



RENY  
RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NY

# YORK STATE

Spring 2024

Vol 74 Issue 1



## *President's Message*

*By Dr. James Newell, PhD*

My wife and I have vacationed in Lake Placid during the winter break for many years. We ski, skate and shop while visiting. When we return home, it always feels like Spring is on the way. I think that such will be the case again this year.

The Spring of 2024 offers the prospect of new and better days for RENEY. First, the increase in membership dues will move us closer to a balanced budget. Our expenses have exceeded our revenues for many years, and you have heard me say over and over, that "we have a revenue problem, not a spending problem." Approval of a dues increase is a meaningful step in the right direction.

The other key factor that is benefiting RENEY's budget is the adoption of an investment policy. RENEY has not had an investment policy for the last two years. As a result, the asset allocation for our endowment has been upside down. RENEY has been top heavy with bonds and fixed income instruments and noticeably light on common stocks and exchange traded funds. As a result, our returns have been quite low during this time. Alongside the adoption of an investment policy, the Finance and Budget Committee sent out RFPs to several reputable investment advisor firms to select a new investment advisor. After a careful vetting process including interviewing the investment advisors, it selected High Probability Advisors. This new firm took over in January 2023 and has done an exceptionally fine job for RENEY. Our returns have been much higher than with our previous advisor and the management fees we pay have declined. Dividends and interest from our investments are applied to our operating budget as needed. This income is one of the largest sources of revenue for our association and better returns, increases operating budget revenues.

Kathi Bassett and a working group have been reviewing our website, [retirededucatorsny.org](http://retirededucatorsny.org), and discussing ways to improve it. After thorough study, the group concluded we need to keep the website up to date, make it easier to navigate and include more pictures and less text. We will be rolling out our improved website soon. Stay tuned! If you have not visited our website in the past, we hope you will do so going forward. It is also our hope that a new, refreshed website will be helpful in recruiting new members.

You may have already received this year's President's Appeal letter. With this letter, we have heeded the advice of our website hosts, Dan and Paul who tell us "More visuals and less text." Last year the President's Appeal met and exceeded our goal of \$60,000. I am truly grateful to all those members who made a gift last year and hope they will do so again this year. If you have not made a gift to the President's Appeal, please consider contributing in 2024. Thank you.

**Continued on next page....**

### ***President's Message, continued***

My wife, Pat, and I have visited WZ, CZ, CWZ, EZ, and of course our own zone, NCZ. We received a kind invitation to visit the Northeastern Zone on June 6, 2024. As you know, this zone has been busy preparing to host the 2024 Convention. They also have been active recruiting new members and have won the membership incentive award for two consecutive years. Pat and I hope to visit other zones before my term as President ends in October.

Well, as the cartoon character, Porky Pig used to say, "that's all for now, folks!" Feel free to email me with your questions or concerns.



## **Senior Vice President's Report** **By Gayla LePage**



The Northeastern Zone has prepared a great convention for 2024. The dates of the Annual Meeting & Convention are October 7- 9, 2024 at Turning Stone Resort and Casino in Verona, NY. Here are some of the highlights of this year's convention:

The theme is "***Hit the Adirondack Trail.***" (What fun!) The keynote speaker will be Dan Berggren who is an Adirondack-story teller and musician. He often involves the audience in his presentations. That should keep us all awake at a late hour.

As I stated in my last report, we have lowered the number of workshops to eight. This will save us the cost of one room rental and less for the media company. Below you will see the workshops that will be offered. More info on these workshops will be available in the Summer edition of *York State*.

### **First Session Workshops**

1. Dan Berggren, storyteller/musician –this is an interactive workshop
2. Journaling - Presented by **Jim Howard** and **Connie Lalonde**
3. An Overview of the History of NYSRTA/RENY (1951-2024) or "The RENY You Should Know" - presenters are Immediate Past President **Kevin Mulligan\*CR** and Sr. Vice President **Gayla LePage**
4. Healthy Living - Presented by **Kathy Caron**

### **Second Session Workshops**

1. "A Pictorial Trip to Iceland" - Presented by **Holly Chorba**
2. "Life of Rockwell Kent" - presented by **Carol Lowry** and **Sandy Lashua**
3. Teachers Retirement System-presenting you with an update on your benefits and a Q & A session
4. "What County Soil and Water Districts Can Do For You!" - Presented by Chastity Miller, Director, Franklin County Soil and Water

There will once again be Trivia Night after the cocktail hour. The theme for the cocktail party will be "Black Fly Ball" with the attire being hiking boots, jeans, and buffalo plaid. This sounds like such fun. If you live in upstate New York, you would understand the whole theme.

As Senior VP, working on this convention is so exciting. RENY is a great organization that works hard for its members.



P.O. Box 490  
Amsterdam, NY 12010  
(518) 482-3509  
Web site: [www.retirededucatorsny.org](http://www.retirededucatorsny.org)



## 2024 President's Appeal

### Valentines Day has passed

As you know RENY relies on the President's Appeal to supplement its budget and it is one of the largest sources of revenue for the Association. It is designed to offset the loss of membership dues coming to the Association from members who reach the age of 90 and older as well as members who paid lifetime membership dues.

