



# COPRA CHRONICLE

Issued by and for the City of Phoenix Retirees Association  
*Your advocate in pension and insurance matters*

January 2009

**MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH**

Issue 6

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### MEMBERSHIP

Changed your address or phone number??? For address and/or telephone number changes, or for any questions about your COPRA membership, please contact Marvin Roelse, Membership Chairman. Marvin can be reached by telephone at (480) 288-1046, or by mail at: COPRA Chronicle, 10701 E. Peralta Canyon Dr., Gold Canyon, AZ 85218, or by e-mail at [marvinr567@msn.com](mailto:marvinr567@msn.com)

## Reverse Mortgage Update

Many retirees, age 62 or older, face a dilemma. On the one hand, they would like to stay in their homes. On the other hand, they often need more money for health care, daily expenses and other purposes than they get from Social Security, pension or investments.

One solution is a "reverse mortgage." These loans provide tax-free cash flow by tapping into the senior's home equity. The borrower can stay in the home, and doesn't have to make mortgage payments (just origination fees, which are typically taken from the home's equity) as long as he/she lives in the house. When the home owner dies or moves out, the house is sold to pay off the loan.

In the past, many seniors have been wary of reverse mortgages because of the high fees charged. Also, loan amounts have been capped at levels that did not appeal to some owners of expensive homes.

Last summer, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 was signed into law. Under prior law, the "origination fee" that lenders could charge ranged up to 2% of the home's value or 2% of the lending limit, whichever was lower. In many areas of the U.S. that lending limit was a home value of \$362,790. Therefore, the origination fee for a reverse mortgage could easily be \$7,255 (2% of \$362,790.)

The maximum fee under the new law is now 2% of the first \$200,000 of the home's value and 1% of the remainder, with a total cap of \$6,000. The lending limit has also been raised to \$417,000, from \$200,160. In certain expensive housing markets, the lending limit will be higher; up to \$625,500, with the cap at \$6,000.

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# President's Message

Happy New Year to all the retirees and their families as we start 2009. We all hope and pray that 2009 will move us forward out of this terrible recession and become more prosperous for everyone. As of this writing we still do not know the level of cuts that are going to take place within the City of Phoenix and put our trust in the Mayor and City Council to continue to do everything in their power to preserve jobs and services. We also do not know the status of the Retiree PEP Fund for 2009 but suspect that the news will not be that positive reflecting the status of the stock market and fund balances. Of course your pension remains safe as part of the overall Retirement System of the City of Phoenix.

The Holiday Luncheon and Annual Meeting that closed out the work of COPRA for 2008 brought out almost 200 members and we thank all of them for joining us for this festive occasion. The Planning Committee for this event including Donna Lewis and Cindy Hasker, assisted by Gary Gross and Marvin Roelse, are due a great deal of thanks by the board and all the COPRA members for their efforts to make this event the success it was. The turnout broke all previous records and we had to go to the larger hall for the event. If you missed the event we hope you will make this year's. The new COPRA 2009 Board was confirmed at the annual meeting held in conjunction with the luncheon and congratulations to all the incumbents and new board members that were voted in at this meeting. Of course, we also had to say goodbye to four dedicated board members, Cindy Hasker, Bruce Selden, Nancy Iverson, and Jim Flanagan. We again thank them for the many years of service to COPRA and the retiree community.

The COPRA Board will be meeting in January to start planning for the three big membership meetings of the year and also to elect table officers (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary) so we have a lot of work ahead. Although the exact dates will not be finalized until the January Board meeting, as a reminder, late March will bring the first of these membership meetings.

The first meeting will again involve Retirement and Pension matters. Kerry Wangberg, now serving on our board and also as the newly appointed retiree representative to the COPERS Board, will be working with the rest of us, and Donna Beulow and her Retirement Office staff, in putting this meeting together. Based on the outcome of last year's meeting, we look forward to another exciting and informative meeting and will share more with you in next month's newsletter.

Again, Happy New Year.....

Jack Thomas  
President

## COPERS Website

You may want to check out the COPERS (City of Phoenix Employees' Retirement System) website. It has a section for "Retirees" which gives valuable information about the 2009 schedule for pension checks, PEP, 13th Check, and Social Security increase history. You can access the site through [www.phoenix.gov/phxcopers](http://www.phoenix.gov/phxcopers).

Our COPRA website [www.msusers.com/cityofphoenixretireesassociation](http://www.msusers.com/cityofphoenixretireesassociation) will be changing in February. More information about the changes in the upcoming newsletter.

