



AFT New Mexico

Retirees Chapter 8029

February 2024 Newsletter

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be February 14 – **Valentine's Day** – snacks will be provided. Come share the love! There will be presentation by the election committee. As usual, our meeting will be hybrid...So you may attend either in person or via Zoom, whichever works best for you. Either way, we look forward to seeing you!

Leap Year, Leap Day - Feb. 29, 2024

It takes our planet 365 days, 5 hours 48 minutes, and 45 seconds to complete one revolution around the sun. Those extra hours, minutes and seconds add up and soon the date on the calendar doesn't match up with the seasons. After 100 years the seasons would be off by 25 days.

There are several calendars in use today which apply different rules to determine how often a leap year occurs. The Gregorian calendar, used by most western countries, adds one extra day, on February 29, nearly every four years. The Chinese calendar, adds a leap month every three years. A leap year in the Jewish calendar has 13 months and occurs 7 times in a 19-year cycle. A leap year in the Ethiopian calendar occurs every 4 years when an extra day is added to the last month of the year.

AFTNM Retirees' Election

Every two years we elect our executive council. President **Anne Pierce-Jones** has appointed an election committee who will present a slate of candidates at the Feb. 14 meeting. Ballots will later be mailed out to all dues paying members of the AFTNM Retirees. You will be asked to mark your choices and return the ballot in the stamped (prepaid) envelope by March 6. The election committee will announce the results at the March 13 meeting.

AFTNM Retirees Executive Council positions

President – sets the monthly agenda, represents Retirees on the AFT NM state executive council, organizes activities (Lobby Day, pre-retirement workshops)

Vice President, Technology - helps with virtual meetings (Zoom) and emailing newsletters

Vice President, Communications – writes monthly newsletter

Secretary – keeps the minutes of the monthly meetings

Treasurer/Membership – maintains bank records & status of membership dues

If you would like to nominate someone for any of these positions (or self-nominate) leave a phone message at 505-934-3058.



Thought for the Day

"All you need is love.

But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

-Charles M. Schulz

COPE

The Committee On Political Education (COPE) is way for Union members to give financial support to candidates for elected offices. Members of COPE conduct candidate interviews. Candidates from any party can participate. After the interviews COPE recommends candidates that show a profound commitment to Public Education and Collective Bargaining. Often a monetary stipend is offered to help a candidate's campaign. Donations to COPE are important!

This is a VOLUTARY donation. It is not, nor has it ever been, a part of AFT dues. Although, active employees can choose to make a donation to COPE at the same time their AFT dues are deducted from their paychecks, retirees don't have that option for automatic deductions. A donation is welcome at any time. Important elections are coming up this fall!



GIVE to COPE

Bring a valentine with cash or a check made out to AFT NM COPE to the Feb. 14 meeting. What a great way to show our love for

Public Education!



Retirees in the Roundhouse

On Tuesday, January 23 AFT NM Retirees went to Santa Fe. **John Comstock, Elynn Cowden, Laurie Harris, Barbara Petersen, Diana Shea, and Therese Saunders**, met at the state capitol to meet and talk to legislators. **Rep. Joy Garratt** introduced them at the beginning of the House session. They were thrilled and honored as they sat at the rostrum on the floor of the House of Representatives. Afterwards, AFT NM President, Whitney Holland treated everyone to a delicious lunch at a nearby restaurant. They returned to the Roundhouse to distribute informational flyers to legislators. The highlight of the afternoon was the invitation to meet Lt. Governor Howie Morales in his office on the 4th floor. AFT NM Retiree **Robin Gibson** joined in. They sat at his conference table and discussed various bills and legislation.



ERB – Educational Retirement Board

For a long time, many of us have been aware of the difference between the pensions of ERB retirees and those of the retirees from the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA). Currently **Senator Mimi Stewart** and **Representative Joy Garratt** (both AFT retirees) have sponsored legislation to study the inequity between the two pension agencies. There are differences in how the pension benefits are computed as well as the cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) that result in “substantial inequity of retirement benefits” provided to ERB members versus PERA members.

Rep. Joy Garratt’s bill HM 1 has passed its first committee hearing. At this writing, **Sen. Mimi Stewart’s** bill SM 4 has not been heard in committee.