#### Every gift counts!

RENY is grateful for every gift no matter what size. Those members contributing \$100 or more will receive a personalized thank you note from the RENY President. So, please make a gift to the President's Appeal and show RENY a little love!



*An envelope with RENY's new address is included with this letter. Gifts can be made by writing a check to RENY or charging your gift with a credit card by visiting [www.retirededucatorsny.org](http://www.retirededucatorsny.org), clicking the Membership tab and selecting Make a Contribution in the drop-down box. Many thanks for continuing to be a part of this great association.*

*Yours truly,  
James Newell, Ph.D.  
President*

Contribution Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***We continue to work for you.....***  
***To learn more about the important work we do on your behalf visit us at [www.retirededucatorsny.org](http://www.retirededucatorsny.org).***

***Make checks payable to:*** RENY  
P.O. Box 490  
Amsterdam, NY 12010

***Current email address:*** \_\_\_\_\_



# Nominations Report

By Judith Farmer\*CR, Chair

The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce that we have secured candidates for the offices of Vice-President for Legislative Action and Vice-President for Friendly Service, However, we are still in need of a member to serve as Vice-President for Membership. If you are willing to fill that position or you would like to nominate another individual, please send the information to the committee chairperson.



## Membership Report

By Dell Ford Jordan, VP for Membership



**WELCOME ALL RETIREES TO 2024.** We applaud our **10,507** members. This number includes **761** 90-year-olds and **111** 100-year-olds. We appreciate all of you! (*stats as of March 14, 2024*)

But our work is not done; as compassionate retirees, we must rekindle and stir up that compassion in the **424** retirees who chose not to re-new their membership. We have to re-sell RENY, re-sell the Zone, and re-sell the Unit by talking about our benefits. You should contact your unit Membership chair or your Zone Membership Chair for a list of those benefits.

**RECAP/REMINDER:** Anyone who joins RENY, becomes a member of their respective Zone automatically; if you become a member of the local Unit only, you are not a member of the Zone or RENY. Becoming a Unit member does not allow an individual the benefits of RENY; you cannot hold an office, attend the Annual Meeting as a delegate, or vote at Zone meetings.

At the end of our Stats Year we had enrolled **110** new members this year, we mourned the loss of **577 members** (loss may be due to death or non payment/not renewing their membership).

The RENY Membership Team has not met this year; a meeting will be scheduled for early April 2024. At this meeting we will make plans to finalize one or more of the events on our list to increase our declining membership. Our committee did support passing the Bylaws change at the 2023 Convention regarding Annual Membership Dues.

**Effective January 1, 2024, our annual dues increased to \$39.00, and Lifetime Dues are \$900.00.**

*In the Spotlight*

Congratulations and many Kudos to the **Northeastern Zone** who is the \$1,000.00 winner of the 2023 Zone Incentive Award. They increased their Zone's membership by 9.63% adding **51** new members to the Zone. They reinvested some of their "extra" cash into their recruitment efforts. Honorable mention goes out to **Northern Zone** for increasing their membership by 2.27% and **Central Zone** for their 1.30% increase. **Congratulations NEZ, NZ, and CZ.**

**WE THANK YOU ALL FOR A JOB WELL DONE!**



## Community Service Report

By Eileen Homes\*CR, Chair



During the fall and winter months from November 2023 through March 2024, RENY community service workers accomplished many worthwhile projects across the state in all ten zones. Donations, both monetary and non-perishable food items, were provided to many local and regional food banks. Collecting toys for needy children through the Christmas Bureau, providing new coats and outerwear through the [Coats for Kids Project](#), donations to [Angels of Action](#) and [Operation Gratitude](#) programs and [Blessings in a Backpack](#)® (over \$700!) are some examples of the generosity of our members.

Other worthy projects included serving at soup kitchens, writing holiday cards for veterans, providing singing entertainment for residents in an assisted living facility, collecting hundreds of dollars for the [Make-A-Wish® Foundation](#) and participating in [Wreaths Across America](#). This generosity and commitment to helping others truly flourished during the past winter and holiday season. Whether working in a zone or unit group or serving as an individual, our members did outstanding work.

Community Service plans are gearing up for a busy spring and summer. Scholarships for graduating seniors, school educator grants, support for veteran causes and continuing support for food pantries are planned. Projects for collecting new socks and personal toiletries, donations for animal shelters and community library support are on the agendas in our zones and units.

If you know of a worthy cause or have an idea for community service to get involved with, please bring it to the attention of your zone or unit Community service chair. New project ideas are always welcome!

To all our Chairs and members, thank you for the hard work, planning, efforts, generosity and support that continue to make RENY Community Service successful!



## Friendly Service Report

By Lois Thornberg\*CR, VP for Friendly Service



The success of the Friendly Service committee depends on all the members from Zone and unit chairs and all the key-workers involved in the daily activities that bring hope and good feelings to those that need it. Friendly Service Committee members selflessly give of themselves to see that all the members of RENY will never feel forgotten or alone. However these dedicated volunteers need to be made aware of anyone who might need some extra care or special attention, so if you are aware of anyone, please share their contact information with your Zone/Unit Friendly Service Committee.

