



COPRA CHRONICLE

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

November 2021

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH

Issue 8

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Please update us when you change your address, email and or phone number. You can send it to:
lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com

"Membership is our Strength" **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership for COPRA is \$12 per year or \$50.00 for 5 years. If you have changed your address, email address or phone number, or have any questions about dues payments, please contact Linda Henderson.

Linda can be reached by: telephone at 623-693-9955, or by email at lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com

Mail payments to:
COPRA
PO Box 2464
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

PayPal Payments:
You can send in dues via PayPal. Use our email address phoenixcopra@gmail.com from your account.

COPRA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our annual General Membership Meeting will be held virtually again this year due to the ongoing pandemic. The meeting date has not yet been determined, but we will provide the date in the December Chronicle and on the COPRA website. The meeting likely will be held from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., as it was last year.

We will be voting for candidates for open Board seats, and we have invited special guests to provide informative presentations. We normally would have the meeting in conjunction with our holiday luncheon, and we are disappointed to not be able to accommodate the luncheon for the second year in a row due to the pandemic.

We will be hosting the General Membership Meeting on Zoom, a video and audio platform for our members to connect to the meeting. To ensure the meeting is as secure as possible, we are asking members to please pre-register for the meeting by November 19. If you have a computer and email, please send your request to: coprapresident@gmail.com with "General Membership Meeting Registration" in the subject line. We will follow-up with a link to the meeting. Computer users will be able to choose a video or audio-only connection. If you do not use a computer, please contact Rob Sweeney at 480-215-2215 and we will get you an audio-only connection.

We hope to "see" you in December!

MEMBER'S MUSIC MADE FAMOUS

On October 1, 2021, the movie "The Many Saints of Newark" opened at the Harkins Theaters. COPRA member Jim Spellman's recording of "Love Dreams", recorded 50 years ago, is featured in this movie. Jim shared that this is the 4th time since April of last year that his songs will have been featured in a movie. His recording of "True Love is Our Love Tonight" was featured in three different movies.

Thank you, Jim, for sharing this exciting news with us!

COPRA BOARD ELECTIONS

It is election time once again for the COPRA Board of Directors. In the October issue of the Chronicle, we asked if any members were interested in becoming a candidate for a Board position.

There are twelve elected positions on the Board, each serving a two-year term. There are four incumbent members seeking re-election, and two new candidates seeking election to the Board this year for a term covering 2022-2023. Elections are staggered with six Board positions coming up for election each year.

In addition, we need to fill three vacancies for a one-year term, as three Board members are resigning mid-term. These positions may be appointed by the Board without going through the formal election process. If you are interested in serving on the Board but want to "try it on" for just a year, then please contact Kathy Wenger, Chair of our Nominating Committee. You may email her at kjw7833@msn.com or by phone at 602-550-4390.

In accordance with the COPRA By-Laws, if there are no more than 6 candidates seeking office, a formalized ballot process is not required. Voting will be conducted by a "virtual vote" at the December COPRA Annual Meeting.

A special thanks to all who participated in the nominating process: **Laura Ross, Sue Stites, Brian Suggs, Rob Sweeney, and Kathy Wenger (Chair).**

VICTORIA CORRELL

Victoria worked for the City of Phoenix for 33 years, starting with Phoenix Police Communications and then transferring to Municipal Court as a Court Clerk II. She retired in July 2012 as a Bailiff. She says, "Hello everyone. My city employment made me aware of strengths and talents I didn't know I had. I volunteered as a docent at the Rosson House in Heritage Square for 25 years, putting my history degree from ASU to use. I'm now volunteering for COPERS. I want to help provide an united voice for retirees to the City of Phoenix. Just because we retired doesn't mean we are finished. I look forward to serving you."

LINDA HENDERSON (Incumbent)

Linda is currently the COPRA Membership Chair. She retired from the Information Technology Department in 2009 after more than 24 years of service and has been a COPRA member since retiring. Since her appointment to the COPRA Board in 2015, Linda has served as the Membership Chair. While employed, Linda served as a board member on several boards in different capacities throughout her career, including treasurer for the International Organization of Women in Telecommunications, and President for Southwest Messaging User's Group. She says she "strongly believes in COPRA's mantra '**Membership is our strength**' and feels the Chronicle is a great way to keep retirees informed of matters related to the City and matters important to seniors." While stepping down as Membership Chair, Linda would like to stay involved on the board to assist in any capacity as needed.

