

RENEY
RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NY

WESTERN CURRENTS

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

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www.wzretiredteachers.org

Winter 2021



Greetings from Your President

Happy Holidays fellow RENY/ Western Zone members. I am your newly elected president, Michelle Claus. Your past presidents, Judy Farmer and Doris Kirsch, presidents for a total of six years collectively, have been advising me during my transition to Western Zone President.

I have had several WZ positions during my eight years on the Board of Directors. Part of my resume includes; Western Currents advertising director, membership chair, awards committee member, 2nd Vice President, handbook assistant, webmaster assistant, public relations chair, Salvatore's Banquet/Restaurant WZ annual meeting and vendor coordinator, Springville/West Valley Retired Teachers' president, and RENY 2018 state conference co-chairman. You can see I learn best by doing. Thank you for your input and guidance throughout my years on the Board of Directors.

We Need YOU! Western Zone needs you! We need your membership. Friends and former colleagues can become members of our organization, RENY/Western Zone. Potential members can take advantage of our 3 year/ \$75

reduced membership fee offered during this year and 2022. Email our membership vice president, Karen Gembar at WesternZoneRENY@gmail.com or contact me to receive a membership form.

We Need YOU to be involved! Western Zone has a variety of committees to join and serve. Some of our committees include legislation, resolutions, community service, Founders' Fund, teacher grant, friendly service, and awards. Many committees communicate via phone or email. You can advocate for retirees, active teachers, and our students.

Come to one of our Board of Directors meetings. We have meetings in April, May, June, September, November, and December. Contact me by the 1st of any month listed, to register your attendance at one of our meetings.

Please continue advocating for retirees by keeping your membership current and encouraging new memberships. Thank you for your support and continued participation. I am enthusiastic about all Western Zone can accomplish with your involvement. When available, please attend unit meetings or join a unit. Please contact me with questions or register to attend a monthly meeting, Michelle Claus, 716-481-5279 or joeclaus@msn.com.

WZ President,
Michelle Claus
WesternZoneRENY@gmail.com

SPOTLIGHT ON

Judy Farmer



Western Zone Officers

President
Michelle Claus

1st Vice President
Doris R. Kirsch

2nd Vice President
Maria Hager

Treasurer
Don E. Lawrence

Recording Secretary
Nancy White

Corresponding Secretary
Audrey Seidel

Membership Secretary
Karen Gembar

Past President
Judy Farmer

A family member reports that when Judy returned home from her first day at kindergarten, she pronounced that she would be a teacher. No further career guidance needed! Judy made education a top priority very early in her life and has maintained and enhanced it

throughout her active teaching years and time of retirement.

Judy's formal education was acquired at West Seneca Central High School, Bob Jones University (BS in Education) and Canisius College (MS in Education). She was employed as an elementary school teacher in the Iroquois School District for 33 years, with an additional five years of service as a substitute teacher. As an active educator she was a leader in the Iroquois Faculty Association serving as Corresponding Secretary and a member of the Negotiating Team. Upon her retirement, Judy expressed that she felt that something about herself had changed dramatically. She said that teaching was "not what she did, but who she was". In her mind, teaching had defined her and now that she was out of the classroom, she no longer played a part in education. Anyone who knows Judy, knows full well that is not the truth. She may have left the classroom, but she immediately took up the reins as an active and inspiring leader of retired educators.

Judy quickly became a leader in the Eastern Erie Retired Teachers' Association where she took on the roles of Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and President - a position which she still holds. She became a member of the Western Zone Board of Directors in 2010, where she again served as Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and President. As of November 1, 2021 she has "retired" (if that is a term that can be used for Judy) as WZ President. She has done a yeoman's job in this capacity, assuming leadership for an extended time and offering outstanding guidance through the pandemic. November 1st also marked the end of her six year term as RENY (NYSRTA) Secretary. When seeking that job she expressed a serious commitment to performing this duty well as it would be her minutes that would become the legal record of the organization's actions. Her minutes have been complete, accurate and timely. Judy has been recognized for her dedicated performance in each of these organizations by being awarded the WZ Citation Award in 2014 and the NYSRTA Certificate of Recognition in 2018. Judy has been the

Zone Unit Presidents

Amherst RTA
Joseph Podgorski

Buffalo RTA
Tom Giambra

Eastern Erie RTA
Judy Farmer

Genesee RTA
James Owen

Kenmore RTA
Joan Costello

Lackawanna RTA
Tina Gambino

Lancaster/Depew RTA
Karen Gembar

Eastern Niagara RTA
Sandy Kelley

Springville/West Valley RTA
Michelle Claus

West Seneca RTA
Patricia Miceli

Williamsville RTA
Therese Clarke

Continued on page 3

Spotlight On

Continued from page 2



epitome of a team player performing her own duties admirably and encouraging others to succeed as well. She does this all in a gracious, dignified and unassuming manner.

