

The REACTOR

*Retired Employees Association
California Teachers Association*

January 2023

HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Robin Rose, President



My journey began in 1976 as a teacher with the Montebello Unified School District. Rather quickly I became involved in the Montebello Teachers Association and was fortunate to work with great leaders and now retired Executive Director, Kenny Kim, who mentored me along the way. My CTA field work included Option 1 and 2 UniServ Units and department staff. I then ventured into CTA management and retired in 2011. Whenever I am asked what my former profession was, I am always proud to say that I worked for the California Teachers Association. We all did great work because we loved what we did. And, like many CTA retirees, REACTA was a soft place to land where I could maintain friendships with colleagues and stay informed of critical issues facing CTA and public education. So, it seems natural to continue my journey in REACTA leadership.

I want to thank **Dom Summa** and his officer team (**Felice Strauss, Pam Bowen, Marilyn Bittle and Marla Reyes**) for their hard work over the past several years. They truly have been instrumental in creating a more relevant organization for retirees, taking REACTA in new directions and seeing us through the Covid pandemic.

In addition to myself, our new officer team includes **Merri Furler** as Vice President, **Felice Strauss** as Treasurer, **Shirley Horn** as Secretary, and **Joe Colton** as Director at Large. I want to thank these members for stepping up to volunteer when their lives are understandably busy, being...well...retirees. Together, our New Year's Resolution is to continue in the direction that has proved to be successful in the past. This will include the continued expansion of our membership under the leadership of our new Membership Committee Chair, **Ann Adler**; maintaining open communication with CTA, CSO and CAS; and most importantly continuing to communicate with REACTA members. A shout out to **Margaret Wallace** for her continuing work as the REACTOR Editor and **Kathie Casas** for maintaining our Facebook/Website/Directory as Social Media Specialist. New on the scene are **Alice Clement** and **Ros Wolf** who have agreed to Co-Chair the REACTA Scholarship Committee. It takes a village...

At our Annual Reunion Meeting in October, we learned that there were currently about 780 former staff or surviving spouses/domestic partners receiving retirement benefits. The average age of CTA retirees is 73.9 and the average age of the approximately 443 active employees is 50. Think about that for a minute....and you can understand the challenges that retirees may face now and in the future. We truly do need each other as we continue to engage in the issues that might have an impact on our members such as protecting our retirement and health benefits. We do this through, among other vehicles, our REACTOR Newsletter, Hot Topics, Website, Facebook, Email Committees, Zoom Sessions, and our Annual Reunion Meeting.

Your new leadership team will be meeting to discuss new and continuing goals and programs for the upcoming year. We want to thank you in advance for your continued support for REACTA.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." Steve Jobs



Joe Colton, John Stevens, and Alan Frey join retirees at the Region 2 holiday party following staff meeting.



Region 4 retirees attend holiday party at Ponte Winery in Temecula.



Robin Rose donates her annual masterpiece quilt to the Region 3 Holiday fundraiser.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January- REACTA Scholarship Applications available online

February 9 – REACTA zoom gathering. Meet your REACTA Board Members



Robin Rose, President; **Margaret Wallace**, Editor; **Joe Colton**, Director at Large; **Mary Furler**, Vice-President; **Felice Strauss**, Treasurer; **Shirley Horn**, Secretary; **Kathie Casas**, Social Media Specialist

March 8, May 23, July 11, September 5, October 3, November 14 – REACTA Board Meetings

April 1– Scholarship applications are due

May 10 – Scholarship results are announced

April and May 2023 – TBD Regional Lunches

October 3,4,5 – REACTA annual meeting, Paso Robles, Oxford Suites

IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE

Meet your new REACTA Board Members, hear updates and connect with CTA friends on the upcoming REACTA zoom gathering.

WHEN: Thursday, February 9, 2023

TIME: 4:00 pm (Pacific Standard Time)

HOW: Zoom link will be provided prior to February 9

NEITHER RAIN NOR SNOW NOR MUDSLIDES

...can keep our members down. Do you have a major unexpected financial issue arise that you are unable to pay for? Did you know that you can reach out to REACTA for help? Our Member Assistance Fund form is available to members on our Facebook page or contact Felice Strauss, CSO Treasurer, at 949-742-0377, if you need confidential help.

MEMBERS ONLY

Non REACTA members can no longer access the REACTA Facebook page. Once they become members, CTA retirees will then be able to get the information provided by REACTA.

IT'S IMPORTANT

Please submit any changes to your address, phone number or email address to **Kathie Casas** kcasas@aol.com. If we don't have your correct information, we cannot notify you with important information such as Pension Trust and Medical Benefits alerts.