I want to express my thanks and gratitude to all of these individuals who put the care and needs of others before themselves. Thank you!

This past year has been a busy one for the committee. They have sent out almost 5,000 cards, 600 e-cards, made 500 phone calls along with 200 personal visits. They have donated their time selflessly to ensure that the members of RENY feel they are a part of a family that cares. This service is what makes RENY differ and stand out from and above other organizations for retirees.

**More from Lois on the next page**

## ***Friendly Service Report, continued***

Two examples of the positive effect of this committee:

- Manny from Long Island wrote his Friendly Service chair wondering why his last birthday greeting was just an empty envelope and not the usual card he so looked forward to- the chair promptly sent him another card with an apology for the mishap.
- Edith, also from Long Island, at age 103 still looks forward to receiving a card from RENY on her birthday!

Again- My deepest thanks and appreciation goes out to all who make this committee work. **Thank You** for caring.

**“If we all do one random act of kindness daily, we just might set the world in the right direction.”- Martin Kornfeld**



## **DeCormier Memorial Trust Report** **By Colette Astoria, Trustee**



### ***Insights from a Newcomer on the DeCormier Board of Trustees***

When I was asked to serve as a trustee for the DeCormier Trust, my first question was, "What does that entail and how can I contribute?" I know my first thought was about time that "thing" I thought I would have so much of in retirement. Prior to retiring, Being the "Committee Queen" in school, I put on a play every Spring, and lovingly raised five children. Since my husband claimed he would never retire, that fall I did; I started a business called [Oswego Tours](#) . I also volunteer for a non-profit called [Ready2Recover](#), actively involved in raising necessary funds. Oh! AND travel, now that my husband has retired, (he forgot his original plan of not retiring), he decided we should travel on my off-season. Thus, TIME - that elusive beast was heavy on my mind!

I was assured that meetings would be via ZOOM, with only one annual face-to-face meeting at the state convention. That sounded manageable, and coincidentally, for our first zoom meeting I was in a hotel room on vacation. It has been very interesting working with the other trustee members. My colleagues are good natured and patient, and as many of you know, zooming requires both. We oversee administrating necessary funds to needy retired members of RENY, and to be certain all is within strict compliance with the Trust agreement. Members of RENY who need monthly assistance are given this as a monthly stipend grant, and help these individuals meet their basic needs. Other members request assistance for an unplanned financial need such as the purchase of hearing aids, a large dental bill, heating issues, medical problems, maintenance home repairs, and other bills that must be paid. We can assist these individuals through a Special Needs Grant. I am truly grateful that this trust is available for those who need it - life is stressful enough for us as we age. It is nice to know there is a safety net for our RENY members. Some elderly teachers' pensions are very low, and unforeseen expenses can be overwhelming, and at times hazardous! If you know of any RENY members in need, have them contact the Chair – Anne Flansburg.

Working with the other five trustees has been an interesting learning experience. They have all been helpful and understand my questions and concerns. I am proud to be able to have been asked and voted upon to serve on the DeCormier Trust. I am indeed grateful that we can, thanks to the contributions of Zones, Units, and Individuals, continue to be a financial lifeline to some of our needy colleagues.

## CENTRAL ZONE NEWS

**SUBMITTED BY RAY PITCHER, ZONE PRESIDENT and  
MARY ANN LUCIANO, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR**



News from around the Zone: We are working on the Hudson and Kramer Memorial Grant for an active teacher to be awarded before the end of this school year. All active teachers have been encouraged to apply. Please contact **Ray Pitcher** for an application due by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Sadly, because of the lack of member participation, we have lost two units—the Oneida Herkimer Retired Teachers Association and the Madison County Retired Teachers Association. All funds have been turned over to the Central Zone. The leadership of both former units encourages their members to remain active with the Zone and RENY as independent members. Both units will continue Friendly Service for another year. **(see article from Ray on next page for more info)**

Many Zone leaders and Zone Committee members have been providing service for many years in their RENY roles and would like to turn over these roles to others. They encourage new retirees and other retirees to begin to assume these roles. For more information, please attend the Central Zone's All Committees' Spring meeting.

The Central Zone's All Committees' Spring meeting will be on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at Theodore's Restaurant in Canastota. All state RENY members are also zone members and are invited to attend.

Units of the Central Zone are beginning to plan their spring meetings. RENY-Chenango's tentative meeting date is May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Earlville Opera House. The village of Earlville is bisected by two counties, Chenango and Madison. Members formerly with Madison County are cordially invited to attend the Chenango luncheon meeting. A program on gardening will be keynoted and the Opera House will be displaying the work of three artists. Contact **Mary Ann Luciano**, RENY-Chenango President for more information.

RENY Oswego is also planning its spring meeting. For more information, contact **Colette Astoria**, RENY Oswego President.

