Keeping Hawaii Safe in War Against Invasive Species  PAGE 5

Bargaining for Fair and Decent Raises  PAGE 3
The only thing that is certain ... is uncertainty. That adage is being repeated by a number of people in the wake of Donald Trump’s election as the next president of the United States.

Mr. Trump’s election came as a surprise if not shock to most of us in Hawaii, and promises a tumultuous next four years for our country. In a state where the terms “liberal” and “progressive” apply to a clear majority of residents, it will be a challenging four years indeed. The uncertain but potential impact on health care, immigration, individual civil liberties, women’s rights, religious tolerance, and union rights (the list could go on) are weighing heavily on many of our minds. And because the Republicans are armed with a majority in both the U.S. Senate and House, unionized workers and many others are bracing for an attack from three fronts: the presidency, the Congress, and the Federal courts.

In the wake of the scare put upon unionized workers by the Friedrichs case, our organization is bracing for new attempts to roll back your job protections and right to bargain as the Trump regime takes office. Now more than ever we will have to band together to protect the values that we hold dear – and work to uphold all that our country’s proud history stands for.

As upset as I am by the presidential election, I for one will not sit idly in the event that Mr. Trump attempts to dismantle basic employee and human rights. We cannot be quiet if his administration and the conservative Congress starts to attack Medicare and Social Security, seeks to deport immigrants who have come to Hawaii to be reunited with family, and seeks to trample basic human rights. It is our responsibility to defend the hard-earned rights and benefits won for us by our predecessors. It’s time to fight back.

In solidarity,

Randy Perreira
HGEA Executive Director
Bargaining for Fair and Decent Raises

As of early November, all HGEA bargaining units except Unit 6 are at impasse with the employers as we try to move their offer of zero pay increases for two years. Here’s a look at some bargaining unit priorities (right).

Although the economic conditions are good, we anticipate tough negotiations with the state and counties. We believe that our members’ stories best illustrate why a fair contract and decent raises are needed and deserved during this round of negotiations. Read Maui member Tammie Plunkett’s story in her own words (page 4).

On the state side of negotiations, Gov. David Ige’s administration is pushing an aggressive plan that would divert revenue to more quickly pay down unfunded liabilities in the pension and health care funds. He also wants to increase the state’s rainy day fund to 10% of general fund revenue.

HGEA Executive Director Randy Perreira was quoted in an Oct. 9, 2016 Honolulu Star-Advertiser article about the increase to the rainy day fund:

“This governor’s administration so far has been very, very conservative, to the point where every cent, it seems, that is available is either going toward an unfunded liability, or now toward the reserves,” he said.

Bargaining Unit Priorities

Unit 2  Blue-collar supervisors
Continue to address pay inequity for supervisors.

Unit 3  White-collar non-supervisors
Address low wages and provide for fair pay increases. More than 2,000 Unit 3 members make less than $15 an hour.

Unit 4  White-collar supervisors
Address pay inequity for supervisors.

Unit 8  University administrative, technical and professional employees
Fair pay increases and a compensation plan that rewards longevity.

Unit 9  Registered professional nurses
Salary increases to keep up with private sector nurses and differentials to address unique working conditions.

Unit 13  Professional and scientific employees
Salary increases to keep up with cost of living and parity with the private sector.

Unit 14  State law enforcement, ocean and water safety officers
Salary increases and addressing articles that were not included in the unit’s first contract.

Continued on page 4
The growing concern that we have is that there are so many needs in the community that could be met when government has the resources as it does today, but they’re not being met.

“That’s where this administration has got to find a balance between trying to be what they view as fiscally responsible, versus prudent use of resources to help people today who are in need, and there are a lot of needs,” Perreira said.

HGEA is hopeful that agreements can be reached with the employers, however we are prepared to take our cases to arbitration if needed.

The arbitration process involves both sides presenting their case to a three-member arbitration panel, which considers all the information and makes a final and binding decision. The state legislature and county councils would still need to fund any arbitrated raises.

For more information on the negotiations process and timeline, visit the HGEA website at www.hgea.org/contracts.

“Official start to negotiations

“We are hard working employees that give over a 100% Monday through Friday, 8 hours a day!”

