As I write this column at the end of Thanksgiving weekend, I’m most thankful for the news that the rains have helped firefighters extinguish the most destructive wildfires in California’s history. Unfortunately, this comes too late for many of our families, friends and colleagues in the Butte County “Camp Fire” area and in the Malibu/Oxnard “Woolsey Fire” area. Hundreds of CTA Members, including dozens of our CTA/NEA-Retired members, experienced damage or complete loss of their homes and belongings in the past few weeks. Please remember that CTA’s Disaster Relief Fund Grants are available to all Active and Retired CTA Members. Contacting some of our members in these areas has been difficult, so if you, or any CTA member you are in contact with, have been affected by these devastating events, know that these grants are part of your benefits as union members.

In addition to the Disaster Funds, CTA has set up help centers in the CTA Chico and Oxnard “RRCs” (Regional Resource Centers) to aid victims in applying for grants, reconnecting with friends and in finding temporary housing. Members of our Chico/CTA/NEA-Retired chapter have been among those volunteering their time and energy helping neighbors at the Chico RRC. Also, Santa Monica/Malibu Educators, Butte College Faculty, Chico Unified TA, Paradise Teachers and others have set up “GOFUNDME” pages and are collecting donations. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can find further information about applying for grants, giving to the relief efforts, and offering help to our CTA brothers and sisters.

There has been some good news on the political front recently. Tony Thurmond, CTA’s recommended candidate for CA Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), was declared the winner a week and a half after the Election Day. As of this writing, his lead is over 176,000. The results were considered an “upset” as his opponent and his billionaire backers spent approximately $30 million on the most expensive school superintendent race in US history. In the end, with less than half the money, but the “people power” of CTA/NEA-Retired, CTA, and other labor organizations, Tony, the candidate fighting to keep the Public in Public Education, won out. Tony, who authored an Assembly Resolution this year calling for the repeal of the Social Security Offset laws, will also now have a seat on the CalSTRS Board. Thanks to the many retired members who wrote thousands of postcards, texted, and tweeted for Tony’s campaign. There were also other positive election results. The Governor-Elect, Gavin Newsom, has a strong record fighting for public education, civil rights, and union rights. As governor, he will appoint five members to the CalSTRS Board and have signing/veto power over legislation which undoubtedly will affect us.

I would also like to congratulate any of our retired members who were elected to School Boards across the state as well as those who are currently serving!

Marc R. Sternberger
President
CTA/NEA-Retired
BOARD REPORT
By KC Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer

CTA/NEA-Retired Board of Directors Meeting - June 1, 2018

Action Items:
- Approved Lifetime/Pre-retired dues increase to $550 effective 9/1/19. Applications received prior to 7/22/19 will still be accepted at the current $450 rate.
- Approved annual cash dues increase to $80 effective 9/1/19. CalSTRS deduction remains at $64.80.
- Our 2018-2019 annual goals have been revised and were approved.
- Decided to forgo sending members to the NEA Retired Organizing Conference this year and increase the number of member scholarships to CTA Summer Institute-Member Benefit strand instead.

Reports:
- The “Partner Membership” Standing Rule change has been approved. NEA-R members from other states are now eligible for CTA/NEA-Retired “Partner Membership.” This opens up a membership opportunity to approximately 1,800 NEA-Retired members who now live in California.
- Planning has begun for our CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference at the San Jose Fairmont, Feb. 28-March 1. Mary Kusler, Senior Director of the NEA Center for Advocacy, has agreed to be our keynote speaker.
- Kudos to grant writer Marc Sternberger. CTA/NEA-Retired was one of only two 2 state affiliates to receive the maximum $7,000 NEA Grant which was for our mentoring program. Other states received lesser amounts. Thanks for helping us advance this work!
- Most retired chapters throughout the state were heavily involved in 2018 campaign activities, especially for Tony Thurmond for SPI and local school board members. There was a lot of energy around the Thurmond campaign, and members participated in a variety of activities including postcard writing and text banking.
- Mary Rose Ortega, our new Ethnic Minority At-Large member, has been busy attending meetings and introducing herself. Mary Rose informed us that the “EMAC” title has been changed to “REAC” for Racial Equity Affairs Committee. She also encouraged us to attend the American Indian/Native American observance on Saturday evening at Council.
- Alen Ritchie, NEA Retired Executive Council member, reported that NEA Member benefits is dropping Part D Medicare insurance. There will be some changes to the NEA Representative Assembly and Annual NEA-Retired meeting. The “free” day at the RA is being dropped and hearings will be held virtually. There is an effort to get Congress members to join the Social Security caucus so that they will be more aware of issues. We are against the Brady Social Security offset bill. It would help some members, but would hurt others.
- Erika Kawasaki, who has been an invaluable asset to CTA/NEA-Retired, has received a promotion and will be in the CTA Human Resources Department. Congratulations to her! And, condolences to us! We will miss you, Erika! The hiring process has begun, and interviews will be held in November.
- Formation of our CalSTRS cadre was approved. We are planning to have 2 members from each region to be on call to attend CalSTRS meetings as needed. CalSTRS is doing more outreach and holding meetings statewide, and while Ed Foglia is great, it’s not possible for him to attend every meeting. We need to expand our expertise in this area.
- Jennifer Baker, CTA Governmental Relations staff, shared that there will be a CalSTRS election November 2019. The current chair Dana Dillon will be retiring. There will be big decisions at the next CalSTRS Board meeting whether to move forward on a new CalSTRS building and whether to divest from private prisons.
- Pat Ryan, CARA liaison, reported that CARA was active in the elections. The group also held regional conventions this year instead of an annual convention.