After a winter project of updating the membership lists and Friendly Service, RENY-Chenango presented a Tech and Tea event. This was an afternoon high tea with traditional sandwiches, scones, and cakes presented at the Splendor



Inn in Norwich. **Kathy Pfeifer**, RENY-Chenango's Newsletter Editor, and Corresponding Secretary provided tips and tricks for maximizing the use of an iPhone. RENY-Chenango will continue its informal pop-in meetings throughout late spring and summer with an Otselic Village historical walk, and



member-requested topic get-togethers such as photography, birds, and legislative updates. The unit will celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week with their future educator scholarship. Through 2024 the Community Service project will continue to focus on supporting local foodbanks. **Continued on next page....**

## CENTRAL ZONE NEWS - continued

SUBMITTED BY RAY PITCHER, ZONE PRESIDENT



### *Merging or disbanding Unit Within the Zone*

A little over two years ago the leaders of the Oneida Herkimer Retired Teachers Association began discussing their future. They felt that they had few choices either to disband or merge with Madison County Retired Teachers Association.

At the Zone's all Committee's meeting, the Zone voted approval for the two groups to begin their discussions. Further, **Bill Tenity**, RENEY's Bylaws chair, ruled that either action would not violate any of RENEY's bylaws.

The leaders from both units met. We exchanged constitutions, membership lists, bylaws, and treasurer reports. We agreed to review the materials and communicate with our respective membership. We met several times more, after reviewing the documents and the results of the communications that were sent out. In both units, we got no responses as to supporting a change merger, or disbanding. We also got no response for any new people to step up and accept leadership roles.

In both units it was decided that they would turn the funds over to the Zone. The Oneida Herkimer Retired Teachers Association decided to keep Friendly Services active for a final year. So, the chairs were given nominal funds to continue their quests.

Checks from both units were sent to the Zone's treasurer to close their accounts. The final bank statements were also provided. The last action will be a group email to the members, inviting them to join RENEY as independent members, and inviting them to join neighboring Units.

# MOVING?

HAD A CHANGE OF ADDRESS  
OR PHONE NUMBER???



**PLEASE LET US KNOW!!!**

**CALL KRISTEN AT 518-482-3509 EXT 1  
OR EMAIL HER BY CLICKING THIS LINK!**

**[Kcecala@nysrta.org](mailto:Kcecala@nysrta.org)**

## CENTRAL WESTERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY MARY BETH TYNDALL, ZONE PRESIDENT



### 2024 has brought on many changes and challenges!

**Barbara Rosecrans** will be leaving our board as Friendly Services Chair. We would like to thank her for all of her year of dedicated service to our members of CWZ. She will be greatly missed!

**Pat Dick** and her committee want to thank everyone who sent in money supporting the **Barrie Fleegel Award**. This award assists working teachers with monetary grants to further their education. Ten lucky individuals will receive \$80 from the Split Club drawing associated with the award.

CWZ Board Member from Ontario County, **Bruce Croucher**, sends his gratitude to all who sent donations to him and his wife, **Sharon**. They experienced a devastating fire in their home around New Years.



**Sandy Kushner** received an email from Jonathan Pragle & Mary Coolbaugh, the 2021 Hudson Kramer Grant winners at Marcus Whitman School District:

*"Mary and I just wanted to reach out to let you know our sugar house is up and running! You provided us with a grant a few years ago for a filter and canner apparatus, which we have used every year. Now it is officially in its final home in our sugar house. We just finished our first batch this year."*



## EASTERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY PAMELA LOVE, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



Eastern Zone President, **Janice Mullins**, said that the Executive Committee of Eastern Zone will hold their Spring Meeting at the Turf Tavern in Scotia, NY on Tuesday, May 21st. Janice is also chairperson of Eastern Zone's State Legislation Action Committee as well as the LAC Sub Committee Chair for RENY. She said the Legislative advocate volunteers for Eastern Zone spent early March discussing RENY'S state legislative priorities with Assembly and Senate representatives. Those priorities are posted on RENY'S website for all members to view. "All 14 of the representatives that we spoke to are very supportive of protecting retiree health benefits and some have shown that support by becoming co-sponsors of the Health Equity for Retirees Act (HERA). They are aware of the issues surrounding Tier 6 and support continued funding for teacher recruitment and retention initiatives and the need for continued funding in the state budget for education." A full report will be delivered at the meeting on the 21st of May.

The Amsterdam Unit has been donating to The Greater Amsterdam Educational Foundation, Inc. which was officially established in January 2021. Its purpose is to help finance innovative programs to enhance the academic and personal growth of student and teachers. The Educational Foundation serves as a community support mechanism outside the scope of the district's annual operating budget, finding projects and programs to further enrich the Greater Amsterdam School District educational experience. The foundation's mission is to develop and support new ways of promoting GASD students' intellectual, emotional, physical or social maturity. For more information, contact Lise Cappuccio.