LOUIS MATAMOROS (Incumbent)

Louis is currently the COPRA Treasurer. He retired from the City of Phoenix in 2012 after 23 years of service. He was a Contract Specialist II with the Aviation Department at the time of his retirement. A member of COPRA since 2012, he looks forward to serving. Louis believes that COPRA's commitment on behalf of retirees is essential to our current and future quality of life.

GAIL PICENO

Gail retired from the City of Phoenix in 2017 after 17 years of service. During that time she worked in the Law Department and Information Technology (IT) Services. She is a proud graduate of ASU (Go Devils) earning a Computer Services degree. She was responsible for managing IT groups and for numerous projects on behalf of the City. She worked with all levels of staff within the City organization and would like the opportunity to represent the City retiree community.

(Continued on page 3)

COPRA BOARD ELECTIONS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 2)

TAMMY RYAN (Incumbent)

Tammy is currently the COPRA representative on the COPERS (City of Phoenix Employee Retirement System) board. Tammy retired in 2017 after 27 years of service. She worked in a number of City departments, including City Audit, Budget & Research, Finance, Water Services, and Library, mainly in positions with financial and administrative oversight responsibility. She was also an elected member of the COPERS Board and has continued serving on that Board as the COPRA liaison. Tammy says, "I believe COPRA serves an important role as a voice for retirees, and without this unified voice we have weaker input into City policies affecting us." Tammy wishes to continue serving on the COPRA Board as she believes her experience provides valuable knowledge of City financial and retirement policies.

MARY JO SLUNDER (Incumbent)

Mary Jo is the current COPRA Chronicle Chair. She retired in 2013 after 21 years of service, entirely served at the City Clerk Department. Mary Jo worked in several capacities there, retiring as an Elections Coordinator, Assigned Citizen Support. When she retired, Mary Jo was responsible for communicating and working with City Council members and the candidates for city office, as well as all of the registered campaign finance committees. She worked with all levels of staff within the City organization. Earlier in her career with the City Clerk Department, Mary Jo was responsible for the Department's budget, payroll, and human resources. She was a member of the team that brought PeopleSoft to the City, and the migration of the City's email system. Mary Jo believes that it is important to have a strong organization representing City retirees and hopes to significantly contribute to COPRA.

Because we did not have more than 6 candidates for Board positions, a formal ballot process will not be necessary, as stipulated in the COPRA by-laws. Also, since we need to fill 9 Board positions, we will be taking nominations/volunteers from the general membership at the December general membership meeting. **Please consider serving on the Board!** This is your organization and we need your help.

OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR 2022 ENDS NOVEMBER 12!

The City of Phoenix remains committed to providing its retirees with sustainable and worthwhile health care coverage. In 2022, City retirees and their eligible dependents will have access to a variety of Medicare and non-Medicare health plans – plus dental plans, a vision plan, legal plans, and pet insurance. The City remains committed to take steps to positively impact the health of its retirees and their families by offering competitive and sustainable health plans.

As in the past, open enrollment is a passive process. If you don't want to make any changes, you don't need to do anything. If you want to make any changes, you must do so no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 12th. Please refer to your Benefits Guide, which was mailed in mid-October, for details. The guide is also available on-line at www.phoenix.gov/benefits.

If you have any questions, the City Benefits staff is there to help. You can call them at 602-262-4777 or email them at benefits.questions@phoenix.gov.

Many thanks to Laura Ross, our representative on the City's Health Care Task Force for all of the work she has done over the years to keep our retirees covered by City benefit plans. Laura is resigning from the COPRA Board effective at the end of the year. She has been on the Board for 23 years! When (or if) you see Laura, please thank her for all of her hard work on behalf of COPRA members and City retirees!

NEW RETIREES (SEPTEMBER)

Johnny Aguirre	Parks & Rec.	William Hughes	Fire Dept.
Ron Campbell	Finance Dept.	Kathy Mathiesen	Street Transportation
Tracy Colechio	Water Services	Sandra Munoz-Weingarten	Parks & Rec.
Roselyn Elam	Aviation	George Quihuis	Public Works
Frederick Ellis	Water Services	Jacqueline Shepard	Police Dept.
Darryl Fuller	Housing	Cynthia Weaver	Communications Office
Ignacio Hernandez	Water Services		

NEW MEMBERS

Maria Camacho-McKenzie	Library	Mo Glancy	Planning and Dev Dept.
Yvonne Lugo	Public Works		

13TH CHECK

COPERS recently emailed retirees some information regarding contact information and information about the 13th check. Since not all COPRA members have an email address, we want to make sure that all of our members receive this information.

