

## WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 14, Number 3

#### www.wzretiredteachers.org

August 2016

## TEACHING IS THE PROFESSION THAT TEACHES ALL OTHER PROFESSIONS

WZ units raise money by 50/50 raffles, member donations, and in memorial of passed members to name a few. The units raise the money for the scholarships in their respective school districts.

Scholarships are financial awards to further their education. They are awarded based upon each unit's criteria. The scholarship is given for a reason, usually academic, and/or agreeing to follow a teaching career.

Members of WZ feel strongly about the pay it forward phrase. Ask any of our members, they have a twinkle in their eye when asked about why they became a teacher. These retirees have the same twinkle when they talk about supporting high school graduates that have chosen the field of education.

Award money is not repaid and has been raised by the members of the unit. We pass the teaching torch to our young, bright students that want to be lifelong learners and teachers. "Teachers teach because they care. Teaching young people is what they do best. It requires long hours, patience, and care." This is a quote from Horace Mann, a person who promoted public education and teacher training during his lifetime in the 1800's.

Below are the recipients of the 2016 scholarships and their respective school districts.

- The Buffalo Retired Teachers Association (BRTA) awards three scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each. The first two scholarships are awarded strictly on academic achievement. The third scholarship recognizes academic as well as community and school service. It is presented in memory of Josephine Slacer, a former President of BRTA.
- Julia Ziaja, City Honors School
- ➤ Alexa Reardon, School #156, Frederick Law Olmstead
- Selena Diaz, McKinley High School
- Buffalo Retired Administrators Association (BRAA) Scholarships are named for Jacqueline Morana, former principal of Houghton Academy. Two \$50 Incentive awards are given to eighth grade recipients and three \$1,000 scholarships are given to seniors.

- > Kaprue Htoo -International Prep
- Umaya Mehbub International Prep
- Naomi Nimely Hutch Tech
- Chautauqua South (SCCRTA) awarded three scholarships this year in the amount of \$1200 each.
  - ➤ Luke Lindeman, Southwestern
  - Makayla Keefe, Chautauqua Lake
  - ➤ Ellen Lockwood, Bemus Point
- Eastern Erie (EERTA) has given more than \$40,000 in 4 districts since inception. Starting in 1994, the scholarship amount was \$100 each, now it is \$700 per recipient.
  - Emma Retzlaff, Alden
  - ➤ Lia Hanes-Stetter, East Aurora
  - > Kayla Reumann, Holland
  - ➤ Jacob Zelasko, Iroquois
  - Mallory Ronan, Alden, Amelia Szymanski Memorial Scholarship (not unit sponsored)
- Genesee County schools awarded three, \$500 scholarships to:
  - ➤ Emily George
  - ➤ Alison Baker
  - Jenna Bird
- The Lackawanna unit awards two \$1,000 scholarships per year.
- Niagara East gives \$500 to one of each of the six school districts.
  - > Megan Ciotuszynski, Newfane
  - Lindsey Williams, Barker
  - > Rebecca Hunt, Royalton-Hartland
  - > Emily Wanamaker, Starpoint
  - Brooke Sanford, Lockport
  - Michael Bell, Wilson
- Springville/West Valley gives one scholarship to a student that has declared teaching as their major. The scholarship amount is \$1,000. The recipient is Kaylee Schreiber.

WESTERN ZONE OFFICERS 2015-2016

**Elected Officers** President Doris R. Kirsch **1st Vice President** Robert J. Metz **2nd Vice President** Gail A. Niparts **Treasurer** Don E. Lawrence **Recording Secretary** Judith F. Farmer **Corresponding Secretary** Loretta M. Peszynski Membership Secretary Marilyn Tota Past President Charles T. Peszynski

**At Large Directors** 

Term Expiring 2016
Betty P. Browne
Ronald A. Czapla
Elizabeth Egan
Anne G. Flansburg
Thomas A. Giambra
Beth Green
Rob Roy Griffith
Sandra W. Kelley
Alphonse Marabella
Robert J. Metz
Marie Gerace Zafron

Term Expiring 2017
Georgann Bemis
John N. Cardarella
Maxine F. Dowler
Doris R. Kirsch
Don E. Lawrence
William D. Loockerman
Ruthe L. Nemmer
Gail A. Niparts
Stanley J. Nowak
Mary V. O'Leary
Theresa E. Pope
Marilyn K. Tota