– Tammie Plunkett, Office Assistant III
Haiku Elementary School

Continued from page 3 –

“I am an office assistant III at Haiku Elementary School on Maui (Unit 3). Office assistants are the back bone support to over 26 teachers, about 500 students (times that by two) over about 1,000 parents, etc... The office staff takes care of everything (good & bad) from the moment we open till the time we close. We are the pleasant faces and voices parents and children see and talk to everyday. We are an aide to all, in all departments!

“At this time, I make $1,203.00 gross per paycheck, at a salary base of $13.88 per hour, bringing home a net of $886.00 and some odd cents. After paying the bills, I’m lucky or fortunate to have roughly $200.00 left for food and household needs. Not enough to even make it till the next pay check. I end up having to go one week with no cash on hand. It’s been hard to build a savings or even start one.

“To have a raise would be very important, it would help just a little more. To get to the point of $15.00 per hour would make living situations just a little more comfortable. We are hard working employees that give over a 100% Monday through Friday, 8 hours a day!”

Please go to the HGEA website at www.hgea.org to read more member stories.

In Her Own Words:
Tammie Plunkett Shares Her Story
Fascinated with the Polynesian culture after reading about the Hokule’a in the National Geographic Magazine, Catherine Davenport took a leap of faith, and a job as crew member with Pacific Whale Foundation, delivering a sailboat from California to Maui. She had only planned to be away for two years. But nearly 30 years later, the Connecticut native remains on Maui, still captivated by the people and lifestyle of her adopted island home and eagerly continuing to learn about the Hawaiian culture for which she has a deep respect and interest.

It’s no surprise then that Davenport’s job is to protect Hawaii’s people and the environment. As part of the Plant Quarantine Branch with the state Department of Agriculture — and the only female plant quarantine inspector on Maui — she is in the first line of defense to keep invasive pests out of our islands. From flowers, fruits and vegetables in the market to clams and oysters in the restaurant, she and nearly 60 plant quarantine inspectors statewide check tons of various items to make sure they’re safe for all of us.

“I value protecting the unique flora and fauna of Hawaii, keeping the forest and ocean free of invasive species and helping our neighborhoods be free of injurious pests,” Davenport said. “Supporting sustainability for the islands, be it agricultural, or a clean ocean to fish — those are the things I value.”

As plant quarantine inspectors, she added, “we do our very best to protect Hawaii.”

**A ROYAL HISTORY**
Images of beautiful tropical flowers and plants may come to mind when people think of Hawaii. The mission of the Plant Quarantine Branch is to prevent the introduction and establishment of plants, animals and diseases that are detrimental to the state’s agriculture industry and the environment; and to prevent the spread of destructive pests among the Hawaiian Islands.

Not widely known is that the state’s plant quarantine program began more than a hundred years ago when, in 1888, King David Kalakaua declared that in order to
Christmas Tree Inspection Program: 
**Farewell to Unwanted Pests**

As the nation’s leading producer of Christmas trees, Oregon ships approximately 250 containers, or 200,000 Christmas trees, to Hawaii each year. With a fairly new inspection program in place, trees from Oregon are inspected for unwanted pests such as slugs and yellow jacket wasps even before they reach our state.

Since 2012, Hawaii Department of Agriculture has worked with Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to inspect Christmas trees bound for the islands. Plant quarantine inspectors from Hawaii get a head start on the process by going to Oregon to look at the trees before they are shipped. ODA also works with growers on how to handle the trees and unwanted pests during the harvest process. Everyone involved works together to ensure the trees are sold pest-free.

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As the first line of defense in keeping invasive pests out of Hawaii, plant quarantine inspectors have a tough but rewarding job. The Plant Quarantine Branch adopted ‘Inspect to Protect’ as their motto after a child at a public outreach event fittingly summed up the work they do. Examples of the duties and responsibilities of plant quarantine inspectors:

**MARITIME**

- Handle commodities arriving through the harbors
- Handle nursery certification, checking each nursery twice a year to make sure they are in compliance
- Travel to vendors (e.g., Costco, Safeway) to check produce, cut flowers and foliage, plants, green coffee, and more
- Go to Matson to check vehicles arriving from the mainland and inspect the containers of agricultural commodities
- Check the interisland vehicles, plants and produce at Young Brothers
- Go out on pest calls, or sightings by the community (e.g., little fire ant, coqui frog, snake, lizard)