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

By: Ann Adler and Robin Rose

The Membership Committee did great work in 2022 and into the new year. Our 2022 final membership count was 397 and we will begin 2023 with a record 408 members!

Our most recent members, since our REACTA Annual Meeting in October, are **Frances Feldon, Jackie and Carlos Hidalgo, Jim Scholtz, David Aponik, Sophia Georgiadis, Eileen Andolina, Dina Ramon, Ingrid and Durrell Williams, Chris Gale, Jim and Mary Clark, Halle Ohlson, Nancy Ciarrocchi, Barbara Swentowski, Karen Boll, Diana Hayes, Rita and Michael Chijimatsu, and Diane and David Hinkle**. Welcome to everyone who joined, and we hope you find a little time in your busy lives to get involved in REACTA.

An ongoing goal has been to convert as many members as possible from paying by check to paying through pension deduction. A record 21 members did just that. It is an easy and effortless way to remain a member, and you are never behind in your dues. Currently, automatic pension deduction is the only option for new member enrollments. Congratulations to everyone who made the switch.

If you know any of the following 2022 retirees who have not yet joined REACTA, please reach out and encourage them to join.

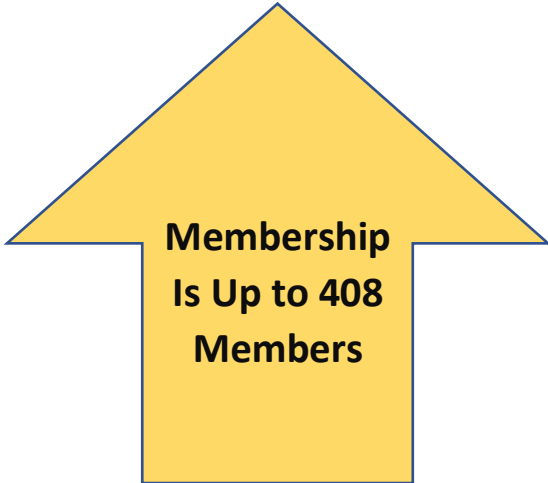
Region 1: Sandra Jones, Carole Anne Luckenbach

Region 2: Tammy Brooks, Jackie Hanna, Bea Montoya

Region 3: Dawn Murray, Kim Mina

Sadly, since our last REACTOR Newsletter we have lost more of our colleagues: **George Cassell, Patricia McCallum** (who recently attended our Annual Meeting in Paso Robles), **Jim Deaton, and Lisa Longabaugh**. May these CTA Warriors Rest in Peace.

Please consider joining our Membership Committee or being a Buddy to new members. Everyone is welcome. Your help is needed and greatly appreciated. Meetings are conducted via Zoom, so there is no need to drive anywhere. You may contact **Ann Adler**, Membership Chair, at 951/990-4110 or adlermvea@aol.com.



**Membership
Is Up to 408
Members**

UPDATE REGARDING SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BENEFITS LETTER

By Merri Furler, Health Trust Liaison and Vice President

At our annual meeting in Paso Robles there was a lengthy discussion about the letter sent by Earhart to retirees requesting a copy of their Social Security Administration 2023 Benefits letter. For many reasons, REACTA believes this is not necessary and creates difficulties for our retirees to respond. REACTA sent a formal detailed letter to the Health Trust chairperson requesting that this issue be discussed at their January 11, 2023, meeting. The following statement below was posted on the REACTA Facebook page and email blasted to our members in December.

"REACTA members should have received a letter from Earhart requesting a copy of your Social Security Administration letter in order to be reimbursed the "increased" standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B. This letter is incorrect. The actual standard monthly Medicare Part B premium has DECREASED for 2023. REACTA believes it should not be necessary to send a copy each year to Earhart since the standard monthly Medicare Part B premium is the same amount for each of us. We raised this issue at our Annual Meeting with our Health Trust Trustees and are working to resolve this issue without having to send the letter. The REACTA officers met today, and we are asking retirees NOT to send the Social Security Administration letter at this time. We will again be communicating with the Trust asking to have this letter from Earhart rescinded. The Health Trust meets on January 11, 2023, and we will update you on any progress made. Since the deadline for responding to the Earhart letter is March 31, you don't need to take any action at this point. Thanks for your cooperation."

We learned on January 11, 2023, that REACTA's concern has been forwarded to the Health Trust Benefits Subcommittee to review the verification process for Medicare B reimbursement at their next meeting on April 4th. The Trust is reviewing our request with their legal counsel and other plan professionals with the intent to make the process easier. REACTA is actively monitoring this situation and although the deadline to respond to the Earhart letter is technically April 1, 2023, REACTA continues to believe that, if you have not already responded to Earhart's letter, you do not need to take any action at this time. We will keep you updated as we continue to work with the Trustees.

