

President's Message *By Dr. James Newell, PhD*

The articles for the fall edition of York State were due on October 27th, before the first snow falls. However, the weather forecasters are saying that Lake Placid and the High Peaks may get snow this weekend, October 21-22. The Farmer's Almanac claims that snow usually begins to fall in the North Country during the third or fourth week in October. When the first snowflakes begin to fall, children look up to the sky with wonder and excitement. They try to catch the snowflakes on their tongues and announce to anyone who will listen, "Snow is falling!" Let us hope that we can also greet this miracle of nature with wonder and never tire to share in the joy of children!

Many of you attended the 72nd Annual Meeting and Convention at Turning Stone, October 11-13, 2023. It was a wonderful event. The keynote speaker, Michael Ringer, taught Art at Ogdensburg Junior-High School, and Alexandria Bay High School for more than 20 years. He left teaching to pursue his artistic gifts full time. He was encouraged by a local businessman to do this despite being the sole breadwinner and having a wife and five daughters to support. This businessman recognized the value of Michael's paintings, watercolors and sculptures and helped him market his work in the local area, across the state and in New York City. Since then, Michael has enjoyed extraordinary success artistically and financially. He has two galleries, one in Alexandria Bay and the other in Clayton. His prints and paintings sell for hundreds of dollars, and he has published several books of his art. He brought an iPad with him and projected images of many of his works on two large screens. The audience was awe struck with the beauty of his art and intrigued by his story of how he developed his artistic talents. Michael Ringer concluded his keynote by paying tribute to his three mentors, who he referred to as "Angels." He also recognized the vital role his beautiful wife, Meg, played in his success and he acknowledged his faith in God being instrumental as well. His keynote was truly memorable!

See more from Jim's article on the next page...



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

When it is time to renew your 2025 membership with the New York State Retired Teachers' Association DBA Retired Educators of NY (RENY), you will notice an increase in the dues amount. Yearly dues for the past ten years have been a modest \$30.00. Out of necessity, the annual dues beginning January 1st, 2024 (for dues to be paid through 2025) are being raised to \$39.00, Lifetime membership dues will be \$900. This increase was decided upon after a great deal of consideration. The financial situation calls for increased revenue since RENY expenditures are not keeping pace with income. This is despite the many measures that have been taken to reduce expenses. As you know from purchasing groceries, clothing, gas, etc., the cost of many items has been going up. The increased revenue will help RENY move toward a balanced budget and remain stable and strong.

This increase does NOT affect current LIFE Members or those members currently OVER 90 years of age.

Members like you are the focus of this organization which works solely on behalf of retired educators. You can feel confident that this non-profit organization run by its members will continue to represent you very well. RENY will continue to concentrate on its two major goals...providing excellent member services and acting to ensure that government decisions and legislation protect your interest as retirees.



We are proud of what RENY has been able to accomplish through the years. We look forward to a bright future. This would not be possible without your continued support. Thank you.

President's Message Continued...

There were excellent workshops on the following day, many of which highlighted the Convention Theme: Beauty, Bounty, and Bravery. All of the others were topics of general interest such as an update from the Teacher Retirement System and presentations on personal health and wellness, investing and the economy, aging gracefully and dealing with grief after the loss of a loved one. All of the presentations were well done and professional. There was something to interest almost all convention goers! Some of these were videotaped and will be posted on our website. If you weren't able to attend this year's Convention, you can still enjoy some of the presentations that were videotaped. Look for them soon on our website, retirededucatorsny.org

The Annual Meeting was held following lunch on Thursday. We were fortunate to have our Parliamentarian, Carol Schilansky, with us in person this year! She was very professional as always and helped us conduct a productive and smooth-running meeting. During this meeting, we adopted a budget for 2023-24. This adopted budget has revenues of \$268,500 and expenses of \$332,250. Without the addition of \$63,750 from our endowment, the budget for 2023-24 would not be in balance. As I mentioned in previous messages, **we need to increase our revenues**. We have taken a step forward by making changes in membership dues, but we still need to look for additional ways to increase our revenues. Many have said that the United States does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. We have the exact opposite problem. **Not enough revenue!**

Delegates also voted on and elected the following officers:

	President	James Newell, Ph.D.	
	Senior Vice-President	Gayla LePage	
	Secretary	Mary Lou Wood	
	Treasurer	Leigh Powell*CR	
	Vice-President for Friendly Service	Lois Thornberg*CR	
	Vice-President for Membership	Dell Ford Jordan	
	Vice-President for Legislative Action	Mary Johnson*CR	

Delegates also approved three resolutions and adopted an amendment to the Bylaw concerning investments of RENY funds. More detailed information about the Bylaw passed and the resolutions can be found inside. One of the amendments to the Bylaws, namely the Bylaw to reduce the percentage rebate to zones did not pass. Sixty-nine, (69) in favor; and forty-eight, (48) opposed. (A 2/3 vote in favor is required to amend a Bylaw.)

In the evening, attendees put on Mardi Gras masks, beads, feathers, and festive dresses for a Masquerade cocktail party. There was a cash bar and light refreshments in the form of fruit, vegetables, crackers, and cheese. The evening culminated in a lively Trivia Contest with a full complement of teams. Taking top honors were Team Trivia Gurus, Team Whiners and Team Rumble Ponies. Special thanks to the North Central Zone under the leadership of **Woody Lyndaker** and his Working Group of **Kathy Allan, Barbara Cole-Russell, Patty Corey, Doug and Pat Dietrich, Toni Gigliotti, Linda Holley, Teresa Lyndaker, Jackie Maloney, Rick and Linda Morris, and Pat Newell**. You were an effective team and put on a terrific Convention!

