



WESTERN CURRENTS



NEWSLETTER of the WESTERN ZONE of the NEW YORK STATE RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

Volume 14, Number 2

www.wzretiredteachers.org

April 2016

President's Message

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT YOU CAN DO!



Doris R. Kirsch

Based on the latest figures, Western Zone's membership is a little less than 4,000, making it the largest of the ten NYSRTA Zones. From my "unbiased" opinion, WZ is not only the largest zone, but also the best in many ways. But, there is always room for improvement and I'd like to offer a few suggestions of how YOU can help WZ to become bigger and better.

- pay your dues in a timely fashion; if you have become delinquent, simply renew your membership
- recruit new members; invite non-member colleagues who retired a few years ago and might now be ready to get back into the educational arena
- make it a personal goal to recruit (or win back) one member; personal contact is most effective
- volunteer to serve as an officer, board member or committee member of WZ
- contribute to the WZ Annual Appeal. Specific information can be found later in this newsletter. Thank you for your past generosity. Continuous financial assistance is necessary to maintain our programs and services.
- support your local unit by attending meetings, serving in leadership positions, contributing to charitable/scholarship programs
- If you live in an area that does not have a functioning unit (Tonawanda/Niagara Falls, Orchard Park/ Hamburg, Cattaraugus County) help us to organize an active unit
- notify us of the deaths of colleagues so we can maintain accurate membership records and include all deceased educators in our annual Memorial Tribute

- consider honoring your deceased colleagues/friends by making a memorial donation to your unit's charitable activities, scholarship fund, WZ's Teacher Grant Program or the NYSRTA sponsored DeCormier Fund
- inform us of changes in your address so you will keep uninterrupted delivery of your Western Currents and York State publications
- inform your unit and zone of those who would benefit from the Friendly Service Committee (cards, visitations, supportive phone calls...)
- alert our needy members of the availability of financial assistance; offer to help them in submitting the necessary paperwork. All requests and grants of money are kept confidential
- be visible in your former school or district in which you reside; volunteer your services, attend concerts, athletic events
- be an example of our slogan: "NYS Retired Teachers' Association supports public education!"
- keep informed of current trends in public education and matters of concern to all retirees; make your feelings known to the "powers that be". Vote!
- visit our zone (www.wzretiredteachers.org) and state (www.nysrta.org) websites for updates
- give encouragement and support to the educators who are still in the classroom as they face the many challenges in today's educational process
- support the actions of other groups that share our common interests (NYSUT, SAANYS, NEA, AARP, Network in Aging...)
- mark your calendar for the 2016 WZ Annual Meeting to be held on September 21st at Salvatore's; Social Security and Medicare will be the main topics of the Keynote Speaker
- offer suggestions on how our retiree organizations can better serve you
- feel free to contact me or any of the officers with questions/comments

HOW MANY OF THESE RELATIVELY EASY SUGGESTIONS CAN YOU IMPLEMENT IN 2016?

**WESTERN ZONE
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2015-2016**

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SPOTLIGHT ON

Spotlight on Judy Farmer



Judy Farmer is a busy lady! She has recently taken on more responsibility as she was elected as Secretary of NYSRTA at the annual convention in October 2015.

Judy graduated from West Seneca High School in 1962, earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Bob Jones University in 1966 and a Master of Science degree from Canisius College in 1994. She taught at the Iroquois Central School district for 31 years, retiring in 2005. While there, she was the corresponding secretary

of the Iroquois Faculty Association and a member of the Negotiation Team.

After retirement, Judy joined NYSRTA. She is a board member of Western Zone and has served as corresponding and recording secretary. Judy is a member of Eastern Erie Retired Teachers' Association and is presently the president and on the Legislative Action Committee.

She is also very active in her community serving as the Social Chairman of the First Baptist Church of Marilla, a member of the Marilla Historical Society, Calvary Heights Baptist Church and the DAV Auxiliary. Judy has served as recording secretary of the Marilla Senior Citizens and is presently the president.

