As I write this article I see the beginning of spring. The birds are singing and the trees have started to bloom. After a harsh winter, it is good to see that spring is here. I love the changing seasons.

NYSRTA is alive and well. We continue to strengthen our financial position. I want to thank all of our members, who have contributed to my President’s Appeal. To date we have raised over $250,000. These donations helped us defeat the Constitutional Convention, as well as strengthen our financial position. I look forward to another Convention. Each year I learn so much about various areas of New York State. Each Zone presents a vivid picture of how unique the various regions New York State are.

The Western Zone and the Committee members have been preparing for our Fall Convention at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino in Verona, NY.

The Workshop Committee Members are: Diane Hahn*CR (EZ), Pat Newell (NCZ), Dr. Jim Newell (NCZ), Beth Green (WZ) Alice Galvin (NZ) and Vince Smith*CR for Mary Lou Wood (SZ). The Western Zone Committee consisted of: John Cardarella, Russ Gervasi, Doris Kirsch *CR, Michelle Claus, Nancy White, and Ginna O’Leary and served as a faithful consultant for this year’s Workshop Committee. I would also like to thank Sr. Vice President Kevin Mulligan for his outstanding job as Chair of the Workshop Committee.

The theme of this year’s Convention is, “The Best in the West.” I think you will be pleased with the workshops that will be presented. I look forward to the workshop entitled, “Aging is Optional”.

Our Convention will be held from Wednesday, October 17th through Friday, October 19th. Our Workshops will be held on Thursday, October 18th. There will be two Workshop Sessions. Session #1 will be held from 9 AM -10 AM and Session #2 will be held from 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM. Remember, you do not need to be a delegate to attend the workshops. Our Keynote Speaker will be John Baronich. His talk is entitled “Freedom to Paddle, Paddling the Erie Canal”.

You are in for a great surprise, the host Zone, Western Zone has organized a Trivia Night for after dinner on Thursday. Further details will be given in the Summer York State.

Please Note: We will be finalizing the workshop information and the schedule of the Convention in the Summer Issue of York State. Remember that check-in is 3 PM and check- out is 11 AM.

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization.

Each member should try to recruit one new member. When you get that one new member put that member to work. Make them feel part of the organization. People want to contribute. We must work together to build a better organization.

My favorite saying is, “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.”
I am very happy to report that the “hay is in the barn”. Workshops for the 2018 NYSRTA Convention have been procured as of April 18, 2018. The host zone is the Western Zone, led by Convention Chairperson Beth Green and assisted by a very present and active committee. Since our first meeting on the last day of Convention 2017, the Western Zone Committee has done an outstanding job coordinating efforts to provide the keynote speaker, John Baronich. Mr. Baronich will portray Jacque B., a French fur trapper and voyageur, in his presentation, “Freedom to Paddle”. They also presented five other workshops that will provide a clear understanding of why the host zone has chosen “The Best in The West” as their theme.

In addition, Workshop Committee members Diane Hahn *CR, Pat Newell and Dr. Jim Newell have put together some other workshops that include “Creative Small Space Gardening”, and culinary treats courtesy of the Farmhouse Kitchen Chef. AXA Retirement Group will provide an informative presentation titled “The Family Love Letter” about estate and trust planning, as well as other useful information about end of life planning. Of course, NYS Teachers’ Retirement System will provide a well informed report on the status of our pensions.

The Workshop Committee wishes to thank the advisement of President Angelo Grande *CR, Kathi Bassett (NYSRTA Executive Office Manager), and consultant advice from Alice Galvin (Northern Zone). Their time, knowledge, and experience proved to be most helpful in the planning success of this committee. Thank you.

Membership; Lois Thornberg
Vice President for Membership

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much” – Helen Keller

Since I was appointed as NYSRTA Vice President of Membership in November of 2017 I have been in contact with the Zone Membership Chairs via e-mail, snail mail, and teleconferences. The focus of these communications is to research ways to improve the general membership of our organization. There has been a decline in our membership over the past years due to deaths, non-renewal of present and non-current paid members, and a lack of new retirees joining. The membership committee is also composed of members of the Marketing subcommittee. Their involvement includes investigating ways to publicize and encourage retirees to join NYSRTA.

Membership recruitment must be a movement involving ALL members of the organization. Retaining present and past members is as important as recruiting new members. Each one of us should focus on ways to share the NYSRTA experience with past, present, and future retirees. Word of mouth and one on one personal meetings/discussions is most likely the best way, however that is not always possible. Other ways to get the message out is through social media, e-mail, posters, and social events such as book clubs and other social get-togethers, coffee breaks, luncheons, and happy hours, community and fund raising events. Think about this: If you had only 30 seconds to encourage someone to join NYSRTA- what would you say to them? Share with them the benefits they would receive through our legislative advocacy, discount insurance policies for dental and hearing. There are travel and shopping discounts available to all NYSRTA members.

A few last thoughts---

Remember it is never too early to recruit members, every member is a recruiter, and FOCUS on the task on hand.

Familiarize new and past retirees with NYSRTA’s benefits
Open your calendar- volunteer your time and talents
Call local schools, groups, and friends to find past, present, future retiree names
Use the local publication, community services, and social events
Support your Zone - Join NYSRTA
Our State Legislative priorities for 2018 are the following:
Minimum Pension Bump Up. (the number of potential retirees and beneficiaries is below 449. In most counties the number is in the low single digits.) The cost to employer members would be 003% of payroll. The cost is no longer prohibitive. In June 2016 the Senate passed the measure and in June 2017 the Assembly passed it. It is still stuck there, a lot of co-signers.

Improving Pension Cola. Does not look promising since it’s a money issue. The bill is being supported by the RPA (Alliance of Public Retirees)

We would like to have a discussion with our legislators on the following items:

1. Term limits and term lengths for legislators: many pro and cons on this issue.
2. Term limits and term lengths for legislative leadership positions
3. The New York Health Act: basically a single payer health plan. May 16, 2017 Assembly Floor Votes were 94Yea/46Nay. We are keeping a close eye on this bill since it could affect teacher retirees health insurance benefits.
4. We will in the near future be developing our Federal Legislative Priorities for use in our fall visits.