The Retired Educators of New York continues to be a great organization for teachers, administrators, and support staff. This Association is a great place to meet new people, maintain social contacts and to continue to learn and grow. RENY also continues to safeguard benefits negotiated for you by your unions. This September, retired educators received a substantial COLA increase of \$37.50 per month. This benefit could not have been obtained without the collective action of your Association as well as teacher and administrator unions. Members should keep that in mind as they renew their membership and persuade other retired educators to join this great association.

Supplemental Health Insurance provided to retired educators is under attack in some parts of the state. Your Association is continuing to advocate for a state law requiring school districts to continue to provide the same level of Supplemental Health Insurance to retirees as to active teachers. Please read more about proposed legislation inside.

As the year unfolds, my wife and I will continue to visit zones. To date, we have visited the WZ, CZ, EZ, NCZ and CWZ. We hope to visit more zones before the completion of my term of office. As I close this message, I remind you that RENY is the only state-wide organization that works exclusively on behalf of retired educators. It is a great organization, and I thank you for continuing to be a part of it. Please help us to grow membership by persuading a friend or colleague to join.

Best wishes to all!

Dr. James Newell



SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Gayla LePage



First, I want to congratulate the North Central Zone for a great convention. We learned a lot about Jefferson and Lewis counties. It was great to see NCZ members working so well together. I also loved the raffles that the Zone had; this was another great addition. Great job, NCZ!

I would also be remiss if I didn't give a shout out to all of the zones for preparing such beautiful baskets. The price was right for the tickets, and we will all be reimbursed a significant amount.

There is no time to wait to plan for next year. The convention committee met after breakfast on the last day of this year's convention to start planning for next year. The dates of the convention are **October 7- 9, 2024** at Turning Stone and the host next year will be the Northeastern Zone. They have already done a great deal of work and I look forward to the months ahead when everything will come together.

Here are some of the highlights for next year's convention.; The theme next year is "**Hit the Adirondack Trail.**" (What fun!) The keynote speaker, if all goes well, will be Dan Berggren who is a story teller and musician. He often involves the audience in his presentations. That should keep us all awake at a late hour. Some other ideas for workshops are an indigenous speaker, presentations by museums in the host zone area, and more about the Adirondacks.

As convention costs increase on a yearly basis, we have decided to lower the number of workshops from 10 to 8. This will save the Association the cost of one room rental and the costs to equip that room with the necessary media needs. We also may do more workshops on letting people know about our organization by utilizing existing members as presenters to discuss committees they represent which would save the organization in overall costs. TRS, as always, will be one of the workshops.

Our next meeting will be a Teams Meeting on December 6 at 10 a.m. We expect to finalize many more things at that meeting. Stay tuned!

As Senior VP, working on this convention is so exciting. RENY is a great organization that works hard for its members.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

By Mary Johnson*CR, VP for Legislation

I hope everyone had a chance to enjoy this nice Fall weather. Fall is the start of the busy time for the Legislative Action Committee. At our meeting in early November, we started discussing possible positions we will take and plan to advocate for bills to support those priorities. Thanks to **Janice Mullins**, State Legislation Sub-committee chair, we will have lots of information to review. We will review the status of past bills that we supported and look for new ones to be introduced in January 2024. We will review the resolutions passed at the Annual Meeting and any past issues that have not been resolved.

The teacher shortage is top of mind. Some research suggests that the Tiers 5 and 6 may have an impact on the decisions potential teachers make about their career choices. If college graduates find that their salary will be reduced by contributions to the Retirement System and that their potential income after retirement will be significantly less than peers in lower tiers, they may head in a different direction. Improvements to Tiers 4,5 and 6 need to be made for teachers currently working under those retirement restrictions. The LAC zone chairs will also take a look at issues that were supported in the past and have not been fully addressed by the legislature. One of those past priorities is the protection of the health benefits that were promised to our members at retirement. We will be following bills that assure there will be no diminishment of health care provisions that were promised regardless of where that retiree resides. We will continue watching and advocating for the Elder Abuse Protective Act. Also, assuring on-site mental health programs and services are provided to all students will be considered for this year's program. We also keep in mind the need for an improvement in the base of the COLA determinations.



Bolstering advocacy teams in each region is a must. Some of the advocates in recent years are no longer able to contribute to this work. While diminishing membership is a problem for the entirety of RENY, there must be members who just haven't given the idea of advocacy much thought. Please feel free to reach out to any LAC member or to Kristen Valentine at RENY if you feel you can join the team or have questions. Whether it is a phone call, a letter or an actual visit to the local offices, know that your participation has great value to RENY members and all retirees.



COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT

By Eileen Holmes*CR



From November 2022 through the Winter, Spring and Summer of 2023, RENY Community Service had an outstanding year. All ten zones engaged in projects that helped people and organizations across New York State. Many thanks to zone chairs: **Joan Handfield, Joyce Notaricola, Angelo Grande*CR, Art Menard, Alice Galvin, Cheryl Fischer, Mary Suffern, Toni Gigliotti and Patty Corey, Ann Marie Wik** and Central Zone President **Ray Pitcher** for their leadership and efforts in organizing community service events.