She also keeps very busy with her family. Judy has been married to John for 48 years. They have two children, John Jr. who is a correction officer for the NYS Prison System and Julie Lathrop, an office support person at Ingram Micro and also a Marilla Town Councilwoman. They are the proud grandparents of two, John MacLeod, who is in the United States Navy and James Lathrop, who Judy babysits for often. Judy also devotes time to her father who lives nearby.

The old adage holds true – if you need something done ask a busy person. As you can see, Judy is a busy person who is always ready to take on more responsibility and help in any way she can. She was recognized for her many talents and devotion to WZ at the 2015 Annual Meeting by receiving the Citation Award. We are proud to have Judy as a WZ board member, Recording Secretary of NYSRTA and most of all as a friend. She is well deserving of our praise and we are delighted to Spotlight her in Western Currents.

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**Questions and/or comments may be forwarded to our Zone President,
Doris Kirsch, at (585) 457-3315 or wdkirsch@gmail.com**

WESTERN CURRENTS is the official newsletter of the Western Zone, New York State Retired Teachers' Association, Inc., PO Box 922, Williamsville, NY 14231-0922 and is published three times yearly in April, August and December. Members are invited to submit articles for publication on topics that would be of interest to their fellow retirees. Advertising is also welcomed from both members and non-members. For additional information on copy guidelines and advertising format and rates, contact the editors:

Sandra W. Kelley, Editor
(716) 772-7807

Michelle L. Claus, Advertising
(716) 649-3844

Robert J. Metz, Layout
(716) 662-0734

OUR 107 YEAR YOUNG WESTERN ZONE MEMBER

Compiled by Sandra Kelley



What began as a routine task for Anne Flansburg turned into a delightful personal adventure! The address of Hazel Nilson, a Western Zone member was in question as she was listed as living in Wisconsin. Upon googling Hazel (oh the joys of the Internet) a 2015 article written by Mr. Paul Mitchell about Hazel was found, mentioning that she was moving to an assisted living facility in NH, to be closer to family members. He was more than happy to give his permission to use any part of his article we chose. Anne's superb detective skills didn't end there. She googled the assisted living facility, found a phone number and called. When she inquired about Hazel, the receptionist she was speaking to said, "Oh, Hazel. She is in the next room. Just a minute and I will get her for you." This resulted in a 15 minute delightful conversation with Hazel, and pictures of Hazel were sent via email.

Hazel turned 107 on August 21, 2015. She went to school in Indianapolis, where she and her husband, "Swede", met and were both physical education majors. They got their first job offers in the Buffalo Public School District, where they spent their entire careers. She retired from Kensington High School in 1965. After retirement, Hazel and her husband, Swede, moved to Stone Lake, WI and spent most winters in warmer climates. Can you imagine being retired for 50 years!

In the article Hazel commented, "I would recommend assisted living to anyone. You have to adjust to it, because if you don't, then you're sad." Hazel has made many friends in her new home. "We are in the same boat," she said, "all mentally sharp people who have gotten older".

Once a teacher, always a teacher! Hazel teaches an exercise session for residents every day, called "Sit and Be Fit". "When I lead the exercise class," she said, "people have a ball. In the class, people stretch and move in their chairs or wheelchairs."

"People can be happy wherever they are", Hazel said. "It's all about attitude. You have to accept life as it is, and enjoy people, and life will be great." She's met a few people who haven't learned that lesson. Hazel said, "Some don't accept being old, but it's no use. You can't change it."

Hazel is the proud mother of two boys, a grandmother of six, and boasts of thirteen great-grandchildren. Hazel stated that she has received birthday and greeting cards from Western Zone Friendly Service throughout the years and that each time she does, it makes her feel at home again.

This charming, delightful and young at heart retired teacher, Hazel, has the honor of being the oldest known member of Western Zone. We can all take a lesson from her... "Accept life as it is, enjoy people and life will be great"!

