



President's Message - Vaughn Tokashiki, HSTA-R President

Mele Kalikimaka e Hauoli Makahiki Hou,

By the time you read this message, you will have already celebrated Thanksgiving, survived Black Friday, and are undoubtedly preparing for the Christmas holiday and New Year, 2017. I know that you, unlike me, have completed your gift shopping for friends and family.

More importantly, I hope that you spent 2016 taking care of your health. Watching over and taking care of loved ones is important, but taking care of your own health should be priority one. Why? Because if you are not healthy, how can you be expected to care for someone else.

A good diet is essential for maintaining a healthy body. That and regular moderate exercise, like walking, yard work, and even house work can help you to maintain a healthy body. Don't forget to also get enough sleep. Of course, taking your prescribed medication at the proper time and regular visits to your physician are essential for a healthy lifestyle.

With no segue whatsoever, I can say that your HSTA-R State, District, and Community Club officers and council members worked very hard this year on your behalf. Monitoring the goings on at the legislature, the EUTF (Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund), and the ERS (Employees Retirement System) were just some of the things in which HSTA-R was involved.

Your District and Community Clubs sponsored many interesting and informative activities for you, and I hope you took advantage of them. If you go to the HSTA-Retired website (hstaretired.org) you will see the many activities your District and Community Club organized in 2016.

With all the changes that occurred because of the political campaigns and subsequent elections in November, 2017 promises to be a very interesting year indeed. I say this because, though we rely on our health benefits under the EUTF and Medicare, our pensions through the ERS, and allotments from Social Security, it is not a given that they will remain unchanged in the future.

There is always some member in Congress talking about privatizing Medicare and Social Security. Could this affect present retirees? I don't know, but I hope not. Thank goodness the NEA (National Education Association-of which HSTA and HSTA-R are members) vigilantly monitor the activities of the Representatives and Senators in Congress.

On the state level, we have to keep reminding our legislators that our health benefits and pensions should not be touched—unless there are plans to enhance them. Rest assured that your HSTA-R officers in the State, District, and Community Clubs will continue to evaluate all proposals made in the legislature to see if they will adversely affect our retirees.

However, we cannot do the work alone. Please keep yourself available to help us at the state and national level by keeping abreast of the news. There may be times when HSTA-R or NEA will ask for help with lobbying our state and Congressional legislators because there may be legislation that would disrupt our retirees' lives.

Finally, Thank-you to the many dedicated people who serve on the State, District, and Community Clubs and on the HSTA-R Standing and Special Committees. Without their tireless service, HSTA-R would not be able to do its job of representing you, our wonderful retirees.

I sincerely hope that you have a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year. Enjoy your trips to Las Vegas and other destinations. Eat good food. Get lots of rest. And again, most importantly, take care of yourselves.

Retirement Issues and Program Committee

It's that time of the year when the Committee reviews and revises the 2017 Legislative Priorities. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the process of reviewing the Priorities.

The 2017 Legislative Priorities was presented to and adopted by the Board of Directors. The priorities are included in this article. We also elected Kevin Nunn, Vice Chair and Norma Villarmia, Secretary for the Retirement Issues and Program Committee.

The Committee discussed the upcoming Legislative Session and will be reviewing legislation that will impact retirees. We

want to make sure that our current health and pension benefits are not diminished. We are also concerned about changes that may be introduced for future retirees.

The Legislative Action Team, which is a sub group of the Retirements Issues and Program Committee, meets regularly and will be doing the monitoring for the RIC during the Legislative Session.

We invite HSTA-R members who would like to participate with us during the 2017 Legislative Session by lobbying, writing testimony, or emailing your legislator, to contact your district RIC member. We have members from across the state so every-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Retirement Issues and Program Committee

one is able to participate.

