Managing Kauai County’s Information Highway

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Information Technology Specialist
Amanda Swanson
You may be sick of watching the ugly battles playing out in our nation’s capitol. I am too. But, we cannot afford to just turn it off, tune out and hope for the best. Too much is at stake. It is time for us, as union members and working people, to adapt to the current challenges, and to attack — in order to protect the values that Hawaii holds dear.

President Donald Trump ran on a false promise of helping working people. But he has surrounded himself with corporate billionaire friends and is aggressively pushing policies that hurt the very people he vowed to help. His “solution” called “The American Healthcare Act” to replace the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), would have seen 24 million people lose medical insurance. The policy was so bad his own party wouldn’t pass it. That bill is dead for now because so many people voiced their anger and concerns, but it’s not the end. Trump’s administration has already pledged to try again. They are taking a shotgun approach and attacking on all fronts: worker rights, environmental policies, LGBT rights, women’s rights, public education, funding to help the poor, Social Security and more.

Here at home, despite our occasional differences with the current state administration or the legislature, we must recognize that Hawaii is still a progressive, worker-friendly state, and we must fight to keep it that way. Our brothers and sisters in places like Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan are dealing with state government leaders who either have already stripped away worker protections or are brutally attempting to take them away.

There is much work that needs to be done. We need to be vigilant and start speaking up more loudly about the injustices we see. Those include the high and escalating cost of housing, the lack of affordable rentals, the homeless epidemic, traffic congestion and the state of our roads and highways. Those concerns also include the lack of will by the government employers to provide a decent salary for public workers, to increase efficiency and provide leadership in the workplace, and to upgrade ridiculously outdated computer and other systems that public workers have to use on a daily basis.

You may notice HGEA taking more public stances on issues of importance to our members and Hawaii, and we hope that you do the same.

In solidarity,

Randy Perreira
HGEA Executive Director
Contract Negotiations
Update: Arbitration
Decisions Expected Soon

Earlier this year, union agents began focusing ongoing Lunch + Learn sessions on contract negotiations with an emphasis on binding arbitration. Despite a strong economy and a reported surplus of funds, state and county employers offered no pay increases to HGEA members for the upcoming contract period. HGEA’s negotiating teams rejected this offer, and in February 2017, six of HGEA’s eight bargaining units entered into binding arbitration seeking fair and unbiased contracts.

During the hearings, HGEA witness Michael Messina (AFSCME Associate Director of Research), presented salary data comparing compensation in Hawaii with salaries in West Coast states for the same or similar jobs. In most cases, the salaries in Hawaii were substantially lower for the same work performed. Rather than acknowledging the commitment of government workers and the ability to fund raises, the employers attempted to correlate employee satisfaction with current low salaries by citing low employee turnover, longevity and high job application as justification for below-average wages.

All HGEA bargaining unit contracts will expire on June 30, 2017. Once a decision is rendered through arbitration, it is final and binding. As this issue of The Public Employee went to print, arbitration hearings for Units 6 and 14 had not yet been scheduled, and HGEA was awaiting decisions for Units 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 13.

HGEA STRATEGIC PLAN
Protecting You is What We Do

HGEA’s strategic vision is to build a stronger, more effective union to improve the quality of life for the members we represent. We will strive to ensure that members find value in the benefits of belonging to HGEA, as well as feel valued as a member. HGEA is pledging a renewed commitment and focus to greatly improve the service we provide to our members, and will work even harder to advocate to protect members’ rights and benefits during this volatile time in our country.

From fighting for a fair contract, protecting established worker rights and benefits, to making sure our members’ voices are heard by state and county legislators, HGEA is working for you.

“Our union members, along with middle-class workers across the nation, are facing unprecedented attacks that will continue to decimate the middle class and widen the wage gap,” said Jodi Endo Chai, Deputy Executive Director – Administration. “The initiatives of our strategic plan will prepare our union for the anticipated changes that will erode or even outright slash the rights and benefits of workers.”

In an effort to continuously improve our services to our members, we will increase opportunities for our members to provide feedback, including online and phone surveys. “We strongly encourage members to take a few moments to share their thoughts with us because in order to improve, we need to know what we are doing well and how we can be a better union for them,” said Chai.

“Through a solid, trusted relationship with our members, we will be in the best position to protect them and enhance their lives.”

The goals of HGEA’s strategic plan are:

**Exceptional Member Service** – We’ll handle inquiries quickly, foster open communication and welcome member feedback.

**Membership of Value** – We’ll protect worker rights, pursue better wages and benefits and deliver lasting membership value.

**Political Power** – We’ll educate you on your vote, act on critical legislation, and support candidates who support working people.
2017–2019
State Board Election
24 Members Run for Office

An election is now being held for the state board’s 2017-2019 term. The HGEA Board of Directors is responsible for policy decisions affecting the organization. The president and the board, who will serve from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019, are not paid for their services.

