



# WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 17, Number 3

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

Summer 2019

## President's Message



I write to inform Western Zone membership that it has become necessary for me to resign my position of President as family health matters have arisen that demand my attention.

I thank the membership and officers for the support and assistance they have cheerfully given me during my tenure. With Judy Farmer stepping up to take on responsibility of presidency, I know the organization is in good and capable hands.

Doris Kirsch needs special recognition for being an indispensable aide in my transition in the short time in the office. I especially thank all those who have offered help and written get well cards and letters to me and my wife. You could not appreciate how uplifting they are. I thank all members for trusting me in the office of president. I rue the need to resign your trust.

Sincerely,

Al Marabella

## A NEW NAME AND LOOK FOR STATE ORGANIZATION?

### Reader Alert!!

The information given in this article concerns *proposed* changes in the name of our state organization and its logo. No final decisions have been made. YOU have an opportunity to provide input and actually vote on the logo issue. Please read and consider this carefully. Several of you have already been introduced to these proposed changes at your unit meetings.

Last year NYSRTA hired a marketing firm to assist in putting a new "face" and emphasis on the state organization. Membership has been on a rapid decline and it was felt that an effort was needed to attract more, newly retired educators into membership. In March 2019 the NYSRTA Board of Directors approved a motion to move forward in changing our name or DBA (Doing Business As) from New York State Retired Teachers' Association to **Retired Educators of New York (RENY, pronounced wren knee)**. The Board also accepted the concept of a new logo. These suggested changes are pictured below.



The change of name requires an amendment to the state Bylaws. A rationale given for the rebranding (name change) is that RENY includes all educators (administrators, librarians, counselors, assistants, etc.) not just teachers. Also, this change in name will avoid confusion with other organizations that begin with NYS (NYSUT, NYSTRS and a multitude of other state agencies).

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**WESTERN ZONE  
OFFICERS  
2018-2019**

**Elected Officers**

**President**  
Judy F. Farmer  
**1st Vice President**  
Doris R. Kirsch  
**2nd Vice President**  
Michelle L. Claus  
**Treasurer**  
Don E. Lawrence  
**Recording Secretary**  
Audrey M. Seidel  
**Corresponding Secretary**  
Nancy White  
**Membership Secretary**  
Vacant  
**Past President**  
Alphonse Marabella

**At Large Directors**

**Term Expiring 2019**

Betty P. Browne  
Ronald A. Czapla  
Elizabeth Egan  
Anne G. Flansburg  
Thomas A. Giambra  
Beth Green  
Maria Hager  
Sandra W. Kelley  
Suzanne Lach  
Alphonse Marabella  
Robert J. Metz  
Marie Gerace Zafron

**Term Expiring 2020**

Georgann Bemis  
John N. Cardarella  
Laura Fiorotto  
Doris R. Kirsch  
Don E. Lawrence  
Gail A. Niparts  
Stanley J. Nowak  
Mary V. O'Leary  
Theresa E. Pope  
Marilyn Stephens  
Marilyn K. Tota  
Vacant

**Term Expiring 2021**

Gary Beuth  
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**

**Audrey Seidel**



**Love thy Neighbor...is how**

Audrey Seidel lives each day. Every Monday morning she volunteers at Oishei Children's Hospital for Ronald McDonald Charities. You can also find her at meetings as a Return Peace Corps Volunteer member, welcoming newly returned volunteers. Her Peace Corp experience was in Malumbo, Colombia, South America for two years prior to her teaching career. During the holidays, she volunteers on the Martin Luther King Day of Caring, Thanksgiving is spent serving dinner to refugees at the Vive Shelter. At Christmas time she volunteers for Hospice, making tags and decorating trees in memory of those that have died of cancer.

After thirty seven years of teaching, Audrey became president of our Springville/West Valley unit. During that time she joined Western Zone of NYSRTA. As a member she has served on the following committees; By Laws, Awards, and Split club. Presently, she is our Recording Secretary. At last years' state convention which our zone hosted, Audrey wore many leadership hats, helping attendees throughout the event. As a Western Zone member, in 2018, she was honored with the Citation Award for her zone and community participation.

Recently, Audrey, helped arrange the National Teacher of the Year, Mandy Manning, to visit Western New York and speak at Medaille College. This was accomplished, in part, through Western Zone's donation.

In the midst of helping others, being involved with retired teachers, following the love thy neighbor philosophy, Audrey found time to provide for Buffalo students by helping to fill 5000 backpacks in Pancho Billa's memory.

