

## A Message From Our President, Dr. James Newell, PhD



As we prepare to go to press for the summer issue of *York State*, we are all thinking of warm weather and all the special outdoor activities we love to do. Some of us have already hit the links. Others are gearing up for outdoor tennis. Some people are getting out their gardening tools and gloves, while others are out walking and cycling. Many of us cannot wait to visit our cottages and camps or to take a trip to the beach.

In Black River, we have had a frost warning for the last two nights, but the weather is getting warmer day by day. Often people ask me, how am I doing? My stock reply is that I am always good when the sun shines! Lately the sun has been shining frequently. When it shines through my window in the morning, I am reminded that it is time to get up and get moving. That's right. We need to get moving. I mean that literally and figuratively. We need to attract new members to RENEY, stabilize the membership numbers, and provide new opportunities for our members to learn and grow. Most importantly, we need to plan and hold those luncheons and breakfast meetings, reach out to our

more senior members, promote our great association, conduct those worthwhile community services, advocate for our legislative priorities and bring in more revenue to support RENEY.

As mentioned in my previous message, **RENY is not generating sufficient revenues to support our operations.** Memberships dues, the President's Appeal, and the dividends/interest earned by our investments all declined this past year. At the same time, RENEY expenses were higher. During the last seven years RENEY/NYSRTA has taken many steps to reduce expenses. Reducing expenses further will harm our organization and hamper its ability to serve its members.

In July, the Board of Directors will be asked to make some difficult decisions. It will be asked to consider changes to membership dues. It will also be asked to consider reducing the percentage of membership dues rebated to the zones. I am asking you to support the decisions made by the BOD. It is vital that we generate sufficient revenue to support our organization and to keep it moving forward.

The Workshop Committee under the leadership of **Gayla LePage** has worked steadily over the last several months and is putting the finishing touches on what promises to be a great Convention. I would encourage you to consider attending this event planned for October 11-13, 2023, at the Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York. Please refer to pages 6 and 7 for more information on the workshops offered.

The Website Development Group met three times via Microsoft Teams. This group consists of **Kathi Bassett, Marilyn Dominick, Terry Satterley, David Schryver, Lois Thornberg**, and yours truly. At the most recent meeting on May 18, we reviewed the results of the Website Survey and formulated some recommendations to improve the website. These recommendations will be presented to the BOD for action in July 2023.

As I close this message, I remind you that RENEY is the only state-wide organization that works exclusively on behalf of retired educators. It is a great organization and I thank you for continuing your membership in RENEY. My wife Patricia and I hope to see you at our Convention or when we visit your zone. Feel free to call, email or text me with your questions or concerns.

*~ Dr. James Newell*

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## PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

The President's Appeal is one of the three largest and most important sources of revenue for the Retired Educators of New York. It was originally designed to offset the loss of membership dues coming to the Association from three different categories of members.

The first category was members who selected lifetime memberships. The dues provided by lifetime members were collected and expended during the year in which the membership was purchased. Thus, these dues are a one time revenue. They do not reoccur annually. It was assumed and expected that lifetime members would contribute to the President's Appeal since they were not paying yearly dues. According to the most recent membership report, RENE has 3787 lifetime members who are less than 90 years old.

The second category of members are members who attain the age of ninety (90). For these members, membership dues are waived as a perk for belonging to the Association for many years. Believe it or not, RENE currently has 1761 members who have attained that age!

A third category is RENE members who have reached the century mark. At the last membership report, there were 210 members who were one hundred years old and older. The membership dues of this group are likewise waived as a perk for belonging to RENE for many year and for reaching this remarkable milestone.

According to Richard Young, Chief Actuary of the New York State Teachers Retirement System, the life expectancy of teachers exceeds that of the general population. On average, female retired teachers have a life expectancy of 86 years, while retired male teachers can expect to live to 84. We celebrate the fact that our members live long and productive lives. It is our belief that the social interaction, life long learning opportunities, service to the community, and the chance to be involved in worthwhile activities contribute to that longevity. RENE plays an important part in keeping retired teachers learning and growing.

The President's Appeal this year was launched in April. The goal for the year is to raise \$60,000. Kathi Bassett and Kris Valentine reported that to date, we have raised \$54,469. Thus, we are 91% of the way to our goal. Knowing the importance of this fund, I encourage every RENE member to make a gift to the 2023 President's Appeal.

## Health Care Committee - By Mary Ella Moeller\*CR, Chairperson

Summer is one of the favorite seasons of the year. But with sunshine and outdoor fun can come summer health risks. Listed below are a few.

### **SKIN PROTECTION**

Skin cancer is more common in people who spend a lot of time in the sun, so if you are going to spend a lot of time soaking up the rays, be sure to use a sunscreen. Check yourself for changes in moles and freckles every few months. Particularly those with fair skin should see their dermatologist for a cancer screening annually, or even semi-annually.

### **STAY COOL**

When the temperature is near 100°, beware of heatstroke. Extreme heat exposure can result in symptoms like confusion, shortness of breath, inability to sweat, and a fast pulse. Heat stroke can be life threatening, so call 911 right away. In the meantime, cool the body with ice and cold water.

### **FOOD POISONING**

Summer and eating outside go hand-in-hand. Remember to keep cool foods cool and hot foods hot. Cold food left out more than an hour in 90° weather may not be safe to eat.

### **BUG BITES**

A bug bite can be more than an itchy inconvenience, if it carries an infectious disease like Lyme or West Nile Disease. Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants in buggy areas and use a good repellent.

With all those protections, go out and have a good time!

