Retiree Advocate

CTA/NEA RETIRED NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XII - ISSUE IV - AUGUST 2012

IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from the President 1

Board of Directors 2

Time to Communicate with CTA/NEA-Retired 2

CTA/NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, June 8, 2012 2

Who is ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) and Why it is so Powerful? 3

CalSTRS Report 3

Meet the New Officers 4

September Board Meeting 5

2012 NEA Representative Assembly 5

Retired Activistist Network 6

Assessment Administrators 6

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Alen Ritchie

When I retired in 2001, I did not plan on getting involved in CTA/NEA-Retired in any way other than by being an active member. In 2003, friends urged me to run for the position of Region IV Representative on the Board and I won with a TOTAL of 28 votes (thank God that elections have changed since then). I did not consider moving into the presidency until last year. I ran for Vice-President, thinking that I would have two to four years of a Sharilynn Russo presidency to prepare. As most of you know, Sharilynn was tragically killed in an auto accident and my two to four years of prep time became three months. My first response was total panic! Then, people began stepping up. Ed Foglia reminded me that he would still be on the Board, would always be available, and would continue working on some of the projects that he had started. Former Presidents Dorothy Moser and Arlene Pavey, and former CTA President Barbara Kerr assured me that they were there for me. All of the Board members offered encouragement. Even people that I didn't know cornered me at meetings or emailed me with words of support. Most of all, I have two of the finest fellow officers that anyone could ask for! Frank Tarantino, Secretary/Treasurer, and Marc Sternberger, newly appointed Vice-President, began working for the Association way back in April. Thanks to all of you!

By now, those of you that have annual memberships have received a letter of renewal. For your benefit, and for the benefit of those who are Lifetime or CalSTRS dues deduction members, I'd like to expand on some of the reasons that we belong to CTA/NEA-Retired.

For me, the main reason that I do what I do is expressed in a statement that I heard at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in June. "Retire from your position, not your profession.". We became educators because we cared for kids and for public education. Being away from our former work sites doesn't mean that we no longer care! By belonging to CTA/NEA-Retired we are able to stay aware of education issues and are more able to become involved when our help is needed.

At the personal level, we maintain almost all of the Member Benefits offered by CTA and NEA. Recently, many of our members have had to take advantage of CTA's Group Legal Services (GLS). CalSTRS has been directed to crack down on "spiking" and as a result many retirees have found that their school districts mistakenly counted various extra payments as regular salary when reporting to CalSTRS. This resulted in higher pension amounts than they should have received. In addition to having their monthly checks decreased on a permanent basis, they have been told that they must also repay the overpayments from prior checks. One retiree that I know of has been billed over $44,000! GLS is working on getting the districts to make the repayments, but only CTA/NEA-Retired members are being represented. Other members have gone to GLS when they believed that they were being treated unfairly in connection with district provided Health Benefits. Each of us is also allowed one half hour consultation on any other matter except taxes or immigration. To access GSL, call 562-478-1349.

Ed Foglia and Dean Vogel at NEA-RA

Retiree

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Alen Ritchie
938 Nottingham Drive
Redlands, CA 92373
909-793-9229
Email: alenritchie@verizon.net

Vice President, Marc Sternberger
3015 Mayhew Court
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
Home: 925-937-1824
Cell: 925-323-3631
Email: marcpea@aol.com

Secretary-Treasurer, Frank Tarantino
1480 Edgehill Drive
Chula Vista, CA 91913-2982
619-985-5508
E-mail: fatarantino@cox.net

District 1 Rep, Vince Cortese
P.O. Box 1150
Oakley, CA 94561-1150
Cell: 650-222-6641
E-mail: vincenzocortese@aol.com

