



WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 16, Number 2

www.wzretiredteachers.org

Spring 2018

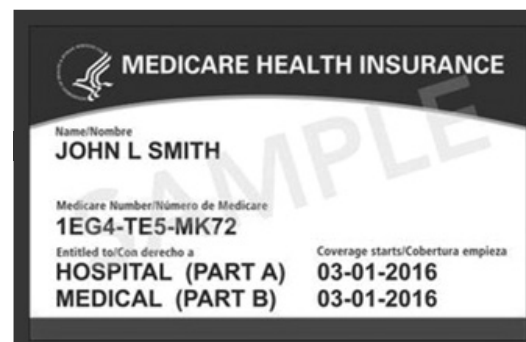
New Medicare Cards coming out in April.

Starting 4/1/18 Medicare will commence a year-long project to replace all current Medicare cards for beneficiaries converting them to alphanumeric ID numbers. Currently, the ID number is your social security number.

Medicare will never call you on the phone.

- Medicare has warned of scams.
- They do not charge for cards
- They do not want your personal information over the phone.
- **DO NOT** give out any information over the phone.

New Medicare cards will come to you in the mail. You don't need to request it or do anything. The cards will show up.



WHAT'S THE SCAM?

Scammers posing to be from "MEDICARE" may call to tell you that you are getting a new Medicare card. They may tell you that you need a temporary card. They may tell you that the fee for the phony card is between \$5-50 dollars. They want to steal your personal information, bank account or credit information—**don't give it to them!**

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Medicare will never call you unless you ask them to.**
- Medicare does all communications by mail unless you ask them to call.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THIS ONE?

- First of all, spread the word. Feel free to share these notes.
- Use your answering machine to screen calls or just don't even answer a number you don't recognize.

If it has happened to you or your friends or loved ones and personal info had been given out (happens considerably more often than you think so don't feel bad or stupid) immediately take action to protect yourself against identity theft.

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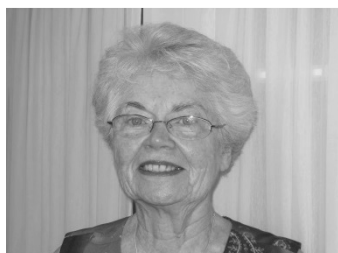
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SPOTLIGHT ON

Elaine DeLisle



In her teaching career, retirement years, community, church or personal life, Elaine is the epitome of hard work, dedication and giving fully of herself and her talents. Elaine earned her BS from SUNY Geneseo and went on to get her Masters as a Reading Specialist from the University of Pittsburg and a Special Education Certification from SUNY Buffalo. Her teaching career started in Clarence and due to frequent transfers for her husband's job, she did substitute teaching in Indiana Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and BOCES II. She retired from Holland Central in 1997.

Upon retirement, Elaine immediately joined and became active in her unit (Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Association), Western Zone and NYSRTA. As EERTA Recording Secretary, her prompt, complete and detailed minutes are appreciated by the membership. When she first completed her resume to be a candidate for the WZ Board, she wrote: "I submit my resume in the belief that belonging to a group requires assuming responsibilities in that group, rather than just saying that one "belongs". I would hope to give back to the organization and to aid other retirees in pursuing issues that are relevant to their well-being and quality of life". She certainly has succeeded in doing that. During her 12 years as a WZ Director, she has served as elected recording Secretary, History Committee Chair, Founder's Fund Committee Member and a delegate to the NYSRTA Annual Meeting in multiple years. When she was granted Honorary Director status she maintained her loyal service by voluntarily serving as interim Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary and Chaplain. Her well planned and meaningful invocations give us inspiration before all of our meetings. She was a most worthy recipient of the WZ Citation Award in 2010.

Elaine's list of interests and accomplishments extend well beyond education and the retired. For 22 years she has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity. She was instrumental in wiring 110 houses in Buffalo and she led two successful

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

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Spotlight on Elaine DeLisle

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“Women Build” homes. She and Dick, her husband of 57 years, trained and served as Emergency Mission Representative giving of their time and efforts for two extended stints to ministering to the spiritual and corporal needs of the people of Baldwin, Louisiana. At the Elma Methodist Church, Elaine heads the Missions and Outreach Committee, is VP of the United Methodist Women’s Group, serves on the administration counsel, is a Fish Volunteer and is always available when other needs arise. She has been a Scout Leader, a Literacy Volunteer and served at an Elderhostel in Albuquerque, MN with the Acoma Indian School. She has received the AARP Community Service Award. Ben Franklin Said, “If you want something done, ask a busy person”. That’s Elaine! Except that she has probably already generously volunteered before there was time to ask.