“There will be no ‘13th check’ in 2021. The ‘13th Check’ is one of the components of the Pension Equalization Program. The Pension Equalization Program was established on October 1, 1991, when voters of the City of Phoenix approved an amendment to Chapter 24 of the City Charter, allowing pension adjustments to be paid to eligible retirees.

Just as the existence of a potential ‘13th check’ is explained in the City Charter, so too are the criteria that must be met for payment and the rate used to determine the amount. CRITERIA: funds must be available in the Pension Equalization Reserve Fund to cover the ‘13th check’ for all eligible retirees. RATE (minimum of 1%) the lesser of: ½ of Consumer Price Index OR Excess investment return rate OR 3% maximum

Over the decade, the number of retirees has increased by nearly 50%, about 5,000 in 2010 to over 7,500 in 2020. This rise in the number of retirees has increased the cost to provide benefits such as the ‘13th Check.’ COPERS was able fund a ‘13th check’ in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2018. Other components of the program resulted in increases during the same time frame.

The Pension Equalization Reserve is funded at the end of each calendar year only when COPERS’ five-year average investment performance exceeds 8%. The strong 2021 market means the chances of funding the Pension Equalization Reserve funding in early 2022 are strong. Therefore, there will be no ‘13th check’ in 2021. The exacting criteria and rate evaluation required by the City Charter are meant to safeguard COPERS’ plan assets and ultimately your pension.”

YOUR E-MAIL IS YOUR ENTRY

As you all know, receiving the COPRA Chronicle by email significantly defrays the printing and postage costs for COPRA. An added benefit is that if there is any important information that COPRA wants to send you, we have your email address on file and can transmit to you in a timely fashion.

In order to encourage our COPRA members to receive the Chronicle by email, each month we will randomly select one member who receives their Chronicle by email and that member will receive a \$25 gift certificate to a grocery store (Fry’s or Safeway).

The October winner is **Lynn Williams. CONGRATULATIONS LYNN!**

If we already have your email address, you are automatically entered! If you do not receive the Chronicle by email, do so NOW! You can provide your email to Linda Henderson at lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com. She can also be reached by phone at (623) 693-9955.

Sign up now!

IN REMEMBRANCE

We have received requests over the past year to include the Department for which our deceased retirees last worked. Beginning in September, we have included that information, if we have it available. For many years that information was not shared with us, so we do not have the information for many of them.

Also, we were asked to identify those who were surviving spouses of City retirees, as opposed to the retiree themselves. Those on the list who are surviving spouses will have the retiree's name in parentheses after the deceased's name.

Name	Department	Date of death
Fred Larkins	Public Works Department	03/12/2021
Rosie Lechuga (Peter R. Lechuga)		06/17/2021
Darlene Merritt	Fire Department	08/06/2021
James E. Jones	Information Technology Services	08/23/2021
Arthur J. Grochowski	Aviation Department	08/27/2021
Susan Watson (Donald)	Planning and Development	08/28/2021
Lynda K. Vyne	Aviation Department	08/30/2021
James O. Morris	Fire Admin. Department	09/01/2021
Robert Schaefer	Street Transportation	09/02/2021
David E. Shackelford	Streets & Transportation Dept.	09/04/2021
Betty Duddy (Samuel B. Duddy)		09/04/2021
Santos Favela	Water Department	09/04/2021
Armida T Siqueiros (David Siqueiros)	Public Works Department	09/06/2021
Rosie Wingo (Ronnie Wingo)		09/08/2021
Roger W. Martinell (Patricia L. Martinell)		09/09/2021
Victor R. Leon	Public Works Department	09/09/2021
Delores Jackson (Ray Jackson)		09/13/2021
Kay Rueckel	Finance	09/17/2021
Janell Dickson (Burness W. Dickson)		09/18/2021
Norma J. Cano (David Cano)		09/18/2021
David Coulter	Parks & Rec. Department	09/19/2021
Joan Adair (Laurence Adair)	Parks & Rec. Department	09/25/2021
Joseph Gustafson	Parks & Rec. Department	09/27/2021
Floyd T. Nelson	Finance Department	09/28/2021
William McDonald	City Attorney Dept.	09/29/2021
Leonard Grammar	Parks Department	09/29/2021
Raul M. Tello	Streets & Transportation	10/01/2021
Jesse M. Dominguez	Housing Department	10/02/2021
Don E. Hoffman	Streets Department	10/12/2021
Larry Piper	Parks and Rec. Dept.	10/14/2021

“Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving”

— W. T. Purkiser

Reminder!