**AIRPORT**

- Meet flights from the mainland to check the Agricultural Declarations Forms and check suspect baggage for any prohibited items
- Inspect interisland passengers, baggage and cargo for destructive pests
- Inspect FedEx and UPS cargo
- Inspect air cargo agricultural commodities for pests (at the ASAP facility on Maui, they not only can inspect but are able to destroy commodities with pests, freeze items with insects, and autoclave, or steam heat, items with plant disease)
- Inspect private jets

**OUTREACH**

- Visit schools, fairs, events and hold open houses where the public can learn more about what plant quarantine does and how the community can help to protect the islands
- On Maui only: conduct tours of the ASAP facility near the Kahului Airport
- Alert key groups such as landscapers, to new threats like the coconut rhinoceros beetle, which is so far only on the island of Oahu

**SPECIALIZED TRAINING**

- Train to hunt snakes and kill them by hand
- Learn how to subdue a bat that may have rabies
- Train for emergency response by the Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS)
business as possible. It may seem silly, but that goodness and teamwork still brings tears to my eyes every time I tell the story.”

A plant quarantine inspector’s job goes beyond the Agricultural Declarations Forms that they collect from passengers coming off of a mainland flight. “It is rewarding to see how honest and caring most people are,” Davenport remarked about the forms. “They share with us their stories of invasive species and plant diseases in their home state or country. The Declaration Form serves as a good education tool for those who want to do the right thing.”

At maritime, the inspectors check commodities arriving through the harbors as well as at vendors such as grocery stores. With the addition of new employees, they are able to inspect the interisland vehicles and produce at Young Brothers. Davenport again marvels at how cooperative and accommodating the vendors and businesses are. “Young Brothers is not required to allow us to check these items, but they understand that we are all in this together to protect each island.”

It is also caring people in the community that Davenport gives credit for keeping Hawaii safe. They’re the ones who call them to report sightings of unwanted pests such as little fire ants. “The public is our most valuable resource for protecting these islands,” she said.

With their community outreach efforts, which Davenport especially enjoys and is heavily involved, they are giving the public the tools and knowledge to help protect the islands and stay vigilant. “The people we come in contact with are our allies,” she acknowledged. “We work with them, as team players, to protect Hawaii. It’s a collaborative effort.”

**Passion for the job**

Talking to Davenport, one can’t help but be impressed by her wealth of knowledge about Hawaiian culture. Her work experiences have been interesting and diverse, including stints as a graphic artist, field archaeologist, hiking guide and research technician. Growing up at the edge of a forest in Connecticut, she was always interested in plants and enjoyed the wonder of seeing them grow.

Davenport’s endless passion for learning and her positive outlook drive her to give her all to her job. In spite of their titles, plant quarantine inspectors are trained for specialized duties, including how to hunt, catch and kill snakes by hand. “There was such camaraderie during the snake training. And I came back from Guam (where training is done) surprisingly comfortable with that activity,” she said proudly. They can volunteer for other training, such as how to subdue a bat, which may have rabies.

Additionally, Davenport, who has a master’s degree in botany from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, teaches at University of Hawaii – Maui College. For 17 years, she has taught Hawaiian Field Biology and Hawaiian Ethnobotany classes. “My students are a precious part of my life,” she said.

**Vital public service**

Davenport believes her nine-year career in plant quarantine just keeps getting better. “Over the years we have gotten tighter as a team and as a community. We adjust, and learn where to strike to be more effective and when to streamline,” she affirmed. “We have such great workers. We just hired some terrific new inspectors, and it feels like we can soar. At the core, we have, in my opinion, the perfect supervisor. He’s calm, respectful to all, ever watchful, has our back, and knows how to position us.”

And they continue to work hard despite not being fully staffed since Gov. Linda

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Catherine Davenport, Matthew Olbert and Michael Simon are part of the team of 10 plant quarantine inspectors on Maui.
Membership ratifies 2016 HGEA General Assembly charter & bylaw amendments

HGEA members voted to ratify amendments to Article III-Objectives of the HGEA Charter of Incorporation and Article I-Membership of the HGEA Bylaws to clarify that private sector employees can be represented by HGEA and that the objectives of HGEA can be extended to private sector employees.

