



# Retiree Advocate



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## CTA/NEA-RETIRED BOARD AND STUDENT CTA PLAN JOINT ACTIVITIES

On January 24th, the CTA/NEA-Retired Executive Board met with the leaders of Student CTA to discuss ways in which the two organizations could work together on areas of mutual interest. The ground work was laid for what we hope will be a wonderful and productive relationship. Plans were made to meet again at the April State Council meeting and for CTA/NEA-Retired to participate in the SCTA conference in April. Suggested future activities included community outreach projects, union history lessons, political action, mentoring of students and, of course, the *Degrees Not Debt* campaign.

NEA has started *Degrees Not Debt* as an informational campaign to help NEA members, students and their families learn about their options to make college more affordable. The amount of money owed in student loans now exceeds \$1.2 trillion. Approximately 40 million people in the United States owe an average of \$29,400 per person. What can we do? Join the *Degrees Not Debt* campaign. There is an excellent presentation on the Student CTA website ([studentcta.org](http://studentcta.org)). It includes a brochure, partner resources, sample letters to the editor and student relief resources.

I encourage you to check this out and to help our future teachers in any way that you can.



Alen Ritchie  
PRESIDENT  
CTA/NEA-Retired

See picture on page 5

## THE PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

by Ed Foglia, District 2 Representative

The separation of private and public schools in our country dates back to the 18th century. Private schools did not receive any government funding and owned their facilities. These were independent schools not bound by any standards or edicts from the state and federal governments. They selected their own student body, instructional curriculum and staff. Funding came from tuition, fundraising activities and donations.

state superintendents, the Department of Education and large urban superintendents. Their message is clear that public schools are failing, and they have the solutions. They want to replace traditional public education with a “for profit” system. They are determined to cut the cost of education and increase profits by staffing schools with cheap labor.

The current reform movement is different in one major way, its major goal is to privatize public education and have the taxpayers subsidize their private enterprise.

After years of failed attempts to pass tuition tax credits, tax exemptions and vouchers for private school families, the movement turned to charter schools. Minnesota established the first charter school in 1991. Private-managed charter schools have provided a road map for the reformers to successfully establish an “independent school system” directly using taxpayers’ dollars.

School reform is not new. For years they have blamed schools for our country’s ills and attacked or scapegoated public education for failing to do our job. The current reform movement is different in one major way, its major goal is to privatize public education and have the taxpayers subsidize their private enterprise.

The corporate reformers are not alone. They are supported by both Republican and (a few) Democratic governors, mayors, legislators, think tanks, foundations,

*Teach for America* now employs college graduates with no pedagogical training or certification other than a five-week summer training program and are given a two-year teaching contract.

The plan is simple – weaken the organizations and personnel that support public education; evaluate teachers based on students test scores; abolish due-process often referred to as “tenure” and eliminate seniority rights for teachers; underfund public schools while increasing support for charter schools without accountability; dismantle the current defined-benefit state retirement system and replace it with a personal investment retirement accounts.

In a future article, I will go into greater depth on the enormity of threats and the negative impact privatization has on America’s public education, students and educators. A worthwhile reading is “Reign of Error” by Diane Ravitch.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

*Retired Members*

# BOARD REPORT

by Frank Tarantino, Secretary-Treasurer

CTA/NEA-Retired Board of Directors Meeting - January 23, 2015

### Action Items:

Approved:

- Approved Maria Little as the 2015 CTA/NEA-Retired Elections Chair
- Endorsed the candidacy of CTA/NEA-Retired President Alen Ritchie for NEA-Retired Executive Committee. The election will be held in Orlando, FL at the NEA-Retired Annual Meeting, June 28-29, 2015.
- Postponed to the June 2015 meeting - decision on CTA/NEA-Retired voting by region for Board of Directors and state delegates to the NEA-RA pending a feasibility study.