~ Source, SCL Health

## Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Report - By Joe Russo, Trustee (NZ)

The last time I wrote a report for the DeCormier Fund, I called myself “The Rookie”. I am not the Rookie any more, but I still feel like one. I am still learning. I have learned a lot from our Veterans, Chair **Anne Flansburg\*CR**, Treasurer **Mary Lou Davis**, and our wonderful new members, **Beth Green, Richard Brogowski, and Colette Astoria**.

I know now that it is the best committee to be on. The meetings are all zoomed and there is nothing more rewarding than helping our fellow retired educators. Even though the Pandemic is considered over, some members are still in need of financial help. Just yesterday we approved a \$5000 plus donation to a deserving member. If you are in need, please contact **Anne Flansburg\*CR**.

In closing I am still very happy to be a member of the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Committee.

## Friendly Service Report - By Lois Thornberg, VP for Friendly Service

### **On Being Thoughtful....**

According to the dictionary a person who is kind is friendly, generous, and considerate. One who is thoughtful is kind and more. The thoughtful person will most often think of others first, pay attention to the needs of others and respond to those around them. So what traits does a thoughtful person exhibit?

1. A thoughtful person thinks of what others need, often before they think of their needs.
2. A thoughtful person is a good listener, allowing others to share their thoughts, feelings, and dreams.
3. A thoughtful person is patient, taking the time to make others realize that who they are matters.
4. A thoughtful person will encourage others to believe in themselves, follow what they believe in and not be easily discouraged.
5. A thoughtful person will keep the feelings of others in mind, realizing something that may seem insignificant to them might be of great importance to others.

I want to encourage everyone to think about who you are and how you think of yourself: are you kind, thoughtful or both? Maybe take the time to review the list above and make any changes in yourself, if necessary, to be a thoughtful individual. Just think about what a wonderful world this could be if more of us became kind AND thoughtful. I know I am going to.

Margaret Mead once said “**A small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.**” This quote describes the work of RENY’s Friendly Service Committee members. I want to take this opportunity to thank those members for the time they take to share with those who need it and encourage all RENY members to follow their example.

## Nominations Report - By Judith Farmer\*CR, Chairperson

The election of officers will be held at the October 12, 2023 RENY Annual Meeting at Turning Stone Casino and Resort. The following have indicated their willingness to serve:

President	<b>Dr. James Newell</b>	Vice-President for Membership	<b>Dell Ford Jordan</b>
Sr. Vice-President	<b>Gayla LePage</b>	Vice-President for Friendly Service	<b>Lois Thornberg</b>
Treasurer	<b>Leigh Powell*CR</b>	Vice-President for Legislative Action	<b>Mary Johnson</b>
Secretary	<b>Mary Lou Wood</b>		

***Nominations can be made from the floor***

## Membership Report —By Dell Ford Jordan, VP for Membership

*“Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.”* – Napoleon Hill, author

This quote is right on the money. As we struggle with our membership having a continuous decline, we must put forth effort to turn that decline around, continuous effort. Let’s start off by talking stats. We started off the year at **11,941** (October 2022) and now we are logging in at **10,741** members for the period ending May 31, 2023. That’s a loss of **1,200** members either by not paying their dues or due to their passing. Since October 1, 2022 we have mourned, and are now grieving, the loss of **317** members. There is no replacement for the members we have lost through death; we have enrolled **66** new members to replace a portion of the numbers lost. We have **808** 90-year-olds, up from **803** and our 100-year-old category has increased from **119 to 147**. **That is truly a blessing.**

Membership Chairs from the Zones and Units are working to develop plans and incentives to help increase our membership. We are sharing our ideas and are working cohesively to bring new members into our organization and reclaim those who are delinquent. The Membership Team supports all efforts to improve RENY’s membership and finances and encourages you to submit your ideas.

GENTLE REMINDER: The incentive of \$50 for every five (5) members you enroll in RENY is still in effect. There is no limit on how many members you can enroll in one year. Just remember to put your name on the application so we will know who gets the credit.

*The Northeastern Zone* is in the *Spotlight* once again. At the end of May 2023 an increase 17 new members were added to their numbers keeping them on target for another First Place win. But don’t despair, *Western Zone, Central Zone, and Central Western Zone* are catching up. We do have 6-months to go before the winner is determined.



**Congratulations to all the Zones for your efforts to increase our numbers!** We thank you for your initiative and commitment to RENY. **THANK YOU!**

John F. Kennedy once said, “Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.” If this is true and I believe it is, let’s turn our numbers around. **Let’s make it happen.**

## Legislative Action Report —By Mary Johnson, VP for Membership

It has been an interesting legislative year between the federal government’s debt limit crisis and the state’s late budget passing. Education fared well with this year’s State budget including the long-awaited fully funding of foundation aid and an increase of general aid to schools of \$3billion, 9.4% over the 2022-23 school year.

RENY’s State Legislative Priorities for 2023 are:

1. Supporting efforts to protect public employees’ health benefits and prohibiting diminution of benefits.
2. Supporting programs and bills that provide pathways to retain current teachers and ways to resolve the teacher shortage.
3. Supporting the creation of a central registry of incidences of elder abuse so that abuses can be reported and abusers face the legal consequences.
4. Supporting mental health services for students within the school setting.

RENY’s Federal Legislative Priorities for 2023 are:

1. Support legislation to ensure the long-term financial security of Social Security and Medicare programs.
2. Support legislation that increases availability of school-based mental health programs and services.
3. Support for legislation that ensures communities have well-qualified school teachers and personnel.

RENY’s advocates are visiting legislators or their legislative aides this spring and early summer. We are always in need of more people to help with this process. Please contact me of the RENY office if you would like to help .