Voting took place at statewide ratification meetings from June 3 through July 8, 2016.

Hawaii Supreme Court rules public employee health benefits protected by Constitution

The Hawaii Supreme Court ruled late last month that the State Constitution protects public employees’ health benefits promised at the time of employment plus any promised during employment. By law, the state cannot diminish or impair benefits.

This ruling was the result of a class action lawsuit filed in 2006 on behalf of retirees who had benefits reduced.

Because of this Supreme Court decision, both sides will go back to court to determine how much retiree benefits declined each year. Eventually there is expected to be a payout for those affected, although currently the timeline is unknown.

We will continue to gather information on this important issue and keep you informed.

Ongoing battle

For Davenport and her fellow plant quarantine inspectors, they are never far from their jobs. As they encourage the public to do, they are constantly on the lookout for invasive pests outside of work. “We’re always in search mode,” she said. “It’s a war. The fear is that invasives will win.”

In addition to the outreach activities at work, Davenport continues to do her part in educating others about protecting Hawaii’s people and environment, whether it’s through teaching at Maui College or as a board member of Friends of Fleming Arboretum at Pu’u Māhōe.

“There is much work that needs to be done,” she said. “We are all in this together to take care of these islands. And to never give up.”

Lingle’s statewide layoffs several years ago.

As an HGEA member, Davenport trusts our union to protect the rights and benefits of state and county employees. “The employer functions best when its employees feel safe and secure enough to give their all to a job,” she said. “People spend most of their waking hours working hard at a job. When we give so much for most of our lives, it is peace of mind that in our older age, at retirement, there will be some financial means and health coverage. Our union, HGEA, does that for us. They are dedicated and brave members who step up and get involved.”

She is proud to be a public employee. “Think about the variety of jobs done by public workers, and you realize how vital they are to our quality of life.”

“Think about the variety of jobs done by public workers, and you realize how vital they are to our quality of life.”
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.

Patricia Gonsalves (Unit 3) is a community services program assistant with the County of Kauai, Agency on Elderly Affairs where she assists and supports various programs that promote the well-being of Kauai’s older adults and responds to the needs of all seniors. Gonsalves, along with her co-workers, also do much for the elderly community outside of work. They are very supportive HGEA members, generously donating items for fundraising events that benefit Relay For Life and the Kendall Scholarship and Education Fund.

An HGEA member for nearly 34 years, Walt Niemczura (Unit 8), who works in the chemistry department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, is the resident expert on a special instrument called the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectrometer. As the NMR and mass spectrometer facility manager, he uses the instrument to identify or characterize a wide range of molecules studied by scientists doing research in drug discovery, biochemistry and medicine and materials chemistry like hydrogen storage, batteries and catalysts.
Road labor supervisor **Doug Andrade** (Unit 2) with the City & County of Honolulu’s Department of Facility Maintenance – Division of Road Maintenance handles all things related to city roads. From sidewalks in need of repair and re-striping of pavement markings to replacement of damaged or faded street signs and clearing city roadways and drainage, Andrade, his crew and the rest of the Road Maintenance workers keep our roads safe and clear.

As a veterinary medical officer with the state Department of Agriculture’s Animal Disease Control Branch on Maui, **Richard Willer** (Unit 13) helps to protect Hawaii’s livestock and poultry industries through the control and prevention of pests and diseases. He’s pictured here, at the ASAP (Alien Species Action Plan) facility by Kahului Airport, inspecting a two-and-a-half-year old pregnant goat that just arrived from Oregon.

Unit 4 member **Ron Kapuniai** is a construction and maintenance support supervisor with the state Department of Transportation, Harbors Division. One of his many responsibilities is overseeing the maintenance of Aloha Tower, one of Hawaii’s most famous landmarks and a docking port of Oahu’s cruise ships. Fun fact: Aloha Tower was once the tallest building in Honolulu, with its lighthouse serving as Honolulu’s “Statue of Liberty,” welcoming thousands of immigrants to the island.
Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Maui Region Privatization Update

The privatization of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Maui Region is ongoing and now slated for transition to Kaiser Permanente after current contracts expire. We anticipate July 1, 2017 as the transition date.

