



# WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 17, Number 2

[www.wzretiredteachers.org](http://www.wzretiredteachers.org)

Spring 2019

## President's Message



At this time, the Chair for Membership is still empty. If you can help our organization by volunteering to fill this position it would be appreciated. Please share your talents with WZ and NYSRTA. The membership chair responsibilities are not overwhelming. For more information contact

me at 716-635-9530 or [almarbs@gmail.com](mailto:almarbs@gmail.com).

Please understand that membership is the life blood of any group. I would ask WZ members who interact with active and retired teachers to encourage them to consider membership in NYSRTA. Members get representation in advocating for matters that affect them, especially with state lawmakers. NYSRTA has secured the COLA for our pensions. It has kept politicians out of the monies that support our pensions. Other retirees that have pensions from the general funds are not as fortunate and are in serious trouble. Our pensions are funded generally at 98% to 100% of obligation.

NYSRTA also offers travel opportunities for its members. Currently some feel that travel is a good stimulus to keep minds active. Three of the trips offered are: 1. Switzerland, Austria & Bavaria, 2. Scotland, coming up shortly, 3. Egypt in February, 2020. See [brta.biz](http://brta.biz) for more information on these trips.

Speaking of travel, once travelling to Europe, my wife forgot to pack her blood pressure meds. We went to a pharmacy to see if they could provide us

with a supply for the duration of our tour. With no script they sold us 30 pills for 10 euros. In the US, these meds would easily be doubled in price if not more. NYSRTA is advocating for fair pricing from pharmaceutical companies. Again, retirees have no legal standing as a group. NYSRTA provides a voice for the retired members they represent.

I'm hoping to attend some of our units' functions to meet with members and answer any questions they may have. It's encouraging to see active teachers across the state standing up for fair salaries and benefits for the students they teach. Education budgets can only be cut so far before it affects the entire system.

Respectfully,  
*Al Marabella*

## Williamsville Unit

Time is running out to reserve a cabin for our January 2020 Southern Caribbean 10 day cruise on the 5-Star Celebrity Reflection departing from Fort Lauderdale. You, your family, your friends are invited to join us for a January Get-away from the cold WNY winter. You will also be helping our unit as the cruise is a fundraiser for the Williamsville Education Foundation.

To inquire about choice and cost of cabins (triple and quad rates available), please contact Amy Bardeen at A&B Travel, 716-688-4567 or email her at [abardeen@aandbtravel.com](mailto:abardeen@aandbtravel.com)

Note: The \$450 per person deposit is fully refundable if you cancel on or before the final payment is due.

**WESTERN ZONE  
OFFICERS  
2018-2019**

**Elected Officers**

**President**  
Alphonse Marabella  
**1st Vice President**  
Judy F. Farmer  
**2nd Vice President**  
Michelle L. Claus  
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Audrey M. Seidel  
**Corresponding Secretary**  
Nancy White  
**Membership Secretary**  
Vacant  
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**Term Expiring 2019**

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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

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John N. Cardarella  
Laura Fiorotto  
Doris R. Kirsch  
Don E. Lawrence  
William D. Loockerman  
Gail A. Niparts  
Stanley J. Nowak  
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Theresa E. Pope  
Marilyn Stephens  
Marilyn K. Tota

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June Beuth  
Elaine DeLisle  
Russell M. Gervasi  
Patricia Keller  
Judith A. Klug  
Sara Rodland  
Dolores A. Scanlon  
Audrey M. Seidel  
Nancy White  
Ann Marie Wik  
Irine D. Zinter

**SPOTLIGHT ON**

**Ronald Czapla**



Ron Czapla is a busy member of Western Zone and an active resident of Lancaster. He prefers to work behind the scenes, quietly and methodically. He is a kind and compassionate person evidenced by his many interests.

Ron retired in 2001 from the Lancaster Central School District as a middle school social studies teacher for 30 years. Upon retiring, he joined the Lancaster/Depew Retired Teachers' Association, becoming the unit president. As a member of the Western Zone Board of Directors, he served on the Friendly Service Committee for five years. Ron's true passion is our Teacher Grant Committee. At our meetings, Ron is focused on the teacher grants to our active teachers in schools. As the chairman, he oversees the applications from more than 100 schools in our five counties. Awards are given yearly to active teachers. On even numbered years, there are 2-\$500 grants sponsored from our Western Zone and the next year, the monies are given from the Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant, New York State Retired Teachers' Association.

