

RENY
RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NY

WESTERN CURRENTS

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

Volume 18, Number 2

www.wzretiredteachers.org

Spring 2020

President's Message



It is official. We are now the **Western Zone of RENY** (Retired Educators of New York).

Last October, your delegates to the NYSRTA

Annual Meeting and Convention at Turning Stone, voted to rebrand our organization and the NYSRTA Board of Directors accepted the new logo developed for us by the marketing firm, Engine 7 Design. From now on you will see the RENY name and the new logo on all Western Zone materials.

Why the change? Have you ever been engaged in a conversation with other retired educators and discovered that they confuse our organization with other groups in our state that have the letters NY in the beginning of their name. Also, many people do not know that we are the only retiree group that includes all educators: classroom teachers, administrators and support staff. And unfortunately, like many other organizations, we are losing more members than we are recruiting.

My goals as President of the Western Zone are to continue serving our members with their

retirement needs and to build our membership. We now have a new, more relevant name and an attractive updated logo. It is up to each of us to reach out to retired and retiring educators and encourage them to join us as we journey on through life.

You should have received a flyer in the letter that you received from RENY President, Kevin Mulligan. You can copy that flyer, or request copies from me, to share with potential members. Your leaders are also working to develop handout items that you can use in your recruitment efforts. Best of all, there is an incentive program being offered by the state organization. For every 5 new members that you recruit to join RENY, you will receive a \$50.00 check. Just make sure that your name is on their application noting that you recruited them.

It is my belief that together we can make this year one of the best in the history of Western Zone.

WZ President,
Judith Farmer
WesternZoneRENY@gmail.com

**WESTERN ZONE
OFFICERS
2019-2020**

Elected Officers

President

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1st Vice President

Doris R. Kirsch

2nd Vice President

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Don E. Lawrence

Recording Secretary

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Corresponding Secretary

Nancy White

Membership Secretary

Karen Gembar and

Ann Marie Wik

Past President

Alphonse Marabella

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Don E. Lawrence

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Beth Green

Maria Hager

Sandra W. Kelley

Suzanne Lach

Alphonse Marabella

Marie Gerace Zafron

SPOTLIGHT ON



Robert Metz



An Officer and a Gentleman

... words that describe Robert J. Metz

to a tee.

Bob was born and grew up in Strykersville, NY. He has three siblings; Gary, Kevin, and Anne. Bob graduated from the

Holland Central School District. He received his B.S. degree in Business Education at Albany and a Master's Degree from Canisius in 1976. Bob met the love of his life in 1998 and has been married to Marianne, a retired West Seneca Central School District Speech Pathologist, for more than twenty years.

Bob joined the Naval Reserve program in 1970 and was called to active duty in 1971 for two years. He was absent from his Chairman and teaching duties in the Business Department of Springville Griffith-Institute Central School District during this time. The Naval Reserve Program saw Bob's potential and he was attached to a Naval Intelligence Unit during his two years of active duty. After Active Duty, Bob rejoined the Reserve Program and was chosen for the Direct Commissioning and the Supply Officer Programs. He spent twenty-five years in the Navy Reserves and retired as a Lieutenant Commander, and holds the Western New York Naval Reserve Association Treasurer position and Treasurer of the Niagara Frontier Council of the Navy League.

Continued on page 5

DIRECTORS/AREA UNIT PRESIDENTS

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Therese C. Clarke

**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:

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

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

Diane Brady, Layout
(716) 496-5390

FOUNDERS' FUND

This year the interest from our Founders' Fund investments was over \$5200.00. We donated \$5100.00 of that to local organizations in the Western Zone. Recipients were Network in Aging Center at the University of Buffalo and local Meals on Wheels: FeedMore WNY (Wheels of WNY), Ken-Ton, Alden, Amherst, Springville, Jamestown, Niagara County Office for the Aging, Home Delivered Meals Program, Genesee County Office for the Aging and Seneca Nations Cattaraugus Reservation. **New this year is Cattaraugus County Department of Aging, Home Delivered Meals.**

If you know of any other Meals on Wheels with in our zone we may have missed, please let me know (jnccw5@gmail.com). We have Erie County covered but I am not sure of our other counties: Niagara, Genesee, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua.