The following sample of accomplished projects is a testament to the capabilities and generosity of our RENY members:

- ⇒ Scholarships were presented in the Eastern, North Central, Northern, Southeastern and Central zones. The Northeastern Zone provided an educator grant for an indoor greenhouse project that has grown into a very successful community-wide, hands-on program.
- ⇒ Many zones engaged in food and clothing collections. Southeastern zone units collected new socks and non-perishable foods for distribution to soup kitchens and homeless shelters. In the Central Zone, the Chenango unit donated to the Chenango County food pantry. The Long Island zone donated new clothing and personal hygiene items for needy veterans in Nassau County and the East End unit provided food and cases of bottled water to Maureen's Haven homeless shelter. The Western zone's Genesee unit collected socks, underwear and personal hygiene products for CASA, an agency that helps kids who are in contact with the court system. The North Central zone coordinated its annual Coats for Kids project, and the Eastern zone planned a sweater and coat drive. The Northeastern zone planned local food drives and in the Southern zone, food pantries in Bath, Corning, Painted Pony and Savona received donations.
- ⇒ Cultural and civic organizations continued to be an important part of RENY's Community Service efforts. The Northern zone donated to the Akwesasne Cultural Center and the Long Island zone's East End unit initiated a "Love Your Public Library" project and presented its first award to the Riverhead Library. Pictured to the right is Riverhead Library Director Kerri McMullen-Smith with EERTA's **Gini Stype**. In the Southern zone, Heritage Village and the Southeast Steuben Library received donations. The Western Zone gave a \$500 teacher grant for a reading improvement program and donated a grant to help fund an African American cultural presentation during Black History Month. The Central Western zone raised money for Relay for Life, the Long Island zone donated to Little Shelter Animal Rescue and Adoption, and the Eastern zone collected donations of food treats and toys for Pets Without People, an organization that helps homeless animals.



Community Service continues to be a vital and gratifying component of our organization. Many thanks to the delegates at the 2023 annual convention who donated non-perishable foods to the state-wide collection and made this annual project very successful. The host zone North Central provided the collection box and the donated items were "passed forward" to the 2024 host zone (Northeastern) for distribution in their area. I am hopeful this worthy project will continue for the third year at the 2024 convention.



FRIENDLY SERVICE REPORT

By Lois Thornberg*CR

It is a well-known fact that the work the Friendly Service Committee does is one of the factors that distinguishes RENY from other retired educator organizations. I question, however, how many of RENY's members are actually aware of all that the Friendly Service key workers actually do. These dedicated individuals share their time with others selflessly to ensure that all our members feel as if they are a part of a "family" and realize that there is something to look forward to in the days to come.

One of the most active tasks of the committee is sending greeting cards for birthdays, get well wishes, holiday season greetings, sympathy sentiments, thinking of you, and support to mention a few reasons. More than 4,000 cards were sent last year along with more than 500 e-cards. Very often the time spent, and work accomplished by the committee members is validated by receiving thank you notes from recipients of their efforts. I have been asked to share some of these with the membership of RENY.

Continued on next page...

Friendly Service Report Continued...

"Thank you for the lovely birthday card. Sorry I did not open it sooner, but I was in the hospital and now in rehab. Your thoughtfulness is very appreciated. - Nelida Rios (LIZ)

"Dear Alicia and Dee, I want to thank you both for remembering my birthday in January. Sorry I took so long to acknowledge it. Here's why-

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO. BUT I AM GLAD YOU DID.

Thanks for all you both do for our organization over the years and I hope you both have an enjoyable summer. " Fondly- Manfred Kuehnel (Manny) (LIZ)

"Dear Alicia,

We love our dogs so you, amazingly, selected a really appropriate and wonderful card :) Thank you and Dee are enjoying retirement and your work for the retirement system.

Enjoy the day. I wish you happiness today and every day." – Mandy (LIZ)

"Linda-

A belated thank-you for the thoughtful cards you send me on special occasions. I meant to write you before this but just didn't get to it until now. Now that my husband is in the Summit nursing home I don't get to see many of the old gang of teachers anymore. A contact from you makes me feel remembered and brings back memories of happy substituting days at Wiley. You were always so peppy and witty. Thank you for reaching out to all of us"

- Sincerely, Mary Jones (NCZ)

Helping our members who need a small boost will continue to be what makes RENY stand out as an organization for retired educators. Although the "thank you messages" shared were addressed to individuals, it is important to know that the feelings represented are for everyone who takes the time and opportunity to reach out to those who need it for whatever reason. Thank you all for caring. You are appreciated more than you know.

A parting thought: **"Kindness is loaning someone your strength, instead of reminding them of their weakness"** ~ Anonymous

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION COMMITTEE REPORT

by Carol Lord*CR, Committee Chair

The Certificate of Recognition Committee consisting of **Carol Lord*CR, Judith Farmer*CR** and **Vince Smith*CR** was very happy to receive award applications from zone presidents and voted to present 2023 awards to **Mary Johnson*CR, Lois Thornberg*CR** and **Kathryn Grande*CR**. Each is very active in RENY, their zones and communities.



Mary Johnson, Southern Zone-Binghampton: Current VP for Legislation, Zone Executive Board member, former State and Federal legislative committee chair, convention delegate, NYSUT Retiree Council 11 Steering Committee member; Licensed Real Estate Agent. Accepting the award for Mary is Zone President **Jerry Tagliaferri**, pictured to the left.