Beyond Ron's involvement in retired teachers, he is also committed to the town of Lancaster, the school district, and its youth. Ron is a member and on the Board of Directors of the Lancaster Historical Society. His students made a yearly field trip to the Little Red Schoolhouse in Lancaster. Ron was in charge of raising the money to update this historical building. Ron used his social studies skills while a town councilman. Volunteering includes a yearly local trivia contest to benefit the Lancaster Youth Foundation. He also volunteers yearly at the local Scrabblefest to benefit Literacy Volunteers. Ron supports and is a member of the St. Vincent DePaul Society providing clothing, household items, and meals to needy guests.

Ron received our Citation Award in September 2017. This award honors members that give to Western Zone and their community. Ron has stated that he is interested in educational and retiree topics, and in ideas shared with his fellow Board members. Thank you, Ron, for your dedication to education and our communities.

**DIRECTORS/AREA  
UNIT PRESIDENTS**

**AMHERST**  
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**GENESEE**  
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**LANCASTER/DEPEW**  
Karen Gembar

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**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,  
Alphonse Marabella (716) 635-9530 or almarbs@gmail.com**

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

**Sandra W. Kelley, Editor**  
(716) 772-7807

**Michelle L. Claus, Advertising**  
(716) 649-3844

**Robert J. Metz, Layout**  
(716) 662-0734

## MEALS ON WHEELS



Michelle Claus (right) presenting a check to Peggy Hess, an officer of Springville Meals on Wheels.



Lisa Boro (left) and President of Network in Aging, Angie Blackley, holding our gold member check



Mindy Doran (right), Director of the Niagara County Home Delivered Meals Program receiving our check from Karen Schlum (left) of WZ on the left.



Vicki Smith (left) presenting a check to Barry Yokum, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels in Jamestown area.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE – 2018**

Ann Marie Wik - Chair

Our membership once again supported Project FLIGHT by donating money and new, birth-to-teen books. Project FLIGHT is a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting literacy in children and caregivers, through school and family literacy initiatives. It works collaboratively with practitioners, schools, community organizations and businesses locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally to achieve its objectives. We sent a check and 180 books this year. These books are then donated to organizations serving needy children to promote literacy.

At the October meeting 263 pairs of new socks were collected for Socktober, an initiative started by Kid President. New socks are one of the least donated items. The new socks were donated to Women's Council of Realtors Buffalo Niagara of which men and women are members. They sponsor a fashion show every year to give to various charities. This year one of their projects was to donate socks to "Best Self", formerly Child and Adolescent Services.

Clothing collected at the December meeting was donated to the Buffalo City Mission. Toiletries collected were donated to a member's church to be sent to Puerto Rico hurricane victims. The many sample size collected were perfect for distribution.

A basket raffle was held at the December meeting featured beautiful baskets donated by member Units and individual members. Proceeds from the baskets were donated to the Honors Flight. Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. They transport our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their memorials. Top priority is given to the senior veterans, that is, the World War II survivors, along with those other veterans who may be terminally ill. This year one of our own Western Zone members, Richard Vienne, traveled with the group.

Many members of Western Zone engage in Community Service opportunities through the various organizations of which they are members of. We continue to look for additional opportunities to participate in community service projects. Our calendar of meetings provides our members a place to easily become involved with donations and opportunity for Community Service donations.

## **WESTERN ZONE SPONSORED NORWEGIAN LINE CRUISE**

Set sail September 22-29, 2019 for a 7 night Western Zone sponsored Norwegian line cruise to Canada and New England. A chartered bus will leave from Williamsville and Hamburg, taking travelers to the New York Port of call. Ports on the cruise include Portland, Bay Harbor, St. John Bay of Fundy, and Halifax Nova Scotia.

Inside cabin is \$1,369 and balcony cabin is \$1,669, based on double occupancy. Cost includes the round trip bus travel to New York City Pier as well as port taxes, entertainment, meals and services. Optional excursions and trip insurance are available. A valid passport is required and a deposit of \$250 per person must be sent to Betty Browne, with check made out to Western Zone NYSRTA. For additional information, contact Betty Browne at 716-207-6152 or Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631.