The following individuals hand delivered checks to their local Meals on Wheels: Vicki Smith (Jamestown), Karen Schlum (Niagara County), Michelle Claus (Springville and Network in Aging of WNY), and John Cardarella (Alden, Ken-Ton, Amherst and FeedMore WNY (MOW of WNY))

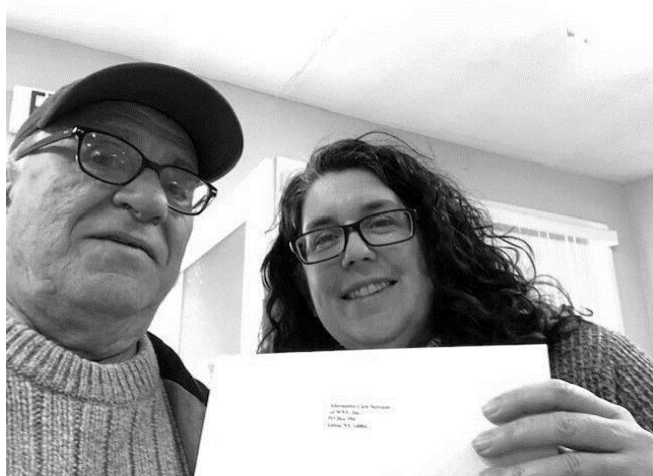
The Founders' Fund Distribution Committee consists of the following: Vicky Smith, Karen Schlum, Dolores Scanlon, Chuck Peszynski, Rob Roy Griffith and John Cardarella.



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



Peggy Hess, WZ and Diane Fleckenstein, President of Springville Meals on Wheels



John Cardarella, WZ and Jennifer Boucher,
Director of Alden Meals on Wheels



Mindy Duran, Director of Home
Delivered Meals Niagara County
and Karen Schlum, WZ



Kathy Graim, Chief Operations
Officer, WNY Meals on Wheels
and John Cardarella, WZ



Kitchen Volunteers at Ken-Ton Meals on
Wheels



Alden Meals on Wheels Volunteers

Robert Metz

Continued from page 2

Bob spent many hours learning the computer programs himself that would be later used in education such as; Microsoft Office, Microsoft Word, and Excel. He taught himself these programs and then taught the staff, teachers, and students. He was always a courteous, patient, and honorable man working his craft and passing his love of technology onto others. Bob was quite popular in the High School because in his “office of the future”, there were computers for us to use and phones to connect to the outside world. (Remember! this was in the early 1980’s). Shortly after his retirement in 2003, Bob needed to care for his mother, Collette, full time. He kept up his computer skills and eventually joined retirement life.

Bob joined New York State Retired Teachers’ Association / Western Zone while he was an active teacher. He leant his skills to update and revise the Western Zone Board of Directors Resource Handbook. He was “layout” editor of Western Currents for over 10 years. Bob also was our first Vice President for 5 years and a member of several committees.

Robert J. Metz has taken many of us under his wing and patiently taught us how to embrace computer technology by his competent, organized, efficient way as a gentleman and superior teacher.

Bob takes time to serve the community of Orchard Park (where he lives). He is a member of the Orchard Park Zoning Board of Appeals and an active member of the American Legion. He is an Honorary Director of Western Zone.

Both Bob and Marianne now travel and enjoy the retired life. We thank you for all your years of service in our military, technological instruction of adults, teachers, students, and being our technology helper with all the answers. Your contributions to Western Zone have been innumerable and have been greatly appreciated.

Less is More

Less is more when it comes to stress and clutter of the mind. Try doing one project or achieving one goal per day instead of becoming overwhelmed with that “to do list”. Forget about doing Facebook, Twitter and Instagram until you are finished as it is not productive to always be multitasking. We all feel so good when we finish a task. Control your time by taking short breaks from your work to be creative. Reading, learning something new, writing in your journal, doing a craft, or whatever makes you happy, helps to refresh and stimulate the mind. Then you can get back to the task at hand feeling that you are in control. Remember “All Work and no Play makes Jack a dull boy”. When the stress and clutter from the mind is reduced you are free to see life in a new perspective and may even become a happier person.



