PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE
GET OFF THE SIDELINES – GET INVOLVED!

The school year has started up again and so are the activities in our CTA/NEA-Retired local chapters. Calendars and plans are being made for the “new year”, new chapters are having initial meetings, and some inactive locals are being revitalized. Much of this new interest in “getting involved” seems to be in reaction to the social/political state our country is in currently. Many have joined or recently become active because of concerns for the future of public education and the next generation of students and educators and because they see the value of belonging to CTA and NEA. Volunteer opportunities, such as our “mentoring programs” have also inspired our members to step up.

Whatever your reason for belonging to CTA/NEA-Retired, whatever level of involvement you are looking for, there are opportunities awaiting you. These are only some:

- **Election assistance** can include ballot collection, sorting, and/or ballot counting for active chapter elections.
- **Phone banking, letters to the editor, and precinct walking** are activities that many retired members are willing and able to participate in and they can be available during “school hours.”
- **Lobbying** state legislators in Sacramento or local offices and members of Congress at their home offices often requires meetings during the school-day.
- **Pre-Retirement Presentations** at CTA offices, chapter retirement dinners or luncheons, or CalSTRS workshops. CTA/NEA-Retired members have experience with this and can share time with the presenter or can focus on retirement do’s & don’ts and the Member Benefits which continue after retirement.

**Mentoring Students or Student CTA members:** Some CTA/NEA-Retired members chapters have been very eager to engage in outreach to Student CTA at various colleges and universities to provide local guidance and assistance to those students preparing to become teachers. CTA/NEA-Retired has initiated a “Teach-to-Teach” Mentoring program which we hope to expand.

**Mentoring New Teachers:** This past year CTA/NEA-Retired applied for and was awarded an NEA Grant to establish a first-year teacher mentoring program. The program pairs experienced retired teachers with new teachers identified by the local chapter in order to provide support with no fear that any “issues” will be shared with administration.

**Community Engagement Activities:** CTA/NEA-Retired and its local retiree chapters may help active CTA Chapters in their efforts to maintain a positive relationship with the general public and community based organizations.

**Membership Recruitment:** With “fair-share” likely to be lost in the next year, making it necessary for CTA Chapters to sign-up members every year,

CTA/NEA-Retired and its local retiree chapters do have field trips and social events but are not just “social clubs.” They are professional organizations which allow retirees to maintain their connection to the union and to support public education. (See Page 5 for a list of chapters.)

NEA CONTINUES THE FIGHT AGAINST UNFAIR SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSETS

By Ed Foglia, District 2 Director

The NEA Board of Directors, NEA-Retired Executive Council, member leaders and staff converged on Capitol Hill for National Retirement Security Advocacy Day, held over a 3-day period in April. They met with lawmakers from all 50 states to oppose Medicare vouchers and continue to build support for the repeals of GPO and WEP. During that time members were encouraged to visit or phone their members of Congress to voice their support for repeal of the punitive Social Security Offsets.

It was considered a successful day of lobbying and relationship-building with Congressional representatives and staffers. In addition to our members’ lobbying efforts, NEA sponsored a national call-in effort urging Congress to support the full GPO-WEP repeal bills, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2017 – H.R. 1205 Davis (R) Illinois and S. 915 Brown (D) Ohio. This robust call-in effort was amplified by our coalition partners Social Security Works, and the Alliance for Retired Americans the national affiliate of California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA). At the recent NEA Board Meeting (October 6-7),

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BOARD REPORT

By KC Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer

CTA/NEA-Retired Board of Directors Meeting - June 2, 2017

Action Items:
- Approved:
  - Awarding three $1000.00 CTA/NEA-Retired Scholarships in Memory of Sharilynn Gardella Russo.
  - Standing Rules: Added procedural language regarding member scholarships to Annual NEA-Organizing Conference
  - Reappointment of Pat Ryan as CTA/NEA-R Retired Liaison to CARA.
  - Covering registration fees (only) for five attendees (CTA/NEA-Retired Delegates) to the annual CARA Conference in Sacramento on September 26-27.

Recommended approval of the 2017-18 CTA/NEA-Retired draft budget to membership. Budget was passed at the subsequent CTA/NEA-Retired Annual Membership meeting.