While attending to all of these professional, community and religious commitments, Elaine has never neglected her family. She and Dick have raised three very successful children. Jackie is a School Psychologist, Mark, is a financial advisor and Ron is a teacher of challenged students. Elaine and Dick are especially proud that all of their children have master degrees.

Eight grandchildren (two college graduates, three collegians, one first grader and twin pre-k students) are also her pride and joy. She says that it is not her job to raise them, but to spoil them. A sign on her refrigerator says, “What happens at Grandma’s, stays a Grandma’s”. Elaine is a true lady. Her mere presence is imbued with grace, gentle dignity and measured accomplishment.

Western Zone is very proud of Elaine and her many accomplishments. It is our privilege to spotlight her in this issue of Western Currents. Thanks to Doris Kirsch who wrote this very touching tribute. It first appeared in the 2017 WZ Annual Meeting program book as the Annual Meeting was dedicated to Elaine.

HISTORY of the FOUNDERS’ FUND

by John Cardarella

The Founders’ Fund is a Community Service Project of the New York State Retired Teachers’ Association - Western Zone. It has its roots in the early 1920’s with a group called “Friends of Retired Teachers”, formed by a group of retired teachers from WNY. The concern back then was the welfare of retired teachers. This group helped establish the New York State Teachers Retirement System in 1921. From the early 20’s through the late 40’s the “Friends” tried to improve the status of retired teachers. In 1947 Emma Lodge, Chairman of the “Friends” called a meeting in Buffalo of retired teachers. At this meeting, Mr. Smith Thomas was elected President of this group, known today as Western Zone. In 1959 a \$30,000 legacy from the estate of Miss Gertrude Tucker of Alden, NY, was given to the Western Zone for the purpose of establishing a fund to create a Retired Teachers’ Home in Western New York. Emma Lodge was chosen as the Chairman of this Home Fund Committee, which publicized the Fund and solicited gifts in memory of deceased members of the zone as well as small bequests from estates. Emma Lodge, in her will, also gave a legacy of \$12,365.

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. Today the Fund

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HISTORY of the FOUNDERS' FUND, Continued

is known as the Founders' Fund. In keeping with objectives of the original Home Fund, the interest income is used to assist the needy of the Western Zone. In past years this income has been used to assist the Friendly Service activities, the Meals on Wheels Program in the Zone, and the Network in Aging Center at the University of Buffalo. The money in the Founders' Fund is invested by the investment committee. The Fund specifies that only the interest earned by the funds can be disbursed. The Board approves all of the distributions from the Fund. This year the Founders' Fund distributed over \$4,000.00 to local Meals on Wheels and Network in Aging of WNY, Inc.



Photo 1: John Cardarella presenting a check to Christine Procknal, the CEO and Interim President of Meals on Wheels of WNY.

Photo 2: Karen Schlum presenting a check to Mindi Doran, Nutritional Services Coordinator for Niagara County Office of the Aging.

Photo 3: A group of volunteers from the Alden Meals on Wheels with John Cardarella.

The Western Zone Advantage

Western Zone and New York State Retired Teachers' Association (NYSRTA) work toward maintaining and improving the retirement benefits for all retirees. NYSRTA works solely for and with retired educational personnel. This organization offers insurance programs, legislative activities and travel options. There are opportunities to be involved in volunteer programs. We are devoted to the needs of retired educators. Western Zone and the units offer many opportunities for social and professional activities, and sponsor a variety of programs to assist our in need retirees and the community at large. The Zone needs your involvement! We need your membership.

As a member, you will enjoy several unique services and benefits, including:

- YORK STATE, our quarterly publication
- Eligibility to participate in low-cost group insurance plans and group travel
- Be included in our database of retirees who are seeking part-time or short term work
- Advocacy efforts to protect your pension benefits at the state and federal levels
- Opportunity to attend the Annual meeting and Workshop in October

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The Western Zone Advantage, Continued from page 4

- Do you know a retired educator that would like to be a member?
- Be part of the only state association that works for retired teachers exclusively.
- Retired Teachers care. We need you and your skills. We care for our fellow retirees and community.
- Contact our President, Doris Kirsch; wdkirsch@gmail.com, 585-457-3315 to explore retired teacher membership in Western Zone Retired Teachers' Association.

