LEARN ABOUT NEA MEMBER BENEFITS AT JANUARY CREA MEETING

In recent weeks, there have been many interesting bargains on the NEA member benefits website. Had you gone there, you would have found some great deals on laptop computers and on dining, just to name two of them.

NEA member benefits are a huge reason to want to be a dues-paying member of the National Education Association, but since most CREA members paid their lifetime dues years ago, it is almost as though our member benefits are free. However, unless you know how to avail yourself of member benefit bargains, they remain unavailable to you. Antonio Galindo is NSEA’s expert on member benefits, and he will speak to us on January 9 to let us know how we can make the most of this valuable money saving resource.

Join us for our next CREA meeting on Thursday, January 9, at 11:00. If you would like, you could also come a little earlier at 10:30 and be part of a political discussion led by Steve Horner.

To RSVP, call or text Harry Beall at (702) 521-3387, or send him an email at sandreap@ix.netcom.com. Please secure your reservation by Monday evening, January 6. Members are free, but guests and spouses will be charged $5.00.

CONSIDER STEPPING UP

Most CREA members want our organization to be the best it can be, and our members have lots of ways to help improve what we are doing. The CREA board could use your help putting on our pre-retirement seminars next month and in April, so volunteer.

Adequate, affordable health care for seniors, especially in rural areas, is a fight all retired education groups are mounting this year, and we would like legislative testimony from affected CREA members. You can even do it locally from the Grant Sawyer Building.

CREA has several committees that help our board. Consider being a member of one of them. They are: budget, by-laws, elections, government relations/political action, luncheon planning, membership, pre-retirement seminars, scholarship, and speakers/entertainment. Any committee chair would love to have more voices and more ideas.

In March, we will accept nominations for the CREA board, and in April, we will have elections. Several CREA officers and board members will be stepping down this year, so take on a leadership position. We should have many who want to run, but we generally have too few candidates, and vacant board positions often stay vacant for months. Consider leadership as an opportunity, not a burden.
CREA SCHEDULES INFORMATIVE SPEAKERS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD

In addition to this month’s speaker about NEA’s member benefits program, many other speakers have been scheduled for the remainder of the CREA year.

In the coming months, we plan to have someone from the Clark County Parks and Recreation Department tell us about programs and facilities that seniors would especially enjoy.

Las Vegas Little Theatre and the Smith Center are no longer the only places people can go to see great plays. Both amateur and semi-professional theatre has exploded recently in Las Vegas, giving local theatre-goers a huge variety of interesting and provocative choices. We will have representatives from several local theatre groups tell us what they are doing and why they are doing it.

We have also reached out to PERS because it is always beneficial for us retirees who are living mostly on our fixed incomes to know what PERS has planned for our monetary futures.

They will also tell us whether our state legislature has any plans to either strengthen or weaken our PERS benefits.
ELECTION NOT NEEDED FOR DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

It appears that the Clark Retired Education Association will not need an election for selecting delegates for this year's delegate assembly. CREA was allotted nine delegates for this year’s delegate assembly, and we had exactly that number. When the nomination forms were tabulated, we had five new nominations. Those were added to the four delegates who will be returning to delegate assembly this year, and that made our total exactly the nine we needed.

The five who were newly nominated include Pat Bynum, Sue Guilliams, Steve Horner, Brian Morgan, and Sylvia Villalva. The four who will be returning to delegate assembly are Doug Bache, Robert Benson, Sandy Morgan, and Gerri North. In addition, CREA members Tom Wellman and Harry Beall will also attend delegate assembly because they are NSEA board members.

This year's delegate assembly will be held in Elko on April 23 and 24. Delegate assemblies have been an annual event, but following this year's delegate assembly, as a cost-cutting move, future delegate assemblies will be held every two years. After this year, the next delegate assembly will be held in 2022.

TEAMSTERS & ESEA UNIONS REACH COMPROMISE

In late October 2019, two unions that have been fighting for nearly 20 years over the right to represent the school district's support staff came to an agreement and decided to divide the employees into two separate union groups.

The Education Support Employees Association, ESEA, which had been the bargaining agent for all of the support staff, agreed to represent employees in administrative work, business, aide positions, information, and food service. Teamsters Local 14, which had been trying for years to represent all of ESEA, will instead represent employees in transportation, skilled trades, police services, broadcast, communications, and operations.

Elections held in previous years indicated that the Teamsters had secured the majority of the votes of members of the support staff who voted. However, the Nevada Supreme Court recently ruled that to be recognized as a new bargaining agent, a union has to win the votes of the majority of all members in the bargaining unit, not simply a majority of those voting.

The new agreement between the two unions has a no-raid provision in which each union agrees that it will not try to take members from the other union or help others to convince employees to go to the other bargaining group. Both parties also agreed that if either union is targeted for takeover from a third union, both will cooperate to defend against that takeover. The partnership between ESEA and the Teamsters is a compromise that will finally bring an end a battle that has cost both sides a lot of money over the years.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU LOOKING FOR WORKERS

At December's meeting, CREA member Nathan Bassing, working as a local census coordinator, spoke for a few minutes about the many well-paying census jobs available. Every 10 years, The U.S. Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the nationwide census. While the next census will be taken later this year, the Census Bureau is already recruiting for temporary positions. You can apply online at 2020census.gov/jobs.
CONTACT YOUR SENATORS ABOUT MEDICARE LEGISLATION

In last month’s newsletter, there was an article about some legislation that is very much of interest to us who are retired, and there was a request to contact your legislators about that legislation.

Retired educators from throughout the nation responded in such large numbers that one of the bills, H.R. 3, was passed in congress. But now the real work begins. We need to get it passed out of the senate. There is a strong push and a lot of money from a group called “Trade Alliance to Promote Prosperity” to kill the legislation in the senate.

The bill would require Medicare to negotiate drug prices on the 250 highest priced drugs, including insulin, and it would make the lower-priced drugs available to all insured Americans, not just to seniors. Members of the House of Representatives have done their part in standing up to pharmaceutical corporations and said “enough is enough.” Now we need all of our voices to speak up for this very important bill to get it passed out of the Senate.

H.R. 3 will help retirees enjoy longer, healthier lives with less financial anxiety. Negotiating drug prices will save taxpayers billions of dollars and help ensure no retiree has to choose between filling a prescription and putting food on the table. The savings in this bill will be used to add critical benefits to Medicare, including dental, hearing, and vision, and provide more funding for crucial medical research.

Retired NEA members have worked hard to give Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices for more than 15 years, and the NEA says this is the closest we have come to actually making it happen. They urge us to stay energized and work to get this legislation passed in the Senate and signed into law. Call your senator today, and tell them how you could be helped by the passage of H.R. 3.

While you are on the phone with them, also let them know your displeasure with another bit of legislation that has been proposed by Utah Senator Mitt Romney. It is a Senate bill, S. 2733, and it has a rather misleading name. It is being called the Trust Act. The bill would create a panel that would meet outside of public view and create plans to fast-track changes in Social Security and Medicare. The National Education Association is very much opposed to the bill, and they say we need to stop that idea before it goes any further. Social Security and Medicare benefits are critical to all Americans. We have paid for them over our entire working life, and we must fight anyone whose goal is to cut them or put Wall Street in charge of the system. Send a message to your U.S. Senator. Below you will find their local phone numbers and addresses, so you can more easily contact them.

For Senator Catherine Cortez Masto the address is 333 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Suite 8016, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101, and her phone number is (702) 388-5020.

For Senator Jacky Rosen is 333 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Suite 8203, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101, and her phone number is (702) 388-0205.