Reports:
- President Marc Sternberger reported that all but one Service Center Council have liaisons! He will also be presenting a session at the CTA Presidents’ Conference on CTA/NEA-Retired and Active Chapters working together.
- V.P. Orval Garrison informed us that the Ambassador Program has been expanded and is going well.
- Bob McDonough reported that Stanislaus retirement workshop was successful and “at capacity.” Two have already been scheduled for next year.
- Jim Groth stated he was able to present Frank Tarantino with our WHO award. Congratulations, Frank!
- Pat Ryan reported on the CARA lobby day, was very successful. There were 32 lobby teams and 112 visits were made to legislators’ offices. Focus was SB 562, the “Single Payer” health care bill and legislation regarding Medicaid. (See her article in this issue for more details.)

Information Items:
- Advocate Editor Bonnie Shatun reminded us that each Advocate issue is available online (www.cta.org/retired) as soon as it is print ready. It takes longer for the printed copy to reach mailboxes.
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ctanearetired (no “membership” in Facebook required).

NEA CONTINUES THE FIGHT AGAINST UNFAIR SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSETS

Continued from page 1

NEA Directors again met with Congress members about these issues. Seventeen of these Directors are from California.

NEA-Today published the Social Security story in the May 2017 issue. Look for the three-page feature story published in the magazine which reaches more than 300,000 retired NEA members throughout the country. It was also shared with members via the NEA Today Express, which reaches approximately one million members.

At last year’s NEA Representative Assembly (RA), I introduced a New Business Item (NBI) dealing with Social Security. It directed NEA Government Relations Department to report on the NEA’s lobbying efforts on Social Security and repeal of the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). The full report was presented electronically (ra.nea.org/delegate-resources). NBI 77, will be reported on, at the 2018 NEA RA through an electronic executive summary of NEA’s organizational efforts to save and strengthen Social Security and repeal the GPO-WEP. NBI 77 was joined by Massachusetts’ delegate, Chuck Clark, expanding our efforts to repeal GPO and WEP by educating and encouraging all members, both active and retired, to target every member of Congress on a continual basis urging them to support the passage of this vital legislation.

Governmental Relations will continue to work with Congress and the current administration to save and strengthen Social Security and repeal the GPO-WEP offsets. Despite the chaotic political climate in the nation’s Capital, NEA has led the way for getting Congressional sponsors and our members have worked in concert with NEA to get co-sponsors, especially in the 35 Social Security states.
MEMBER BENEFITS – THE MEMBERSHIP GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

By Orval Garrison, CTA/NEA-Retired Vice President

My colleagues in CTA/NEA-Retired suspect that I am bit obsessive when it comes to CTA and NEA Member Benefits. You see, I use them on a regular basis. Chalk it up to my parents and grandparents and the Great Depression, but I was raised not to turn my back on a discount, sale, two-for-one, raincheck, and so on.

In Northern California where I live, my wife and I are not near many department, discount, wholesale, and major bargain stores. I have come to value Member Benefits because of its ease of purchase and reliability of delivery. Recently, we bought a new freezer and refrigerator, and last year we bought an over-the-range microwave through NEA Member Benefits.

But, let me tell you about our recent summer trip to Boston, NYC, and Fredericksburg, VA, where our son lives. Air tickets from San Francisco to Boston and from Dulles to the West Coast were bought through NEA Click & Save. Ticket prices were right (you can compare right there online) and I earned WOWPoints—rewards points translating to redeemable dollars for future purchases. Hotels were scouted and booked through Click & Save (more WOWPoints). CTA has a new hotel discount program that is amazing. Do check it out as well and compare.

Manhattan is known to have a few good restaurants. I scoped some through Click & Save and took two restaurant certificates with me --paid $3.50 each for two $25 certificates at two restaurants we tried in Midtown Manhattan. That translates to a $21.50 savings in each restaurant.

Then, of course, we saw some Broadway shows--School of Rock and War Paint. You’ve guessed it: I bought the tickets ahead of time through NEA Click & Save. We had very good seats at reduced prices in right-center orchestra and front mezzanine of the Winter Garden and Nederlander theaters. At will call, just show your voucher, printed at home, and pick up the tickets (more WOWPoints).

We drove from Newark Airport down to Virginia. Usually, I use Enterprise through CTA Member Benefits. Most times, especially in California, it gives the best rates. But, this time I shopped rentals in NEA Member Benefits (always shop and compare), and Hertz through NEA gave the best rate for eight days.

So what, you are saying? Well, altogether, I calculated that we saved $508 on purchases that we were going to make anyway because we made those purchases through NEA Click & Save and/or because I showed my CTA/NEA-Retired membership card. AND, I have not yet touched any of the WOWPoints I earned. I am saving those to apply to a future purchase. Membership and Member Benefits—the gift that keeps on giving!

