009. Active committee members included co-chairs Bonnie Scheall and Jo Madonna, and Richard Kelly.

### Luncheons



Jo Madonna

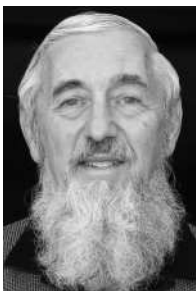
**Fall Luncheon.** This luncheon was held on Tuesday, October 28, 2008 from 11:30am – 1:30pm at the Fred Holmes Party Room of the Karsten Golf Course Club House. The cost was \$26.00 per person and this amount covered the cost of luncheon buffet, tax and tip. Fifty-two (52) members sent in reservations for the event; 41 attended and 11 were no shows. The food was very good. The general noise from the general dining room did bleed into our private dining room and this was distracting during the presentation by our guest speaker.

The guest speaker was Rob Spindler, University Archivist and Head of the Department of Archives and Special Collections at Arizona State University Libraries. He shared his multimedia presentation entitled, “*The Long Road to Excellence: 123 Years of Arizona State University.*” This included rare photos and documents on the history of ASU. Everyone seemed to immensely enjoy the presentation.

**Holiday Party.** For the first time, the Holiday party was a Potluck Luncheon, rather than cookies and desserts. Members were invited to bring whatever type of food they wanted to share. The party was held on Tuesday, December 2, 2008 from 11:30 – 1:30 pm in a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classroom of the ASU Community Services Building Room 201, 200 E. Curry, Tempe. The potluck was a great success with a large variety of delicious dishes that included salads, main dishes, desserts and breads. There was no charge for this event. About 50 of our members enjoyed camaraderie, great food and the holiday spirit.

**Spring Luncheon.** The Spring Luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2009 from 11:45am – 3:00pm at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, 5247 E. Brown Road, Mesa, AZ. This luncheon will include the performance of the Broadway musical “*Ring of Fire,*” a celebration of the songs of the legendary Johnny Cash. The cost will be \$43.00 per person and includes the show, lunch, taxes and gratuity.

### Travel



The Travel Committee was reenergized between the last annual meeting and this year. With support from Mary Stevens and Pat Moore, the Travel Committee put together a Spring Southern Arizona Wine / Cultural trip in 2008. This was followed with a November 2008 local cultural trip to Cosanti/Taliesin West in Phoenix. Participants traveled by a chartered bus to a guided tour of Cosanti, followed by lunch at the El Chorro Lodge in Scottsdale and a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin West by a Taliesin student and return to the Tempe Public Library, where participants parked.

William Stasi

The group continued to follow through in 2009 with an event in February at ASU “*We Love ASU Collections*”. The balance of the year has other trips planned including a three-day bus trip in April to Canyon de Chelly and the Hopi reservation in northern Arizona with 42 registered participants, and in the Fall on the Verde Canyon Railroad.

In 2010 a trip is planned to China. Together these trips will have provided greater than (100) members, friends, and guests an opportunity to enjoy many adventures and develop new acquaintances and socialize with fellow colleagues. The Travel Committee had a goal to provide one more trip in 2009 than 2008. We have exceeded that mark. Another goal was to improve a system of communicating with members who sign up for travel activities. With support from Carolyn Minner, Carol Moore and the office staff, a computer program was developed and members were notified of confirmation on a trip. This also provided an email address and telephone contact to follow up with additional information. With support from Connie McNeill, the ASURA web site was improved to provide information, graphics and registration forms on each trip. The Travel Committee has made great strides over the last year. Individuals interested in planning future travel activities or joining this group should contact [wstasi@asu.edu](mailto:wstasi@asu.edu)

Earlier this year Gary Anderson, a member of the Travel Committee, developed a travel questionnaire, which was distributed to Board members at the February meeting and to members at Retirees Day. The questionnaire can be found on the ASURA home page. The committee desires input from the membership for future travel planning.

## **BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT**



Marv Stevens

At the commencement of the 2008-2009-year, the most recent version of the ASURA Bylaws was dated February 8, 2001. Revisions were proposed and approved in November 2002, but inadvertently were not incorporated.

During the summer 2008, ASURA President Val Peterson appointed an ad hoc committee to review the ASURA Bylaws and recommend amendments, if any, to the ASURA Board for review and discussion and subsequent submission to the membership for approval or rejection. The members of the Bylaws Committee were Mary Stevens, Chair, Alan Johnson, Douglas Johnson, Lois Lehman, Connie McNeill and Carolyn Minner. Alan Johnson explained the history of the 2002 revisions and provided the committee with the text of those revisions, which the committee considered in the review process.