NMRHCA – New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority

Senator “Bobby” Gonzales is sponsoring a Joint Resolution (SJR 5) to add an amendment to Article 20 of the NM Constitution. This amendment would give the Retiree Health Care Authority constitutional protection similar to the state’s pension plans: ERB and PERA. The RHCA was created by legislative statute in 1990. Legislators created it and legislators could conceivably take it away. (In the past, some legislators have supported a Defined Contribution program rather than our current Defined Benefit.). At the time of this writing, SJR5 is being heard in the Senate Rules Committee. The RHCA decided not to ask for a budget request (of a one-time \$150 million) or an increase in employer or employee contributions as it was felt that currently, the most important issue is protecting the funds and management of the RHCA.

The Wise and Well program is offering free virtual exercise classes that are open to all NMRHCA retirees. The classes are on Thursday’s at 9:30am. They are held bi-weekly until March 28, 2024. Check the NMRHCA website for more information.

New Dog in the House

Lancashire Heeler is the newest breed to be added to the American Kennel Club list of



purebred dogs. Founded in 1884, AKC is the U.S.’s oldest purebred dog registry and function like a league for many canine competitions including sports open to mixed-breeds and purebreds. But only the 201 recognized breeds vie for the traditional “best in show” trophies at Westminster and elsewhere.

The Lancashire heeler is native to the United Kingdom and was originally developed for herding cattle. It is said to be intelligent, alert, and quick to learn new tasks. The AKC says only about 5,000 of this breed exist worldwide and lists them as an endangered breed.

ARA – Alliance for Retired Americans

The ARA is grassroots advocacy organization founded by the AFL-CIO in 2001. Nationwide it has 4.4 million members. It is made up of retired union members affiliated with the AFL-CIO. As a member of AFTNM, you are already a member of the ARA and our local AFTNM Retirees pays membership dues to the ARA and sends a representative, **Anne Pierce-Jones**, to the monthly meetings. The ARA publishes a weekly “Friday Report” about issues that are of particular interest to retirees: social security, Medicare, raising drug cost, among others. The ARA keeps a close watch Congress and federal legislation. You can learn more at:



<http://www.RetiredAmericans.org>

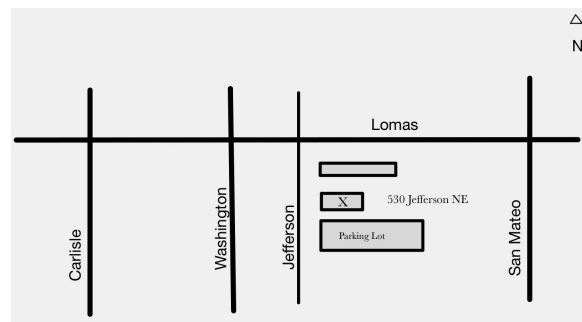
Something To Think About

“Don’t confuse your path with your destination. Just because it’s stormy now doesn’t mean you aren’t headed for sunshine later.
Don’t lose faith.”

- Trent Shelton

Next Month’s Meeting

Our next meeting will be **March 13, 2024 at 1:30 pm**. This meeting will be on the day before Pi Day, 3/14. There WILL BE PIE to eat. Let us know your favorite type of pie: Apple? Cherry? Pecan? Banana Cream? (We will have an in-person meeting at the AFT Union Office, 530 Jefferson St. NE *and* a simultaneous virtual meeting (Zoom).



We don’t *publish* the link/number for our Zoom meeting. *We send the link out a few days before the meeting through email.* The link will be emailed to you by February 12, 2024

We will also send out an email with the Minutes from last month's meeting as well as a current Treasurer's Report. As part of our regular business-meeting we ask members of review these documents and ask any questions about them before we vote to accept them into our permanent record. Please take the time to look these over and note any corrections or questions you may have.

Contact information:

Email: AFTNewMexicoRetirees@gmail.com

Facebook: AFT New Mexico Retirees – Chapter 8029

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

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AFT New Mexico Retirees Chapter
Local 8029-R

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION /RENEWAL

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE AND ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

| What local did you retire from?

ANNUAL DUES

check indicate:

\$25 Per Person – Licensed ☐

\$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

(write a separate check for this made out to AFT NM COPE)

NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR

AMOUNT DATE

CHECK# OR CHECK HERE FOR CASH

KEEP THIS AS A RECEIPT FOR COPE DONATION

NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR

AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED DATE