Audrey Seidel continues to care about family, friends, and the world in which we live. We are fortunate to have this positive, supportive retired teacher, in Western Zone.

**DIRECTORS/AREA  
UNIT PRESIDENTS**

**AMHERST**  
Joseph A. Podgorski

**BUFFALO**  
Charles Peszynski

**EASTERN ERIE**  
Judy F. Farmer

**GENESEE**  
James Owen

**KENMORE**  
Mary Ann Kermis

**LACKAWANNA**  
Tina Gambino

**LANCASTER/DEPEW**  
Karen Gembar

**NIAGARA EAST**  
Sandy W. Kelley

**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,  
Judy Farmer (716) 652-9210 or [jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jfarmer2@rochester.rr.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

# NYS Retired Teachers' Association Western Zone

Cordially invites members and guests to attend  
**The Annual Meeting and Luncheon**  
**Wednesday, September 18, 2019**  
**Salvatore's Italian Gardens**  
**6461 Transit Road, Depew, NY (683-7990)**

8:15-9:15      Registration and Vendor Exhibits; Coffee, Tea & pastries available  
9:15            **Dr. Rohan Bhoir**  
                 **Topic: Active Seniors**  
10:00          Cheese and Fruit Display  
10:30          Vendor Baskets and Prizes Drawing  
10:45          **General Membership Meeting**  
12:15          Luncheon with Board Meeting to follow

**Luncheon includes: Greek Salad, Roasted Potato Medley, Vegetable,  
Dessert-Apple Cobbler with Salted Caramel ice cream, Coffee or Tea**

Choice of:

- |                                                                |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Prime Rib                                                   | \$32 |
| 2. Salmon with Lobster Dill Sauce                              | \$26 |
| 3. Lemon-Caper Chicken                                         | \$25 |
| 4. Vegetarian: Seasonal Roasted Vegetables on Angel Hair Pasta | \$25 |

**Reservation Deadline: Friday, September 6, 2019**

**Checks Payable to:** Western Zone NYSRTA. **Mail to:** Michelle Claus, 6313 Kast Pl, Hamburg, NY, 14075

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

**Western Zone NYSRTA Annual Meeting, September 18, 2019**

**\$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 \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to reserve a table of 10, please contact Michelle Claus at (716) 481-5279

With whom would you like to sit? \_\_\_\_\_

## National Teacher of the Year Visits Buffalo



Pictured from left to right: Nancy White, Audrey Seidel, Mandy Manning and Michelle Claus

Western Zone was a sponsor for a visit by Mandy Manning National Teacher of the year, 2018-2019. Mandy who served in the Peace Corps in Armenia from 1999-2001, currently teaches math and English to the children of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Spokane Washington. She is an advocate for inclusive educational opportunity for all students.

Michelle Claus, Audrey Seidel and Nancy White attended her keynote address at Medaille College on June 10. Mandy spoke of her service in the Peace Corps and its impact on her as a teacher. Her experience as a foreigner adapting to the Armenian culture gave her insight into the needs of her students who

have recently arrived in the United States. Earlier in the day she visited several Buffalo public schools that have a large number of immigrant students. Her love of teaching and her advocacy for equal education for all children is clearly why she was chosen National Teacher of the year.



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



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

## BEECHWOOD HOMES

*Skilled Care Community – "Welcome Home"*

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



*To learn more about any of Beechwood Continuing Care communities, call 716-810-7370.  
[www.beechwoodcare.org](http://www.beechwoodcare.org)*

## Springville/West Valley RTA

The Springville/West Valley RTA unit representatives met in June for the purpose of choosing a high school senior who will be attending college in the fall studying education. Nathan Dash will receive our \$1000 scholarship, and will be pursuing an art education degree. Our committee members are: Becky King, Karen and Rodney Rich, Fred Schrantz, Nancy White, and chairman, Audrey Seidel.

Our second scholarship is also for \$1000. This award is jointly given by Springville Faculty Association and Springville Retired Teachers. This years' recipient Lauren Ditchey, is attending college this fall majoring in childhood education. Scholarship funds from Springville/ West Valley have been donated by members at our meetings and Holiday Party. Thank you, members of our unit.

