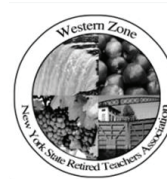




WESTERN CURRENTS



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

Volume 18, Number 1

www.wzretiredteachers.org

Winter 2019

President's Message



Greetings from your newly elected President, Judith Farmer. I consider it a privilege to have been chosen to serve the Western Zone of NYSRTA in that capacity and promise to do my best to keep our zone

strong.

September and October are one of the busiest times of the year for our zone. In mid-September we held the Western Zone Annual Meeting. Thanks to the organizational skills of our 2nd Vice-president, Michelle Claus, everything went smoothly. Those members who attended heard an important program on keeping fit as we age. There were over 30 vendors with information about their products. Each of them had free gifts and wonderful raffled baskets. During the business meeting you elected board members for the 2019-2020 term and voted not to accept the proposed new logo. The lunch was delicious. If you didn't attend you missed a very productive day. Please consider attending next year's meeting.

During early October, your delegates attended the NYSRTA Annual Conference at Turning Stone Resort and Casino. At the business meeting the bylaw change to make Retired Educators of New York/ RENE our *Doing Business As* name was approved. As soon as New York State accepts the request to do so, we will be called RENE. In the future you will also be seeing a new, more likable, logo.

Thanks to each of you for your participation and support. You are the heart of Western Zone. Remember, the best way to keep informed about our organization is to attend your unit meetings. If you have any questions, concern, suggestions, etc., please contact me at: jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com

Taking Life Too Seriously

When was the last time you heard a laugh that was so contagious everyone in the room burst out with laughter, or tears were in the eyes of the listeners? People seem so serious and for good reason these days. But, do you for just an instant remember laughing like a child? When babies laugh, people smile. It's hard to be around someone who is always negative, belittling, or toxic. The sound of laughter is so much nicer. How about sincerely being happy to see someone who has a positive attitude, someone who laughs, tells jokes and is sincerely happy to see you, a person who sees the cup as half full opposed to half empty. It's nice to wake up to a smile instead of one of the true Seven Dwarfs – GRUMPY.

When animals or dogs wake up, the first thing they do is take a great big stretch and seem to smile. Try it! It feels good to take a stretch before getting out of bed, lay there for a few minutes, then get up and face the day with a smile. Laughter is contagious. And, it's good for you!

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2019-2020**

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SPOTLIGHT ON

"The Travel Trio"



The "Travel Trio" AKA, Anne Flansburg, Betty Browne and Judy Klug, are awesome ladies who plan, organize and accompany WZ members on a variety of wonderful excursions throughout the year. In our 2019 summer edition of Western Currents we learned the history of the WZ Travel Club which began in 2005 with Tony Vetrano, the WZ president at that time. Anne took over as "travel director" when Tony was no longer able to continue in that capacity. She took the ball and ran with it. Betty Browne and Judy Klug then joined the travel committee. Our "Travel Trio" continues to offer great trips to our members. Their energy, enthusiasm and friendliness are contagious. Each has served WZ and NYSRTA for many years in a number of positions.

Anne has served as Western Zone VP and President as well as on the Membership, Remembrance, Health Services and Travel committees. She is a NYSRTA DeCormier Fund Trustee, currently serving as chairman, and a member of the NYSRTA Certificate of Recognition committee. Ann has received the WZ Citation and Dedication Award and the NYSRTA Certificate of Recognition for her outstanding contributions to Western Zone and NYSRTA. She is an 18 year member of the Buffalo Retired Teachers' Association and very active in her community. This busy lady is a volunteer tutor, teacher in Gifted and Talented Math UB, Amherst Youth Board Volunteer, Tonawanda Symphony Orchestra as a violinist, volunteers at Studio Arena, Artpark and Sheas as well as the Secretary for Garden Club in Ocala, Fl. She and her husband Don have hosted students from Switzerland, Japan and Russia through the American Field Service and sponsored a boy from Poland for 10 weeks through Hope for Tomorrow Foundation.

Betty has served on the NYSRTA Bylaws committee and presently is the Health Care Advocate for Western Zone and on the Travel committee. She is a 27-year member of the Lake Shore Central Retired Teachers Association where she has served as president, treasurer and secretary. Betty has also received the WZ Citation Award for her dedicated service. She is the "life of the party", always smiling and relating humorous stories, most from her own experiences.