# 72ND ANNUAL MEETING & CONVENTION 2023

## "BEAUTY, BOUNTY & BRAVERY"

### Hosted by RENY North Central Zone

**Wednesday, October 11, 2023**

**2:00pm - 5:00pm - Registration and Welcome Reception**

Coffee, Tea, Danish Pastry

Basket Raffles on Sale

**6:00pm - Dinner in the Mohawk Room**

**Following Dinner: Certificate of Recognition Award  
and Keynote Speaker, Michael Ringer**

**Thursday, October 12, 2023**

**7:30am - Breakfast Buffet - Mohawk Room**

**9:00am - 11:00am - Registration**

**9:00am - 10:00am - Session 1 Workshops**

**10:30am - 11:30am - Session 2 Workshops**

**Noon - Lunch - Oneida Room**

**1:15pm - 4:30pm - Annual Meeting Session 1**

**5:00pm - Cocktail Party Mohawk Room (cash bar)**

The theme of this years cocktail party is "Masquerade Ball". Bring your own 1920's era mask or any mask you can find and join in on the fun!

**6:00pm - Buffet Dinner - Oneida Room**

**Entertainment after Dinner - Mohawk Room (cash bar) Trivia Night!!!**

**Keynote Speaker, Michael Ringer, North Country Artist**

**"A Journey of the North Country"**

**Introduced by Pat Newell**

**Description:** "My work in the North Country began in 1970. My intention was, then and remains, to record the incredible beauty of the St. Lawrence River and Adirondacks through my paintings, drawings, bronze sculptures, and intaglio prints. My introduction to the North Country began when I took a position as a junior high school teacher in Ogdensburg, New York. This is my journey....."

**Biographical Background:** The North Country comes alive with the artistic work of Michael Ringer. Many of his creations are focused on the Thousand Islands region. He is well known as the host of the national broadcast PBS show, "The Artist's World with Michael Ringer." Five books have been published on Mr. Ringer's work, and he is a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America. His exhibitions have been featured in numerous local, state, and national galleries. His studio is located in Alexandria Bay. His works are on display at his galleries in Clayton and in Alexandria Bay. Beyond a doubt, Michael Ringer has carved out a reputation as one of the foremost artists in the region.



Photos by David Schryver & Pat Dietrich and the center picture is courtesy of Fort Drum Public Affairs Office.



## Session One - 9:00am - 10:00am (Choose 1 of the Following)

**"Hopenhagan Farms - Full of beauty, very bountiful, and very brave to grow them in northern NY!"**

**Presenter: Mary Rumble**

**Description:** Come learn about the adventure of a retired teacher's path into agriculture and how we started a hop and lavender farm on our land. Located in Copenhagen, NY, we are a small scale farm that provides retail and bulk sales along with a storefront, a 20c kitchen, and an authentic tea room. During the presentation, she will be discussing growing, harvesting, drying, and distilling lavender along with many other uses that we implement at their farm.

**About Presenter:** Mary Rumble has an Associate of Applied Science from SUNY Morrisville, a Bachelor of Science from SUNY Oswego, and a Master of Science in Education-Literacy from SUNY Potsdam. She has experience of fifteen years in the dairy industry and twenty-five years in education at Carthage Central School District. She currently is a specialty crop farmer.

**Introducer: Pat Dietrich**

**"Economic Update from High Probability Advisors"**

**Presenter: Dr. Jeff Coons**

**Description:** The volatility of the last few years has brought anxiety back into the market for individuals and institutions alike. As Chief Risk Officer of Institutional Services, Dr. Jeff Coons is uniquely equipped to diagnose and speak to current economic conditions and how they are impacting the investment landscape. Please join us for a presentation, as well as a Q and A period with an industry expert.

**About Presenter:** Jeff has over thirty years of investment industry experience, serving a wide variety of investment-related and management-related roles at the firm, including as a C-suite executive, a research director, a risk manager, an investment strategist/economist, a quantitative and fundamental portfolio manager, and an investment consultant. As has been the case throughout his career, Jeff's efforts center on the importance of understanding and managing investment risks faced by clients across varying market environments. He believes deeply in HPA's mission of providing evidence based investment approaches and squeezing out those decisions that raise the risk of failure in an investment program. Jeff has been a frequent writer of white paper and a speaker at conferences on a broad range of investment topics as well as participated in many national media interviews over the years. Jeff's academic background includes a BA in Economics from the University of Rochester and a Ph.D. in economics from Temple University

**Introducers: Leigh Powell\*CR and Diane Bonenfant**

**"Lost Villages of Fort Drum"**

**Presenter: Dr. Laurie W. Rush**

**Description:** In 1940 when Fort Drum expanded, over 350 families lost their farms. The citizens of five villages lost their homes and indigenous people could no longer hunt and fish on land they had used and managed for thousands of years. This presentation will introduce and discuss this important piece of regional history.

**About Presenter:** Dr. Laurie has a BA from Indiana University and a Ph.D. from Northwestern. She has been the Army Archeology and Native American Liaison at Fort Drum for over twenty years. Her research specialty is Native Americans of the Great Lakes, and she is an internationally recognized authority on protecting cultural heritage. She is a fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a University of Pennsylvania Consulting Scholar, and a Smithsonian Research Associate.