The 13 total director seats up for election this year are one for Oahu-at-Large, one for Kauai-at-Large, six for Unit 3, four for Unit 13 and one for Unit 14. Candidates who ran unopposed were automatically elected (see page 6 for the list of unopposed candidates).

Ballots were mailed to eligible members in early April.

- Active members who live on Oahu and Kauai will receive one ballot to elect their island’s At-Large Director.

- Active members in Unit 3, Unit 13 and Unit 14 will get an additional ballot to elect their Unit Directors.

The last day to vote is May 2, 2017. All ballots must be mailed to N&K CPAs, Inc., the third-party elections organization for the 2017-2019 state board election. Hand-delivered ballots will not be accepted.

For disability access information or other accommodations, please call N&K CPAs, Inc. at (808) 524-2255 by April 21, 2017.

Questions about your ballots? Call N&K CPAs, Inc. at (808) 524-2255.

For more information on the 2017-2019 HGEA state board election, including complete candidate profiles, visit www.hgea.org/boardelections2017 or scan this code with a mobile device.
When tourism and budget surpluses set records, Employer offers zero raise and higher health costs! It’s time political leaders recognize our worth. With my legislative, board and negotiations experience, I’ll continue advocating for the mutual benefit of all HGEA members. Together we can win fair wages, benefits, and working conditions.

I am committed to advocate for and represent the needs of HGEA members across all 8 bargaining units. I am looking for an opportunity to continue the service provided by those who have worked hard to advance union initiatives by way of this policy-making body.

I am running for office to offer fellow members a choice selection on the ballot.

In these changing times our union will be facing many challenges. I would like to have a say in the position that HGEA takes to ensure we remain strong.

I am running for the office of Unit 3 Director to serve HGEA, our union, to help guide us through the anticipated rough times ahead. We must prepare ourselves for the continued attacks on unions and be ready to work to preserve the benefits we enjoy from our union membership.

Having served on the State Board, I want to continue the work for the membership and HGEA. I am running for Unit 3 Director to continue to protect, preserve and advance the rights and benefits we earned and deserve.

I have become increasingly concerned that state and county employees and their unions have been unfairly and disproportionately targeted by budget cuts. I want to get involved in protecting the jobs and benefits of my fellow workers during this time of skyrocketing cost of living here in Hawaii.

Let’s “BUILD” Relationships MEMBERS Value!

*PASSION: “HGEA Strong Activities!”
*To advance educational, social and economic welfare for “ALL Members”!
*TRUST: Gaining support & cooperation amongst membership, units, and leadership
*UNITY: Together, let’s STRIVE towards building a STRONG, dedicated team of leaders working for our members!
*VALUES: “Members’ Lives Matter!”

I am running again to continue learning and sharing pertinent information. I am always willing to listen to concerns about the decisions we make for our future and want to represent our hard working members past and present. I have experienced a greater sense of responsibility and commitment. Mahalo.

Unit 3 candidates continued on page 6
**UNIT 3 DIRECTOR (6 seats)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALISON JULIANO</strong></td>
<td>Educational Assistant</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>State Department of Education</td>
<td>Kahuku (Oahu)</td>
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<td>Windward District</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>ADELE N. KOYAMA</strong></td>
<td>Secretary to the Dean</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>University of Hawaii at Hilo</td>
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<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KEHAULANI A. MAKAILA</strong></td>
<td>Educational Assistant</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>State Department of Education</td>
<td>Waimanalo (Oahu)</td>
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I believe that every government employee deserves and should be entitled to basic rights and benefits that continue to help the employee as well as their family. As a candidate for the HGEA Board of Directors it will allow me to unify individuals, co-workers making decisions that will benefit all.

I care about preserving the rights and benefits that we currently enjoy. Having served as a Unit 3 State Board Director for four previous terms, I have the experience to deal with various issues that challenge our members and I am prepared to deal with future ones.

I decided to run for office because I want...
- Change ... which starts from the top
- To be an active voice for our membership
- To preserve member rights and benefits
- To be a leader that has a positive impact on our union
- To “practice what I preach” – getting involved

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<tr>
<td><strong>SAM TI’ITI’I</strong></td>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>State Department of Transportation</td>
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I’d like to bring innovative perspectives to the board as well as dynamic leadership skills. I am also experienced with implementing and enforcing policies.

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<td><strong>VERNON L. VERZON</strong></td>
<td>Educational Assistant</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>State Department of Education</td>
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I am running for office to represent all of the talented people who make Unit 3 great. I am a team player who listens to members needs and wants to make sure their rights and benefits are always protected.

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<tr>
<td><strong>ELLSWORTH HULIHEE JR.</strong></td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>Unit 13</td>
<td>County of Hawaii</td>
<td>Kailua-Kona (Hawaii)</td>
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I am running for office because I am committed to being a voice for the membership to protect wages and benefits and to promote positive change that will make us a stronger member based union.