# New Year's Resolution

## Renew Your COPRA Membership

It is recommended that, if you have not renewed your COPRA membership for 2009, you do so now. That would be a great gift for you and your family for the New Year.

If that is a resolution you decide to make:

**Check the mailing label on this Chronicle for the "Dues Paid Thru:" year. If the "Dues Paid Thru:" year is "2008", you should renew your COPRA membership now!**

As a retiree, it is important that you stay abreast of events happening in the City that may have an impact on your benefits and the retirement fund. Please renew your membership today. As our motto on the front page of the Chronicle says, "Membership is Our Strength."

The 2009 dues are still \$7.00 for Singles and \$10.00 for Couples. The dues special is still available so if you pay dues for 4 years (\$28.00 Singles; \$40.00 Couples), you get credit for 5 years. To renew your COPRA membership, send a check payable to "COPRA" to the following address:

COPRA  
% Marvin Roelse  
10701 East Peralta Canyon Drive  
Gold Canyon, AZ 85218

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## RETIREMENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

The City of Phoenix Employees' Retirement Plan (COPERS) has approved the appointment of newly-elected COPRA board member, Kerry Wangberg, as the retiree member of their nine-member board for a three-year term starting this month. This position has been filled by Jim Flanagan.

The COPERS board is made up of three elected members, four ex-officio members consisting of city staff, a citizen member, and a retiree member (usually recommended by COPRA.)

Kerry, who retired last year as City Prosecutor, previously has served on the COPERS board as an elected member for a couple years so he's aware of the time requirements and challenges of this position. COPRA is fortunate to have his skills on both boards.

We want to thank Jim Flanagan for his dedicated efforts these past three years on the COPRA and COPERS boards.

# Identity Theft

## Tips for you and your Family

### **Practice safe shopping online.**

Never give out your personal information to unsolicited emails, only shop on sites you know you can trust, and make sure the site you're entering your information into is secure. You can tell a site is secure if there is a closed lock in the browser window, or the web address starts with "https".

### **Remove unnecessary items from your wallet.**

When you go out to shop, don't take everything with you. Lost and stolen wallets, checkbooks, and cards account for about 33% of all identity fraud. Only take the card or checkbook you'll be using.

**Download the WalletLock form.** Visit [www.lifelock.com/walletlock](http://www.lifelock.com/walletlock). Print and complete a convenient form to record the contents of your wallet. If your wallet does go missing, have the form on hand and call 1-800-LIFELOCK (543-3562). They will help you cancel and replace the contents quickly.

### **Check your statements as soon as you receive them.**

Keep all of your receipts and as soon as you receive your monthly statement, reconcile it against them. If you find even the smallest discrepancy, notify your bank or credit card company immediately.

**Become a LifeLock member.** The fraud alerts help stop identity thieves by requiring that creditors contact you and/or verify your identity before issuing in-store "instant credit". Instead of an immediate approval, these applications are submitted for review. If the application is found to be fraudulent, it will be denied and the theft stopped, keeping your identity and credit safe.

## Long Term Care Insurance

A long-term care insurance policy is not for everyone. For a limited population, a long-term care policy makes sense as an affordable and worthwhile form of insurance. Buying long-term coverage should not cause financial hardship and force you to forego other financial needs.

In any specific case it is difficult to predict who will need long-term care, but studies point out the likelihood of needing such care. In one study, it is anticipated that 43% of those who turned age 65 in 1990 will enter a nursing home at some time during their life. Of those who live to age 65, nearly 1 in 3 will spend three months or more in a nursing home and 1 in 4 will spend one year or more in a nursing home. Only 1 in 11 will spend five years or more in a nursing home.

Buying a policy is a function of your age, health status, overall retirement objectives, income and wealth. If the only source of income is a minimum Social Security benefit or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), do not purchase a policy. If paying utilities, food or medicine stretches a budget; this person should probably not purchase a policy.

# Control Your Legacy Complete a Beneficiary Form Now

Take control of who receives your 457 and/or 401(a) account assets when you die by filling out a beneficiary form with Nationwide Retirement Solutions TODAY! Whether you have a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan account and/or a 401(a) Plan account, having a designated beneficiary means that you control who receives your benefits if you die before your account is paid out.

Even an out-of-date beneficiary form could override wishes you express in a will. Make sure the form Nationwide has on file is up-to-date. Keep in mind that Beneficiary Designation Forms submitted prior to 2004 are **not** on file with Nationwide; and the 457 / 401(a) Beneficiary Designation form is separate from the beneficiary designation form you previously completed with the city's Retirement Office for your pension.

