



COPRA CHRONICLE

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

February 2024

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH

Issue 2

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2024 COPRA EXECUTIVE BOARD

The COPRA Board members have chosen the Executive Board for 2024.

President: Rob Sweeney	Secretary: Mary Jo Slunder
Vice President: Andy Terrey	Treasurer: Louis Matamoros

Other Board members have been assigned to the following positions:

Events Coordinator:	Kathy Wenger
Chronicle Chair:	Regina Ficken
COPERS Representative:	Tammy Ryan
Health Care Task Force Rep.:	Donna May
Membership Chair:	Anna Marie Dragonetti
Website Chair:	Gail Piceno

Please join us in welcoming back Regina Ficken to the Board! She will be taking over duties as COPRA Chronicle editor this spring.

"Membership is our Strength" **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership for COPRA is \$12 per year or \$50.00 for 5 years, or \$100 for lifetime. 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

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.

MY TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

ANNA MARIE DRAGONETTI

Road Scholar is an American not-for-profit organization that provides educational travel programs primarily geared toward older adults. Last year I decided to try this company to take a trip to New Orleans. It was on my bucket list, and I wanted to try a new tour company that I hadn't used before. I liked the idea that it was a not-for-profit organization and that it would be reasonably priced.

The cost of the tour was \$1899 per person, double occupancy. It was for six days, it included the hotel, daily breakfast buffet, 3 lunches and 4 dinners. and on the last day a beautiful brunch. All the food was excellent at local restaurants. There were set

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Rob Sweeney

Traditions have to start sometime. We call it a tradition when the 'inaugural' event becomes an annual one. Soon we (well, at least some of us) will enjoy Super Bowl LVIII. Don't get me started on the Roman Numeral thing: it's just tradition! As it is, 58 years of a tradition is quite young. Celebrating Groundhog Day can be traced back to 16th century Germany, when communities looked for a badger's shadow instead of a groundhog's.

In many respects traditions keep moving forward, year after year because someone documented the event and got others involved. This allowed the tradition to grow in popularity and allow it to stay relevant from one generation to the next.

One of my favorite traditions is celebrating National Haiku Month each February. No, seriously. I force myself to think creatively to form prose in the traditional 17-syllable poem, usually formed in three lines of 5, 7, 5 syllables, respectively. This form of poetry has its origins in 17 century Japan. This simple, yet powerful form is a way to be direct, discreet, thoughtful, humorous or even political. If you've never given Haiku a thought, let me challenge you with a topic: Volunteerism. Here is my entry:

*Tasks will help others;
satisfaction guaranteed.
COPRA awaits you.*

I guess my Haiku entry falls into the marketing category! The COPRA Board is eager to hear from any of you to lend a helping hand to our fellow COPRA Members. Please reach out to anyone on the Board if you are interested in starting a new tradition of volunteerism with COPRA to help us thrive well into the future.

I wish you all good health and peace - Rob

COPRA FACEBOOK PAGE COMING SOON!

GAIL PICENO

COPRA is always looking for ways to connect our members with valuable information. Coming soon we will be creating a COPRA Facebook page to supplement our outreach efforts. The goal will be to create opportunities to grow our membership and provide additional avenues to promote and carry out activities for the benefit of retired General employees of the City of Phoenix.

THIS DATE IN ARIZONA HISTORY FROM THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

8 February 1913: "The University of Arizona unconditionally prohibited ragtime dancing and said all social functions must end by 11:30 p.m."

10 February 1857: "The Greek camel driver, Hadji Ali, arrived in the United States with a shipload of camels destined to open the first wagon road along the 35th parallel across Arizona."

18 February 1908: "Ellen Lynn was appointed as the first woman mail carrier in Tucson. Lynn covered a rural route, which circled all of Tucson, in a horse and buggy."

18 February 1913: "A prehistoric graveyard was unearthed along Sycamore Creek near Prescott containing the skeletons of people who appeared to have been at least 8 feet tall."

