

AARP Chapter 2426

Minutes from the May 17th, 2017 Meeting

President **Petr Skalnik** called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and led the pledge of allegiance.

Announcements: The next regular Chapter meeting will be on **June 21st, 2017 @ 1:00PM** at the South Austin Senior Activity Center. The next Board meeting will be on **Wednesday, May 24th** at the Manchaca Road Branch of the Austin Public Library @ 10:00 am. The AARP Community Council meeting will be on **June 13, 2017**.

Minutes:

The minutes of the April general meeting were read and approved.

Program: At our May meeting **Kris Raab**, representing the Communication Workers of America, spoke on income inequality in America, addressing such topics as: The Wage Gap Is Much Larger Than We Think It Is; The Expanding Gap Between Productivity And Wages; How Corporate Debt Has Exploded While Interest Isn't Taxable And How Currently The Top Tiers Of Taxpayers Pay Taxes At A Lower Rate Than Middle To Lower Wage Earners.

We also heard from **Sue Castle** who provided a discussion on Bitcoins, which are a type of digital currency that was created anonymously in 2009. Transactions are made with no middlemen – meaning, no banks. There are no transaction fees and no need to give your real name. Bitcoins can be used to buy merchandise anonymously. In addition, international payments are not tied to any country or subject to any regulation. Bitcoins have been called Cryptocurrency as it is a type of digital currency that uses cryptography i.e. “secret writing”, which is the science of coding and decoding messages so as to keep these messages secure.

Treasurer's Report:

Barbara Fetonte reported that the Primary Savings Account was **\$25**; the Chapter Checking account was **\$2,472.43** and Travel Checking account was **\$1,348.83**

Committee Reports

Community Service Committee: **Pat Thomas** reported that the next **Roll and Stroll** is this Saturday May 20th. We will meet at the Wheatsville Co-op South at 11:00 a.m. and catch the #803 to explore Dougherty Arts Center (part of the West Austin Studio Tour). After exploring the Dougherty we will stop at the Lamar Union Plaza to eat at a restaurant named “Delicious”. We will walk around the plaza and explore the shops before returning to Wheatsville by 3:30. This Roll & Stroll adventure will cost \$1.25 for a day pass. Dougherty Arts Center previews the work of over 300 WEST artists allowing you to move through the show geographically, discovering your favorite WEST artists along the way. All art is for sale.

Legislative Committee: Debbie Galloway has volunteered to chair this committee. She reported that **Jessica Lemann** forwarded the following information on legislative issues pertinent to the AARP:

Current Legislative Priority is Nursing Home Quality

- Senate Bill 932 has passed out of the full Senate and is over at the House. It has passed out of the first House Committee and we are optimistic that it will continue on to the floor of the House without complication. You can connect with your House member by calling toll free 844-305-8852 and ask them to support Senate Bill 932 when it comes up for a vote.

Other Updates:

- Senate Bill 507 regarding Surprise Medical Bills has passed out of both houses and has gone to the Governor's desk for signing – This bill will increase consumer access to mediation when faced with a surprise medical bill
- CARE Act has passed out of committees in both the House and Senate and is expected to pass both houses soon. The difference this year was having the support of the Hospital Association
- A package of Guardianship bills supported by AARP is on track to advance out of committees in both houses soon
- Legislation related to Elder Financial Exploitation is on track to advance out of committees in both houses soon
- Nursing Scope of Practice legislation is dead, but it made it significantly further this year and had large bipartisan support

The state budget still isn't final, but as of now we have been able to restore funding for respite care, so we will continue to monitor during the Special Session this summer.

Sunshine Committee: Doris Thorne reported that the May Birthdays were: **Nina Stearns, Kin Nguyen** and **Pete Skalnik**. There were no anniversaries.

Membership Committee: Margaret Hughes reported that there were **56 members** and **10 Guests** attending today's meeting. We have added 7 new members since April.

Program Committee: Pete reported that **Kathryn Stone** has resigned from this committee and we are in need of a new chairperson. All of the programs for the coming year are already scheduled, so this committee is currently in great shape.

Travel Committee: Mario Macaluso announced that the trip on June 7th to Lake Buchanan for the Vanishing Texas River Cruise through the Canyon of the Eagles will leave as scheduled. He reminded members to be at the SASAC parking lot between 8:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. **No later.** Prompt departure will be at 8:45 a.m. to be on time to catch the boat. Please bring your nametags with YOUR NAME IN IT and wear them. Those who have never traveled with us before, bring a pen to fill out the waiver where you will also enter the name of your contact and his/her telephone number in case of an emergency. Remember also that the SASAC will be closed for annual maintenance and repairs on June 7th, 2017.

Mario also is planning for a trip to visit the Painted Churches of Texas near Schulenburg on August 29th. Cost of the trip is \$56 which includes the bus fare, a personal guide, a driver's tip and lunch at the Oak Ridge Smoke House Restaurant.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

(APPROVED 6/21/2017)

Ed Gonzales, Secretary