The Columbia Retired Teachers are celebrating their over 90 year old members with a luncheon and gift. They are extremely appreciative of the service these members have provided over the years. For more information, contact **Mary Ann Shook**. Columbia Unit President, **Joan Mattson**, said that at their May meeting, they will be working on updating the unit's by-laws. The program at the meeting will be a presentation on the Columbia Land Conservancy. Heidi Bock, Vice President of Conservation will speak on the non-profit group that brings people together to conserve, appreciate and enjoy land. The Conservancy's ten public properties have thirty trails and sees 45,000 visitors a year. The unit's officers are looking for a new place to hold their meeting since our usual meeting restaurant has closed.

Other units of Eastern Zone will be holding Spring Meetings in May or June. Most have not finalized details at the time of this report. Retired Educators of the Capital Region (RCRTA) will meet June 12th. The Schoharie Retired Teachers Unit will be meeting May 15th. The Upper Montgomery Unit will meet on May 22nd at the Winner's Circle , Fonda, NY with meeting at 11 a.m., luncheon to follow (contact **Rosalind Carron** for further information).



## LONG ISLAND ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY EILEEN HOLMES\*CR, ZONE PRESIDENT



Ah, Spring! The snowbirds return, the weather warms up and Long Island RENY retirees can get back to meeting, socializing, carrying out community service projects and planning for future events.

The East End unit held a Spring Luncheon on April 10th. Members gathered at Lenny's Restaurant in Jamesport. A raffle was held to support "Love Your Local Library" and EERTA Community Service Chair Rosemary McKinley announced a donation has been made to CAST, a community service group based in Southold that provides needy North Fork residents with clothing, food, job training, cooking skills and other resources. East End also donated snacks for an interfaith, after-school crafts and socialization program that serves elementary school children in the Cutchogue-Southold area.

The Long Island Zone will be hosting their Spring Luncheon on May 22, 2024 at the Irish Coffee Pub. Plans are being made for a unique guest speaker, Carol Sidor of Cutchogue. Carol and her husband Martin are Long Island potato farmers who turned their farm business into a flourishing potato chip company. From their kitchen table to world-wide shipping, North Fork Potato Chips is a fascinating success story. More news about this in the next issue of YORK!!!

LIZ Community Chair **President Emeritus Angelo Grande\*CR** has been developing plans to donate to a horse therapy program that works with veterans who are suffering from depression and trauma. LIZ will also continue to support Nassau County veteran programs that arrange donations of food, clothing and personal hygiene items to homeless, needy vets on Long Island.

LIZ's West End unit has had a hard time reorganizing since COVID. Several key leaders have been unable to serve. The long-time membership chair is now in a nursing home; the long-serving president/vice president is in assisted living and sadly, Candi Misner, who served as treasurer for over 15 years, passed away. Our 'hats are off' to **Jo Anne Powell** who has been working to set up a new WERTA board and resume activities. In past years WERTA was known for elegant lunches with great keynote speakers, interesting day trips to wineries, horse farms, the culinary institute, and museums in Connecticut. Additionally, WERTA had a long affiliation with Adelphi University School of Education and presented scholarships to aspiring future educators. The LIZ is very hopeful that JoAnne will be able to reorganize this unit so it can carry on with its programs.



PRESENTS  
SOUTHERN CHARM HOLIDAY

December 2 - 8, 2024

[\(877\) 256-0194 Please Refer to Booking](tel:8772560194)

[#1182612](https://www.instagram.com/1182612)



Historic Charleston, Boone Hall Plantation & Gardens, Choice on Tour: Walking Tour or Fort Sumter Cruise in Charleston, James Island County Park Holiday Display, Savannah, Choice on Tour: Savannah Trolley City Tour or Walking Tour, St. Simons Island, Jekyll Island, Sea Turtle Hospital, Christmas Caroling

## NORTH CENTRAL ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY PATRICIA NEWELL and NANCY ROBERTS\*CR, PUBLIC RELATIONS CO - CHAIRS

<https://renyncz.org>



**“This is a new year...a new beginning, and things will change.” Taylor Swift**



This statement rings true of NCZ. We are very lucky to have **Rick Morris** serving as the new President of our zone. He worked closely with our former President, **Elwood “Woody” Lyndaker**. Rick has received some valuable insights into the job. Rick’s initiation has been a “trial by fire” so to speak. His first assignment was to find a new location to hold our June and September luncheons. The venue that NCZ has used for years suddenly added a substantial room fee and raised the luncheon buffet price significantly. (Has this situation occurred in any other zones?) Rick has been a regular detective tracking down estimates from various restaurants and clubs in the Watertown area. Rick is pictured at left.

We are proud to announce that Rick has been successful in his mission! Our spring Scholarship Luncheon on June 19<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Watertown. We look forward to this event as an opportunity to gather members and our “snow bird” friends who have been away for the winter. At this luncheon, we will honor two graduating seniors who will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship to further their education. This year, we are also privileged to present the Hudson-Kramer Professional Educator Award. This luncheon is special because it highlights young people going into the field of education. It will also celebrate a seasoned educator who is an innovative planner in his/her own classroom. This is the heart of our business.



Suzanne Renzi-Falge, Executive Director, of the Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library in Watertown, pictured, will be our featured speaker at the spring luncheon. Her presentation will focus on the history and the gorgeous artwork in this treasure hidden in the North Country. In 1980, Flower Library was entered on the National Register of Historic Places. This should be a very memorable program.