Nominations;
Bill Cline, Chair

Candidates wishing to run for the open positions or candidates desiring to oppose one of the incumbents should submit a letter of intent and a current resume along with a letter of endorsement from his/her zone president. Other supporting letters from NYSRTA members may be included. These materials must be submitted to:

Mr. William Cline
Chair of the Nominating Committee
2 Stever Drive
Binghamton, NY 13901

Submissions must be received no later than May 31, 2018. There will be no exceptions.

The Nominating Committee will meet on Monday, July 9, 2018, at 2 PM in Syracuse. Prior to that meeting, each member of the Nominations Committee will have been provided with copies of the applications sent to the chair. Candidates will present themselves to the Nominations Committee on the 9th. The committee will interview each candidate and then make recommendations for each position. If a member of the Nominations Committee is not able to attend, his/her zone president should send the name of the alternate via a letter or e-mail message to the Chair.

Row 1: Beth Green and Doris Kirsch *CR
Row 2: Ginna O'Leary, Judy Farmer, Maria Hager, Nancy White, Michelle Claus, and Audrey Seidel

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 NYSTRA 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!
The Bylaws Committee is presenting three proposed bylaws changes to the Board of Directors at its July meeting. A summary of the three propositions will be presented in the next York State, if they have approved by the Board at that time. After the October Board of Directors meeting two members of this committee retired. I wish to recognize the hard work and dedication of those two former members, both of whom served for many years. They are Diane Hahn and former chair Burt Phillips. They have both done a lot to help this organization. I am happy to report that we finally got replacements for them in March. Joining the Bylaws Committee are Peter Atchinson of Northeastern Zone and Rae Louise Tate of Northern Zone. I am pleased to welcome them aboard.

Hope you all have a wonderful summer!

CHEMO BAG CAMPAIGN

At its December meeting, the Oneida-Herkimer Counties Retired Teachers Association (OHCRTA) chose to support the Chemo Bag campaign. What are Chemo Bags? Several Years ago Poland Central School District’s second grade teacher Mrs. Heather Judd began the campaign in support of a colleague who had developed breast cancer. The bags are “Thirty-one bags”. They contain socks, chap sticks, pens, pencils, puzzle books, magazines, hats, gloves, slippers, hard candy, bottle water, cards etc. They are directed at men, women, boys and girls. Once assembled the bags are delivered to Ronald McDonnell Houses and cancer centers from Syracuse to Albany. This year the goal was 500 bags. The goal was met thanks to the following groups who provided cash and/or supplies: School Districts: Poland, West Canada Valley, Herkimer, Central Valley, Little Falls, Frankfort-Schuyler, Utica and Whitesboro. The campaign was further helped by several local churches and the Carbone Auto Group who provided $500.00. Finally the OHRTA provided $350.00, and its members provided cash and/or supplies for the bags. On March the twenty-third community members, teachers, Little Falls Girls track team, and members of the OHRCTA assembled in a church gym in Little Falls. In about two hours the 500 bags were assembled ready to be delivered. Over the next week volunteers delivered them to individuals who they knew were fighting cancer and to the cancer centers.
I sent info out in February to all zone resolution chairs and presidents. I have not received any yet. If you have a submission, please follow the schedule and rules below. I will be waiting for them.

SCHEDULE FOR PROPOSING RESOLUTIONS

All proposed resolutions must be submitted to the State Chair of the Resolutions Committee “thirty (30) days before the July Executive Committee Meeting”. The date of that meeting is July 9, 2018. Thirty days prior to that date is Friday, June 8, 2018, provides for a full thirty days between the due date and the date of the State Executive Committee meeting.

When submitting proposals, please adhere to all of the guidelines that are clearly spelled out on pp. 78-80 of the Leader’s Manual. Each proposal should be on a separate page with the proper attestation and signed and dated by the zone president at the top. Each proposal should specify which NYSRTA objective(s) is being addressed in the proposal. These are found in Article II of the Bylaws. A signed hard copy must be sent to me (189 County Route 16, North Bangor, NY 12966) along with an electronically transmitted copy to luer913@hotmail.com.

Zones considering the submission of a proposed resolution should:

1. Examine, in depth, whether the intent (purpose, aim, action required, or the like) is clearly an expression of one or more to the Article II of the By-Laws. Is the intent something that should be expressed as a resolution, something that requires a By-Law change, something that necessitates action by the STATE Executive Committee, or a change by another committee or agency?

2. Research thoroughly the proposed resolutions.

3. Make certain the “whereas” statements and the “Resolved” are clearly stated. This is extremely important as the Legislative Action Committee will return to us or table the unclear proposed resolutions.

4. Submit the proposed resolutions as early as your zone’s schedule permits, allowing time for reviews by the zone’s Resolution Chairs as well as by appropriate NYSRTA committees.

5. Submit up to but no more than three (3) resolutions for consideration in a given year.

Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service – Jackie Moller, Chair

It is that time of year when I send letters to all Presidents of zones, hoping that some will send in applications for a member of their zone that they would like to nominate to receive a Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service. It is up to each zone to choose that individual for this award.

This award is in recognition of members who have shown outstanding leadership and accomplishments in the field of education and service through retirement. The objective is to single out professionals who have contributed significantly to NYSRTA. Nominees must be qualified living candidates who are members of NYSRTA and who have served at the Association, Zone and Unit levels. (If your zone is one of that does not have local units, please note that on the form so that the committee will know.

This honor is to be a surprise to the recipient. A nominee should not be informed of his or her name being presented. Information that you need for the application may be obtained from records or from families. Names of those chosen to receive the honor will not be divulged until certificates are presented at the Annual Convention. If you do not know all of the information and verify that it is accurate, please ask someone who does know the applicant well. All applications must be received by June 1, 2018.

Once the application is completed, it must be signed by The Zone President and sent to the committee chair: Jackie Moller, 588 Stoneleigh Rd., Oneida, NY 13421
The first full week in May is National Teacher Appreciation Week, with Tuesday, May 8, 2018 designated as National Teacher Day. A one day - even a weeklong - tribute hardly seems adequate to fully recognize the work of our teachers and the extent that their efforts spread far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. As retired educators, the members of Western Zone of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association deem it our pleasure and obligation to lead in this proclamation of appreciation in honor of our active teachers.