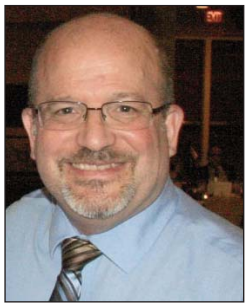
District 2 Rep, Ed Foglia
201 Ravenwood Court
Granite Bay, CA 95746
E-mail: edndonna@surewest.net

District 3 Rep, Dorothy Moser
5513 Willow Crest Avenue
No. Hollywood, CA 91601
818-763-5850
Cell: 818-416-9344
E-mail: moser-d@sbcglobal.net

District 4 Rep, Sharon Fitch Boudreau
292 Palmer Street, C-2
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
949-646-8606
Email: sharbou@aol.com

Ethnic Minority Rep Harris Kight-Moore
P.O. Box 1952
Idyllwild, CA 92549-1952
Home: 951-659-0196
Cell: 951-288-8022
Email: kingcty@yahoo.com

TIME TO COMMUNICATE WITH CTA/NEA RETIRED



Marc Sternberger, Vice President

CTA/NEA- Retired has been using the **Retiree Advocate Newsletter** to communicate with its retired and pre-retired members for over a decade now. The issues are printed and mailed out after the four (4) CTA State Councils and CTA/NEA-Retired Meetings during the school year and after the NEA Representative Assembly and Retired Annual Meetings in the Summer. This newsletter continues to serve us well and inform our members, however, with the rapidly changing political scene both in California and the Nation we have decided to utilize some more immediate forms of communication.

Starting in June you can find and "like" **CTA/NEA- Retired on Facebook**. We will make every effort to keep this page updated with the latest news and issues regarding politics, retirement, pensions, and the state of our Association. In the near future we hope to post meeting notices for local CTA Retired Affiliates. The CTA/NEA-Retired leadership can also be contacted through this page or by e-mailing **CTANEARetired@aol.com.**

Another source of current information can be found by going to **www.CTA.org**, clicking on **ABOUT CTA**, then the **WHO WE ARE** box, and then **Retired.**

From the **CTA Retired** home page you can navigate to **Current Issues**, information about **Member Benefits**, and **links** to other useful site like **CalSTRS** and the **NEA Retired** webpage.

California's students, union members, retirees, and CTA colleagues, active and retired, are depending on us, especially in this upcoming November Election. Stay informed with the **Retiree Advocate, CTA/NEA- Retired** on **Facebook**, and **CTA.org/Retired.**

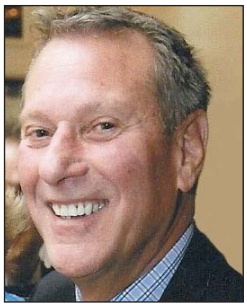
CTA/NEA RETIRED ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 8, 2012

Dorothy Moser, District III

CTA/NEA-Retired Board sets goals for 2012-13 at its Annual Meeting:

- Increase membership 20% by August 31, 2013.
- Continue to build and expand an instant communication network with members, chapter leaders, liaisons, and political contacts.
- Establish at least one retired chapter in every Service Center Council area by 2014.
- Assist new and current chapters to be strong advocates for retirement and organizational issues.
- Expand the annual "Retirement Issues Conference" involving both retirees and pre-retired subscribers to have 200 registered participants.
- Increase the visibility and awareness among CTA active members on the value of NEA-Retired membership upon retirement.
- Encourage CTA to accept political and charitable contributions to the appropriate CTA funds from CTA/NEA-Retired members.
- Have ninety percent of CTA/NEA-Retired members be voters and active in the political process.
- Work to defeat all ballot and legislative initiatives that would silence the voices of California union workers and strengthen the clout of big corporations.
- Work to pass ballot and legislative initiatives that would restore stable tax revenues for public schools, colleges, and universities.
- Continue work for passage and enactment of the Social Security Fairness Act.
- Continue efforts to reach out to the public to inform them of the societal benefits of public employees defined benefit pension plans.
- Seek to have CTA/NEA-Retired members be appointed to be part of any Speakers Bureau for the 2012 fall campaign.