**Introducer: Woody Lyndaker**

**"Aging Gracefully and Faithfully - Things You Need to Know....From Head to Toe"**

**Presenter: Dianne Ferrucci, RENY Member from North Central Zone**

**Description:** Aging gracefully and faithfully is a secret to overcoming decreased physical limitations, unexpected lifestyle changes, and numerous losses in relationships and activities that were once enjoyed. Diane will teach you ways to navigate through your aging journey with dignity, grace, and faithful new powerful practices. You will learn to adapt to realistic effective behaviors that will empower you to fully enjoy this chapter of your life. Her famous line "adjust we must." Suggestions will be discussed for things you need to know from head to toe. Aging gracefully and faithfully is a holy invitation to embrace this sacred season of your life. She will show you how to turn each trial into a triumph. This program is for anyone who is aging, caring for a loved one, or is experiencing a compromising lifestyle and want to experience fully the joy of aging gracefully and faithfully.

**About Presenter:** Diane graduated from SUNY Brockport, and got her masters at Nazareth College in Rochester, NY. She taught Physical Education in the Rochester City Schools for 31 years. The highlight of her career was using her sabbatical to become a Certified Personal Trainer, a Professional Life Coach, and a Nutrition Specialist. This led her to develop a weight loss program that was featured on Dr. Phil show. Diane continues to expand her knowledge by becoming trained Reiki, specializing in holistic health and wellness. As an Intentional Disciple Minister, licensed brain technician, end-of-life care specialist, and certified to work with mentally challenged clients. This allows "everyBODY" to benefit from her program. Diane is currently focused on empowering seniors and caregivers to age gracefully. She practices everything she has learned on her 90-year-old husband, Michael, and both are reaping the benefits to age gracefully and faithfully.

**Introducer: Jackie Maloney**

**"It's Okay.....Scream in the Shower"**

**Presenter: Holly Chorba - RENY Northern Zone Member**

**Description:** Do you believe that you, or your significant other will live forever? Not on this earth! So how do you possibly manage when the inevitable comes? How can you be proactive, regardless of who survives? How do you carry grief, yet carry on? How do you support others you know who face such a loss? Holly Chorba will share information and resources that led her from pervasive grieving, to calm surviving, to actual thriving in the years following the death of beloved spouse of 30 years. Learn how to address future practical needs for immediate action following loss as well as gather resources for regaining equilibrium and moving forward to acceptance and constructive contentment.

**About Presenter:** Holly Chorba has devoted herself to learning and teaching about the natural world since her childhood in Orchard Park, NY. She has been a North Country resident and educator since she began her teaching career at Brushton-Moira Central School in 1971. She enjoyed 30 years in formal education, including teaching biology and chemistry, serving as Curriculum Coordinator, Director of Instruction, and Jr/Sr High School Principal at BMC and Potsdam Central School. She retired in 2004 and continues learning and teaching, primarily through her work as a photographer, video producer, and writer. Her book, It's Okay...Scream in the Shower, published in 2021 pays forward the support she received from spiritual insight, family, friends, and media. Currently she resides in the North Country and Tucson, Arizona areas and takes joy in the natural beauty and spirited people of these areas.

**Introducer: Gayla LePage**

Session Two - 10:30am - 11:30am (Choose 1 of the Following)

"Strength, Balance, and Aging"

Presenter: Dr. Joel VanSlyke

Description: Dr. Joel VanSlyke is the lead physical therapist and owner of Choice Physical Therapy, PLLC in Corning, NY. He will provide specialized knowledge about how our bodies age and how we can maintain our strength and balance as we age.

About Presenter: Dr. Joel is a board certified clinical specialist (GCS) with specialized knowledge pertaining to how our bodies age. This includes diagnosis and treatment of arthritis, back pain, balance and safety issues, and general strength, endurance and mobility. In his 20 years practicing as a physical therapist, he has worked with all ages (0-107!) in many settings. He enjoys sharing his experience to groups like RENEY. Personally, Dr. Joel enjoys spending time with his two children and learning the joys of raising teenagers. He hobbies include volleyball, skiing, hiking, casual running and bike riding, kayaking, or virtually anything outdoors. He also plays trumpet and loves music. Introducer: Pat Newell

"Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust"

Presenters: Mark Pacilio and Linda Gibbs

Description: The presentation will provide an overview of the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, including a description of its conservation easements on more than 22,000 acres of farm and forest lands in six counties of the region. It will include an overview of its community outreach and education programs.

About Presenters: Linda Gibbs, Community Programs Director, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is a graduate of SUNY CESF, Syracuse, NY (B.S. Forestry and Wildlife Management), and Antioch New England, Keene, NH (M.S.T. Environmental Education). She has worked as an environmental educator and natural resources specialist in New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Colorado. Linda joined Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust as its Community Programs Director in 2018, having worked for the land trust previously in its younger years. She enjoys helping others learn about their natural surroundings, find joy in its complexity, and take action to steward the planet more sustainably. Mark Pacilio, Executive Director, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust has had a long career in nonprofit management and in local and state government. He came to Tug Hill in August of 2022 after the departure of their long-time Executive Director Linda Garrett. Mark has a B.S. from Utica College of Syracuse University and an M.P.A. from the University of Delaware. Introducer: Dr. James Newell

"Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division"

Presenter: Kent Bolke

Description: This will present the history of Fort Drum and the 10th Mountain Division.

About Presenter: Kent Bolke grew up in an army family in El Paso, Texas and served in the Coast Guard. He has a Bachelor's in history from the University of Texas at El Paso and a Master's in museum studies from the University of Oklahoma. He has served with the Army's Air Defense Artillery Museum at Fort Bliss, the 1st Infantry Division in Wurzburg, Germany, and the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum since December 2006. He, currently is the Director of the Museum there.

