



# COPRA CHRONICLE

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

February 2023

**MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH**

Issue 2

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## PHOENIX PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS!

LEE FRANKLIN – PHOENIX PUBLIC LIBRARY

Phoenix Public Library is looking forward to another full year, and our big news is 2023 marks our system's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving our community!

On June 21, 1898 the "Friday Club" opened our first Phoenix Public Library location in two upstairs rooms of the Fleming Building at Washington and First Avenue. This was the result of fourteen women recognizing the need for Phoenix, incorporated as a city in 1881, to have a free library. In 1901, the Arizona Legislature passed a bill allowing a tax to support free libraries, qualifying Phoenix to have a donated library building from Mr. Andrew Carnegie. The Carnegie Free Library at 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Washington was opened in February of 1908 and served as our primary location until 1952. It was replaced by the original central library constructed on property donated by the Heard family at Central and McDowell.

In 1995, our current flagship, Burton Barr Central Library was opened, and the original central library became what is now the

*(Continued on page 2)*

### *"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 Mary Jo Slunder.

Mary Jo can be reached by: telephone at 602-206-5515, or by email at [copra.members@gmail.com](mailto:copra.members@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](mailto:phoenixcopra@gmail.com) from your account.

## MORE RESULTS from THE MEMBER SURVEY

BRIAN SUGGS

We presented the results of the first eight (of ten total) survey questions in the last *Chronicle*. But there is much more! The last two questions asked you to send us your questions, concerns and suggestions. Between those two questions, we received several hundred responses from you. We are continuing to compile and categorize those responses, but here are some of the first issues we are addressing:

- Lifetime membership – many of you commented about this suggestion, and responses were split. One thing that was clear was that membership felt that a lifetime membership payment could be a good option, but only if added to our current options to pay for a one- or five-year membership.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope 2023 is treating you all well! We have had record precipitation in Arizona and are actually experiencing a winter. Let's hope the good fortunes continue for the rest of the year.

Per COPRA's bylaws, your COPRA Board of Directors met in January to determine who will serve as this year's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. I am humbled to again be elected COPRA's President. I want to congratulate other Executive Committee Members for their service for the next year:

Vice President – Brian Suggs  
Treasurer – Louis Matamoros  
Secretary – Victoria Correll



Rob Sweeney

Additional appointments were made for the following positions:

COPERS Rep/Benefits & Health Care Committee Chair – Tammy Ryan  
Membership Chair – Mary Jo Slunder  
Events Coordinator – Kathy Wenger  
Website Support – Gail Piceno  
Chronicle Chair – Andy Terrey

Thank you fellow COPRA Board Members for your service and dedication!

The entire COPRA Board is looking forward to serving you this year. Look for positive changes as to how we operate, communicate and engage with you and other Phoenix retirees. We obtained some thoughtful feedback as a result the survey of COPRA Members. The entire Board is dedicated to making constructive improvements. I want to thank all COPRA Members who took the time to respond to the survey.

Your COPRA Board of Directors has a couple of vacancies awaiting someone to fill them. Have you considered volunteering? Feel free to reach out to anyone on the Board to express your interest. If you can't fit COPRA into your volunteer plans, perhaps you can volunteer with your next favorite nonprofit. You will get an extra day next year as part of your volunteering as 2024 is a Leap Year!

We are in the midst of a new Lunar Year - we have just begun the Year of the Rabbit. I hope COPRA is as prolific as a rabbit in its ability to multiply. Please reach out to your fellow retired City of Phoenix colleagues and let them know COPRA is here for them.

I wish you good health and happiness – Rob

## PHOENIX PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS! (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Phoenix Art Museum. Recognizing how critical library services are to a growing city, community leaders have consistently supported Phoenix Public Library expansion and through the decades, we have grown to be a system of 17 locations.

For 125 years, generations of Phoenicians have come to the library to discover a love of reading...help their children be ready for school... learn new skills for a job...enjoy a great family program...use the latest technology... discover they have what it takes to go to college...find a welcoming place...and of course, we have always helped fellow book lovers find their next great read!

We hope you make Phoenix Public Library part of your plans for 2023, visit [125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Phoenix Public Library](#) to join in our planned activities throughout the year. We have a lot to celebrate!