Term Expiring 2018
Gary Beuth
June Beuth
Russell M. Gervasi
Patricia Keller
Judith A. Klug
Loretta M. Peszynski
Sara Rodland
Dolores A. Scanlon
Salvatore J. Sedita
Audrey M. Seidel
Nancy White
Irene D. Zinter

SPOTLIGHT ON Michelle Claus



DIRECTORS/AREA UNIT PRESIDENTS

AMHERST Joseph A. Podgorski

BUFFALO Charles Peszynski

> EASTERN ERIE Judy F. Farmer

GENESEE
James Owen

KENMORE
Dennis A. Priore

LACKAWANNA
Tina Gambino

LANCASTER/DEPEW
Ann Marie Wik

EASTERN NIAGARA
Gail A. Niparts

SOUTHERN CHAUTAUQUA
Nancy Anderson

SPRINGVILLE/WEST VALLEY
Michelle L. Claus

WEST SENECA
Patricia W. Miceli

WILLIAMSVILLE
Therese C. Clarke

Michelle Claus is a role model for loving life, being involved and helping others. She seeks out opportunities for both professional and personal growth." I am too busy" is not in her vocabulary and she is always excited to take on new challenges and responsibilities.

Michelle has been married to Joseph Claus for forty-two years. They have two children,

Christopher (Jill) of Chicago and Jonathan of Buffalo. They adore their two grandchildren, Cameron and Calvin, and visit them often.

Michelle received her BS degree from Rosary Hill in 1972 and her MS from Canisius College in 1975. She began her teaching career at Hamburg Jr. High in 1977. The following year she accepted a position at Springville Griffith Institute Middle School, where she taught math for twenty-nine years. While teaching, Michelle became an active member of the Springville Faculty Association. She was a building rep, a negotiating team member, APPR lead teacher rep, a member of the Executive Committee, served as treasurer for six years and vice president for four years. Her involvement in the union helped the working relationships between teachers and administrators.

Michelle was instrumental in the formation of Springville's mentoring program, which received a national award. Years of unofficially mentoring colleagues prepared her to serve as SGI Lead District Mentor. In 1987 she was Teacher of the Year and in 2007 she was Western New York Women in Educational Leadership Mentor of the Year.

Michelle is also an active community member. She coached soccer for the town of Hamburg for twenty years, has been the president of Concerned Citizens of Hamburg for four years, and within the last year became a Notary Public.

Since her retirement in 2007, Michelle has been an active member of the Springville/ West Valley Retired Teachers Association. She has been president for two years, during which time the group's membership has increased in size. Michelle's positive and energetic attitude is key in realizing her goal of more active member involvement in the organization.

Michelle has been a member of Western Zone NYSTRA since 2014. She has contributed quarterly to YORK STATE, authored articles, and served as advertising director in Western Currents, served on the Awards Committee, chaired the Public Relations Committee, been in charge of reservations and vendors at the Annual Western Zone meeting, and attended the NYSRTA Annual Convention each year.

Michelle Claus is truly a leader who is ready to pitch in and help in any way that she can. She inspires and motivates others to do the same. It is with great pride that this month's Spotlight is on Michelle Claus.

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

#### **NYSRTA Legislative Action Committee**

Judy Klug, Chair



Judy Klug

enough in this day and age.

The State Legislation advocacy period was completed with our local advocates visiting their respective State Legislators in April and May. From the reports I have received they were successful in obtaining support for the bills on our agenda. No movement has been made on any of the bills as of this date.

There is one bill which needs some extra help to get passed. This is the "Minimum Pension Bump-Up" bill. This bill provides for an increase in pension for those educators who retired before July 1, 1980. Please write to your state senator and assemblyman or woman asking them to support the passage of this bill. These retirees are receiving pensions based on a final salary of \$16,000 to \$17,000, not

The Federal Legislation advocacy period will begin soon. The State Legislative Action Committee will meet in a conference call at a time to be determined to discuss and finalize the Federal agenda. The local advocates will be visiting our US Senators and congressmen this summer to seek their support.



