

RENY  
RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NY

## WESTERN CURRENTS

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

Volume 20, Number 2

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

Spring 2022



### Greetings from Your President

Spring is just around the corner! It has been a long, snowy, cold winter for Western Zone. We are ready for spring. Our units are planning in person meetings. We have 11 units within Western Zone, listed at the end of this article. If you belong to a unit, information will be forthcoming as to meeting dates. If you do not have a unit, please look at our list of units and call or email the president of a unit you wish to visit. The contact information for the presidents are at the end of this article. The unit president will give you the information and dates for their meetings and luncheons.

Now is the time...WE NEED YOU. This was the theme in my first letter to you. We need to be involved and active in RENY/Western Zone. Involvement can be from minimal or extremely active. Involvement and support is extremely important.

Western Zone and unit committees are ready to serve. These committees have been involved since we held zoom meetings and limited in-person meetings in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Scholarship committees will soon be meeting with school personnel. These scholarships are given to graduating seniors going on to college.

Legislative committees have zoomed and met to decide the topics we retirees will support and present to our legislators. The discussion "cards"

have been delivered to these legislators. An article from our legislative chairman is in this newsletter.

The Teacher Grant committee met several times to decide on a recipient for our \$1000 active teacher award. This award was presented in October of 2021. They are working on the next grant to be given in 2022.

Our Remembrances committee has been very busy. Anita Blasiak, Rhoda Harrington, and Marie Zafron contribute almost daily to the list of deceased educators.

The Community Service committee collected coats, hats, scarves, etc. donated to the refugees that have settled in Western New York this season. We also donated to Charlotte House and St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. Founders' Fund gives monetary donations to groups that need assistance. There is an article from the Founders' Fund chairman in this newsletter.

The membership committee is working on a slightly different way to encourage membership and notify members when they fall behind in their dues.

Our units are resuming in person meetings. Congratulations to Eastern Niagara County RTA and Eastern Erie County RTA units which met in person in 2021.

We need you! Thank you all for supporting Western Zone.

WZ President,  
Michelle Claus  
[joeclaus@msn.com](mailto:joeclaus@msn.com)

Continued on page 3

# SPOTLIGHT ON

## Spotlight on John Cardarella

Western Zone appreciates our YES man...



### 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

Our John Cardarella has been a Board of Directors member since 2007. Prior to this, he graduated from Brockport (1967), earned a Masters' degree at Buffalo State College (1970), and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Preparation (1977). John and Russ Gervasi graduated from Bishop Fallon High School, which started their lifelong friendships. John served in the National Guard for 36 years. John and Russ were double dating until John and Carolyn married in 1972. These men stayed close friends renting a cottage with friends in Canada yearly until now. John taught elementary, grades 5 and 6, in the Kenmore School System and retired in 2002, when he joined NYSRTA (New York State Retired Teachers' Association) Western Zone.

As a member on the Board of Directors', John specializes in the financial part of Western Zone. He is our Assistant Treasurer and Chairman of our Founders' Fund. John loves managing the Founders' Fund as you can see in this newsletter.

He is involved in so many groups and organizations. Some of them are; Bishop Fallon Alumni Organization, St. Gregory the Great Golf League and the 174<sup>th</sup> Armory Veterans Club. He is also the main planner and driving force of the Longo yearly family picnic. As part of the Post 49 Am Vets club, John supports various charitable organizations. The fun monthly poker players group has met for more than fifty years.

The "yes" man is dedicated. He supports and joins many organizations such as our Western Zone. John was in charge of many aspects of the fundraiser and business part of our three-day statewide

### 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



annual meeting. John, Russ, and Vicki were a team under the guidance of John. They sold raffle tickets and handed out donations for two days. After this convention, the secretary's report was sent to our 28,000 members. By some glitch, John's last name was printed Cinderella. He took the new name in stride and we have never forgotten Cinderella.

John loves to travel and has been to London, Germany, Austria, and Italy. John and Carolyn spent their honeymoon in Italy in the summer of 1972. They had a cute Italian car for the trip. Driving in Rome, they always saw the sign, SENSO ONICO, several times. Drivers honked, some people made gestures, some yelled in their native language, as the couple drove on, lost in the city. John and Carolyn later found out the sign said, ONE WAY.

Always a good time with John. We have asked him several times to fill in for positions and help at a moment's notice, John always says "yes".

He is a great example of a member who is always ready to help Western Zone.