Lois Thornberg, Long Island Zone: Current VP for Friendly Service, past VP for Membership, Strategic Planning Committee, Workshop Committee, current member of RENY website planning committee. In her zone she served as budget and finance chair, former treasurer, former membership chair, as well as the former West End Retired Teachers (WERTA) membership committee member. She is a former EMT with Fire Island Fire Dept and Rescue as well as the founder of ASSET, Association for Educational Technology. Pictured to right is Lois accepting her award.



Continued on the next page...

Certificate of Rec Continued



Kathryn Grande, Long Island Zone: Served the Legislative Action Committee for many years supporting the “Mommies Bill” and a convention delegate.

For her zone, Kathryn was the Zone President and Vice President, Legislative Action Committee Chair for over 10 years and Nominations Chair and co-chair of Community Service. She spent 15 years on the North Shore School District Board, very active for the Sons of Italy in America, and at St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church in Roslyn, NY.

*Pictured to left is **Carol Lord*CR** presenting Kathryn with her award. Pictured on right is Kathryn getting a smooch from her husband, **President Emeritus Angelo Grande*CR***



Members and Officers, please look at your zone members and think who might be deserving of this recognition for 2024. Applications are online at retirededucatorsny.org or by contacting a committee member. Applications are due by June 1, 2024.



ROBERT R. DECORMIER MEMORIAL TRUST REPORT by Beth Green, Secretary, DeCormier Memorial Trust



The DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund was established to assist retired educators facing financial challenges. The Fund provides both monthly stipends to retirees who are struggling to meet their regular expenses and special grants for one-time expenses that are beyond the means of the retiree. We recently approved a one-time grant to cover the cost of hearing aids and another to help pay off a loan that was taken out to cover medical expenses, as well as a monthly stipend to help with the cost of home health care for another RENY member. Info and application forms can be found on our website at <https://retirededucatorsny.org/financial-assistance/>. If you, or someone you know, is in need of financial assistance, please go to the website or, if you prefer, contact **Anne Flansburg*CR**, Chair. She will be happy to help you with the application process.

The DeCormier Fund relies on donations from zones, units, and individuals to be able to continue to help our former colleagues in need. Donations to the fund may be tax deductible, depending upon your tax situation. Donations, in any amount, can be sent to **Mary Lou Davis, Treasurer, 125 Andrews Road, LaGrangeville, NY 12540. Please make checks payable to the DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund. Do not send them to the RENY Office.**



BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT by William Tenity, Committee Chair



The Bylaws Committee presented two proposed bylaw changes at the Annual Meeting. Both Bylaw proposals went through the process set up in the Bylaws. Both proposals were requested by the Board of Directors. The Bylaws Committee met and recommended the changes to the BOD. The BOD received each proposal ten days before the meetings where they were to be voted on. The BOD passed each proposal by more than the two-thirds of the votes required for approval. Each zone voted at their annual meetings and at least two-thirds of the zones voted their approval. The proposals were then presented at the RENY Annual Meeting on October 12, 2023.

Proposition #1 IOAF (Investment of Association Funds) 2023 which modified how Association funds were to be invested was passed by all ten zones and was passed unanimously by the delegates.

Proposition #2 RODTZAOR (Remittance of Dues to Zones and Out-of-state Regions) 2023 would have changed the percentage of dues money for annual memberships returned to the zones from one-third (33-1/3%) to one quarter (25%). This was proposed because of the dues increase from \$30 to \$40. Each zone would still have received the same amount of money, \$10, that it was getting presently. Eight of the ten zones had approved this Bylaw change but the delegates defeated it by 8 votes. The Bylaw will stay as it is presently written.

Chair: **William Tenity**; CZ **Pete Atchinson**; NEZ **President Emeritus Carlyle T Campamy*CR** ;
NCZ **Bruce Croucher** ;CWZ and **Helen Hoering** SEZ

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CENTRAL ZONE

By Mary Ann Luciano, Public Relations Chair and Ray Pitcher, Zone President



RENY Central Zone Delegates in alphabetical order were **Collette Astoria, Lee Beals, Marilyn Dominick, Lynn Grandjean, Jane Hicks, Darlene Jarvis, Stella King, Mary Ann Luciano, Ray Pitcher, Peg Reding, Judith Schad, Bill Tenity, and Vera Wolczek.**

The **2024 Central Zone meetings** are in April, July, and September. The first two meetings are in Canastota at Theodore's Restaurant, with the September Annual meeting hosted by the RENY Oswego unit. Hosting for the RENY 2025 State Convention is the Central Zone's responsibility. A key agenda item for the zone's 2024 meetings is planning this convention. Many members are needed to run the event. At this time, dates for the meetings and a place for the September

meeting are to be determined. **WATCH** for the email meeting notices from Central Zone President **Ray Pitcher**.



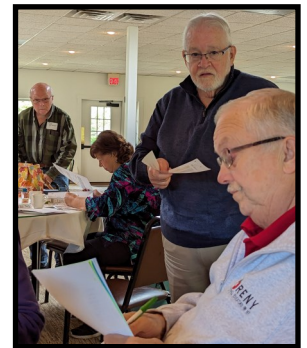
The **Central Zone held their annual meeting** in mid-September at the beautiful Marietta Inn hosted by RENY Onondaga with an autumn and honey bees theme. Business focused on a review and vote on the upcoming actions for the RENY Convention. This was followed by a candle-lit remembrance for RENY Zone members who passed on from 2020 to 2023. Members were treated to a delicious buffet topped off with a "Bee" RENY cake. Keynoters retired educators Sue and Dan McCoy of Owens Orchard in Elbridge, NY spoke about bees' importance in growing Central NY crops. This event provides excellent notes for the 2024 Annual Central Zone September meeting. RENY Onondaga's Co-Presidents **Marilyn Dominick and Dell Ford Jordan** with their committee did a great job!

