

# RECOM

Retired Employees City of Mesa

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## Inside This Issue

- *Message From the President*
- *Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow*
- *Board Retreat*
- *Benefits Task Force*
- *Meetings*



RECOM Executive Board

## Message from the President

### Small town life in the big city

Maybe you grew up in a small town too. In a time when bicycle locks weren't yet invented, your car keys never left the ignition, and Halloween "treats" were all homemade. You waited to make your call until the "party line" was clear, and you only brought out the "Kodak" for special occasions. You knew all your neighbors and they knew you. You shared each other's joys and sorrows, and you pitched in to help whenever it was needed.

Now we are much older and live in the big city where the simple times of the past are only a dim memory. Your neighbors are just people to wave to as your garage door slowly closes, and you try desperately not to make eye contact with the homeless man holding his cardboard sign at the exit ramp. Jaded and cynical as we may have become, if you think the old fashioned virtues of life in a small town don't exist in the sprawling city, you'd be wrong.

I can say this because of a recent experience. A serious illness left me unable to leave my house for several days. Since I live alone, the lack of activity was soon noticed by my neighbors. After only three days the phone rang. It was my next

door neighbor. "Are you Okay? We noticed your garage door has been shut and we haven't seen you out walking the dogs". Following my explanation, offers of help in any way were proffered. An hour later the door bell rang. A neighbor from across the cul-de-sac brought two jars of homemade vegetable soup and loaf of fresh bread. Again, there were offers of rides to the doctor, running errands, or picking up some groceries. The very next day, I heard a soft knock on the door. When I opened it there sat a basket of "medicinal" foods like homemade chicken soup and chicken crepes --this, courtesy of yet another neighbor.

While I can't say for sure, I have to believe that the good food, offers of help, and concern from my neighbors assisted my recovery just as much as any medication prescribed by the doctor. So maybe we can't go back to our small town lives, but much of the good things we remember still exist today. Sometimes it just takes a bit of adversity to rediscover it.

### **Message from the President Part 2**

Apparently this month John Gendron had a bit of enforced leisure due to his illness which he used to wax poetic on Barb's leaving the Board. Chalk it up to the era of good feeling about people (see above). Nevertheless, the kind words are appreciated.

## Parting is such sweet sorrow

We're all familiar with the famous line young Juliet spoke from the balcony to her handsome Romeo: "Parting is such sweet sorrow". While certainly not in the same context as literature's most famous romance, this phrase takes on a new meaning with the departure of Barb Seperich from RECOM's Board of Directors.

Barb started attending RECOM meetings in 2003 and was appointed to the first Board of Directors that same year. In 2005 she was elected President-elect and ascended to the Presidency in '06. Last year, the RECOM membership elected her to a one year term on the Board. Despite Herculean attempts by me and other Board members to convince Barb to run for office once again, she demurred, saying only that it was time for other RECOM members to step up and serve.

If I could describe Barb's tenure on the Board in three words, they would be professionalism, organization, and dedication. Under Barb's leadership, RECOM evolved from a loose-knit group into a true professional organization. She helped put RECOM "on the map" and raised our visibility in the community. For this and more, we all owe her a real debt of gratitude.

While Barb may not be serving on the Board, the good news is that she will continue on as our liaison on the Employee Benefits Task Force, a position she has held for the past five years. Barb has also graciously agreed to serve as our Newsletter Editor for the foreseeable future. If you read the Newsletter then you know how important this position is.

So, if you grant me the artistic license to slightly amend Shakespeare, then on behalf of the Board and the membership, I will say to Barb:

"Good bye, good bye! Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That we should say good bye till it be morrow"

John Gendron,  
President

## Board Retreat

While the Board didn't retreat into the cool pines of northern Arizona, the board members did take a morning here in the Valley and assess RECOM's year in 2007/08 and plan for 2008/09. Some of the accomplishments the Board is particularly proud of include:

Development of a more professional organization by:

- Adopting policies and procedures
- Developing an online newsletter
- Developing a more professional website
- Improving the membership renewal process
- Initiating an incorporation process
- Initiating a formal annual financial review

Improvement of RECOM's profile in the community by:

- Hosting the Candidates' Forum
- Hosting the Pre-retirement seminar
- Meeting with City Manager Chris Brady
- Developing the RECOM brochure
- Retaining large percentage of membership – over 98%

When we got done being proud, we got down to business to discuss what's up for next year. Had to ask ourselves some hard questions like:

1. Do we want to keep the monthly meetings, or go to quarterly? (While membership is up, attendance at the meetings is down. Why?)
2. What kind of programs do we want to present? Information on health, retirement, and insurance matters only, entertaining, instructional like digital photography or xeriscaping? A mix of the above?
3. Do we want to raise RECOM's profile by doing a "road show" about RECOM and develop a lively pre-packaged, electronic presentation?