CTA/NEA-Retired at NEA-RA July 2012



WHO IS ALEC (AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL) AND WHY IS IT SO POWERFUL?

Frank Tarantino, Secretary-Treasurer

ALEC is an organization of nearly 2,000 conservative state legislators representing all 50 states. It has some 300 corporate sponsors including Walmart, AT&T, ExxonMobil, Johnson & Johnson, Bank of America, Pfizer, Corrections Corporation of America and Koch Industries, run by billionaire oil tycoons David and Charles Koch, major funders of the Tea Party movement. It is a legislative think-tank and clearinghouse from which the corporate members of ALEC draft model legislation for lawmakers to pull from, introduce and pass into law across the country. In short, ALEC is a ghostwriting organization for federal and state legislators across the country on behalf of its corporate clients. ALEC has been leading the privatization movement for nearly 40 years, but is currently getting attention because many of its ideas are now being enacted.

Founded in 1973, this Washington, D.C.-based group describes itself as "the nation's largest, nonpartisan, individual public-private membership association of state legislators." ALEC connects conservative state legislators, who pay a nominal fee of $50 for two years of membership, with corporations that pay tens of thousands of dollars a year to join the organization. On the surface, their membership looks like a networking organization comprised of thousands of legislators from around the country, but in reality it is run by corporate contributors who are giving thousands, if not millions, of dollars to gain access to these legislators and distribute legislation they've crafted that will push their corporate interests. The organization boasts that each year, close to 1,000 bills based on its corporate-crafted model legislation are introduced into statehouses across the country. Of these, an average of 20 percent are enacted into law.

ALEC's policymaking process involves three legislative meetings each year, geared around the organization's nine task forces, which focus on issues from education to health policy to telecommunications. Internal documents reveal that corporate and legislative members sit as equals on task forces where each member has a "voice and vote" on the model legislation. This means that corporate votes have a large role in dictating which legislative models are introduced in state legislatures. Because ALEC is organized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization **this allows ALEC to keep its documents private only to its legislative and corporate members.** This means that the very people who are affected by policy that ALEC pushes have no right to inspect the model legislation, nor are legislators required to note when a bill they introduce is based on ALEC models.

The "explosion" of draft legislation advancing the privatization of our public schools, the elimination of teacher due process protections and the dismantling of collective bargaining rights for all educational personnel is no accident. The privatization of public schools has been on ALEC's agenda for some time. Wherever terms like "state vouchers", "charters" and language advocating other forms of school privatization, new opportunities for profit-making entities, and the expansion of for-profit online charter schools appear in legislative language, one is likely to find echoes of the ALEC model.

CALSTRS REPORT

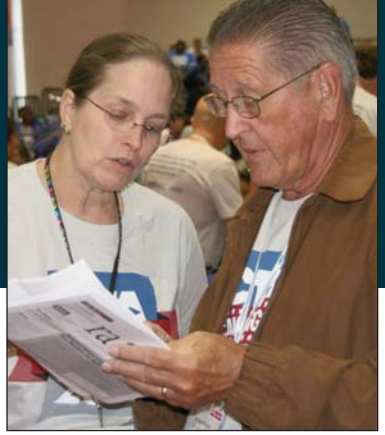
Ed Foglia, District II

CalSTRS will be celebrating its centennial anniversary this year. During their first hundred years, CalSTRS has grown to become the largest teacher retirement system and second largest public employment pension system in the United States.

At the July meeting, the CalSTRS Board of Directors received the 2011-2012 investment returns which are 1.84%. This is the first time in 15 years that the investments have underperformed their benchmarks. The investment returns for 2009-2010 were 12.2% and 2010-2011 were 23.1%. The average investment return from 2009 to 2012 is 12.04%.

