May 2020 Newsletter

April meeting

Cancelled due to corona virus.

The Retiree Executive Committee met several times through Zoom meetings to decide how to best go forward during the quarantine. It was decided that the AFT Retiree newsletter would be sent out via email. Currently the quarantine restrictions make it impossible for us to print and mail this newsletter.

May Meeting

Our next meeting will be a virtual one. We will have a Zoom meeting on Wednesday, May 13 at 1 o’clock. Join us. It will be fun to see friends and catch-up.

The primary and general election are just around the corner. Learn how the AFT candidate endorsement process is done and what the next steps will be. John Dyre, AFT NM staff member, will be the speaker. He will be happy to answer any questions.

(The last page of this newsletter includes the list of national and state candidates that have been endorsed by AFT.)

Learn to ZOOM

Member Marcia Demento will be guiding us through our very first Retirees’ virtual meeting. She will be our tech guru. Marcia will be holding a practice session. You can make sure your computer or phone is able to sign on to our Zoom meeting. She will be available to answer questions and provide assistance.

The practice session will be this coming Thursday, May 7 at 2:00pm. To set up a practice session, call Anne Pierce-Jones at 505-453-8812.

Quarantine

According to Wikipedia, “A quarantine is a restriction on the movement of people and goods which is intended to prevent the spread of disease or pests.” This idea has been around for a long time. In the Bible, the book of Leviticus mentions using isolation for certain illnesses. The Islamic prophet Muhammad advised, “Those with contagious diseases should be kept away from those who are healthy.” And a Persian physician around the year 1000 recommended quarantine for patients with infectious diseases, especially tuberculosis.

The word quarantine come from the Italian word for forty- quaranta. During the 14th and 15th centuries Venice required all ships to isolate for 40 days before passengers and crew could go ashore during the Black Plague. Between 1348 and 1359, the Black Death epidemic killed an estimated 30% of Europe’s population and a significant percentage of Asia’s population.

Anti-Stress Suggestions

It can be hard to combat stress, depression and loneliness during these Stay-At-Home times. Here are two suggestions that brought smiles to our faces.

(1) "Some Good News" is a weekly YouTube series by the actor, John Krasinski who starred in the TV show The Office. It’s about 20 minutes long and each episode has uplifting stories from around the world and special guests via Zoom. And (2) Wicked Tulips Flower Farm posts beautiful photos on Facebook. For a $10 donation (that will help keep this family farm in business) they will send you daily videos to your Facebook page. Or just go to their Facebook page and enjoy some loveliness for free. If you have a favorite way to spread some happiness, please share with us. Email: AFTNewMexicoRetirees@gmail.com

Thought for the Day

“Flowers always make people better, happier and more hopeful; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the soul.”

- Luther Burbank

NM Retiree Health Care Authority

On March 11, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham vetoed House Bill 45 which would have increased employee and employer contributions rates to the Retiree Health Care Fund. It was one of only two bills that she vetoed. HB 45 passed the House and Senate with bipartisan support. At the time of the veto the Governor vowed future support for Retiree Health Care. Given the state’s current economic outlook due to the COVID 19 pandemic future financial support to the RHCA seems dim. But the agency is solvent and will continue. NMRHCA has been building a trust fund to cover its solvency for many years, however, it may soon have to dip into that trust fund. (This means deficient spending and possible, future higher costs (premiums or co-pays) to retirees.

Like everyone else, the NMRHCA is looking into ways to negotiate the quarantine. Stay tuned to see how they will handle the fall switch enrollment. Large groups of older retirees may not be the best way to get new information out!
2020 Census

Have you completed the 2020 Census? Good for you. If not, DO IT NOW. It’s fast, it’s easy and it’s very important. Funding for New Mexico’s classrooms depend on an accurate count.

AFT National is looking for retired members to volunteer to participate in Census 2020 phone-banking. They will provide training. The Census Outreach Volunteer sign up is at: https://forms.gle/SEYyB6uDr61aHLg7A

Political Endorsements by AFT

Your union does not tell you how to vote. However, you can be sure that we have carefully vetted each candidate to ensure that our recommendations reflect individuals who most closely align with our goals of preserving and promoting public education and labor rights.

The endorsed incumbent candidates were recommended by the ATF Unified COPE committee based on their previous voting record. All new candidates have completed the ATF Unified COPE Questionnaire and have submitted to an interview with the ATF Unified COPE Interview Team. The endorsements were ratified by the ATF Fed Rep Council on April 20, 2020. All statewide endorsements and endorsements for candidates outside of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County were vetted by the AFT-NM COPE Committee. National endorsements are made by the American Federation of Teachers.