## MORE RESULTS FROM THE MEMBER SURVEY (CONTINUED)

*(Continued from page 1)*

- Annual Benefits Open Enrollment Meeting – this meeting was the highest-rated event of all the ones COPRA has offered. The City has not resumed this special meeting for retirees since the pandemic, but based on your responses, the board will take this up with the Retirement Office and the Human Resources Department.
- COPRA Website Usage – nearly half of those who receive the Chronicle electronically also visit our website on a regular basis. To make the website more useful to our members, we have decided to upgrade and refresh it in the near future.

We will keep you informed of the progress of these items, as well as others identified in the survey, in the coming months.

## COPRA TOY DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS

Five Head Start families were selected to receive the toys collected at the COPRA 2022 Holiday party. Each family was able to select two gifts for each child in their family. Two of the families were grandparents raising their grandchildren. One grandparent had just obtained temporary custody of her grandchildren due to the parent becoming incarcerated. This grandmother was thrilled to be able to provide a wonderful Christmas for the children. Two of the families were experiencing financial hardships and were ecstatic to receive the gifts for their children. A gift-wrapping station was set up so the parents could wrap the selected gifts before taking them home.

Two Head Start families were given gift cards. The parents expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to purchase their children's Christmas gifts and other household items they need.

It was a wonderful experience for the families, the children, and the Head Start who carefully identified those most in need.

The City of Phoenix Head Start Birth to Five Program thanks the City of Phoenix Retirement.



## BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED



Want to make a difference but are not necessarily keen on being placed in harm's way, doing heavy physical labor, or responding to natural disasters? Consider becoming a member of the COPRA Board of Directors! We still have two vacancies that need to be filled.

By serving on the COPRA Board, you will have the opportunity to work with others to develop, promote, and carry out activities for the benefit of retired City of Phoenix employees. Many improvements and protections of our pensions and other retirement benefits have come through the efforts of COPRA.

You don't need any special skills, just a desire to help your fellow retirees.

We meet at 10:00 am on the second Thursday of each month (except for June, July, and August) at the Washington Activity Center. You can also join the meetings by Zoom if you can't attend in person.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, contact Mary Jo Slunder at [mj.copra@gmail.com](mailto:mj.copra@gmail.com).





## IN REMEMBRANCE

Name	Date of Death	Department
Millicent Welcher	04/29/2022	Human Services
David Sanchez	10/30/2022	Water Services
Frances Minkler (James)	11/16/2022	
Ruth Uhrig (Anton)	12/05/2022	
David A. McKinnon	12/06/2022	Police
Billy Jo Blair	12/09/2022	Phoenix Convention Center
Frances Osuna (Armando)	12/11/2022	
Richard Counts, Jr.	12/18/2022	Planning & Development
Enrique Esparza	12/18/2022	Street Transportation
Paula S. Douse	12/19/2022	Police
Howard J. Johnson	12/19/2022	Human Services
Manuel S. Padia, Jr.	12/19/2022	Parks & Recreation
Shirley Saylor	12/19/2022	Library
Krishan K. Ahuja	12/22/2022	Public Works
Regis K. Pizzuti	12/22/2022	Parks & Recreation
Carlos S. Galindo, Jr.	12/22/2022	Aviation
Charles P. Arthur	12/24/2022	
Frank Pineda	12/24/2022	Street Transportation
Harold Burton	12/28/2022	Human Services
John J. Melton	12/28/2022	
Maria E. Mar (Eleno U.)	01/03/2023	
Kenneth Rangel	01/04/2023	Public Transit
Cecilia Brown	01/05/2023	Municipal Court

(Those on the list who are surviving spouses will have the retiree's name in parentheses after the deceased's name.)

*"If January is the month of change, February is the month of lasting change. January is for dreamers...*

*February is for doers."*

– Marc Parent

## NEW RETIREES (DECEMBER)

Darren Berg	Aviation	Cynthia Luck	Public Works
William Bradley	Planning & Development	Winston Lyons	Parks & Recreation
Shirley Butler	Neighborhood Services	Josefina Mar	Human Services
Danny Clouse	Planning & Development	Donna May	Aviation
Timothy Cohoe	Human Services	Michael McComb	Phoenix Police
Adan Davila	Water Services	Rodney Merrill	Public Transit
Charles Emmert	Communications Office	Maria Miranda	Human Services
Genoveva Gatica	Police	Ronnie Norris	Planning & Development
Gregory Gibbons	Public Works	Carol Robinson	Phoenix Police
Mark Gilmore	Public Works	Susan Robustelli	Budget & Research
Rodney Good	Aviation	Judy Ross	Aviation
Daniel Gronseth	Parks & Recreation	Gary Russell	Public Works
David Hendricks	Public Works	Ben Saiz	Parks & Recreation
Sandra Hoffman	Planning & Development	William Shaw	Public Works
James Huckaby	Parks & Recreation.	Wanda Sprygada	Municipal Court
Anna Kosturik	Street Transportation	Mary Torres	Finance
Molly Lee	Municipal Court	Yolanda Valencia	Human Services
Rose Lopez	Library	David Wells	Public Works

