



WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 16, Number 3

www.wzretiredteachers.org

Summer 2018

ANTHONY VETRANO

January 14, 1931—March 10, 2018

For those who knew Anthony Vetrano during his long career, first as a soldier, then as a teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal, and eventually director of vocational education for Buffalo Public Schools, a certain level of post-retirement involvement seemed inevitable. His students and co-workers loved him, and he was grateful for a career that afforded him the chance to positively affect lives. Retirement was merely an opportunity for Tony to share his gifts and energy with new populations.

Tony took his love of family, friends and teaching with him when he retired. He became active in the St Gregory's Senior Association, serving on its board of directors, and was in charge of planning multiple activities for his fellow senior citizens. An honorably discharged Veteran of the Korean War, he was an active member of AMVETS Post 49 for more than a decade, instituting Italian Night with its renowned spaghetti dinner, the Kentucky Derby party and card games night. Married to Marie for 60 years, Tony always made time for his family, and retirement brought the ability to spend even more time with their family's four children, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

After retirement, Tony became an active member of NYSRTA and Western Zone. He served as a Board of Director member for many years, and was President of Western Zone from 2003 to 2005. He initiated a travel program which proved to be highly successful, and doubled as a great recruitment incentive to encourage new members to join. As Chair of the Health Service Committee, Tony was a diligent and conscientious custodian of the Western Zone health insurance program. In 2007 he received the Western Zone Citation Award on behalf of retired educators and the community at large. On the state level, he was a delegate to numerous conventions, and his exceptional organizational skills were recognized when he was appointed as Chair of the Credentials Committee. In 2011, NYSRTA awarded him a Certificate of Recognition for his Distinguished Service at the Local, Zone, and State levels.

From erudite mathematician to hands-on instructor in the vocational fields, rounded out by a love of sports and a deep pride in his family, country, and community, Tony lived his life fully, both during his long career and in his very active retirement. He will be missed but his work lives on.

LEN SIKORA

January 6, 1928—June 10, 2018

On June 10, 2018, we lost a true leader in our community. Leonard Sikora blazed trails in Buffalo education, and the chapters of his life describe years of hard work that leave their lasting influence on countless teachers, students, and cherished friends.

Len's early chapters were spent excelling as a student and eventually as an innovative and creative young teacher. A proud Buffalonian, he received the Jesse Ketchum award in eighth grade, and graduated with top honors from Seneca Vocational High School in 1946, a school to which he would return, in a different chapter, as principal.

His forty year career in the Buffalo schools exemplified his forward-thinking approach to education. It led to the organization of Home Mechanics classes for girls in the early '50s, the introduction of an Honors High School and CAD/CAM and Satellite Communication Programs. In 1975 he was appointed principal of his Alma Mater, Seneca Vocational High School, retiring in 1990.

The middle chapters in Len's life flowed naturally into his retirement years. With his wife Irene's support, he worked with NYS Skilled Workers Emeritus, the Erie County Department of Senior Services, and Network in Aging. He was given many awards, including the Jerry Flaschner Humanitarian, Buffalo State College Foundation, Buffalo State Senior Service, NYS Skilled Workers Emeritus, Niagara Frontier Folk Art Council, Am-Pol Eagle Citizen of the Year, and others. Proud of his cultural heritage, he served as Chairman of the Polish Arts Scholarship Foundation and was a trustee of the Scholarship Fund.

He became active with the Western Zone of NYSRTA, serving as second VP, first VP, and as President from 1997-1999. Len worked tirelessly as Chair of the Founders' Fund, and Community Service Committee, Board of Director, and member of various committees. In 2003 he received the WZ Citation Award. The State recognized his leadership abilities, and he was appointed membership chair, and Chair of the NYSRTA/AARP/NRTA

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**WESTERN ZONE
OFFICERS
2017-2018**