#### "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. 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 \$624 for single occupancy. All hotel rooms are non-smoking, unless requested otherwise. Complete the form below and enclose a \$50 deposit per person. Remember – this trip is on a "first paid-first served" deposit basis. Once the bus is filled, additional payees will be put on a waiting list, and will be notified accordingly. Reserve now, as our trips fill very quickly! For special needs, such as a handicapped room, first floor location, food allergies, 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 <a href="mailto:anneflanswz@aol.com">anneflanswz@aol.com</a>. 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. Press Option #1, the tour operator is White Star, operator #386097. You will be asked your cost of trip. The form will be sent or you can use a credit card to pay.

Please send a deposit of \$50 per person, payable to <u>Western Zone RTA</u> by or before <u>August 15, 2016</u>. (Remember, reservations are accepted in the order of date received.) The balance for this trip is due by <u>September 8, 2016</u>.

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					
Emergency contact Phone					
Pickup location preferred (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg					
Special needs or requests					
Check # Amount					

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#### ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S APPEAL

As of this writing, the Annual President's Appeal continues. 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			S	tate	ZIP		
Local Unit					(if applicable)		
Donation Amount:	\$10	\$20	\$30	\$50 _	Other		
Please make checks payable to: Western Zone-NYSRTA							
P.O. Box 922							
Williamsville, NY 14231-0922							





#### Mary O'Leary

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES NOMINEES Mary V. O'Leary, Chair

The Nominations Committee has announced candidates for positions of Board of Directors and Officers of Western Zone. They will be elected at the annual meeting to be held on **September 21st** at Salvatore's Italian Gardens for a three year term.

The candidates are: Elizabeth Browne, Ronald Czapla, Elizabeth Egan, Anne Flansburg, Thomas Giambra, Beth Green, Maria Hager, Suzanne Lach, Sandra Kelley, Alphonse Marabella, Robert Metz, and Marie Zafron.

Officers will be elected by a vote of the Board of Directors at a regular meeting following the business session. The nominated candidates are:

President	Doris Kirsch
1st Vice President	Robert J. Metz
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Gail Niparts
Treasurer	-
Recording Secretary	Audrey Seidel
Corresponding Secretary	· ·
Membership Secretary	•
Past President	

Nominations may also be made from the floor of the annual business meeting. According to the bylaws, Article VIII, Section 14g, any candidate nominated from the floor can only be considered if he/she has an active resume on file with the Nominations Committee prior to the annual meeting.









## 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





www.pscwny.org

#### **Maxine Dowler**



Maxine Dowler, a devoted and long-time member of the Board of Directors of Western Zone, passed away in December. Maxine was an elementary teacher who taught kindergarten, first, and second grade in the Salamanca City Central School for more than 30 years. She retired from teaching in 1989, but stayed active in education in so many ways. Upon joining Western Zone, she served as President of her local Cattaraugus West Unit, and was active on several committees, including the Founder's Fund Distribution, Remembrance, and Membership.

Whenever a need arose for an individual to be a spokesperson and advocate for the youth, elderly, ill, or otherwise needy, Maxine was always in the forefront. Usually soft-spoken but always passionate and knowledgeable, she was not afraid to make herself heard when the need arose. She had a true gift for getting people the resources they needed to improve their lives. She went beyond advocacy, working directly with students and showing them what they could achieve with hard work and guidance.

She served as a Board Member for four school districts, as well as the New York State and the National School Board Associations. She served as a Director of the Seneca Nation Cultural Program in the Salamanca City Central School District, and was recognized as a Woman of Distinction by New York State. Maxine was a Seneca Nation Library Trustee, a lay advocate for the Seneca National Judicial Department, and a member of the Indigenous Women's Initiatives in Buffalo. She volunteered as a reader for elementary children, and volunteered in an alternative education school as well. Grateful to be a cancer survivor, she chaired fund raising activities for the American Cancer Society.

Maxine loved to travel, but her family was truly her passion. She was the proud mother of two sons, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A Native American Prayer reminds us of the love, passion, and leadership that Maxine Dowler displayed to her students, her family, the many people she advocated for, members of Western Zone, and indeed all she met.

#### I Give You This One Thought

I give you this one thought to keep, I am with you still - I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the diamond glints on the snow, I am the sunlight on ripened grain, I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight. I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not think of me as gone. I am with you still - in each new dawn.

