Aloha, HGEA Retiree Members

A long time 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?"

WORDFIND
Notable January & February Birthdays

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

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 over, 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. Hooy, 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. Usual club lines still continue 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 do 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.

HGEA Retirees helped collect over 100 canned goods and pantry items for the AFL-CIO Food Bank Drive. Mahalo to the Oahu Chapter for your support and to all who donated!
A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

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 Social Security Administration recorded 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.

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In Solidarity,
[Signature]