Judy's commitment to others can readily be seen in her involvement with her neighbors and family. In her community (Marilla), Judy is one of those people who is always there when needed. She has filled several roles with the local Historical Society, Senior Citizens Organization, Marilla Free Library and First Baptist Church. She and Jack (a Vietnam War Veteran) have been married for over 50 years. They have two adult children and two grandsons. The older of the grandsons dreamed of entering the Navy. As a result of Judy's tutoring, he achieved a high score qualifying him for the job he wanted. He remains in Military Service. The younger grandson is a 5th Grader. It should come as no surprise that Judy was his grandmother/remote teacher throughout the pandemic. Her elementary school teaching skills have been very useful in guiding him in his studies and development.

Now, we should look back a generation. Prior to her Dad's passing (he was in his upper 90's) Judy was his primary care giver while he was able to be home and later as he needed to be placed in a health care facility. She recalls, with great pride, the day she accompanied her Dad to Washington, DC as participants in the Honor Flight experience. Add a proud commitment to the military to Judy's accomplishments through her loyal support of her father, husband and grandson as they served the country.

Having shed the titles of RENY Secretary and WZ President, Judy can now feel the relief of those responsibilities. She is to be commended and thanked for her stellar service.

JUDY: enjoy your new found freedom, but don't get too relaxed because we will be calling upon you often. Your knowledge, expertise and dedication are still greatly needed.

2021 RENY Annual Meeting

The RENY annual meeting was held October 13-14 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany. This was the first time that zone delegates met since 2019. Due to COVID, we had a modified meeting format. Each delegate represented 200 members of their zone.

The meeting included the election of officers, as well as discussions and voting on By Laws and resolutions. Newly elected officers for RENY are the following: Dr. James Newell, President; Gayla LePage, Senior Vice President; Dell Ford Jordan, Vice-President for Membership, Mary Lou Wood Secretary, and Leigh Powell, Treasurer. The fact that delegates could come together, facilitated the work of the organization being completed.



Audrey Seidel, Nancy White, Public Relations Co-Chairs

West Seneca Retired Teachers Fall Luncheon

October 18, 2021, the West Seneca Retired Teachers held their first luncheon in over 2 years. More than 40 people met for the traditional WSRTA Fall Luncheon at Lucarelli's Banquet Center. Time was spent chatting and catching up with friends and colleagues. President Pat Miceli shared information from both the local and state level. A \$250 donation was made to the West Seneca Food Bank. Canned goods were also collected for food bank donation. The next luncheon will be held on June 6, 2022, at Kloc's Grove in the Garden Room.



Health Tips for Seniors

Vaccination is recommended as the **most effective way** of preventing invasive diseases for the elderly, such as **flu**, serious **pneumococcal infections** and **shingles**. The flu shot is a yearly vaccination. Be sure to ask for the Senior Flu shot, as it is more effective for older people. The pneumococcal shot is a onetime deal. It is also recommended that people over 50 receive the Shingles vaccine, Shingrix. This is a two shot vaccine with the second shot given 2 to 6 months after the first. Two doses of Shingrix protect you from the shingles and the complications associated with this disease. All of us who have had Chicken Pox as a child have the Shingles' virus dormant in our bodies. Scientists are not sure what causes the virus to reactivate thus causing Shingles. However, if you have had shingles or know someone who has had it, you definitely don't want to get it. Hence the necessity of the Shingles shot. Local pharmacies have the **flu, pneumonia and shingles** shots available, as will your doctor

For those who have received **your Covid-19 vaccination** shots, be sure to get your **booster** shot. Contact your local Health Department, pharmacy or doctor to find out where you can get your booster and set up an appointment.

