



WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 15, Number 3

www.wzretiredteachers.org

Summer 2017

The Magnificent Seven (7) Strengths of NYSRTA

- NYSRTA considers that all adults working in any educational institution are educators and membership is open to all active or retired teachers, administrators, and other certified professionals, as well as non-certified staff in New York State public and private educational institutions (Pre-K to university), along with their spouses.
- NYSRTA has served retired educators for decades, with the members always being paramount.
 - NYSRTA has been in existence since 1951, which validates both the organization's mission and its efficacy.
 - Since its inception, NYSRTA has defined itself as a dynamic organization of retired educators working together to support and strengthen the quality of life for all retired educators, their families and communities. This has been accomplished through the continued efforts and support of the members and their work in various committees.
 - All members are welcome to voice their opinions and all retired educator members have the opportunity to be delegates at the annual meeting and to become leaders on both the local and state levels.
- Our **Friendly Service** program is a personal, in-depth service that takes its mission from its name—to provide friendly service to all members, especially our older members and shut-ins. Emphasis is on communications. The Zone Friendly Service people also assist members with accessing available financial aid.
- NYSRTA has a **robust legislative program** which focuses mainly on retirees' needs.
 - Although many other retiree organizations provide legislative action, NYSRTA, with its initiatives **directed by the members**, tends to focus on the needs of the retiree. That said, NYSRTA not only works for the benefit of retirees, it also works to improve conditions for the working educator.
 - NYSRTA members are a volunteer army working on behalf of retired educators in New York State.
 - NYSRTA reaches out to other retiree organizations and works with them on issues common to all retirees.
- NYSRTA is run in a professional manner, incorporated under New York State Not For Profit Corporation Law and granted tax exempt status under Revenue Code 501(c)(4). We operate in accordance with strict bylaws put in place, and enforced by, our retiree organization.
- **Member benefits** are available. Special discount programs and services provide access to group-rate insurance programs for dental, vision, and hearing plans; home and auto insurances, as well as discount package travel opportunities.
 - **Abenity** - provides members with an elite collection of local and national discounts from thousands of hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, retailers, florists, car dealers, theme parks, national attractions, concerts, and events through Abenity. Some of the vendors offering available savings include Costco, Sprint, Firestone, DirecTV, T-Mobile, Dell, Target. com, Overstock.com, Brooks Brothers, TJ Max, Bed Bath and Beyond, and Amazon.
 - **Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund** provides aid to retired educators facing extreme financial problems, and financial needs with a personal un-reimbursed expense such as funeral, medical or dental expenses.
 - **Membership dues may be recouped by the many benefits available to member**

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**WESTERN ZONE
OFFICERS
2016-2017**

Elected Officers

President

Doris R. Kirsch

1st Vice President

Robert J. Metz

2nd Vice President

Gail A. Niparts

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Don E. Lawrence

Recording Secretary

Audrey M. Seidel

Corresponding Secretary

Loretta M. Peszynski

Membership Secretary

Michelle L. Claus

Past President

Charles T. Peszynski

At Large Directors

Term Expiring 2017

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John N. Cardarella

Doris R. Kirsch

Don E. Lawrence

William D. Loockerman

Ruthe L. Nemmer

Stanley J. Nowak

Mary V. O'Leary

Theresa E. Pope

Marilyn K. Tota

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June Beuth

Russell M. Gervasi

Patricia Keller

Judith A. Klug

Sara Rodland

Dolores A. Scanlon

Salvatore J. Sedita

Audrey M. Seidel

Nancy White

Irene D. Zinter

Term Expiring 2019

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Ronald A. Czapla

Elizabeth Egan

Anne G. Flansburg

Thomas A. Giambra

Beth Green

Maria Hager

Sandra W. Kelley

Suzanne Lach

Alphonse Marabella

Robert J. Metz

Marie Gerace Zafron

SPOTLIGHT ON

Tom Giambra



Tom graduated from Kenmore West High School in 1964 and received an associate degree in Food Service from Erie County Community College in 1966. He obtained a BA degree in History in 1969 and a Master's degree in Social Studies Education in 1971; both from the University of Buffalo. Tom also served our country from 1970 – 1972 while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas

Tom's long and illustrious teaching career began in 1972 teaching 7th & 8th grade social studies at School 56 in Buffalo; which later became known as the Olmsted School. He was involved in the magnet program for gifted and talented students and also taught two classes of 7th grade English for five years. Tom retired in 2002 after teaching in the same building for his entire teaching career.