#### MAY MAXINE DOWLER, OUR BELOVED WZ BOARD MEMBER REST IN PEACE!

## NYS Retired Teachers Association Western Zone

Cordially invites members and guests to attend
The Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at
Salvatore's Italian Gardens
6461 Transit Road, Depew, NY (683-7990)

Program to include Guest Speaker Barry Kaufmann, President of NYSARA

8:15-9:15 Registration and Vendor Exhibits; Coffee & past 9:30 Barry Kaufmann Challenges Facing Seniors 11:00 General Membership Meeting preceded by Che Luncheon with Board Meeting to follow	and How to Solve Them				
Luncheon with Salad, Potato, Vegetable,	Dessert, and Coffee or Tea				
Choice of: 1. Prime Rib	\$29.95				
2. Salmon with Lobster Dill Sauce	\$29.93 \$28.00				
3. Chicken Milanese (with Panko, Tomato, Red Onion	·				
4. Roasted Vegetable Plate with Mediterranean Orzo	\$24.00				
Reservation Deadline: Friday, September 9, 2016					
Checks Payable to: Western Zone NYSRTA. Mail to: Michelle Claus, 6313 Kast Place, Hamburg, NY 14075					
Detach and mail lower portion only. Keep upper portion as your reminder.					
Western Zone NYSRTA Annual Meeting, September 21, 2016 \$29.95 for Prime Rib, \$28.00 for Salmon, \$24.00 for Chicken or Vegetarian NamePhone					
Address_	NYSRTA member? Yes No				
	_ Local Unit				
E-Mail address					
Meal Choice					
Guest Name	Meal Choice				
Guest Name	Meal Choice				
If you would like to reserve a table of 10, please contact Mi	chelle Claus at 649-3844				
With whom would you like to sit?					

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Western Currents

#### The Awards Committee of Western Zone



**Irine Denis Zinter** 

Records from the early 1900's showed that retired teachers in Western New York had concern for their financial welfare in their retirement years. There was no state teachers' retirement system until 1921 and city employee pensions were about \$400 per year. An organization called "Friends of Retired Teachers" came into existence to help Buffalo area teachers improve their retirement income. The foresight of steadfast retirees throughout our state resulted in The New York State Retired Teachers Association (NYSRTA) which is comprised of ten zones. Our Western Zone includes the counties of Erie, Niagara, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Genesee.

At the annual business meeting in September, Western Zone gives the **Citation Award** to members that have shown outstanding contributions, leadership, participation, and service. The present Awards Committee, at the Zone level, has developed a profile asking each member to complete information regarding their education, teaching service, WZ involvement, community service and other awards. Nominations from members are used, along with the individual profile sheet, to determine **Citation Award** recipients.

A **Certificate of Recognition** is given by the State, NYSRTA, to members that also have shown outstanding contributions at the State level. Nominees are chosen from each of the ten zones and honorees are informed of their selection at the time of presentation given at the annual convention in October.

Sincere thanks to members of the Awards Committee: Michelle Claus, Judy Farmer, Audrey Seidel and Mary Lou Bogart, for exceptional teamwork.