Your beneficiary designation is reflected on your Nationwide quarterly statement and can now also be accessed from the 457 Plan link to your online account on Nationwide's city of Phoenix website at [www.phoenixdcp.com](http://www.phoenixdcp.com). If you're not sure if you have named a beneficiary, refer to the last page of your latest account statement, or call Nationwide at 602-266-2733 or 1-800-891-4PHX (4749) to confirm your beneficiary information or request a Beneficiary Designation Form. You may also access and print this form through the website under "Plan Details and Forms" / "City of Phoenix Plan Forms".

## Shop Phoenix

For several years now, the city has been urging its residents to shop in Phoenix.

That's because the sales taxes on their purchases support the city's general fund and help pay for police, fire, libraries, parks and other basic services.

Under a plan approved by the City Council, the city will try to solicit responses from businesses located in the city when it seeks bids for many of the goods and services it purchases on a regular basis.

While Phoenix firms currently receive much of the city's business, a number of contracts also go to companies outside of the city and state. City officials are hopeful the plan to get more city businesses involved in the bidding process will help promote job creation while bolstering the city's sales tax revenues.

## Photo Enforcement Don't Get "Snapped"

Arizona's photo radar enforcement is growing dramatically - the state legislature approved the installation of more than 100 new cameras on state freeways to reduce collisions and generate new revenue.

Offenders who are ticketed for speeding 10 miles or more above posted limits on state freeways receive \$165 in civil fines, plus tax, but violations will not be reported to the Motor Vehicle Division for points added to their motor vehicle record.

Photo-enforcement tickets received on city streets or streets other than state-run highways may result in points on the offender's driver's license. In order to keep members informed, AAA Arizona has published an up to date list of stationary freeway camera locations. Visit [AAAaz.com/news/articles/PhotoRadar.htm](http://AAAaz.com/news/articles/PhotoRadar.htm) or visit the DPS website at <http://photoenforcement.azdps.gov/>.

# What Makes Women's Heart Disease Different?

Heart disease in women can be very different than heart disease in men. In fact, some women have symptoms of heart disease and don't even realize it. Certainly, they can experience the classic feeling of an elephant sitting on their chest but it is also possible that their symptoms can be more vague. Less dramatic symptoms, which most women don't associate with heart disease, include nausea, vomiting or pain in the neck, jaw or shoulders.

Many women don't realize that the No.1 cause of death for women is heart disease and is more common than death due to all cancers combined. That's why Arizona Heart Institute recently started a Women's Heart and Wellness program which encourages women to get screened, diagnosed and treated for heart disease early in the disease process. Some women come in when they're 30 to simply get screened just to keep track of their heart health. But usually the age at which a patient should be screened for heart disease depends on family history and other risk factors such as smoking or being overweight. If a patient's mother or father had heart complications in their 40's and 50's then the individual patient should be screened in their 40's and 50's.

Women's Heart and Wellness at Arizona Heart Institute utilizes a simple screening tool called Calcium Score Testing, which evaluates the potential presence of calcium blockage in the coronary arteries. A healthy individual with no evidence of calcium should have a score of zero, but the greater degree of calcium the higher the score will be. It's very simple to take the test, too. The patient just lies on the table and goes through a donut-shaped machine (CT Scanner). This test does not involve any injections, and results are ready in minutes.

In the past, it was hard for women to get the proper testing and screening. They were sometimes told that symptoms they were experiencing were just due to anxiety. Thankfully, that has changed, and we take complaints from women just as seriously as complaints from men.

## EXPERT HEALTH TIP

The best weapon against heart disease is to stay active, lead an active lifestyle and avoid stress. When sedentary, you can gain weight and develop high cholesterol and diabetes, all of which set you up for heart disease. Ideally, exercising a minimum of 30 minutes a day whether by walking, running or any sustained exercise that raises your heart rate, is the best medicine.

*Dr. Shani Saks – Director Women's Heart and Wellness at Arizona Heart Institute*

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## Reverse Mortgage Update

(continued from page one)

In addition to capping fees and raising loan limits, the new law creates rules that promote independence and quality counseling of all potential borrowers. All these changes may make reverse mortgages more attractive to many seniors. With any type loan however, thought and care must go into any decision of this type.