## President's Message

Continued from page 1

An important way to be involved is to make sure your dues are current. If you have questions regarding your dues, please contact me: [joeclaus@msn.com](mailto:joeclaus@msn.com) or 716-481-5279

### UNITS:

Amherst	<a href="mailto:mrtrekfan@gmail.com">mrtrekfan@gmail.com</a>	716-491-0400
Buffalo	<a href="mailto:tgiambra@roadrunner.com">tgiambra@roadrunner.com</a>	716-877-7796
Eastern Erie	<a href="mailto:jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com">jfarmer2@rochester.rr.com</a>	716-652-9210
Genesee	<a href="mailto:owenone_2001@yahoo.com">owenone_2001@yahoo.com</a>	585-343-1877
Kenmore	<a href="mailto:jclearningpiano@gmail.com">jclearningpiano@gmail.com</a>	716-689-9196
Lackawanna	<a href="mailto:tinagambino21@hotmail.com">tinagambino21@hotmail.com</a>	716-648-2391
Lancaster/Depew	<a href="mailto:13gembar@gmail.com">13gembar@gmail.com</a>	716-714-5944
Eastern Niagara County	<a href="mailto:rlkelley48@gmail.com">rlkelley48@gmail.com</a>	716-830-9569
Springville/W Valley	<a href="mailto:joeclaus@msn.com">joeclaus@msn.com</a>	716-481-5279
West Seneca	<a href="mailto:pwmiceli@gmail.com">pwmiceli@gmail.com</a>	716-626-0234
Williamsville	<a href="mailto:thereseclarke1141@hotmail.com">thereseclarke1141@hotmail.com</a>	716-622-4539

# Western Zone Legislative Committee Report

The RENY statewide legislative committee held zoom meetings with the 10 zone legislative representatives in December and January. Zone presidents then met in February to approve the results.

## **State legislative priorities are:**

1. Supporting the Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow
2. Teacher Recruitment and Retention program.
3. Elder abuse registry and expanded reporting.
4. Increased residential options for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## **Federal legislative priorities are:**

1. Parts of the BBB bill that may still be pursued including:
  - \*Expansion of rural broadband.
  - \*Home health tax credits/Family Caregiver Compensation.
  - \*Expansion of Medicare & Medicaid.
  - \*Universal Pre-Kindergarten.
  - \*Paid Family Leave.
2. The Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act.
3. Social Security 2100 Act.

The members of the 2022-23 Western Zone Legislative Committee are: Georgann Bemis, Elizabeth Egan, Laura Fiorotto, Doris Kirsch, Patricia Miceli, Ginna O'Leary, Marylyn Stephens and Vicki Smith. Thanks to all of them!

Gary Beuth  
Chairman

## Community Service

I want to thank our Western Zone members for their generous winter clothing donations at our December Board meeting. Our donations this past year included women's toiletries, our Socktober sock collection and the winter clothing. These donations went to the City Mission and Vive la Casa. They will be given to Afghan refugees who have relocated to the Buffalo area.

Noted when walking through a store I saw a sign that said "Give from the Heart". To me this sign represents our Western Zone members who step up each year with generous donations. Our December 2022 clothing donations will emphasize winter pajamas. Now is a good time to watch for pajamas to go on clearance. I have already purchased three pairs and will watch for further reduced prices to purchase more. We will continue to collect books in September, socks in October, winter apparel, including pajamas, in December and women's toiletries all through the year. A special thank you to Don Lawrence for coordinating the delivery of our donations. Thank you to all the members for your generosity!

Ann Marie Wik  
Community Services Chair.



**enjoylife.**

Having a walking trail right outside your door for a safe & socially distanced walk. That's enjoying life

Pictured - Lew & Harriet McCauley with their dog Sunny

Fox Run is the premier Continuing Care Retirement Community in the Southtowns

716.662.5001 • [foxrunorchardpark.com](http://foxrunorchardpark.com)



**livelife.**

## **Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers (ENCRTA)**

The December meeting of ENCRTA was well attended at the Lockport Town and Country Club. We welcomed 4 new members to ENCRTA. The Lockport Senior High Jazz Band was to be our entertainment. However due to a Covid outbreak, Lockport schools went to remote learning and the Band was unable to join us. Two of our ENCRTA members stepped up to provide great entertainment. Our 90year old member, Shirley Plummer, led us in a Christmas Carol sing along, accompanied by one of our new members, Kevin Clark, on the piano.

Major Jose' Santiago, from the Lockport Salvation Army was our guest speaker and spoke on the many wonderful programs that the Salvation Army offers in the Lockport area. Our members brought nonperishable food items to donate to the Salvation Army and a cash donation of \$365.00 was collected from members for Sister Mary Loretto's Soup Kitchen.

ENCRTA also voted to donate \$100.00 to the Robert DeCormier Trust Fund.