Judy has served WZ on the Legislative Action, Resolutions, Health Care Advocacy and Travel committees. She is a 23-year member of the Williamsville Retired Teachers' Association and has served as their president.

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**DIRECTORS/AREA
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**Questions and/or comments may be forwarded to our Zone President,
Judy Farmer (716) 652-9210 or 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:

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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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The Travel Trio

Continued from page 2

Judy was co-chairman of the 2008-2009 NYSRTA Convention and has received the WZ Citation Award for her outstanding service to WZ. She is a Director of the Williamsville Education Foundation Board and is also involved with the Ladies Auxiliary of the Main-Transit Fire Department serving as president and past financial secretary.

We are pleased to Spotlight “The Travel Trio” for their dedication to WZ and especially to the Travel committee. These three delightful ladies know how to have a good time and enjoy sharing their talents with others. WZ members have been able to take many delightful and educational trips throughout the years thanks in part to “The Travel Trio”. Please consider joining Anne, Betty and Judy on an upcoming excursion in 2020. You will have the time of your life making lasting friendships and wonderful memories. The WZ members who have joined our “Travel Trio” on their trips have nothing but high praise and gratitude for the superb job they do with the planning and execution of each trip. Thanks, Travel Trio! You make us proud!

WZ MEMBERS ATTENDING THE 2019 NYSRTA CONVENTION



Members from the various Units of Western Zone attended the 69th Annual NYSRTA (York State Retired Teachers Association) Convention, October 9-11, at Turning Stone Resort and Casino, Verona, New York. They experienced fun while learning at the various workshops. All the workshops were very informative. Reports from the chairmen of NYSRTA Committees were read. Many Western Zone members serve on these committees.

The delegates took “A Journey through the Southern Tier”, which was the convention theme, hosted by the Southern Zone. They listened tentatively to the Keynote Speaker, Sheila Reed as “Livy “Langdon (Olivia Langdon Clemens). Through Sheila’s enactment they learned about Olivia’s life experiences with her husband, Mark Twain. They were especially thrilled to hear and have reinforcement about Mark Twain’s association with Buffalo, New York (Western Zone area).

Workshops had various topics. To the Western Zone attendees, of interest were: “TRS Pension 2019; “Transforming Your Home into A Safe Haven”, “What’s Hot and What’s Not in Antiques”, among others.

On Thursday evening, October 10, Western Zone and conference attendees took “A Stroll Mark Twain Country” by venture of video. The evening was closed with their participation in “Trivia Night “, where the Zones had trivia teams and competed against one another.

Continued on page 11

Once an educator, always an educator...says Dorothy Vienne, an educator for over



60 years. She still has the desire to experience, learn, and educate herself and transfer her knowledge to others. Dorothy and her husband, Richard, are members of Western Zone, and Dick is an Honorary Director. Both previously taught in Lancaster Central School District and Dottie retired from Ken-Ton (Kenmore-Tonawanda Central School District).

Dick and Dottie have two children who also have the desire to educate. Their daughter is a teacher and their son is an executive with Univera Healthcare. After Dottie's experience, her son, Dr. Richard Vienne, encouraged her to be part of a sepsis article written by *The Buffalo News* Refresh editor Scott Scanlon on September 28, 2019. Some of the information in this article is from the Refresh magazine. Dr. Vienne told his mom, "If you can save one person, your article will be worth it." The Vienne family are whole life educators.

Dottie is 80 years young, and has Type 2 diabetes. Not all cases of sepsis are the same. Pre-existing conditions, and age are factors for contracting sepsis. This is Dottie's story. During the week of the Super Bowl 2019, Dorothy ate a small amount of raw beef from her refrigerator and later in the week made chili for the family Super Bowl party. Dottie started to feel ill for a couple of days after the party. The next morning, she had several of the symptoms of sepsis: confusion or disorientation, shortness of breath, extreme pain or discomfort, high heart rate, fever or chills, clammy or sweaty skin. Dottie had the last two symptoms. She was able to call 911. The Elma Volunteer Fire Department arrived in minutes and she was taken to the closest hospital, South Buffalo Mercy Hospital. She spent 10 out of 12 days in ICU (Intensive Care Unit) and received the best care at this hospital, recalls Dottie.