This next year, the Central Zone will be presenting the \$1,000. Hudson Kramer Grant to a teacher (s) or a principal for enhancing their school's curriculum. The notice with the required application for this competitive grant will be sent to school districts in February 2024 with plans to award the grant before the end of the school year. Grant applications must be submitted to **Ray Pitcher** for the Grant Review Committee and are due the second week of April 2024.

Within the Central Zone over this past year, the RENY Madison and RENY Oneida-Herkimer units met to discuss the possibility of merging. After surveying their members, the units' leadership determined that the best way forward was to officially disband as of January 1, 2024, with their treasuries given to the Central Zone. A portion of each unit's treasury will be reserved for their current Friendly Service chairs, so that this work may continue for as long as the funds are available.

To continue to be active in RENY, all members of these units will need to join the state organization. All state members are automatically zone members and can remain active in the Central Zone. If these members also want to stay in a smaller unit, they should feel free to reach out to other RENY Central Zone units: RENY Cayuga, **Peg Reading**, RENY Chenango, **Mary Ann Luciano**, RENY Onondaga, **Lee Beals**, or RENY Oswego, **Collette Astoria**.

RENY Chenango provided several opportunities this year for member outreach and connection by offering its programs in various venues and in partnership with other organizations. The spring membership dinner meeting was in Greene with musical entertainment by a group that includes many retired music educators. The fall annual meeting luncheon held at a Norwich Restaurant featured a presentation from the Executive Director of United Way of Mid Rural New York. She provided members and guests with essential Chenango data about children and families. RENY Chenango members then volunteered at the United Way to help with their annual fundraising drive.



Bill Tenity discussing bylaws with CZ members

See more from the Central Zone on the next page

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Central Zone, Continued

At each meeting, those attending bring non-perishable food for the local food bank. Pop-ins or informal meetings were held or planned in between the two larger member meetings.

The first pop-in was in Bainbridge with coffee and pie to celebrate spring. The Norwich YMCA hosted another pop-in with an Upstate New York chapter of Third Act representative presenting to interested RENY members. This project is to support and collaborate with local school districts (per a recently passed state law) to get 18-year-olds registered to vote—an excellent community service project. Upcoming pop-ins will focus on county history exhibits with the Chenango County Historical



Association, legislative letter writing/postcards to our state representatives, and other partnering events in various Chenango County towns and villages. For more information on these pop-ins contact **Mary Ann Luciano**.

Pictured to the **left** is the RENY Chenango Executive Committee planning the annual meeting at the Chenango Arts Council.



Pictured to the **right** is RENY Chenango's Treasurer and President presenting the 2023 award to Future Educator Scholarship winner Elsbeth Hunter

At the spring luncheon, the RENY Oswego unit presented a contribution to Empower Parkinson, which is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide a holistic program of wellness and prevention to empower people with Parkinson's disease to maintain their functional abilities and aging well. Pictured at right is **Lynn Grandjean**, Treasurer presenting a check to Bill Spreter, Vice President for Legislation and an advocate for individuals with Parkinson's. Along with this check, the total donations were \$386. In addition, the unit provides four \$500 scholarships to future educators. RENY Oswego members generously support the quality of life for senior citizens and the future of New York State Education.



FALL FUNNY

The four seasons were debating over who was the best.

Winter brags: "Well, you can make snowman, and the snow is lovely. And then there's Hanukkah and Christmas!! Everyone enjoys the holiday season!"

Spring chuckles: "Sure, but everything is so fresh and new in the spring! It doesn't get much better than all the new blooms!"

Summer says: "Yes, but I am without a doubt the best season overall! Swimming in the lake, ice cream, and nice weather. You can't compete with it. What about you, Autumn? What can you offer?"

Autumn: leaves

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CENTRAL WESTERN ZONE By President Emerita Judie Byndas*CR

Central Western Zone of the Retired Educators of New York (Allegany, Livingston, Monroe, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates Counties) held their 2023 Annual Meeting at Warfields, Clifton Springs, September 14th. Zone President, **Mary Beth Tyndall** of Monroe County, convened the meeting.



Special guests were **Dr. James Newell**, State President of RENY and his wife, **Patricia Newell**, pictured at left. Also present was honored guest **Robert Schooley** of Rushford, NY, Allegany County as the Epke-Meagher award winner for newly retired educators of the year in CWZ. This award is given to a new retiree who has shown exemplary service in their school and community and is named for deceased retirees. Mr. Schooley taught special education in Pioneer Schools from 1988-2023. Working with children with severe disabilities. He began the first inclusion program in western New York schools. He served as Dean of Students at the high school and vice president of the teachers' union. He developed a project of a coffee shop with his students as a fundraiser to support the people of Uganda where he has visited multiple times. He also works with a group of volunteers to do "good deeds" for others in the community.

In addition, Robert is a United Methodist Church minister and has served local churches since 2000. Educators everywhere share some of these characteristics, but Robert was definitely the right choice for 2023. He is a husband, father of 4 and grandfather of 6. The award was presented by committee chair **President Emerita Judie Byndas*CR**, Seneca County and his saga presented by a co-educator, **Judy Habberger**, Wyoming County. Pictured from left to right is **Judie Byndas*CR**, award winner **Robert Schooley** and **Judy Habberger**.



