



R E N E Y
RETIRE D E D U C A T O R S O F N Y

WESTERN CURRENTS

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

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www.wzretiredteachers.org

Winter 2022



Greetings from Your President



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Why did you join RENY? It can be answered in many ways. Is it because of the information we provide, the interesting programs, comradery of fellow educators, donating to a cause, or the care and concern of our community?

We all help Western Zone in some way or ways. Do you provide transportation to a friend to meetings or appointments? Do you visit or send cards? Do you attend memorial services or wellness visits for fellow members? Are you involved in our committees or are you an officer in a unit, zone, or state association?

Tis the season to Thank You for your service to Western Zone.

Our zone has a little less than 2500 members. Some pay yearly and others are lifetime members. We have eleven units within Western Zone. We could have more units. If you are interested in starting a unit, contact me. Since Covid, two units have filled their officer vacancies. Thank you to Genesee County Retired Educators Association. I attended their first meeting in almost

3 years in September. They are ready to care for their communities again. Thanks to President, Marcia Riley and Secretary, Suzie Schmidt for their diligence in this process. Springville/West Valley Retired Teachers' Association also decided to continue their unit's care and concern this year. Treasurer, Donna Potter and Secretary, Rhonda Moore took over duties for 7 months until a new president and vice president were elected.

Donations to local charities are being collected during the months of November and December 2022. We are collecting Children's books for Project Flight, new socks, toiletries, and warm winter outdoor clothing. November 16 and December 14 are our Board of Directors meeting dates. We meet at Alton's Banquet Facility, 2221 Transit Rd, Elma from 9 am-1 pm. Please feel free to drop off donations during these times and dates.

Thank you for caring and giving to your community. I will close with a quote from Maya Angelou, which sums up our care and concern; "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

WZ President
Michelle Claus
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Spotlight on Rhoda Ann Harrington



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Judy Farmer

The 2022 WZ annual meeting was dedicated to Rhoda for her many years of service and dedication. She began her career as an Attendance Officer and School Social Worker for the Lockport City School District in 1969 and worked there until her retirement in 1991.

Since her retirement she has been an active lobbyist for education and has been very active in numerous education and community organizations.

Rhoda has been a life member of RENY Western Zone since 1998. Over the years she has served as the Corresponding Membership Secretary and has also been on numerous committees. Presently she serves on the Community Service, History and Remembrance Committees.

She is also very active in the Eastern Niagara County Unit where she served as President and Vice President. She is an active participant of the following unit committees:

Bereavement, History and Nominations and also spearheaded their annual Christmas Project for the Lockport Salvation Army.

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

Sharon Barley

West Seneca RTA

Patricia Miceli

Williamsville RTA

Therese Clarke

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Spotlight On

Continued from page 2



Rhoda is a member of the following community organizations:

- Lockport Salvation Army Advisory Board
- Lockport Senior Citizen
- Eastern Niagara Hospital Guild
- Clinton Street United Methodist Church and is chairman of the “Staff Pastor Parish Relations Board”

She has received the following honors and awards:

- International Women’s Day Recipient
- Newspaper tribute: Women Who Care for Children
- Western Zone Citation award (2013)
- Western Zone Dedication
- Certificate of Appreciation for Dedication & Service to Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers
- Community Service Award (in York State)

Rhoda once said: “I feel I have been called to serve others. My entire professional life has been devoted to service. I couldn’t have chosen a better profession. Being a human service provider had been and always will be my way of life. I trust I have made a positive impact on the lives I have touched.”

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! CONGRATULATIONS RHODA!

In Memory of Ruthe Nemmer

Ruthe Nemmer joined Western Zone in 2007 and served as a member of its Board of Directors, both active and then honorary until her passing August 9, 2022. She received both her Bachelor and Master degrees in Speech Education at Buffalo State, and taught in Buffalo, BOCES and Williamsville.