HGEA continues to fight for the benefits provided in legislation known as Act 1 (Senate Bill 2077), which provides a severance or early retirement to many HHSC Maui Region employees. Currently full implementation of Act 1 is stalled, awaiting the outcome of litigation brought by the Employees’ Retirement System (ERS). The ERS seeks clarification on whether the law would negatively affect its tax exempt status.

It remains HGEA’s position that the severance portion of the law is valid and should be paid out upon separation with the state for qualifying employees. In addition, HGEA will be working with legislators to correct any potential legal issues with the law during the upcoming 2017 legislative session.

HGEA Executive Director Randy Perreira answers FAQs regarding Maui County hospitals privatization

Q. What’s going on with the privatization of the State’s Maui Region Hospital System?

RP: The privatization is moving forward, however more slowly than anticipated. Approximately 900 HGEA members will be terminated from government service, but will be offered positions with Kaiser Permanente. This will cut short their service time for state pensions and medical benefits. Because of that, HGEA supported legislation to try to help members reach retirement milestones by providing early retirement options for certain employees or a severance for other employees. HGEA did not file a lawsuit but instead believed that relief for the members could be attained through legislation.

Q: Why did HGEA push for passage of a law that the State claims could jeopardize our retirement system’s tax exempt status?

RP: The legislation that passed, Senate Bill 2077 which is now Act 1, was vetted by all parties during the legislative session including the governor’s team and the ERS team. During the session, the ERS failed to raise any issues about a potential effect to the ERS’ tax exempt status. It was only after the legislation passed that the ERS stated concerns. At this time, there is a lawsuit filed by the ERS that seeks guidance from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on whether in fact Act 1 violates any IRS rules. If the IRS has issues with Act 1 it can be amended legislatively if needed. AFSCME’s attorneys have advised us that the ERS’ claims are overblown and that they are overstating any potential risk to the retirement system. However, given the delay, we are looking to go back to the legislature in 2017 to address any concerns.
Congratulations to Mel Puu, who was honored with AFSCME’s first-ever Never Quit Innovation Award. Puu, along with three AFSCME members from other states, were recognized for having made a difference to their union, their community and their state — and beyond.

A water safety officer for the City & County of Honolulu’s Emergency Services Department, a Unit 14 director and a well-known surfer, Puu — along with a group of surfers and lifeguards — is credited with helping to pioneer the development and use of personal rescue watercraft. Their innovative and life-saving idea: attach a boogie board to a WaveRunner, produced by the Yamaha Motor Company.

They also developed a rescue program and advocated in court for permission to use jet skis in rescues conducted by public lifeguards. Their efforts have been successful as the City & County of Honolulu has made the use of rescue craft part of its daily operations since 1991.

In addition, Puu helps train lifeguards on the use of the watercraft in rescues here in Hawaii and around the world.

AFSCME Members: Earn a Free College Degree

AFSCME is now offering an exclusive new benefit that allows members, their families* and retirees to continue their education. It has partnered with Eastern Gateway Community College to provide the AFSCME Free College benefit — you and your family members can now earn an associate degree completely online for FREE.

Eastern Gateway is an accredited community college that is part of the University System of Ohio and one of the fastest growing public colleges in the country.

Learn how the AFSCME Free College benefit works. Visit freecollege.afscme.org for more information.

*Family of AFSCME members are defined as children (or stepchildren), grandchildren (or step grandchildren), spouses, domestic partners and financial dependents.
Joint Labor Management Seminar: *Adapting to Embrace Change*

At their annual Joint Labor Management training in September, stewards on Oahu examined the process of change and how HGEA and the employer can work together as partners to embrace change. Eran Ganot, head coach of the University of Hawaii Men’s Basketball and a Unit 8 member, was the keynote speaker, sharing his experiences as a young head coach who led the Rainbow Warriors to a historic 2015-2016 season and guided UH to its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2002. Stewards also heard from Keith Kashiwada, professor of speech and communication at Kapiolani Community College, and Brandon Suyeoka of SoComm Marketing, who discussed how social media can be an effective communications tool for members and the employer.

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**In Memoriam**

**K. Mark Takai**

1967-2016

With heavy hearts, HGEA mourned the untimely passing in July of U.S. Congressman K. Mark Takai, a proud member and strong advocate for working families.