To get to NEA Click & Save: go to www.neamb.com and sign in if registered. (If not registered, do so.) Have your membership number, establish a USER ID (usually email address) and a Password. Sign in. Go to Discounts/Everyday Discounts and then to NEA Click & Save. Click “Start Shopping.”

Have you saved money using Member Benefits? Next time you go to dinner, take a trip, make a purchase, or enjoy an experience that saved you money using CTA or NEA Member Benefits, snap a picture of yourself with the item or at the experience and send it to us. If your picture is chosen to appear in the Advocate, we will send you a $25 giftcard. Send your picture with a caption to BShatun@aol.com.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE 2018 ELLEN LOGUE “WHO” (WE HONOR OURS) AWARD

Annually, CTA/NEA-Retired honors one member who has continued to be active in their retirement by exhibiting leadership in the Association, in public education and in the community. The recipient will be recognized at our Annual CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference to be held on March 1-2, 2018 at the Redondo Beach Marriott, Torrance.

PAST WINNERS OF THE AWARD ARE:

2017 – Frank Tarantino 2015 – Bonnie Shatun 2013 – Orval Garrison

Nomination forms can be found online at www.cta.org/retired. If you would prefer to receive the form in the mail, please call CTA/NEA-Retired at 650.552.5439 or email CTA-Retired@cta.org. Deadline for submission is Friday, January 27, 2018.
“UNITING THE NATION” BRINGS NEA-RETIRED DELEGATES TO BOSTON

By Bonnie Shatun, District 3 Director

“UNITing Our Members and the Nation” was the theme of the 34th NEA-Retired Annual Meeting which was held in Boston June 27-28 immediately preceding the NEA Representative Assembly. Our California delegation was more than 30 strong and included the seventeen CTA/NEA-Retired delegates elected to represent our members at the upcoming Representative Assembly. The two-day meeting was packed with information and many calls to action.

Although this meeting is organizational to prepare for involvement in the NEA RA, the presentations by the NEA officers and staff set the tone and the priorities for the upcoming week. NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, Vice President Becky Pringle and Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss each addressed the participants and shared with us how vital NEA-Retired members are to the strength of NEA.

Vice President Becky Pringle spoke about how Social Security was created to be a reliable safety net. Threats to it undermine the retirement security of everyone. She said it was important for us to tell stories about real people and the threats they face. If the Social Security Offsets impact you, go to nea.org/home/63123.htm and share your story.

Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss added that we need activism and advocacy more than ever to protect Social Security and Medicare and to repeal the unfair GPO and WEP penalties. She also spoke about the NEA New Educator Campaign which is aimed at better supporting educators because they are leaving the profession faster than they are coming in.

A highlight for me is always the presentation by Mary Kusler, Senior Director of NEA’s Center for Advocacy. Her focus was concern about the threats to Health Care and the proposed legislation which would cause 22 million people to lose coverage with the money saved going to insurance companies and the wealthy in the form of tax cuts. She explained that Medicaid, which helps low income children, families and the elderly, is a target. Thirty-nine percent of all children and two-thirds of all nursing home residents receive some benefit from Medicaid. When Medicaid is cut, the states must make up the shortfall and that reduces the funding available for schools. This could result in the largest cut since 1983 when President Reagan cut education by thirty percent.

NEA Executive Director John Stocks spoke about NEA’s strategic priorities and our reality that educators are retiring faster than they can be replaced. He told the retired delegates that our knowledge and experience could help the new generation of educators so they will not have to learn the hard lessons we did. We also heard Committee Reports, took positions on New Business Items and elected Sarah Borgman as the new NEA-Retired President. And, thanks to very generous donations to the Jack Kinnaman Scholarship fund, we were able to honor three outstanding college students with $2,500 scholarships. At this meeting delegates contributed $9,930 to the Kinnaman Scholarship fund and $34,250 to the NEA Fund for children and Public Education to help elect supporters of public education.

Again this year, our publication the CTA/NEA-Retired “Retiree Advocate” was recognized as outstanding and received an NEA Communications Award in the Established State Newsletter category. CTA/NEA-Retired was also given an award for Membership Growth.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, Vice President Becky Pringle and Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss each addressed the participants and shared with us how vital NEA-Retired members are to the strength of NEA.

At the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in Boston, CTA/NEA-Retired received the award for the largest increase in membership. Accepting the award were (from left) Vice President Orval Garrison and President Marc Sternberger.

At the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, this picture appeared on the large screen to announce that our CTA/NEA-Retired “Retiree Advocate” had been selected to receive its second NEA-Retired Communications Award in the Established State Newsletter category. President Marc Sternberger and “Advocate” Editor Bonnie Shatun accepted the award.

