I’ve had this reoccurring nightmare for the last few weeks. It started the evening of November 8. In this “very bad dream” all three branches of the U.S. Federal Government were preparing to attack our pensions, dismantle Medicare, privatize Social Security, do away with Public Schools, and strip working citizens of the right to collectively bargain. Unfortunately, I’m actually awake and realize that this “worst case scenario” may be well on its way to becoming reality.

So now what? We, yes WE must prepare for the challenges very likely to come from Washington and from our foes within California, now newly emboldened by election results and coming changes in the U.S. Supreme Court.

There are proposed “changes” in Medicare being talked about in Congress, threatening the billions of dollars that currently come to California’s retirees. We will probably have to fight to keep our health benefits, the prices of prescription drugs from increasing even more, and the cost of long-term-care from skyrocketing completely out of reach. What will happen with Social Security and the GPO/WEP? I cannot help but think the “changes” the leadership of the next Congress have in mind will not bring about relief for those impacted by the Social Security Offsets and will instead weaken the Social Security System even more.

Our retirement security is under attack across the country and is being chipped away bit by bit daily by state legislatures, governors, and ballot measures. Within California, there are already initiatives being readied to “reform” us out of our “Defined Benefit Pension Plans”.

Under these seemingly overwhelming clouds I can still muster some optimism as I see what the voters of California and the members of CTA/NEA-Retired and CTA have been able to accomplish in spite of negative results in many other states. We passed Prop. 55 which will stabilize state public education funding for the next dozen years. We elected a great new U.S. Senator, Kamala Harris, many good Representatives to Congress and  majorities of both houses of the CA State Legislature who appear to be responsive to senior/retiree needs, pro-public education, and pro-labor and ready to advocate for us.

We will need each other, our community, and labor allies in the months and years to come. Only by working together, ALL of US, are we going to weather what’s bound to come. This may require YOUR active participation in writing letters/e-mails, grassroots lobbying, composing guest editorials, and showing up at meetings and rallies. What is at stake is nothing less than YOUR/OUR quality of life!!!

**Before I get too many angry responses, I’ll admit my outlook is biased by partisan political views. I’m sure among our 16,000 plus CTA/NEA-Retired members we have some who welcome this new “government reality” and when reading this will say “overreacting” and “much too pessimistic”. To those members I say, “I sincerely wish I am wrong!”

Marc R. Sternberger
PRESIDENT
CTA/NEA-Retired

CTA/NEA-RETIRED ELECTIONS ALERT!

Although the 2017 NEA Representative Assembly may seem to be a long time away, the Declaration of Candidacy form to run as a CTA/NEA-Retired Delegate is available in the November/December issue of the California Educator and also can be obtained by going to www.cta.org/racandidacy. Each Spring, CTA/NEA-Retired members elect delegates to represent our members at the NEA-RA and NEA-Retired Annual Meetings. All CTA/NEA-Retired members who are in good standing are eligible to run. In past years we have elected, funded and sent 14 to 16 members, depending on our membership count. We expect to send a similarly-sized delegation to the meetings in Boston on June 27/July 5.

Declaration of Candidacy statements and forms must be received no later than 5 p.m. on January 31, 2017. Please mail to CTA/NEA-Retired, c/o NODD, P. O. Box 921, Burlingame CA 94011-0921.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If you are a PRE-RETIRED member and just retired, you must notify CTA membership by calling 650-552-5278 or send an email to membership@cta.org notifying them of your change in status. Otherwise, you will not be able to run for a position or vote in CTA/NEA-Retired elections. Also, if you have had a change in address and/or phone number(s), please contact CTA Membership as soon as possible. The number is 650/552-5578 or send the information to CTA-Retired@cta.org.
CTA/NEA-Retired Board of Directors
Meeting - September 30, 2016

Action Items:
Approved:
• The list of CTA/NEA-Retired Liaisons to Service Centers for 2016-17
• Tentatively approved bylaws for the North San Diego Chapter contingent upon their alignment with the required CTA/NEA-R template
• Appointments to the Membership Development Workgroup which will hold their first meeting on November 3, 2016 in Burlingame.
• Discussed and approved Goals and Strategies for 2016-17
• Up to $300 start-up money to help with the formation of the North San Diego chapter.
• Up to $300 start-up money to help with the formation of the Service Center One chapter