Introducer: Woody Lyndaker

"Garden Smart —Tips for and Eco-Friendly Garden"

Presenter: Rosanne Loparco

Description: The aim of any gardener is to have a healthy and productive garden that has minimal impact on our ecosystem. It takes more thought, but you'll save precious resources while making a positive impact on the environment. Learn about proper plant choices, smart ways to garden, using resources efficiently, and how to incorporate native plants into your garden. What is an organic pesticide? You will learn how to identify them and what choices are better to use. Finally, learn how to reduce, reuse, and recycle items around your home and turn them into garden treasure.

About Presenter: Rosanne Loparco is a Master Gardener Volunteer with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County. She's been an active volunteer for the last fifteen years as well as a member of the Cornell Board of Directors. Rosanne is retired from the Air Force Research Lab in Rome, NY where she served as the Senior Business Manager. She recently worked as a garden associate at George's Greenhouse in Clinton, NY as well as a customer service representative at Bonide Garden Products in Oriskany, NY. Now, she is COMPLETELY retired and enjoying talking to the public about responsible gardening. Introducer: Diane Hahn

"TRS"

Presenter: Richard Young and the TRS Team

Description: As in past years, representatives from TRS will provide information about the current status of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System.

Introducer: Kevin Mulligan

Interesting Facts About Jefferson County

The Philadelphia Cream Cheese and Thousand Islands Dressing originated here, along with Woolworth's Five and Dime Store, the Dewey Decimal System, and Arbor Day.

Interesting Facts About Lewis County

The county was named after famous American explorer Meriwether Lewis, best known for his role as leader of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The first settlers in Lewis County came from Vermont and Connecticut in the early 1800s. They primarily engaged in farming, lumbering, and trade activities. In the late 19th century, the county became known for its thriving cheese-making industry, with many local farmers producing high-quality cheddar cheese that won international awards. Lewis County played an important role in the Underground Railroad, a secret network of people and safe houses that helped slaves escape from the South to freedom in the North.

# ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

## Central Zone - By Ray Pitcher, Zone President

Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego

Future meeting dates for the Central Zone: The July All Committees meeting will be July the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Fall Annual meeting will be September the 21<sup>st</sup>.

At the Central Zone's April meeting a motion was approved to allow Madison and Oneida-Herkimer Retired Teachers Associations to investigate the possibility of merging and/or abolishing these two units. The units' leaders are planning a meeting in mid-June to discuss how they will be moving forward.

Starting this summer NYSUT will be kicking off a campaign to improve Tier Six. More information will follow when it becomes available. Remember, any improvement in retirement tiers, will result in a new tier. Such as the creation of tier 4 since tier 3 was in need of a change. Your help will be needed.

### Onondaga

**By: Marilyn Dominick and Dell Ford Jordan**

Five of us attended the April RENY/Central Zone meeting. Thank you, Ruby, Rosa, Lee, Dell and Marilyn, for your commitment to RENY. At this meeting, we heard the importance of all unit members also be RENY state members. RENY remains very active in lobbying and fighting to protect our rights as retired educators and offers many benefits in the form of vital information for retirees, good values on insurance, travel, and a chance to meet with other RENY members to make our lives better. We will have the responsibility for planning the fall general membership meeting of the Central Zone on September the 21<sup>st</sup>. This meeting will be in our county.

### Oswego

**By: Colette Astoria**

President, Colette and the new unit Friendly Service Chair, hosted a Souper luncheon for the Friendly Service Workers last month. It was the first time the group had met in almost 5 years to discuss what they do for our older and wiser members. They shared tips on keeping track of the birthday card mailings and talked about the many ways they keep in contact with our members. Our spring meeting will be held on May the Twenty-fifth.

## Central Western Zone - By Mary Beth Tyndall, Zone President

Allegany, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben (not Southern), Wayne, Wyoming, Yates



We're all on board!

(Some of us have been aboard a bit longer!)

The CWZ Board gathered in May and will meet again in August and November. (The March zoom meeting worked well for our snowbirds!) Many of our dedicated board members wear more than one hat to cover all the available positions. Photo courtesy of **Carol Lord\*CR**.

We are pleased to announce that Frank Straub has been selected as the RENY Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant recipient from our Zone. Thank you to **Sandy Kushner** and the committee for making this possible.

Under the leadership of **Pat Dick**, the Barrie Fleegel Active Educator Award / Split Club will resume in 2024. Pat has been streamlining the process to make things more labor and cost efficient.

**President Emerita Judie Byndas\*CR** is overseeing the Epke-Meagher Awards. This award honors outstanding newly retired educators who have served their school district and community. Stay tuned for the announcement of our winners.....

# ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

## Eastern Zone - By Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair

Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Sch'dy, Schoharie, Warren, Washington



RENY/Eastern Zone President, **Janice Mullins**, pictured at left, presided over the May 23rd. Executive Committee Meeting at the Turf Tavern in Scotia. All office and committee Chairperson Reports were presented. The next election of RENY/Eastern Zone officers will be held at the Annual Meeting which will be held September 21st. at the Turf Tavern in Scotia. After the luncheon meeting, the final selection for this year's Hudson-Kramer Grant was made.

**Joan Mattson**, President of RENY/Columbia County Unit, said her unit held their Spring Meeting on May 11th. at Koze's in Hudson. During the meeting, the unit voted to make a \$100 donation to the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund. A Committee was organized to update the unit's by-laws. The speaker for this meeting was Susan Wagner, founder of 'Equine Advocates'

which is a national non-profit equine protection organization promoting equine rescue, retirement and humane treatment of horses, ponies, donkeys and mules. The unit's fall meeting will be held October 19th.