The committee met weekly for six weeks and recommended changes in some of the text and format as well as some reorganization of the articles. Connie McNeill used a projector and screen to enable the committee to revise the Bylaws from the text projected onto a screen. She input revisions following discussion and approval. Connie’s method greatly expedited the process and allowed the committee to work together as a whole.

The committee revised a total of ten drafts in a format that struck-through deleted text and capitalized new text. The committee also reorganized some of the Articles to include all of the provisions on a subject in one article. For example, Article IV. “Board of Directors” contains all of the provisions on the Board, including purpose, composition, eligibility, term and elections.



Much of the struck-through text was not deleted but moved to another Article. For example, Article VIII, “Composition of the Board” is struck-through. The language has not been deleted but moved Article IV.B under “Board of Directors”.

The most significant revisions include:

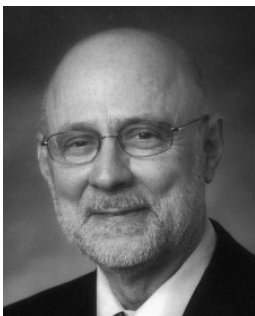
1. Dues, Article III.B. The 2001 Bylaws stated annual dues of ten (10) dollars for members and five (5) dollars for associate members. While a change in dues may not be contemplated at this time, it is possible that a change could be considered in the future. If dues are specified in the Bylaws, a change must be effected through an amendment, requiring approval by the membership. The 2009 Bylaws provide responsibility to the Board for setting annual dues. Associate members will have voting rights because they pay dues.
2. Elections, Article IV.E. The amended Bylaws add deadlines and a provision for the Executive Committee to count ballots submitted by members during elections of new Board members.
3. Changes to Standing Committees, Article VI. Some of the titles and responsibilities of standing committees changed as follows:
  - a. Legislative Liaison Council to Government Liaison Council
  - b. Education and Activities Committees to Events Committee with sub-subcommittees for various programs and activities
  - c. Health Insurance to Health Insurance Liaison Committee
  - d. Membership to Membership and Communications Committee
  - e. The creation of a new committee, the Community Outreach Committee with subcommittees for programs such Adopt-a-Family, Golf Tournament, Scholarships, Video History and Volunteers
  - f. Deletion of the Finance committee because its duties are performed by Treasurer.

The Committee provided proposed amendments to the Board prior to the regular December Board meeting. The Board discussed the proposed amendments during its regular meeting on December 10, 2008 and additional revisions were incorporated. The Board approved the amendments in a special meeting on January 7, 2009.

Connie McNeill prepared a ballot form for use by members in voting to approve or reject the proposed amendments. On January 28, 2009, President Peterson forwarded a copy of the proposed amendments, which showed new and deleted text and the ballot to current ASURA members, requesting return of ballots through mail or email by February 27, 2009.

Val Peterson, Connie McNeill, Carolyn Minner and Doug Johnson counted ballots on March 3, 2009. 193 ballots were received. 191 members voted to approve and 2 members voted to reject the amendments. The amended Bylaws will become the new ASURA Bylaws on April 16, 2009 when the new Board members and officers assume office. The Bylaws are available on the ASURA home page, <http://asura.asu.edu>.

The drafts of the proposed revisions and other related documentation are available in the “Bylaws” file in the ASURA office.



## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE: ANNUAL RETIREE’S DAY**

Each year the ASURA sponsors a day of presentations on modern themes suggested by the members. The program is designed to provide diversity of subjects and presenters. This year's gala occasion was held on Saturday, February 21, 2009 in the Memorial Union on the ASU Tempe Campus. The program included presentations on Sudan by Mathew Betz, Sustainability by Matthew Fraser, the 2008 Presidential Election by Bruce Merrill, the Global Economic Crisis by Stephen Happel, Architecture Across Country Borders by Juan Jaime de la Torre, and the ASU Biodesign Institute by Kimberly Ovitt. Congressman Harry Mitchell, the luncheon speaker, spoke about current trends in the new Congress. Approximately 100 ASURA members participated in the Day. The ASURA participants seemed to enjoy the excellent presentations, as well as the fellowship with their fellow ASURA members and the speakers.

Robert Barnhill

The Education Committee: Robert Barnhill, Chair, Sue Blumer, Dennis Ederer, Bruce Mason, Wilma Matthews and Mary Stevens. The members of the Education Committee each had responsibility for at least one of the invited speakers; this procedure worked well. They also had responsibility for many other tasks, some undefined, about which see Recommendations for the Future below.

Many people helped the Education Committee, including ASURA President Val Peterson, the ASURA Board and, more specifically, Carol Moore, Carol Berg, Linda Van Scoy, Carolyn Minner, Connie McNeil, Zeke Prust, and Joan Leard. It is strength and a weakness that so many people, especially staff, are involved in Retirees' Day.