WASHINGTON, DC & SIGHT AND SOUND'S PERFORMANCE "JESUS"

June 21-25, 2018

Seats are still available; to enjoy the history and beauty of Washington, as never seen before, with a five day trip to Washington, DC. Included in this WZ trip is the fantastic, live performance of "JESUS" at the Sight and Sound's Millennium Theatre in Lancaster, and a stop at Flight 93 Memorial.

The price is \$694 per person double occupancy, \$664 triple occupancy and \$923 single occupancy. Any questions, contact Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com OR Betty Browne at 716-207-6152. The cost of the trip is all inclusive, and will feature a tram ride at Arlington, Guided Sightseeing Bus Tour, Visit to seven Memorials, Bus tour of illuminated monuments, Smithsonian Institutes, Air & Space Museum, as well as a ticket to "JESUS", and other points of interest.

Optional travel insurance may be purchased directly through NTA/AON Insurance at 1-800-388-1470. Choose Option #1, White Star operator #386097. Please send a check, payable to **Western Zone RTA** by or before May 1, **2018**. Send completed form and check to: Betty Browne, 6025 Shore Blvd So. #415, Gulfport, FL 33707-5813.

DETACH and send to Betty Browne by or before May 1

WASHINGTON trip and Performance of "JESUS" (June 21-25, 2018)

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Cell _____ E-mail _____
Emergency contact _____ Phone _____
Pickup location preferred (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg
Special needs or requests _____
Check # _____ Amount _____

WESTERN ZONE MAKES PLANS FOR 2018 NYSTRA CONVENTION

Several members of the Western Zone planning committee recently gathered to experience a trivia night in preparation for the 2018 NYSRTA Annual Convention at Turning Stone in October. The Western Zone team came in solidly in the middle at this Trivia Night competition but had a great time! In a change from recent years, this year's after-dinner entertainment on Thursday, October 18, will be a Trivia Night of our own. Start thinking about forming a team and bone up on your knowledge of trivia!



Beechwood Continuing Care

Beechwood Continuing Care is considered the premier not-for-profit senior care community in WNY. From luxury independent apartment living to state-of-the-art short term rehabilitation...our communities have something for everyone.



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*Assisted & Enhanced Living Community...
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Classic elegance in the heart of Williamsville, Blocher offers the perfect alternative for your loved one when they can no longer live at home alone. Residents enjoy daily personal and nursing services by caring professionals. Blocher not only provides traditional assisted living, but enhanced assisted living services as well which enables residents to age in place.



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Wesley's interdisciplinary team of professionals develop a goal-oriented approach with each patient to ensure their rehab stay at Wesley gets them home as soon as possible. All rooms are private with flat screen TV's, phones and homelike amenities. Meals are enjoyed in a beautifully appointed dining room. *Your first step toward health and independence.*

BEECHWOOD HOMES

Skilled Care Community – "Welcome Home"

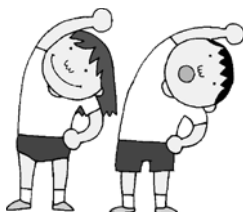
Beechwood Homes is the only skilled care community in WNY that has completely integrated person-centered care in a household setting. Each household has 12-18 residents that enjoy their own living room, country kitchen and dining room including a hospice household. Over 65 nursing homes and assisted living communities from around the country have visited Beechwood to learn how they can make this culture change journey. *Seeing is believing!*



*To learn more about any of Beechwood Continuing Care communities, call 716-810-7370.
www.beechwoodcare.org*

Betty's Health Tip: Yes, Stretch!

By Betty Browne



Stretching is good for us. Below are a few stretches. Hold the moves for a minimum of 30 seconds, five times. Do the entire circuit at least three times a week. It's addictive!

Chest Stretch: Helps your chest stay open which allows you to expand your rib cage and breathe more easily. To fully stretch the pectoralis major muscle, you will need to use two different arm positions. What to do:

Stand facing a door frame. Place your forearms and hands on the doorframe with elbows bent at 90 degrees. Take one step through the doorway, leaning your trunk slightly forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders. After 30 seconds, release and step back through the doorway. Bring arms into a high V, straight up at a diagonal from shoulders, and repeat the stretch.