Delegates had the opportunity to hear about NEA priorities from the three NEA officers. Pictured from the left are Vice President Becky Pringle, President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss.
Stanislaus Retired President Don Rowe welcomed seventy educators to a CTA Retirement Workshop sponsored by Stanislaus CTA/NEA-Retired. The Stanislaus chapter was supported in sponsoring this workshop by a grant CTA/NEA-Retired received from NEA. Stanislaus Retired has already scheduled two more workshops.

Members of CTA/NEA-Retired Northbay participated in informational picketing and a march to the District Office in support of Santa Rosa Teachers who had been working without a contract for two years. Factfinding negotiations went long into the night. The parties reached a tentative agreement the next day.

San Diego Education Association CTA/NEA-Retired members enjoyed an interesting and free tour of the Taylor Guitar Factory in El Cajon, California. Everyone received a souvenir cut out guitar to take home.
The CTA/NEA-Retired Scholarship Committee selected Brandon Osorio, Carlos Arias and Monica Chenglo, out of many qualified and deserving applicants, to be this year’s recipients of the CTA/NEA-Retired Scholarship in Memory of Sharilynn Gardella Russo.

Monica Chenglo is completing her second year in the Master’s Program in the Communication Disorders and Sciences in Speech Language Pathology at San Jose State University. Prior to pursuing her graduate degree, she earned a B.S. in Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology from UC Santa Cruz. In her application Monica said, “Initially, I wanted to be a science teacher, however, my vision shifted when I recognized the influence communication had on education.”

As an undergraduate, she worked on the “Effective Science Teaching for English Language Learners’ Project” and, after graduating, assisted in a study examining how bilingual students develop their vocabulary when they are exposed to multiple languages. Monica is also involved in a program hosted by the Stanford Ear Institute where she helps organize summer camp experiences for families who have children with cochlear implants. After graduation, Ms. Chenglo plans, “to specialize in cognitive disorders and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.” As a fluent speaker of English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese she hopes to “assist minorities” with these communication disorders.

Brandon Osorio entered the Communication Sciences and Disorders Master’s Program last year at Chapman University with a B.A. in English Literature from UC-Irvine and a B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Utah State already on his resume. This past school-year, besides taking a full load of classes, Brandon has been providing language intervention for adolescents with various severities of language disorders, led social skills lessons for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder, and provided cognitive rehabilitation services for adults. He also has been working as a Graduate Assistant in the Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center and was elected Treasurer of the campus’s Speech/Language and Hearing Student Association chapter, (NSSLHA).

In his application he stated, “...because of my commitment to the quality of education in this state, I see myself working in California Public Schools after completing my graduate program.” Brandon’s academic achievements and his drive to “pursue a career that helps make an impact in others’ lives,” have his professors and supervisors singing his praises.

Carlos Arias is just finishing his first year as a Master’s Degree student in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at San Diego State, where he also earned his B.A. Although he began his “professional” career as an athlete and assistant football coach, his priorities and goals eventually changed. In his application’s personal statement, Carlo related how his experiences as a professional athlete and resulting injuries (concussions), led him to “work in the field of neurogenic disorders” (an inability to exchange information with others due to nervous system impairment).

As an undergrad student, he aided in research on tongue movement and speech production of children and young adults with cerebral palsy. The data he and his team collected and the ground-breaking work done earned Carlos a Summer Undergraduate Grant to complete this work. He presented the resulting data at the “Conference on Motor Speech” in March 2016 and his work has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Speech, Language, & Hearing Research, the premier research publication in the field.

He also volunteers with the San Diego Brain Injury Foundation, which works with stroke and traumatic brain injury survivors, Carlos also made it clear in his application that his long-term goal was to “give back to my community in the Imperial Valley.”

Donations are gratefully accepted anytime of the year and are tax deductible! Please make checks out to the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning with the following notation: Sharilynn Russo Memorial Scholarship Fund in the memo line of your check.

Checks should be mailed to: KC Walsh, 100 N. Rodeo Gulch Rd., SPC 183, Soquel, CA 95073
More than thirty members of CTA/NEA-Retired attended the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting in Boston.

2017 NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY SETS THE COURSE FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

By Alen Ritchie, NEA-Retired Executive Council

This year’s Representative Assembly (held in Boston) started off with a bang when President Lily Eskelsen Garcia in her opening address made several comments about our new Secretary of Education. She spoke about how she had to turn down an invitation from DeVos to meet because the new Education Secretary, in her Senate confirmation hearing, failed to answer simple questions about her commitment to accountability and transparency for charter schools and to protecting our most vulnerable students.