Retirement Issues and Program Committee members are by District: Oahu: Joanne Ing, Darlene Pang, Norma Villarmia, Mae Kishimoto, Lanny Busher, Marianne Busher, Jo-An Goss. Hawaii: Kim Springer, Gary Kaku; Maui: Sharmen Graydon, Steve Harman; Kaua'i; Sandra Gage, Kevin Nunn. Your State Officers; Vaughn Tokashiki, Yvonne Tavares, Jeanne Fukuoka, Glenn D. Fernandez, and Beverly Gotelli. Government Relations Co-Chairs; Carol Nitta, Stephen Ono.

We welcome you to come and join us during the 2017 Legislative Session. You can reach us by calling 840-2258 and leave a message with your contact information.

Thank you for all you do to make HSTA-R a successful organization.

Beverly Gotelli

2017 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.
- Support legislation to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

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 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.

HSTA-R Dues Over Collection 2012-2016

The ERS (Employee Retirement Service) has been dues deducting 1 (one) cent more per month for the past four years---after the dues were increased in 2012. This occurred because the ERS cannot deduct 1/2 (one-half) cents from our pensions and rounds up to a full penny per month. The HSTA-R fiscal year is from September 1-August 31.

All HSTA-R members who joined or who already belonged to HSTA-R from 2012-2013 can be reimbursed up to 48 (forty-eight) cents. Members from 2013-2014 up to 36 (thirty-six) cents. Members from 2014-2015 up to 24 (twenty-four) cents. Members from 2015-2016 up to 12 (twelve) cents.

This issue does not affect HSTA-R members who do not have their dues deducted from their monthly pensions because they pay for their membership in HSTA-R annually by writing a check.

The Executive Committee had discussed mailing a notice to HSTA-R members, (figuring out the cost of writing, printing, and mailing out the letter, including an envelope that the member can use to request the refund and also the cost of then writing and mailing out the check).

However, the mail out would have actually cost more than the total amount of money that was over collected because of the rounding up by the ERS. The Executive Committee didn't think that this was a financially prudent thing to do. If anything, we thought that we would our members would be upset that we were using their dues money like this.

Your HSTA-R Executive Committee, with the approval of the HSTA-R Board of Directors, will donate the over collected funds to the HEA (Hawaii Education Association) to be used for teacher scholarships because we continue to support teachers in our communities. The amount that will be transmitted to the HEA is \$2,500.00.

Anyone who wants to be reimbursed for the over collection will have the opportunity to request a check from HSTA-R in the amount that was over collected.

Therefore, if you would like a one-time reimbursement for the over collected dues money (up to 12 cents, 24 cents, 36 cents, or 48 cents---depending on how long you have been a member of HSTA-R), please call the HSTA-R phone number, (800) 840-2258.

This situation will not occur again because the HSTA-R yearly dues were increased from \$45.00 to \$48.00 and can be evenly divided by 12 months (24 pay periods).

Thank you for your understanding. Thank you, too, to the several members who brought the over collection to the attention of your HSTA-R officers. *Vaughn Tokashiki*

District News From Around The State

Kauai District

In September our council met. With the help of our treasurer, Bonnie Kakinami, our budget for the year was established. A discussion on how to integrate the information from our Focus Group was held. At this time, a beginning step will be to vary the newsletter dates from the Messenger's dates.

In September we visited the Hindu Monastery on an educational tour.

October was a time to visit with our members at a wonderful luncheon at Kauai Community College's Fine Dining.

November we participated with HSTA Kauai Chapter in their Legislative Reception. November will be the beginning of collecting gift cards to be given in December for those in need of some cheer during this holiday season.

Our committee for the upcoming Meet and Greet has met to finalize plans. *Sandra Gage*

Maui District

HSTA-R Maui District Council met in September to further plans for the coming year. We will continue to participate in community activities, such as the Senior Fair, held on Oct. 29, at which we distributed health and medication forms to help in case of a medical emergency.