Teachers teach students the skills and subject matter to fulfill all of the other positions in life. But, in their normal conduct as educators, teachers themselves show their proficiency in numerous areas. Teachers excel as:

Prophets, anticipating needs and laying down the foundation for the future
Artists, molding the clay of developing personalities
Friends, supporting, encouraging, reassuring and correcting
Citizens, advancing the knowledge of our history and government
Builders, working toward the development of higher values and better lives
Culture Bearers, recognizing the differences in students while developing positive attitudes and more civil treatment for all
Planners, projecting and implementing ways for students to fit into that great system called "Life"
Reformers, removing the handicaps that weaken lives and stymie progress
Believers, striving to instill the desire, confidence and ability to succeed in ALL students

Much has been written about testing and accountability in the content areas. But, how do you measure a primary child being taught to be tolerant of others, a middle school student learning to ward off the evils of bullying and high schoolers marching and speaking on behalf of securing a safer environment? These actions are just a few of the intangibles inspired by teachers. All of us should feel a sense of confidence knowing that today's young people will be tomorrow's leaders.

The burdens placed on today's educators are many. These challenges are not limited to the daily contact with students; they often cut to the very core of the teaching profession. Teachers are threatened with the potential loss of union representation and collective bargaining rights, inadequate funding to have necessary supplies/equipment, inequity in salary and benefits and a Federal Department of Education that is less than supportive of public education. Teachers do not cave to these difficulties. They are resilient and successful in spite of these adversities.

As retired educators we value your efforts. We thank you! We accept you as worthy followers in this great profession.

Doris R. Kirsch *CR
President Western Zone of NYSRTA
Strykersville, NY
Central Zone; Public Relations Chair, Mary Radloff

The CZ Executive Committee met on April 19 for an All Committee Day. After a brief business meeting, small groups met to address common issues and reported back on their results.

**Highlights of reports:**

**Community Service** in all county units have an increasing positive effect on keeping members, new retirees, active teachers and the general public informed of the good work of NYSRTA. These grants keep active teachers aware of the good works of our organization and will be an encouragement for them to become members when they retire.

**Madison County** Jane Hicks reported a grant to Mr. Edward Gratien of Otto-Shortell Middle School, Oneida City School District. Funds supplied a 3-D computer for the technology class. 3D printing will allow students to create a physical model from a sketch. Students will apply math concepts of understanding 3D views, plans, elevations, and probability in their creation.

**Cayuga County** along with the other CZ counties will be selecting a winner of the $1000 NYSRTA grant from applicants who are full time teachers/admirators in a public school system. Many applications have already been received and will be evaluated by PR chairs of county units. This year the Grant honors Ross C. Hudson of Gouverneur, N.Y. who was a dedicated veteran teacher and longtime supporter of NYSRTA. Cayuga also presented three $300 grants to active teachers in 2017.

**Membership** Mark Granan reported that membership continues to decline. It was suggested that the emphasis and effort be concentrated on new retirees. If earlier retirees have not joined after the first two years, they are not going to join now. A discussion of requiring local members to join NYSRTA did not result in any agreement nor action.

**Convention** Barb Finley estimated there may be two delegates for each unit after places are given to officers and committee heads. A suggestion to give places to elected officers for 2012-0109 rather than those serving out term for 2017-18, was not supported. Mike Hayduk *CR gave October 17, 18, 19 as dates for the 2018 Annual Convention at Turning Stone. The next hardcopy of York State will contain reservation forms and additional information.

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Central Western Zone; Phyllis Dunlap, Public Relations Chair

Welcome happy morning-Welcome Spring!

We have had several losses of teachers this winter.

CWZ--Mariann Holcomb- January 17, 2018-Medina
Seneca County is grieving the loss of five members:

- Kathy Russo- November 22, 2017-Romulus
- Kathleen Oldfield- December 6, 2017-Waterloo
- Eugenia Marshall-January 8, 2018-Geneva
- James Dickson- January 9, 2018-Seneca Falls
- Janet Fulkerson-January 26, 2018-Seneca Falls

Vicki Universal of Livingston County reports they are also mourning the loss of several retired teachers.

- Margaret Preston-November 22, 2017 Dundee Central School
- James “Jim” Stewart Jr.-February 12, 2018-Dansville
- Ellen Hank-Mapes, wife of David Mapes, February 20, 2018-Dansville
- Kenneth Morris-Dansville
- Edyth Martin-Batavia

Carolers Singing Group in RTO/Monroe Co

Continued on page 8
We, Seneca County, are looking forward to our spring luncheon meeting at Abigails Restaurant where we will also have our CWZ luncheon in the fall. Our guest speaker will be Erica Spencer of Natural Solutions Acupuncture in Waterloo. Our Seneca County Relay Team will be having a quilt for the June Relay in Seneca Falls. We also bring gently used children’s books for the United Way Red Shelf program. Also, members bring adult books for ex-

Marge Wood and Mary Beth Tyn dall, Co-Presidents of Monroe County report about their holiday gathering and luncheon held in December at the Lake Shore Country Club. Approximately 60 members were in attendance. A business meeting, craft sale and guest speaker, Chet Fery (The Bread Man), added to the spirit of the season and the enjoyment of the event.

The next RTO/Monroe County executive board meeting took place in April. Topics discussed included: bulk mailing, bylaw change of adding position of President-Elect, detail of finances and dispersing of funds to activity groups.

On June 6th, the spring/summer luncheon will be held at the Whittier Party House. Livingston County’s spring lunch- eon will be in May at the Yard of Ale. Geneseo Professor, Michael Obeg, will be discussing Native American History and the Indian Boarding Schools established with U.S. Government’s 1871 Policy of assimilation.

These schools are yet another important lesson in our nation’s history omitted from the texts used in high schools. Jane Crosby has volunteered to be membership chair of our Central Western Zone. Membership is only $30 per year and a renewal form is sent yearly once you have joined. Jane’s focus is to encourage local members to join and maintain their membership at the state level of NYSRTA to ensure a vital and continuing organization.