### **Recommendations for the Future**

**Strengths of the Current Arrangement.** The ASURA volunteers, the Education Committee and the ASURA staff, are capable, dedicated, and are willing to spend the time that it takes to put on an excellent program. Speakers prepare fine presentations and are willing to spend a Saturday with the ASURA. The good will of both the volunteers and the speakers needs to be maintained.

**Weaknesses of the Current Arrangement.** There should be structure within the Education Committee and people recruited for the specific positions. The Chair should oversee the whole process, but be responsible for less detail than is currently the case. There should be a Chief of Staff, a role that Mary Stevens took on this time, who assigns/follows up on the many components of Retirees' Day. There should be a Chief of Operations, involving the food, MU arrangements and similar activities, a role that Sue Blumer took on this time. Finally, there should be specific ASURA staff assigned to help with Retirees' Day. One logistics item re the presentations: speakers should be asked to bring their own laptops and ASURA should ensure that there is one spare laptop available at the Retirees Day site, to avoid possible problems.

**Summary.** ASURA Retirees' Day is worthy of continuation. However, putting on a successful program takes more time and effort than can easily be imagined. To make Retirees' Day sustainable, in a completely volunteer organization, there needs to be better upfront allocation of tasks within both the Education Committee and the ASURA staff.

## **HEALTH & DENTAL INSURANCE COMMITTEE**



Dick Murra

Considering the overall ADOA Benefit Options for 2009, ASURA is once again fortunate to have a stable health and dental insurance selection offered to our members. Domestic partners and children over the age of eighteen but younger than 25 may now be included in members health and dental plans within certain qualifications. While the number of dental insurance providers

were reduced from four to two for pre-paid plans and from two to one for PPO plans, we gained by providing three tiers for premium determination. This change provided a premium reduction to most retiree family units that usually consist of two persons.

Hearing aids allowance was increased from \$2,000 per year to \$1,500 per year per ear. Repair and cleaning of these devices will now be covered.

Medical management changes were introduced to make sure our health insurance needs are met in a cost effective manner. Secure Horizons now offers routine physical exams and routine hearing exams with no co-pay. The premium structure is still in line with prior years.

Currently the primary concern regarding benefits is what will happen for 2010. The status of the economy and the legislative actions now being passed and planned lends an area of concern. The impact on our state budget may result in a complete review. While there may be no significant impact there is the possibility that some changes may be forthcoming.

## LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COUNCIL



Jerry Aronson

The Legislative Liaison Council (LLC) continues to monitor legislative activities impacting retirees and active (i.e., pre-retirement) employees. We exercise public responsibility also by supporting ASU in its roles as an employer and an educational and research institution. The LLC is chaired currently by Jerry Aronson who utilizes the support of Alan Johnson, Rose Minetti and Bob Mings. Johnson also serves as Chair *Pro Tem* when Aronson is absent due to traveling, etc. In carrying out its mission, LLC interacts on various levels with the ASU administration, the ASU Alumni Association (and its Sun Devil Advocates Network), the Tri-University Retirees Coalition, the Arizona Legislature (through attendance and/or advocacy at committee hearings and email, telephone or face-to-face communication), the Coalition of Arizona State Retirees Associations and the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS). We hope that during the next

year we can establish a more effective rapport with the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA). The Council is authorized by the ASURA Board to lobby the State Legislature in support of or opposition to proposed legislation impacting active employees and retired members. During the 2008-09 year Jerome (Jerry) Aronson succeeded Alan Johnson as the Designated Lobbyist (DL) for ASURA. The DL is responsible for periodic reporting to Secretary of State. Johnson, Minetti and Mings serve as Authorized Lobbyists (AL). The DL and the AL's are equally empowered to represent the Association and all serve without compensation.

During the 2008-2009 year, the Council interacted with other groups sharing common interests. This past Fall, Johnson attended the annual gathering of the Coalition of Arizona State Retiree Associations. In November of 2008, our annual Tri-University Meeting was held in Tempe. Each year, representatives of ASURA, NAURA and UARA meet here to discuss various retiree issues and seek to remedy problems whenever possible. We furnish the meeting facilities every year and luncheon expenses rotate among the three organizations. This year's meeting was concerned primarily with two areas of concern—the financial stability of the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) and health insurance. ASRS Director, Paul Matson addressed the former and ASRS health insurance specialist, Ed Rappaport dealt with the latter. We learned that ASRS is poised to endure the current economic slump but there will be consequences. Defined Benefit Plan retirees (making up the vast majority of ASRS retirees) will continue to receive their full pension, including previous PBI adjustments, but are not likely to receive any

increases for the foreseeable future. While current pension amounts are guaranteed, pension increases will be dependent upon a significant upswing in investment markets. For those retirees receiving a pension from the “old” System (defined contribution plan), the situation is more precarious. A portion of their benefit is **not** guaranteed. It will not be known until later in 2009 if System retiree pensions will be reduced. Unfortunately there is no legislative remedy for this situation. The only remedy is economic recovery. With respect to health insurance, Tri-U representatives were generally pleased with ASRS’s outreach and transparency with respect to their dealings with insurance carriers bidding for ASRS contracts. The same can not be said for ADOA and there was expressed dissatisfaction for the apparent lack of coordination between the two agencies. The lack of ADOA participation at this meeting was a further cause for concern. We hope that ADOA will be represented at our next Tri-U meeting in October, 2009.