AARP has a reverse mortgage calculator ([www.rmaarp.com](http://www.rmaarp.com)) that tells you how much money you can get under this revised program. A loan counselor can also be located through HUD (800-569-4287, [www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hecm/hecmclist.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hecm/hecmclist.cfm)). *Article from December 2008 Bottom Line Retirement*

## *In Remembrance*

Raymond W. Thompson	11/13/2008
Alva J. Warren	11/22/2008, survivor
Willis D. Hamby	11/23/2008
Gilbert W. Hill	11/23/2008
Julia A. Russell	11/26/2008
Gloria L. Cordova	11/26/2008, survivor
Robert Medina	11/28/2008
Shirley M. Burke	12/03/2008, survivor
Hilario Murillo Jr	12/06/2008
Leonard H. Meyers	12/10/2008
Ray Yanez	12/11/2008
Edith Marie Calland	12/12/2008, survivor
Harold W. Wiley	12/14/2008
Manuel L. Escoto	12/14/2008
Joyce Rangel	12/22/2008

## HEALTH AND COMPASSION

We care about our members and their families. If someone in your family is ill, whether at home or in a care facility, or if a loved one has passed away, please call Kathy Erickson at (623)879-9632.

## New Arizona State Law

Effective January 01, 2009, the "License Plate Holder Law" requires that the state name at the top of Arizona license plates must be visible. Any license plate holder or cover that prevents the license plate from being clearly legible, is in violation of this new law, A.R.S. 28-2354(B.).

If the license plate frame holder covers the name Arizona, you'll receive a \$130.00 ticket!

It is your responsibility to know new motor vehicle laws - the state does not send out mailings. For more information on new motor vehicle laws click on the link <http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/>.

## COPRA BOARD

President:	<b>Jack Thomas</b> .....(623) 825-6999 E-Mail ..... <a href="mailto:jtnt@cox.net">jtnt@cox.net</a>
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Secretary:	Vacant
Board Members:	<b>Donna Lewis</b> .....(480) 361-8784 E-mail..... <a href="mailto:dglewis04@cox.net">dglewis04@cox.net</a> <b>Al Zielinski</b> .....(602) 510-0408 E-mail ..... <a href="mailto:al.zielinski@cox.net">al.zielinski@cox.net</a> <b>Barbara Kellogg</b> .....(623) 322-5227 E-mail ..... <a href="mailto:avidgolfer@aol.com">avidgolfer@aol.com</a> <b>Sue Stites</b> .....(602) 957-6099 E-mail..... <a href="mailto:sstites@cox.net">sstites@cox.net</a> <b>Karen Clifford-Anderson</b> .....(623) 772-7472 E-mail..... <a href="mailto:kcliffander@yahoo.com">kcliffander@yahoo.com</a> <b>Kerry Wangberg</b> .....(480) 893-2794 E-mail..... <a href="mailto:wangwell@qwest.net">wangwell@qwest.net</a>

Benefits Committee Chair &

Health Task Force: **Laura Ross**.....(623) 878-3334

Retirement Board Rep:

**Kerry Wangberg**.....(480) 893-2794

Member Support and Social Chair:

**Donna Lewis** .....(480) 361-8784

Membership Chair: **Marvin Roelse** .....(480) 288-1046

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Past President: **John Burke** (ex officio).....(928) 427-9461

COPRA website: [www.msnuers.com/cityofphoenixretireesassociation](http://www.msnuers.com/cityofphoenixretireesassociation)  
City Retirement Systems .....(602) 534-4400  
Personnel - Benefits Section .....(602) 262-4777  
COPMEA .....(602) 262-6857

## Chronicle Article Deadline

Please be advised that the deadline for submitting articles for the Chronicle is the **25th day of the month** before you want the article to appear. Any member may submit material for publication, but the Editor will determine what will appear in the final copy based upon suitability and available space. For more information call the Editor at (623) 879-9632.

This is your Chronicle! Help us by submitting articles of general interest. Tell us about yourself, your family, an interesting trip or hobby. Suggestions are always welcomed.

E-mail to: **rekathleen@qwest.net**

Or mail to: Kathleen Erickson  
20248 N. 17th Place  
Phoenix, AZ 85024

## Disclaimer

Acceptance of advertisements or articles in the COPRA Chronicle does not constitute an endorsement by COPRA of goods or services.



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## PERIODICALS

**Only in America .....do people order double cheeseburgers,  
large fries, and a 'diet' coke.**

**Membership Meeting Announcements  
Washington Community Center  
2240 W. Citrus Way**

**March 2009 - 1:00 pm**  
Pension and Retirement Board Issues

**May 2009 - 1:00 pm**  
Benefits and Health Insurance

**September 2009 - 1:00 pm**  
To Be Announced

**December 2009**  
Holiday Party and Annual Membership Meeting