Information Items:
- CTA/NEA-Retired Board Meetings are held on Friday afternoons at CTA State Council in Santa Anita A at the Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles. All members are welcome to attend. We had approximately 20 members attend the October meeting.
- The next CTA/NEA-Retired Board Meeting will be held Friday, Jan. 25 (1:00 pm Closed Session and 1:30 Open Session)
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ctanearetired (No “membership” in Facebook is required.)
CalSTRS DIVESTS
By Harry M. Keiley, CalSTRS Board Member*

I am often asked why we don’t pull our investments out of companies that have policies or products which may be counter to our values as educators. It is important to remember that we have a fiduciary duty to protect the assets of our members and to keep the system that funds retiree benefits sound. Divestment can create financial risk to our system.

CalSTRS believes active and direct engagement with companies is the best way to mitigate risks and resolve issues. Only if engagement fails to resolve a risk sufficiently will CalSTRS consider divestment. For different reasons, CalSTRS determined that engagement has been ineffective with respect to companies which make guns that are illegal in California and two U.S. companies who operate private prisons. In both cases, this determination led to divestment.

Following the Sandy Hook tragedy, the CalSTRS Board voted to divest from companies that manufacture weapons which are illegal in California based on the unwillingness of the companies to engage with CalSTRS. CalSTRS sold its interests in two publicly traded companies immediately, but because one company was in a private equity fund, it took approximately 18 months to divest entirely.

In the wake of the concert shooting in Las Vegas and the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, CalSTRS made continued engagement with firearms companies a top priority. On November 14th, CalSTRS joined thirteen long-term, global institutional and private investors with combined assets of more than $4.83 trillion to create the Principles for a Responsible Civilian Firearms Industry. These principles will serve as engagement points for investors seeking to protect and enhance long-term portfolio values.

Two U.S. private prison companies, Core Civic and GEO Group, received heightened national attention because of their contracts with federal immigration authorities and the Trump administration’s policies for border crossings and the separation of families.

In June 2018, CalSTRS CIO, Chris Ailman, announced to the Board’s investment committee that his staff would be increasing engagement with the two companies, including a formal review. Ultimately, after three months of intensified effort, our staff concluded that the companies’ activities could pose a risk to the portfolio. Staff also concluded that further engagement with the companies would be ineffective since the companies’ operations and practices are primarily determined by the terms of federal government contacts. On November 7, 2018 the CalSTRS Board voted to divest from Core Civic and GEO Group.

CalSTRS views divestment as a tool of last resort, because divestment it can have lasting financial consequences for the retirement system and denies CalSTRS the ability to influence the companies’ behavior. Nonetheless, in rare cases where it is determined that engagement will not be effective and risk is low, CalSTRS has made the decision to divest.

*Harry M. Keiley is a high school teacher with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, and was elected to the Teachers’ Retirement Board in 2007. He has served as the president of Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association and chair of the California Teachers Association Political Involvement Committee. He chairs the CalSTRS Investment Committee.

2019 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!!!!

CTA/NEA-RETIRED SCHOLARSHIPS
IN MEMORY OF SHARILYNNE GARDELLA RUSSO

The application for the CTA/NEA-Retired Scholarship is now available on our website (cta.org/retired). These scholarships, given in memory of our former CTA/NEA-Retired President-Elect Sharilynn Russo, 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. Higher education programs in California that offer degrees and/or certification in a Speech Pathology and/or Audiology-related career have been contacted. We have requested that college/university staff, financial aid departments and related organizations inform potential applicants of the availability of these awards.

With these CTA/NEA-Retired, Scholarships we hope to encourage students to enroll in these programs and help support those already in SLP and SLPA programs so they may eventually serve this ever-increasing population of students.

If you know anyone in or entering a program, please let them know about this opportunity.

The application deadline is Friday, March 22, 2019.