## Betty Browne's Health Tip

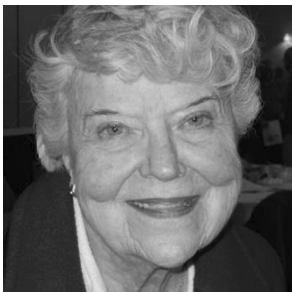
### "Ten Commandments of Human Relations"

1. SPEAK TO PEOPLE. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. SMILE AT PEOPLE. It takes 72 muscles to frown and only 14 to smile.
3. CALL PEOPLE BY NAME. The sweetest music to one's ears is the sound of their name.
4. BE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL. If you would have friends, be a friend.
5. BE CORDIAL. Speak and act as if everything you do is a genuine pleasure.
6. BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PEOPLE. You can like almost everything if you try.
7. BE GENEROUS WITH PRAISE. Be cautious with criticism.
8. BE CONSIDERATE WITH THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS. There are usually three sides to controversy: Yours, the other fellow's and the right side.
9. BE ALERT TO GIVE SERVICE. What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. Add to this a good sense of HUMOR, a big dose of PATIENCE, and a dash of Humility, and you will be rewarded many-fold.

*This is from the Imagine Museum, 1910 Central Ave. St. Petersburg, FL*

## Awards Committee

Irine Zinter, Chairperson



In order to select honorees for the Citation Award given at our annual meeting completion of two forms is necessary. They are crucial in helping the committee to select the recipients of the Citation Award. The forms are the **Profile form** (yellow) and the **Nomination form** (blue). Both forms will be available at the April WZ Board meeting for our new board members and for current board members to update. Please be sure to fill out, complete and/or update the Profile (yellow) form. The more information you provide and the thorough completion of the form will help the Awards committee with their decision making. Please make sure you include all WZ positions you are currently holding or have held, including committees you have served on or are serving on and all community involvement. Also be thinking about WZ board members who deserve this honor and who you would like to nominate. Both forms **must** be returned to the Awards Committee by our **June** WZ board meeting. We are very appreciative of your efforts.



Mike Gannon  
West Herr Select Mgr.

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## ASBURY POINTE

*Independent Retirement Community...  
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110 beautifully appointed apartments – all with a balcony or patio. Residents enjoy a luxurious yet neighborly lifestyle complete with 5 star dining service and heated underground parking. Known for its extraordinary décor, verdant campus and attention to personal service, Asbury offers the freedom and security of retirement living.

## BLOCHER HOMES

*Assisted & Enhanced Living Community...  
...the right place at the right time!*

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.



## WESLEY REHABILITATION CENTER

*Make Wesley your first choice!*

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](http://www.beechwoodcare.org)*





## Embrace Aging.

The desire to evade an entire season of life is bound to leave us all questioning what is important. You do not need to question, though. You have nothing to evade, no empty promise to cling loosely to. You do not grieve for life past. You are too busy embracing your life today. Aging is not the enemy. Underestimating it is. Others might think it is time to slow down. Good luck convincing your heart.

**Presbyterian Village at North Church, 214 Village Park Drive, Williamsville, NY 14221 • 716-631-3430**

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

**Ken-Ton Presbyterian Village, 3735 Delaware Ave., Kenmore, NY 14217 • 716-874-6070**



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## 2019 Annual President's Appeal

As of this writing, the 2019 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:

- 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 Al Marabella at (716) 635-9530 or e-mail [almarbs@gmail.com](mailto:almarbs@gmail.com)

**PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE OUR SERVICE TO YOU BY FILLING OUT THE FORM BELOW AND SENDING IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO THE ADDRESS INDICATED.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Unit \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable)  
Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please make checks payable to:

**Western Zone-NYSRTA  
P.O. Box 922  
Williamsville, NY 14231**

## NYSRTA Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant

Our WZ Teacher Grant Committee (Chair Ron Czapla, Therese Clarke, Maria Hager (excused), Stan Nowak, Chuck Peszynski, Irine Zinter) has met to plan our work schedule for the 2019-2020 Hudson-Kramer. The grant is a NYSRTA state grant that our zone awards every other year. The award is one \$1,000.00 award, and applications are sent to public schools in our zone. This differs from our own zone awards of two \$500.00 grants to teachers in public, charter, and private schools on alternating years.