There is some good news for retirees who earn post retirement income. The legislature passed a bill that goes to the Governor that changes the post retirement earnings limit to ½ the median final compensation of all recently retired members. That raises the limit from $31,020 to $40,000 that a retiree may earn in a year.

The bill to elect a retired member to the CalSTRS Board is making its way through the Legislature. Currently, active CalSTRS members elect three members to the Board of Directors.



Advocate

Gerry Fong and
Alen Ritchie at NEA-RA

MEET THE NEW OFFICERS

President-Alen Ritchie
Alen is a lifelong resident of Redlands and a graduate of the University of Redlands. He taught for 40 years in the Redlands schools, mostly junior high instrumental music and social studies. He became active in association work in 1988 and served as local president for 6 years during the 90's and into 2001. He was on CTA State Council for 10 years and chaired the Language Acquisition committee. He was also chair of the San Gorgonio Service Center Council for two years. Since retiring in 2001, he has served for five years as Region IV Director and two years as Secretary/Treasurer on the CTA/NEA-Retired Executive Board. Alen's wife, Carolyn, is a Nurse Manager, and they have three children and eight grandchildren. Both are active in their community, and Alen is currently president of the San Bernardino County Board of Education.

Vice President-Marc Sternberger
Marc became Vice-President of NEA/CTA-R upon the recommendation of the incoming CTA/NEA-R President and approval of the CTA/NEA-R Executive Board at a meeting of the Board in Washington, DC on June 27th.

Marc retired in June 2011, after 38 years as a Speech and Language Therapist and Special Education Teacher; the last 20 years in the Pittsburg Unified School District. He has been active in NEA, CTA, the Alcosta Service Center, and Local Association activities for more than 30 years. Among many other duties, he has served as local PEA President and Bargaining Chair, CTA State Council Member, Service Center Chair, CTA/ABC Committee Member, NEA Board Member, and CTA Board Member (NEA/CTA Coordinating Director).

Besides being familiar with politics, education issues and the workings of the Association at every level, Marc has been an outspoken advocate for retirees for many years. As a member of the NEA Board of Directors (six years) he lobbied our CA Congressional Delegation in Washington, DC dozens of times on the "Social Security Fairness Act" and repeal of the GOP/WEP and has also spoken at rallies in the SF Bay Area. As a member of CTA Political Involvement Committee (14 years) he gave updates and reports on retirement related bills/initiatives at numerous PIC Committee meetings.

Now that he's retired, Marc gets to spend more time traveling, gardening and working on his obsession… photography.

He joins Alen, Frank, and the Executive Board with the goals of growing our membership and increasing membership participation through improved communications.

Frank Tarantino – Secretary Treasurer
Frank was elected to a 2-year term as CTA/NEA-R Secretary Treasurer in the spring of 2012. He served as interim vice president upon the death of Sharilynn Russo.

Frank retired from the Sweetwater Union High School District in June, 2009 after 35 years of service as a teacher and guidance counselor. He first became active in association work in 1988 as a site representative (as most people do). The subsequent year, he was elected to the Sweetwater Counseling & Guidance Association (SCGA) Executive Board as high school representative. That began his "one meeting a month" commitment required in association work.

Frank remained active in association politics throughout the duration of his educational career. He was a member of the SCGA bargaining team and later became bargaining chair for two terms. He served as Association Vice President and President for two separate terms of office. Frank also served nine years on the Teacher Evaluation and Academic Freedom Committee of state council. He was appointed Chair of the Dismissal Subcommittee and has served on a number of Commissions on Professional Competence (CPC) Panel hearings. In 2001 Frank was elected to the San Diego Service Center Council Steering Committee. He was elected Chair in 2004 and served in that position until he retired in 2009. He is currently the Secretary- Treasurer of his local CTA/NEA-R chapter: South County Teachers United-Retired.

As Secretary Treasurer of CTA/NEA-R, Frank is committed to promoting membership and the formation of new chapters in CTA/NEA-R, as well as providing assistance to the treasurers of the 18 CTA/NEA-R locals.