Regional Reports:
• Gretchen Lipow, Region 1 Director
  - Region 1 members participated in the East Bay Labor Council Labor Day Picnic.
• Ed Foglia, Region 2 Director
  - Region 2 has ten Service Center Councils and all ten have a Political Action Coordinator for the Prop. 55 Campaign.
  - The Teach to Teach Mentoring Program in conjunction with SCTA will continue in 2016-17. All Mentors have agreed to continue and applications are being given out to students.
• Bonnie Shatun, Region 3 Director
  - We are conducting a membership drive at UTLA Retired meetings.
  - The new High Desert Chapter will soon be holding officer elections.
  - Bay Valley CTA/NEA-Retired has held three new retiree receptions which provide information about the many benefits of membership.
  - Retired leaders in Service Center One will be inviting current CTA/NEA-Retired members and new retirees to a luncheon and informational program about Member Benefits.
  - Has given seven Prop. 55 presentations around the Region urging members to volunteer in campaign activities.
• Sharon Fitch Boudreau, Region 4 Director
  - Prop. 55 presentations have been well received.
  - The North San Diego new chapter formation is progressing well.
  - We will have a table at the Orange Service Center Leadership Conference in Palm Springs.
• Harris Kight-Moore, Ethnic Minority At-Large
  - Will be sending an email to ethnic minority members asking them to volunteer in the campaign.
  - There was a Prop. 55 presentation at the San Gorgonio Retired meeting and phone banking in Hemet.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE 2016-17 ELLEN LOGUE WHO (WE HONOR OURS) AWARD

Annually, CTA/NEA-Retired honors one member who has continued to be active in his or her 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 2-3 in San Jose. Past winners of the award are:

2016 - Arlene Pavey
2015 - Bonnie Shatun
2014 - Val Muchowski
2013 - Orval Garrison
2012 - Tim Jenkins

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. The deadline for nominations is no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, February 1, 2017.
Public education was the big winner in California’s November election results. A special thank you needs to go to our retired members who voted, talked with friends and family, and volunteered thousands of hours to help pass critical ballot measures and elect pro-education candidates.

California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 55 which will guarantee billions of dollars in school funding for California’s students and schools by continuing the current tax rate on the wealthiest residents for another twelve years. Had it not passed, it was expected that school funding would be cut by at least $4 billion each year and would have plunged schools back into the crisis experienced before the passage of Proposition 30. Proposition 55 was approved by almost two thirds (62.2 percent) of the voters and passed in 55 of our 58 counties.

Another victory for students is the passage of Proposition 58, the Language Education Acquisition and Readiness Initiative (LEARN). It’s goal is to help all students achieve English proficiency as soon as possible and provide opportunities for English speakers to learn a second language. It was approved by 72.6% and passed in all 58 counties. And, CTA supported Proposition 52 will make sure that Medi-Cal federal matching funds will continue to be available for the health care of low income students.

A majority of CTA recommended candidates also prevailed. Eighty-six percent of those supported for the California Legislature and Congress were elected and 65% of recommended school board candidates were successful. CTA local associations also took positions on local measures such as bonds and parcel taxes and 34 out of 36 of those were approved by the voters.

Again, thank you and congratulations to our many members who phone-banked, knocked on doors, wrote letters and postcards, participated in media events, shared information on social media, spoke to groups, engaged in conversations, made contributions, and voted. Once again voters have made California students and the funding of our schools a priority.

“**A special thank you needs to go to our retired members who voted, talked with friends and family, and volunteered thousands of hours to help pass critical ballot measures and elect pro-education candidates.**

**SHARILYNN GARDELLA RUSSO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

**DEADLINE MARCH 24, 2017**

The application for the Sharilynn Gardella Russo Memorial Scholarships is now available on our website (cta.org/retired). These two (2) $1000 scholarships, given in memory of our former CTA/NEA-Retired President-Elect, provide financial aid to students pursuing a college degree, credential, or certification for a Speech Pathology and/or Audiology-related career in public education in an accredited institution of higher education.