A group cannot function without strong leadership and cannot grow without the vitality and energy of new leadership; states Vicki. At their 2016 May meeting a motion was passed for Livingston County to elect officers for a 3 year term but modify that initially to allow for one or two new elected positions at a time. Her term will end in May 2018 with the provision that she stay on as co-president for an additional year. Sounds like a great plan. Let us know what happens, Vicki.

In closing, Betty Weber Worden’s Health Report for CWZ told about a group of Monroe County retired Family and Consumer Science Teachers are enrolled in an opioid overdose Reversal Training class (Narcan Training) sponsored by the Villa of Hope in Rochester. The training covers the numbers of U.S. deaths from opioid overdoses, which opioids are associated with the largest numbers of opioid deaths, preventing opioid overdose deaths and what to do if someone has overdosed. It also teaches how to use the Narcan Kit. We are discussing having the training for our CWZ...
I will start by reporting of the death of Neal Burger, Past President of Eastern Zone, who died in January of this year. Neal was President of Eastern Zone from 2005 - 2007. He and his wife Joan, were actively involved with Eastern Zone meetings for many years. Neal also was a President of the Columbia Unit of Eastern Zone. He had served as the Elementary Principal at Germantown Central School District for thirty-two years. He loved being involved with Eastern Zone and enjoyed being involved with his community in his retirement. Besides his wife Joan, he is survived by three children and four grandchildren.

Edna Wells, a member of the Rensselaer County Unit (formerly TARTA) and NYSRTA celebrated her 100 Birthday on December 5, 2017 in Troy. For many years, Edna played piano as retirees sang songs at RCRTA (TARTA) meetings. For her birthday, she was joined by family members, friends and distinguished guests. Although legally blind, Edna played the keyboard as everyone sang at her celebration. Kathy Jimino, Rensselaer County Director and Patrick Madden, Mayor of Troy, presented her with a plaque honoring her for all her contributions.

The $1,000 Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant which Eastern Zone was able to give in 2017 was presented by the Fulton County Unit to Karen Toscano, a special education teacher at Pleasant Avenue School in Johnstown. Presenters from the Fulton Unit included Jane Sitterly, Linda Sammons, Treasurer and Irene Hauser, President. This grant will help Karen Toscano to provide materials that are not covered in a school budget for STEM activities.

This program immediately engages in hands-on activities that create problem solving, collaboration and questioning. Eastern Zone thanks Irene Hauser and her committee for their leadership concerning this particular grant for 2017.

Eastern Zone will have another opportunity to present the $1,000 Hudson-Kramer Grant in 2019.

Kenneth Bollerud, President of the Saratoga County Unit was honored by the Saratoga Springs Rotary Club as its Senior Citizen of 2016 for his many years of Volunteer Services to the Saratoga Community. Besides his many other activities, he served as President of the Library Board for 28 years and was Chairman of the Building & Grounds Committee that saw the building of the present Saratoga Springs Public Library.
LIZ, EERTA and WERTA are alive and flourishing on Long Island. This spring we've hosted many successful functions, including, BOD meetings, Newsletters, and Luncheons. The units and zone will be nominating officers for 2018-2019 in May and June with the elections taking place in September. We are in the process of finding our delegates for the October NYSRTA Annual Meeting and Convention. Our Legislative Action Committee is busy interviewing the various state legislators (assembly members and senators) on NYSRTA's specific agenda items up for presentation this fall. All of our BOD members are busy fulfilling their duties and responsibilities and are anticipating the joys of a warming spring and a peaceful summer. ~ Fred Conway *CR

We’ve been patiently waiting through March and April but Mother Nature has not delivered Spring weather to Long Island. There's a rumor going around that her husband was driving, they got lost and he refused to stop and ask for directions!

Fortunately, there were two wonderful luncheon get-togethers before the winter set in. Larry Strickland arranged a great gathering in November at Villa Paul Restaurant in Hampton Bays. Members were able to celebrate the defeat of the constitutional convention proposal, meet the new East End RTA officers and share news from the NYSRTA convention. In December, Agnes Dancereau put together a gala holiday party at O'Malley's Restaurant in Greenport. There was a Chinese auction, door prizes, an Elf-on-the-Shelf gift bag exchange, excellent food and two music groups, Fred Conway *CR's barbershop quartet Antiquity and EERTA sing-along members Jim and Diana Davies' with guitars to entertain guests and to lead sing-alongs.

Agnes Dancereau congratulating a raffle winner at the EERTA Holiday party.

Alicia Winowsky, our Elf -on-the-Shelf

EERTA’S new officers: From the left. Fred Conway *CR, President, Dom LiCausi, Co-Vice President, Sue LiCausi, Secretary, Agnes Dansereau, Co -Vice President, and in the back, John Ruggiero, treasurer
As I write this article on April 29th, a glance through my window reveals freshly fallen snow! Not a lot of snow, but, Spring can arrive to stay any day now, please. During this past snowy winter, The NZ executive board met on November 6, 2018, January 30, 2018 and will meet again on May 1st to plan for the upcoming year. The November meeting emphasized wrapping up Annual Convention 2017 business, planning for the 2018 high school senior scholarships and ideas to increase new membership and increase active participation of current members. We are still in need of volunteers to chair or join some committees; please, won’t you consider helping? We need your support as many are doing double and triple duties to continue NYSRTA business and activities. Also, we respectfully ask that any NZ unit members who haven’t yet joined the state organization to find in their hearts a willingness to join, please.

At the January meeting, it was decided that NZ Secretary Rae Louise Tate and Public Relations Chair Linda Crosby would attend the State Board of Directors meeting in Liverpool on April 16-17. NZ President Gayla LePage said scholarship applications will be sent out soon to area high schools in both Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties. Committee chairs gave their reports and suggested ideas for 2018 events. After all her extensive planning, Vice-President Alice Galvin enthusiastically revealed the details for a very unique venue for our 2018 Spring Membership Meeting on May 23. We invite all members to travel to the Frederic Remington Museum in Ogdensburg for our business meeting, a tour of the museum and lunch. This beautiful museum is a world class site dedicated to the lifetime work of Frederic Remington, whose decades of travel throughout our western states and the Adirondacks produced thousands of drawings, paintings and sculptures that historically record the American Wild West of the late 1800’s. People literally from around the world visit to view the impressive, extensive collection of the museum. Also, you could spend the afternoon enjoying the views and strolling the paths of the large park nestled on the banks of the mighty St. Lawrence River across the street from the museum! NZ members should watch for the next newsletter and invitation; of course, guests and new members are welcome to join us for this event. Contact Gayla LePage (518)483-5014 for new membership information. The May 1st executive board meeting will include preparations for the mailing of the NZ Spring newsletter to be sent out that day to members.