Ruthe's life enkindled threads of kindness, love and empathy, and she worked hard to help improve the life of active and retired educators, as well as others who needed assistance, or simply needed an uplifting of spirit and mind. In her local Williamsville unit, she served as Vice-president and assisted in planning local meetings. On the Zone level, she served on the Friendly Service and Remembrance Committees, and attended several of the State meetings. She enjoyed providing decorations, setting up entertainment at a meeting, and being there to assist in whatever capacity needed.

Her far-reaching efforts scaled volunteering for the SPCA, book clubs for children, visits to senior homes, and helping adults with handicapping conditions. She enjoyed gardening, reading, family visits and performances of the Buffalo Philharmonic. Members of Western Zone remember her kindness in setting up meetings and honor her generous spirit, philanthropy, and warm smile – the completion of her beautiful tapestry of life.

Where's the Beef?

Why, at the new Goose Food Pantry in the town of Oakfield!

In the spring of 2021, Western Zone awarded the \$1,000 Hudson-Kramer grant to agriculture teacher Todd Hofheins, the FFA advisor at Oakfield-Alabama Central School, to help purchase two beef steers to raise in the school barn in support of the local food pantry. The students participate in an “authentic experience” by being taught calf selection, animal husbandry, nutrition, showmanship, and community service.

At the end of the 2022 school year, the steers were marketed and yielded 600 pounds of 80% ground beef. This was packaged into two-pound rolls. Families can have two rolls per month, providing essential protein. Mr. Hofheins, in his application, remarked on the “tremendous amount of good that our grant will mean not only to the students but to the families in the community who will appreciate the food for many months to come.” We are so proud of this outstanding teacher and his top-notch students!

The Hudson-Kramer Grant is awarded annually on a rotating basis by RENY zones. It is awarded to an educational professional in memory of Ross C. Hudson and Florence Coulter Kramer, public school teachers and outstanding members of RENY (NYSRTA). The purpose of the grant is to fund an innovative project or program in a New York State public school.

Members serving on the committee, chaired by Ron Czapla, are Therese Clarke, Maria Hager, Elaine DeLisle and Stanley Nowak.





Health Care Tip

Are you familiar with the Health Care Proxy? It is a legal document that enables you to choose a trusted person to make health care decisions for you should you lose the ability to make them for yourself. Health care providers are bound to follow these decisions as if they were your own. It is not the same as a Living Will, which is used by your caregivers to know your wishes about life-prolonging procedures and other end-of-life care. While you may be asked to complete this form at the time of admission to a hospital, it is obviously a good idea to have it completed beforehand, taking time to carefully consider your concerns, wishes, and options. Health Care Proxy forms can be requested from the New York State Department of Health

Vicki Smith

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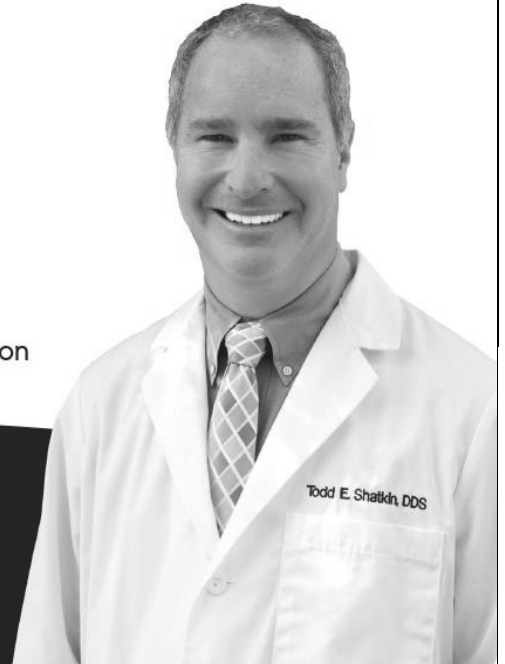
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In Memory of Judy Klug

Judy Klug, a truly dedicated and active teacher, retired in 1996 and joined the New York State Retired Teachers' Association. She served as a Board of Director for Western Zone until her passing in June, 2022. She also served as President of the Williamsville RTA for eleven years.