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<td><strong>BARRY JAY KWOCK</strong></td>
<td>Preschool Open Doors Specialist</td>
<td>Unit 13</td>
<td>State Department of Human Services</td>
<td>Honolulu (Oahu)</td>
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I’m running for director because I want to serve the people in my union, be a voice for their wishes/concerns, continue to promote family fun, and be an inspiration to others to be active in our union. “If I can do it, so can you.”

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<td><strong>JESSICA E. R. CARROLL</strong></td>
<td>Behavioral Health Specialist</td>
<td>Unit 13</td>
<td>State Department of Education</td>
<td>Mountain View (Hawaii)</td>
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<td><strong>ROBERTA CHUN</strong></td>
<td>GIS Analyst</td>
<td>City &amp; County of Honolulu</td>
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I’m running because I would like to see more opportunities for member involvement on Hawaii Island. I am passionate about protecting worker’s rights and in an age where these rights are under attack in many states, I feel it is important that members understand what their union does for them.

I am running for office to bring to the forefront the founding mission of this union, to guarantee government workers fair treatment. I am optimistic we can develop a training program to educate stewards and employees of their workplace rights. Together we can have a wholesome and productive workplace.

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**UNIT 13 DIRECTOR (4 seats)**

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The following eight candidates ran unopposed and are automatically elected. 

**MUHAMMAD ANWAR QUADRI**
Public Health Educator  
Unit 13  
State Department of Health  
Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion  
Honolulu (Oahu)

I am running for Unit 13 Board of Director during this difficult time when labor unions are under attack all over the country. I will increase union membership and encourage HGEA union members to get involved in the union activities, and serve as board and union spokesperson at unit meetings.

**ZACK STODDARD**
Planner  
Unit 13  
State Department of Health  
Office of Environmental Quality Control  
Honolulu (Oahu)

I grew up admiring my mom’s struggle for nurses’ rights and fair wages. After 35 years of fighting (including strikes), she now advocates on the board of directors for hundreds of thousands of American nurses. Witnessing this has given me a special appreciation for the power of an organized workforce.

**BENNETT T. YAP**
Information Technology Specialist  
Unit 13  
State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations  
Kaneohe (Oahu)

I would like the opportunity to serve my fellow peers as we face many challenges to our membership and to HGEA itself.

**EARL N. YOUNG**
Mental Health Supervisor  
Unit 13  
State Department of Health  
CAMHD  
Aiea (Oahu)

After being a steward for over 15 years, I feel that it is time to do more to contribute to union affairs. I would like the opportunity to serve on the Board to help steer our union toward greater things in the years to come.

**UNIT 14 DIRECTOR (1 seat)**

**MICHAEL S. OAKLAND**
Deputy Sheriff (Lieutenant)  
Unit 14  
State Department of Public Safety  
Sheriff Division  
Honolulu (Oahu)

Aloha, I am running for Unit 14 Director to use my experience as a steward and member of our negotiating team in order to fight for increased pay and fair treatment for all of our brothers and sisters in Ocean Safety and Law Enforcement, it’s time we fight for US!

**JOHN G. SILBERSTEIN**
Conservation & Resources Enforcement Officer  
Unit 14  
State Department of Land & Natural Resources  
DO CARE  
Waimanalo (Oahu)

I’m running to serve my fellow members in support of continuing the unprecedented strides achieved by the establishment of BUI4. The diversity of my work history in both the Lifeguard and LE arenas on dual islands provides me with a comprehensive understanding of the strengths, uniqueness and needs of the agencies represented.

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**UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES**

The following eight candidates ran unopposed and are automatically elected.

**President**  
JACKIE FERGUSON-MIYAMOTO

Office Assistant  
Unit 3  
State Department of Transportation  
Harbors Division  
Kailua (Oahu)

**Hawaii-At-Large Director**  
SANDRA MOSES

Clerk Typist  
Unit 3  
Hilo Medical Center  
Respiratory Division  
Hilo (Hawaii)

**Maui-At-Large Director**  
HOLLIE K. A. DALAPO

Secretary  
Unit 3  
The Judiciary  
ICRD/CJC  
Wailuku (Maui)

**Unit 2 Director**  
KEN K. MORIKAWA

District Road Overseer  
Unit 2  
County of Kauai  
Department of Public Works  
Highways Division  
Waikele (Kauai)

**Unit 4 Director**  
HAROLD K. NAONE

Supervising Police Radio Dispatcher  
Unit 4  
Honolulu Police Department  
Communications Division  
Mililani (Oahu)

**Unit 6 Director**  
FRANCINE W. HONDA

Principal  
Unit 6  
State Department of Education  
Kaneohe (Oahu)

**Unit 8 Director**  
ELWYN L. WATKINS

Building and Security Systems Engineer  
Unit 8  
University of Hawaii  
John A. Burns School of Medicine  
Mililani (Oahu)

**Unit 9 Director**  
JOSETTE “JOJO” KAWANA

Registered Nurse  
Unit 9  
State Department of Health  
Behavioral Health Division  
Honolulu (Oahu)
HGEA Members on Molokai: Small Community, Big Challenges

On Molokai, with a population of 7,345 residents, the community sometimes feels forgotten and misunderstood by policymakers on Oahu. While sometimes frustrating, that sense of being on their own inspires friends and neighbors to come together and help each other.