At the State Board of Directors meeting in Liverpool, zone presidents, officers and committee chairs gave their reports and asked for help from members in writing resolutions, planning zone activities and inviting new members to join NYSRTA. Plans for the 2018 NYSRTA Annual Convention at Turning Stone Casino hosted by the Western Zone are well ahead of schedule with exciting new workshops and activities. There was much discussion on many issues including membership, by-laws, and legislative action; it was proposed that legislative action would focus on teacher health insurance issues, which are always a topic of great concern for retirees and active teachers.

Continued on page 11
Five years ago, we celebrated the 100th birthday of Clifton-Fine retired teacher Pauline Bassette. This past April 21st, she celebrated her 105th birthday with family and friends. In 1931, Pauline attended Ogdensburg Training Class which allowed her to teach in rural schools for 3 years while earning a Bachelor’s degree from Potsdam Normal School. Her teaching was interrupted during WWII when she did clerical work at the Rome Air Depot. After the war, she taught 3rd grade in a four room school in Newton Falls in St. Lawrence County until Clifton-Fine Central School opened in 1952 where she continued to teach 3rd grade until she retired in 1970. Eventually, Pauline went back to college in Albany where she earned a degree in Library Science.

She returned to Clifton-Fine as Elementary Librarian. She was one of the founding members of the Clifton-Fine Retired Teachers’ Association which was established in 1974. After her husband’s passing, Pauline lived alone in her home until this past November when she became a resident at an assisted living unit nearby. When recently asked about her secret to longevity, Pauline replied that she always liked to eat everything on her plate, especially vegetables and meat. “I was never fussy,” she said. She also explained that as a child, she and a brother would like to see who could eat the most. Except for some vision problems, Pauline is in very good health. We wish her many more years of birthday celebrations.

(Pauline Bassette article and photo by NZ Vice-President Alice Galvin)

Happy Teachers Appreciation Week
May 7-11, 2018

Teachers open up young minds,
Showing them the wonders of the intellect
And the miracle
Of being able to think for themselves
A teacher exercises
the mental muscle of students,
Stretching and strengthening
So they can make challenging decisions,
Find their way in the world,
And become independent.
The best teachers care enough
To gently push and prod students
To do their best
And fulfill their potential.
You are one of those.

Thank You!
Northeastern Zone; Marti Martin, Public Relations

It’s safe to say Spring has sprung in the North Country. We can look back on the many Fall and Winter activities of the Northeastern Zone and reminisce, but it may be too early yet to forget the frigid temperatures, the ice and numerous Spring snowstorms.

The Fall Gala celebrating “The Way We Were,” marked the 65th Anniversary of our zone and was a big hit with everyone who attended. The Adirondack Room of the Butcher Block was transformed into a 50’s-60’s Sock Hop with many revelers ready to strut their stuff during the fashion show. Tina Fountain wowed us with her renditions of the classic music she selected to entertain us. Our past presidents, Kevin Mulligan and President Emeritus Ron Wilson *CR, teamed up to do a fab job trying to convince us “Who’s on First?”, while the 50’s Trivia contest and a Silent Auction rounded out the events of the day, raising $1000 for our High School Student Scholarship program. Five individuals were honored for their Distinguished Service over the years, Robert LaFontaine, Emily Castine *CR, Nancy Olsen, Marilyn Smith, President Emeritus Ron Wilson *CR and Mary Myers, posthumously.

This year we welcome new members Kathleen Fessette, Karen Kearns, Lisa McGinn, A.Paul Scott, and Karen Slattery. Sandy Lashua, Membership chair, will be canvassing the 17 school districts in our Zone to invite active educators who are retiring in June to join our organization.

We are so pleased to have Glenda Smith Rowe join our Board of Directors as Vice President. While she is being mentored by President, Bonnie Gregware, Glenda brings enthusiasm and new ideas to the position.

Representatives from our Board of Directors attended the State Convention at Turning Stone in October. Pete Atchinson (Resolutions), Judy Corigliano (Friendly Service), Connie LaLonde (Community Service), (At Large Delegates) President Emeritus Ron Wilson *CR and his wife Lois, Bonnie Gregware, (President) and NYSRTA VP, Kevin Mulligan, reported back with the highlights of their committee meetings and organizational business. The effectiveness of the Con-Con campaign was lauded. The fiscal health of the Organization was boosted by the generous contributions to the Annual Fund, enabling NYSRTA to continue to support its mission and many programs. When October rolls around, our delegates look forward to the opportunity to network and find out what issues retirees face in other areas of New York state.

NEZ Board of Directors has decided to begin initiatives to make our organization more known to active teachers, with the ultimate hope for them to join and become involved when they retire. In the spirit of that endeavor, in addition to the Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant which is made available every other year through the State organization, we are going to give two scholarships every year; one to a HS senior declaring a major in the field of Education, and the second, to an active teacher who has an idea for an innovative project in their classroom. We are going to begin this year. Application details will go out soon and the award determination will be made in early Summer.

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As an update…Through updates on the website, http://sites.google.com/a/moriahk12.org/technology, we have been able to keep abreast of the Sustainable Energy project completed by Aaron Brassard’s Technology classes at Moriah Central School. Aaron is the recipient of the Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant. Each of his classes was responsible for a stage of the project involving constructing, wiring, and installing a solar panel and a wind turbine which were used to power an outdoor 50 watt LED spotlight. The spotlight illuminates an area near the sports playing field and parking lot. Aaron stated, “On behalf of our students I want to thank the NYS Retired Teachers’ Association for providing the grant funding to make this project happen. The project was a success and we will continue to use the system to teach students years down the road”.