Announcement letters will be sent to public schools before the end of March. Applications must be received by May 15. Announcement of the winner will be on May 31.

Note. We were delighted to be hosted by Chuck Peszynski who maintains an invested interest in this committee.

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and learn more.

## **MAY 8th and MAY 14th SPEAKER**

Eastern Erie RTA and Springville/ West Valley RTA are sponsoring Karen Wielinski to speak at our meetings this spring.

Karen is the widow of Doug Wielinski who lost his life on February 12, 2009 during the crash of Flight 3407. Doug and Karen's home was destroyed as a result of the plane crash.

Karen will be the speaker and take questions on each of these days. She will also be selling her book: On the Ground, for \$10 on each of these days. Proceeds of the sale of this book will go to a high school student scholarship in the Wielinski's name. Karen's story is of love and survival.

Please join us, bring your friends, to listen to this exceptional story. Reservations will be taken for each date as listed below.

### **MAY 8<sup>th</sup>**

Springville Country Club  
14445 Route 219  
Springville, NY 14141  
Cost of meal is \$18.00  
Reservations and money due by 5/1/19  
Michelle Claus- President  
716-481-5279  
joeclaus@msn.com

### **MAY 14<sup>th</sup>**

Alton's Restaurant  
2221 Transit Rd  
Elma, NY 14059  
Cost of meal varies; \$22 approximately  
Reservations and money due by 5/7/19  
Judy Farmer- President  
716-652-9210  
jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com

## **Legislative Action**

Judy Klug, Chair



The NYSRTA Legislative Action Committee met in October, 2018 before the Annual Convention. The 10 zone chairs reviewed the 2018 state and federal agendas. It was decided that we would have a conference call in December to discuss the resolutions passed at the convention and who would be responsible for implementing them.

We held 2 more conference calls in January and February to determine the state legislative agenda. The federal agenda will be determined at a later date.

The main focus of this year's state agenda is an improvement in the COLA. Bills related to school safety will also be discussed when the advocates meet with their legislators. Due to the change in the majority party in the Senate we were unable to obtain a sponsor for the Minimum Pension Bump-up so, have decided to not pursue it this year.

## Western Zone—NYSRTA

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### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

The Western Zone Annual Meeting at Salvatore's is September 18, 2019. Please plan to attend.

The NYSRTA Annual Convention is October 9-11, 2019 at Turning Stone Casino and Convention Center.

Please plan to attend these events. More information will appear in the next Western Currents.

## **ROBERT R. DECORMIER MEMORIAL TRUST FUND**

At times, members of NYSRTA may incur an unexpected expenditure such as a house-roof replacement, dental work, medical bills, utility costs, need for hearing aids, or any bill that stretches beyond the intended budget. HELP IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY! Robert R. DeCormier, the first president of NYSRTA, realized that unforeseen circumstances could cause a member to be in financial distress. Thus, the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund, a 501 (c) 3 charitable trust was established in 1967 to assist NYSRTA members.

The Trust Fund provides two types of grants. One is a **monthly stipend** to supplement other income (such as the pension); the second is a **one-time grant** to meet an emergency need. If you, or any other member of NYSRTA needs financial assistance, please contact the Chair Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or [anneflanswz@aol.com](mailto:anneflanswz@aol.com).

**Western Zone** is a strong contributor of donations to the DeCormier Trust, and in 2018, six of the units from Western Zone also contributed, namely: **Eastern Erie, Eastern Niagara, Southern Chautauqua County, Springville, West Seneca and Williamsville**. Members from Western Zone have applied, and been given grants. During the year 2018, over \$20,000 was given to individual NYSRTA members who were in financial distress. The aid the DeCormier Trust provided these individuals helped make their daily financial struggles a little less and we are grateful for this.

Spread the word! Financial help is available; no member of NYSRTA should do without the necessities of life. The DeCormier Trust will help you or any other NYSRTA member in need.