In one colorful example of that community spirit, registered nurse and Unit 9 member Louise “Lulu” Linker shows off the brightly painted immunization room at the State Department of Health, Maui District Health Office, at the Molokai Civic Center. Linker says one of their clients volunteered her time and talents to paint the room with cheery colors, letters of the alphabet, and fruit and animals.

Linker explains that pictures on the walls help children feel more at ease and can distract them while getting their vaccines. She says the nurses also use letters and pictures as an assessment tool while talking to young patients and their parents.

Linker and her staff’s community outreach have enabled them to help more people with medical needs, sometimes saving patients from financial ruin. By going into the community, they learn that some people suffering from devastating illness don’t know how to complete complex and confusing Medicare and Medicaid forms. “Some people don’t know they are eligible and the paperwork can be complicated – we’ve seen terminal cancer patients paying $1,000 a month out of pocket for their medicine,” says Linker. “By training more of our staff, getting out in the community and partnering with the hospital, we are making a difference in the quality of people’s lives.”

Although the staff’s efforts are making improvements, Linker and others in the community say decision-makers in Honolulu often forget about their unique situation and needs. Many are upset that the Molokai unemployment office is no longer staffed. Its sole employee retired in February. Since then the State decided not to fill the position and directed residents to use the internet to file claims. This is frustrating or close to impossible for those in this rural community who have limited and often spotty internet access.

Unit 3 member Arlene Keanini, a tax clerk, is the only employee in the island’s State Department of Taxation. She worries that when she retires, her position won’t be filled and the people...
Life-changing experience for school security attendant

If it wasn’t for a defibrillator on campus and the quick acting staff and faculty at Kaimuki High School, School Security Attendant and Unit 3 member Kawika Chung says he wouldn’t be here doing the job he loves – patrolling the campus and working with students.

Chung said his life-changing day began when he walked into Vice Principal and Unit 6 member Kevin Yuen’s office for a meeting one day and felt dizzy. “I tried to reach for a chair, but it was too late. I was down,” Chung recalls. “At first Mr. Yuen thought I was joking around.”

But it was no joke. CPR was started on Chung, but it wasn’t working and time was passing. “Good thing we had a defibrillator in the school office – the two guys, fellow School Security Attendants Solomon Soares and Edward Wells, saved my life.”

After he was revived and headed to the hospital, Chung learned that he had suffered a massive heart attack. Now, he has both a pacemaker and a defibrillator implanted in his chest – keeping him alive. “I was out eight to 10 minutes. The doctor said there was only a two percent chance that I would survive without any bad effects – but I did,” says Chung. He’s now grateful to be alive. “It changed my life,” explains Chung. “I used to get mad over simple stuff, not anymore.”

Being mindful that he must take care of his health, Chung tries to manage his stress and lifestyle. He said he enjoys his challenging job as a security attendant, but because the salary is too low, he works at private security jobs at night and on weekends to supplement his income.

Despite some misleading news reports by Grassroots Institute of Hawaii critics who claim government employees are overpaid, most of our state and county workers make very modest salaries while providing important and necessary work and services to residents and visitors.

With both union and non-union positions, Chung sees the difference in employment. He values having a contract and a union to represent him and negotiate on his behalf.

“I value our union,” he says. “I need to minimize my stress where I can, and belonging to HGEA gives me peace of mind. When I was having problems with payroll, I called my agent to get that problem addressed and she got it resolved. Without a union, it’s just you taking it up with your boss – and you can guess how that’s going to end up. My job is to help protect the students and my co-workers, and HGEA works to protect me.”

With his second chance at life, Chung looks forward to continue working at Kaimuki High School for many years to come.
HGEA members working for you

Every day, there is an HGEA member working to provide vital services to the public. These members help to keep our state and counties running smoothly and our communities safe.

From left to right: Ocean safety officers and Unit 14 members Alfred Vermey, Jeffry Lombardi and Hans Buetzer, all from Lahaina, keep watch and make sure beachgoers are safe at D.T. Fleming Beach Park on Maui. As part of the island-wide 9-1-1 Emergency System, all ocean safety officers are trained above and beyond United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) certification and all are certified in American Heart Association (AHA) CPR for Health Care Provider and Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) as well as skilled in rescue techniques using equipment such as rescue boards, tubes and fins, jet skis, four-wheel drive ATVs, and first aid supplies. Fun fact: Fleming Beach at Kapalua is a popular surfing and bodyboarding site and is frequently included on lists of the best beaches in the world.

