

ELF'S CORNER

By President Ethel L. Fleming



Aloha, HGEA Retiree Members

A longtime Hawaii activity allowed with permit is to set off fireworks as one calendar year ends, and the new one begins. Oh boy, not much has changed from long ago practice, as 2022 was welcomed in the evening of December 31, 2021 by all kinds of loud bangs, bombs, and as evidenced by my own eyeballs looking out of my lanai and picture windows, pretty colorful aerial pyrotechnics in many parts of Honolulu (illegals). I heard that other parts of the islands had this happen, too. Unfortunately, there were also some serious injuries, and frightened pets during this time, both before and after this date. Can't you hear your grandma?: "Stop it already; why you no listen?"

We left the old year behind, perhaps with some regret, but also with hope for change to happen as we began January. Rains came; we felt refreshed, despite getting soaked. Green grass and mountains are beautiful. We balanced the beauty with being careful where we went and who we were going to be seeing. Pandemic not pau, and group events were cancelled, curtailing our urge to see relatives and friends in person. We're doing things right; wash hands, wear mask, maintain social distance, get vaccinated. Thank goodness, more members learned to "Zoom" as a way to connect with some of the activities offered by our union. Hooray, we had a "Movie Day" in person in January at HGEA, with masks, social distancing, popcorn and hot dogs, too. Crochet class has changed to Craft class. Ukulele class still continues to meet. When you read about activities in the Ho'olaha, and want to participate, call early to the Retirees office to reserve a place for you. Do your Word Search puzzle to keep your brains engaged. Check your HGEA calendar. Offer to lead an activity. It is so good to connect with our members. Always suggest your ideas, too. Our HGEA leadership encourages member participation, and we appreciate those who support the activities. Paraphrasing President John F. Kennedy's words; ask what you can do for your union.

Chinese New Year is roaring in soon. It's the Year of the Tiger at the start of the lunar new year on February 1. Doesn't that invigorate you?! So does Valentine's Day come rolling up behind two weeks later. Notice red is prominent for both days; such a color of life. No doubt it's someone's birthday or time to commemorate an event, too, during this early part of the new year. These are things to look forward to in participating with others. We adapt to current community safeguards, and make rational decisions to keep ourselves and others safe.

As Spring "springs" upon us, look for bees. They create sweet things after they land in flowers, and get back to their hives. Just saying "bee" reminds us to bring positivity to our lives; be you, and not get lost while we're temporarily apart. Embrace positivity in the new year.

A hui hou.



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WORDFIND

Notable January & February Birthdays

Aileen Obina	George Washington
Alice Cooper	James Dean
Bob Marley	Joan Baez
Burt Reynolds	John Travolta
Chelsea Clinton	Martin Luther
Ed Sheeran	King Jr.
Elizabeth Taylor	Michael Jordan
Elvis Presley	Paul Matsuo
Farrah Fawcett	Ronald Reagan
Galileo Galilei	Steve Criss
George Harrison	Steve Jobs
	Thomas Edison

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

HO'OLAHA

PUBLICATION OF THE RETIRED PEOPLE

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR



Hauoli Makahiki Hou, Happy New Year and greetings to all of you here and across the globe. With much anticipation of exciting new adventures while still weathering the challenges of a worldwide pandemic, I wish you safe travels for those venturing out, and most of all, happiness and good health.

We started the calendar year with the continuing saga at Red Hill. A special thank you to Ernest Lau of the Board of Water

supply and others who diligently kept the public informed about this issue, giving us all a better understanding of what was going on. I also hope you had a chance to listen to the Governor and, most recently, Lt. Governor candidate forums via Zoom to hear their ideas and concerns. These forums were recorded and are available on our website. In addition, the Political Action committees on each island and the State PAC introduced legislative proposals at the January 19 opening session and will continue onward into the 2022 elections.

Our commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrated not only his 93rd birthday but also put front and center the continuing issues of systemic racism, voter suppression, and rights given to all Americans by the Declaration of Independence. Decades after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, we are still fighting for equal access to the ballot box, which I believe is shameful and outrageous. Quoting Dr. King, "So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote, I do not possess myself." As the US Senate debates the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, we must encourage our local legislature and our Congressional delegation to support free and fair elections for all Americans. As Dr. King stated, "a right delayed is a right denied."