Our next meeting will be Thursday May 12 at 10:30 at the Lockport Town and Country Club. Isabella Sutherland portrayed by Marsha Zimmer will entertain us with stories of the famous Lockport seven Sutherland sisters and their famous hair tonic.

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](mailto:rlkelley48@gmail.com).

### **Spring Health Tip**

As the weather begins to get nicer and spring approaches walking is an excellent form of exercise. However, as we age the possibility of falling increases dramatically, especially outside, It is important to be aware of this fact and plan accordingly. Wear sensible shoes and boots. Be aware of your surroundings and be on the lookout for uneven ground or unlevel pavement. If you use a cane or walker inside, be prepared to use them outside as well. Following these tips will help you to have a safe and enjoyable spring!



# SMOKY MOUNTAINS OF TENNESSEE

September 25 – 30, 2022

Join a spectacular Western Zone trip that will feature the **Smoky Mountains of Tennessee** and will be highlighted by **four** spectacular shows. This **six day, five night** trip will include a **guided tour** of these majestic Smoky mountains, featuring America's most visited national park. It is world renowned for its diversity of plant and animal life.

Enjoy time in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg. Attend the **Paula Deen Lumberjack Feud Show**, viewing competition among world-class lumberjacks. On this trip, be entertained at the **Charlie Bob Smith Morning Variety Show**, which will blend perfect harmonies through a variety of musical styles at the Opry Theatre, bringing back nostalgic memories of the past. The **Country Tonite Theatre** will feature an exceptionally high-energy variety show with dynamic singing and dancing, side-splitting comedy, and powerful American patriotism. Additionally, a **spectacular fourth show** (chosen by group) will be featured.

Surround yourself in history and relive the experiences of the **TITANIC** at the **RMS Titanic Museum**. Learn about moonshine and enjoy a sample of the **Old Smoky Tennessee Moonshine**. Get a behind-scenes look at crime history in America, with a visit to the **Alcatraz East Crime Museum**.

The price is **\$815** per person for double occupancy, and **\$1,115** for single occupancy. Cost includes: transportation, 5 nights lodging, 5 breakfasts, 3 dinners, 4 shows, as well as all tours. Gratuities for meals, tour guides and bus driver are also included. Any questions, contact Anne Flansburg 716-863-3631 or [anneflanswz@aol.com](mailto:anneflanswz@aol.com) OR Betty Browne 716-207-6152.

**Optional basic plan travel insurance** may be purchased for \$71 (double) or \$90 (single). Contact Anne at 716-863-3631 for additional details.

Send a **deposit of \$100 per person**, payable to **Western Zone RTA** by or before **June 1, 2022**. (Reservations accepted in order of date received.) The **balance** for this trip is due by **July 10, 2022**. This exciting and memorable trip promises to be a "sell out" so reserve early.

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

**BEFORE May 1st, Betty Browne 6025 Shore Blvd So #415 Gulfport FL 33707-5813**

**AFTER May 1st, Betty Browne 3011 Cloverbank Rd #43 Hamburg NY 14075-3433**

**Deposit for SMOKY MOUNTAINS OF TENNESSEE TRIP**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Roommate \_\_\_\_\_

**If address and contact info is same for both, one form.**  
**If not, please complete a second form.**

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Pickup location preferred (circle one)    Williamsville    or    Hamburg

Special needs or requests \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

**SDH**  
**SHATKIN**  
**DENTAL HEALTH**

*Postdoctoral Dental  
Residency Program*

**SPECIAL**  
**\$43.00**  
**CLEANINGS+X-RAY**  
**SAVE 20%-30%**  
on Dental Procedures  
**FREE CONSULTATIONS**  
with X-Rays



**Aesthetic  
Associates Centre**  
Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry

**Cosmetic Dentistry**

Porcelain Veneers  
Crowns & Bridges  
Bonding  
iSmile™ Teeth Whitening  
Krystal Klear™ Aligners

**Mini Implant Restoration**

Immediate Tooth Replacement  
Full Mouth Reconstruction  
Permanent Dentures & Denture Stabilization



**716-839-1700**  
**www.drtshatkin.com**  
**2500 Kensington Avenue • Amherst**



## FOUNDERS' FUND

John Cardarella  
Chairman of Founders' Fund

We received around \$5100.00 from our investments this year. Using some of our surplus funds we were able to donate close to \$6000.00 to local organizations in the Western Zone! This year we have 2 additional independent Meals on Wheels: Meals on Wheels Niagara Falls and Twin City Meals on Wheels in North Tonawanda. These two will be added to our other independent Meals on Wheels; Kenton, Alden, Amherst, Springville, Jamestown, Niagara County Office for the Aging, Home Delivered Meals Program, Genesee County Office for the Aging, Seneca Nations Cattaraugus Reservation and the Cattaraugus County Department of Aging, Home Delivered Meals. We continue to support the Network in Aging Center, and FeedMore WNY (Formerly Meals on Wheels of WNY). Small donations were also given to Aurora Senior Club, which provides meals at the East Aurora Senior Center 5 days a week, and to South Buffalo Community Table, before COVID-19 they were a Soup Kitchen. Now they provide meals to seniors as well as homeless in their area, surviving on donations and grant money!