The federally-funded Oahu WorkLinks One-Stop Career Centers or American Job Centers provide essential services to job seekers and employers alike. At the One-Stop Career Center in Waianae, Kalia McGee (Unit 13), job resource specialist, and Sherry Jelf (Unit 3), senior clerk typist, help with job search assistance, resume preparation, job matching and referrals and access to training opportunities, provide use of desktop computers, email, telephone, fax machines and copiers for job searching, and much, much more — all at no cost.
Iris Craig (Unit 3) is very appreciative of her job as an account clerk at the State Department of Transportation, Harbors Division on Kauai, where she processes fees for port of entry and dockage, wharfage, cruise ships and barges, as well as ground transportation applications and collection of monies for employee parking. An HGEA steward and a member of the State Committee on Political Action, she works hard at her job because she knows how it is not being in a union. “I’m so lucky I work here,” Craig says. “I have really good supervisors. And I’m so grateful for my union benefits like the vacation and sick leave that has allowed me to take time off to take care of my family.”

As network administrator at the University of Hawaii – West Oahu, Janna Yamashita (Unit 8) manages the network backbone at the UHWO campus in Kapolei, making sure the network is up-to-date and running smoothly. In addition, she manages the firewall (a security appliance designed to prevent unauthorized access to or from a private network), and the wireless and phone systems. Yamashita, an HGEA steward, has several certifications: CCNA (Cisco Certified Networking Associate), Security+, Network+ and A+.

James Maeda (Unit 3) is a clerk dispatcher with the Capitol Patrol Section/Dispatch Unit of the Sheriff Division working out of the Hawaii State Capitol. James’ primary duties include dispatching sheriffs to all emergency and non-emergency calls under their jurisdiction, doing person and vehicle database checks and issuing case report numbers. “It’s basically like a police radio dispatcher, but not as stressful,” he jokes. Maeda is a proud HGEA member and dedicated public worker — he has been working for the State Department of Public Safety for more than 30 years!
Following the retirement of the Wailuku Bookmobile after 21 years on the road, the brand new Holoholo Bookmobile has arrived to bring back library services to the Maui community. Maui’s only mobile library is more than functioning, it’s flourishing. And it’s staffed by one of the friendliest librarians you’ll ever meet.

“The Bookmobile is exactly what it sounds like,” says Bookmobile Librarian Jessica Gleason. She matter-of-factly calls it “a library on wheels,” noting “patrons have access to all the services of a brick and mortar library without having to go to an actual library.” And, yes. She means all the services. The Bookmobile is fully equipped to handle everything from issuing library cards to checking out books, and everything in between. Coupled with state-of-the art technology like solar panels, sky lights and Wi-Fi connectivity, it’s easy to see why Gleason enjoys her job. “I love the Bookmobile!” she gushes. “I’d see it as a kid and think, ‘wow, that’s cool,’ but I never thought this would actually happen to me.”

“I didn’t even know I wanted to be a librarian,” admits the Unit 13 member. But after a short stint as a library assistant in Makawao Public Library, she transferred to Wailuku Library and realized “this is it – this is what I want to do.” And with the support of Unit 13 librarians Susan Werner and Glenda Berry, Gleason pursued a degree in library information science. “They (Werner and Berry) were so encouraging, so I applied for school and basically earned my degree while still working at the library,” she says.

After receiving her master’s degree, Gleason filled in temporarily at Kihei Public Library as branch manager and was hired permanently in 2012. “Then the new Bookmobile librarian position opened up,” she says, smiling. “Although I miss Kihei staff and patrons very much, this is more my speed,” she adds. “When I first became a librarian, I thought the Bookmobile would be a dream job, but there hadn’t been a Bookmobile Librarian position for more than 20 years. Then this great opportunity came along and there was just no way I could pass it up.”

As a mother of twin toddlers, the timing couldn’t have been better for Gleason. The concept of the Bookmobile is simple – bring library resources to places without library access. Some regular stops include community centers, senior housing, nursing homes, the correctional facility, public and private schools, and several preschools, but the Bookmobile also participates in some community events like big truck shows and the occasional ho’olaulea. “If people aren’t able to come out and see us, we can bring books and materials to them,” Gleason says. “Our setup is very flexible, so we can move things around and make it easy for people to access items. We even have a really cool awning that can be pulled out for added shade or shelter so patrons don’t necessarily have to enter the vehicle.”

Whether it’s story time with toddlers or supplementing school curriculum, librarians do more than just check out books. They have a responsibility to protect access to information and provide as best they can for their community. “We’re not just the people who shush you in the aisles,” Gleason jokes. Librarians often spend hours building collections and coordinating programs designed to educate, support literacy, and nurture a lifelong love of reading in people of all ages and backgrounds. “People don’t think that’s part of our job, but we have strong beliefs in freedom of information, open access to information, and to make sure that we’re breaking down barriers that prevent people from getting information.” And the Bookmobile is just one vehicle that enables Gleason to do exactly that. “Most people are usually happy to see us and thankful for the services we provide. That makes my job so much more rewarding.”