Being proactive by getting vaccinated can minimize the risk of developing these diseases, helping us to be safe and healthy so we can enjoy the Holidays and winter season with our friends and family.

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Pictured - Lew & Harriet McCauley with their dog Sunny

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ROBERT R. DECORMIER MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

Are you, or any member of RENY that you know, in need of financial assistance? If so, funds are available. **The DeCormier Trust**, named after the first President of the organization, provides assistance in the form of **Special Grants**. These are one-time grants, which help members who experience an unforeseen or unplanned expense that would be difficult to cover. The Trust awards stipends for special needs, and has helped members of RENY by covering dental, hearing aid, car, and home repair payments, as well as purchasing a chairlift for assistance with mobility, and providing other necessities. Money is available for any member who has a need. If you, or someone you know, is experiencing financial difficulties, please have them contact Chair. Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or via email at anneflanswz@aol.com.

Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers

Sandy Kelley, President

The October meeting of ENCRTA was well attended with 60 members at the Lockport Town and Country Club. Everyone enjoyed Joyce Thompson Hovey's presentation of Belva Lockwood, who was born in the town of Royalton in Eastern Niagara County in 1830. She was a teacher, a prominent lawyer in Washington DC and the first woman to run for the US presidency. Joyce shared many interesting facts about Belva who was a pioneer in Women's Rights on many fronts.

The annual **basket raffle** to benefit the Scholarship fund was a huge success. We had 36 baskets, which was a record. Thanks to the members who donated baskets and to all who purchased raffle tickets. Because of the generosity of our members the raffle netted \$425.00 for the Scholarship Fund. ENCRTA gives six \$500 scholarships each June to area high school seniors. The "**Socktober**" project was also a success with our members donating 187 pairs of socks

We have welcomed 16 new members and two returning members to ENCRTA within the last two years. Our next meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 11 at 10:30 at the Lockport Town and Country Club. The Lockport High School Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Tim Martin will entertain us during lunch. If you are a retired educator in Niagara County who is interested in ENCRTA or want to learn more about us, please email President Sandy Kelley at rlkelley48@gmail.com.



New ENCRTA members at the fall meeting

1st Row: Kathy Good, Priscilla Ferguson, Karen Thompson, Martha LaPointe, Pres. Sandy Kelley

2nd Row: Jan Cilip, Jess Smith, Nancy Buffone, Donna Powers, Debi Sweeney, Kevin Clark

BALTIMORE & ANNAPOLIS, MD
with
SIGHT & SOUND PRODUCTION of DAVID
June 20–23, 2022

Join Western Zone members for a four day, three night trip to **Baltimore and Annapolis, MD** and to enjoy the production of **DAVID** at the Sight and Sound Theatre in Lancaster, PA. While in Maryland, experience Baltimore's Inner Harbor, **enjoy** a colonial-attired tour guide's introduction through historic downtown Annapolis and the Maryland State House, as well as the U.S. Naval Academy. **Board** the Harbor Queen for a 40-minute narrated cruise and **visit** the Basilica of the National Shrine, the gravesite of Edgar Allan Poe, and many additional sights of interest. In PA, visit Kitchen Kettle Village and partake in the live performance of **DAVID** at the Sight & Sound Theatre.

The price is **\$575** per person for double occupancy, and **\$815** for single occupancy. Cost includes: transportation, three nights lodging, three breakfasts, and 3 dinners, including Phillips Restaurant and Shady Maple Smorgasbord. Gratuities for meals, guides and bus driver are all included. Any questions, contact Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com OR Betty Browne at 716-207-6152. All e-mails and calls will be acknowledged.

Two pickups will be scheduled, and additional information will be provided. Detailed flyers are available upon request, or sent via e-mail.

Send a **deposit of \$100 per person**, payable to **Western Zone RTA** by or before **February 21, 2022**. (Reservations accepted in order of date received.) The **balance** for this trip is due by **April 5, 2022**. This exciting and memorable trip promises to be a "sell out" so reserve early.