In addition to Rick Morris, NCZ also welcomes new officers, **Patty Corey** and **Toni Gigliotti**, pictured at right, who will be serving as Co-1<sup>st</sup> Vice Presidents. They are quite an amazing team who will continue to serve NCZ as Community Service Co-Chairs. [Coats for Kids](#) is their main focus. This winter was a record year. Patty & Toni received an almost overwhelming request for help. They supplied 66 coats, 20 pairs of boots, 5 pairs of snow pants, numerous sets of hats & mittens to needy students in Lewis County. What a difference this has made in the lives of so many children during our winter season! We are very proud of work accomplished by this “Dynamic Duo.”



### Dates to Remember:

NCZ Executive Council Meeting- May 7, 2024, NNYCF, 10am

NCZ Spring Scholarship Luncheon- June 19, 2024, Hilton Garden Inn, Watertown

## NORTHEASTERN ZONE NEWS

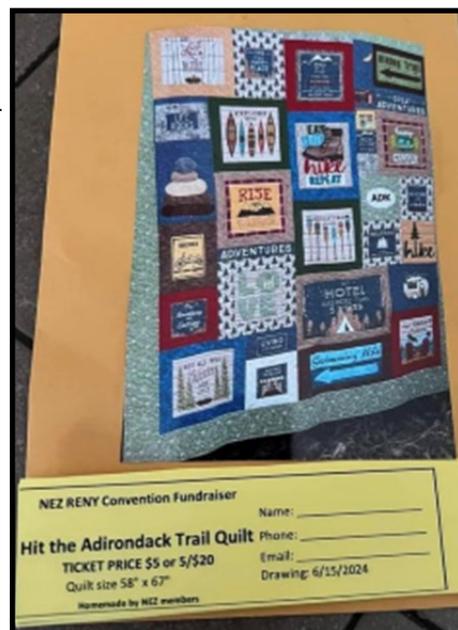
SUBMITTED BY CINDI LAFOUNTAIN, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



We made it through the worst of the weather and are starting to see more sunshine and less snow. Our zone was the winner of the 2023 RENY \$1000 New Member Grant by obtaining 51 new members. This is an excellent example of what teamwork can accomplish. Thank you to **Sandy Lashua** for all her hard work and leadership! Great way to end the year.

The 2024 RENY convention is being hosted by us and we have many involved to make it successful. A few of our members have stepped up to present workshops. So far we have Journaling, End of Life, The Rockwell Kent House, and Staying Healthy Using Your Local Resources.

We are holding a raffle for this beautiful “Hit the Adirondack Trail” lap quilt that was made by four of our members. We also have a concert featuring the popular band “Beartracks”. Both of these fundraisers will help us make the convention fun and show off our great area. Spring is on it’s way..enjoy!



### TOMATO TEA SANDWICHES RECIPE

#### Ingredients

- 6 tablespoons cream cheese, softened
- 2 1/2 teaspoons [Summer Sauce](#)
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 12 thin white bread slices, toasted
- 1 large tomato, cut into 6 slices
- 1 medium-size red onion, thinly sliced (about 1 1/2 cups)

Stir together cream cheese, Summer Sauce, pepper, and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt in a small bowl until combined. Spread cream cheese mixture on 1 side of toasted bread slices. Place 1 tomato slice and about 1/4 cup onion slices on each of 6 bread slices. Sprinkle evenly with remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cover with remaining 6 bread slices. Cut sandwiches in half; serve immediately

#### SUMMER SAUCE INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest, plus 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 garlic clove

Process all ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth. Add additional salt or lemon juice, if desired. Cover and chill until ready to use. Use within 2 days.

## NORTHERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY LINDA CROSBY, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



Although Spring will soon be here, a thin layer of snow still adorns my yard with a frosty sparkle as I write this report. That being said, I think our NZ/Clifton-Fine-Edwards Unit deserves a mention for their always festive Christmas party on December 20 since photos and news of the party were too late for the last edition of York State. The CFE unit always welcomes anyone from the whole NZ to their gatherings year round, so, people from the northern area of NZ were some of the 30 people who celebrated at the luncheon at the Packbasket Inn in Wanakena, NY in the southern area of NZ. Joining the CFE folks in the group photo in front of the fireplace were **Phil LePage** (NZ Health Insurance Monitor),



**Joe Russo** (CFE President, NZ Healthcare), **Alice Galvin** (NZ Meetings and Programs Chair, CFE member), **Tom Cook** (NZ member), **Rae Louise Tate** (NZ Legislative Action Chair, CFE member), **Gayla LePage** (NZ President, RENY Senior Vice-President), and **Betty Cook** (NZ Secretary, NZ Friendly Service Chair). All attendees brought food for the local food pantry; at the January BOD meeting, CFE President

**Joe Russo** reported that the 2023 Christmas food collection was the largest amount ever donated. He extended a sincere thank you to **Alice Galvin** for planning the Christmas party and thank you, Alice, for all the Christmas party photos.