Calling All Golfers--Rescheduled

This is an open invitation to all golfers, both male and female. The Buffalo Retired Teachers Golf Tournament at Terry Hills Golf Course has been rescheduled to Tuesday, June 14, 2016. Shotgun start begins at 12:30 pm and includes 18 holes of golf with cart and lunch at the turn and a steak dinner after golf. Prizes are included. Cost is \$75 per golfer. Contact Steve Parada at 716-472-0277 or srada48@yahoo.com



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ASSISTED LIVING at WEST SENECA
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716-677-4242

ASSISTED LIVING at WHEATFIELD
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WESTERN ZONE TRIP TO CHICAGO – The Windy City

August 15 - 19, 2016

Join Western Zone members and Know How Tours to visit Chicago, which is America's most popular mid-western City, for a five day, four night get-away! Experience this "must see" destination as well as the beauty, culture, and education that annually attract over 48 million people. Family and friends of Western Zone members are welcome, so please share this information with them.

The trip cost includes: motor coach transportation, lodging, four breakfasts, four dinners, admission to all attractions, and gratuities for standard meals, guides and bus driver. We will visit Shedd – the world's largest indoor aquarium, the historic Navy Pier, the largest Science Museum in the Western Hemisphere, the Chicago Fed Money Museum, Lincoln Park Conservatory and much more. Enjoy a guided bus tour, an architectural cruise of the "Windy City" as well as dinner and entertainment at Tommy Gun's Dinner Theatre. A tour of the University of Notre Dame has been included on the trip home.

The all-inclusive price is only \$798 per person for double occupancy, \$778 for triple occupancy and \$998 for single occupancy. Reservations are now being accepted by completing the form below and enclosing a **\$100** deposit per person. Remember – this trip is on a "**first paid-first served**" deposit basis, and dependent on getting adequate reservations for the bus. Once the bus is filled, additional payees will be put on a waiting list. Seats will be limited, so reserve quickly! Two pickups will be scheduled, one in Williamsville and one in Hamburg. Luggage tags and additional information will be provided.

Optional travel insurance is available, but not included in the cost. IF you wish to purchase insurance for the trip, a separate check must be written, made out to Western Zone RTA, and sent in with the reservation. Insurance per person, for triple or double occupancy is \$44, and for single occupancy is \$52, payable with deposit. If there are any questions, please contact Judy Klug at 716-632-6251 or Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com. All e-mails and calls will be acknowledged.

Please send a deposit of **\$100 per person**, payable to Western Zone RTA by or before **April 15, 2016**. (Remember, reservations are accepted in the order of date received.) The balance for this trip is requested by **June 15, 2016**, payable to Western Zone RTA and sent to address below. To guarantee a reservation for this trip, send completed form and deposit check NOW to:

Judy Klug

52 Harrogate Sq

Williamsville NY 14221-4051

-----DETACH and send to Judy Klug by or before April 15, 2016-----

Check to **Western Zone RTA** for trip to Chicago August 15-19, 2016 (deposit of **\$100 per person**)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____ E-mail _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Pickup location preferred (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg

Special needs or requests _____

Check # _____ Amount _____

ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

As of this writing, the Annual President's Appeal is approaching. Western Zone thanks all members who have made contributions and appeals to those who have not yet contributed to consider a donation.

WZ needs your voluntary contributions in order to:

- ✓ provide financial assistance to our needy members
- ✓ continue the excellent work of the Friendly Service Committee
- ✓ retain granting incentive awards to active teachers
- ✓ present informative workshops
- ✓ maintain the publication of three newsletters per year

Should you have any questions regarding this appeal, please contact Doris Kirsch at 585-457-3315 or email her at wdkirsch@gmail.com.

PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE OUR SERVICE TO YOU BY FILLING OUT THE FORM BELOW AND SENDING IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO THE ADDRESS INDICATED.