If you know anyone in, or entering, a program, please let them know about this opportunity. The application deadline is Friday, March 24, 2017.

Donations are still gratefully accepted! Please also consider making a donation to the scholarship in honor or memory of members of the teaching profession and loved ones. Make checks out to the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning with the following notation: Sharilynn Gardella Russo Memorial Scholarship Fund in the memo line of your check.

Checks should be mailed to KC Walsh, 100 N. Rodeo Gulch Rd. Sp 183, Soquel, CA 95073-2047.
As part of their cruise to the Dominican Republic, Anne and Ned Curtis took advantage of opportunities to help support local projects which benefit the citizens and the economy. In the first picture, Anne is with one of the founders of the chocolate factory which was started by the women in the village. In the center picture, Ned is planting seedlings as part of the reforestation project. And, on the right, they are preparing for a zip line excursion.

CRUISING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
By Anne Johnson-Curtis, Co-President of High Desert-Retired

Are you looking for a way to combine your love of travel with your desire to make a difference in the world? Fathom, a new cruise line which specializes in “impact + travel,” might be for you.

This cruise line had its inaugural voyage on April 1, 2016. My husband, Ned Curtis, and I were lucky enough to be among those on the first sailing. We flew to Miami to join the ship for a seven day cruise to the Dominican Republic. During the cruise, we enjoyed all the comforts of a modern cruise ship and also participated in “cohort” groups to learn about the culture, the history and a little about the language of the Dominican people. Then, we landed at Coral Cove, a beautiful port in northern part of the country. For the next three days we had a list of impact activities in which we could participate. We chose to help with the nursery and reforestation of the rain forest, working in a chocolate factory, and working with students to learn English. All the impact activities are at no additional cost.

The goal of the Nursery & Reforestation Project is to maintain the rain forest which is important to the country and to our world. We spent the time planting seeds and small seedlings in containers and placing them in the nursery. Other groups ventured farther out into the rain forest to plant some of the nursery’s larger plants.

My next activity was going into schools to help the students learn English. Our group worked with third grade students and then fifth grade students. This is very important for Dominican Republic students because their ability to speak English is directly correlated to their financial success and life fulfillment.

We also went to a chocolate factory which was started by twenty women fifteen years ago. Even though the other community members said it wouldn’t work, it’s been successful. We sorted out the bad beans and unusable items, put chocolate into molds, and wrapped chocolate bars. It was an interesting process to see and with this kind of volunteer help, they will be able to pay off their mortgage and hire more locals.

Some of the other activities cruisers can volunteer for are making water filters out of clay to help ensure safe and affordable drinking water, replacing dirt floors in homes with cement ones, and helping with the paper recycling program which makes new paper as well as jewelry and other items. More excursions are available for a fee which include sightseeing, snorkeling, zip-lining, and historical tours. This program has attracted many millennials (those in their 20s) and inter-generational families with grandparents, adult children, and grandchildren cruising and working together to create a better world for the Dominican Republic. During our one week journey as Fathom travelers, we became part of an ongoing process that brings hundreds of travelers week after week into the same communities to volunteer and make a difference. Fathom is Impact + Travel.

For more information go to www.fathom.org or contact Anne and Ned at nedanne@verizon.net.

NEED GLASSES? LOOK INTO THE EXPANDED VSP VISION SAVINGS PROGRAM
By Orval Garrison, Vice President

Recently, Vision Service Plan (VSP), working with CTA Member Benefits, created an additional vision savings plan called the VSP Vision Savings Pass Program. This is NOT insurance, but it is a set of vision discounts that is available FREE to CTA/NEA-Retired Members and is provided by the CTA Economic Benefits Trust.

Retired members of CTA/NEA who are in good standing are eligible to participate in this new program. This discount program is available from Vision Service Plan (VSP) participating providers only.*

If one goes to a VSP accepting doctor and purchases a complete pair of eye glasses, the discounts can be significant! Up to 43% savings over out-of-pocket costs without VSP.