Elected Officers

President

Doris R. Kirsch

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Robert J. Metz

2nd Vice President

Michelle L. Claus

Treasurer

Don E. Lawrence

Recording Secretary

Audrey M. Seidel

Corresponding Secretary

Nancy White

Membership Secretary

Salvatore J. Sedita

Past President

Charles T. Peszynski

At Large Directors

Term Expiring 2018

Gary Beuth

June Beuth

Russell M. Gervasi

Patricia Keller

Judith A. Klug

Sara Rodland

Dolores A. Scanlon

Salvatore J. Sedita

Audrey M. Seidel

Nancy White

Ann Marie Wik

Irine D. Zinter

Term Expiring 2019

Betty P. Browne

Ronald A. Czapl

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

Term Expiring 2020

Georgann Bemis

John N. Cardarella

Laura Fiorotto

Doris R. Kirsch

Don E. Lawrence

William D. Loockerman

Gail A. Niparts

Stanley J. Nowak

Mary V. O'Leary

Theresa E. Pope

Marilyn Stephens

Marilyn K. Tota

SPOTLIGHT ON

Don Lawrence



Don has been an intricate part of WZ since becoming a board member in 2008. He has been our treasurer for the past 10 years, preparing the annual budgets, presenting monthly financial reports for our Board meetings, keeping track of the accounts, paying the bills and keeping WZ in a positive financial state. Not a little job by any means!! He was instrumental in working with the auditors from the IRS, which was time consuming and we know at times, frustrating. However, Don, with his financial experience and dedication, was ready for the task. The audit was concluded satisfactorily and with no need for any actions other than dropping the Health Insurance Program.

He is a graduate of SUNY Buffalo where he earned his Bachelors of Science degree in 1968 in English Education and his Masters in Science degree in 1976 in Reading. Don began his teaching career in the Buffalo Public Schools by teaching eighth and ninth grade Language Arts from 1968 to 1971 at Woodlawn Junior High School. He then moved to School 59 from 1971-1974 where he taught Language Arts and Reading to grades 2-6. From 1974 to 2004 Don held the positions of Reading Specialist, English teacher and English as a Second Language at Williamsville East High School. He was also director and teacher of the Summer Studies Program from 1974-1987 for the Park School Summer Sessions Program. During the 1978-1979 school year Don was the Reading Clinic Supervisor and Instructor at SUNY Buffalo. He also was an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Elementary Education and Reading at SUNY Buffalo from 2001-2008.

Don became a member of NYSRTA in 2004 when he retired from Williamsville. Since becoming a Board member of WZ he has served on the Finance Committee for 10 years and on the Health Care committee for 8 years, as well as continuing to serve as our treasurer.

He is President of the Amherst East Rotary Club, also served as treasurer and was Literary Chairman of Rotary International District

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**DIRECTORS/AREA
UNIT PRESIDENTS**

AMHERST

Joseph A. Podgorski

BUFFALO

Charles Peszynski

CHAUTAUQUA SOUTH

Nancy Anderson

EASTERN ERIE

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GENESEE

James Owen

KENMORE

Mary Ann Kermis

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

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

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

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(716) 649-3844

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WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE 96 YEARS YOUNG!



We have written previous articles about Richard Snethen, a spry 96 year old retired Science teacher from Springville-Griffith Institute in Southern Erie County. Dick continues to be amazing. He attended, with his family, the 75th reunion from Rutgers, graduating in 1943. He also attended the rededication of the relocated WWII monument. The end of the rededication was marked by the reading of Dick Snethen's memorial poem, playing of taps, and Dick saluting in his original military uniform. The two remaining graduates of the class of 1943 were heard planning the next reunion.

Dick rushed home; the Buffalo Bison's wanted Dick to throw the first ball at the Armed Forces Day baseball game. Dick was there on May 19th, in his full military uniform to throw the first ball, followed by a hot dog and liquid refreshment during the game.

Memorial Day, at Amberleigh (Dicks home), also involved remembering military. Dick was in full military garb and participated in their remembrance program.

Richard Vienne

Honor Flight



Richard Vienne, Sr. and Dr. Richard Vienne, Jr.

"The best day of my life," was Dick's reply when asked about the Honor Flight he participated in on April 14, 2018. This statement was echoed by his chaperone, his son Rick, but Rick corrected it to "One of the best days of my life." Few of the veterans selected really knew what to expect, except a really busy day in Washington D.C.

They departed from the American Legion Post with both a motorcycle and police escort. They were met at the airport by about 100 well-wishers and a band playing music from each of the service branches. Two Buffalo Bills met them and joined them for the trip.