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ E-Mail _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Local Unit _____ (if applicable)
Donation Amount: _____ \$10 _____ \$20 _____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ Other

Please make checks payable to: **Western Zone-NYSRTA** and send to:

**Western Zone-NYSRTA
P.O. Box 922
Williamsville, NY 14231-0922**

WZ Founder's Fund Checks Delivered

The Founder's Fund is a Community Service Project of the Western Zone of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association. It was started in 1959. That year Gertrude Tucker of Alden gave a legacy of \$30,000 to the Western Zone to establish a fund, which would create a retired teachers' home in Western New York. Emma Lodge, in her will, also gave a legacy of \$12,365 to this Fund. Over the years, with the interests and additional legacies that were given, the Fund grew.

However, the cost of the retired teachers' home grew much faster, and it was unable to be established. In keeping with objectives of the Fund, the interest income of the Fund has been used to assist the needy of the Western Zone. This past year the income from the Fund was used to assist the Friendly Service activities, the Meals on Wheels Program in the Zone, Niagara County Office for the Aging "Home Meals Program" and the Network in Aging Center at the University of Buffalo.

Continued on page 7

WZ Founder's Fund, continued from page 6



John Cardarella presenting a check to Lisa Woodring, Foundation Director of Meals on Wheels of WNY and Dennis Priore distributing a check to Dan Wiles of the KenTon Meals on Wheels.

Here are a few statistics from some of the agencies the Founder's Fund supports.

- Meals on Wheels of Western NY – 1500 volunteers, 1800 clients, 3600 meals daily.
- Amherst Meals on Wheels – 425 volunteers, 260 clients, 520 meals daily.
- Home Meals Program – 375 clients, 60+ volunteers, 300 – meals daily.



Embrace Aging.

The desire to evade an entire season of life is bound to leave us all questioning what is important. You do not need to question, though. You have nothing to evade, no empty promise to cling loosely to. You do not grieve for life past. You are too busy embracing your life today. Aging is not the enemy. Underestimating it is. Others might think it is time to slow down. Good luck convincing your heart.

Presbyterian Village at North Church, 214 Village Park Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221 • 716-631-3430

Lockport Presbyterian Home, 305-327 High Street, Lockport, NY 14094 • 716-434-8805

Ken-Ton Presbyterian Village, 3735 Delaware Ave., Kenmore, NY 14217 • 716-874-6070



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Lancaster-Depew Retired Teachers Association



The Fall Gathering of the LDRTA was held for the first time at Ripas on Thursday, October 22, 2015. President Ann Marie Wik welcomed the group. Phyllis Dickinson who is in charge of friendly service gave a recap of the year and offered to send cards to members who are sick or have experienced a loss. Ann Marie recapped the annual meeting, which several members attended in September. David Keefe was the speaker who talked about the possibility of a Constitutional Convention and its relevance to NYS retirement.

Ron Czapla talked about the Western Zone teacher grants. There are 2 grants of \$500 given to current teachers who need funding for an innovative project or a student presentation for audiences. Gabe Sciolino talked about the importance of being a member of NYSRTA.

Ann Marie has also started a scrapbook to archive the group's activities as well as information pertaining to individual members. She would like members to send articles, newspaper clippings etc. to help her out with this or bring them to the next meeting.

Donations were made to the Robert R. DeCormier Foundation, sponsoring a team and unit ad for the Trivia Contest held at the Lancaster Youth Bureau and a donation to the Boys and Girls Club.