Frank Straub, Penn Yan Middle School 7th grade Physical Science teacher, received a \$1,000 Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant on Monday, June 6, 2023, at the Yates County Retired Educators Association meeting. Mr. Straub was awarded the grant to purchase twelve digital thermometers and two charging stations for use in labs with his students to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. New York State has mandated science investigation labs, at both the elementary and intermediate levels, which expects students to demonstrate the use of digital technology and its impact on science and scientific investigations.



As stated in Mr. Staub's grant application: "*Teachers are expected to integrate qualitative scientific and technical information to support the claim that digitized signals are a more reliable way to encode and transmit information than analog signals. Students performing mastery on this standard should be able to demonstrate how the digitization of that technology has advanced science and scientific investigations.*" Teachers need to transition their classroom equipment from analog scale and tools to digital instruments, and this grant will provide the money to do so. Pictured with Frank is **Sandra Kushner**, CWZ grant administrator.

The RENY Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant was established to support and encourage our still active colleagues teaching in New York State public schools. The grant is given to honor the memory of **Ross C. Hudson** from Gouverneur, who was a stalwart, devoted member of RENY for many years and **Florence Coulter Kramer**, who was a dedicated veteran teacher in New York City and New Rochelle school districts. This grant will be available for the ten counties of the Central Western Zone again in 2025.

Many thanks to the RENY Insurance Trust Fund for making this grant possible. Also, thank you to judges **Betty Pilato**, **Jane Behnk**, and **Laura Janus** for reading and ranking the applications before choosing the recipient.

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EASTERN ZONE

By Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair



Hudson-Kramer Grant for 2023: For 2023, RENY/Eastern Zone was able to award an active Public School Teacher (s) or administrator a Hudson-Kramer Grant of \$1,000 for a special school related project. I received seven completed application forms by the closing date of March 15, 2023. Four of the forms came from the Upper Montgomery County Unit and one form from the counties of Delaware, Capital Region (RCRTA) and Schoharie County. I asked the Upper Montgomery County Unit to pick one of the four forms to submit to me. I asked four members of our RENY/Eastern Zone Executive Committee who represented other counties in our zone to judge the four forms following our May Executive Meeting. Lauren Oppelt and Marianne Carus, 7th Grade Science Teachers who teach at Troy Middle School, Troy, NY. Were chosen. They developed a forensic unit for their 7th Grade Science classes which will be used in October. Pictured at left is Capital Region (RCRTA) Unit President **Marjorie Leibowitz** presenting a check to Marianne Carus.

Unit Reports for this Fall:

Amsterdam Unit President, Ann Marie Dufresne, said that their Fall Meeting was held on Tuesday, October 17th. at Fox Run in Johnstown. During the Spring, their unit awarded two \$1,500 Scholarships to high school seniors who plan on becoming teachers. The recipients who had excellent grades and participated in many activities are Denise Green who will be attending SUNY Plattsburgh and Aaron Madej who will be attending St. Rose.

Capital Region (RCRTA) Unit President, Marjorie Leibowitz, said that they held their Luncheon Meeting on September 13th. All new retirees were invited to attend.

Columbia County Unit President, Joan Mattson, said that they held their fall Luncheon Meeting on October 19th.

Delaware County Unit President, Pat Reynolds said that they held their fall meeting on September 28th. Their Speaker for the meeting talked about Wildlife Rehabilitation as a Community Project. The Unit will be making a donation to the Wildlife Project as well as donating to the backpack program for local schools.

Greene County Unit President, Lenore Cusick, said that they held their fall meeting on October 18th and had a special speaker, Pat DeLucia, who talked about Education in Hawaii.

Saratoga County Unit President, Ken Bollerud, said that they held their September Luncheon Meeting on September 18th at The Holiday Inn in Saratoga. Their Unit meets monthly during the school year. They did have a special summer activity which was a lot of fun and attended by former members.

Schoharie County Co-President, Margaret Dafeldecker, said that their Luncheon Meeting was held on October 18th.

Upper Montgomery Unit President, Rosalind Carron, said that they held their fall Luncheon Meeting on September 15th. She said that in June, their unit gave two \$500 scholarships to high school seniors who plan on becoming teachers. The recipients of the awards were Jonathan Cranker from Fultonville H.S, who will major in Special Education at SUNY Brockport and Alexes Deon from Canajoharie H.S who will major in Early Childhood Education at SUNY Cortland.

Continued on next page...

ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

Eastern Zone, Continued

Eastern Zone Fall Events : Eastern Zone held their Annual Meeting on September 21st. at the Turf Inn, Scotia, N.Y. President, **Janice Mullins** presided over the meeting. The following members of the zone were delegates to the 72nd. RENY State Convention held at Turning Stone Resort and Casino from October 11th - 13th: **Carolyn Bovee, Albert Ciejka, Gloria Ciejka, Lisa Devaren, Diane Hahn*CR, Marjorie Leibowitz, Pamela Love, Virginia Madore, Janice Mullins, Thomas Mullins, Rosalie Oliver** and **Ann Stafford**.

Pictured below to the left: Before Delegate Meeting: L-R 1st. Row: **Marjorie Leibowitz, Carolyn Bovee, Al Ciejka, Gloria Ciejka** and **Diane Hahn*CR**. L-R 2nd. Row: **Lisa Devaren, Virginia Madore, Tom and Janice Mullins, and Rosalie Oliver**

Pictured to left getting ready to attend the cocktail Party is from L-R: Marjorie Leibowitz, Rosalie Oliver, Virginia Madore, and Pamela Love.