Please remember to update us (COPRA to lindajoyhenderson@gmail.com) if you change your address, email, or phone number. We do not get updates from COPERS. Thank you!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR TAX SEASON

The city of Phoenix Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is looking for volunteers to help low-to-limited income taxpayers file their taxes. Don't worry, no tax preparation experience is necessary! Over the last 17 years, VITA volunteers have assisted clients in obtaining over \$100 million dollars in tax refunds.

VITA volunteers receive free training on how to prepare and e-file tax returns for taxpayers helping them save hundreds of dollars in paid preparer fees. This free service helps ensure a taxpayer's income, deductions and allowable credits are claimed.

Virtual information sessions for interested volunteers are currently being held and training is available both online and in person with courses beginning in November. If interested, please visit Phoenix.gov/EITC or call 602-534-8359.

Source: PHX AT YOUR SERVICE, October, 2021

KEEPING YOU SAFE WHEN ONLINE

Cybersecurity Awareness Month is a national movement to ensure all Americans have the resources they need to be safer and more secure online. As the city continues to serve the public during this extremely challenging time, residents and businesses are encouraged to remain vigilant when sharing personal and financial information online.

Keep these tips in mind to protect your devices and personal information:

1. Be cautious of links in emails, even from known contacts.
2. Keep your apps up-to-date as they improve the security of your device, which protects your personal information.
3. Passwords are not enough. Turn on two-factor authentication to validate users accessing your accounts. Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart

Source: PHX AT YOUR SERVICE, October, 2021

"I RECYCLE PHX" FESTIVAL RETURNS PHOENIX

Public Works and Keep Phoenix Beautiful are excited to announce the return of the "I Recycle PHX" festival. The first event since the COVID-19 pandemic began was held on Saturday, Oct. 16, at the Desert Ridge Marketplace. If you missed it, don't worry – several more are being scheduled. Check out dates on KeepPHXBeautiful.org.

Community partners will be on hand to accept many items, including: hard drives, laptops, computer towers, printers, cell phones, flat screen televisions and monitors, bicycles, nonperishable food, clothing, unopened personal care products, books, office and school supplies and housewares.

Personal documents can be shredded onsite, up to five boxes for free. Additional boxes can be shredded for either a monetary or non-perishable food donation. On-site shredding will be offered until the truck is full. Any additional materials collected will be securely shredded offsite. **The event will follow health and safety protocols as people will be asked to stay in their vehicles** while masked-up volunteers do all the heavy lifting.

Source: PHX AT YOUR SERVICE, October, 2021

JEFF BARTON IS PHX'S NEW CITY MANAGER

After a unanimous vote by the Mayor and Council, Jeff Barton has been selected as the next Phoenix City Manager. Jeff most recently served as the city's Assistant City Manager, Deputy City Manager and Director of Budget and Research before that. "I consider it an honor and privilege to contribute to making Phoenix an even stronger, safer, better place to live, work and play for all residents, business owners and visitors," Barton said. Jeff's first day was Friday, Oct. 8, 2021, which was when current City Manager Ed Zuercher retired after 28 years of dedicated service to the city of Phoenix.

Source: PHX AT YOUR SERVICE,
October, 2021

"May your stuffing be tasty
May your turkey be plump,
May your potatoes and gravy
Have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious
And your pies take the prize,
And may your Thanksgiving
dinner
Stay off your thighs!"
- Anonymous



Disclaimer

All articles are for informational purposes and not intended to be a substitute for professional, legal, financial or medical advice. Consult an attorney or other professional what is best for your situation. COPRA expressly disclaims and denies liability for any decisions based on the information presented.

COPRA website.....	www.phoenixcopra.com
COPERS website.....	www.phoenix.gov/copers
COPMEA website.....	www.copmea.com
City Retirement Systems (COPERS).....	(602) 534-4400
Human Resources - Benefits Section	(602) 262-4777
COPMEA.....	(602) 262-6858

2021 COPRA BOARD

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Chronicle Article Deadline

Please be advised that the deadline for submitting articles for the Chronicle is the **20th day of the month** before you want the article to appear. Any member may submit material for publication, but the Editor determines what will appear in the final copy based on suitability and available space.

This is your Chronicle. Help us by submitting articles of general interest. Tell us about yourself, your family, a trip you've taken or an interesting hobby you have. Suggestions are always welcomed.

E-mail to: COPRAnewsletter@gmail.com

Or mail to: Mary Dysinger Franklin, 6208 E Desert Cove Ave, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

NOVEMBER COPRA CHRONICLE

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Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



2021 MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership meetings held

Virtually until further notice

December meeting date TBD - Board Member Voting

Board meetings are held quarterly on the 2nd Thursday of the Month
Except for June, July and August.