“Mark was a champion of the middle class starting with his days in the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii, throughout his days in our state legislature and in the United States Congress. HGEA has lost a dedicated member,” said HGEA Executive Director Randy Perreira.

Representing Aiea and Pearl City, Takai served in the Hawaii Legislature for 20 years before winning election in 2014 to the U.S. House seat. As state representative, he had a solid record of consistently supporting public employees and working families, and had served as chair of the House Committee on Veterans, Military and International Affairs, as chair and vice-chair of the Committee on Higher Education, and briefly as vice speaker.

Additionally, Takai was an Iraq War veteran who deployed to the Middle East in 2009, and was a lieutenant colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard.

Takai was a part of our HGEA family, having voluntarily joined HGEA as an associate member. He understood the value and importance of public service, valiantly fought for workers’ rights and proudly served our country. He will truly be missed.
Our union was victorious in electing HGEA-endorsed candidates in key races, such as Harry Kim for Hawaii mayor, Kirk Caldwell for Honolulu mayor, Colleen Hanabusa for U.S Congress, Karl Rhoads and Stanley Chang for state Senate, Nadine Nakamura and Cedric Gates for state House of Representatives, and Justin Kollar for Kauai prosecuting attorney. Hawaii is now the only state in the country with an all-Democrat state Senate. Mahalo to the numerous HGEA members who volunteered their time to support HGEA and our endorsed candidates, from signwaving to phone banking and canvassing.
2017 Legislative Priorities

Legislative action remains an important part of HGEA’s mission to advance employee rights and benefits. Public worker unions and our members continue to fight against attacks on collective bargaining rights and benefits, and our voices need to be heard. We appreciate the many HGEA members and staff who fight hard against take-away bills, submit testimony on numerous measures, testify at hearings and lobby legislators. HGEA again anticipates continued revenue challenges and potential adverse changes to employee benefits in the 2017 legislative session.

As The Public Employee went to print, the Board of Directors was scheduled to meet to discuss and approve the State Political Action Committee’s proposed legislative priorities. Some of the issues expected to arise are:

- Privatization
  HGEA will continue to fight for the benefits provided in legislation known as Act I (Senate Bill 2077) to provide a severance or early retirement to many Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Maui Region employees. (See HHSC Maui Region Privatization Update, page 12)

- Funding for all bargaining unit contracts
  Legislation will be submitted for funding of HGEA’s contract agreements. All of HGEA’s bargaining unit contracts expire on June 30, 2017.

If you have any questions, please contact Michele Kurihara-Klein at mkurihara@hgea.org.

Kendall golf tournament raises more than $17,000 for scholarships

The 2016 Charles R. Kendall Scholarship Golf Tournament raised more than $17,000 to benefit the Kendall Scholarship and Education Fund, which provides educational benefits to HGEA members and their immediate families. Thank you to all of our sponsors and supporters who generously provided monetary donations and prizes for this year’s tourney.

Save the date for next year’s tournament! It will be held on Friday, August 25, 2017, at the Hawaii Prince Golf Club.

Waterpark Fun!

In August, more than 800 HGEA members and their families enjoyed the waterpark at the annual Family Fun Day at Wet ‘n’ Wild Hawaii. In addition to the water rides, everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch and keiki-friendly activities such as face painting, balloon making and glitter tattoos. If you missed this year’s event, join us on Admission Day in 2017!
Annually, on November 11, Hawaii island members honor and remember our many veterans. Starting a few weeks before Veterans Day, members get together to make ti-leaf lei to be placed on graves at West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery. On Veterans Day, Boy Scouts join the members and put flags on each of the graves. Mahalo to our members and their families who donated ti-leaves, made all the lei and came out for lei placement.
New HGEA website launched

On November 28, 2016, HGEA launched a new website, jam-packed with enhanced features to give members easier access to information and a user-friendly site navigation.

With the help of local award-winning agency Anthology Marketing Group, HGEA focused on increasing functionality, accessibility and aesthetics while keeping the members’ needs in mind.