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
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!!!!
REGISTER NOW @ www.ctago.org

15th ANNUAL
CTA/NEA-RETIRED ISSUES CONFERENCE
February 28 - March 1, 2019
Fairmont – San Jose

Come join us for the 15th Annual CTA/NEA-Retired Issues 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.

“Retirement Security in Uncertain Times!”

Attend this conference to learn how you can stay connected, be protected & enjoy great benefits

Plan to Attend Sessions to...
- Find out about local CTA/NEA-Retired chapters & events in your area
- Learn how to start a new retired chapter
- Make Sense of CalSTRS and Public Employee Pensions
- Negotiate the Healthcare Maze – Medicare & the Affordable Care Act
- Be Updated on NEA’s Advocacy for Federal Retirement Security (Protecting Social Security & Repealing GPO/WEP)
- Discover the CTA/NEA Member Benefits including many savings available to you!
- Staying Healthy and Active in Retirement

SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS to inform and inspire!
Eric Heins – CTA President
Mary Kusler – Senior Director - NEA Center for Advocacy
Jennifer Baker – CTA Legislative Advocate
And more!

Reception Thursday Evening, February 28
Come and meet other participants and have some great snacks!

CO$T
Registration cost is $100.00
(Thurs. evening reception, Fri. breakfast and lunch are included as part of your registration).
REGISTER NOW @ www.ctago.org
CTA/NEA-RETIRED ELECTIONS ALERT!

This year we will be electing CTA/NEA-Retired Alternate Representatives to CTA State Council/Board of Directors from CTA Regions I, II, III, IV (3-year terms).

All members in good standing are eligible to run for the Alternate positions. State Council Alternate Candidates must reside in the electoral district (CTA-Region) they are running to represent.

Candidacy forms will be available in the December 2018/January 2019 publication of the CTA California Educator and posted on the My CTA website.

Although the July 2019 NEA Representative Assembly (RA) seems to be a long time away, Declaration of Candidacy forms to run as a CTA/NEA-Retired Delegate will also be available in the December 2018/January 2019 publication of the CTA-California Educator and posted on the My CTA website.

More information will be available along with the form in CTA’s California Educator.

CARA HOLDS REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

By Pat Ryan, CARA Representative

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) is a statewide nonprofit organization that unites retired workers and community groups for the purpose of educating and informing its membership, the public and elected officials about issues that affect the well-being of California’s older adults. CARA is the California affiliate of the Alliance for Retired Americans. Your membership in CTA/NEA-Retired also makes you a member of CARA and eligible to participate in their activities.

Long standing goals for CARA are to protect and expand Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, stop efforts to cut or privatize benefits and support efforts to win universal single payer health care.

Delegates at the regional meetings also approved the following priorities:

- Support efforts to reform Proposition 13 and make commercial property owners pay their fair share of taxes.
- Support efforts to implement campaign finance reform at state and national levels.
- Advocate to increase SSI/SSP base grants. (A federal program which provides income support for eligible individuals who are 65 or older, blind or disabled.)
- Protect pension and retirement benefits including fighting legislative and electoral efforts to eliminate or reduce benefits.
- Advocate for funding affordable housing construction and preservation.
- Expand protection for renters and homeowners in California.
- Require transparency of drug pricing and lower drug costs.
- Educate and engage seniors on climate change and other environmental issues.
- Advocate for legislation to require all California counties to have drug take back programs to safely discard unused and expired drugs.

For more information about CARA issues and events, visit www.californiaalliance.org

Members of Southeastern Retired took time out from their New Retiree Luncheon to write postcards to fellow retired educators in support of Tony Thurmond for Superintendent of Public Instruction.
This commission would assess divestment proposals and prepare an analysis, including an actuarial impact, on a proposal’s impact on the CalSTRS.

Much of the discussion, at this meeting, centered on protecting our pension fund from those who want to privatize it and those who want to use it as a vehicle to make political/social statements. The privatizers continue to raise the alarm about the system’s “unfunded liability”. They wish to undo AB 1469, “The CalSTRS Funding Plan” signed into law in 2014, which put the system on the path to full funding by changing contribution rates for employers and employees. There are also those who see divestiture as a tool to force social change. Although many of the changes sought are very righteous and admirable, the use of divestiture to move corporations is many times ineffective and often threatens the fund retirees depend upon.

Instead of divestiture CalSTRS uses “corporate engagement” as a key tool to influence change in the marketplace. For example, staff participated in an Investors for Opioid Accountability’s (IOA) call with drug distributor Cardinal Health to communicate the IOA’s agenda and exchange views. CalSTRS has also committed to engaging 100 companies over the next five years around the issue of climate change. Additionally, they have announced a plan to ratchet up engagement with retailers of firearms that are illegal in California and unanimously approved a plan authorizing to make firearms engagement activities a top priority by publicly engaging companies and recommending the board consider divestment if engagement efforts fail.