**Please register to attend the Western Zone 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on September 18, 2019. The registration form is in this Western Currents. Our speaker is Dr. Rohan Bhoir, a geriatric doctor that will speak on active seniors. Reservations are due September 6. Join us for an informative day and luncheon.**



### 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**

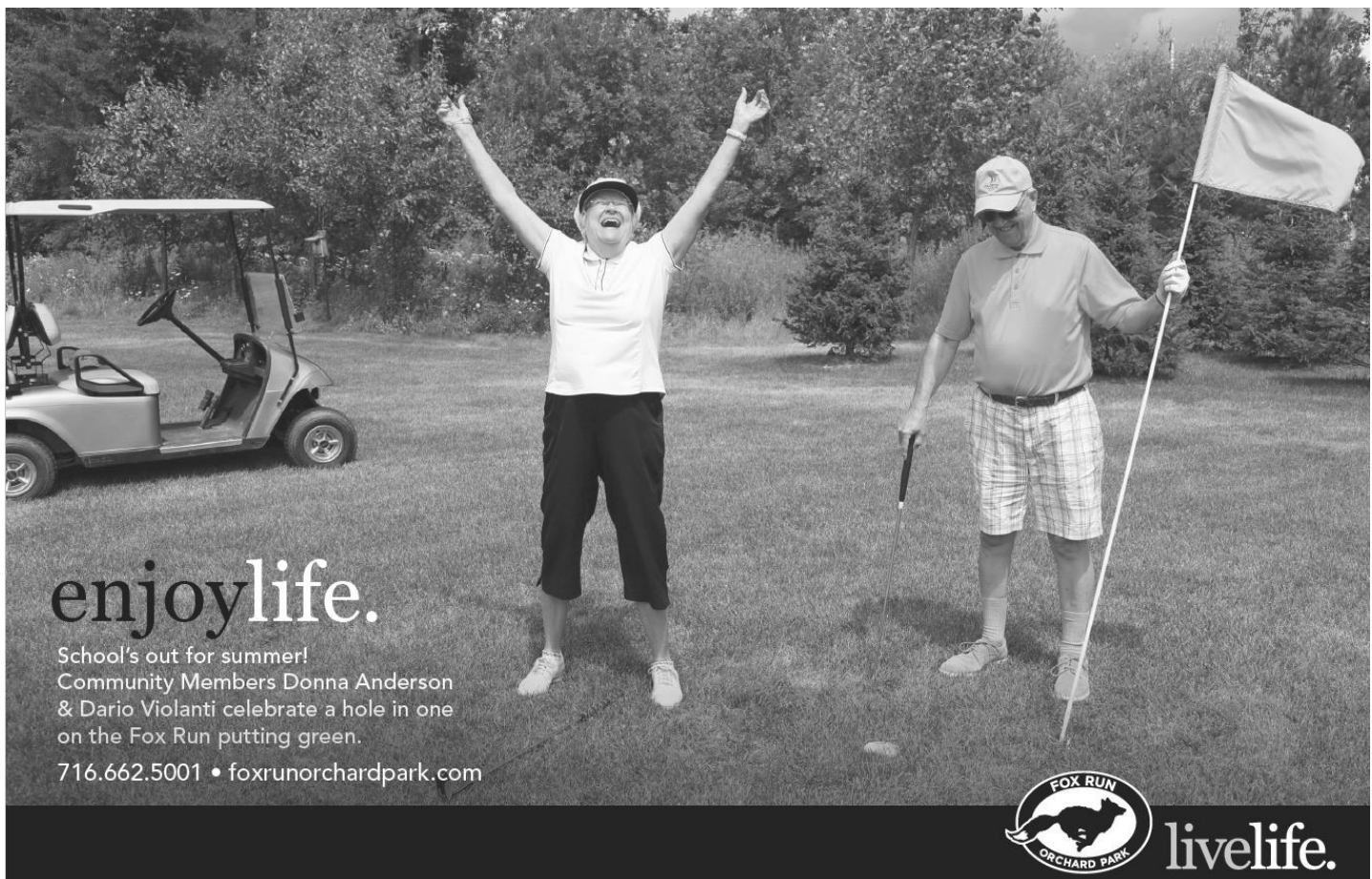
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**Ken-Ton Presbyterian Village, 3735 Delaware Ave., Kenmore, NY 14217 • 716-874-6070**



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## CRUISE WITH THE WESTERN ZONE

Join the Western Zone travel group, and launch on a 7-night Canada and New England Cruise September 22-29, 2019. The adventure will be aboard the Norwegian Cruise Line's "Escape". Port of calls will be in Portland-ME, Bar Harbor-ME, St. John-Bay of Fundy, and Halifax-Nova Scotia. Optional tours and excursions are provided, and travelers can choose these prior to boarding if they wish. The trip is approximately \$1,400 per person, double occupancy, based on the cabins chosen and ship availability.