LONG ISLAND ZONE

By Eileen Holmes*CR, Zone President



The Long Island Zone attended the 2023 Annual RENY Convention at Turning Stone with 12 delegates. It was wonderful to watch two of our very hard-working members, **Lois Thornberg*CR** and **Kathryn Grande*CR**, receive the Certificate of Recognition award from **Carol Lord*CR** in recognition of the outstanding service they have given to their unit, zone and state organization over the years!

LIZ encountered some traveling difficulties this year. The original bus we had reserved was the one that crashed with the Farmingdale music students and no replacement was available. Compared to the tragedy of that fatal bus crash, our problem was minor and "all's well that ends well". On very short notice, we were able to hire a large van. We were able to attend the convention, experience the workshops, enjoy the masquerade cocktail party and revel in watching our two LIZ members be honored with the Certificate of Recognition.

LIZ held its annual fall meeting on September 20th at the Irish Coffee Pub in East Islip. A highlight of this meeting was the presentation of the zone's highest award, the Distinguished Service 'Silver Tray' pin and certificate. **Jo Anne Powell**, Awards Co-chair, announced **David Keefe**, pictured to the right, as our newest honoree. Dave has been a member of LIZ for over 25 years, since his retirement from the Hempstead School District and a long-time board member and now president for several terms of the NYS Teachers Retirement System. He keeps us up to date on pension news with presentations at our LIZ annual meetings and luncheons and we appreciate and acknowledge his hard work to keep pensions secure for all retired public school teachers/educators across the state.



Continue reading more from the LIZ on next page....

ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

Long Island Zone, Continued

LIZ's Community Service collected clean plastic (bread bags, newspaper sleeves, paper towel wrap, candy bags, etc.) for donation to the Westhampton Beach Library's project to collect 750 lbs. of plastic and win a lovely white reading bench made out of recycled materials. LIZ members **Eileen Holmes*CR** and **Lillie Brown** delivered the donation in late October and in November, a dozen LIZ members gathered at the Riverhead library to sign over 100 holiday cards to be delivered to the Long Island Veterans' Hospital.

LIZ's East End unit (EERTA) has been busy. At their September Back-to-School meeting they held their first "Love Your Public Library" raffle. **Gini and Val Stype** were the winners and chose the Riverhead Library to receive the proceeds. Pictured to the right is Gini, on right hand side, handing the library a check. EERTA also donated snack foods and bottled water to a local homeless shelter. Newly elected officers for EERTA are **Dom LiCausi**, President, **Val Stype** and **Agnes Dansereau**, Co-Vice Presidents, **Sue LiCausi**, Secretary and **Eileen Holmes*CR**, Treasurer.

LIZ's West End unit (WERTA) has been inactive since COVID but there are positive signs of a reorganization. **Jo Anne Powell** has taken on the job as Treasure, a name has been floated to take the position of president and membership/dues notices are being prepared to be sent out. Hopefully in the new year 2024, WERTA's first project may be reviving its working relationship with Adelphi University's School of Education to set up a scholarship for a graduating student.



Back row: Kathy Grande*CR, Angelo Grande*CR, Jo Anne Powell, Leigh Powell*CR, Eileen Holmes*CR, Lois Thornberg*CR, and Dominick LiCausi

Front seated: Robert Svoboda, Alicia Winowsky, Rosemary McKinley, Agnes Dansereau, and Susan LiCausi



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NORTH CENTRAL ZONE

By Nancy Roberts*CR, and Patricia Newell, Public Relations Co -Chairs

<https://renyncz.org/>

NCZ Travel & Leisure Committee Chair, **David Schryver**, always has great ideas for outdoor fun in the North Country. On July 19th, he led a waterfall hiking excursion. As the co-author of the book, Waterfalls of New York State, no one is more qualified than David to lead such a tour. To encourage NCZ members to participate, he publicized the outing as “hiking for the non-hiker”! The six brave souls, pictured at right, who participated in this outing took in such amazing sites as Pleasant Creek Falls in Evans Mills, Childs Falls in Philadelphia, and Fullerville Falls in Fowler. It was an opportunity to view the beauty of the North Country up close and personal. The group ate hearty sandwiches for lunch at 2-E’s Bar & Grill in the town of Edwards. Afterwards, they stopped to view the falls in Natural Bridge and topped the day off with a stop for ice cream. It was truly a day filled with sunshine, laughter, and good fellowship.



L to R: (back row) Marcia Schryver, Jim Newell, Pat Newell, David Schryver
(front row) Donna Zehr, Kathy Allan **Photo Credit: David Schryver**



F.S. Fitzgerald says that “Life starts over again when it gets crisp in the fall.” This is certainly true of the NCZ as members gathered for our Fall Business Luncheon on September 19th at the Ramada Inn in Watertown. After electing officers and enjoying a luncheon buffet, we were entertained by one of our own local celebrities, Craig Sirianni. This remarkable individual studied at Jefferson Community College and SUNY Fredonia. He found his way as a leading tenor to some of the most celebrated opera houses in Europe and North America. The recounting of his amazing journey was both humorous and enlightening. Mr. Sirianni shared two clips of his vocal performances via You Tube. This was definitely a luncheon to be remembered. Pictured is your new Board of Directors, from L to R: **Rick Morris** (President), **Toni Gigliotti** (Co-1st VP), **Barb Cole-Russell** (Treasurer), **Ann Anderson** (Secretary), **Pat Newell** (2nd VP). Missing from photo-**Patty Corey** (Co-1st VP).