We have been observing the current 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, First Regular Session. At present, the Legislature is preoccupied with budgetary issues but proposed legislation affecting ASRS has been introduced. HB2111 proposes a number of changes that would affect future retirees. The sum of age plus years of service required for a full benefit which is currently 80 would be increased to 85. The current 3-year salary average would change to a 5-year average. In addition a terminating employee, electing to leave ASRS, would no longer receive 100% of his/her employer’s contributions, but would be limited to 25% of that amount. These changes would have a long term beneficial effect on the ASRS Fund and the containment of contribution rates. HB2111 also proposes the elimination of the current pension limitation of 80% of salary. This bill received a do pass from the House Committee on Public Employees, Retirement and Entitlement Reform and was supported by ASURA. It awaits action by the House Rules Committee before it can be taken up by the full House. Other bills, HB2112, 2113, 2114 and 2115 deal separately with the four provisions in HB2111. To date none of these have received any House action. Similarly, a companion bill to HB2111, SB1345, has not as yet received any Senate action. We will continue to monitor legislative activity for the balance of the Session and register ASURA support of the above-mentioned bills when they are taken up by House/Senate committees.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



Elmer Gooding

This year the Membership Committee was formally established with the following members: Connie McNeill, Carolyn Minner, David Scheatzle and Elmer Gooding. The committee has developed a database of ASU retirees. We have identified those who have made their annual contribution (donation) as members of ASURA and these retirees are receiving all announcements of activities, invitations to events and through PrimeTimes. There are 692 who have made their annual donation of \$10.00 or more for 2008-2009.

We are excited about the prospect of increasing our membership even more and will mail application/renewal forms to the more than 1300 retirees in our database. This mailing will take place prior to the beginning of the fiscal year for 2009-2010. We hope you will encourage your retiree friends to join the ASURA and take advantage of the services provided by this wonderful organization.

Due to the budget reductions that the University is facing, the level of support to ASURA has been reduced. Therefore, the Board of Directors is considering an increase in the requested donation for members. The Board is also considering establishing life-time memberships for those who donate up to a certain amount (yet to be determined). More information about these changes will be included in the 2009-2010 application/renewal form that will be mailed prior to July 1. We appreciate the support of our members and the outstanding attendance at our events.

## **PRIME TIMES NEWSLETTER**



Dave Scheatzle

In March, we published the Winter 2009 edition of the Prime Times newsletter. This was my twelfth issue (4<sup>th</sup> year) as editor. Three issues per year seem to work the best based on the availability of material. Besides, our budget probably wouldn't allow more issues per year. The ASURA website has been a wonderful addition to our ability to communicate with members. As more and more members become computer literate, we may be able to reduce the frequency of the printed newsletter. In time, our printed Prime Times may go the way of the city newspapers.

Because of budget restrictions, we shopped around for prices for the printing work for the recent issue. Our long time vendor, Canon – based at Noble Library – was not able to meet the price of competitors, Alpha Graphics or Print Smart. The latter bid was 35% lower than Canon, so this issue was produced by Print Smart for \$240 for the 800 copies. Paper stock had been purchased a year ago and we had hoped that it could possibly last for another year or more. This includes 6000 shells (front banner page with the return address on the rear) and roughly 2000 pages of inside matching color stock. However, we have received recent information from the mail room that might require a different placement of the return address. If this is mandatory immediately, we may have to discard the 6000 shells and redesign.

Photographs continue to be an important part of the publication. We need to encourage volunteer photographers at tours and other activities. Also, we should enlist authors of “color” stories, of the type submitted by Dean Smith, on the history of ASU and of members of our ASU retired community.

I am hoping that a new Prime Times editor will be found from the returns of membership applications. It can be a fun experience. We have a template that allows the publication to be assembled easily with Microsoft Word. Being the editor is a good way to get to know all that is going on in the organization and provides the opportunity to attend our monthly Board meetings.