19 February 1927: "The Grand Jury barred 13 "art" magazines from the Tucson newsstands."

Source: AZCentral.com, February 2022

IN REMEMBRANCE

Name	Date of Death	Department
Kevin M. Klug	10/03/2023	
Eli Johnson	11/01/2023	Street Transportation
Robert E. Jones	11/28/2023	Public Works
Andrea L. Perez	12/02/2023	
Donald Tarkington	12/04/2023	Parks & Recreation
Jean McCormick	12/06/2023	Library
Norman Kelley	12/07/2023	Water Services
Phillip R. Brown	12/10/2023	Neighborhood Services
Stacy J. Hegeman	12/10/2023	Budget & Research
David Shepard (Jeannette B.)	12/12/2023	
Tillie Moreno (Joe V.)	12/13/2023	
Thomas C. Oviatt	12/13/2023	Public Works
Basilio V. Gomez	12/14/2023	Phoenix Convention Center
Ruth L. Baker (Bennie)	12/15/2023	
Terrence Hoff	12/17/2023	Water Services
Boyd Winfrey	12/18/2023	Parks & Recreation
Martha Coronado (Cruz)	12/18/2023	
Sharon M. Palermo (John R.)	12/20/2023	
Thomas Arico	12/24/2023	
Roberta E. Jurado	01/09/2024	Human Services

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

COPRA TOY DONATIONS 2023

PATRICIA L. KIRKLAND, DEPUTY HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR

On behalf of the City of Phoenix Head Start Birth to Five Program, I would like to thank you for the generous donation of toys for our Head Start families. This year, ten families in South Phoenix were selected to receive toys for their children. These families were carefully selected based on need and current circumstances. The families included a grandmother raising her grandchildren, single parents, and two-parent families who are trying their best to provide for their children in these uncertain times. They

were all very grateful and humbled to be receiving the toys. Each parent selected items for their children and then wrapped the gifts. As you can see in the pictures, they had a great time wrapping the toys and engaging with other parents.



Your kindness made many children very happy this Christmas Season. Thank you for supporting children and families in the Head Start Birth to Five Program.

MY TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1)

meals for the lunches and dinners. They would send you the food options before the tour starts and you would select which meal you wanted.

I have to say I had a wonderful experience. My cousin and I went in October. The weather was very nice. The temperature was in the 60's. We flew into Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. The taxis are set up to only charge \$36 for the cab when going to the French Quarter. We usually take Uber but it was actually cheaper to take a taxi at the fixed fee. It is about a 20-minute ride.

We stayed at the Hotel Monteleone, which is a four-star hotel on Royal Street, near Bourbon Street. It was a very centrally located hotel. It is also featured in the movie, "Girl's Trip." My past experience with tours is that the hotels were not so good. This hotel was wonderful. All the staff were very professional.

Each morning we would have our breakfast buffet and then go to a classroom for a one- or two-hour lecture on a special topic such as literature, architecture, or New Orleans lifestyle. All the speakers were local and very enthusiastic about their subjects. This is an educational tour which is not for everyone. If you like to learn a lot about the place you are visiting this would be the tour for you. I love learning new things, so I enjoyed it.

After the lectures, we would usually walk a block to the bus and take off to see various New Orleans landmarks, such as Louis Armstrong Park, the World War II Museum, which is a military history museum. They have an interesting film narrated by Tom Hanks which is a don't miss movie in 4D. I learned about my Italian ancestry during the war that I didn't know about because they had a special exhibit on it.



While driving around New Orleans we visited the sculpture garden, a New Orleans cemetery, and the Garden District area which are lovely homes that were beautifully decorated for Halloween. We visited Sazerac House, which served us samples of their bitters. I am not a fan of this type of drink so it wasn't a highlight for me but other people did enjoy tasting and shopping.

We went to Vue Orleans, which is an interactive museum about New Orleans and has a beautiful view from the top floor. We attended a cooking class where a chef prepared a New Orleans meal for us that included gumbo and fresh pecan pralines. The entry fees for all the places they took us to were included. We didn't have any additional fees.

It was a wonderful trip. I would definitely use Road Scholar again. I look forward to my next adventure.

NEW RETIREES (NOVEMBER)

Janet Aldava	Human Services Dept.	Bart Nyandamu	Water Services Dept.
Joyce Barrett	Phoenix Police Dept.	Jeffrey Page	Environmental Prog. Dept.
Clark Burns	Water Services Dept.	Marvin Shelley	Public Works Dept.
Arthur Erving	Public Works Dept.	Ross Tate	City Auditor Dept.
Nicoleta Greenberger	Aviation Dept.	Miguel Teposte	Finance Dept.
Amanda Griffin	Neighborhood Serv. Dept.	Kenneth Vinson	Public Works Dept.
Richard Kortan	Aviation Dept.	Thomas Wyatt	Street Transportation Dept.
Dale McKendrick	Planning & Dev. Dept.	Carlos Ybarra	Street Transportation Dept.
Maria Medina	Human Services Dept.		