While at Olmsted, Tom received the Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher award from Niagara Frontier Council of the Social Studies. He still remains on the Board of Directors for that organization. He was also very involved with the Buffalos Teachers Federation, serving as Building Committee Representative for his school, as a delegate and Delegate Chairperson for School 56, on the Grievance Committee, and a trustee on the Supplemental Benefits Fund. Tom was also a trustee on the Sick Leave Bank for many years.

He also found time to give back to his community through his Boy Scouting endeavors. Tom was adult leader for BSA Troop 225 in Kenmore from 1965 to 2010. During that time he served in many roles, including scoutmaster, assistant scoutmaster, and committee chairperson. In addition, Tom taught many different Boy Scout merit badges.

He is currently the First Vice-President of the Buffalo Retired Teachers Association and has been a member of the Board of Directors for the BRTA since 2007.

Tom is a member of NYSRTA and became involved with Western Zone in 2006. He has served on the Board of Directors and has been the chairperson for the Friendly Service Committee since 2006. As Chairperson he and his committee are responsible for seeing that that Holiday greeting cards are sent to WZ members who are 90+; Thanksgiving & Valentine greetings to members who are 97+; and birthday greetings to members who turn 80, 85, 90, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100+. Tom sends an annual report to the NYSRTA and keeps in touch with the WZ Unit Friendly Service Chairs. He also serves on the WZ

Continued on page 10

**DIRECTORS/AREA
UNIT PRESIDENTS**

AMHERST
Joseph A. Podgorski

BUFFALO
Charles Peszynski

CHAUTAUQUA SOUTH
Nancy Anderson

EASTERN ERIE
Judy F. Farmer

GENESEE
James Owen

KENMORE
Dennis A. Priore

LACKAWANNA
Tina Gambino

LANCASTER/DEPEW
Karen Gembar

NIAGARA EAST
Gail A. Niparts

**SPRINGVILLE GRIFFITH
INSTITUTE**
Michelle L. Claus

WEST SENECA
Patricia W. Miceli

WILLIAMSVILLE
Therese C. Clarke

In Loving Memory of Loretta M. Peszynski



"My life's been full; I savored much - Good friends, good times a loved one's touch,

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief; don't lengthen it now with undue grief.

Lift up your hearts, and peace to thee; God wanted me now, He set me free."

These were the final words that appear on Loretta's memorial card. While it is impossible to accept her loss without grief, it would be more to her character that we celebrate her life and accomplishments. She was a shining example of life lived to its fullest with the impact of her energy reaching out to all

with whom she came in contact.

Loretta had a rich and rewarding teaching career, serving for 33 years at Bennett High School. Her colleagues and students described her as "a wonderful, hardworking, brilliant teacher". Then, as Miss Urso, she served on a Curriculum Committee with Chuck Peszynski. A professional and personal friendship developed. When she needed an escort to the Senior prom which she was chaperoning, she asked him to be her "date". They married in 1973 and enjoyed a loving and happy married life, raising their three daughters and delighting in the grandchildren.

For most of us, we didn't know Loretta until her days of retirement. To say that she was "active" in the Buffalo Retired Teachers' Association, Western Zone and NYS Retired Teachers' Association doesn't do justice to all that she did for all of these groups. She served in many leadership roles and on numerous committees - too numerous to list here. Whatever task she took on, she pursued with vivacity, dedication and an impassioned commitment. Whether it was annually hand writing over 400 holiday cards to our senior members or encouraging us to "pay attention" to current legislative trends, she did it with gusto and fervor. Loretta's passing has left a huge hole in our retired educators' organizations.