Nationally with your support of the PEOPLE campaign, AFSCME continues to push for the passage of these bills along with President Biden's Build Back Better bill. We encourage you to stay informed on both issues and follow the Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid legislation. Your Social Security checks saw an increase of 5.9% in 2022, the largest in history. Congressman Larson's Social Security Expansion bill (HR5723) increases, expands, and improves benefits.

(Continued on next page...)

Since the Capitol visits by retirees in June, the bill has seen more Congressmen sign on as supporters. The reconciliation package, which includes proposals to lower drug prices, and expand Medicare to cover dental benefits, is still being discussed. However, Medicare Part B will start covering hearing aids with specific qualifications and who can order the hearing aid beginning in January 2023.

On a discouraging note, we continue to see scams targeting retirees around the country and even here in our homes. The US Senate Aging Committee recently published a 2021 Fraud book available online, <https://www.aging.senate.gov/download/2021-fraud-book>. Many complaints are about COVID-19 issues, but the Hawaii Herald Tribune ran a story on the "license plate" scam more recently. The top five scams include government impersonation, sweepstakes; unsolicited phone calls; computers; and grandparent/person in need. There are many resources on avoiding these and other scams, including the 211-resource line locally.

As you may have seen in the news, changes could be on the way to who is considered "fully vaccinated" in the State of Hawaii. These changes could include requiring a COVID-19 booster shot. Please be sure to get your booster shot to update your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. We know many of you are ready to gather in person again, but HGEA will continue to follow the county's guidelines on each island. Each chapter is looking forward to hosting in-person activities and wants to safely. Please contact your chapter presidents or my office for the most up-to-date information.

The 2022 standard Medicare Part B premium is \$170.10. As a reminder, if you are paying higher than the standard premium, you must submit a copy of your letter from the Social Security Administration to the EUTF to be reimbursed the higher amount. Send your letter to EUTF, 201 Merchant Street, Suite 1700 Honolulu 96813.

Thank you for your continued support of the HGEA Retirees Unit.

In Solidarity,

Mahie

CHAPTER NEWS:

AS OF THIS WRITING, THE IN-PERSON GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS DATES ARE TENTATIVE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS. Please check with your chapter presidents before your meeting to see if restrictions have been lifted. You must wear a mask and present your COVID-19 card to attend all activities.

HAWAII ISLAND CHAPTER:

March 16, 2022 – General membership Meeting POSTPONED. Holiday luncheon scheduled for today has been rescheduled to June 15, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. if gathering mandates allow. More information will be provided in the next Ho'olaha. Please call Evelyn Togashi at 808-959-6727 for details and to RSVP.

KAUAI CHAPTER:

Kauai Chapter Board members are still planning on a March 14, 2022 General Membership Meeting/ New Year celebration. Please RSVP to Timmy or call Joni at the HGEA office at 808-245-6751. Members will be notified if meeting is cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

MAUI CHAPTER: EMAIL STEVE CRISS AT STPLSD69@YAHOO.COM

March 15, 2022 – General Membership Meeting Kepaniwai Heritage Gardens, Iao Needle, 9:00 a.m. Elaine Slavinsky will be the guest speaker. Lunch and door prizes provided. Please confirm with Steve Criss by February 28, to reserve your seat.

OAHU CHAPTER: EMAIL AVA KRIDLER AT VOLKSWAGONBUG102@CS.COM

All activities begin at 9:00 a.m.

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 2022 – Mahjong CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

February 2 & 16, 2022 - Ukulele
February 7, 2022 – Bingo
February 9, 2022 – Line Dancing
February 24, 2022 - Crafting

March 1 & 22 - Tai Chi
March 2 & 16, 2022 – Ukulele
March 3, 2022- State Board Meeting
March 7, 2022 – Bingo
March 9 & 23, 2022- Line Dancing
March 10, 2022 – Chapter Board Meeting (TBD)
March 17, 2022 – General Membership Meeting
March 31, 2022 – Craft



Oahu Chapter Officers and the Ukulele group wished members happy holidays on December 11, 2021, with ukulele music and Christmas carols. In addition, members picked up a handmade ornament and a bento