Their arrival in Baltimore was exciting because they were met by U. S. Naval Academy midshipman who welcomed them and congratulated them.

Next was a police escort to Washington where the first stop was the Pentagon. A group of school children cheered for them as they entered the building. The next stop was the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where they observed the changing of the guard. The ceremony was beautiful and there was hardly a dry eye among the vets. Memorials were next, which included WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.

An ice storm which closed Buffalo airport changed flight plans and necessitated an overnight stay at the Sheraton Hotel in Baltimore. At the airport the next day, while awaiting their departure, a group of soldiers from the 101st airborne group deplaned. The Buffalo vets cheered and applauded them much to the surprise of the young soldiers. Minutes later they returned to honor the older vets. A beautiful thing to see the past honor the future and the future honor the past.

Arrival in Buffalo included a bagpipe band, large crowd, including Scouts, Veteran Groups, older and young family members, flags and signs everywhere.

Maybe for many, "One of the best days of their life."

NYS Retired Teachers' Association Western Zone

Cordially invites members and guests to attend
The Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Wednesday, September 19, 2018
Salvatore's Italian Gardens
6461 Transit Road, Depew, NY (683-7990)

8:15-9:15 Registration and Vendor Exhibits; Coffee, Tea & pastries available
9:30 **Program: Steve Kramer, Eldercare Lawyer; NYSUT and Private Practice**
Topic: Scams and Legal Concerns of Seniors
10:30 Cheese and Fruit Display
11:00 **General Membership Meeting**
11:45 Vendor Baskets and Prizes Drawing
12:15 Luncheon with Board Meeting to follow

Luncheon with Soup, Roll, Potato, Vegetable, Dessert, and Coffee or Tea

Choice of:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Prime Rib | \$32 |
| 2. Salmon with Lobster Dill Sauce | \$26 |
| 3. Chicken Francaise | \$25 |
| 4. Vegetarian: Pasta Puttanesca | \$25 |

Reservation Deadline: Friday, September 7, 2018

Checks Payable to: Western Zone NYSRTA. **Mail to:** Maria Hager, 898 Geer Rd., Arcade, NY 14009

Detach and mail lower portion only. Keep upper portion as your reminder.

Western Zone NYSRTA Annual Meeting, September 19, 2018

\$32 Prime Rib, \$26 Salmon, \$25 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 Maria Hager at (716) 307-3083
With whom would you like to sit? _____

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Betty Browne's Health Tip

If you are looking for a permanent way of eating healthy, then the Mediterranean Diet is for you. What is the Mediterranean Diet? It is not a "diet". It's a culinary tradition that focuses on fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seafood, olive oil and healthy fats. It is the healthy way to lose weight and keep it off. This way of eating is part of a culture that appreciates and respects the freshest ingredients, simply prepared and shares meals with friends and family in a leisurely and social way.

To sum up the **Mediterranean Diet**:

- Eat lots of fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Go with whole grains, no white flour
- Buy raw or roasted nuts such as almonds, cashews and walnuts
- Replace the butter with olive oil
- Use herbs and spices
- Eat more fish
- Cut back on red meat
- Buy low fat dairy products
- For more information go to Google: The Mediterranean Diet

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 19th** at Salvatore's Italian Gardens.

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

The candidates are: Gary Beuth, June Beuth, Elaine DeLisle, Russell Gervasi, Patricia Keller, Judith Klug, Sara Rodland, Dolores Scanlon, Audrey Seidel, Nancy White, Ann Marie Wik, and Irine Zinter

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	Alphonse Marabella
1st Vice President	Judy Farmer
2nd Vice President	Michelle Claus
Treasurer	Don Lawrence
Recording Secretary	Audrey Seidel
Corresponding Secretary	Nancy White
Membership Secretary	Vacant
Past President	Doris Kirsch

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.

*If the proposed change to the Zone's bylaw, Article V, Section I is approved, the possibility of co-officer positions would exist.

WESTERN ZONE PROPOSES TWO RESOLUTIONS

The Western Zone of NYSRTA has proposed two resolutions for consideration at the, July 9, 2018 committee meeting, at Liverpool, New York. Ten zone resolution committee chairs, will meet to decide which resolutions will be submitted to the New York State Retired Teachers Association for a vote at the NYSRTA Convention.