Our members are getting geared up for the first Road Clean Up in May along our designated four miles on historic State Route 9 with its majestic views of the mountains of Vermont. Every year, the volume of trash found along this highway is disconcerting. Particular caution is being advised to dress appropriately to walk in areas where ticks may be prevalent, a concern we all have to be more aware of.

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The annual food drives for selected areas in the North Country will be held in June. Those wishing to join us for either event are encouraged to contact Connie LaLonde.

As usual, Health Insurance for Retirees is an issue we have to be vigilant about. Many of our members of NYSRTA faithfully attend the Health Consortium meetings held at our regional BOCES in Plattsburgh. It is vitally important to show our interest, concern and solidarity when it comes to the health insurance of our members. In the past year, medical costs for all participants in the consortium have sharply risen leaving the reserves unusually low. This sparked immediate unintended additional payments by individual school districts in the Clinton Essex Warren Washington BOCES and portends to initiate another sharp increase in premiums for the next school year as well. Members are encouraged to be selective about the need for emergency visits to the hospital as these rates are significantly higher than those of clinics.

Our June meeting will be June 7 at 11am at the American Legion on the Quarry Rd, Plattsburgh. Dr. Hollis Palmer and A.Paul Scott, who have participated in the conversations regarding the Health Insurance dilemma, will speak to the members after the June business meeting and a luncheon. We have asked them to give us their insights and share what actions are being taken and how they may affect retirees, in particular. We encourage our members to attend to become informed.

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Arising from the Hudson-Kramer Grant submissions, our Zone has adopted Kathleen Modert’s Middle School Life Skills class from Ticonderoga Central School. At our September and December meetings, personal care items, easily prepared food products, and gift cards have been collected and donated to the students. Thank you notes and personally designed tile trivets were sent to the officers of NEZ as tokens of the students’ appreciation.

The project rated runner-up for the Hudson-Kramer grant has come to fruition as well. Robert Arnold, SUNY Professor Emeritus, and Brian Cook, SAR Registrar and Genealogy Historian, representatives from the Plattsburgh Battle chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, have initiated this innovative project. Keeseville Elementary School Principal, Kevin Hulbert, Robert and Brian began a collaboration in the Fall of 2017 to test the feasibility of implementing the study of history and geography through Local History using a website developed for this express purpose. www.americaspastthroughtheeyesoflocalhistory was developed by Arnold and his grandson, Regan Arnold, a high school student. Fifth grade teachers Becky Bassett, Tim Butler, Rebecca Lloyd, Lindsay Campagna and Technology teacher Mario LaFranca have introduced the project with their students in two phases. In Phase I, A Family Geneology Search, students were taught ways to research their family tree using online sites, locating primary source documents to support their findings in addition to using family resources. Phase II is a study of history through primary documents, specifically the Gordon Gazetteer of 1836, enabling students to research the history of the towns in which they live and to document their learning through keeping individual on-line journal entries. A Family Ancestry Night was held in November when each student was available to talk to visitors and share what they learned about their family history. Museum Night will be held the end of May when students will share what they have learned about the social, economic, political, physical environmental influences on their towns’ history using modalities unique to the students’ abilities and interests. Funding for the project came from their respective organizations. History buffs and educators looking for an innovative way to introduce these concepts to students using a systems approach are encouraged to delve further at the website where Teacher and Student editions as well as historical resources and links can be found to get you started.

The Board of Directors of NEZ wish our members and colleagues around the state a glorious Summer enjoying friends and family, exploring new interests and enjoying favorite past times.
The poet W. C. Marshall writes about “Keeping step with Spring.” This describes what NCZ members are doing!

The annual WPBS-TV’s Ready, Set, Fun is set for Saturday, May 12th. This event under the direction of Community Chair Patricia Dietrich is being held at a new location this year, the Salmon Run Mall in Watertown. Enthusiastic NCZ volunteers hand out brand new Scholastic books to children of all ages. The volunteers also oversee a gently used book exchange. This is a great celebration that supports families and promotes literacy. This positive, inspiring project is perfectly suited for our retired teachers!

Plans are also underway for our Spring Scholarship Luncheon scheduled for June 12th at the Ramada Inn in Watertown. In partnership with the Northern New York Community Foundation, NCZ is awarding two $1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors who are envisioning a future career in the field of education. The NCZ Scholarship Committee under the leadership of John Gaffney has been busy. They have the challenging task of selecting two winners after reviewing applications from many highly qualified candidates. John is assisted by an experienced committee consisting of Bruce & Candice Buckingham, Dr. George Forbes*, Willis Haller, Marianne Malatino, and Tom Van Emmerik. NCZ is very proud to announce that Lesley Aucter from Beaver River Central School and Michaela VanWormer from South Jefferson Central School are the 2018 Scholarship Winners. These deserving students with their parents will be honored at the June 12th luncheon. Our 2018 Professional Educator Award will also be presented at this luncheon.

LESLEY J. AUCTER
Lesley is the daughter Jim and KaTina Aucter. She currently resides in Croghan, NY and attends Beaver River Central High School. She plans on attending SUNY Cobleskill or Morrisville State where she will major in Secondary Education-Agriculture.

MICHAELA A. VANWORMER
Michaela is the daughter of Mike and Angie VanWormer. She currently resides in Rodman, NY and attends South Jefferson High Central School. She plans on attending SUNY Geneseo where she plans on majoring in Secondary Education-Science

Another special feature of the June luncheon is the presentation by Laura Foster, executive director, of the Frederic Remington Art Museum in Ogdensburg. You may have seen this excellent presentation at the 2017 NYSRTA Convention in Verona. Ms. Foster will highlight Remington’s North

Linda Holley and Beverly Campany are hostesses for this spring event. They are gracious greeters who do the extras even supplying fresh garden flowers to grace the luncheon tables! Pat Dietrich oversees the “Love Your Public Library” fundraiser and a non-perishable food drive for the Jefferson County Food pantry. Patty Corey and Toni Gigliotti supply decorated Mason jars on the tables for Coats for Kids. NCZ Members generously support all these worthy causes.