This price includes round-trip bus trip to New York City Port, as well as the usual amenities offered on a cruise, which include cabin, all meals on board, snacks, health and fitness center, free nightly entertainment, casino, swimming pool and sporting activities, port taxes and other luxuries. Family and friends of Western Zone members are invited. For additional information, contact Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or Betty Brown at 716-207-6152.

### Summer Health Tip

**Remember to stay hydrated during the heat of the summer and don't forget to use sunscreen!**



## **“GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN!”**

In the early 1950's, the travel industry launched this slogan that continues to be true today for many Western Zone members who have experienced the friendships and memories that have been formed over the years.

In 2005, Western Zone President **Anthony (Tony) Vetrano**, and his wife, **Marie**, opened a new field of “togetherness” for members and planned a bus trip to Virginia Beach and Williamsburg, VA. It was such a rewarding experience for those who joined, that in 2006 a trip was planned to Cape Cod and then in 2007 to Chicago. The Chicago trip quickly filled two buses, and Tony asked **Anne Flansburg** to be the leader on the second bus, and eventually asked her to take over his position when he was no longer able to continue. **Betty Browne** and **Judy Klug** then joined the committee, and they have planned at least one trip and sometimes three trips in one year.

Travel excursions since 2008 include: Myrtle Beach – SC, Wildwood – NJ, Branson -MO, Washington - DC, Mackinac Island – MI, Philadelphia – PA, Canadian Rockies, Pittsburgh – PA, Riding Rails of West Virginia, Azalea Festival – VA, Montreal and Quebec City, Discover Maine, Hudson Valley – NY, Biltmore -NC, Amish Country and “Samson”, Rhode Island, Ark Encounter – Ohio, Washington and “Jesus”, Savannah, and the upcoming cruise to New England and Canada. Each trip has been a rewarding experience, as well as a learning and fun-filled one! TRULY, Tony and his wife, Marie, were the inspiration for fifteen years of memories shared by many, and they opened the door to travel encounters that so many of us have enjoyed. If you have not signed up for a Western Zone trip, be sure to do so when they are announced in the future issues of CURRENTS.

The committee is considering trips for 2020, and have been given suggestions by many of our travelers. Included as possibilities are: New York City Tour and attendance at Sight and Sounds “Esther”, several New England cities and States, other new and exciting destinations, as well as those visited in prior years. If you have not signed up for a Western Zone trip, be sure to do so when they are announced in the future issues of CURRENTS.

### **Eastern Niagara County Retired Teacher's Award \$3000 in Scholarships**

At this time of year many high school seniors are preparing for their first year of college and embarking on the beginning of a career in education. ENCRTA is very pleased to be able to help several young people from six school districts realize their dream through our Scholarship Fund. This year the following students were awarded scholarships: Lockport - \$500 to Ayrianna Fuller; Starpoint - \$500 to Renee' Edbauer; Roy-Hart - \$500 to Madison Pratt; Barker - \$250 to Holly Wasnock & \$250 to Dasha Crenshaw; Newfane - \$500 to Matthew Bouchard; and Wilson - \$500 to Courtney Brown. We are able to present these scholarships due to the generous donations of our members, the revenue from our 50/50 drawings at our Unit meetings and proceeds from our annual Basket Raffle at our October meeting. Many thanks to Judy Schultz and Ginny Piskowoski for chairing our Scholarship fund.





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## Legislative Action

Judy Klug, Chair



The Western Zone Legislative Action Committee advocates for state legislation have completed their visits to their respective state senators and assembly men and women.

Our main focus this year was an increase in the base on which our COLA is determined. It's been 19 years since the COLA bill was enacted and we felt it's time for an increase.

Bills related to school safety were also discussed. Due to the change in the majority party in the Senate we were unable to obtain a sponsor for the Minimum Pension Bump-up bill. We also thanked them for passing the APPR bill which places teacher evaluations back in the hands of the local administration and the union.

The federal agenda had not been decided upon at press time but will be similar to last year's agenda, which included securing Social Security and Medicare as well as prescription drug cost relief. The advocates for federal legislation will be visiting our senators and congressmen or their representatives as soon as the agenda is set. Gail Niparts is the WZ Federal Legislation chair.

We can always use more advocates so, if you're interested, email Judy at [jaklug16@gmail.com](mailto:jaklug16@gmail.com).