### Reports:

- Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, which challenges "fair share" aka Agency Fee, is most likely headed to the U.S. Supreme Court during the 2015-2016 session.
- CTA/NEA-Retired Bylaw Article IV – Membership, Section 1 (Eligibility) is in conflict with CTA Bylaws. This section of the CTA/NEA-Retired Bylaw states "any person may become a member of CTA/NEA-Retired...if the person (1) is or was a member of CTA and/or NEA; (2) is retired from state affiliates of NEA." CTA Bylaws restrict membership in CTA/NEA-Retired to only those who are/or were a member of CTA. Efforts are underway to bring the Bylaws into congruence.

- CTA/NEA-Retired members are eligible for one-hour free legal consultation on issues dealing with substitute employment as well as retirement and health/welfare benefits. Individuals must be members at the time the issue took place, during the time services are sought and after the services have been provided. Members are also eligible for a 30-minute free consultation on issues dealing with "anything" except immigration, tax advice and/or intellectual property. CTA/NEA-Retired members can call CTA Group Legal Services at 650-552-5425 for assistance.

### Information Items:

- All members are invited to attend a short CTA/NEA-Retired Board Meeting which will be held on March 5, 2015 from 11:00am to 12:30pm at CTA Burlingame Headquarters prior to the beginning of the CTA/NEA-Retired Annual Conference. Look for the announcement in this issue of the Advocate.
- The 2015 NEA-Retired Organizing Conference will be held March 24-26, 2015 at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel in Atlanta, GA. **Organize, Educate, and Lead** is the theme for this year's conference. To register go to [www.nea.org/retired](http://www.nea.org/retired). Conference registration is \$90 and is non-refundable.
- As part of the implementation of CTA's Long Term Strategic Plan, State Council members were presented with feedback from the Appreciative Inquiry activity conducted at the October meeting. The Workgroup will provide updates and a final report at future Council meetings.

## PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES

The following Bylaw changes will be voted on at the CTA/NEA-Retired Annual Conference on March 6th.

### ARTICLE III-PURPOSE

c) Promoting united action with CTA/NEA and its local affiliates ~~of CTA/NEA~~ and others devoted to the cause of public education.

### ARTICLE V-OFFICERS

Section 3, the President shall:

d) Appoint the chair of the Elections Committee and the Membership Chair.

# IT'S TIME FOR READ ACROSS AMERICA

by Bonnie Shatun, Editor

Read Across America is the time when CTA and NEA work to focus the nation's attention on the importance of reading. This year it's being celebrated on Monday, March 2. As educators, we know that motivating children to read is an important factor in student achievement and in creating lifelong successful readers and that activities centered on reading should continue throughout the year.

CTA is working with the California School Library Association to highlight books quarterly in the Educator. The first group of recommended books was in the September edition. The December/January issue showcased five new books and included their Accelerated Reader levels when available. They are: *One* by Kathryn Otoshi (Pre-K), *La Mariposa* by Francisco Jiménez (K-2), *Words with Wings* by Nikki Grimes (3-5), *Richmond Tales: Lost Secrets of the Iron Triangle* by Summer Brenner (6-8) and *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* by Malala Yousafzai (9-12).

Retirees can be an important part of this celebration. Please contact the local CTA chapter in your area or your neighborhood school to find out how to be a part of these

school activities and community events. Several CTA/NEA-Retired chapters have participated. Last year the Orange CTA/NEA-Retired members read at a variety of schools in their area. This year they are using money from their budget to purchase some of the recommended books for local classrooms and school libraries. They are adding bookplates which say the books were donated by CTA Retirees.

Last year, the Northbay-Retired chapter organized their first Read Across America outreach coordinating with a single active chapter and including Student CTA members from Sonoma State University. This year, they are once again planning to have readers at all four schools in the Bellevue School District in Santa Rosa.

The CTA websites - [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads) and [cta.org/raa](http://cta.org/raa) - have additional resources to pair with the recommended books as well as *Six Keys to Help a Child Become a Good Reader* (available in eight languages).

Whatever you choose to do, just make sure to share the joy of reading because California reads! And, don't forget to send us news about your activities with pictures so we can feature your chapter in the next *Advocate*.

