



President's Message

- Vaughn Tokashiki

Seasons Greetings,

The Holiday Season is when we count our blessings, enjoy being with family and friends, and appreciate the fact that even what first appeared to be obstacles actually became opportunities to extend ourselves and to try new things and approaches to our problems.

I have previously said that it is also a time when we should reflect on our life and the positive influence we had on everyone around us; friends, peers, and students. Like a small stone, dropped into a pond, whose ripples spread out infinitely, our hope is that our influence was like the stone dropped into the pond.

Like James Stewart's character in It's a Wonderful Life, (How many of you remember that lovely story?) many of us will never fully understand or appreciate the impact we had on everyone around us. Of course, we won't need an angel to take us back in time to show us how we helped others. We just need to reflect on our past experiences.

We worked hard in our schools, not searching for glory or recognition, (and definitely not to trying get rich!!) but to make a difference to our students and our communities. We sought to have a positive influence on those who meant everything to us.

I am keeping my Winter Message short. I want you to use the time it would have taken to read ten more paragraphs, if I had continued to write, to reflect on your life. I'm sure, being teachers, that you have not "led a life of quiet desperation." Your life, like mine, is most assuredly filled with love and happiness. Is there really a need for anything more?

Finally, your HSTA-R state officers look forward to again meeting and talking to our fellow HSTA-R retirees at the HSTA-R Delegate Assembly on Friday, April 29, 2016 at the Honolulu Country Club.

Happy Holidays!

2016 HSTA-Retired Legislative Priorities

Retirement Issues

- Support legislation to allow the pensions of public employees to keep up with the cost of living.
- Support preservation of current retiree benefits.
 - ▶ **Oppose taxing all retiree pensions.**
 - ▶ **Oppose eliminating reimbursement of Medicare Part B premiums.**
 - ▶ **Oppose any reductions to Social Security and Medicare.**
- Support legislation on a long range plan toward eliminating the unfunded liability of the Employees Union Trust Fund Health Benefits; provided current benefits are not diminished.
- Support legislation to have retiree's health premiums deducted from monthly pension.

Health Issues

- Support legislation to allow bargaining Unit 5 members and retirees to participate in a VEBA trust.
- Support the preservation of health care benefits for retired public employees by opposing legislation to eliminate reimbursement of Medicare Part B.
- Support proposals to lower the cost of prescription drugs and allow approved drugs to be imported under federal regulations.
- Support state and national health reform legislation to make affordable health care available to all Americans.
- Support legislation on long-term care.

Education Issues

- Support HSTA's Legislative Priorities.
- Support legislation to adequately fund Hawaii's public schools.
- Support HSTA and its commitment to the improvement of public education, Pre K to 20.
- Support NEA's recommendation for the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization bill.

2016 Legislative Priorities - Beverly Gotelli

The Retirement Issues Committee reviewed and recommended the HSTA-R 2016 Legislative Priorities to the HSTA-R Board of Directors. We have kept our priorities very simple and broad. There are many issues that we are faced with but we can't address them all.

This year we will continue to monitor legislation that will benefit retirees and not diminish what they have. This is a biennium year so bills that

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News You Can Use - Linda Tavares

December 25 is just around the corner. So instead of wishing you a Merry Christmas, I would like to say Chestnut Cheer! Chestnuts are here, and just in time for the holidays! Chestnuts capture the spirit and tradition of the season around the world. Chestnuts, in addition to being a culinary staple, were used to treat ailments like whooping cough, and were thought to help women conceive.

They are a good source of amino acids and flavonoids, which help fight free radicals in the body associated with aging, disease and inflammation. Filled with vitamins, nutrients, and minerals, chestnuts are a true gift of good health. And should you conceive after eating a lot of chestnuts, it will surely be a miracle!

Did you know that the brains of older people are slow because they KNOW so MUCH. People do not decline mentally with age. It just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains. Just like a computer struggles as the hard drive gets full, so, too, do humans take longer to access information when their brains are full. Researchers say this slowing down process is not the same as cognitive decline. Our brain works slower in old age because we have stored more information over time. The brains of older people do not get weak. On the contrary, they simply know more. So there! Now when I reach for a word or a name, I won't excuse myself by saying "I'm having a senior moment". Now I'll say, "My disk is full!"

And before your disk fills up, may I remind you that for the year 2015 your HSTA-R dues were \$75 for the Year (\$45 for HSTA-R and \$30 for NEA-R). The \$6.25 is taken out monthly from your pension check. However, if you are an NEA-Lifetime member, your dues annually is only \$45 for HSTA-R, and you are paying \$3.75 monthly.

May you have a Chestnut Cheer and Cuddle more! Snuggling not only feels good . . . it reduces stress and triggers the release of the hormone oxytocin, which helps lower blood pressure. Don't have a reliable cuddle partner? Rescue a pup from the pound . . . they don't talk back!

2016 Legislative Priorities (Continued)

did not become law last year will be carried over to this year's session.