Arlene Pavey
at NEA-RA

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

Alen Ritchie, President

The November election is of paramount importance, this year, to public education and to CTA. So, instead of having an October State Council this year, CTA is having all members and staff, that would normally be in Los Angeles for 3-4 days, stay home and work on campaigning for Proposition 30 and against Proposition 32. The CTA/NEA-Retired Executive Board, however, needs to meet in the fall in order to plan for a very busy year. Therefore we have set September 6th as the date for a special meeting at the Ontario Regional Resource Center. As usual, all members are welcome to attend. The meeting is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 3175-C Sedona Court, Ontario. The phone number is 909-476-2367.

NO ON 32
STOP THE SPECIAL EXEMPTIONS ACT

YES on 30 Schools & Local Public Safety Protection Act

2012 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Ed Foglia, District II

Nearly 8,000 fellow educators gathered at the National Education Association's (NEA) Representative Assembly. 2012 National Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Mieliwocki, delivered captivating, moving and inspirational words about the power teachers have to shape and transform the lives of their students.

Mieliwocki, an English teacher from Burbank, California received the prestigious title of National Teacher of the Year from President Obama for her unconventional teaching practices and her deep commitment to helping students succeed.

Joining Ms. Mieliwocki in delivering the message of support for public education were President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. "If public education is to remain a basic right for every child, rather than a privilege for only the wealthy, educators will have to lead their profession not just in their schools but in their communities and in political campaigns." President Obama told the RA delegates, "You can't help the American people without helping education."

NEA Executive Director John Stocks delivered a rousing keynote speech, "But with the emergence of voter suppression laws, growing income inequality, and insidious new forms of racial discrimination, it is imperative that NEA members everywhere become committed activists for social justice and equal opportunity."

The Friend of Education award was given to winner of the Nobel Prize Economist Paul Krugman author of End This Depression Now. This insightful book will give you the understanding why and how America can get out of this economic mess.

My New Business Item urged NEA to develop a strategy to reverse the "Citizen United" Supreme Court decision through a US constitutional amendment. Corporations are not people and should not have the same rights as real people. The NBI received overwhelming support from the RA.

Often times it is very difficult to find out what is going on or have access to information representing retirees' best interests. Log on to MyEducationVotes.NEA.org for the latest information on issues that impact our lives and profession. You may contribute to public educational candidates and office holders at www.go.NEAFUND.org.

RetireeAdvocate
CTA/NEA RETIRED NEWSLETTER
California Teachers Association
1705 Murchison Drive
Burlingame, CA 94010

Presorted
First-Class Mail
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Francisco, CA
Permit #11882

RETIREE ACTION NETWORK

Alen Ritchie, President

One of Ed Foglia's last projects as president was to create a "Retiree Action Network" (RAN). This is a group of members who can be contacted easily via email, when there is a need for immediate action from CTA/NEA-Retired. A good example would be the need to contact legislators when a bad bill is coming up for a vote. If you would like to be part of the RAN, please send your email address and former Service Center Council (or former school district, if you don't know your SSC) to alenritchie@verizon.net. Those of you that have been active in the retired organization in the last two or three years are probably already on the list, but send us your information, anyway, just to be sure.

Watch "Voices of WEAC" on YouTube, to see what happened in Wisconsin!

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATORS

We are seeking motivated individuals to proctor assessment sessions with 4th-, 8th-, and 12th- grade students in schools for the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Must be available January 28–March 8, 2013. Paid training, paid time and mileage reimbursement for local driving, and weekly paychecks. This is a part-time, temporary position. To apply, visit our website at www.westat.com/CAREERS and select "Search Field Data Collection Jobs." Search for your state, find the NAEP Assessment Administrator position and select the "apply to job" button.

For more information e-mail NAEPrecruit@westat.com or call 1-888-237-8036.

WESTAT
EOE