**Marjorie Leibowitz**, President of Retired Teachers of the Capital Region (RCRTA) held an Executive Committee Meeting on May 10th. They met to organize the unit's Spring Meeting which will be held June 14th. **Mary Ellen Caporta**, Scholarship Chairperson for the unit, said that Rachel Frazier, a senior from Schodack Central School District, received \$1,000 from the unit. She will be attending SUNY Adirondack and majoring in Early Education K -6. Two students who each received a \$250 Merit Award from the unit are Abigale Dunlavey from Rensselaer Jr./Sr.H.S. who will be attending SUNYs Plattsburgh and Camrin Watson from Lansingburgh H.S. who will be attending HVCC. At the unit's Spring Meeting, members will be donating food, animal treats and toys for Pets Without People who are housed at any of the Capital Vet facilities before they are adopted.

## Long Island Zone - By Eileen Holmes\*CR, Zone President

Nassau & Suffolk Counties

The Long Island Zone held their Spring Meeting/Luncheon on May 10th at the Irish Coffee Pub in East Islip. LIZ Nominations chair **Kathryn Grande** announced the slate of officers for the 2023-24 year and this will be voted on at the Annual meeting in September. Unless there are some additional nominations from the floor, the present board (**Eileen Holmes\*CR**, President, **Val Stype**, Vice President, **Alicia Winowsky**, Secretary and **Dom LiCausi**, Treasurer) will continue to serve another year.



The luncheon had many highlights: **Eileen Holmes\*CR** was delighted to present a certificate of thanks and admiration from the RENY board to **President Emeritus Angelo Grande\*CR** and his wife **Kathryn Grande** for their many years of dedicated service on the state level. Pictured below, **Val Stype**, Vice President of Long Island Zone presented a very rare and special award to LIZ President **Eileen Holmes\*CR**--The Long Island Zone's Golden Apple Award--in appreciation for her work in chairing the planning committee for hosting the 2022 RENY Convention. These awards were total surprises for the both the Grande's and for Eileen!

Community Service chair **President Emeritus Angelo Grande\*CR** presented a donation to Little Shelter Animal Rescue and Adoption Center from Huntington who sent two representatives to speak to us about their programs. A reading program with specially trained dogs who go into classrooms, a 'visiting the veterans' program at Northport VA Hospital, an animal soup kitchen (A.S.K.) program, a 110 acre sanctuary in upstate New York, and more. Little Shelter is a non-profit, no-kill shelter that has been saving animals for over 89 years on Long Island.

On June 14th the officers from LIZ and the two units EERTA and WERTA had a breakfast meeting at the SeaPort Diner in Port Jefferson Station with a "Flag Day Triple Play" agenda. Planning future community service projects, organizing a gala EERTA-sponsored " Back-to-School" luncheon in September and working to reestablish WERTA's membership list were major topics. Time flies so fast; before we know it, summer will be in full swing and we will be signing up delegates and booking the motor coach for the 2023 RENY Convention!

# ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

## North Central Zone - By Nancy Roberts\*CR and Patricia Newell, Public Relations Co-Chairs

NCZ website: [www.renyncz.org](http://www.renyncz.org)  
Jefferson & Lewis Counties

As we write this in May, our world is green again in Northern NY. We welcome the change in color and all the blooming flowers and trees. It is a beautiful, rejuvenating time of year.



Our 2023 scholarship winners are Courtney Kerley and Mackenzie Ples. Courtney is a graduating senior from Lyme Central School who plans to attend St. Lawrence University majoring in Secondary Education Math. Mackenzie Ples is a graduating senior from Lowville Academy and Central School who plans to attend LeMoyne College majoring in Elementary Education. Their \$1000 awards will be presented by John Gaffney, Scholarship Chair, and Northern NY Community Foundation at the NCZ luncheon on June 27<sup>th</sup>.



Our Fall Business Luncheon on September 19th will feature Craig Sirianni as our program presenter. Mr. Sirianni, a renowned leading tenor in international opera houses, graduated from Watertown HS, Jefferson Community College and SUNY Fredonia. He will share some highlights of his career and clips from his operatic performances.

NCZ is hosting the RENY 2023 Convention. The committee is firming up workshops and putting the final touches on the cover for the convention booklet. We are excited with the preparations for our RENY gathering on October 11-13<sup>th</sup>.

**Dates to Remember:** NCZ Executive Council Meeting - August 8, 2023 NNCF 10:00 a.m.  
NCZ Fall Business Luncheon - September 19, 2023 - Ramada Inn, Watertown

## Northeastern Zone - By Tracey Howard, Public Relations Chair Clinton & Essex Counties

Recently our zone received an update from our Educator Grant recipient, Tricia Thurber, of Peru Middle School. Her Nighthawk Cultivation Project which started as a simple class adventure ended up bringing a community together.

In March, tiny seeds were planted by students and placed in portable greenhouses that were purchased with our grant. Shortly after germination came spring break, so a parent/student duo attended to the tiny seedlings during that time.

Word started to spread of the little greenhouses, and a former student donated baby spider plants to the mix. While waiting to be planted, a tech teacher walked by and asked about all the plants. Intrigued by the grant and community connection, he offered to enlist his tech students to create little pots using 3D printers that he set up in the classroom for students to observe. A possible partnership is in the works for next year as well.

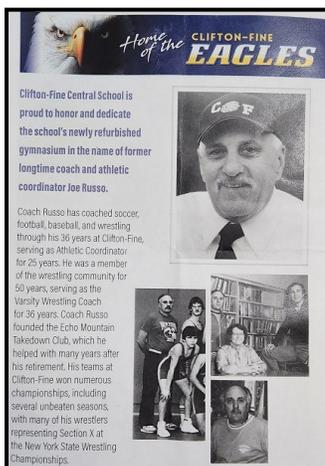
With the help of a MS Art teacher, the process has expanded to creating a "Green Team" Club, creating a garden in the courtyard, maintaining annuals and perennials around the outside of the school, and much more. The team hopes to partner with the PACE program to be able to expand this club and offer learning experiences for students after school for 6 week sessions.