For more information about the Bookmobile including schedule, services and locations, please visit www.librarieshawaii.org.
When Amanda “Mandi” Swanson was in the fifth grade, her teacher expressed concern to her parents. While the other kids were outside playing, she was spending recess time indoors playing with the teacher’s Apple computer. “I guess I’ve always been a geek,” Swanson admitted, laughing.

Impressively, this self-proclaimed computer geek from Washington, whose early interest in computers continued throughout high school and college, where she received her bachelor of arts in computer science at Seattle Pacific University, landed a job as a software design engineer in test for technology giant Microsoft Corporation.

“I appreciate how HGEA on Kauai is constantly trying to find ways to engage with members and keep them interested in our union.”

Considering how difficult it was just to get an interview with the tech company, it was an admirable feat to get hired among a highly competitive pool of applicants.

Fortunately for us, Swanson is now employed at the County of Kauai and is an active HGEA member.

Burned out from her high-stress job at Microsoft, she moved from Washington to the Garden Island in 2007 and put her high tech skills to work as an information technology specialist. “It was a bit of a bummer to leave a company like Microsoft. I loved it, but it was hard work, long hours and really stressful,” Swanson said. “After 10 years, it was time for a change.”

As an IT specialist for Kauai County, she manages the County’s official website, kauai.gov, and trains users in various departments and agencies of the County who are responsible for updating their portion of the website. Swanson’s broad technical experience and knowledge of Microsoft software...
and applications are valuable as she is the sole person in the county who manages their internal SharePoint system, which also makes it challenging. Additionally, she has created online applications, such as the eProcurement system for the County’s Purchasing Division and the DataBank for Life’s Choices Kauai (formerly the Anti-Drug Program), and manages the County’s Laserfiche document repository system as well as internal and public online forms.

Although Swanson mostly works independently, she acknowledges the importance of teamwork. “I value the knowledge of my co-workers,” she said. “It would be a lot harder to do my job if I didn’t have the support of my manager and the other people on the IT team.” She likes how her work, through the website and supporting systems within the county, has a direct effect on the public and ultimately benefits Hawaii residents, visitors and her community.

After coming from a place like Microsoft, working in government for Swanson may have seemed a bit archaic and filled with a myriad of policies and regulations. Nothing personified that so much as her most memorable venture about nine years ago — a more-than-half-a-million-dollar scanning project that involved several different County departments and agencies and “a lot of sweat and tears and stress.” From an invitation to bid to purchasing and implementation — along with countless meetings — the daunting task to scan the backlog of paper documents for electronic storage took about three-and-a-half years to complete and a total of 5.6 million pages scanned. “Anytime you deal with procurement it’s stressful,” Swanson explained. “A lot of people are involved, and there are so many hoops you need to jump through to make sure that it’s all fair and competitive. But while this project was long and time-consuming, I learned a lot from it.”

Much like how she approaches life with a can-do attitude, Swanson takes on the challenges and new experiences that come with her job all in stride. In addition to her work responsibilities, she serves as the Kauai designee on two state committees relating to technology needs for the state and counties and online services they provide the public — Access Hawaii Committee, which oversees the activities of the State of Hawaii’s official Internet Portal Manager, Hawaii Information Consortium, and the Information Privacy & Security Council, which develops guidelines for government agencies on the loss, disclosure, or security breach of personal information that can contribute to identify theft.

“I really like what I do,” Swanson said. “I think my favorite part of my job is when I get something out of the ordinary like a coding or online application project. It challenges me because I have to think about coming up with a solution to solve a problem.” It’s no wonder that one of her other favorite things to do is roller derby, where strategy is key. (See “A Roller Derby Life,” page 15)

Since she started working at Kauai County, Swanson has always been

“Especially now with lawsuits that threaten unions today, it’s important that people get involved … the more they get involved, the more secure they can feel in keeping their benefits they have today.”
involved with HGEA. She is a steward, Unit 13 Kauai Island Division secretary/treasurer and Kauai chair for the State Committee on Education and Training. “I had never been in a union,” she shared. “But my dad was in the boilermakers union, and his union was the reason he got work, period. Growing up I didn’t really know about the union fighting for workers’ benefits, but I knew it was better to be in one.”

Swanson certainly recognizes the value of being in a union. “It’s really important that workers know our union fights for their benefits every single time negotiations comes around. Their benefits are constantly being threatened, and if HGEA wasn’t around we definitely would not have the benefits we have today.”

For someone looking for an IT position in any company or organization, “I would just say do your best to keep up with the technology industry because it’s constantly evolving,” Swanson advised. “But I think it’s evolving for the better.”