The Retirement Issues Committee is made up of HSTA-R members from throughout the state. Members are; Oahu District, Joanne Ing, Lanny Busher, Jo-An Goss, Darlene Pang, Phyllis Ida, Norma Villarmia, and Mae Kishimoto. Kaua'i District, Sandra Gage and Kevin Nunn; Maui District, Sharmen Graydon and Steven Harman, Hawaii District, Cynthia Sallee-Brown and Gary Kaku.

HSTA-R Government Relations co-chair, Carol Nitta, and HSTA-R state officers, Vaughn Tokashiki, Linda Tavares, Jeanne Fukuoka, Glenn D. Fernandez and Beverly Gotelli are also members of the Retirement Issues Committee.

We are here to address senior concerns and to help monitor retirement pensions, and health benefits. We also, work with the Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA) on legislation.

If you want to get involved with testifying or writing testimony during the legislative session, please contact a member from your district.

Thank you for all you do for HSTA-Retired.

HSTA-Retired Focus Groups - Beverly Gotelli

HSTA-R was established by HSTA in 1995 and completed its 20th year in 2015. As in any organization we've grown and would like to have the opinion of our members.

The HSTA-R Board of Directors, with concurrence of the Delegate Assembly, has funded a special committee of the Board, "The Survey Committee." The Survey Committee is Chair, Beverly Gotelli, members, Darlene Pang, Jo-An Goss, Sharon Mahoe, Linda Tavares, Joan Lee Husted, Glenn Dave Fernandez, and Vaughn Tokashiki. The committee met several times and decided on focus groups rather than a survey.

Anthology Group has been hired to conduct the Focus Groups. They will be calling members to ask their participation in January. We are hoping that when contacted, you will take part in this activity. This is a onetime endeavor and we would like the membership to be actively involved in the focus groups.

What will the Focus Groups be asking? We want to know if HSTA-R is doing a good job in communicating with its membership. Do our members know what benefits they have by being a member of HSTA-R and NEA-R? Why are you a member of HSTA-R? They aren't hard questions, but as an organization we aren't sure if we are meeting the needs of our membership.

So please, help us out when you are called by Anthology Group. Give them a few minutes of your time.

Poll Site Volunteers - Clarice Roby

The HSTA State Elections Committee is seeking volunteers to help with the 2016 HSTA Elections at poll sites throughout the islands. Since many of the active teachers are on the ballots, those candidates are not allowed to "handle" ballots. Depending on the specific complexes, Greeters, Sign-in workers, Monitors, Ballot Box and Challenge Desk workers will be needed. HSTA-R volunteers will be reporting to a Poll Site Coordinator, a member of the Elections Committee or HSTA staff, working between 2:45 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.. Elections will take place from February 8 – 29, 2016.

If you are interested in helping, contact your district President or Clarice Roby, HSTA-R Elections Co-chair: kyrob-y888@gmail.com or (809) 551-0164.

Hawaii State Teachers Association - Retired

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Phone: 808-833-2711

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Hawaii State Teachers Association - Retired

HSTA-RETIRED OFFICERS

President:	Vaughn Tokashiki
First V. President:	Yvonne (Linda) Tavares
Second V. President:	Jeanne Fukuoka
Secretary:	Glenn Dave Fernandez
Treasurer:	Beverly Gotelli

District News From Around The State

Oahu District

Submitted by Joanne Ing, President

Another year brings new possibilities, but it also brings decreased brain cells, so before I forget, let me recap what HSTA-R Oahu district did in 2015.

Our emphasis on the three “C”s (Connection, Communication, and Community) remained our focus as we planned our activities. This year, incorporating the results from evaluations, we moved our October general membership to the Okinawa Center.

Previously, we held all membership meetings at Waialae Country Club, but the council made a location change to accommodate members who live on the Leeward and Central parts of the island. In 2016, we are planning a Meet and greet on the Windward side to encourage participation from our Windward members.

Our Communication efforts are ongoing, as we continually strive to disseminate timely information. Our email system with 1,920 working email addresses is our most effective means of timely communication, but unfortunately it serves only half of our membership. To help us better serve you, if there are any changes to your contact information, please let us know.

(As a side note, Oahu members should receive three newsletters a year; September, January, and June either by email or US postal service. If you have not been receiving your newsletters, please call the HSTA-R office at (808) 840-2258 and leave a message indicating your concern. In any case, our newsletter is also located at www.hstaretired.org).

Our Community Service efforts continue to be the “shining light” of our activities. The positive comments of our members and the community agencies validate the valuable contribution that we continue to make to our society.

As we enter 2016, we will direct our efforts to emphasize Empowerment, Enrichment, and Encouragement. We started this focus at our September General Membership by presenting Gerry Yahata who spoke on “Re-Fired”; having a purpose in life, celebrating life, loving others, belonging to a “tribe” and giving back. Following Mr. Yahata, members Sherry and Calvin Abe shared how they have incorporated aspects of this philosophy through the growing of orchids.

Looking forward to 2016 with new challenges and new people to meet.