## **ARIZONA STATE RETIREMENT SYSTEM**



Alan Johnson

In the past year the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) has continued to improve the efficiency of its operations and to receive national recognition as a “top performer” among public retirement funds. However, as the U.S. and global economies have struggled with a severe credit crisis and stock-market values have plunged, the ASRS fund has also suffered. It is important to remember that, as the ASRS's outside investment consultant observed in its February 2009 Board of Trustees meeting, the ASRS's “conservative” approach to investment has resulted in less loss than many other retirement funds have experienced. It is reassuring, too, that Article 29 of the Arizona Constitution protects the ASRS fund from being raided for other purposes and protects its contractually guaranteed benefits from being “diminished or impaired.”

At the last official valuation of the ASRS fund, on June 30, 2008, it had 548,857 members. Of these, 92,673 were retirees or surviving beneficiaries receiving retirement benefits. Most of those receiving retirement benefits are enrolled in the ASRS “Plan,” which was instituted in

1971. About 1656 retirees or their surviving beneficiaries are enrolled in the ASRS “System,” which originated in 1953 and closed to new members with the advent of the “Plan.”

From June 30, 2007, to June 30, 2008, the value of the ASRS fund fell from \$28 billion to \$26.1 billion; its annual earnings fell from +17.8% to -7.6%; and the actuarially funded status of the total Plan (the ratio of its assets in relation to its anticipated expenses over a prospective thirty-year period) fell from 82.8% to 82.2%. Calculated with the market value of the fund, without adjustments for actuarial factors, from 2007 to 2008 the funding ratio slipped from 86.4% to 74.7%. The decline in value, earnings, and funding ratio was largely due to the sub-prime mortgage crisis which erupted in August 2007. As this crisis widened into a general and global credit crisis in 2008, ASRS earnings fell to -8.2% in the third quarter of 2008 and to -14.1% in the fourth quarter. Earnings for the year 2008-2009 are expected to sink below -20%. The value of the fund in February 2009 was \$18.9 billion. The ASRS and its outside investment consultant expect the first significant signs of recovery to appear in late 2009 or early 2010.

Plan members receive a totally guaranteed retirement benefit based on the multiple of their years of service X their average salary over a three-year period prior to retirement X a “multiplier” (.021-.025 depending on years of service). Retirees in the Plan receive a mid-year Permanent Benefit Increase (PBI) if the retrospective 10-year average earnings of the ASRS fund exceed 8%. PBI’s were awarded in 1996-2005. These added benefits cannot be taken away. Financial downturns in 2001-2003 and 2008 have prevented PBI’s since 2005. Another PBI is not anticipated in the near future.

System members receive a retirement benefit based on the accumulation of employee and employer contributions during the member’s working years, plus 8% annual interest, plus supplemental credits accumulated during the working years when ASRS earnings exceed 8%. During retirement the System member may receive a “13<sup>th</sup> check” based on ASRS earnings that exceed 8%. The portion of the benefit based on the employer and employee contributions and the accumulated 8% interest is contractually guaranteed. By ASRS rule, if the System’s market-value funding ratio falls in the range of 95-105% the 13<sup>th</sup> check will not increase, and if the ratio falls below 95% the amount of 13<sup>th</sup> check will be decreased. In a “Special Notice” of February 3, 2009, the ASRS warns that, after the annual valuation of the System on June 30, 2009, a decrease in the 13<sup>th</sup> check may be necessary.

ASRS information is available at [www.azasrs.gov](http://www.azasrs.gov) and at its Members Service Center, 602-240-2000 or 1-800-621-3778. Throughout the year, ASURA has maintained personal contact with the ASRS by attendance at meetings of its Board of Trustees and occasional conversations with ASRS officers.

## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE



Sue Blumer

The Scholarship Committee met in April 2008 to select the recipient of this year’s scholarship, Elizabeth Harris, a gerontology studies student at ASU. She presented an outstanding academic record as well as a mature, focused career goal. She has worked in assisted living facilities organizing activities and plans to prepare for a career in managing facilities for a senior population. In well-organized letters, she expressed her gratitude for her scholarship and a hope that she can someday help to contribute toward scholarships for students like her.

This scholarship program provides an important means for members to participate in the lives of current students on all our campuses and to see what unusual and diverse life stories these students bring to the university.

Most of these students face long years to complete their undergraduate degrees and graduate work. Since

they are recently students, further delays make it difficult for them to fulfill their potential. Thus, our scholarship, which provides \$5,000 for the academic year, is a powerful means to help one student at a time.

The committee will meet soon to select the scholarship recipient for next year. Committee members have provided valuable ideas and input in the selection process and for the conditions and languages of the offering. Last year, the Board approved opening the scholarship to students who have already matriculated at ASU if they are within the first two semesters of attendance. The Scholarship Committee had recommended this change, and their service on the committee has been most helpful.

The excellent students who apply for the scholarship make selection difficult but rewarding. Their diverse interests and background, their excellent academic and community achievements, and their academic and professional goals continue the ASU tradition.