Northeastern Zone RENY planted the seed that helped make it all happen!



# **ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS**

## **Northern Zone - By Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair Franklin & St. Lawrence Counties**



Special congratulations must go to our NZ Healthcare Chairman Joe Russo on the dedication of the newly renovated Clifton-Fine Central School Gymnasium renamed in his honor. In a special auditorium ceremony, former colleagues, administrators, support staff, and students regaled Joe with stories about their school experiences with him and how much they cherished his steadfast devotion to them and to sports at CFSD. One student even flew in from Georgia for the day to give an especially precious speech. Obviously, Joe's students and athletes greatly admired and loved their Physical Education teacher and coach. Ever the humble man, Joe's speech recognized his deep appreciation for the support of his school colleagues, his students, and his family; Joe did not forget the others who had his back in so many ways for all those years. Teaching and coaching require great



sacrifice. All the heartfelt accolades that went Joe's way were well deserved and rested on the shoulders of a truly good man!

NZ members gathered for the Spring membership meeting on May 24 at Bear's Den Restaurant in Hogansburg and viewed Mohawk cultural exhibits at the Akwesasne Cultural Center.

NZBOD meeting: July 26-Potsdam Methodist Church-10 a.m.-all welcome.

## **Southeastern Zone - By Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester**

*"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." Audrey Hepburn*

True, but we can look at our scholarship winners and know we can "believe in tomorrow".

Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association (MARTA) awarded four \$3,000 scholarships. Nicky Giannakakis from Chester Academy will attend St. John's University and study childhood education, grades 1-6. Kiera McPhillips from Valley Central HS will attend York College and major in math. Samantha Mynio from Washingtonville HS will major in health education at Messiah University. Maleah Young from Warwick HS will major in elementary education at SUNY Cortland.

The Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association (NARTA) awarded two \$2,000 scholarships. Joseph Ponesse from Newburgh Free Academy will attend SUNY Cortland and major in Physical Education. Gabriella Williams from Marlboro HS will attend SUNY New Paltz and major in Elementary Education.

Southeastern Zone held their annual spring luncheon in May at LA Casa Vicina. Debbie O'Donahue, a Registered Dietician with the Veterans' Healthcare Administration gave an informative talk on heart attacks and super foods. We learned many ways to strengthen our bodies as we age.

SEZ members unanimously approved a \$3,000 donation to The DeCormier Fund.

So fellow retirees, "Believe in tomorrow" and let these kids lead the way!



# ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

## Southern Zone - By Mary Lou Wood, Public Relations Chair

Broome, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins, Steuben (Bath, Haverling, Campbell-Savona, Corning, Painted Post, Bradford, Jasper-Troupsburg, Addison)

Summer is always a happy time. Our snowbirds are home, the birds are singing and nesting, (we're watching the second set of robins hatch and fly away), the flowers are blooming, people are out walking and socializing more, and our families are growing. But with that we have lost a few friends along the way. We are trying to reach out to old friends however some of them have only cell phones and haven't updated their new numbers. If you have moved or dropped a landline, call RENY at 518-482-3509 and pick choice 1 (Kristen) to update your information.

**President Lynne Hunkovic: Eastern Broome Branch Ret. Tchrs. (EBB)** continues to have wonderful speakers at its 2022-2023 luncheons, which resumed in October 2022 at the Relief Pitcher in Binghamton. At their June luncheon, they honored 90+ years old members with music from their "eras". They have wonderful speakers scheduled for our 2023-2024 EBB luncheons. They include John Darrow, an actor from the Preservation Society, a speaker from the Office for the Aging, the Johnson City High School Sophisticats (a musical group), an officer from the Binghamton Police Department Crime Prevention Bureau to discuss safety tips for seniors, the chief meteorologist from a local station, and Bob Connelly to discuss appraisals and antiques, to name a few. EBB will host the Southern Zone Annual Conference at the Relief Pitcher on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. Our guest speaker will be Larry Kassin, back by popular acclaim. He will discuss Rod Serling and "The Twilight Zone".

**President Debbi Deats: Corning Area Ret. Tchrs.' Assoc. (CARTA)** has finally found a permanent location at the Forest View-Gang Mills Fire Department for its meetings with a catered buffet by Billy Spaulding of Corning Catering. So far all meetings have been geared toward staying healthy and limber. Our last meeting introduced us to chair Yoga (lots of knees cracking). Please join us any time you can. We just ask you to let us know that we will be expecting you. The Corning Area Teachers' handed out one scholarship to a recipient of Corning-Painted Post High School student who will be entering college for a teaching degree.

**Vice President Don Cutton\*CR: Schuyler County Ret. Tchrs.** held a picnic style meeting on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Their speaker was Gary Emerson, County Historian, who talked about Charles Cook, Cook Academy, and the history about the dispute between Montour Falls and Watkins Glen over the County Seat. Charles Cook was involved in trying to establish Cornell University in Montour Falls. Unfortunately he was unsuccessful. Cornell University is established in Ithaca.

**President Nancy Spaulding: Elmira & Area Ret. Tchrs' Assoc. (EARTA)** have been very active this summer. Her next meeting will be focused on the Pre-Emption line and how Chemung County was formed. They will also celebrate their 90+ birthdays which is always a treat.



**Southern Zone Board of Directors:**

From left to right, Sitting: Debbi Deats, Jean McCormick, Don Cutton\*CR, Lois Cutton, and Mary Suffern.