Kudos to Teachers

Our very own Marie (Gerace) Zafron was mentioned in a recent article on February 20, in the Buffalo Evening News. The author, Peter Simon (a former Buffalo News reporter) sings the praises of Bennet High School in the 1960's while a student there. He states that his "turning point" in finding direction was in "Marie Gerace's psychology class, which he found fascinating. He even mentions that Bob Lanier, a 1966 graduate of Bennet who became a professional basketball star and an inductee in the Basketball Hall of Fame, was impressed with Marie. As she recalls, Lanier and some other students once caused a disturbance outside her classroom. Marie ordered Bob to "see that it doesn't happen again". From there after Lanier would pass Miss Gerace's classroom each day with a shy smile and a pleasant, "Hi Ma'am", Marie recalls. She says that it was his kindness and gentle nature that impressed her. Kudos to our sweet Marie Zafron! She and all of our retired WZ teachers have helped to mold the lives of so many. We should be proud of our endeavors as teachers!

Financial Assistance Available for NYSRTA Members

Do you know of a Western Zone retired educator or spouse of a retired educator, who is experiencing difficulty in meeting the increased daily expenses of everyday living? Or perhaps, someone who has a need for financial assistance in paying fuel, medical, dental, homecare or other bills? Or, do you find YOURSELF in such a situation? **There is assistance available!**

In memory of the first President, Robert R. DeCormier of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association, NYSRTA established a fund that continues to provide financial aid to retired members and spousal members, who are facing this dilemma. In some cases, a monthly stipend is granted, which enables an individual to continue to meet the daily expenses of living. In other instances, a "special grant" is given that provides coverage for an unexpected financial burden. In 2019, over \$19,000 was given to assist our fellow retirees.

If you know anyone that is a member of NYSRTA, and **is in need of financial assistance**, or **for additional information**, please contact Anne Flansburg at [716-863-3631](tel:716-863-3631). You may also download an application and/or learn more about the fund at www.nysrta.org. On the home page, click on "membership" and then "financial assistance". Please share this information with others who may not be familiar with this valuable resource.



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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*

“THE HILLS ARE ALIVE” TRIP

Sept 28-Oct 2, 2020

Experience the beauty and memories of New England's Fall foliage on our **VERMONT and NEW HAMPSHIRE – The Hills Are Alive**, Western Zone five day trip. Reservations are on a first-come, first paid basis and we encourage you to send the deposit as quickly as possible. **THIS TRIP WILL BE HELD ONLY IF THE TRAVEL PLANS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE SAFE AND AREA IS NOT RESTRICTED**

This extraordinary trip will begin with a stop at the **Erie Canal Museum** in Syracuse and then continue to the Killington/Rutland area, where a welcome reception, followed by a dinner and an evening of entertainment will be enjoyed. The next day will be spent with a local guide in northern Vermont, which will include a tour of the **Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory**, and a sampling of their delicious confection. In the afternoon, a visit to the **Trapp Family Lodge** will include a buffet and delicious Austrian pastries. Learn of all that is new in the “Sound of Music” family, and visit the property, the lodge and gift shop. Later, tour the **State Capitol Building in Montpelier**, the smallest capitol city in the U.S. with one of thirteen remaining gold domes.

Journey to New Hampshire, with visit to **Quechee Gorge**, Vermont's “Little Grand Canyon” and ride on the **Loon Mountain Gondola**. View the movie “**On Golden Pond**” and visit **Squam Lake** where it was filmed. Enjoy a **narrated morning cruise**, and later, dinner on board the **Lake Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad**.

The price for double occupancy is only **\$989**. **Single** occupancy is **\$1168**. A **deposit** of \$100 must be paid by or before **May 15, 2020**. **Final payment** is due **June 15, 2020**. This price covers: motor coach transportation, 4 nights lodging, 4 breakfasts, 3 dinners, 1 lunch at the Trapp Lodge and all admissions to events, as well as tips for guides and bus driver. 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.