The word is out that there are positions on the HSTA-R Board to be filled in January. We are looking for new and returning members to run for office.

Hawaii District

Submitted by Niyati Brown

Hawaii District has been having way too much fun again. The Kona Community Club recently took a group to the West Hawaii Exploratory Academy (WHEA). It is a public charter school with a focus on marine biology and preservation of our ocean environments. The students focus on group projects that explore and test scientific theories in a non-traditional setting with lots of hands-on experiments.

We are gearing up for our annual meetings and elections in January and February. All executive officers and some council seats must be filled. If you would like to be more involved with your retiree organization, now is the time to step up and let us know that you would like to place your name on the ballot for a

position.

The Hawaii State Legislature will meet again in about a month. HSTA-R has developed a list of our legislative priorities that we hope you will support. From time to time we will call on you to contact your Senator’s or Representative’s office with testimony about bills we are supporting. When called upon, please freely tell “your story” with your experience from a retiree’s perspective. It is personal stories that garner the most attention.

Happy Holidays to all Big Island and state retirees! Be safe, be happy, and enjoy the season.

Maui District

Submitted by Sharmen Graydon

Maui County District is very pleased to report that all three islands in the County now have organized and active groups of HSTA-R members. Lanai is the most recent community club to form, joining Molokai’s club. Congratulations to Nora Kawasaki for assuring that Lanai’s retired teachers have a forum and voice in our organization.

Lanai active teachers joined Maui’s for Institute Day on October 13, 2015 at Maui High School in Kahului. Maui’s HSTA-R pre-retirement cadre presented their workshop to nearly 90 teachers, 13 of whom joined NEA-R that day. Thanks to Debby Takahashi and Linnea Francis for their efforts.

Halloween was the auspicious date for the MEO annual Senior Fair. Attended by over 3000 people, seniors were offered information on healthy living, politicians’ freebies, plants, crafts and more. HSTA-R Maui District distributed blue carabiners imprinted with the HSTA-R logo to about 450 lucky attendees.

A lot of work has been done by Nelson Chung in preparing the most recent newsletter distributed this week. He has included very pertinent and useful information ranging from annual dues paid, to application for TSA pre-check status, in addition to updates on activities and plans by our District.

Also hard at work are the committee members planning the annual Christmas luncheon. It will be moved from Lahaina this year to central Maui. We are in awe of the detailed planning and coordinating done by Brenda Wong for the past several years of the luncheon. She has stepped down and we now know how much she did to make a success of the annual event. We heartily thank her.

And finally, our District has new shirts with the blue of the original shirts with the white logo, but now with feminine styling for the ladies, a pocket on the polo for the gentlemen. We were able to acquire the shirts thanks to a grant from HSTA-R.

Kauai District

Submitted by Sandra Gage, President

October was a busy month. Volunteering with registration and refreshments at HSTA Kauai Teacher’s Institute Day allowed our retired members to connect with the active teachers, our future members. Members also enjoyed a guided tour of the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

Planning for our Meet and Greet is ongoing. The committee is working on the details to introduce new and returning members to the history of HSTA-R and our activities in the community.

2016 HSTA-R Elections



Wanted:

- 11 Delegates to HSTA Convention
- 5 Delegates to NEA-R Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly



The 2016 HSTA Convention will be held on April 16-17, 2016 at the Hawaii Convention Center. HSTA-R is entitled to 12 delegates, including the HSTA-R President. In this election, the top 11 candidates will become delegates, and the next 11 will be alternates. Air and ground transportation, hotel, and meals for delegates will be provided by HSTA-R.

The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly will be held from June 29 to July 7, 2016 in Washington, D.C.. HSTA-R will have six delegates, including the HSTA-R President. In this election the top five (5) candidates will become delegates and the next five (5) will be alternates. Partial funding for expenses will be provided to HSTA-R member delegates who attend both meetings.

Candidates for delegates to the HSTA Convention must be members of HSTA-R and NEA-R. Candidates for election to the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting and the NEA Representative Assembly must be members of NEA-R.

For more information concerning these elections, contact Haunani Kauahi (808) 536-7831, Sandra Low (808) 395-9039, or Clarice Roby (808) 551-0164.

Elections Timeline

December, 2015	Notification of elections
January 11, 2016	Nominations deadline
January 27, 2016	Ballots mailed
February 16, 2016	Ballots return deadline
February 17, 2016	Ballots counted
February 26, 2016	HSTA-R Board of Directors certifies election results

2016 HSTA-R Nomination Form

Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Member making nomination: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

(Check below the election(s) for which the person is nominated)

- HSTA Convention Delegate
- NEA-R Annual Meeting and NEA Representative Assembly Delegate

Mail this form to:

**HSTA-Retired Elections Committee
1200 Ala Kapuna Street
Honolulu, HI 96819**

Nominations must be received in the HSTA office via mail or fax (808) 839-7106 by **4:00 p.m., January 11, 2016.**

Please include a biographical sketch (50 words or less).