Jules Comeau, Rae Louise Tate, Fran Miller,  
Julie Meek, Ted Tate



Mary Kay Durham, Alice Galvin, Joe Russo, Mary  
Austin, Alice and Jerry Antwine



Rogene Rice, Sally Capone, Sharon Flynn, Jean  
Pomerville, Debby Yartz, and Mary Garwood



Agnes Hudson, Scott Hudson, Sandy Hudson.

*Continued on the next page*

## NORTHERN ZONE NEWS - continued

SUBMITTED BY LINDA CROSBY, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



The NZ Board of Directors met by Zoom on January 24, 2024. After the regular business and reports, **Gayla LePage** gave her President's Report which outlined some RENEY convention 2023 news including member dues changes and mentioned congratulations to Northeastern Zone for their stellar membership increase of 51 new members which garnered NEZ the \$1,000 RENEY new membership award (NZ came in second place). NZ committee chairs gave their reports mentioning **Scott Hudson** as a new member; Scott is a son of **President Emerita Agnes Hudson\*CR**. Agnes was also the former NZ Friendly Service Chair.

Northern Zone high school scholarship recipients, Caleigh Smith (Lisbon, NY) and Vail St. Hilaire (North Bangor, NY) received their \$400 awards after successful completion of their first semester of college; congratulations to both ladies.

We are in need of a new historian; any volunteers, please?

**Alice Galvin** is working on the spring NZ membership meeting, which is tentatively set for May 16, 2024 at the Franklin County House of History in Malone, NY. Alice and Gayla will consult with **Diane Bonenfant** (NEZ member, RENEY Assistant Treasurer, Franklin County resident), who is a member of the House of History Board of Directors.

The NZ BOD will meet again in March (by Zoom--**Phil and Gayla LePage** have parked their bodies on a beach in Florida!) to continue planning the year's activities.

Enjoy Spring, friends! I hope you planned some eclipse gatherings!



### PRESENTS

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## SOUTHEASTERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY MAUREEN COFFEY, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



*"Spring won't let me stay in this house any longer! I must get out and breathe the air deeply again. "*

*~Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911)*

I fell in love with this quote, but I must admit, I had no idea who Gustav Mahler was. A quick click to Wikipedia revealed that Gustav "was an Austro-Bohemian romantic composer and one of the leading conductors of his generation."

I can't help but think that if he were still alive today, he'd be very pleased with just how well many of the upcoming Spring activities in Southeastern Zone are a perfect example for his beautiful words.

On May 2nd, **Donna Harness**, President of Southeastern Zone, will have a meeting of our officers at Denny's in Newburgh. SEZ has also started a get together luncheon for our members on the third Thursday of every month at the KAZ Americana Diner in Middletown. This has been a very informal, but successful, endeavor. Meeting up with colleagues just to share news and enjoy one another's company is always a good thing. There is also a "Save the Date": On September 19th, SEZ will have their annual fall meeting; venue information to follow.

**Helen Hoering** reported that Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) will meet on April 24th for lunch at Casa Mia in Hurleyville. Their guest speaker will be a local bank representative who will share important information on scams and fraud schemes.

**Ray Leduc** announced that the Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association (NARTA) has planned a "Welcome to Spring" luncheon for April 11th. Their annual meeting and another luncheon is scheduled for June 6th. Both events will take place at The Lakeview House in Newburgh. NARTA will also be awarding "two \$2000 scholarships to outstanding seniors who will be pursuing a career in the field of education." Interested seniors from Cornwall HS, James I O'Neill HS, Marlboro HS, and Newburgh Free Academy may apply.

**Barbara Topps** shared that the Mid- Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association (MARTA) has a busy spring lineup planned. Hikers will enjoy outings to Sam's Point and the Bova Road Canal/Rail Trail. A nice day at the Basha Kill Winery will begin with an easy hike followed by wine samplings and live music at the winery. A walk on the Walkway Over the Hudson will be followed by lunch at Lola's Cafe. The artists in our group will have fun designing a one of a kind tote bag at our Sip N Paint and movie buffs will enjoy an afternoon feature at the beautiful Paramount Theater in Middletown. Also planned are trips to the Bear Mountain Zoo and a boat ride and tour of Bannerman Castle on Bannerman Island.

Finally, on May 29th at the scholarship breakfast, MARTA will award four \$3000 scholarships to deserving students planning to pursue careers in education.

**Barbara Topps** and **Linda Trapani**, along with members of their Activities Committee, really strive to provide "Something for Everyone!"

On March 22, 2024, **James Flanagan, Ph.D.** passed away in Bismarck, ND. Jim, a retired chemistry teacher from F.D. Roosevelt HS in Hyde Park, NY, was an active member in NYSRTA. He served as president of Southeastern Zone and on the state level, was a member of the Credentials Report Committee. Many of us old timers remember Jim declaring we had the necessary quorum to conduct business or announcing the result of a recently tallied vote.

