

# ELF'S CORNER

By President Ethel L. Fleming



*Aloha, everyone,*

A recent message from the national union AFSCME, of which HGEA is a member, reminded us "Labor Day recognizes the strength and achievements of generations of American workers — especially union workers who fought for workplace safety, the eight-hour workday, and yes, the Labor Day holiday." This was important to us as "Actives." Now as union Retiree members, we have seen the benefits of fighting for better wages, supplemental rights, and pensions, so we are "able to retire with reliable health

care coverage and financial security." (AFSCME Retirees, "The Legacy of Labor Day," September 4, 2021.)

We appreciate our previous leaders and Retiree officers for their great example in union work to serve members. This current pandemic has taught us that we are all in this together. We mask, wash, and distance to reduce COVID infection in our community. Our present leadership team intends to keep in touch via several means: Zoom meetings and activities, such as BINGO, phone trees, limited in-person special interest groups, etc. We miss our large in-person gatherings, and plan ways to still be connected with you, our fellow Retiree members. Please reach out to our Retirees office, give suggestions, offer to lead/join activities, and help with functions. We are organized toward common interests to keep our minds and bodies active, and also, before you know it, support HGEA-endorsed candidates for political office. (They play a huge part in protecting our hard-won benefits.) Mahalo to our four Retiree members from each county who are current committee members on the HGEA State Board: Aileen Obina (Legislative & Political Action/PEOPLE), Tommy Oi (Member Benefits), Leticia Hedani (C.R. Kendall Fundraising) and Ethel Fleming (Finance).

All Retiree members are welcome to call the HGEA Retirees Unit as noted in the Ho'olaha. "Reach out and touch someone," and increase activities in your lives. Due to current pandemic restrictions, for instance, have you tried any adult coloring books? This activity does the following: 1) Relaxes your brain and improves brain function; 2) Induces a meditative state; 3) Improves motor skills; 4) Improves sleep; 5) Improves focus; 6) Reduces anxiety, and 7) Relieves stress. Separately and together, we can have fun!



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HGEA members enjoy a socially-distanced event at the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event in Hilo. Thank you to all who joined us in supporting this worthy cause!

## WORDFIND Things associated with Thanksgiving

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Autumn       | Mashed potato |
| Baked Beans  | Noodles       |
| Biscuits     | November      |
| Colonists    | Pecan         |
| Cornbread    | Poke          |
| Corn pudding | Pumpkin Pie   |
| Cranberries  | Squash        |
| Drumstick    | Stuffing      |
| Giblets      | Sushi         |
| Gravy        | Sweet Potato  |
| Ham          | Tom Turkey    |
| Harvest      | Wishbone      |
| Leftovers    | Yam           |

N N Q P L W S C C R F N R A H E G E W M  
 U M A F E H N O J O I Y I C N V I A N A  
 Q X U C V J A R S U R Q M O Q P R S L S  
 Q S Y T E Y E N Q S O N B K N W T D C H  
 Y A M I U P B P U N T H B I D I M R Y E  
 L E U N J A D U Q H S E K R U A A Z E D  
 E E X B O T E D O I D P L C E N Z Y K P  
 P U F W J M K D W K M H S B B A X V R O  
 V J M T X T A I W U L I Y E I K D A U T  
 C N D F O H B N P Z B Z R L G G G R T A  
 H I E D P V B G Y H A R V E S T F G M T  
 K I R E B M E V O N I V S C J D N A O O  
 S Q U A S H Z R M E Q E Q T N S J R T U  
 X E Y L D J G Z S W V L Y O U A Y H I Y  
 O T A T O P T E E W S K O L S F O E H H  
 R M T P F C L B K L G D A E U V F Q P T  
 R K N S N O Y Y R G L Q M K S S W I C W  
 K C I T S M U R D E L A F O H M N C N A  
 C O L O N I S T S J H E M P I I T Q V G  
 A R Q P Y P I J J Q A X D K E Q S N W V

# HO'OLAHA

PUBLICATION OF THE RETIRED PEOPLE

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## HO`OLAHA

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# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR



I hope you read a recent Midweek featuring Executive Director Randy Perreira who spoke on the partnership of the AFL-CIO and Aloha United Way's Workplace Giving campaign which has raised money through unionized workplace fundraisers.

Perreira reported that one of their most successful annual campaigns is the annual Retiree Giving Program which raised over \$133,000 last year. I personally want to thank you for your generous support of the Giving Program as we begin another year of fundraising.

Today, it is much harder to get by let alone get ahead and the COVID pandemic has added a major hurdle to our daily lives. While the madness of anti-maskers and vaxxers who do not believe the medical breakthrough of taking the vaccines to save lives, yet continue to arrive daily at hospitals across the nation begging for medication. Proudly, retirees on the other hand have stepped up and taken the vaccinations at a much higher percentage than others. President Biden recently stated "we've been patient, but our patience is wearing thin, and your refusal has cost all of us." I encourage those that have not been vaccinated to please get the vaccination. Continue to wash your hands and always wear a mask when you are around anyone other than your immediate circle. Many clinics and pharmacies around the state offer free vaccinations. Equally important is the need to get your flu shot. Kaiser and HMSA have partnered with many businesses to make the shot available. Thank you retirees, who continue to do your part for the greater good of all of us.