TREASURER REPORT

For Year ending December 31, 2023

		November - December	2023
Book Balance December 2023			\$ 89,455.74
Receipts			
Member Dues		\$ 6,642.50	\$ 11,973.50
Paypal		\$ 1,290.17	\$ 2,547.31
Interest Earned		\$ 327.84	\$ 1,038.56
Holiday Tickets Sold	Tickets via paypal and mail	\$ 1,189.80	\$ 1,267.40
	Total Receipts	\$ 9,450.31	\$ 16,826.77
Disbursements			
Bank Fees	Returned checks, Services Fees	\$ 56.00	\$ 56.00
Chronicle		\$ 982.16	\$ 4,575.42
Dues overpayment/Refund		\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Business Expenses	Ink, Office Supplies, Computer expenses including laptops P.O. Box, Printing deposit	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,710.00
Member Support	Gift cards, refreshments, holiday party cater	\$ 4,581.92	\$ 6,552.92
Website (paid via paypal/checking account)		\$ -	\$ 696.00
	Total Disbursements	\$ 8,140.08	\$ 14,610.34
Book Balance December 31, 2023			\$ 90,765.97
December net +/-		\$ 1,310.23	
Transfer to money market		\$ -	
Bank Balance December 31, 2023	Checking		\$ 5,890.21
	Paypal (all transactions included)		\$ 5,785.56
Interest Earned			
		December	YTD
	CD (10/17/2024 @ 9 month 4.88%-\$20000)	\$ 168.42	\$ 741.60
	CD (1/17/2024 @ 12 month 3.92%-\$20000)	\$ -	\$ -
	Money Market 3.44%	\$ 159.42	\$ 296.54
	Total	\$ 327.84	\$ 1,038.14
			\$ 90,765.97

ARIZONA IS THE BEST STATE TO VISIT FOR WINTER HIKING

Arizona is the best state to visit for hiking in the winter, with hiking suitability score of 8.04/10. The highest-rated trail in Arizona is the Devil's Bridge Trail in Coconino National Forest (4.7/5), a moderately difficult 6.3 km out-and-back trail near Sedona. Arizona is home to 3,240 hiking trails, which is equivalent to 43.47 trails per 100,000 people, and an average trail rating of 4.5/5 – making the state a top choice for travelers looking to experience the dramatic scenery and serenity that winter hiking can provide. Whilst some hikers may think to avoid walking trails in the colder months, the state's average temperature is 64.03°F (17.79°C) with an average precipitation of just 2.83 inches. In comparison, Arizona's neighboring state Colorado is 16.36 degrees colder, with 25% more precipitation.

Tips for winter hiking:

- **Choose the right trail for you**
Use resources or apps like AllTrails, which ranks trails by difficulty, provides information about length and elevation, as well as user reviews. Hikes could be easy, moderate, or challenging – make an educated choice that aligns with your current physical condition for a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience.
- **Check the weather and trail conditions**
For real time conditions, elevation, etc.
- **Make sure to keep warm and dress for the weather**
Make sure to regulate your body temperature by dressing in layers, and wear insulated, waterproof boots with good traction.
- **Set off early and choose sunnier trails**
Start early to maximize daylight hours.
- **Make sure to stay hydrated and bring snacks**
Ensure you carry an adequate supply of water and high-energy snacks for your winter hike.

Extracted from the Sonoran News, January 3, 2024

BEWARE OF GIFT CARD SCAMS

Gift card scams start with a call, text, email, or social media message. Scammers will say almost anything to get you to buy gift cards — like Google Play, Apple, or Amazon cards — and hand over the card number and PIN codes. Here are some common tactics scammers use in gift card scams:

1. **Scammers will say it's urgent.** They will say to pay them right away or something terrible will happen. They don't want you to have time to think about what they're saying or talk to someone you trust. Slow down. Don't pay. It's a scam.
2. **Scammers will tell you which gift card to buy (and where).** They might say to put money on an eBay, Google Play, Target, or Apple gift card. They might send you to a specific store — often Walmart, Target, CVS, or Walgreens. Sometimes they'll tell you to buy cards at several stores, so cashiers won't get suspicious. The scammer also might stay on the phone with you while you go to the store and load money onto the card. If this happens to you, hang up. It's a scam.
3. **Scammers will ask you for the gift card number and PIN.** The card number and PIN on the back of the card let the scammer get the money you loaded onto the card — even if you still have the card itself. Slow down. Don't give them those numbers or send them a photo of the card. It's a scam.