We attend meetings of MEO (Maui Economic Opportunity) and of HSTA Maui Chapter to be informed of ways in which we can coordinate our efforts. We will also enjoy the festivities at our annual Christmas luncheon, during which we will honor recent retirees.

To further reach out to newly retired teachers, we will use the program grant we received to hold a meet-and-greet luncheon in February. We were very pleased to be recipients of the grant and look forward to connecting with new members. *Sharmen Graydon*

Oahu District

Empowerment, Encouragement and Enrichment have been the foci of our activities throughout the year. To accommodate our members who live on the west side of the island, we held our October 17, 2016 meeting at the Hawaii Okinawa Center. Besides a delicious buffet lunch, our members enjoyed a tai chi demonstration and a presentation on the non profit organization, "Music for Life". Through the generosity of our attendees, HSTA-R was able to collect \$840.00 for this organization. "Music for Life" strives to bring music back into the school curriculum.

The HSTA-R Oahu District council continues to make connections with new members through its "Meet and Greet" meetings. These meetings, one in March and the other in August, helps to connect the organization with its members. The August program featured speakers from the Hawaii State Department of Commerce who presented information on commonly used scams geared at seniors. Another part of these meetings is small group sharing. As a result of these meetings, new faces have joined us at our activities and planning sessions.

Our leadership training sessions led by June Motokawa and Sharon Mahoe concentrated on communication styles, decision making and team building. These training sessions have created a bond within the members of the council and has resulted in greater cooperation and participation in district and state roles.

Presently, we are working on interest group meetings. Our first activity will be centered around crafts to "make and take" or donate to the Institute of Human Services. Our goal is to provide members with new activities that they will enjoy. Future plans include travel, cooking and gardening.

Exciting things are being planned for 2017. Please join us. *Joanne Ing*

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Statistics show that women who have a weight problem... live longer than the men who tell them, "Remember: age is only a number, and weight is only a number." I've decided that numbers are really starting to piss me off.

We all know that once you qualify for Social Security you can expect your benefits to be paid once a month. But did you know that the week in the month on which you receive your benefit, depends on the birth date of the person on whose record you receive benefits. For example, if you receive benefits as a retired or disabled worker, your benefit will be determined by your birth date. If you receive benefits as a spouse, your benefit payment date will be determined by your spouse's birth date. Here's how it works:

<u>Birth day on</u>	<u>Benefits paid on</u>
1st to 10th day	Second Wednesday
11th to 20th day	Third Wednesday
21st to 31st day	Fourth Wednesday

Once the day you receive your benefits is determined, it does NOT change.

Also, the day you receive your benefits has no effect on the way your benefits are figured. My bank is sure happy that I discovered this information...now I rarely call them to ask...is my SS money in my checking? I just start spending the money the week after it is deposited.

So remember, if life starts to get you down, and your glass is empty! QUICK! Call ...Wine-One-One! *Linda Tavares*

Hawaii State Teachers Association - Retired

1200 Ala Kapuna Street

Honolulu, HI 96819

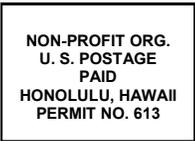
Phone: 808-840-2258

Website: www.hstaretired.org

The **MESSENGER** is the quarterly publication of the **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



2017 HSTA-R Delegate Elections



Wanted:

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



The 2017 HSTA Convention will be held on April 1 and 2, 2017 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 successor delegates. 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 27 to July 5, 2017 in Boston, Mass. 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 successor delegates. 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) 255-7291, or Clarice Roby (808) 551-0164.

Elections Timeline

December, 2016	Notification of elections
January 9, 2017	Nominations deadline
January 25, 2017	Ballots mailed
February 15, 2017	Ballots return deadline
February 16, 2017	Ballots counted
February 23, 2017	HSTA-R Board of Directors certifies election results

2017 HSTA-R Nomination Form

Nominee: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Member making nomination: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I have the nominee's permission.

Signature Date

(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 not later than **4:00 p.m., January 9, 2017.**

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