Chapter Presidents have cancelled retiree activities and meetings but several activities are being conducted via Zoom especially while the gathering mandates are in place. Please call Tammy at 543-0054 to receive the Zoom connection and to participate. If you are interested in conducting a specific Zoom class or can refer an instructor for an activity, please contact Tammy.

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Through the AFSCME Strong and PEOPLE programs, HGEA and other unions are trying to level the playing field by educating our members on the importance of continuing your union membership. Collectively, we will have a stronger voice at the negotiations table, at the legislature, and the worksite. For retirees, union strength is key to maintain and not lose any benefits. Article XVI, Section 2 of the Hawaii State Constitution says that once the State and Counties agreed to provide to retirees certain rights and benefits, those rights and benefits cannot be diminished or impaired thereafter in any way. We know that without the union as your watchdog, and support from the union endorsed candidates, laws like this one are always challenged in one way or another. President Ethel Fleming and the State Board has made increasing membership a priority. Please reach out to co-workers, friends and neighbors to join our retiree unit.

Along with your HGEA staff, the retiree chapter boards and retiree state board of directors are all PEOPLE members. What is PEOPLE you ask? First, it stands for Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality. As an affiliate of AFSCME, HGEA receives essential monetary funds to help support campaigns of union endorsed candidates. PEOPLE is AFSCME's political, legislative and most importantly, fundraising arm. Contributing to PEOPLE is the difference between having things happen to you and making things happen. The Retirees Unit is committed to have 10% of our membership be PEOPLE members and so I am again asking each and every one of you reading this message to join the PEOPLE program. At \$8.40 a month, it translates to less than 30 cents a day for protection of Family and Medical leave, cost of living adjustments for retiree pensions, efforts that want to eliminate the Medicare Part B reimbursement, strengthen Social Security and oppose efforts to cut Medicare and Medicaid. In the past few sessions, efforts to eliminate life insurance plans for both active and retired employees, forgoing dental and vision coverage, and taxing pensions, are battles that the HGEA Retirees Unit have fought and won. PEOPLE dollars have funded direct mail and paid media for battles across the state and the country. All retiree and active board members are MVP PEOPLE members and 100% of the HGEA staff are MVP PEOPLE members. I urge you to become a PEOPLE member and be part of this growing movement. I encourage you to enlist your family and friends to join us as we continue this fight and prepare for battles yet to come.

The Charles R. Kendall and Russell K. Okata Scholarship applications are now available on the HGEA website. Awards are available to members in good standing for at least one year and their dependents. Deadline to submit your application is January 18, 2022. Selection will be in the Spring of 2022. If you would like to contribute to the Scholarship and Education Fund please make checks payable to the C.R. Kendall Scholarship and Education Fund and mail your check to HGEA-Kendall Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 2930 Honolulu, Hawaii 96802-2930.

Thank you to for your continued support of our union.

In solidarity,

*Mahie*

## CHAPTER NEWS:

You must continue to wear your mask at all HGEA functions.

**OCTOBER 14, 2021: Retiree Open Enrollment information and questions with HMSA at 9:00 a.m. Please register by emailing [outinfo@hmsa.com](mailto:outinfo@hmsa.com).**

**KAUAI CHAPTER: EMAIL TIMMY ALBAO AT [TLALBAOSR@HAWAIIANTEL.NET](mailto:TLALBAOSR@HAWAIIANTEL.NET)**

Please email Timmy so he has your contact information! We are watching the gathering numbers and hope to have social events in the future. We can connect via Zoom but you must be able to connect via a personal computer or mobile device.

The 2021 Christmas party is cancelled, but we may plan a New Year activity.

**MAUI CHAPTER: EMAIL STEVE CRISS AT [STPLSD69@YAHOO.COM](mailto:STPLSD69@YAHOO.COM)**

Christmas party is cancelled. Please email Steve if you want to have a spring celebration.

General membership meetings can be conducted via Zoom. Please email Steve if you are able to connect via a personal computer or mobile device.

**HAWAII CHAPTER: EMAIL EVELYN TOGASHI AT [ETOGASHI@HAWAII.RR.COM](mailto:ETOGASHI@HAWAII.RR.COM)**

- No Community Action activities in October and November, 2021.
- December 8, 2021 - Chapter Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m. via Zoom
- January 15, 2022 - General Membership Meeting if COVID-19 mandates lifted for large groups.

With the increase in COVID 19, mandates allow only 10 participants indoors and outdoors.

**OAHU CHAPTER: EMAIL AVA KRIDLER AT [VOLKSWAGONBUG102@CS.COM](mailto:VOLKSWAGONBUG102@CS.COM)**

All activities begin at 9:00 a.m.

- November 1, December 6, 2021 - Bingo
- October 20, November 3, December 1, 2021 - Ukulele
- October 13 & 27, November 10, December 8, 2021 - Line Dancing
- October 28, November 19, 2021 - Crochet
- December 9, 2021 - Chapter Board Meeting
- December 16, 2021 - General Membership Meeting via Zoom

December 11, 2021:

A Christmas (stay in your car) Affair. 10 a.m. until noon. HGEA office 888 Mililani Street, Honolulu. RSVP by December 1, 2021 to Tammy at 543-0054 to be eligible. Wear a mask and bring canned goods for the Labor Food Drive.



Retirees attend an ukulele class on Oahu.