Sepsis sidelined Dottie for a while. She is back doing what she loves now including attending her four book clubs, working out at the Y (YMCA), speaking engagements and continuing to be active. Her food regime includes eating more vegetables and not eating raw meat, fish, or shellfish, which can easily grow bacteria.

During Dorothy's educational career, she had many experiences including earning two National Schools of Excellence Awards presented to her and the Ken-Ton School District by presidents; George H. Bush, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton.

We have chosen to write this article for you because of Dottie's educational career and experiences that helped her realize she needed help that day. She wants to educate us by telling her story and what she has learned on the topic of sepsis. We also used the website: sepsis.org, for some of our information. We encourage you to read the article in *The Buffalo News* and read the sepsis website.

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

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

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Address _____ E-Mail _____
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Local Unit _____ (if applicable)

Donation Amount: _____\$10 _____\$20 _____\$30 _____\$50 _____Other

Please make checks payable to:

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P.O. Box 922
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From the NYSRTS Website:

When memberships in NYSTRS cease we make every effort to contact these individuals and encourage them to withdraw any contributions they may have made to the System. If contributions are not withdrawn, we add their names to a list of Unclaimed Accounts. If the contributions remain unclaimed for 18 months, they are considered abandoned. Whether unclaimed or abandoned, such funds may be claimed at any time by the former member, or his or her beneficiary or estate.

<https://secure.nystrs.org/unclaimedFunds/unclaimedfunds.aspx>

NEW YORK CITY AND LANCASTER, PA TRIP

Combine two unforgettable experiences in a six-day, five-night trip June 5-10, 2020. This trip will include **New York City** as well as the live production of **ESTHER**. Reservations are on a first-come, first served basis and since this trip promises to be a sellout, we encourage you to send the deposit as quickly as possible.

Explore "**The City That Never Sleeps**" with a guided tour of **Manhattan**, including Central Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square, Wall Street, and much more. Your "**Big Apple**" adventure will include the National 9/11 Museum and a visit to the new One World Observatory, allowing you to view 500 years of New York history from 1,250 feet above ground. The third day of touring will take you to **Ellis Island** and **Liberty Island**, with a ferry ride for an up-close view of Lady Liberty. Later, **embark** onto Ellis Island, where you can walk in the footsteps of the millions of immigrants (perhaps even relatives of yours) who came to the United State seeking a new life. These highlights, as well as many other sights of interest will be seen and shared by all.

After enjoying the NY City sights, travel to **Lancaster PA** and take in the magnificent sets, special effects and live animals in the brand-new, original stage production of **ESTHER** at the **Sight and Sound Theatre**. Enjoy time at the Kitchen Kettle Village, and stay in a PA area hotel for the last night of the trip.

The **price** per person, based on **double** occupancy, is only **\$835**. **Single** occupancy is **\$1,099**. A **deposit** of \$75 must be paid by or before Dec 31, 2019. **Final payment** is due February 28, 2020. This price is all inclusive and covers: motor coach transportation, 5 nights lodging, 5 breakfasts, 5 dinners - including a dinner party with entertainment, all admissions to events, memorials and Esther, and tips for guides. The two pickup locations will be in Hamburg and Williamsville. Any questions, contact Betty Browne at 716-207-6152 or Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or Judy Klug at 716-406-9885.

Please mail a check made out to **Western Zone RTA**, with your **deposit** of \$75 per person, prior to Dec. 31, 2019 and mail to: Betty Browne, 6025 Shore Blvd S #415, Gulfport, FL 33707-5813.

Optional travel insurance may be purchased at www.travelconfident.com for this tour, #1707859 at a cost of \$69. Or include a check for \$69 made out to Travel Insured International with your deposit and send to Betty.

-----Detach and send to Betty Browne, on or before December 31, 2019 -----

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Questions or Concerns? _____

West Seneca Retired Teachers' Association



The West Seneca Retired Teachers (WSRTA), met October 21, 2019, for the annual Fall Luncheon at Lucarelli's Banquet Center in Lackawanna, NY. There were 54 members in attendance.

A special welcome was extended to recent retirees Cheryl Boggan and Jim Sipior and retirees now living in Canada, Bernadette and Don Burton.

Those in attendance had an opportunity to socialize and be updated on the health and well-being of West Seneca Retirees. Pat Miceli, WSRTA President, shared important information from the New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS), the Alzheimer's Association, and about the Holiday Luncheon on December 10 at Salvatores sponsored by NYSUT Retirees of WNY.