The AFT NM Retirees had a member at both the state level and at the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County level. Candidates were asked about their support for educational retirees’ pension and health care. Our thanks go out to Ellen Mills and Therese Saunders. If you have questions or would like to learn more, join the Retirees Zoom meeting on Wednesday, May 13 at 1:00. Retirees are welcomed and needed at all COPE meetings.

Important Dates

May 5th: Last Day to Register or Change Registration for the Primary/ County Clerks Begin Mailing Out Absentee Ballot Applications
May 16th- May 30th: Early Voting
May 28th: Last Day to Request An Absentee Ballot
June 2nd: Primary Election Day

Stay tuned for early voting information. Meanwhile... Sign Up for an Absentee Ballot here.

The New Mexico Supreme Court has denied a request for an all-mail election for our state primary on June 2. There is no way to know what our quarantine status will be in early June. Protect yourself and your vote, sign up for an absentee ballot today.

Next Meeting – a Virtual Meeting

Our next meeting will be May 13, 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://aftnmretirees.nm.aft.org/contact-us
530 Jefferson NE Albuquerque NM 87108

AFT New Mexico Retirees Chapter
Local 8029/R/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 COPE DONATION
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CHECK# OR CHECK HERE FOR CASH

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DATE
The following national candidates are endorsed by the American Federation of Teachers:

U.S. President
Joe Biden

U.S. Senate:
Ben Ray Lujan, U.S. Senate

U.S. Congress:
Debra Haaland, U.S. House of Representatives, District 1
Xochitl Torres Small, U.S. House of Representatives, District 2

No Endorsement Until After the Primary, U.S. House of Representatives, District 3

The following candidates are endorsed by the AFT-NewMexico

NM Judicial Races:
Supreme Court, Position 1: Shannon Bacon
Supreme Court, Position 2: David Thomson
Court of Appeals, Position 1: Zach Ives
Court of Appeals, Position 2: Shammarra Henderson

New Mexico State Senate (SD= Senate District):
SD3 Shannon Pinto
SD4 George Muñoz
SD5 Pete Campos
SD9 Benjamin Rodefer
SD10 Katy Duhigg
SD14 Michael Padilla
SD15 Daniel Ivey-Soto*
SD16 Antoinette Sedillo Lopez
SD17 Mimi Stewart*
SD18 William "Bill" Tallman
SD19 Claudia Risner
SD20 Martin Hickey / Rebecca Stair dual endorse
SD23 Harold Pope
SD24 Nancy Rodriguez
SD25 Peter Wirth
SD28 Gabriel Ramos
SD29 Paul Baca
SD30 Clemente Sanchez
SD31 Joseph Cervantes
SD33 Denise Lang-Browne
SD36 Jeff Steinborn
SD38 Mary Kay Papen
SD39 Elizabeth “Liz” Stefanics

New Mexico State House of Representatives (HD= House District):
HD4 Anthony Allison
HD6 Eliseo “Lee” Alcon
HD7 Santos Griego
HD9 Patricia Lundstrom
HD10 Andres Romero *
HD13 Patricia Roybal Caballero
HD14 Miguel Garcia*
HD15 Dayan “Day” Hochman
HD17 Deborah Armstrong
HD18 Gail Chasey
HD19 Sheryl Williams Stapleton*
HD20 Meredith Dixon
HD21 Debbie Sariñana*
HD22 Jessica Velasquez
HD23 Daymon Ely
HD24 Elizabeth “Liz” Thomson *
HD25 Christine Trujillo*
HD26 Georgene Louis*
HD27 Marian Matthews
HD28 Melanie Stansbury
HD29 Joy Garratt*
HD30 Natalie Figueroa*
HD31 Julie Ford Brenning
HD34 Raymundo Lara
HD35 Angelica Rubio
HD36 Nathan Small^*
HD37 Joanne Ferrary
HD38 Karen Whitlock
HD39 Rudy Martinez
HD40 Roger Montoya
HD42 Kristina Ortez
HD43 Christine Chandler
HD44 Gary Tripp
HD45 Linda Serrato
HD46 Andrea Romero
HD47 Brian Egolf
HD48 Linda Trujillo
HD50 Matthew McQueen
HD51 Jeff Swanson
HD52 Doreen Gallegos
HD53 Willie Madrid^*
HD56 Laura Childress
HD57 Billie Helean^*
HD59 Kimble Kears
HD68 Karen Bash
HD 69: Harry Garcia
HD 70: Anita Gonzales^*

* Denotes a current, retired or former member of the Albuquerque Teachers Federation
^ Denotes a current, retired or former member of the AFT-NM