Thigh High Stretch: Releases the quadriceps muscles, keeping thighs loose and hips extended for walking, taking the stairs and standing. What to do: Stand near a chair, counter or doorframe that you can hold on to with your right hand for support. Bend left leg back and up, knee pointed to the floor gently pull your left heel up toward your butt without arching your back. After 30 seconds switch sides and repeat with the right leg.

Shoulder Stretch: Helps keep shoulder blades aligned so you stand straight and tall. What to do: Stand or sit with your back straight, shoulders aligned over hips. Tip your right ear toward your right shoulder. Turn your head to the right and tuck your chin. Place your right hand behind the back of your head and gently push down driving your nose toward your right armpit. After 30 seconds switch sides.

C-Curve Back Stretch: Lengthens the side muscles of your back that help your shoulders from being pulled down and forward. What to do: Stand facing a doorframe with arms at your sides. Reach up and grasp each side of the frame, arms at shoulder height. Bend your knees, tuck your pelvis under and round your back, letting your head drop forward. Lean back slightly, using your hands to support your weight, as your shoulders rise toward your ears.

Neck Stretch: Corrects the dreaded "Tech Neck", the forward head posture you get as a result of sitting at your computer or staring at your phone all day. What to Do: Stand with your back, head, and shoulder blades against a wall, heels about a foot apart, keeping your skull in contact with the wall at all times. Nod your head up and down repeatedly for 30 seconds. You should feel a stretch in the neck as you work through this range of motion.

Find Your Center: Your correct posture is one that aligns your body against the forces of gravity. To find it, imagine a line coming from the ceiling that passes through your head, down through the vertebrae in your neck and back, slightly behind your hip joint, and slightly in front of your knee joint, ending a bit in front of your ankle joint. "Anything less than this is analogous to a poorly stacked pile of building blocks." Says Zujko, "You can build off center for only so long before the tower falls".

BUFFALO NIAGARA HONOR FLIGHT

By Dennis Priore



Buffalo-Niagara Honor Flight (BNHF) is one of 10 affiliates or Hubs in New York State that are part of the National Honor Flight Network. (NHFN) is a non-profit organization dedicated to transporting United States military veterans to Washington, D.C. to the memorials in of the respective war(s) they fought in at no cost to them. The organization's primary focus is bringing veterans of World War II to the National World War II Memorial, and any veteran with a terminal illness to see the memorial of the war they fought in.

BNHF serves the seven counties of Western New York, as well as Potter and McKean counties in Northern PA and the Southern Ontario region. Now in its third year the BNHF has run five flights over the past couple of years and is planning at least two-a-year going forward. It provides a once in a lifetime experience to our Veterans from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, with preference in that order.

Each veteran is accompanied by their own individual guardian, and the day begins with a send-off from a local VFW Post where the veterans and their guardians are accompanied by an Honor Guard and Police Escort to the airport. After a brief ceremony that includes a 40-piece band, local dignitaries and family members; the group of about 45 veterans, their guardians, and a support staff of about 10, including two nurses; board a plane to Baltimore-Washington International Airport. Following a short bus ride with

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2018 Annual President's Appeal

As of this writing, the 2018 Annual President's Appeal begins. 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.

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Address _____ E-Mail _____
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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**

BUFFALO NIAGARA HONOR FLIGHT continued from page 8

escorted volunteer guardians, the taxiing airplane is saluted by fire trucks and passengers are met by cheering crowds in D.C. and on their return flight home.

BNHF is an all-volunteer organization led by President Tom Petrie and a seven-member board along with a core group of about 40 volunteers; many are the sons and daughters of WWII Veterans. BNHF is very grateful for the support of the many volunteers and the local business community. To recommend a veteran, donate or for more information go to: buffaloniagarahonorflight.org, on the web and Facebook, or call 716-908-7497

LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

The NYSRTA Legislative Action Committee held a conference call on February 13 to finalize the 2018 campaign agenda.

The top priority item is the Minimum pension Bump-up bill; A-06603A (Brindisi) and S-5329A (Tedisco). We are hoping to have a positive outcome for this bill this year.

The second item is an Improvement of the Pension COLA. A-06045 (Steck) and S-03306 (Ritchie).

We also plan to discuss term limits and lengths for legislators and for leadership positions as well as the New York Health Act.

Any support you can give for these bills will be greatly appreciated. You can call or email your state senator and assemblyperson to let them know of your views.



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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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The NYSRTA Annual Convention is October 17-19, 2018 at Turning Stone Casino and Convention Center. Western Zone will be hosting this year. Please plan to attend. More information will appear in the next Western Currents.



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