At our October meeting we learned that the CalSTRS communication department has been working on new toolkits, social media, YouTube videos and other publications designed to communicate with all members.

Besides participation in the CTA Retirement Committee meetings, CTA and CTA/NEA-Retired sends liaisons to all CalSTRS and CalPERS Board meetings, sends members to lobby the CA Legislature on retirement issues, and continually monitors organizations and individuals who threaten our pensions. We are committed to protecting our pensions and will continue to be vigilant.


Congratulations to CTA recommended candidate Tony Thurmond who has been elected as the California Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thank you to all members who wrote postcards, texted, made calls, walked precincts, posted on social media, voted and spoke to friends and family during this campaign.

On October 25, 2018, the San Diego Education Association CTA/NEA-Retired chapter hosted a joint Open Enrollment Seminar in conjunction with the District for SDEA-Retired and other District retirees. More than one hundred retirees attended to hear presentations on Medicare, the healthcare plans offered and other retiree areas of interest. New SDEA-Retired President Debra Redenbaugh emceed the event. Seated at the check in table are Executive Board Members Joyce Heyn, Norma Heeter and Judy Thomas.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE 2019 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 February 28 – March 1 in San Jose. Past winners of the award are:

2018 – Bob McDonough
2017 - Frank Tarentino
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, 2019.
Impacted by California Wildfires? Your Union is Here to Help.

Wildfires have caused massive devastation and ravaged communities throughout California. As news floods in about these tragedies, stories of heroism, kindness and compassion give us hope. It always becomes clear: in times of tragedy and crisis, look to your union sisters and brothers to lend a helping hand.

See below for information about resources, how you can help those in need, and news about educators throughout California stepping up to save lives and rebuild their communities.

Have you been affected by the Camp Fire, Woolsey Fire or another California wildfire? CTA’s Disaster Relief Fund provides financial assistance grants for CTA members who have suffered significant losses from fires and other disasters.

To apply for help, contact any CTA office or go to cta.org and download the Disaster Relief Application.

Help our sisters and brothers in need.

In the immediate aftermath of a wildfire, the best form of aid is cash assistance to communities affected by the fires. It’s tough to know exactly what items should be donated and where to send them. If you can, donate to the funds below so local folks on the ground can purchase the items they need. Below are active funds that are good to donate to:

- **The Chico Unified Teachers Association’s Camp Fire**: www.gofundme.com/camp-fire-paradise-teachers
- **Butte College Education Association**: www.gofundme.com/butte-college-facultystaff-relief or for students www.gofundme.com/butte-college-student-relief-fund
- **Santa Monica/Malibu Classroom Teachers**: www.gofundme.com/smmcta-fire-victims
- **The CTA Chico RRC** is also accepting donations of cash and practical gift cards for groceries or essentials. If you can provide housing for those needing a place to stay, please call the RRC at (530) 345-9743.

You can also donate directly to CTA’s Disaster Relief Fund by sending a check made out to:
CTA Disaster Relief Fund
1705 Murchison Drive
Burlingame, CA 94010

You may also contribute through automatic payroll deduction. To request a payroll deduction form, contact:
California Teachers Association (CTA)
Membership Accounting Department
(650) 552-5278
Membership@cta.org
WOMEN’S CAUCUS NEWS

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?

By Debra Sheehan, CTA Women’s Caucus Secretary
and NEA Women’s Caucus Retired Coordinator

The CTA/NEA Women’s Caucus would like to hear from you. We elected a new CTA Chair, Maya Walker, at the October State Council meeting. Her main focus is to include all members, including retired, minority caucuses, and Student CTA, in meetings and decisions. This presents an excellent opportunity for retired educators to share ideas and concerns. You can contact me at dwsheehan@yahoo.com and I will bring your comments to the Steering Committee.

At the 2018 NEA Representative Assembly in Minneapolis, the NEA Women’s Caucus collected 180 purses and filled them with 322 pounds of toiletries for our Power of the Purse project. The filled purses were donated to The Tubman House in Minneapolis. Thank you to everyone who donated. The CA Women’s Caucus continues this project at each State Council.

The CTA Women’s Caucus meets at every CTA State Council and at CTA conferences. Caucus advocacy topics include Social Security fairness, health care, improving sexual harassment policies and establishing a Silver Alert to locate missing seniors. Membership includes both CTA and NEA Caucuses.

As members of CTA/NEA-Retired you also receive the California Educator. The December/January issue includes information about CTA State Council recommendations, Declaration of Candidacy forms for CTA/NEA-Retired offices and the NEA Representative Assembly and many interesting and important articles about public education and educators.