Please send completed reservation form and check(s) to:

Betty Browne 6025 Shore Blvd So. #415 Gulfport FL 33707-5813

Deposit for Baltimore & Annapolis, MD and DAVID Trip

Name(s) _____ Roommate _____

Address _____

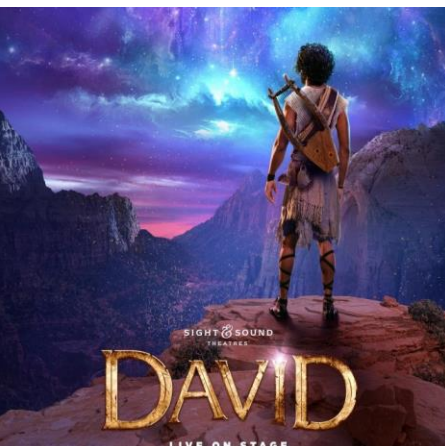
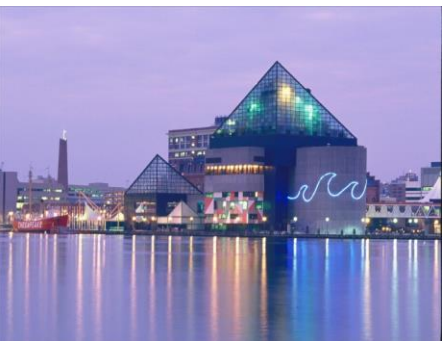
Cell _____ E-mail _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Pickup location preferred (circle one) Williamsville or Hamburg

Special needs or requests _____

Check # _____ Amount _____



BALTIMORE & ANNAPOLIS, MD

with "David" at Sight & Sound Theatre

4 DAYS - 3 NIGHTS

JUNE 20 - 23, 2022

\$ 575.00 Per Person *Double Occupancy*

\$ 815.00 Per Person *Single Occupancy*

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- * 3 Nights Lodging
- * 3 Breakfasts
- * 3 Dinners, including Phillips Restaurant & Shady Maple
- * Harborplace at Baltimore's Inner Harbor
- * Tour of Annapolis & the Naval Academy
- * Annapolis Harbor Cruise
- * Guided Tour of Historic Baltimore
- * Performance of "David" at Sight & Sound Theatre
- * Kitchen Kettle Village
- * Souvenir Gift
- * Luggage Handling
- * Taxes & Meal Gratuities
- * Bus Driver & Tour Guide Gratuities
- * Motorcoach Transportation

FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS CONTACT:

**RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NEW YORK (RENY)
WESTERN ZONE**

Anne Flansburg - (716) 863-3631

Betty Browne - (716) 207-6152

BALTIMORE & ANNAPOLIS, MD

Plus “David” at Sight & Sound Theatre

4 Days - 3 Nights

- Day 1** Depart from your hometown and travel to Baltimore, upon arrival visit Harborplace where you will have time to see Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and visit the shops. That evening, a delicious seafood dinner at Phillips Harborplace Restaurant. After dinner, check into your lodging for the next two nights.
- Day 2** Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, then travel south of Baltimore to Annapolis. Upon arrival you will meet your **colonial-attired tour guide** who will bring history to life as you stroll through **historic downtown Annapolis and the Maryland State House**. Be inspired with the sights and sounds of the U.S. Naval Academy, home to over 4,000 midshipmen. After lunch on your own in the city dock area, board the *Harbor Queen* for a 40-minute **narrated cruise on historic Annapolis Harbor** and the banks of the U.S. Naval Academy. Return to the Baltimore area for dinner, followed by a relaxing evening.
- Day 3** After breakfast at your hotel, check out and meet your guide at the National Aquarium driveway and depart aboard your bus for a **guided tour of the historic highlights of the Monumental City**. See Mt. Vernon Place and the Washington Monument (*Baltimore’s first formal tribute to our nation’s first president.*) View the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the very first Catholic Cathedral in the United States. Stop at the gravesite of Edgar Allen Poe and hear the story of the mysterious circumstances surrounding his untimely death. After your tour, depart for **Pennsylvania’s Amish lands**, stopping for lunch on your own en route. This afternoon, arrive at the **Sight & Sound Theatre** to see a brand-new, original, live performance of *David*. Master Poet. Fearless Warrior. Anointed King. From still waters to shadowed valleys, David’s ascent to the throne is filled with towering giants, wild animals, and Philistine soldiers.
- Experience one of the most legendary Bible stories as it comes to life with spectacular special effects, massive sets, and live animals. After the performance, enjoy a **smorgasbord dinner at Shady Maple** then depart for your lodging in the area where you will check in for a restful night.
- Day 4** After breakfast at the hotel, check out and depart for **Kitchen Kettle Village** in the town of Intercourse. You’ll have time to browse in the unique specialty shops displaying everything from local art to fine leather coats, quilts, accessories, and pottery. Lunch is on your own at Kitchen Kettle or en route home. Depart for home with lasting memories of **Maryland’s historic twin cities & Pennsylvania Dutch Country!**