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Our SEZ members had a variety of winter escapades! **Leon Harrold** *CR and his wife Jean spent three wonderful weeks in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, only to arrive home later than expected thanks to Nor’easter #1. Cheryl and **Bob Fischer** spent a few months in Hallandale Beach, Florida. By 8AM every morning Cheryl was in the pool doing water aerobics and did not miss the snow at all! The snow must have missed Cheryl though…they came home to a 6-inch snowfall. **Tony and Mary Ellen Colombo** sailed on the Breakaway to the Bahamas. Although they had hail in Cape Canaveral, Nassau made up for it with warm sunny skies. Geri Grammas made several trips to Florida as well as a two week vacation in India. **Patti and Jerry De Leo** spent Super Bowl Sunday in Atlantic City. Patti described the two of them as Patriots’ fans hiding in the Eagles’ nest! **Helen and Rudy Hoering** spent most of the winter in Florida. The four of us were even able to spend a delightful day in St. Augustine together. Ed and I were just about “snowbirds” this year. We were away for 51 days spending time in St. Augustine, Mayport, Ormond Beach, Daytona Beach, Orlando, Tampa, and St Petersburg. We had a lovely time with two of Ed’s brothers and their wives, caught up with friends in Orlando, St. Petersburg, and of course Helen and Rudy in St. Augustine. We took a western Caribbean cruise in the middle of our adventure and knocked Dunn’s River Falls in Jamaica off our bucket list. Our son and daughter-in-law came and provided us with a week filled with fun and adventure. When it was time to head back to reality, we did so on the Auto Train. Best winter getaway ever!

To quote Ray, “In addition to being able to say, ‘My Three Sons’ I now can add ‘Eight Is Enough’ – my two favorite TV shows!” **Jackie Gerken** had her daughter, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren for a week at Christmas. I guess you might say she had a “Full House”! **Patti De Leo** and **Mary Lou Davis**, both active in The American Association of University Women, planned a conference in Corning, NY. The topic was “Women Moving Forward After the March.” They both also worked on a Writer’s Tea, a fundraiser for scholarships and initiatives for girls and women.

Now that spring is in the air, **Patti** and **Jerry De Leo** have their suitcases out and are ready to go. Look out Branson! Here they come! Many of SEZ’s units are also “ready to go”! The Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association (MARTA) has lectures, theater trips, craft projects, lunch and classic movie get togethers, CPR instruction, as well as a scholarship breakfast on the agenda. The Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association (NARTA) will have their annual meeting on June 7th at Spruce Lodge. Another luncheon is planned by their group at the River Grill on the Newburgh waterfront. They all have their fingers crossed for nice weather and lunch outside on the patio. Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) hosted a lecture concerning community health in Sullivan County. AND, we all came together on April 26th as Southeastern Zone for a meeting with **Tony Colombo**, our zone president. It seems no matter what the season, or where we are, we are very busy people!

Back at home, **Martha Diederich**’s quilting group made lap quilts for veterans and presented them through West Point. Lucky vets! In March, **Ray LeDuc** became a grandfather---again!

Enjoy the warm weather, be healthy, and stay safe! ‘Til next time…
The Southern Zone has lost another one of its active members, Delores (Dee) Smith. We had just honored her for our Special Recognition Award in our zone! Dee was previously a chairperson for the Federal and State Legislation Committees in both the Corning CARTA unit and zone levels. She was an active lobbyist and was especially focused on a COLA for retired teachers. It is with great sadness that we honor her passing with our appreciation of all she worked for to make our lives better.

On a lighter note, our Zone is able to choose a teacher/administrator applicant from our area to earn the $1000 NYSRTA Hudson Kramer Memorial Grant. The grant is to be used to support the teacher’s curriculum in his or her school district. A committee will meet soon after the May 5th deadline to select a deserving winner for this award.

Marge McPherson, a member of the EARTA unit, received recognition from Washington for a national award on Poison Control. She and others go to many schools in our area and talk to students about the dangers of poisonous substances, including drugs. It is a part of a community outreach program. Congratulations to Marge!

The Southern Zone executive committee met to discuss notes taken from a NYSRTA meeting. We need to encourage new and old members to join NYSRTA, and to inform them of the many benefits of being members. We have started the process of finding presenters for the keynote speaker and workshops for the 2019 NYSRTA convention. We would like to encourage the general membership to attend their zone and state meetings.

Our units are trying to fill their executive positions lost through death or health issues. EARTA has gained Marge MacPherson as their legislator. She is an accomplished retiree having been awarded the prestigious Hospital Award for Volunteer Excellence (HAVE) for incredible work on the Poison Prevention Program. Marge accepted the award in Washington D.C. The Southern Zone has 2 new executive members. Mary Suffern will take over Community Service chairperson. Mary was past VP, Secretary, President, and Program chairman of CARTA. For SZ Mary was secretary for many years and participated on several committees and was a recipient of the Special Recognition Award for the Southern Zone.

Sue Pierce has graciously accepted the position of Southern Zone Health Care Chairperson. She is a member from WBET unit. WBET will be hosting the SZ Annual meeting September 19 at the Owego Methodist Church. Their speaker will inform attendees of Medicare in 2019. All are welcome to join us.