### **ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM**



Joan Leard

Two families were adopted for this school year. One family of two from the Tempe Elementary School District #3 and one family of three from ASU. The Tempe family consists of a mother who is single and going to school full-time with a seven year old son. She says that they work as a team at home doing homework together after school and cooking together. She says he especially loves art and so we have included art supplies in the packages of clothing and food we have given to them.

The ASU family consists of a mother and father, both students at ASU, and a son 6 years old. The mother says they are very earth conscious and into healthy organic foods. They are all interested in art and hand made crafts. She is a photography and art education major and loves books about hand-made arts and crafts or art projects for kids. We helped them with art & craft supplies as well as clothing and food.

The funds used for these purchases come from ASURA member donations and the ASURA treasury. With your help we will continue to give two families struggling with education for a better life and everyday expenses a helping hand. Please continue to donate so we may keep this outreach program alive and well for many more years.

### **LIVING HISTORY VIDEO PROJECT**



Linda Van Scov

The ASU Retirees Association Living History Video Project (LHVP) is pleased to report all 49 interviews that have been conducted are available on DVD. The interviews have also been transcribed in digital and hard copy format. The DVDs may be borrowed from or viewed in the ASURA office. The average run time is 1-1.5 hours.

The LHVP committee has recommended approximately 15 individuals for the next series of interviews which are being scheduled in two sessions, one this spring and one in the fall. Committee members include: Marvin Fisher, Bob Francis, Elmer Gooding, Ed Nelsen, June Payne, David Scheatzle, Pam

Stevenson (professional advisor), Linda Van Scoy (chair) and Hal White.

Nominations for retired faculty and staff as candidates for consideration are welcome. Please send nominations with a brief justification to:

ASU Living History Video Project  
ASU Retirees Association  
PO Box 873308  
Tempe, AZ 85287-3308

OR

E-Mail: lvs@asu.edu

A goal for the coming year is to make the full videos available on the ASURA web site in addition to 3-5-minute highlights of each interview.

The following is a list of the interviews available on DVD:

Charles Backus (Engineering and East/Polytechnic Campus) ,Loretta Bardwyck (Nursing), Mat Betz (Civil Engineering/Administration), Ellamae Branstetter (Nursing), Brent Brown (Public Affairs & Institutional Advancement), Lattie Coor (President), Troy Crowder (Journalism and Telecommunications), Don Dotts (Alumni Association), Roy Doyle (Education) , John Edwards (Education), Bob Ellis (KAET-TV), James W. Elmore (Architecture), Hal Fearon (Purchasing/Management), Margaret Gisolo (Dance), Marvin Fisher (Languages and Literatures), Elmer Gooding (Economics/Administration), Leonard Gordon (Sociology), Betty Greathouse (Curriculum and Instruction), Eugene Grigsby (Art), William Huizingh (Accounting), Bill Kajikawa (Athletics), Denis Kigin (Technology, and Continuing Education & Summer Sessions), Frank Kush (Athletics, football), Beth Lessard (Dance), Eugene Lombardi (Music, University Symphony Orchestra), Bruce Mason (Political Science), Alan Matheson (Law), Gerry McSheffrey (Architecture and West campus), Arlene Metha (Counseling Psychology), Victor J. Miller (Agriculture), Carleton Moore (Chemistry and Geology, meteorites), George Morrell (Purchasing), Dick Murra (Human Resources), Russell Nelson (President, Business), Lonnie Ostrom (Development & ASU Foundation), Bonnie Peplow (News Bureau), Anne M. Pittman (Physical Education, tennis), Ross Rice (Political Science), Gale Richards (Human Communication), Frank Sackton (Public Affairs and many other hats!), Nick Salerno (English), Wilma Schwada (former ASU first lady) , Leon Shell (Student Affairs), Dean Smith (ASU Historian, Publications), Rudy Turk (Art Museum), George Umberson (Music), Linda Van Scoy (Provost's Office), Bobby Winkles (baseball). There is also a videotaped "roundtable discussion" with Brent Brown, Russell Nelson and Frank Sackton.

## UNIVERSITY CLUB LIAISON



Zeke Prust resigned as the Liaison for ASURA to the University Club in November 2008, and Jim Fordemwalt was appointed to replace him. The next University Club Board meeting was held on February 17, 2009. Jim attended that meeting and introduced himself as Prust's replacement.

At that meeting the University Club, Board President Larry Hilton reported that the membership had declined slightly, as well as the revenues, which was not surprising, considering the condition of the local and national economy.



Jim Fordemwalt      The Club's Board feels a need to send out a new questionnaire to the membership and Jim was appointed to the committee formed to prepare a questionnaire. The Board is considering a new membership drive but no final decision or action has been determined.