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

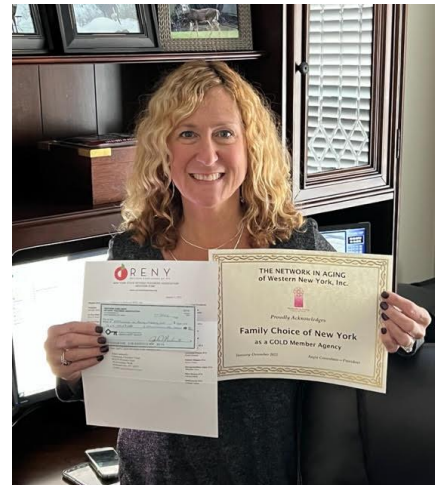
With the help of Michelle Claus and Vicky Smith we delivered 7 checks. The remaining checks were mailed out. We did receive information and pictures from a number of our recipients.



Ethel Morgan, 95 years old  
Niagara Falls Meals on Wheels  
Coordinator



Barrie Yochim, Exec. Director  
Meals on Wheels Jamestown  
and Vicki Smith



Lisa Boron, Network  
in Aging coordinator



Twin City Volunteer sealing  
a meal in microwave container



South Buffalo Volunteers  
preparing fresh fruit cups

## **Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Unit Report (EERTA)**

The Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Unit of the Western Zone of RENY met for the first time, since the Covid19 pandemic interrupted our lives, on October 5, 2021. We had a breakfast buffet and a brief meeting where we welcomed our one new member. Our special honored member was Janice Weitz who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in August. The winners of our scholarships, one from each district represented by the members, were announced. For our Community Service project the members brought books to be donated to local children in need of reading materials. Author and former police detective, Lissa Redmond, spoke about her experiences with the Buffalo police department and her journey as an author. Our guest speaker also brought books, but they were books that she has written and that could be purchased by the members

Our second meeting was held on February 15, 2022. Again, we shared a breakfast buffet followed by our regular business meeting. We were informed by Paul Beakman, a member of WARP and a councilman in Lockport, of his ongoing efforts with legislators to pass an increase in COLA this year. Coincidentally, this is one of the bills that your RENY Legislative Action advocates are asking state legislators to pass this year. Hopefully we can join forces in this effort.

For our Community Service project we brought non-perishable food item which were donated to the Alden Food Pantry.

Our next meeting is on May 3, 2022 at The Columns in Elma, New York.

Locally Owned ~ Not-for-Profit Senior Care Community



## BEECHWOOD CONTINUING CARE



*Beechwood Continuing Care is considered the premier not-for-profit senior care community in WNY. From luxury independent apartment living to state-of-the-art short-term rehabilitation...our communities have something for everyone.*

**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!**



### Independent Living Communities

#### **Asbury Pointe Retirement Community**

50 Stahl Road ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Phone - 716-810-7500



#### **Presbyterian Village at North Church**

214 Village Park Drive ♦ Williamsville, NY 14221

Phone - 716-810-7475



#### **Ken-Ton Presbyterian Village**

3735 Delaware Avenue ♦ Kenmore, NY 14217

Phone - 716-810-7478



### Skilled Nursing & Sub-Acute Short Term Rehabilitation

#### **Beechwood Homes**

100 Stahl Road ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Phone - 716-810-7000



#### **Wesley Rehabilitation Center**

2235 Millersport Highway ♦ Amherst, NY 14068

Phone - 716-810-7000



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

**Western Zone—NYSRTA**

**P.O. Box 922**

**Williamsville, NY 14231-0922**

**Non-Profit Org.**

**U.S. Postage Paid**

**Buffalo, NY**

**Permit 4574**

Save the Date: Western Zone Annual Meeting, September 21, 2022. Details to follow in the Summer Western Currents.

Please be current on your RENY dues. Any questions, please call/text/email Michelle Claus, 716-481-5279. [joeclaus@msn.com](mailto:joeclaus@msn.com)