WZ Vermont & New Hampshire Trip

In September, **HILLS WERE ALIVE**, both in Vermont and in New Hampshire, as 47 Western Zone travelers traversed the sights and sounds of this area. The trip included a narrated cruise on Squam Lake – the site of the movie “On Golden Pond”, lunch at the Trapp Family Lodge, as well as a ride and turkey dinner aboard the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad. Guided bus tours, entertainment, memorable views, capital, state and historic buildings, wildlife, fall foliage and many other experiences highlighted the travel.

Our Western Zone sponsored trips have encouraged many new friendships and experiences. Our upcoming **June 20-23, 2022** trip will feature the **Baltimore and Annapolis area**, as well as the Sight and Sound Production of “**DAVID**”. Send in your reservation form **now**, which is included in this newsletter.

Additionally, save the dates of **September 25-30, 2022** for a trip to **Tennessee’s Smoky Mountains**. Details and reservations will be in the next issue of WESTERN CURRENTS.



WZ members enjoying the VT and NH trip

Western Zone Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee announced the following candidates for the 2021-2022 Officers positions of Western Zone at the September 2021 Board of Directors’ Meeting. All were voted on favorably. The 2021-2022 Western Zone officers are:

President: Michelle Claus
1st Vice President: Doris Kirsch
2nd Vice President: Maria Hager
Treasurer: Donald Lawrence
Recording Secretary: Nancy White
Corresponding Secretary: Audrey Seidel
Membership Secretary: Karen Gembar
Past President: Judith Farmer

The Covid 19 situation has necessitated a change in the election of Board members. Current Board members will continue to serve in their positions until Western Zone is able to safely hold a general membership meeting, hopefully in September of 2022.

Beechwood Welcomes Presbyterian Senior Care of WNY into Our Family

Beechwood Continuing Care is pleased to announce that Presbyterian Senior Care WNY communities have joined our Beechwood family!

As we are both mission driven and not-for-profit senior housing and care communities, it made perfect sense for us to join together and offer a wider spectrum of senior housing and services to better serve our WNY seniors. Together our histories have provided over 60 years of caring for seniors.

Below is a list of all our communities. Please feel free to reach out to learn more about all we have to offer. We are just a phone call away!

Below is a complete directory of all communities:

Independent Living Communities

Asbury Pointe Retirement Community

50 Stahl Road ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Karen Grady - Executive Director

Phone - 716-810-7500



Presbyterian Village at North Church

214 Village Park Drive ♦ Williamsville, NY 14221

Lisa Lundy - Administrator

Phone - 716-631-3430



Ken-Ton Presbyterian Village

3735 Delaware Avenue ♦ Kenmore, NY 14217

Colleen Bullion - Administrator

Phone - 716-874-6070



Adult Home & Assisted Living Communities

Lockport Presbyterian Home

327 High Street ♦ Lockport, NY 14094

Pam Flagler - Administrator

Phone - 716-434-8805



Skilled Nursing & Sub-Acute Short Term Rehabilitation

Beechwood Homes

100 Stahl Road ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Rich McCune - Administrator

Phone - 716-810-7000



Wesley Rehabilitation Center

2235 Millersport Highway ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Rich McCune - Administrator

Phone - 716-810-7000



Western Zone—NYSRTA

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We need YOU! We need a representative to serve on our Health Insurance Committee. Virtual meetings. Contact Michelle Claus, 716-481-5279 or joeclaus@msn.com. Thank you

These car or home magnets are in red, white, and green measuring 3" x 12". They are available for \$1 each. Send me your address information and \$1 each and I will mail to you. Thank you for supporting RENY Retired Educators!

Michelle Claus, 6313 Kast Place, Hamburg, NY 14075
Joeclaus@msn.com. 716-481-5279



**WEAR YOUR MASK
WASH YOUR HANDS
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE
FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE!**