## **WEB SITE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **ASURA Web Site**



Connie McNeill

ASURA's Web site, <http://asura.asu.edu> "went live" in its current form about one year ago. During this first year of its existence it has grown to contain over 150 pages of information. New information is being added all the time. The site seeks to provide information of interest to our membership, including information on events, on people, and on such "hot topics" as volunteering and health care. We especially like to have lots of interesting photos of our people and activities, and Val Peterson and Dave Scheatzle are great at providing photos.

The site is fairly well used, currently averaging between 400 and 500 "hits" per day, typically involving 40-50 "visits". Between 400 and 600 different "sites" are accessing us each month – most of these are individual people, but some are automated processes, such as indexing engines. A majority of people are coming directly to our site, but a large number are also finding us using search engines or the ASU index.

The Web site is housed at no cost to the ASURA on a server provided through ASU's Web hosting services.

In addition to information available to "the general public", the ASURA Web site contains information that is available to authorized users on ASURA operations. We hope to expand this area and its use in the coming year, so that those who volunteer with the ASURA have a convenient means of finding out about policies and procedures involved in doing their work.

In future, we hope that some ASURA members will want to author articles that others can respond to and comment on -- our site does allow for "blogging", and this is a great way to get people involved in discussions of "hot topics".

### **ASURA E-mail Distribution Lists**

Since there is a significant reduction in available funds for sending information to members through surface mail, we will need to rely more and more on electronic communication. We currently have an e-mail distribution list for all members for whom we have e-mail addresses – this is about 2/3 of our membership currently. We also have an e-mail distribution list for retirees and others who are not currently members, but who are eligible to be members and to whom we occasionally mail information. Finally, we have a shared distribution list for Board members and others who regularly attend Board meetings. We encourage every ASU retiree who has an e-mail address to provide it to us. This can be done by phone, mail, FAX or e-mail – see <http://asura.asu.edu/contact>. Also please remember to inform

us if you change your e-mail address. Or, better yet, use the ASU electronic post office to maintain an e-mail address that will remain constant even if you change ISPs (Internet Service Providers). For information on why and how to do this, see <http://asura.asu.edu/UsingEPO>.

Our distribution lists are currently using Listserv technology, made available to us at no cost by ASU. Listservs have the advantage of being useable by anyone with an e-mail account and proper authorization, and they automatically archive all messages in a place that is accessible by members. However, they are restrictive in terms of being able to use graphics. We are currently discussing whether to stay with this technology or to switch to using Outlook/Exchange in order to have an upgraded “look” to our e-mail communications.

### **ASURA Office Technology**

During this past year, the ASURA has made a major change in the way it keeps information about members and potential members: we switched from a mainly paper-based system to an electronic database

Elmer Gooding chaired a meeting in which we agreed on what information we initially needed in our database (and therefore what we have on our Membership Application/Renewal Form), and he worked with ASU’s Human Resources to obtain a machine-readable list of new retirees each quarter. Dave Scheatzle developed a Microsoft Access-based application for maintaining the membership records, and loaded it with data from a variety of paper sources and from an Excel spreadsheet that he and others had worked on. We “went live” with the new membership database in June 2008.

In July 2008 I took over responsibility for the database, and have revised it to improve ease of use and ease of maintenance. The database is on an ASU server so that those who need access can get to it from “anywhere”, and can share it reasonably easily. We are using the database to generate mailing files for ASU Mail Services, and have generated several special “one-time” reports to use for such things as recruiting committee members and office volunteers, validating votes in our recent election, and targeting people to receive the recent survey on travel interests.

During the coming months, we expect to expand access to the database so that office volunteers can use it, and we expect to begin using it to record event attendance. This will help us determine, for example, whether we are getting a good response for our events via e-mail announcements.

In addition to creating the database, we switched from more or less manual bookkeeping to maintaining our budget and income/expense records using Quicken. Carolyn Minner did the bulk of this work, working with Val Peterson and other officers to create a chart of accounts and a budget that meets our needs. Carolyn interacts with our “bank”, the ASU Foundation, electronically, and reconciles the books in Quicken with the reports she gets from the Foundation.

We installed new computers in the office in early 2008, so we did not need to upgrade those this year. We did make an improvement in the way the office printer is connected during this past year (it seemed like this was much more difficult than it should have been!).

If money were available to do so, it would be desirable to obtain a projector in the coming year to use to help make our meetings as effective and productive as possible. We had good success with using a projector and computer during this year’s Bylaws Committee meetings, when the Nursing College kindly allowed us to use one of their classrooms. Nursing will be moving Downtown soon, so we will likely not have ready access to a facility that has this kind of “effective meeting” technology unless we are able to acquire it ourselves.