## CTA RETIREMENT COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

by Shelley Krantz, District 3 Representative

CTA's Retirement Committee held their regular meeting at the January State Council meeting. Several items of special interest were discussed:

- We have all been concerned for a long time about repealing the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions of the Social Security Act. California Senator Jim Beall (SD 15, Santa Clara County) has authored a bill, Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR1), which calls for the repeal of these two items. His Retirement Committee unanimously supported this bill and CTA is potentially a co-sponsor. Members are encouraged to write letters of support to Senator Beall. For more information, visit [cta.org/retired](http://cta.org/retired).
- We have been without representation for three years. Ed Foglia spoke to the Retirement Committee about the importance of getting Governor Brown

- to appoint a retired member to the CalSTRS Board. One of the Governor's objectives is to select an individual who has not already served on the Board. Additionally, there is an opening for a School Board representative. We need to find excellent candidates for both seats. Interested applicants can go to the Governor's website ([gov.ca.gov](http://gov.ca.gov)) and click on Appointments to apply. Our goal is to someday have the ability to elect those who represent us on the CalSTRS Board.
- There is a new policy requiring greater accountability on the part of school districts requiring them to properly report earnings to CalSTRS. The problem came to CTA's attention when some retirees were overpaid by CalSTRS because the district reported their earnings as too much. Not only were their benefits reduced, but members had to pay back the overage.

# READ ACROSS AMERICA 2014



Northbay-Retired member Elizabeth Vega



Northbay-Retired President Pat Sabo



Student CTA members from Sonoma State University



Parents were invited to join active and retired teachers in Read Across America activities.

# CRUISE TRAVEL FOR SENIORS

by Jim Clark, CTA/NEA-Retired Staff Consultant



I have noticed more and more of my retired friends going on cruises. Whether a month-long cruise through the Panama Canal to Mediterranean Ports of Call, a 7-day cruise to the Mexican Riviera or a 15-day European river cruise on the Danube, they all return raving about the experience.

So what should seniors look for in a cruise? First, we want what all other cruisers want:

- We like the ease of having most of the nuts-and-bolts travel details worked out for us.
- We like the idea of traveling to multiple destinations while unpacking only once.
- We appreciate top-notch pampering, service and excellent food.
- We like the bang-for-our-buck that cruising provides.

But there are a number of features that are of a higher priority to us than to our younger

shipmates. Some of those are the choice of itineraries since we may have traveled to many places already, the availability of enrichment programs on board, the ease of traveling solo or with multigenerational family groups, and the ships that are accessible and have medical care.

Two good sources for senior cruise travel on the Internet are <http://www.cruisecritic.com> for general information and <http://www.independenttraveler.com/travel-tips/senior-travel/best-cruises-for-seniors> for specific information related to seniors. There are a number of ways that you can use to secure the best deal. Here are some suggestions from the Cruise Critic website:

- Send Deals to Your Inbox or Phone
- Keep an Eye on Boutique and Daily Deal Sites
- Book Ahead for High-Season Cruising
- Book Last Minute

## CTA/NEA-RETIRED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2015

Time: 11:00am to 12:30pm

Location: CTA Headquarters, Room 102

**\*This is open to all and does NOT require you to register for the Retired Issues Conference.**

## NEW LAWS FOR 2015

by Frank Tarantino, Secretary-Treasurer

New Year's Day ushered in 930 new laws for California. Here are some of the more "high profile" laws most of which went into effect on January 1, 2015:

- SB 850 allows 15 Community Colleges to offer four-year bachelor's degrees in certain subjects as a pilot program.
- SB 173 will streamline and update the Adult Education accountability and funding system.
- With concern about head injuries in football mounting, AB 2127 seeks to protect young players by limiting high schools to two full-contact practices a week during the 2015 season and beyond.
- SB 1266 seeks to guard against dangerous allergic reactions in schoolchildren by requiring every school in California to stock at least one epinephrine auto-injector. Teachers and other non-nurse school employees will be able to use them as long as they have received proper training.
- SB 1023 will provide student support services for foster youth in the Community College system.
- Dogs are now legally allowed to accompany their owners on restaurant patios/outdoor dining areas throughout California. The new law does set conditions for how and where dogs can "dine" (e.g. no sitting on tables/chairs and must be leashed or in

carriers) and still makes allowances for local ordinances that ban the practice. Indoor dining is still only for service dogs.