Loretta extended her involvement into her community. She was an influential force in her volunteer activities with the Little Portion Friary, Studio Arena, League of Women's Voters, Polish Arts Club of Buffalo and Pomost International. In each of these groups, she devoted her time to doing what was needed to make life better for others.

Our love and sympathy are extended to Chuck and her family. It is reassuring that Chuck has pledged to stay involved, knowing that Loretta's aura will remain with us. The greatest think we can all do to promote Loretta's legacy, is to commit ourselves to achieving the goals that she so vigorously pursued.

May she rest in peace.



Mike Gannon
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NYS Retired Teachers Association Western Zone

Cordially invites members and guests to attend

**The Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Wednesday, September 20, 2017 at
Salvatore's Italian Gardens
6461 Transit Road, Depew, NY (683-7990)**

Program to include Guest Speaker **David Keefe**, President of NYSTRS

8:15-9:15 Registration and Vendor Exhibits; Coffee & pastries available
9:30 David Keefe... **Your TRS Pension Update and Challenges Ahead**
11:00 General Membership Meeting preceded by Cheese and Fruit Display
12:00 Luncheon with Board Meeting to follow

Luncheon with Salad, Potato, Vegetable, Dessert, and Coffee or Tea

Choice of:

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Prime Rib | \$32 |
| 2. Salmon with Lobster Dill Sauce | \$26 |
| 3. Chicken Milanese (with Panko, Tomato, Red Onion & Asiago Cheese) | \$25 |
| 4. Roasted Vegetable Plate with Mediterranean Orzo | \$25 |

Reservation Deadline: Friday, September 8, 2017

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 20, 2017
\$32 for Prime Rib, \$26 for Salmon, \$25 for Chicken or Vegetarian**

Name _____ Phone _____

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 Michelle Claus at 649-3844

With whom would you like to sit? _____

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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.

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

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left to right: Russell Delmonte, Mary Jane Russell,
Bill Russell, Ruth Shoemaker

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Betty Browne's Health Tip

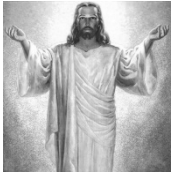
DEHYDRATION CAN CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS

The human body is made up of approximately 70 percent water. So it makes sense that fluids are vital for the majority of our bodily functions: protecting our joints, maintaining organ function, transporting oxygen to cells, and sustaining body temperature. It also makes sense that the body can become dehydrated fairly quickly due to excess perspiration, hot weather, sun exposure, and lack of fluids throughout the day.

However, if you're active or if you sweat excessively, replenishing water levels regularly throughout the day is critical to prevent dehydration. Here are the ten telltale signs that your body is experiencing dangerous dehydration:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Fatigue sets in | 6. Muscle cramps |
| 2. Urine appears dark yellow | 7. Ugh! Constipation |
| 3. Sudden lightheadedness | 8. Skin loses elasticity |
| 4. Heart rate increases | 9. No more tears |
| 5. You overheat | 10. You are parched |

Join the Western Zone Travel Group to attend the play “JESUS”



The Western Zone travel group is making plans to attend the outstanding play “JESUS” at the Sight & Sound Millennium Theater in Lancaster, PA in 2018. The package will include additional tours in the area, that will feature sights not previously seen when the group attended “SAMSON” at this Theater. Details and finalized dates will be in the next issue of CURRENTS.

Join the Western Zone Travel Group to experience the Ark Encounter

Join Western Zone travel group to experience the Ark Encounter (life-size, 510 foot long replica of Noah’s Ark) and Creation Museum August 28 – Sept 1, 2017. Spend a day receiving a guided bus tour of Cincinnati and later enjoying a sight-seeing Riverboat Cruise. Cost is \$549 per person, which includes the 5 days and 4 nights lodging, 4 breakfasts and 4 dinners, all admissions, a dinner party with entertainment, motor coach travel and much more. For information and reservations, call Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or Judy Klug at 716-632-6251. Additional information is also available on WZ website www.wzretiredteachers.org under Coming Events.