The VSP Saving Pass Program includes:
$ Exam ($50),
$ Retinal Screening (not to exceed $39),
$ Lenses (single, $40; bifocal, $60; trifocal, $75),
$ Frames (25% off),
$ Laser Vision Correction (average 15% off reg. price/5% off promotional price),
$ For a limited time, there is an additional $20 extra to spend on featured frame brands.

To learn more, find a VSP doctor at www.vsp.com or call (800) 877-7195. At your appointment, tell the VSP doctor that you are a VSP member and an CTA/NEA-Retired Member. *Discounts are available through the VSP network doctor who provided an eye exam within the last 12 months. Your CTA/NEA-Retired membership number must be presented at the time of visit. If you chose not to use a VSP provider for your exam you are still eligible for discounts through the VSP Access Plan.

To obtain a CTA/NEA-Retired membership card or membership number, please contact the CTA Membership Department at (650) 552-5278 or CTA/NEA-Retired at (650) 552-5439.
13th ANNUAL
CTA/NEA-Retired CONFERENCE

March 2 - 3, 2017
Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

Come join us for the 13th Annual CTA/NEA-Retired Conference! You don’t have to be retired to attend. If you are retired or are considering retirement in the next few years you will benefit from the information offered by speakers and workshops on a variety of issues.

“Make the most of your retirement!” Attend this conference to learn how you can stay connected, be protected and enjoy great benefits. Plan to Attend Sessions to...

**STAY CONNECTED**
Find out about local CTA/NEA-Retired chapters and events in your area
Learn how to start a new retired chapter

**BE PROTECTED**
Make Sense of CalSTRS and Public Employee Pensions
Negotiate the Healthcare Maze – Medicare and the Affordable Care Act
Be Updated on NEA’s Advocacy for Federal Retirement Security (Protect Social Security & Repeal GPO/WEP)

**ENJOY BENEFITS**
Discover the CTA/NEA Member Benefits including NEW Programs available to you!
Staying Healthy and Active in Retirement

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**SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS** to inform and inspire!

Eric Heins – CTA President
Jack Ehnes – CEO, California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS)
Jennifer Baker – CTA Legislative Advocate

**RECEPTION**
Thursday Evening, March 2
Come and meet other participants and have some great snacks!

**COST**
Registration cost is $100.00
(Thursday evening reception, Friday breakfast and Friday lunch are included as part of your registration).

**REGISTER NOW** @ www.ctago.org
Although the 2016 national election resulted in agony for some and ecstasy for others, we can be proud of the voters in California and CTA for supporting our core values of promoting diversity, social justice, women’s issues and for fighting racism. I’m looking forward also with pride to our Equity and Human Rights Conference. The goal of this conference is to provide all members with a greater understanding of the issues of diversity and equity. It will be held March 3-5 at the San Jose Fairmont Hotel and immediately follows our Retired Issues Conference and Annual Meeting in the same location. Each year we experience heartwarming and sometimes heart wrenching presentations expertly crafted to catalyze us to action. One of highlights this year will be a moving presentation from a San Jose public high school student group.

To register, go to ctago.org/conferences or use your CTAGo cell phone app. For assistance, call our CTA Conference Coordination Center at (650) 552-5355.

$100 REMINDER $100
2016-17 CTA/NEA-RETIRED CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The local retired chapter signing up the most new CTA/NEA-Retired members will receive $100 and be recognized at our Annual Conference on March 3, 2017.

Effective membership Start Dates are September 1, 2016 to January 31, 2017.

Those signed up in Spring/Summer 2016 who became members as of September 1, 2016 may be included.

Turn in Names, Addresses and Emails to CTA-Retired@cta.org by February 7, 2017 to be verified and counted.

CTA/NEA-RETIRED PURPOSE

This Association shall be dedicated to the promotion of retirement with dignity, a fair and just retirement income, a comprehensive health care program, and decent, affordable housing through:

a. Promoting the social, professional and economic status and general welfare of retirees;
b. Promoting volunteer participation by its members in educational and civic affairs; and
c. Promoting united action with CTA/NEA and its local affiliates as well as others who are devoted to the cause of public education.