Born in Buffalo, she went to school in Arcade and in Williamsville. She attended Buffalo State where she received her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Home Economics. She taught in the Kendall and Williamsville School Districts for about thirty years.

Judy was an inspiration, and a wonderful, loving and caring individual who gave of her time and energy to any project she undertook. As Chairperson for WZ legislative committee it was said that she was soft spoken but forceful, well-prepared, knowledgeable, thorough, efficient and non-partisan. Judy also served on the Health Advocacy Committee for WZ, as well as the Resolution Committee. She was co-chair for the 2009 NYSRTA Annual Convention. The love of travel inspired her to visit many countries, including Australia, China, Germany, Italy, Scotland, Switzerland and others. She served on the Travel Committee for WZ for over ten years and was always known for her cheerful smile, kindness, purchasing lottery tickets for prizes, and for bringing Timbits to offer everyone on the bus trips.

She truly lived life to the fullest and gave so much of herself. Her influence was far spread and varied, as she served as director of the Williamsville Education Foundation Board, as well as financial secretary and president of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Main-Transit Fire Department. Judy will be missed by many, but her kindness and love will long be remembered by all.

WZ 2022 Trips

In May 2022 Western Zone sponsored a trip to Annapolis Naval Academy, Baltimore Harbor, the Amish lands and Hershey, PA. A highlight of the trip was attending the Sight and Sound production of “David”.



WZ members and friends enjoyed a six day trip to the Smoky Mountains of TN in September. Tour consisted of four live shows, including The Dolly Parton Stampede, as well as the Titanic Museum, Alcatraz East Crime Museum, several tours and delightful friendship.





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PARADE OF NATIONS/VA TATOO/LANCASTER TRIP

Join a spectacular Western Zone bus trip **April 19 - 24, 2023**. This **six-day, five-night** trip will begin with the outstanding performance of **MOSES** at the **Sight and Sound Theatre in Lancaster, PA**, and then spend an overnight in the area.

Travel to the Virginia Beach/Norfolk Area in Virginia, where activities and sights will fill you with memories and awe! See the performance of the **Virginia International Tattoo Show**, which incorporates groups from around the world including acrobats, choral groups and precision military drill teams. It is truly a Scottish tradition with American soul! Enjoy reserved seating at the **70th Annual Parade of Nations**, which is sponsored by NATO and includes themed floats from various countries, in addition to marching bands, antique and classic cars, comic brigades and much more.

Visit the **Nauticus**, a maritime science museum and share in the experiences of the **Naval Museum** as well as the **Battleship Wisconsin**. Tour the **MacArthur Memorial**, the final resting place of this five-star general, where mementos, his staff car and a film on his life are presented. Enjoy time at the **Chrysler Museum of Art**, which features fine arts and a collection of automobiles from Walter P Chrysler, Jr. Relax as you **cruise** along the Elizabeth River on the **Spirit of Virginia**, with a **dinner and entertainment**.

The price is **\$990 per person** for **double** occupancy, and **\$1,390** for **single** occupancy. Cost includes transportation, 5 nights lodging, 5 breakfasts, 4 full course dinners including The Spirit of Norfolk Dinner Cruise, and admission to all of the above-named sights. Gratuities for meals, tour guides, and driver are included.

For additional information regarding the trip, reservations forms and/or travel insurance, contact Anne Flansburg at 716-863-3631 or anneflanswz@aol.com OR Ann Marie Wik at 716-228-2414 or amwik@rochester.rr.com. **Optional cancellation and travel insurance** may be purchased for \$71 (double or triple) or \$110 (single). To cover pre-existing conditions, insurance must be purchased at least within 14 days of deposit.

A **deposit of \$100 per person** is due by or before **December 31, 2022**. (Reservations accepted in order of date received.) The **balance** for this trip is due by **March 1, 2023**. This exciting and memorable trip promises to be a “sell out” so call or email early to get additional details and to sign up.

Western Zone—NYSRTA

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Donations from our December 14th Board of Directors meeting have been given to Mercy Flight and Harvest House

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