2017 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:

- ✓ Offer timely presentations such as the Constitutional Convention workshop.
- ✓ 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 programs
- ✓ 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**
P.O. Box 922
Williamsville, NY 14231-0922

SPOTLIGHT on Tom Giambra (continued from page 2)

Federal Legislation, the Nominations and Remembrances committees. Tom regularly attends the WZ board meetings, the NYSRTA annual Conventions and is always willing to help out in any way. In 2014 Tom was awarded the Citation award for his outstanding contributions to Western Zone.

You may think, “Wow, Tom is sure a busy person.” But, wait, there is more! He finds time to golf, bowl and even play the organ. Tom is an avid reader, enjoying books on various aspects of American history and mysteries. We are very happy to Spotlight Tom in this issue of Western Currents. His warm matter, willingness to help and dedication to Western Zone is commendable.

WZ Unit Scholarships

Each year many of the Western Zone Units provide scholarships to deserving students. These scholarships, not only benefit students who are interested in pursuing a career in education, but also help to promote the good work that is being done by WZ. This year 23 scholarships for a total of \$18,800.00 were awarded thanks to the generosity of these WZ Units.

- BRTA (Buffalo Retired Teachers Association) 3 @ \$1,500 each (total - \$4,500)
- BRAA (Buffalo Retired Administrators Association) 3 @ \$1,000 each (total - \$3,000)
- SCCRTA (Chautauqua South) Retired Teachers Association 1 @ \$1,000 each (total - \$1,000)
- EERTA (Eastern Erie) Retired Teachers Association 4 @ \$700 each (total - \$2,800)
- Genesee County Retired Teachers Association 3 @ \$500 each (total - \$1,500)
- Lackawanna Retired Teachers Association 2 @ \$1,000 each (total - \$2,000)
- Niagara East Retired Teachers Association 6 @ \$500 each (total - \$3,000)
- Springville/West Valley Retired Teachers Association 1 @ \$1,000 each (total - \$1,000)

Legislative Action

Judy Klug, Chair

As you may have heard, there will be an item on the ballot in November asking if there should be a Constitutional Convention. NYSRTA is asking that you vote NO. There are other means for amending the Constitution which are much more economical and as effective. In fact, the amendment route was used most recently in 2013. It had been used up to 200 times since 1894 when the last major revision was made.

At stake could be our right to collective bargaining, the right to a free public education, the right to worker's compensation, environmental protections, social welfare needs and the security of our pensions. It is estimated to cost about \$340 million and the delegates would most likely be political insiders, mostly from New York City, along with the state senators and assembly people who would receive their regular pay plus the stipend for serving as a delegate. Therefore we are urging you to vote NO on a Constitutional Convention.

Western Zone—NYSRTA

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Newfane teacher, Nancy Simmons, receives \$1,000 grant from NY State Retired Teachers Association. She was one of 34 applicants from the five Western Zone counties.



Members of WZ grant committee, Chuck Peszynski, Ron Czapla and Stan Nowak, presenting the Award to Simmons.

Keep September 20th open for the Western Zone Annual meeting at Salvatore's! See page 6 for the reservation form

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 20th** at Salvatore's Italian Gardens.

The Board of Directors will be elected at the morning business meeting.

The candidates are: Georgann Bemis, John Cardarella, Laura Fiorotto, Doris Kirsch, Don Lawrence, William Loockerman, Gail Niparts, Stanley Nowak, Mary V. O'Leary, Theresa Pope, Marilyn Stephens, Marilyn Tota.

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
2nd Vice President	Michelle Claus
Treasurer	Don Lawrence
Recording Secretary.....	Audrey Seidel
Corresponding Secretary.....	Nancy White
Membership Secretary.....	Ann Marie Wik
Past President	Charles Peszynski

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.

*Since there are no announced candidates for these positions at this time, the current officers will continue to serve until successors are elected (Article V, Section 1 of the bylaws).