## 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:

- Offer timely presentations such as the Constitutional Convention workshop.
- Provide financial assistance to our needy members
- Continue the excellent work of the Friendly Service Committee
- Retain granting incentive awards to active teachers
- Present informative programs
- Maintain the publication of three newsletters per year

Should you have any questions regarding this appeal, please contact Judy Farmer or e-mail [jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com](mailto:jfarmer2@rochester.rr.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**

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### Nomination 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 18th** at Salvatore's Italian Gardens.

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

**The candidates are: Elizabeth Browne, Ronald Czapla, Elizabeth Egan, Anne Flansburg, Beth Green, Maria Hager, Sandra Kelley, Suzanne Lach, Alphonse Marabella, Marie Zafron.**

Officers will be elected by a vote of the Board of Directors at a regular meeting following the business session\*. The nominated candidates are:

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## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES NOMINEES

Continued from page 10

**President .....Judith Farmer**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.....Doris Kirsch**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.....Michelle Claus**  
**Treasurer .....Don Lawrence**  
**\*Recording Secretary .....Audrey Seidel**  
**Corresponding Secretary .....Nancy White**  
**Membership Secretary .....Vacant**  
**Past President .....Alphonse Marabella**

This year, for the first time in many years, there are opening for Director positions and Membership Secretary. If you are interested in serving, nominations may also be made from the floor of the annual business meeting. According to the bylaws, Article VIII, Section 14g, and 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. To comply with this requirement, please submit your resume, along with any questions, to [www.golry.72](http://www.golry.72) by September 6, 2019.

Nominations may also be made from the floor of the annual business meeting. According to the bylaws, Article VIII, Section 14g, any candidate nominated from the floor can only be considered if he/she has an active resume on file with the Nominations Committee prior to the annual meeting.

\*Since there is no announced candidate for this position at this time, the current officer will continue to serve until a successor is elected (Article V., Section 1 of the bylaws).

## NAME AND LOOK FOR STATE ORGANIZATION?

Continued from page 1

At its 7/16/19 meeting the NYSRTA Board of Directors approved the following proposed Bylaws amendment.

The current language is: "The New York State Retired Teachers' Association, Inc., referred to in these Bylaws as the **Association**, shall be the name of this organization."

The proposed language is: "The New York State Retired Teachers' Association, Inc., is the legal name of the corporation referred to in these Bylaws as the **Association**. The **Association** has filed with New York State and will henceforth be known as New York State Retired Teachers' Association doing business as the Retired Educators of New York (RENY)."

Continued on page 12

**Promote membership.**

**Personally invite a newly retired - or not so newly retired - friend/colleague**

## Western Zone—NYSRTA

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Williamsville, NY 14231-0922

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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.

### **NAME AND LOOK FOR STATE ORGANIZATION?**

Continued from page 11

This proposal must now go to the ten zones for a vote. Two-thirds of the zones (7) must approve of this change for the process to continue. Your Western Zone Board of Directors will vote on this at the meeting to be held during the afternoon of September 18, 2019. If the proposal is accepted by two-thirds of the zones, it will then be voted upon by the delegates at the 2019 Annual Meeting, October 10th at Turning Stone. Again, a two-thirds majority of the voting delegates will be necessary for adoption. This Bylaws amendment deals ONLY with the name change (RENY). The logo change is a separate issue.

During the September 18th WZ General Membership Meeting being held at Salvatore's, a video prepared by the marketing firm explaining the whole process of rebranding (name change) and new logo, will be shown. After the video is shown, the Annual Meeting attendees (YOU) will be given an opportunity to vote "yes" or "no" on the proposed logo. The results of the WZ vote will be sent to the state office. If a majority (6) of the zones are in favor of the new logo, it will be adopted. No vote will be taken at the October meeting at Turning Stone.

If you would like to watch this video presentation prior to our Salvatore's meeting, you can do so by going to nysrta.org. Under "Membership" click on "Member Benefits" and then click on "New Membership Presentation". The video giving the background and rationale of the name and logo changes can be viewed there. The summer issue of *York State* will also contain information about these proposed changes.

Remember: these changes have not been ratified. If you have comments and/or questions, please contact President Judy Farmer (jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com) or Acting 1st VP Doris Kirsch (wdkirsch@gmail.com).

Come to the Western Zone Annual Meeting on September 18th at Salvatore's. You will have a direct voice in the logo decision. A reservation form is included in this newsletter.