“I will not allow the National Education Association to be used by Donald Trump or Betsy DeVos,” Eskelsen Garcia told the enthusiastic delegates. “I do not trust their motives. I do not believe their alternative facts. I see no reason to assume they will do what is best for our students and their families. There will be no photo-op!”

President Eskelsen García spoke about how many states have already scored victories against the Trump-DeVos privatization agenda. Educators in Massachusetts fought back an initiative on unaccountable charter school expansion, voters in Georgia rejected a referendum to give the state the power to take over schools, and South Dakota educators worked with Republicans and Democrats to direct more revenue to the state’s public schools.

“We will find common ground with many Republicans and many Democrats on many issues. We will not find common ground with an administration that is cruel and callous to our children and their families.”

Lily (along with Vice President Becky Pringle and Secretary-Treasurer Princess Moss) was subsequently re-elected for a second term. California’s own George Sheridan was re-elected to the NEA Executive Committee.

In addition to listening to speeches from NEA Executive Director John Stocks, ESP of the Year Saul Ramos, Teacher of the Year Sydney Chaffee and Friend of Education LeVar Burton (of “Roots” and “Reading Rainbow” fame) we managed to squeeze in four full days (7:15 am to 5-8 pm) discussing and voting on our Legislative Platform, changes to NEA Resolutions, Policies, a policy statement on Charter Schools, Bylaws and Standing rules, and, everybody’s favorite, New Business Items (NBIs). NBIs set the course for what we want to see accomplished by NEA in the coming year. Usually there are about 100-120. This year -- 159! Most of those passed would be of interest to retired educators, but here are the three that would be of special interest to those of us who are no longer in the trenches:

• NEA will publicize our support of the right to Universal Healthcare, and our opposition to assaults on Medicare, Medicaid, educator health plans and the health care of our students and their families.

• NEA will present to the 2018 RA an electronic executive summary of the NEA’s organizational efforts to save and strengthen Social Security and repeal of the offset provisions of Social Security (Thank you, Ed Foglia who authored that NBI!)

• NEA will educate and encourage its members to target every member of Congress on a continual basis urging them to support passage of legislation repealing the Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision.

This article just touches the surface of what occurred at the RA. For MUCH more, go to “NEA.org”, hover over “Grants and Events” and click on “Annual Meeting and Representative Assembly (RA)”. 
CARA TAKES OUR ISSUES TO SACRAMENTO

By Pat Ryan, CARA Representative

The California Alliance for Retired Americans has been very busy advocating for seniors on issues that are important. On May 25, 2017 CARA members held a lobby day in Sacramento where teams of 4 or 5 CARA members visited each Assembly member and State Senator’s office in the Capitol -- a total of 125 offices.

We discussed with legislators and their staff members SB 562 (Lara/Atkins) “Healthy California Act”, which would benefit all Californians by establishing a “single-payer” system of equal, comprehensive, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all in California. We also lobbied for passage of AB796 (Kalra/Thurmond) which would reinstate the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the SSI/SSP Program. This program awards monthly grants to seniors and disabled adults who get no or minimal Social Security benefits.

These grants were reduced and the COLA suspended during the recession and SSI recipients are currently at 70% of poverty level. We also urged the passage of Assembly Joint Resolution 8 (Kalra), which calls upon California’s Representatives in Congress to vote against any cuts to, and proposals to privatize Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. It also calls upon Congress and the President to expand and improve these programs.

SB 562 was later approved by the State Senate (June 2) and sent on to the Assembly. Currently it is considered a “two year bill” as the full Assembly will not take it up until its funding is agreed upon. Passage of this legislation would produce savings in healthcare costs for thousands of households. Businesses would see reduced payroll costs for healthcare premiums. The California Nurses Association and National Nurses United sponsored a study led by University of Massachusetts Economist Dr. Robert Pollin which found that “Single Payer” would result in savings for businesses and families and would reduce overall spending on healthcare in California by 18%. Continued pressure on the CA Assembly leaders and members is urged by CARA.

AB 796 was held in Appropriations and is basically dead in its current form. The authors intend to re-introduce the bill later. AJR 8 was passed by both houses and the resolution was sent to the California Congressional Representatives.

More information on the legislation mentioned above can be found at californiaalliance.org

Editor’s note: Pat Ryan was reappointed CTA/NEA-Retired’s liaison to CARA in June. Congratulations Pat.