Over the years, Jim held other positions within the organization and was awarded the Certificate of Recognition for his contributions. Jim was a true scholar. He was awarded many degrees, including a Ph.D. in physical chemistry from Notre Dame University. He and his wife, Ella Mae, raised seven children and in turn, had many grandchildren. He was a true gentleman and will be missed by all who knew him. Rest in peace, Jim. You have certainly earned it.

## SOUTHERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY MARY LOU WOOD, PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR



By the time you read this our snowbird friends will be migrating north or are already here walking outside enjoying the sunshine, smelling the flowers, and listening to the birds chirping. While they were away, the rest of us held down the 'unit meetings' and enjoyed our mild winter.

During our Southern Zone annual meeting we awarded our past president with the Southern Zone Special Recognition Award. **Gerardo Tagliaferri** wears many hats. Not only was he president for Southern Zone for two terms, but he worked with the Legislative Action Committee and helped on the initial Health Care Committee efforts. Jerry is quite active in his community and church, i.e. Board of Directors for Catholic Charities, Knights of Columbus, Binghamton area food pantry, Election Inspector, served as chair of the town of Binghamton's Zoning Board of Appeals, and former track official. Jerry retired as Superintendent for the Susquehanna Valley School District. We were very pleased to award this certificate to Jerry.



At our Southern Zone Annual meeting held in Binghamton we enjoyed listening to Larry Kassam. Larry Kassam is the managing director and production designer for the drama, dance and musical theater productions at Binghamton High School's Rod Serling School of the Arts. In 1995, he founded the Rod Serling Video Festival, which he has directed for over twenty years.

At the Southern Zone meeting we retained the following zone officers and board members: **McCormick**; Acting SZ Co President & **Smith\*CR**; Immediate Past President Service **Debbi Deats**; EBB Co President **Bonnie Stratton**; EARTA President Historian and VP for Public Relations side is Secretary **Mary Suffern**.



annual the follow-  
Sitting at the table: Visitor **Jean**  
VP for Membership **Vince**  
**Gerardo Tagliaferri**; Friendly **Lynne Hunkovic**; Treasurer **Nancy Spaulding**; Co President, **Mary Lou Wood**; and on the Absent: VF for Legislative Action **Mary Johnson\*CR**.



As part of our Community Service, Corning Area Retired Teachers' were presented with a very detailed presentation on Sex Trafficking occurring in New York State. NYS Trooper Jason Kiewicki emphasized how sex traffickers have targeted our youth with a wide variety of entrapments. New York State has at least 8 different agencies working on trying to keep our youth and young adults safe.



## WESTERN ZONE NEWS

SUBMITTED BY NANCY WHITE AND AUDREY SEIDEL, PUBLIC RELATIONS CO - CHAIRS



We hope the winter has been good to you and yours. The welcoming signs of spring hopefully will be arriving soon. Throughout the year, Western Zone's committees have been busy with various projects. Our committee work is what connects us to our members and the community. In this issue we would like to highlight two WZ committees that have a positive impact on people.

One committee that aids us in connecting and helping others is Community Service. The Chairperson for this committee is **Ann Marie Wik**, who has been Chairperson of this committee since 2010. The following WZ members are also on the committee and help throughout the year: **John Cardarella, Joan Costello, Elaine DeLisle and Rhoda Harrington**. This past year the committee, with help from WZ Board of Director members, collected books for Project Flight, a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting literacy in children and caregivers, through school and family literacy initiatives. Winter clothing and socks were donated to Buffalo City Mission; and toiletries and used purses were given to the Small Blessings Purse Project, a local organization that donates purses filled with personal items for disadvantaged women in the area. Also, a variety of pajamas have been donated from our zone to [Haven House](#) in Buffalo, a child and family services agency that provides shelter, advocacy and counseling for domestic violence survivors. In addition to these donations throughout the year, the Community Service Committee has collected donations for individuals from Ukraine who are now residing in our zone.



Another hardworking committee is Friendly Service. The Chairman is **Tom Giambra**, pictured, who has served in this position since 2006. Tom, as chair of the committee, is responsible to annually compile the number and types of activities all zone units are providing to members. He then forwards this information to the state for the annual WZ Friendly Service report. Also on the committee are the following Western Zone members: **Georgann Bemis, Josephine Cross, Elaine DeLisle, Anne Flansburg\*CR, Russell Gervasi, Cynthia Mehary, Sara Rodland, Dolores Scanlon, Marilyn Stephens and Nancy White**. Each year the committee sends out holiday cards to members who are ninety years old and older. This year 250 holiday cards were sent. The committee also sends birthday cards to members who are 80, 85, 90, and 95. WZ members who are over 95 years old receive birthday cards every year. In addition to sending out many cards, the committee makes phone calls, sends e-mail messages, and makes visits to homes, hospitals and senior residences. From time to time when the committee member visits, he/she might bring a small gift to the individual to lighten their spirits.



Both of these committees are very active and continue their important work throughout the year. The support that they give to community members and to WZ members has a positive impact on the lives of others.

As springtime weather approaches, we look forward to our meetings, connecting with zone members, and supporting individuals in need. By serving others, we can make a difference in the world.