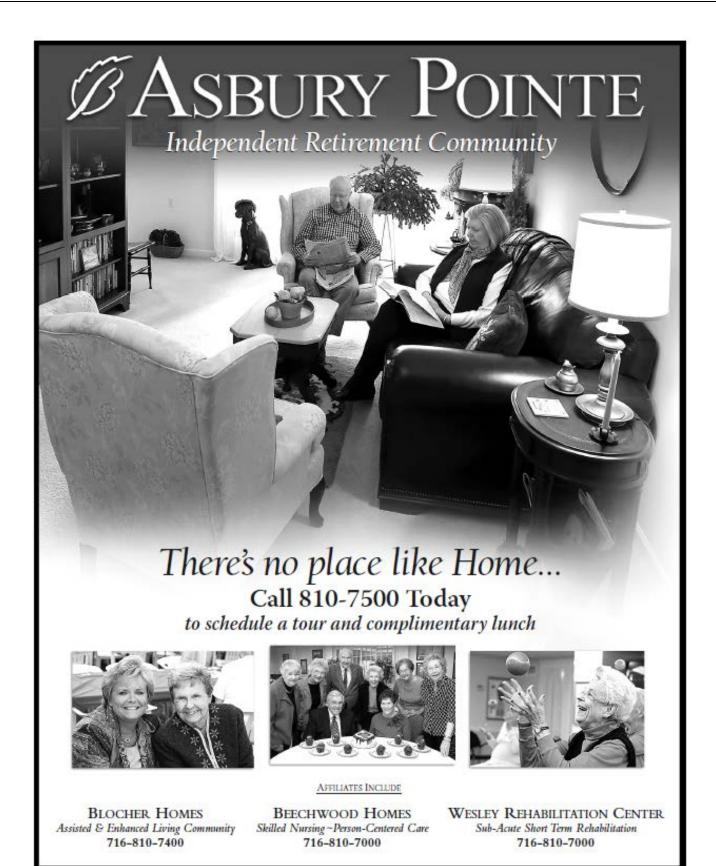
#### 2016 WZ Grant Winners



Western Zone of NYSRTA recently awarded two \$500.00 grants in its recent Teacher Grant Competition. In the category for uniquely creative classroom-related project, the "CONVERwinning proposal, SACIONES: Promoting Classroom Conversations and Interactions with student-created Images and Videos," was awarded to Dr. Anna Barrett, a foreign language teacher at Lockport Maria Ebersole, a High School. movement/eurythmy teacher at Auro-

ra Waldorf School in West Falls was awarded the grant in the cultural presentation category for her entry entitled "Music and Movement Exchange: Beethoven, Schumann, and Celtic Tale". Congratulations to both of these very deserving teachers.

Many thanks to Ron Czapla, Chairman of the Teacher Grant Committee and committee members, Therese Clarke, Geraldine Horton, Louise Klier, Stanley Nowak, Charles Peszynski and Irene Zinter. Their many hours of preparing the grant applications, getting them to all schools in WZ, reading each proposal received, and deciding on the winning entries are appreciated greatly. Because of their commitment, Western Zone is able to make a difference in active educators' lives and make our presence known to local schools.



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ASSISTED LIVING at CHEEKTOWAGA 229 Bennett Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14227 716-681-8631

ASSISTED LIVING at HAMBURG 76 Buffalo Street, Hamburg, NY 14075 716-649-7676

ASSISTED LIVING at TONAWANDA 111 Ensminger Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150 716-871-1814

ASSISTED LIVING at WEST SENECA 580 Orchard Park Rd., West Seneca, NY 14224 716-677-4242

ASSISTED LIVING at WHEATFIELD 2600 Niagara Falls Blvd., Wheatfield, NY 14304 716-731-2200

VILLAGE at WILLIAMSVILLE 5271 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221 716-565-9663

### HANDLING YOUR DAILY CHORES. SO YOU CAN SPEND YOUR DAY THE WAY YOU WANT.

There's so much more you can enjoy when you have just a little extra help. You'll find that help at Elderwood's assisted living communities, along with new opportunities, a welcoming social circle and lively activities. Relax - home maintenance and yard work are done for you. We take care of the cooking, cleaning, laundry and even help keep track of your medications. It's why Elderwood is the right place for the right care.



Get in touch with us to schedule a tour and learn more.



# P.O. Box 922

Williamsville, NY 14231-0922

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#### **Betty Browne's Health Tips:**

Falls are a leading cause of injuries among older adults. Most falls occur in the home. Simple safety modifications cut the risk of falling. Create a safe environment in your home:

- •Use rugs with non-slip bottoms, or carpet floors
- •Clean up clutter
- •Make sure your stairs have hand rails
- •Use night lights
- •Use slip-free mats in the bath tub and shower
- •Slow down
- •Increase balance by taking a balance class offered at most Senior Centers.

Keep September 21 open for the Western Zone Annual meeting at Salvatores! See page 8 for the reservation form

#### YORK STATE

**Note**: York State - will be sent twice (summer and winter) in hard copy and twice (spring and fall) via e-mail. If you wish to receive the e-mail spring and fall editions, you must send your e-mail address to the Albany office (dabarnes@nysrta.org) or alternatively you may access it on the NYSRTA website (nysrta.org).