For those starting any new job with the county or state, “I would say definitely get involved with the union.” Personally, Swanson encourages others to join and take part in HGEA activities and events. “Workers need to know that they have a say, that our union listens to them,” she added. “I appreciate how HGEA on Kauai is constantly trying to find ways to engage with members and keep them interested in our union.”

Her active union participation is definitely a no-brainer for Swanson. “Especially now with lawsuits that threaten unions today, it’s important that people get involved,” she said. “It’s hard, but I try to let others know that they should care because the more they get involved, the more secure they can feel in keeping their benefits they have today.”

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A Roller Derby Life

When she’s not at her IT job, paper crafting and designing her own greeting cards, or surfing and stand-up paddling when time allows for a beach day, Amanda Swanson plays roller derby.

Known by her teammates as “Chilly Pepper,” having come from Washington and having played ice hockey, skied and snowboarded, Unit 13 member Swanson is a blocker for Garden Island Renegade Rollers (GIRR), the only roller derby team on Kauai. “I love it. I love the people that I play with, and I really like skating,” she said. “We’re constantly thinking and learning about strategy.”

Contrary to what most people believe, roller derby is not a violent sport – though Swanson, who has been playing for more than five years, noted that in this contact sport “there are a lot of bruises that happen, but minimal injury.”

This year it’s the Garden Island Renegade Rollers’ turn to host the Battle of the Islands tournament scheduled for September. Volunteers are welcome and needed.

If you’re interested in being part of GIRR, visit www.girenegades.com for more information. “I love the camaraderie,” Swanson added. “It’s a really good workout, lots of cardio. It’s just a really fun thing to do.”
Union Member Wears Many Hats

What do a union member leader, a clown, a yoga teacher and an acupuncturist have in common? They’re one and the same person – Duke Nakamatsu, a very active Unit 3 member and a commission support clerk for the Department of Planning at the County of Kauai.

As someone who wears many hats – and occasionally different faces – Nakamatsu essentially has his days chock-full of numerous activities and events, all related to his various jobs and interests. He is passionate about everything he does and is always eager to learn something new.

Nakamatsu says he is fortunate to have his stable county job. “What I value most about my job are the 40-hour work weeks and weekends off that allow me to pursue my other endeavors such as treating patients, teaching yoga and the occasional clowning around,” he acknowledges. “I also value my medical benefits, sick leave, and especially my vacation leave that allows me to visit my favorite Disney places.”

Yet it is because of his full-time job that he works part-time “to supplement my government pay,” Nakamatsu adds, half-jokingly. A member of the Unit 3 negotiating team, as well as chair of Unit 3 Kauai Island Division and member of several different committees, the longtime steward understands the struggles of workers in Hawaii. Coming from a family where one parent was part of a union and the other worked for an anti-union employer, Nakamatsu saw the differences, heard the complaints about constant policy changes and cutting of hours, and recognized how beneficial a union was.

That’s what keeps him going and involved with HGEA. “If people want to see a change, if they’re not happy with certain things, then they need to step up and become involved,” he says. “There were a lot of questions I had, too, as far as why things are a certain way, and it wasn’t until I actually became involved that I learned the processes and the steps involved in grievances and negotiations, the whole overall operations of why things are the way they are and how we got to where we are today. It’s important to continue to fight for the things we have because they can go any time.”

Nakamatsu recommends more members, particularly Next Wavers (see page 17), get involved with HGEA. “We are only as strong as our members,” he asserts. “And now more than ever, with the attacks on unions at the Supreme Court level and throughout the nation, we need to stand strong and stay together to fight to protect and preserve the rights and benefits we enjoy now.”

On a less serious note, Nakamatsu thoroughly enjoys his job at the County – although he recognizes the challenges of increasing duties and skills as a result of positions not being filled or replaced – as well as his busy life outside of work, which helps him maintain his positive outlook.

A certified yoga instructor, Nakamatsu teaches beginner yoga twice a week at Ho’ola Lahui Hawaii, an organization that focuses on the health needs of Native Hawaiians. Since 2001, he has been a licensed acupuncturist and is owner of Kauai Acupuncture & Wellness. He just recently retired from 25 years of successful clowning, which helped put him through acupuncture school. Whether it was birthday parties or promotional events, he was the clown to entertain and make people laugh and smile. Adding to his long list of varied interests, he is also an avid foodie and Disney fanatic.

Nakamatsu reveals that he was in his first musical last year. No matter what new experience or skill he takes on, we can be sure that he will give it his all.
In March, Next Wavers on Oahu, Maui and the Big Island volunteered their time to help lead several bone marrow drives as part of the Kahie Project to support Luke Kaahaaina, an energetic 14-year-old freshman at Moanalua High School who was diagnosed with leukemia last year. It was heartwarming to see many people come out and register to become bone marrow donors. Doctors confirmed that 60 percent of Kaahaaina’s bone marrow had been infected, and that a bone marrow transplant will give him a 50 percent chance at survival. Mahalo to everyone for your support.