Dates to Save:

- LDRTA Spring Luncheon -May 10, 2016 Lancaster Country Club
- NYSUT Christmas Party - Tuesday Dec 8, 2015 – Salvatore's
- NYSRTA Annual Meeting Sept 21, 2016

At our spring 2015 meeting we discussed what service projects retired teachers around the state participate in. Our group has made donations to various community causes. This year we were hoping to do something extra. It was suggested by Heidi Chaves to participate in the "Socktober" project, a request for socks to be donated in October. We encouraged everyone to bring new socks (men, women or children's) to the fall luncheon. I am pleased to report that 318 pairs of new socks were collected and donated to the Clothes Closet for the Lancaster Youth Bureau. If anyone would like to learn more about Socktober and Kid President...use this link... <http://soulpancake.com/socktober/>

Ann Marie Wik
President, Lancaster Depew Retired Teachers' Association

DO YOU KNOW OF A WZ MEMBER IN NEED OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

If you, or any member of Western Zone is experiencing temporary or long-term financial difficulties, call WZ President Doris Kirsch at 585-457-3315. We have funds available, to assist members who are unable to purchase medicine, to pay utility bills, to receive medical or dental care, or to provide for other basic necessities of life. All requests will be held in strictest confidence. The President's Fund, Friendly Service, and the DeCormier Fund have been established to offer financial assistance to members of NYSRTA, and we urge you to apply if there is a financial need.



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Be sure to watch Dr. Sam Shatkin & Dr. Todd Shatkin on AM Buffalo segment called "Gr8 Look Monday" which airs the first and third monday of each month during the AM Buffalo program on Channel 7 ABC-TV affiliate weekdays between 10-11 am.

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FUTURE -- Mark your calendars! Western Zone's fall travel trip, from **October 2 - 5, 2016**, will feature Gettysburg and Amish Lands of Lancaster, including the amazing performance of "SAMSON". Check the website www.wzretiredteachers.org for details and a reservation form under "Coming Events", or contact Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631.

The Western Zone of the NYSRTA announces the winners of its recent Teacher Grant Competition

In the category for a uniquely creative classroom-related project, the winning proposal entitled *CONVERSACIONES: Promoting Classroom Conversations and Interactions with Student-created Images and Videos* was submitted by Dr. Anna Barrett, a foreign language teacher at Lockport High School.

Maria Ebersole, movement/eurythmy teacher at the Aurora Waldorf School in West Falls submitted the winning entry entitled *Music and Movement Exchange: Beethoven, Schumann, and a Celtic Tale* in the cultural presentation category.

Both of the winners will receive a grant of \$500 toward the culmination of their proposed educational projects in their respective schools.

CARDIOLOGISTS' TIPS FOR HEALTHY HEARTS

- * Trash the cigarettes * Reduce your sugar intake * Monitor your numbers (cholesterol, blood pressure)
- * Keep your weight under control * Find a physical activity that you enjoy * Don't worry too much

CITATION AWARDS AT THE WESTERN ZONE ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Three awards were given at this year's Annual Luncheon. The recipients were Gail Niparts, Judy Farmer, and Loretta Peszynski.

Gail Niparts has been Western Zone's Second Vice President for three years. She has done a superlative job of planning our annual luncheons. She is currently the President of Eastern Niagara Retired Teachers Association and the President of District #3 of NYSUT. Gail retired from the Lockport School System.

Judy Farmer is the current Recording Secretary of Western Zone and she was the previous Corresponding Secretary. Judy is the President of the Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Association. Judy was recently elected Secretary of NYSRTA. Judy is President of the Marilla Senior Group. She retired from the Iroquois School System.

Loretta Peszynski is the Corresponding Secretary of Western Zone. She is a board member of the Buffalo Retired Teachers' Association and a board member of NYSUT #44. Loretta has chaired the Federal Legislation Committee and has written the Christmas cards for 90+ year olds for many years. Loretta retired from the Buffalo School System.

BUFFALO RETIRED TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION

Charles Peszynski, President of BRTA, reported that the annual Christmas luncheon at Salvatore's was enjoyed by 257 members. Donations were made to St. Luke's Mission of Mercy.

The winter luncheon was held at Sean Patrick's with 115 attending. \$200 was collected and will be donated to the Variety Club Telethon.