Western Zone has proposed “School Safety” and “Loss of Retiree Benefits”, as resolutions to be considered. Board member Judy Klug will represent the Western Zone at the July 9 meeting.

Resolutions approved at the July 9 meeting will be published in “York State”, the NYSRTA publication. These resolutions will be voted on at the NYSTRA Conference at Turning Stone in October.

Members of the Western Zone Resolution committee include: Theresa Pope, Judy Klug, Marilyn Tota and Janice Weitz.



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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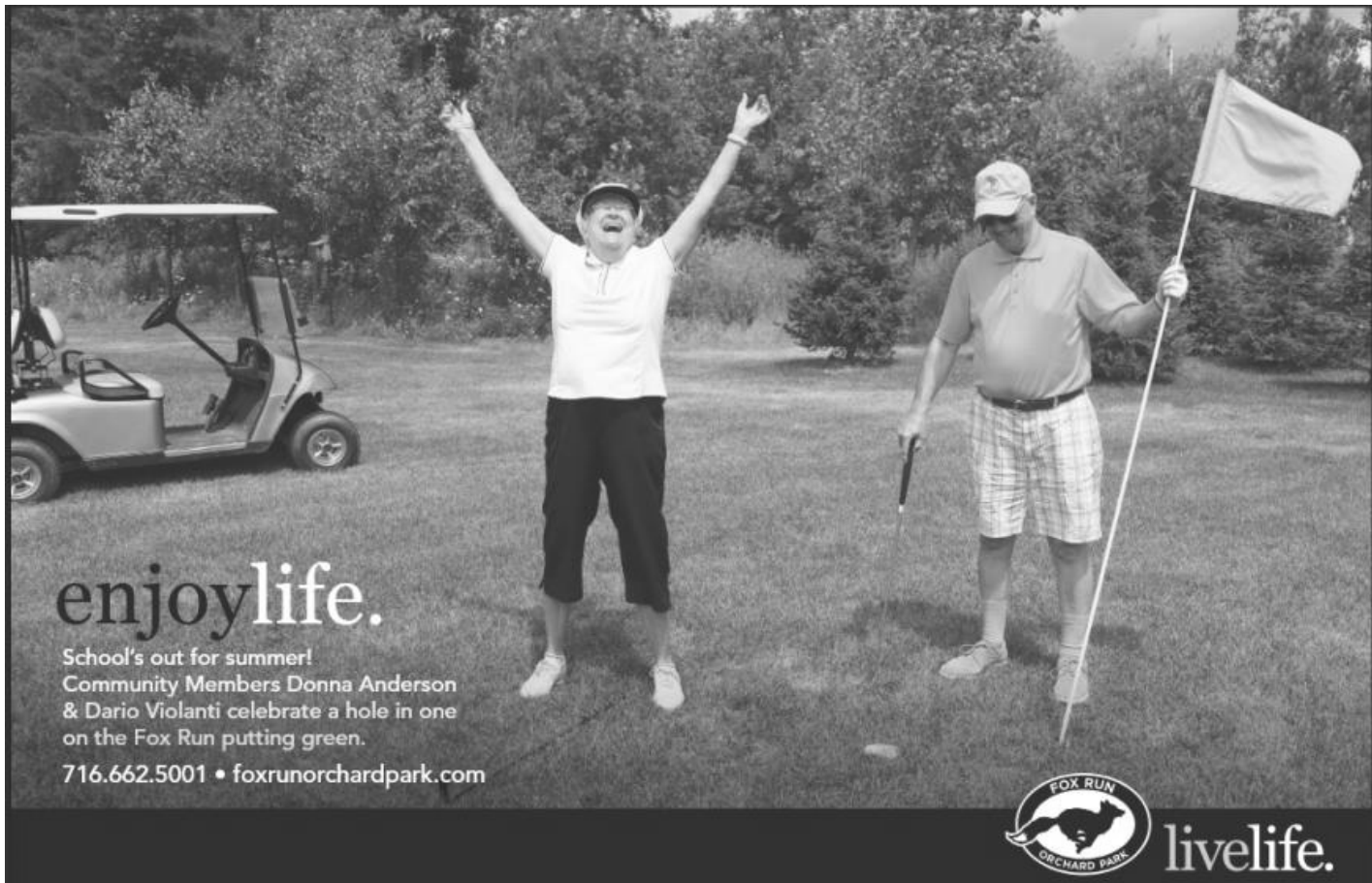


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WZ COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Again this year WZ will be collecting new children’s books for “Project Flight”. Please bring books to the Annual Meeting at Salvatore’s on September 19. These will be distributed to area schools.