REACTA communicates regularly to its members through our Facebook Page and in emails such as Hot Topics. The REACTOR is published quarterly. In order to get "real time" information from REACTA, it is important that we have your current email address on file. You may contact Kathie Casas (kcasas@aol.com) to make sure that she has your updated contact information.



UNITY IS EVERYTHING

By: Margaret Wallace

DeDe Deatrick started her CTA career at the Escondido Teachers' Association. She volunteered in an elementary classroom and worked afternoons at the Association office.

Eventually she was drawn to the San Diego Coastal United Teachers office, which offered better opportunities. Then, after a serious health issue for her husband, she needed to look for a better situation and applied for the position in the Regional CTA office in Rancho Mirage, soon to become Palm Desert. "I needed to become self-sufficient immediately," she said.

The weather adjustment was easy for DeDe, she loved and still loves the desert. She quickly discovered a variety of desert charities to become involved in and continues to volunteer for them today.

Currently DeDe is volunteering with the Joselyn Center in Palm Desert, specifically, Meals On Wheels and Bingo calling every Tuesday night.

Her volunteer work started at an early age. Her father was actively involved in the Carlsbad Special Olympics, and she tagged along. "I caught the volunteer bug early."

She really enjoyed it when her locals got her involved in the annual Christmas Parade. "It felt good, and I felt significant," said DeDe.



Now she volunteers for the Food Bank and 5K walks. She was recognized as Volunteer of the year by Riverside County and received an accommodation from Assemblyman Raul Ruiz for her work.

DeDe was active in CAS and was on their bargaining team. She joined REACTA immediately after retiring because she believes in REACTA and unity is everything.



JUST COULDN'T PUT IT DOWN

Here are a few book recommendations from our members.

Margaret Wallace recommends: Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver and Guncle, by Steven Rowley

Joanne Summa recommends: Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Tracy Jenkins Reid and Counterfeit by Kristin Chen

Darrell Gifford recommends: Our Only World by Wendell Berry

Ruth Mary Cradler recommends: Oh, William by Elizabeth Strout and Rise of the Rocket Girls by Natalie Holt

(Two colleagues recommend books that others have recommended in the past.)

Priscilla Winslow "re" recommends: Horses by Geraldine Brooks

Alva Rivera "re" recommends: Lessons In Chemistry by Ronnie Gamus

Your reading contributions are always welcome. Simply contact Margaret Wallace at marwall@aol.com

Scholarships



SCHOLARSHIP – TIME TO APPLY

By: Co-Chairs Alice Clement and Ros Wolf

For 2023, REACTA is awarding one or two scholarships, up to the amount of \$2000 each, to students currently attending or registered to attend an accredited, degree granting institution or college.

Applicant must be a child, grandchild, great-grandchild, niece, or nephew of an active REACTA member.

Copies of the application may be obtained by email, on request, from **Alice Clement** or on the REACTA website, www.reacta.org.

DEADLINE for the scholarship application is **April 1, 2023**. Applications postmarked after this date will not be considered.

You will be notified by mail, email and/or phone on **May 10, 2023**, regarding the status of your application. If you have any questions about the application, you may contact Alice Clement aliceclement@me.com or call 818/516-1785.

NOTE: Scholarship funds will be awarded to students upon evidence of registration in an accredited college or institution for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Mail completed application to **Alice Clement**, 604 Swarthmore Ave., Pacific Palisades, CA. 90272.

Please consider joining our Scholarship Committee. It's an easy way to become involved in REACTA and your efforts would be greatly appreciated. Meetings are by Zoom. You may contact **Alice Clement** for more information.

WHEN FIREFIGHTERS ARE MORE THAN FIREFIGHTERS –

--If you fall, you call

By: Kerry Moriarty

Many months ago, my former teaching partner shared her experience with her local fire department. Her husband is 6'5" and very large. She's petite. He has dementia and would find himself in situations where his wife could not assist (getting him up from the floor comes to mind). She called on her local fire department for assistance. They helped by:

- Help getting up from the floor
- Help getting into/out of bed
- Help getting in and out of the house and into the car

When my knee turned to mush and I could not navigate 3 stairs out of my house and my neighbors were all on vacation, I called my local fire department. Minutes later firefighters were on the scene, helping me up and down 3 stairs. It's an amazing service!!

From one of our members who lives in a gated community: *"Residents may elect to have the fire department install a lockbox next to the front door with keys to the house and emergency information. No need to break your door to get in."* My local fire department provides the same service. They told me that this is often a big part of their day and is a common practice among fire departments. You may want to confirm what services your local fire department provides. I live in Contra Costa County and know that San Mateo County offers the same service.

Mind you, this does not replace at home care, but is available on an as-needed basis.

