



AFT New Mexico Retirees Chapter 8029

June 2020 Newsletter

May Meeting

John Dyrce, staff member with AFT NM, was invited to talk about COPE and the AFTNM endorsements. He explained that all candidates (no matter what party) are invited to participate. Each is sent a written questionnaire but some candidates do not wish to be endorsed by a union and do not return the questionnaire. The next step for a candidate is an interview. This year, with social distancing, it was done by Zoom meetings. The Committee on Political Education (COPE) then reviews the questionnaire and interview to make a recommendation for endorsement. The COPE focuses only on educational and labor issues.

Candidates who would represent the Albuquerque area were interviewed by the ATF (Albuquerque Teachers' Federation) COPE committee. The rest of the state candidates were interviewed by the AFTNM COPE committee. The Retirees had a representative in both committees. Candidates were asked about their support for educational retirees' pensions and health care.

AFT COPE endorsed candidates receive a monetary contribution to use for their campaigns. COPE is funded by individual contributions. Dues are *never* used for COPE. Our newsletter provides an opportunity for retirees to make a personal donation.

Your Union *never* tells you who to vote for! There are many issues involved in every election: social justice, the environment, civil rights, the economy and others as well as education and labor. But by voting for an AFT endorsed candidate you know you are voting for someone who share your **values** on Education and Labor issues. If you would like a copy of the AFT endorsements, you can request one at:

AFTNewMexicoRetirees@gmail.com

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Our Next Meeting: Distance Learning

We will have a Zoom meeting on **Wednesday, June 10 at 1 o'clock**. Join us. We have invited some currently working educators to tell us about the last few months of school with 'distance learning'. We will ask them to tell us: What worked? What were the challenges? So much has changed since we retired and now that change has increased!

Thought for the Day

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. IT DOES."

- William James



Math Problem (heard on NPR's 1A radio program)

A rectangular classroom 31x32 is approximately 1000sq. feet. If students need to stay 6 feet apart from each other, how many students can you put in a classroom?

(see what answer was reported at the end of this newsletter)



Teachers Against Child Detention

Mirle Hernandez reported on TACD activities. They have been taking caravans of cars to Santa Fe and to detention centers to ask to #FreeThemAll. Covid-19 is a huge danger in detention centers.

Tsuru for Solidarity is another group working to end detention sites. This group of Japanese American advocates remembers the legacy of U.S. camps during WWII and says, "Stop Repeating History!"

The thought of families and *children* held in detention centers is heartbreaking. There are many organizations actively working to close these facilities. Some are working nationally while others focus locally. If you are involved in one let us know so we can spread the word about this important action.

The Power of Retirees

More and more people are recognizing the power that retirees have. We have the knowledge and experience in the education system and we have the time: the time to actively advocate for causes, the time to support our working colleagues and the time to put our thoughts into action.

This summer the American Federation of Teachers will be holding their annual convention. (The convention is scheduled for Houston, Texas, July 27-30. It is yet to be determined if/how this will happen.). There will be proposed amendments to the AFT constitution that specifically mention retirees. One proposed amendment (to ARTICLE II, Section 12) states "...to promote organizing and engagement among active and retired members, and to advance the interests of retired persons in our society."

NM Legislature Special Session

Retirees' Vice President, **Elynn Cowden** recently wrote to senator Mimi Stewart asking if the special session would consider using ERB funds to offset the financial losses due to the pandemic.

The senator replied with this encouraging news: "*I have heard no mention from anyone about taking any ERB funds. In fact, we passed a constitutional amendment about 8 years ago that explicitly states the state cannot use retirement funds for any purpose.*"

Thank you, Senator Stewart, we will all sleep a little better knowing that our state pensions are secure.

Teacher Emporium Collection

The Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF) collects donated teaching materials that are given free of charge to beginning teachers. The first of three collections was held right after school dismissed for the summer.

Therese Saunders and **John Comstock** were there to help. The Retirees provided snacks and cold drinks.



The next collection dates are Tues. June 16 and Tues. July 21 from 10-2. You are welcome to come help or if you know someone who is retiring, changing grade levels or just want to clean out old teaching materials tell them about this opportunity at the AFT Union office, 530 Jefferson St. NE., Albuquerque.

Covid-19 Information

The latest and most accurate information on the pandemic in New Mexico can be found on the website for the New Mexico Department of Health. They have the latest statistics broken down by many factors, including cases in detention centers and long-term care facilities.

For those of you that don't have a cloth mask, can't find one to fit well, or knows someone that still needs a mask, the State will send you a mask in the mail for free. Go to <https://cv.nmhealth.org> and fill out the simple form to request a mask.

Digital vs. Virtual??

What do you think? Our next meeting on June 10 will be a *real* AFTNM Retirees' meeting. It's not virtual, as in *virtual reality*, where things just appear real. It's real but in won't be *in person*. Tell us what you think – should we stop using the word “virtual” and replace it is “digital”. Which is correct? Let us know at:

AFTNewMexicoRetirees@gmail.com

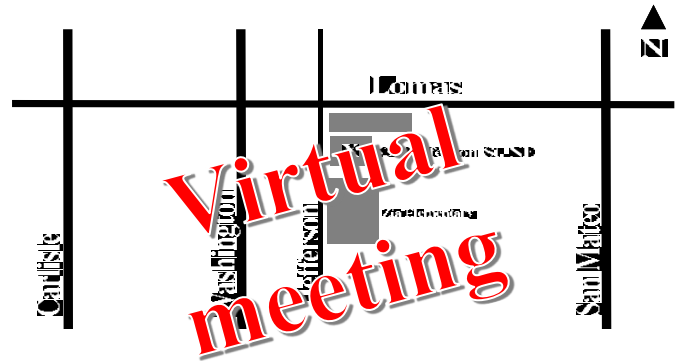
Math Answer (heard on NPR's 1A radio program)

If each student is in the center of a circle, the answer is 27!!

What?!?!? We were shocked when we heard this. This *has* to assume there are no bookshelves, tables, teacher's desk or *teacher* in the classroom!

Next Meeting – a Virtual Meeting

Our next meeting will be **June 10, 2020** at 1 pm. We will **NOT** meet at the AFT Union office at 530 Jefferson St. NE.



Contact information:

Email: AFTNewMexicoRetirees@gmail.com

Facebook: AFT New Mexico Retirees – Chapter 8029

Web: <http://aftmretirees.nm.aft.org/contact-us>

530 Jefferson NE Albuquerque NM 87108



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AFT New Mexico Retirees Chapter
Local 8029-R/AFT/AFT NM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE AND ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

ANNUAL DUES

\$25 Per Person - Certified

\$20 Per Person - Classified

Please make checks payable to AFT NM Retirees Chapter and mail to: 530 Jefferson St NE, Albuquerque NM 87108

VOLUNTARY AFT RETIREES CHAPTER

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(write a separate check for this)

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