- California's Cap-and-Trade Law will raise the price of gasoline an average of 10 cents/gallon in order to combat global warming.
- On July 1, a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags will go into effect largely affecting grocery stores and pharmacies and a year later convenience stores and liquor stores must comply. There is currently a challenge to this law and opponents say that they have enough signatures to put the issue on the June 2016 statewide ballot.
- New 2015 standard IRS deduction rates for mileage are as follows: for business miles driven, the rate increases to 57.5 cents/mile; for medical or moving purposes, the rate will be 23 cents/mile; for charitable purposes, the rate will be 14 cents/mile (unchanged from 2014).

Sources: *Sacramento Bee/San Diego Union Tribune*  
(December 31, 2014 - January 4, 2015)

To view the specifics of these bills and more, please visit: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>.



**SCTA and CTA/NEA-Retired Meeting**

Leaders of CTA/NEA-Retired and Student CTA met at the January State Council Meeting to discuss possible joint activities.

## MORE SENIOR SCAMS -- THEY NEVER STOP!

by Sharon Fitch Boudreau, District 4 Representative

“Hello, Mrs. Budreao.” They never can pronounce my name, but another call from senior phone scammers begins—with a new twist! They enthusiastically informed me that the Life Alert I ordered was being shipped and they just wanted to confirm a few details, such as my address and credit card numbers, so it could be on its way. I curtly informed this man that I ordered no such item and please don’t call me again! But I know

you and your financial institutions and you play a vital role in preventing yourself from becoming a victim of fraud.

Here are some simple ways you can take action:

- Create strong passwords, change them often, and use a combination of upper and lower case letters, characters and numbers.
- Keep security software current. This is

Guarding against online scams is a two-way street between you and your financial institutions and you play a vital role in preventing yourself from becoming a victim of fraud.

this scam works quite often, and is similar to another internet scam where the crooks send fake invoices or shipping labels and want you to “click on” a link so they can collect your personal data. Don’t ever give information to people that YOU didn’t contact first.

As seniors increase their use of the internet and decrease the use of landlines, the online fraud grows with hackers finding new ways to steal your personal information. You may wonder if it’s really possible to combat online crime. The answer is yes. Guarding against online scams is a two-way street between

a must. You should always keep your antivirus/anti-spyware programs up-to-date. Secure your home network and never access personal financial or business information in a coffee shop or public place. A public network is not secure.

- Keep yourself informed about the latest scams that can separate you from your dearly earned retirement income.

For additional information on how to avoid or report scams, go to [www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/fraud](http://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/fraud) and [www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0060-10-ways-avoid-fraud](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0060-10-ways-avoid-fraud).

## SWEARING-IN CEREMONY SACRAMENTO 2015



CTA/NEA-Retired members Judy Jacobs (left ) and Carol Robb (right) attended the swearing-in ceremonies in Sacramento for California’s statewide officers. They are pictured here with newly elected State Senator Tony Mendoza (center). Senator Mendoza is a former teacher and CTA leader who served in the California Assembly prior to being elected to the State Senate.

# SHARILYNN GARDELLA RUSSO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS DEADLINE APPROACHING

by Marc Sternberger, Vice President

The application for the Sharilynn Gardella Russo Memorial Scholarships is now available on our website ([cta.org/retired](http://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.

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.

**If you know anyone in or entering a program, please let them know about this opportunity. The application deadline is Friday, March 27, 2015.**

With these CTA 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.