From left to right, Standing; Lynne Hunkovic, Vince Smith\*CR, Nancy Spaulding, Bonnie Stratton, Mary Lou Wood, and our President Jerry Tagliaferri.



### MEMORIALS OF WORLD WAR II



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London's connections to World War II during a city tour focused on The Blitz. Cross the English Channel, retracing the parallel journey nearly 160,000 courageous Allied troops took on June 6th, 1944, as they set out to liberate Europe from the Nazis. Immerse yourself in the history of Normandy's D-Day Landing Beaches and visit the Normandy American Cemetery. Visit Saint-Mère-Église, the first French town liberated from the Nazis and learn about the brave paratroopers who parachuted into Normandy on the night of June 5-6, 1944. Conclude your journey in Paris, the City of Light with a festive dinner cruise along the Seine River.

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# ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS   ZONE NEWS

## Western Zone - By Audrey Seidel & Nancy White, Public Relations Co - Chairs

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Genesee

Western Zone is a busy and thriving zone in RENY. Unfortunately, as the years have gone by, for a variety of reasons, several of our units have considered disbanding, and one unit did come to the final decision to dissolve. This troubling concern is also true in a variety of organizations and businesses. It's a sad reality of our time, whether it's due to COVID and the isolation it forced many to endure, or peoples' busy lives and the need that they may feel to "pull back" from some responsibilities and group participation.



Fortunately, we are highlighting a wonderful unit in Genesee County that seriously contemplated disbanding, but has survived and is growing stronger as time goes on. We are talking about a true success story here. The reasons that they considered disbanding were: lack of leadership candidates, no volunteers for friendly server vacancies, and difficulty in obtaining names of recent retirees.

The success story started out by having an ad hoc committee with committed unit members. They were able to get a one-year commitment by individuals to form a slate of officers and through many conversations, emails, and various planning meetings their unit is emerging as quite a force.

Our WZ President, **Michelle Claus**, and past President, **Judy Farmer\*CR** have helped this unit RENY/ Western Zone/Genesee or GCREA, get back on its feet, by answering various questions the unit had, attending a meeting, and including the current president, Marcia Riley and Secretary Susan Schmidt in WZ Board of Directors' meetings.

The Genesee unit plans to hold two meetings per year, one in the spring, and one in the fall. Their first meeting/luncheon of the year was held in May and 40 members were in attendance. In July their scholarship committee will review criteria for scholarships that they plan on awarding. In October the unit will hold its fall meeting.

Another area that is important to GCREA is community service. Recently their "Transition Team" sponsored a drive to collect socks, underwear, and personal hygiene products for CASA, the Court Appointed Special Advocates for Genesee County kids whose circumstances put them in contact with the court system, picture at right. Many more engaging projects are hoped to be put in place in the future.



The rebirth of this unit is so encouraging and invigorating. The members in leadership positions are saving an important organization for prospective and current retirees in their surrounding communities. We wish them much continued success!



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Convention application

## How treating hearing loss can change your life for the better

Hearing loss often happens gradually over time. You may not even realize at first that you're not hearing sounds the way you used to. Or you may think that while your hearing isn't as good as it used to be, it's not bad enough to warrant a visit to a healthcare professional. You're not alone if that's the case.

However, treating hearing loss means so much more than improving your hearing. It can have a significant impact on many aspects of your life, including your relationships, mental health, and overall quality of life.

If you think you have hearing loss, you may be familiar with needing to ask people to repeat themselves. Or perhaps you've started to shy away from attending social events because you find it difficult to follow conversations. Treating hearing loss can open the door to better relationships.

According to MarkeTrak 2022, a comprehensive survey conducted by the Hearing Industries Association, 1 in 2 hearing aid users report their willingness to talk and engage improved due to their hearing aids. And 48 percent said their ability to participate in groups improved.<sup>1</sup>

But it's not just limited to group social settings. Nearly half of hearing aid users said their communication with their spouse or partner was better or a lot better after wearing hearing aids.<sup>1</sup>

When you can't hear well, everyday activities such as socializing, working or volunteering, or enjoying hobbies can be more challenging. These activities can even become stress inducing and lead to feelings of isolation.

Hearing loss has been associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety especially among those who don't currently own hearing aids.<sup>1,2</sup> But the good news is hearing aid use may lower those odds. Among the 65 percent of hearing aid users who wish they'd gotten their hearing aids sooner, better mental and emotional health was in the top two reasons why, after better social life.<sup>1</sup>

The impacts of hearing loss can be far reaching, but so can the benefits of treating it. Among hearing aid owners who got their devices in the last five years, nearly two-thirds say their hearing aids regularly improve their quality of life.<sup>1</sup>

Improvements were even noticed by individuals whose spouse or partner was the one who started wearing hearing aids. For example, 43% of respondents said their relationship was better or a lot better since their spouse or partner started wearing hearing aids.<sup>1</sup>

As a RENY member, you have access to hearing care through Hear In America® where you can save off the average retail price of high-quality hearing aids.

**If you're experiencing hearing difficulty, we hope you'll take advantage of this program. Call Hear In America at 1-800-286-6149 to schedule a hearing exam with a provider near you.**

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Retired Teachers' Association  
DBA Retired Educators of New York (RENY)  
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**Dated Material—Do Not Delay**

<sup>1</sup> MarkeTrak 2022. Hearing Industries Association (HIA).

<sup>2</sup> Bigelow RT, Reed NS, Brewster KK, et al. Association of Hearing Loss With Psychological Distress and Utilization of Mental Health Services Among Adults in the United States. JAMA Netw Open. 2020.