4. Do we want to raise our profile with the City of Mesa by introducing RECOM to the new City Council at a study session? Ask City for direct link to RECOM on the City's website?
5. Do we want to take on larger part in the volunteer community?
6. Do we want to pursue "Pay Pal" as a membership payment option?
7. How do we involve membership more in the organization?
8. Do we need a marketing committee?
9. How do we prepare, inform, and recruit members for future service on the Board?
10. How do we let people know that RECOM is **not** part of the City of Mesa?

Well, there was more. But these are the highlights of what occupied us for a few hours on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. And y' all were probably busy getting ready for your 4<sup>th</sup> of July activities weren't you? I tell you, drinking coffee and eating doughnuts is **such** hard work!

## Speaker

It was inevitable. Eventually RECOM would get around to mentioning the gasoline crisis. And so, when we invited AAA to make a presentation for our June membership meeting, we asked them to focus on travel close to home, or a least in Arizona.

And that's just what **Judy Coleman**, Branch Office Manager for AAA, did. She comes to the USA via South Africa and Canada, so she's been places and seen things to compare to Arizona.

And she thinks there are places here that the others can't hold a candle to. No, no strike that candle part, not a good idea!

But from the

wine country in southern AZ  
to Kartchner Caverns  
to the north rim –

when were you there last?

Did you buy apples or see the hydroponic tomato greenhouses in Willcox? (Look for "EuroFresh" brand tomatoes in your local megamart).

This writer missed eating at the Velvet Elvis Café in Patagonia, but Judy says it's good! Have you been? Have you stayed overnight in one of those charming B&B's in Madeira canyon?

If rafting down the Colorado is a bit too adventurous, how about a houseboat ride on Lake Powell? ('Course you'd have to find a few close friends you'd want to spend a few days with or who'd want to spend a few days with you!) Or you could do just a scenic day cruise – with someone else doing the driving – so to speak.

Have you seen the Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood in OR? No need to go that far. El Tovar at the south rim of the Grand Canyon is one of the most magnificent lodges of the national parks.

Even if you've already spent your retirement pay-out which you might need for a room for a couple of nights, you can still enjoy the architecture and the public rooms of El Tovar – and of course the views and trails nearby.

OK, so we've all been to Sedona with every long-lost cousin, former college roommate, mother-in-law and other assorted visitors who found our phone number in their address book. But have you seen it from a helicopter or a hot air balloon? (This is why they call it ...home of the **brave**... I guess). You get the idea.

Lots of places in AZ have new things to do and to discover. The writer thinks she'll skip the sky diving in Eloy, but the wind tunnel experience might be a possibility.

Judy brought two of her associates to the meeting, Barbara Kane and Matthew Stadel, both of whom are North American Travel specialists. If you're planning a gas saving trip close to home, they'll be able to help you.

And, you can belong to AAA even if your car insurance is with... ah, one of those other companies. And yes, they still do Trip Tic and they do them online as well.

If you need or want more info here's how to contact the local AAA office:

[www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)

602-274-1116 ext. 3903 (Judy Coleman)  
4126 E. Valley Auto Drive  
Mesa, AZ 85206

If you've been to a spot in Arizona that you'd like to share with your fellow RECOM members, send an email to the editor at [bseperich@aol.com](mailto:bseperich@aol.com). It can be a restaurant, a camping spot, a building, a ghost town, hotel, etc. Tell us what you liked about it and some contact information if possible. Doesn't have to be long, but if you feel like expressing yourself – here's your chance.

## Reports

### Benefits Task Force

The City sent out requests for proposal for a new healthcare network and prescription drugs. BlueCross/Blue Shield and Medco were the only companies who responded. So, we'll be with them for the foreseeable future. Contracts are usually for one year, renewable for four additional years.

The June meeting of the Task Force was cancelled so there's no new information.

## Meetings

**July 16<sup>th</sup>** meeting:

Speaker: Linda Burns, Hospice of the Valley – “Getting Your End-of-Life Directives in Order --- What you need, where to file and how to update your health care directives and living wills. She will also discuss hospice care.

**August 20<sup>th</sup>** meeting:

Speaker: Matt Fehling, President & CEO of the Arizona Better Business Bureau, will present an overview of their activities with focus on consumer fraud, especially involving the elderly.