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 **Frank Tarantino, 1480 Edgehill Drive, Chula Vista, CA 91913.**

## SAN GORGONIO LUNCHEON



San Gorgonio-Retired members enjoy a festive holiday lunch. Pictured clockwise from lower left are John Graham, Judy Berndt, Heather Hodges, Dennis Hodges, former CTA President Barbara Kerr, Mark Lawrence and Phyllis Purcell



Members of San Gorgonio-Retired brought more than 70 new children's gifts to their annual holiday luncheon to be donated to the Salvation Army toy drive.

## FOCUS ON SAN GORGONIO-RETIRED

by Carol Robb, San Gorgonio-Retired President

San Gorgonio-Retired is a large, very active chapter and among the first retired chapters established. Alternating business meetings with a guest speaker one month then with an excursion the following month has been a very successful formula for us. At the conclusion of each meeting, a lunch is provided - often prepared by the officers and Board members. We have some very good cooks in our ranks!

While our members mostly come from the metropolitan San Bernardino and Riverside area, we also have members in the high desert as well as what we commonly call the "low desert." We generally follow the area comprised of the original San Gorgonio Service Center Council.

In December, the featured event is a luncheon at a neighboring restaurant. In addition to having a truly excellent meal, we enjoy an often hilarious white elephant gift exchange. More importantly, our members bring toys to provide Christmas gifts to local children. This year the Salvation Army received over 70 gifts for children ranging from toddlers to teens. Each May the members are surveyed for their ideas on speaker topics and trips for the coming year.

The Getty Villa, Getty Museum and the Living Desert are perennial favorites. Earlier

this year we went to the California Science Center for the Pompeii exhibit and the Endeavour Space Shuttle. Coming up, we plan to spend the day at Santa Anita relishing a special buffet and a day at the races. For the last two years we've planned an "extra" excursion in June; one to the local minor league ball park. However, this year we are using a local tour company to take us on a Temecula Wine Tour.

The State Teachers' Retirement System is almost a must have topic for one of our meetings. In January, we were very fortunate to have Gretchen Zeagler, Strategy Specialist, from the Sacramento CalSTRS office.

San Gorgonio-Retired has been successful because we listen to our members input and try to pick topics of timely interest. Good speakers followed by a good lunch reinforce camaraderie and fellowship. Many San G-Retired members were leaders and/or were active in their local chapters so we are blessed with a continuous supply of experienced leadership at the helm. Current officers include: Carol Robb, President; Dennis Hodges, Vice President; Valerie Lichtman, Secretary; Roslyn Jones, Treasurer; Ned Curtis and John Graham, At-Large Board Members.

# 11TH ANNUAL CTA/NEA-RETIRED CONFERENCE

MARCH 5-6, 2015  
CTA HEADQUARTERS and HYATT REGENCY SFO

## “Making the Most of Retirement”

Come join us for the 11th 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.

**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 (Repeal GPO/WEP)

## ENJOY BENEFITS

Discover the CTA/NEA Member Benefits available to you!  
Learn how to stay Healthy and Active in Retirement



## Keynote Speakers

Dean E. Vogel, CTA President  
Mary Kusler, NEA Director of Governmental Relations

## Reception

March 5 • Thursday evening  
*Meet other participants and enjoy some 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.regonline.com/2015RC](http://www.regonline.com/2015RC)  
Or call 650-552-5355



# Retiree Advocate

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### Compton Holiday Event

The Compton CTA/NEA-Retired chapter held their annual holiday party at the Compton District Office. Members paid a small fee for a delicious catered lunch and a chance to visit and stay connected with colleagues.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEA-RETIRED ORGANIZING CONFERENCE  
March 24-26, Atlanta, GA

CTA/NEA-RETIRED BOARD MEETING  
April 10, Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles

CTA STATE COUNCIL  
April 10-12, Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles

CTA/NEA-RETIRED ANNUAL MEETING  
June 5, Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles

CTA STATE COUNCIL  
June 5-7 Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles

NEA-RETIRED ANNUAL MEETING  
June 28-29, Orlando, FL

NEA REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY  
July 1-6, Orlando, FL