The updated October, 2019 Membership List was distributed, and an update from the West Seneca Teachers Association (WSTA) was shared.

Lauri Delecki will assume the position of WSRTA Treasure, previously held by Joyce Say, Debbie Wrazen will assume the position of Sunshine Committee Chair previously held by Rose Lombardo. Joyce Say and Rose Lombardo were thanked for their many years of service.

The Spring Luncheon will be June 8, 2020, at Lucarelli's Banquet Center, 1830 Abbott Rd, Lackawanna, NY.

Alphonse "AL" Marabella Honored



Alphonse "AL" Marabella was honored on Friday, October 25, 2019 by his high school alma mater, Bishop Fallon High School in Buffalo, New York. In addition to his honor by Bishop Fallon, he was also inducted into the 18th Annual Hall of Fame.

He received many accolades for his accomplishments over the years. He is a former president of the Buffalo Retired Teachers' Association and an immediate past president of Western Zone of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association now the Retired Educators of New York (RENY).

Al was an educator in the Buffalo Public Schools for 34 years, having taught English. His career included employment in the Buffalo Public School's Quality in Education (QI E) program, where he provided instrumental service for the integration of the district schools. His remaining years of instruction were spent at Seneca Vocational High School. He retired in 1999.

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Alphonse “AL” Marabella Honored

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Retirement was only an addition for Al. His activities included: Vice-President for Federal Legislation for NYSRTA; president of the Senior Citizens Organization of St. Gregory the Great Parish; president of the Senior Bowling League and an usher and participant in the Adoration Chapel; Confirmation Coordinator at St. Pius X; a catechist at St. Christopher's; Secretary for the Niagara Frontier Division of the Toy Train Operators Society (TTOS). He participates in “Buffalo in Bloom”.

Al is also a family man: father of Mark, Michelle, and Nicole, and two grandchildren, Grace and Charlie. He is married to Mary Agnes, his life supporter and friend.

Hudson/Kramer Grant Recipient



The 2019 Western Zone recipient of the NYSRTA Hudson/Kramer Award is Michelle Schroeder, an art teacher at Leonardo da Vinci High School in Buffalo. Ms Schroeder was presented her \$1000 grant before her colleagues at an October 23 faculty meeting.

Her winning entry in the grant competition was a proposal to form a club—POSITIVELY PRINTING—whereby she hopes to engage some of her less-involved and introverted students whom she calls “fringe kids” in a skills activity that would give those

involved an enhanced sense of belonging to a “community” and thus achieve greater self-confidence and social skills.

With her entry in the annual grant competition, Ms Schroeder becomes the first teacher from the City of Buffalo Schools to win the grant.

WZ MEMBERS ATTENDING THE 2019 NYSRTA CONVENTION

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During the business session, delegates witnessed the change of the name NYSTRA (New York State Retired Teachers Association) to the DOB (doing business as) to RENY, an acronym for Retired Educators of New York. They were further introduced to the new logo for the organization.

Judy Farmer, president of Western Zone, remains the secretary of NYSTRA (now RENY). She represented Western Zone (WZ) in the parade of presidents.

Western Zone—NYSRTA

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“Hill Are Alive” Trip

**Details will be announced in the next is-
sue of CURRENTS.**

Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers



Sandy Kelley

The Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers held their fall meeting on October 17, 2019 at the Lockport Town and Country Club. There were 55 members in attendance. After the business meeting and a delicious lunch Joyce Thompson-Hovey, a retired Attica Central School Social Studies Teacher, presented a very interesting slide show on “Schools During the Civil War Era”. She explained the types of schools available at that time and explained the difference in education between the North and South. She also shared the rules and regulations for both teachers and students. These were quite different from today! Of course, women teachers had many more stipulations than did the men and were paid less. Joyce also had some classroom books on display from that era.

We held our annual Basket Raffle with proceeds going to the scholarship fund. Each year ENCRTA awards a \$500.00 scholarship to a high school senior pursuing a career in education from each of the six school districts that are part of our Unit. Thanks to the generous donations of 42 lovely baskets we realized \$490.00. The Basket Raffle, the 50/50 split club at each meeting and generous donations from our members make these scholarships possible. Members also brought a total of 129 new pairs of socks to be donated to WZ’s Socktober community service project. Our next meeting will be Dec. 12, 2019.