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE PHOENIX AREA

- Feb. 4-5 **American Indian Festival.** Arizona is home to many diverse American Indian tribes. Learn and experience their rich culture at the American Indian Festival at the Scottsdale Civic Center. The festival will feature historic dwellings, art demonstrations, Native American storytelling, performances, and music, an artisan market, food trucks, fry bread stands, and kids' activities. Admission is free and open to the public.  
<https://arizonaindiantourism.org/azindianfestival/>
- Feb. 6-12 **Waste Management Phoenix Open.** In addition to seeing 132 of the world's top golfers play, the schedule is also jam-packed with other special events for attendees like motivational speeches, a trick shot show, Special Olympics, entertainment tents, live music performances, and more! The first two days are free; general admission prices for the remaining days range from \$50-\$75. <https://wmphoenixopen.com/>
- Feb. 6-12 **Super Bowl Week.** Even if you don't have tickets to the Super Bowl, you can still get into the NFL spirit by attending a variety of event leading up to the Big Game.  
<https://www.nfl.com/super-bowl/event-info/>
- Feb. 12 –  
March 25 **MLB Cactus League Spring Training.** Since 1947, the Cactus League has blossomed into a baseball fan's paradise, with 10 ballparks hosting 15 Major League Baseball teams. Enjoy unparalleled player access, intimate ballparks, and up-close encounters with veteran stars and promising rookies alike make it truly a unique baseball experience. <https://cactusleague.com/>

## HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION ABOUT COPERS

Tammy Ryan

Did you know you can access information about our pension plan (COPERS) through the City's website? Use this link <https://www.phoenix.gov/copers/pension-plan-reports> to access quarterly investment, real estate, and performance statistic reports as well as annual financial and actuarial reports. These documents provide a wealth of information which can be overwhelming so we've provided a brief overview of the information included in each of the reports to help you navigate the reports.

**Quarterly Investment Reports** – Prepared by our investment advisor, this report provides detailed information on the pension fund, including where the money is invested and quarterly, year-to-date, 1-year, 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year rate of return for all investments.

**Quarterly Real Estate Investment Reports** – Prepared by our real estate managers, this report provides a deeper dive into those investments. The overview page discusses market conditions and provides charts of the 5-year quarterly returns and returns by sector. There is also a pie chart in the document showing portfolio diversification by geography and property type.

**Performance Statistic Reports** – These reports are prepared by the Retirement Department to show the work being performed in the Department. It includes things such as number of customer contacts, number of retirees, etc.

**Annual Actuarial Reports** – Prepared by our actuarial firm, these reports measure COPERS funding progress and determine the employer contribution rate.

**Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports (ACFR)** – The official audited financial statements of COPERS.

**Popular Annual Financial Reports (PAFR)** – A summary of the ACFR and designed to convey important information in a condensed and easily understood manner. For an interesting and quick overview of the status of COPERS, this is the report to use.

## 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 January winner is **Janet Marking**.  
**CONGRATULATIONS Janet!**

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 Mary Jo Slunder at [copra.members@gmail.com](mailto:copra.members@gmail.com). She can also be reached by phone at 602-206-5515.

**Sign up now!**



### 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.....	<a href="http://www.phoenixcopra.com">www.phoenixcopra.com</a>
COPERS website.....	<a href="http://www.phoenix.gov/copers">www.phoenix.gov/copers</a>
COPMEA website.....	<a href="http://www.copmea.com">www.copmea.com</a>
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### Chronicle Article Deadline

Please be advised that the deadline for submitting articles for the Chronicle is the **20<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:COPRAnewsletter@gmail.com)

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



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PO Box 2464  
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



## 2023 MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Washington Activity Center  
2240 W. Citrus Way  
Phoenix, AZ

Board meetings are held monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the Month  
Except for June, July and August.