Scammers tell different stories to get you to buy gift cards so they can steal your money. Here are some common gift card scams:

- **Scammers say they're [from the government](#).** They say they're from the IRS, the Social Security Administration, or even the FTC. They say you have to pay taxes or a fine. But government agencies won't contact you to demand immediate payment, and they never demand payment by gift card. It's a scam.
- **Scammers say they're [from tech support](#).** They say they're from Microsoft or Apple and there's something wrong with your computer. They ask for remote access, and say to pay them to get it fixed. Don't give them access to your computer. It's a scam.
- **Scammers say they're a friend or family member with an [emergency](#).** If the scammer uses voice cloning, they may even sound just like your loved one. They ask you to send money right away — but not tell anyone. It's a scam. If you're worried, contact the friend or relative to check that everything is all right.
- **Scammers say [you've won a prize](#).** But first, they tell you to pay fees or other charges with a gift card. It's a scam. No honest business or agency will ever make you buy a gift card to pay them for a prize. And did you even enter to win that prize?
- **Scammers say they're from your [utility company](#).** They threaten to cut off your service if you don't pay immediately. But utility companies don't work that way. It's a scam.
- **Scammers ask for money after they chat you up on a [dating website](#).** Romance scammers will make up any story to trick you into buying a gift card to send them money. Slow down. Never send money or gifts to anyone you haven't met in person — even if they send you money first.
- **Scammers [send a check](#) for way more than you expected.** They tell you to deposit the check and give them the difference on a gift card. Don't do it. It's a scam. That check will be fake and you and you'll be out all that money.
- **Scammers pose as a friend, coworker, or as an officer of a club or association you belong to.** For example, members of the COPRA Board occasionally get email from a fake "Rob Sweeney" asking to pay for vendor services with gift cards. To do this, the scammer gets the Board Member names and email addresses from the COPRA website, then creates a "Rob Sweeney" alias for his/her nefarious email address.

Gift cards are for **gifts**. Only gifts. Not for payments. Never buy a gift card because someone tells you to buy one and give them the numbers. Whenever you buy gift cards:

- **Stick to stores you know and trust.** Avoid buying from online auction sites because the gift cards may be fake or stolen.
- **Inspect the gift card before you buy it.** Make sure the protective stickers are on the card and that it doesn't look like someone tampered with them. Also check that the PIN number on the back isn't showing. Pick a different gift card if you spot a problem and show the tampered card to a cashier or manager.
- **Always keep a copy of the gift card and store receipt.** Take a picture of the gift card and store receipt with your phone. The number on the gift card and store receipt will help you file a report with the [gift card company](#) if you lose the gift card or if you need to [report fraud](#).

Source: Federal Trade Commission. (July 2023) *Avoiding and Reporting Gift Card Scams*. Consumer Advice. <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/avoiding-and-reporting-gift-card-scams#howwork>

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 September winner is **Thomas Harris**.

CONGRATULATIONS Thomas!

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. She can also be reached by phone at 602-206-5515.

Sign up now!

"In February
there is everything
to hope for
and nothing to regret."

—Patience Strong

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

2024 COPRA BOARD

President:

Rob Sweeney

480-215-2215

E-mail

coprapresident@gmail.com

Vice President:

Andy Terrey

602-653-5460

E-mail

at.copra@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Louis Matamoros

623-734-6624

E-mail

biglou6415@yahoo.com

Secretary:

Mary Jo Slunder

602-206-5515

E-mail

copra.members@gmail.com

Board Members:

Chronicle Chair:

Regina Ficken

623-521-0052

E-mail

rvficken@gmail.com

COPERS Representative:

Tammy Ryan

602-430-5965

E-mail

tlgryan1822@gmail.com

Membership Chair:

Anna Marie Dragonetti

602-992-0362

E-mail

amddragonetti@cox.net

Activity Coordinator:

Kathy Wenger

602-550-4390

E-mail

kjw7833@msn.com

Website Support:

Gail Piceno

602-509-1908

E-mail

gpiceno0808@gmail.com

Health Care Task Force Representative:

Donna May

602-513-1069

E-mail

dmay.copra@gmail.com

Chronicle Editor:

Mary Dysinger Franklin

602-705-8822

E-mail

copranewsletter@gmail.com

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

FEBRUARY COPRA CHRONICLE

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Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



MEMBERSHIP MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS



COPRA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
10:00 AM -12:00 PM MARCH 14, 2024
Washington Activity Center
[2240 W. Citrus Way](#)
(23rd Ave. and Glendale Ave.)

Representatives from the City Manager's Office, Human Resources Division, and Retirement Office have been invited to answer your questions about your healthcare and pension benefits.

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