Spotlight on Don Lawrence

Continued from page 2

7090 from 2006–2008. Don was Central Treasurer of Williamsville East High School from 1984-2004 and Vice President of Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center from 2006-2008. Don also volunteers at the Newman Center.

As you can see, Don is involved in many community organizations. He puts his heart and soul into whatever he does as is evident with the many awards and recognitions he has received. In 1996 he was selected to the Board of Judges, Columbia Scholastic Press Association and American Scholastic Press Association. In 2000 Don received the Teacher of Excellence award from the Niagara Frontier Reading Association and in 2003 he was recognized with the President’s Club Award from Josten’s Publishing. Don was selected as a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International in 2006. We at WZ were very pleased to present Don with the WZ Citation award in 2016 for his many years of service to our organization.

When asked on his WZ resume’, why he became a Board member, Don replied, “Working for the good of retired and active teachers is a lifelong job.” He continues to work diligently as a valued Board member to ensure the good of all teachers. Thanks, Don, for your continued dedication to WZ. This Spotlight article doesn’t begin to express our gratitude for a job well done as our treasurer.

2018 Western Zone Grant Recipients

The Teacher Grant Committee once again conducted the Western Zone School Grant Competition for teachers in the counties of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, and Niagara.

Winners of the two \$500.00 grants were:

- Amy Dewart, a teacher at Barker Central High School, received the grant for her entry entitled “International Exchange with Italy.”
- The second grant was awarded to Donn Riggi, librarian at Alden Middle School, for her entry entitled “Battle of the Books.”

Congratulations to both for their outstanding applications and innovative projects.



Front Row: Shirley Plummer Back Row:
Ron Czapla, Amy Dewart, Stan Nowak, and
Therese Clarke



Stan Nowak, Donn Riggi, Ron Czapla, Therese
Clarke, Irene Zinter

Len Sikora

Continued from page 1

committee. He received the NYSRTA Certificate of Recognition and the AARP Volunteer Community Service Awards, and coordinated the National Day of Service for many years.

Leonard Sikora's life was not unlike a good book, with nice long chapters and full of the possibilities of what one person can accomplish if he shares his gifts for learning and teaching. His dedication to accomplishing things gave his life meaning long after his final pages were written. He will be missed, but his life is now woven through everyone he influenced who will continue his excellent work.

Proposed Change to Bylaws Article V Officers, Section I

The following proposed amendment to the Western Zone NYSRTA bylaws was passed at the meeting of the WZ Board of Directors on Wednesday, June 20, 2018. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to those present at the WZ Annual Meeting at Salvatore's Italian Gardens on Wednesday, September 19, 2018. A favorable vote of two-thirds of those members present shall be required for adoption. The new amendment to the Zone Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon passage. The proposed amendment to Article V: Section I would permit co-officers for each elected office of the Western Zone.

Article V Officers: Section I:

Current provision:

The elected officers of the zone shall hold office for a term of 1 (one) year. Elected officers are limited to not more than 3 (three) consecutive terms except for Treasurer whose term is not limited. This shall not apply to any person holding an office at the time of this bylaw amendment passage. The term of the elected officers shall begin on November 1st and end on October 31st of the next year except it shall continue until a successor is elected to that office. In case of a vacancy, the office shall be filled by the action of the Board of Directors for the remainder of that term of office.

Amend by addition:

Co-officers shall be permitted for each elected office. Duties of the co-officers shall be decided by the co-officers themselves and presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

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New York State Retired Teachers' Association 68th Annual Convention is October 17, 18, and 19, 2018.

Western Zone is the host.

Please go on line at www.nysrta.org to register.

Support Western Zone.

Keep September 19 open for the Western Zone Annual meeting at Salvatore's! See page 4 for the reservation form



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