Lastly, we need to identify a volunteer or volunteers to provide more “depth” to our technology team. We should have at least two people who can help maintain each facet of the technology that we are relying on for effective operations!

## **TREASURER’S REPORT**



Ted Carv

As the fiscal year 2008-2009 draws to a close I wish to thank ASURA for the opportunity I have had as serving as Treasurer of the organization for the past year. It has been rewarding and has given me the opportunity to see the hard work and dedication of members serving as Officers and Board members of the association. I have had the opportunity to work closely with Carolyn Minner, ASURA Business Manager and appreciate her dedication and desire to spend resources wisely and to oversee the budget management for our group. Current budget reports are included in this report.

I was supportive of the effort this year to develop an approved operating budget for ASURA. The current weak economic conditions within state and university budgets dictate that our organization, which was established to operate as an entity of the university, develop guidelines for our operations and expenditures. Even though there has not been a formal budget utilized in the past, it has been my observation while serving on the Board and this year as Treasurer that income and expenditures of available funds were properly expended and accounted for. While I believe the operating budget as adopted may need to be adjusted in the future to meet the needs of the organization, it is a start for maintaining prudent operation standards for the association.

In approving the budget this year the Board also approved the separation of the Operating budget from the Special Events budget. The Special Events budget consists of funds generated in the past from the annual Veteran’s Day Golf Tournament. These funds are restricted funds that are only to be expended for special projects such as the ASURA Living History Video project and the Scholarship program and other special projects approved by the Board of Directors. It was felt that these funds should not be co-mingled. This Financial Report includes a current accounting of both the Operating Budget and the Special Events Budget which are shown on the following two pages.

I would like to add to this report that I feel that that members of ASURA should be asked to pay a bit more of the operating costs of the association through a reasonable increase in the dues structure. Current dues of \$10 per year are far below those of other similar groups and peer associations. Even so, given the weak economy, I suggest that any increases be made only after an overall assessment of needs and implementation of cost saving practices and procedures.

OPERATIONS FINANCIAL REPORT - PERIOD ENDING 3/20/2009

Category	Actual YTD Income/Expense	Funds Available
FUNDS AVAILABLE 7/1/2008		40,867
LESS TRANSFER TO SPECIAL PROJECTS ACCOUNT*		<u>23,459</u>
ADJUSTED FUNDS AVAILABLE 7/1/2008		17,408
INCOME AS OF 3/20/2009		
A1-00 Membership Dues		
A1-10 Membership - Renewals	795	
A1-20 Membership - New	280	
A2-00 Public Affairs Support	7,780	
A3-00 Miscellaneous Revenue		
A3-10 Adopt-A-Family	200	
A3-30 Retirees Day	2,002	
A3-40 Luncheons & Activities	5,192	
A3-50 Donations	<u>1,278</u>	
TOTAL INCOME AS OF 3/20/2009		<u>17,527</u>
EXPENSE AS OF 3/20/2009		
B1-00 Operations		
B1-10 Printing Service	2,205	
B1-20 Mail Service	5,073	
B1-30 Office Supplies	207	
B2-00 Equipment		
B2-10 Office Equipment	756	
B3-00 Miscellaneous Expense		
B3-10 Adopt-A-Family	986	
B3-20 Scholarship Award	5,000	
B3-30 Retirees Day	2,389	
B3-40 Luncheons & Activities	3,333	
B3-65 Annual Meeting	0	
B3-70 Refreshments/Entertainment	0	
B3-75 Volunteer Staff Luncheon	0	
B3-80 Petty Cash	250	
B4-00 Foundation Fees	<u>223</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSE AS OF 3/20/2009		<u>20,422</u>
FUNDS AVAILABLE AS OF 3/20/2009		<u><u>14,513</u></u>

\*Income and expense relative to Video History Project

SPECIAL EVENTS FINANCIAL REPORT - PERIOD ENDING 3/20/2009		
Category	Actual YTD Income/Expense	Funds Available
FUNDS AVAILABLE 7/1/2008		14,730
LESS TRANSFER FROM OPERATIONS ACCOUNT*		<u>23,459</u>
ADJUSTED FUNDS AVAILABLE 7/1/2008		38,189
INCOME AS OF 3/20/2009		
A2-00 Public Affairs Support	<u>112</u>	
TOTAL INCOME AS OF 3/20/2009		<u>112</u>
EXPENSE AS OF 3/20/2009		
B6-00 Foundation Fees	79	
B7-00 Video History Expense		
B7-20 Video Production	3,918	
B7-30 Postage	11	
B7-40 Supplies	<u>23</u>	
TOTAL EXPENSE AS OF 3/20/2009		<u>4,031</u>
FUNDS AVAILABLE AS OF 3/20/2009		<u><u>34,270</u></u>

\*Income and expense relative to Video History Project