**New additions include:**

- Vibrant design, member-focused images
- Easy access to contracts and bargaining unit documents
- Member status check (state/county employees can verify their HGEA membership online)
- Improved member login (members can create their own user ID and password)
- A personalized dashboard where members can update their member information, request a new membership card, view archived eBulletins, confirm PEOPLE MVP status and more
- Better organized content and intuitive navigation, making it easier for visitors to find the information they need
- Updated member discounts
- Quick links to social media

We will continue to make improvements and enhancements – so visit often! Check us out at [www.hgea.org](http://www.hgea.org).

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Important Announcement About Royal State Insurance

HGEA was recently informed by Royal State Insurance (RSI) that at some point within the next year and a half, RSI is looking to close their business. RSI has not yet provided HGEA with a timetable.

Our HGEA members, and their security and well-being, are of the utmost importance to us. Upon learning about RSI’s decision, HGEA has been in discussions with them to determine ways to mitigate any issues that may arise for policyholders. We assure you that this matter is a priority for us, and we are striving to ensure there is little to no inconvenience and negative impact to policyholders.

We will continue to keep you updated as more information becomes available. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our HGEA office at (808) 543-0000 or memberbenefits@hgea.org.

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Three Generations of HGEA

Proudly representing HGEA on Maui: Retiree **Lori Fong** worked for the state Department of Education for more than 20 years and is currently treasurer of the Retirees Unit’s Maui chapter. Her daughter, **Lisa Garcia**, is a Unit 3 member and tax maps and records technician with the Maui County Department of Finance, and co-secretary of the Unit 3 Maui Island Division stewards. Lisa’s daughter, **Alia Garcia**, is a Charles R. Kendall Scholarship recipient.
Upcoming Events

**Oahu**

**December 25:** Meals on Wheels – Volunteers needed to deliver meals on Christmas Day

**January 16:** Martin Luther King, Jr Parade (begins at Ala Moana Park’s Magic Island, ends at Kapiolani Park, 9:00 a.m. to noon)

**January 28:** Family Fun Day – UH Men’s & Women’s Basketball (UH Wahine vs Cal Poly at 5:00 p.m., UH Men vs UCSB at 7:30 p.m., Stan Sheriff Center) Cost: $7 HGEA members, $12 guests

**February 27:** Whale Watch

**March 2017:** Basketball League starts

**March 2017:** Volleyball League starts

**March 11:** Kendall Cookie Bake (Mililani High School)

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

**Hawaii**

**February 4:** Kendall Cookie Bake (Puna Hongwanji)

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

**March:** Kendall Scholarship Fundraiser – Assembly of kadomatsu bamboo arrangement (HGEA Meeting Hall, 8:00 a.m.) Cost: $30 per kadomatsu

**May 2017:** Joint Labor Management Seminar (for stewards)

**June 2017:** Kendall Cookie Bake (location to be determined)

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

**Kauai**

**December 17:** Kendall Scholarship Fundraiser – Assembly of kadomatsu bamboo arrangement (HGEA Meeting Hall, 8:00 a.m.) Cost: $30 per kadomatsu

**January 16:** Martin Luther King, Jr. March (HGEA Meeting Hall – 10:15 a.m. gathering; 10:30 a.m. march from HGEA Hall to Kukui Grove Shopping Center; 11:00 a.m. to noon sign holding; 12:00 p.m. march back to HGEA Hall)

If you are interested in participating in any of the above events, please contact the Kauai Division office at (808) 245-6751.

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.
2017 HGEA State Board Elections

Elections for the 2017–2019 term of office for the president and board of directors will be held next year. Active members interested in running will be able to pick up a candidate packet from the HGEA offices starting **Tuesday, January 31, 2017.**

In addition to electing the president, active members will elect directors for Units 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, Hawaii-at-large, Kauai-at-large, Maui-at-large and Oahu-at-large.

**Key dates in the election schedule are:**

- **Thursday, March 2**  
  Deadline to submit nomination petitions
- **Saturday, March 18–Sunday, April 16**  
  Period for mailing ballots
- **Tuesday, May 2**  
  Last day to vote (Election Date)  
  *Ballots must be hand-delivered before 4:30 p.m.*  
  *or postmarked before midnight.*
- **Friday, May 12, 4:30 p.m.**  
  Deadline to receive mailed ballots postmarked by midnight, May 2.
- **Saturday, May 13, 8:00 a.m.**  
  Ballots counted and results certified.

The president and directors will serve from **July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019.** Positions are volunteer and unpaid.