More than 40 members and their families and friends helped to clean up Waimanalo Beach Park on Oahu in March. Although it involved much work, all came away a bit weary but satisfied. The Next Wave event was in partnership with The Korner Room in Kaneohe, which provided lunch for all participants. Thank you to all who took the time out on a Sunday to lend a hand.

Many thanks to the efforts of Next Wave Committee Chair Kehau Makaila (Unit 3), Next Wavers on the Windward side of Oahu enjoyed a fun-filled evening getting to know each other and our union. The Next Wave informational meeting provided attendees with current union news and updates and engaged them in thinking about ways they could get fellow members to be more active.

Maui members got together for a Next Wave pau hana at Maui Brewing Company. They discussed union activities and future Next Wave events. Thanks to Kecia Sakugawa (Unit 13) and Jandee Ferguson (Unit 13) for organizing the event.

Stay tuned for Next Wave happenings, and join us for our next activity or event. Want more information about Next Wave? Email us at nextwave@hgea.org.
State Bowling Tournament

Thirteen teams (52 bowlers) from Oahu, Maui and the Big Island participated in this year’s statewide bowling tournament, held at Naval Station Bowling Center at Pearl Harbor on February 17–18, 2017.

Congratulations to the First Place winners from each event:

**Team Event:** The Incredibowls – Lawrence B. Caberto (Associate), Cheryl “Leihua” Lee (Unit 3), Stacey M. Calistro (Associate), Glen I. Teramoto (Unit 13)

**Men’s Doubles Event:** Cubby Kinjo (Unit 13), Robert Usagawa (Retiree)

**Women’s Doubles Event:** Arlene Spinola (Unit 3), Deelite Kanakaole-Murphy (Unit 3)

**Men’s Singles Event:** Ken Tatsuguchi (Excluded)

**Women’s Singles Event:** Audrey Miyasato (Unit 4)

**All Events – Men:** Curtiss Salcur (Retiree)

**All Events – Women:** Katherine Castle (Associate)

Yummy Cookies Raise $14,000 for Kendall Scholarship Fund

Members on the Big Island and Oahu held cookies bakes in February and March, respectively, raising approximately $14,000 and baking 34,000 cookies to benefit the Charles R. Kendall Scholarship and Education Fund, which provides educational benefits to members and their immediate families.

Thank you to all of our HGEA members, their families and staff who volunteered their time to help out a worthy cause.
Upcoming Events

Oahu
April 20: BINGO (5:30 p.m., HGEA Building, 1st Floor) Register online at www.hgea.org

May 7: Family Fun Day at the Ballpark – UH vs Cal State Fullerton (1:05 p.m., Les Murakami Stadium, UH Manoa)
Cost: $3 for HGEA members, $5 for guests (maximum of 4 guests)

August 25: Kendall Golf Tournament (Hawaii Prince Golf Course) Fundraiser to benefit Charles R. Kendall Scholarship and Education Fund

For questions regarding the above events, please contact the Oahu office at (808) 543-0000.

Hawaii
April 26: Lifecycle Financial Solutions (5:15–6:15 p.m., HGEA Hawaii Island Division Office) Register online at www.hgea.org/HiloFHBseminar17

For questions regarding the above events, please contact the Hawaii Division office at (808) 935-6841.

Maui
April 30: Golf (Waiehu Golf Course) Tee times start at 9:02 a.m.
May 9: Hanafuda (David Trask Building #207, 5:00–7:00 p.m.)

Kauai
April 21-23: 2017 Shoreline Fishing Tournament – Start time: 6:00 p.m. on April 21; End time: 12:00 p.m. on April 23 (Fee: $500/ticket)

April 29-30: Relay for Life (Hanaapepe Soccer Field, 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.)
If you are interested in participating in any of the above events, please contact the Kauai Division office at (808) 245-6751.

Lanai
April 25: Lifecycle Financial Solutions (Lanai Senior Center, 4:45–5:45 p.m.) Register online at www.hgea.org/LanaiFHBseminar17

If you are interested in participating in any of the above events, please contact the Maui Division office at (808) 244-5508.

Molokai
April 27: Lifecycle Financial Solutions (Mitchell Pauole Community Center, 4:45–5:45 p.m.) Register online at www.hgea.org/MolokaiFHBseminar17

If you are interested in participating in any of the above events, please contact the Maui Division office at (808) 244-5508.

Event dates, times or locations may be subject to change. For updated information on these and other events, visit the HGEA website at www.hgea.org, look for details in upcoming eBulletins or check with your island division office.
Workers and the middle class are under attack across the country. With right-to-work (for less) laws, anti-union groups are seeking to eliminate workers’ rights and kill union representation, weakening workplace protection and the unions’ ability to negotiate good wages and benefits.

We must stand together. Thank you for being an HGEA member.
We are HGEAStrong!