“GETTYSBURG/AMISH LANDS”, including” SAMSON” Oct 2 - 5, 2016

Join Western Zone members and White Star Tours to enjoy a four day trip to Gettysburg and to the Amish Country. Enjoy a narrated bus tour in Gettysburg, and visit the Eisenhower National Historic Site as well as other points of interest in the area. The next day, travel to the Amish Country, where you will have a guided tour that will be fun-filled, educational, and memorable. While there, experience the sights and sounds of the famous “**SAMSON**” - one of the most captivating stories in the Bible, and watch as he literally “brings down the temple”. After this dramatic play, enjoy a family-style dinner. Family and friends of Western Zone members are welcome, so please share this information with them.

The trip cost includes: motor coach transportation, the performance of SAMSON, three nights lodging, three breakfasts, as well as three dinners including Lancaster County’s largest smorgasbord, SHADY MAPLE, where you will find genuine Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. The price also includes gratuities for standard meals, guides and bus driver. The price is only **\$494** per person for double occupancy, **\$470** for triple occupancy and **\$694** for single occupancy. All hotel rooms are non-smoking, unless requested otherwise. Reservations are now being accepted by completing the form below and enclosing a \$50 deposit per person. Remember – this trip is on a “**first paid-first served**” deposit basis, and dependent on getting adequate reservations for the bus. Once the bus is filled, additional payees will be put on a waiting list, and will be notified accordingly. Seats will be limited, so reserve quickly, as our trips fill very quickly! For special needs, such as a handicapped room, first floor location, or near an elevator, please advise below.

If there are any questions, please contact Betty Browne at 716-207-6152, Judy Klug at 716-632-6251, or Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com. All e-mails and calls will be acknowledged.

Two pickups will be scheduled, one in Williamsville and one in Hamburg, with locations to be announced. Luggage tags and additional information will be provided. Optional travel insurance is available and may be purchased directly through Berkely Insurance at 1-800-388-1470.

Please send a deposit of **\$50** per person, payable to Western Zone RTA by or before **August 15, 2016**. (Remember, reservations are accepted in the order of date received.) The balance for this trip is due by **September 8, 2016**. Send completed form and check to:

Betty Browne

3011 Cloverbank Road #43

Hamburg, NY 14075-3461

-----DETACH and send to Betty Browne by or before August 15, 2016-----

Western Zone RTA – Deposit for trip to Gettysburg/Amish Country Oct 2 – 5, 2016

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ E-mail _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Pickup location preferred (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg

Special needs or requests _____

Check # _____ **Amount** _____

NYSRTA Legislative Action Committee

Judy Klug, Chair

On Jan. 5th, Angelo Grande, NYSRTA president, met with NYSUT President Karen Magee and her staff. NYSRTA members attending were Kevin Mulligan (NEZ)-Sr.VP; Brian Sherman (NCZ)-VP for Legislative Action; Janice Mullins (EZ)-State Legislation chair; and Rod Sherman (NEZ).

In Angelo's report to members he said they had a very successful meeting and were able to get a better understanding of how both of our organizations work. He felt it was a great beginning. We had made some progress in the past but there was still a lack of dialogue between our 2 organizations.

Topics of discussion included the issue of the 2017 Constitutional Convention vote and its implications. Angelo is forming a coalition of other retiree groups to work to stop the Constitutional Convention. Currently they include SAANY-School Administrators Association of NYS, RPEA-Retired Public Employees Association and the Alliance of Public Employees of NYS. Also discussed were the Common Core and Student Testing in New York State. They agreed there will be a change in Student Testing.

The NYSRTA Legislative Action Committee will be meeting on March 13 & 14 to finalize the state advocacy agenda and set a federal advocacy agenda as well. State advocates will be visiting their state legislators in April and federal advocates will be visiting their US Senators and Congressmen during the summer.

Please consider a contribution to the Western Zone's President's Fund—See page 6 for details!



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Spring Opening

Premier Retirement Community adding Enhanced Assisted Living and Memory Care.

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