Mail a check made out to **Western Zone RTA**, with your **deposit** of \$100 per person, and mail to: Betty Browne at 6025 Shore Blvd So.#415, Gulfport FL 33707-5813, Any checks paid **after May 1, 2020** should be sent to: Betty Browne at 3011 Cloverbank Rd #43 Hamburg NY 14075-3433. For optional travel insurance information, call directly 800-388-1470, giving Tour #386097 OR contact Anne at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com.

-----Detach and send to Betty Browne, on or before May 15, 2020-----

NAME _____ Email _____

NAME _____ Email _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ Emergency Phone _____

PICKUP LOCATION (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg

SPECIAL NEEDS OR REQUESTS _____

CHECK # _____ AMOUNT _____

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For Retired Educators of NY Members

West Herr Select is a complimentary service designed to take the stress out of shopping for a vehicle. Our Select Benefits Representatives and Sales Concierges are dedicated to simplify the sales process and provide a transparent full disclosure vehicle price - making your experience easy and as smooth as possible.

WEST HERR Select.com Vehicle Purchase Plan

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2020 SE Retired Educators of NY Flyer 2-12-20



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



PRESBYTERIAN
SENIOR CARE
OF WESTERN NEW YORK

www.pscwny.org

Western Zone President's Appeal

Thank you to all who have donated to our annual appeal since last July. Appeal funds are used for teacher grants to inspire creative teaching and keeping in contact with fellow Western Zone members through Friendly Service. If you donated and your name is not on the list, please call Don Lawrence at 716-445-2205 to correct our error.

Adams, Cheryl B.
Andruczyk, Judith
Annis, Agnes
Balassone, Enzo
Barbaro, John J.
Bauza, William G.
Beeley, Cindy
Beresny, Joanne
Blue, Beverly
Chase, Dawn L.
Clare, Judith R.
Collins-Coffelt, Susan
Davis, Karen L.
Dellaccio, Felicia A.
Dudkowski, Charlotte L.
Duggan, Jim
Farmer, Judy
Ferraro, Dennis
Fitzgerald, Joan
George, Gwendolyn
Germanovich, Darlene
Gilbert, Roger --In memory of Loretta
Peszynski
Harrington, Rhoda Ann
Herbst, Charles J.
Hoffman, Judith M.
Jones, Mary Louise
Kaczmarek, Marianne
Keller, Patricia S.
Kelly, Sandy
Kirsch, Doris
Kosikowski, Julia M.
Kuzara, Linda A.
Lawrence, Don E.

Lawton, Judith
Lee, James E.
Lenkei, Eleanor
Lewis, Anne C.
Maggiore, Susan
McCormack, Barbara K.
McNeil, Richard
Mitchell, Anita
Myszka, Edward
Myszka, Marcia
O'Shea, Barbara
Parkman, Carolyn
Peterson, Helen
Postle, John
Riester, Peter J.
Schroeder, Edward G.
Selkirk, Daniel
Smith, Victoria
Szykowny, Susan
Toner, Judy
Vienne, Dorothy
Vienne, Richard
Walter, Gary
Walter, Sharon
White, Nancy
Wickham, Dale
Wild, Gerald
Williams, Mary Linda
Wisniewski, Robert L.
Zarbo, Elizabeth
Zimmer, Edward
Zimmer, Vicki
Zittel, Helen

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In this very trying and stressful time we want to remind our WZ members to stay strong, practice social distancing and be safe!

INFORMATION REGARDING THE NEW YORK CITY TRIP

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the safety of our members and in the interest of public health, we have CANCELLED the trip to New York City scheduled for June 5-10, 2020. The safety and well-being of our members and their loved ones who join us on our Western Zone trips has always been and continues to be of primary concern, to the three group leaders and to the tour companies we use. ALL monies paid will be refunded, including any travel insurance purchased. Hopefully, a similar trip will be planned next year.

SAVE THE DATE!

RENY/ Western Zone Annual Meeting September 16, 2020

Salvatore's Conference Center. More information coming this summer.

Contact Michelle Claus, 716-481-5279, if you or someone you know would like to be a vendor at this year's meeting.