Front row, kneeling — Lynne Hunkovic (EBB); Mary Lou Wood, Pres. of So. Zone & CARTA
Second row, sitting — Sue Pierce, SZ Health Care; Linda Moore, Pres. of SCRTA; Lois Cutton, SZ Treasurer; Marge MacPherson, EARTA Legislator; Mary Johnson, Legislation
Back row, — Bonnie Stratton, SZ Secretary; Nancy Spaulding, Pres. of EARTA; Mary Suffern, SZ Community Service; Imogene McKendrick, Friendly Service, DeCormier Board member-retired; Don Cutton, SZ Scholarship; Vince Smith *CR, SZ Membership
An article caught my eye in our Buffalo News. Theresa Adamec, Assistant Principal at Lancaster High School has won 2 state education associations awards. Wow! She was chosen as the State School Administrative Assistant Principal of NYS (SAANYS) and also recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). I called Lancaster High School and left a message for Mrs. Adamec. She called me back, we spoke, and I immediately wanted to meet this educator. We scheduled a one hour meeting at her school which has 1900 plus students. I am a retired middle school teacher (graduated HS in 1968) and I was not sure what I was going to see and hear, fifty years later, 2018. In her office, we sat down and began to get to know each other and Lancaster HS life. We spent much of our time talking about empowering the students of Lancaster High School. Terry began her education in the Lancaster Central School District. She graduated from this school district and was first employed as a High School Special Education teacher and is now, Assistant Principal. Mrs. Adamec told me; “Lancaster Central is the best kept secret” because of their efficient administration and smart planning. Terry Adamec is a gifted educator. She is caring and passionate about students and their educational process. She believes in empowering students to be the best they can be. Terry facilitated the creation of the school’s more than 60 clubs and activities, many of which are led by students. She collaborates with teachers to develop curriculum and instruction which results in student centered classes that are achievable yet challenging. All freshmen take the Foundations to Success course. This is a transition course into high school; life, study skills, soft skills, and an introduction to the more than 60 clubs offered. Teachers volunteer to teach this specific course curriculum and there is a waiting list. As a sophomore, the students may apply to be part of one of seven Leadership Academies in the high school. There are over 300 students in these academies. They are; Leadership, Healthcare, Finance, Hospitality and Tourism, Trades, Project Lead the Way (Engineering), and the Visual and Performing Arts. These academy members and faculty plan activities, topics, and classes for the school. There are also 50 plus sports teams to join. Terry Adamec recognized the need for a program to identify and support the needs of her high school students including the “at risk” students. With her creativity to motivate the Lancaster High School students, the graduation rate is 98%.

Terry is now a candidate for the National Secondary Assistant Principal of the year, which will be awarded later this year. I ended my interview by saying, “I wish I could have taught here”. Do you know a progressive, student centered, school like Lancaster High School? Maybe you were lucky enough to teach there, and have some of these memories.
Community Service Report; Eileen Holmes, Chair

As newly appointed Community Chair, it has been a very rewarding experience to be in contact with the zone chairs and learn about the community service projects planned for 2018. Across New York state NYSTRA members will be encouraging literacy, walking for health, improving our environment, aiding needy families, providing scholarships and teacher grants, helping animals, and sponsoring libraries, museums, hospitals and charitable causes.

Our members will be collecting and donating money, food, clothing, books, coupons, soda can tabs, school supplies, etc. but most of all, our members will be donating their TIME to help achieve these worthy goals. I strongly encourage all our members to add time and support to their Zone’s community service activities. Aesop’s ancient words of wisdom "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted" will ring true for us as we work together as a formidable group of retirees to serve our communities.

Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust; Imogene Mckendrick, Treasurer

When those monthly bills arrive at your home, are you finding it difficult to decide which to pay and which to set aside until next month, because you just do not have enough money available to pay them all at this time? Is this the process you have gone through last month and the month before that? Do you then wonder if your desperate situation is ever going to get any better? Next month your doctor may order another prescription, or the utility company will raise its rates. Then what will you do? Financial help may be available to you just for the asking!

What are you going to do about repairing the roof that the wind gusts blew off? You have used all of the money that you have, just to buy food and pay this month’s bills. Will you have to take out a loan to take care of the unexpected happening and be in debt until the loan is “paid off”? Financial help (without payback or any obligation) may be available to you just for the asking!

If you are a member or spousal member of NYSRTA you can apply for a DeCormier Trust Fund Grant.

A Monthly Stipend Grant application or a Special Grant application can be obtained from the NYSRTA Office, the NYSRTA website, your Friendly Service president or unit chair, a DeCormier Trustee, or by calling DeCormier Trustee Chairman, Anne Flansburg at (716) 863-3631. Fill in the form for the grant that would best meet your need and send it to the address as directed on the form. If you want some help to complete the form, ask a Friendly Service person, your unit president, a DeCormier Trustee, or a friend.

A Monthly Stipend is a “long term” grant that would provide financial assistance in the form of a check sent to you each month for as long as you have a need for assistance.
Helping Those Who Serve: Developing an Assistance to Firefighters Grant Application

The National Volunteer Fire Council is creating support for its volunteer fire departments across the United States. Volunteer fire departments have the opportunity three times a year to apply for Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG). However, each year our office gets questions about where they can turn to for assistance in writing these grants. Each AFG application has a box on it that allows grant writers the option to apply for funding for their support if the grant is accepted. This will be determined between the writer and the volunteer fire department applying.

Fire departments and non-affiliated EMS agencies can get funding through AFG to purchase equipment, apparatus and training. These grants are especially important to volunteer fire departments, which make up about 85 percent of the fire service but often struggle to adequately and safely equip their station and personnel.

One challenge fire departments face is writing the grant narrative for the AFG application. Volunteer departments often do not have a designated grant-writer and some find the task of putting together a federal grant application daunting. Community members such as teachers may consider offering their services to their local department to help them write or edit their grant narrative to increase the chances of the department’s success in obtaining an AFG grant.

AFG is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which has posted a number of guidance materials to help fire departments and grant writers develop applications, including:

Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) contains the key programmatic updates and application requirements for all eligible applicants.
The Get Ready Guide is designed to give you a kick-start in preparing your application. It will help better prepare you to thoroughly answer the application questions.
The SELF-EVALUATION ASSISTANCE sheets are designed to help you understand the criteria that you must address in your Narrative Statement when applying for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) Program. There are two sheets, one for Operations and Safety and one for Vehicle Acquisition.

The Application Checklist will help you prepare your grant application. Collecting this information beforehand will reduce the time and energy needed to complete your application.

The Cost Share calculator allows you to determine your organizations Local Cost Share for grants. It is important to familiarize yourself with FEMA’s administration of cost sharing requirements.

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) strongly recommends that anyone developing an AFG application carefully review all applicable guidance materials published by FEMA prior to beginning an application, particularly the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to ensure that the application is in line with the grant criteria.

If a retiree would be interested in assisting volunteer fire departments from across the United States write their grant and/or grant narrative, please email Brian McQueen, NVFC Executive Committee at: 271believe@gmail.com. You will be asked to fill out a data form that will be kept on file and shared with interested volunteer fire departments. This form will include: Your name, address and contact information only.