While I hope you never need it, help is close by. "When you fall, you call." Don't hesitate.

| | 2022 Actuals as of 11/30/22 | 2023 Adopted Budget 10/4/2022 |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| INCOME | | |
| Members | 14,050 | 15,000 |
| Annual Meeting | 2,280 | 2,500 |
| Addl Scholarship Donations | 1520 | 500 |
| Other | 875 | 50 |
| Total Income | 19,025 | 18,050 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Executive Board | 3,200.86 | 3,000 |
| Committees | 4,877.51 | 9,600 |
| Elections | 942.51 | 200 |
| Membership | 390.00 | 3,000 |
| Nominations | | 100 |
| Political Education | | 200 |
| Scholarship | 2,131.70 | 2,000 |
| Trusts | 1,400.80 | 4,000 |
| Other | | 100 |
| Communications | 1,453.63 | 2,950 |
| Directory | | 50 |
| Facebook | | 200 |
| Hot Topics | | 50 |
| Newsletter (REACTOR) | | 100 |
| Website | 219.86 | 300 |
| CAS/CSO/CTA | 570.20 | 1,500 |
| Printing Mailing/Supplies | 663.57 | 750 |
| Membership & Advocacy | 8,978.31 | 22,000 |
| Annual Meeting | 6,891.01 | 9,000 |
| Member Assistance | | 4,000 |
| Legal Expenses | | 5,500 |
| Regional Activities | 87.30 | 1,500 |
| Scholarships | 2,000.00 | 2,000 |
| Other | 1,020.00 | 100 |
| Total Expenses | 4,940.35 | 37,650 |
| | | |
| Total Income | 11,518.81 | 18,050 |
| FFCU | 12/31/2022 | |
| Convenience Checking | 55,941.42 | |
| Prime Checking | 11,381.54 | Scholarship 2000 |
| Association Savings | 28.07 | |
| Total Assets | 67,351.03 | 60,000 |



TREASURER'S REPORT

By: Felice Strauss

Only 56 people remain on cash payment. This is down significantly over the last four years.

"Thank you to all of you that converted to Pension Deduct," said Felice Strauss. "You have made our volunteer work SO MUCH EASIER."

Pension Deduct forms are available on the REACTA website and Facebook.

REACTA Officers

Robin Rose

President

rrmcrose@gmail.com

818-433-2778

Merri Furler

Vice President

merriboston@gmail.com

619-708-8598

Felice Strauss

Treasurer

felicecso@gmail.com

949-642-1413

Shirley Horn

Secretary

shorngiants@gmail.com

650-922-5941

Joe Colton

Director At Large

Jrcolton92260@gmail.com

650-245-9179

Committees

Membership Team: Ann Adler, (Chair); **Scholarship**

Committee: Alice Clement and Ros Wolfe, (Co-Chairs);

Health & Welfare Trust

Liaison: Merri Furler

Retirement Trust Liaison:

Alan Frey. **REACTOR**

Newsletter: Margaret

Wallace (Editor) **Social Media**

Specialist: Kathie Casas;

Legal Expense Fund and

Member Assistance Fund:

Felice Strauss



MEET OUR NEW REACTA OFFICERS

By: MARGARET WALLACE, EDITOR

Joe Colton, our new Director At Large officer, retired in 2011 and joined right away. The decision to join was an easy one because Joe said, "The potential to get information about retirement was from REACTA."

Before being a CTA in-house attorney, Joe worked in private practice for several years. CTA staff regularly used him to represent members for employment issues. The State Council TEAF committee appreciated his expertise as a participant in the mock compliance trials each year.

Joe and his wife Merilee recently moved to Sacramento where they have been busy working on their house and helping their dogs adjust to cooler weather. "Desert heat was too much for me," said Joe.

Region II has already benefitted from Joe's advocacy. He joined fellow retirees **John Stephens and Alan Frey** at the Region II Holiday party recruiting potential members.

REACTA's new Secretary is **Shirley Horn**. She retired from CTA after working in the legal department for 28.5 years. She has been in the legal arena for most of her career starting with Civil Service Employee Insurance and ending as the CTA Legal Supervisor in Burlingame.

Shirley was very active in CAS as the Grievance Co-chair with **Debbie Diaz**. She really enjoyed working with CAS and took that experience to heart when she had the opportunity to become Legal Supervisor for 10 years.

Retirement was an easy transition for Shirley. Her life is now filled with Giants baseball, family, projects around the house, trips to Hawaii with her friend **Danita Keefe**, gourmet cooking and 4 mile walks every day with her husband. She gets together regularly with her CAS friends up north as well.

CTA gave Shirley many opportunities, benefits, and learning experiences, but most of all many lifelong friends.