Speaking of remarkable people, two North Country ladies are proving that life as an educator is rewarding. **Helen Chisholm, on left** and **Jeannie Brennan on right** are shining examples of strength, spirit, and determination. Helen celebrated her 100th birthday on March 14, 2023. Jeannie, also known as the “Sackets Firecracker” celebrated her 100th birthday on July 4, 2023. Both of these amazing women were dedicated teachers of young children for 30 years. Helen retired from the Watertown School District in 1978. Jeannie retired from teaching at Sackets Harbor Central School in the 1980’s. With her husband Robert, Jeannie co-authored the books Images of America: Sackets Harbor and Images of America: Fort Drum. She volunteered at the Pickering-Beach Museum for 37 years and the Jefferson County Historical Society for more than 30 years. Both of these ladies are in good health, love to play cards, word games & puzzles. They have sharp memories for people and events. We celebrate and admire both of these outstanding educators.



Continued on next page...

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North Central Zone, Continued



At the start, hosting the 2023 RENY Convention was a daunting challenge for the North Central Zone. It proved to be an opportunity for teamwork, cooperation, and creative ideas on a budget. It was a call to duty that everyone on the NCZ Executive Council answered. Things began to take shape once our President **Woody Lyndaker** conceived the idea of “Beauty, Bounty & Bravery” as our convention theme. NCZ was proud to have a keynote speaker the caliber of **Michael Ringer**. We were pleased to showcase the North Country with such outstanding workshops as Ft. Drum/10th Mountain Division, The Lost Villages of Fort Drum, Hopenhagen Farm, and the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust. We were delighted to have our dynamic NCZ member, **Diane Ferrucci**, as one of our presenters. We enjoyed the convention ourselves by dressing up for the Masquerade Ball and participating in the Trivia Contest.

L to R: (back row) Teresa & Woody Lyndaker, Doug Dietrich, Toni Gigliotti, Patty Corey, Rick & Linda Morris, Pat & Jim Newell
L to R: (front row) Kathy Allan, Pat Dietrich, Jackie Maloney, Linda Holley, Barb Cole-Russell

We were happy to pass along a stockpile of non-perishable food goods to the Northeastern Zone. We wish them success and offer them our support as they begin planning for next year’s RENY Convention. It is indeed a worthwhile and incredibly memorable experience.



NORTHEASTERN ZONE By Tracy Howard, Public Relations Chair



As a first time attendee to the annual convention, my eyes were opened to the workings of RENY at the state level. I was able to meet members from across the state as well as spend a considerable amount of time with longtime members who were willing to give a historical perspective on our organization. Sadly, I have to admit, my lack of knowledge limited the importance of the responsibility each zone has to ensure the future success of the total organization. If we don’t step back and focus on the whole, we might be left without the strength that comes from our elected leadership. Certainly, I am proud of what our zone has accomplished, but I am also aware of the root system helping us to stand proudly and grow stronger.

Kevin Mulligan*CR, our current president, loaned me the publication, “ON COURSE, NEW YORK STATE RETIRED TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION, 1951-2001”. I am truly amazed by the contributions of so many, but in particular, **Robert R. DeCormier**, who was the first president of NYSRTA (RENY). If it weren’t for his leadership in securing an insurance plan for retirees and York State Manor, the proceeds from which now fund the Insurance Trust, we would be even deeper in financial straits.

All zones now have to take on the challenge of helping RENY flourish. We need to make our presence known in area schools in order to make teachers excited to be part of our organization when they retire. We need to reach out to our past colleagues, and not count on just a membership chair to bring people in. We have to learn to streamline costs without jeopardizing communication within the organization. One gentleman stood before the convention and said he was ready to raise money. The message was clear, it starts with us.

Continue reading more from the NEZ on the next page...

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Northeastern Zone, Continued

One of my favorite contributions to NEZ is connecting with current teachers. I am a member of the Educator Awards Committee led by **Simone Lutz** and **Alison Brown**. We recently received communication from a previous grant winner. In 2021, Jennifer Shutts, Art Educator from Ausable Valley CSD, received a \$1000 award for her Ceramic Tile Mural Project. Because of several challenges associated with COVID, the project did not go forward as originally planned. She did, however, purchase a slab roller and used it creatively for class projects during the 2021-2022 school year. During last school year she eventually sought out more funding and created clay tiles that were assembled to create a stunning mural depicting the Ausable Valley area. The mural was installed in August 2023 at Ausable Valley Central School District. I've included the sketch and the actual mural which rests proudly on the school wall. What a beautiful depiction of her town and tribute to Jennifer, her students, and her district.

Jennifer, pictured below, requested that we include this additional information in any publications: *(This project was made possible with funds*



from the Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts



As our zone continues to brainstorm and raise money to host the annual convention in October, I have taken on the role of Sr. Vice President. The next PR chair for our zone is **Cindi LaFountain**, a retiree from Peru Central School. She remains active in the community and church. She is a wife, a mother of three children, and a grandmother as well. Cindi and I were colleagues for many years at Peru Intermediate School. We worked together as a team in our third grade classroom, served as officers for Peru Association of Teachers, and remain very close friends.

For seniors living independently, having a support network is critical as health and wellness can change quickly. Below is a list of resources available to seniors who may be seeking help post-retirement.

NY Connects 1-800-342-9871

Seniors with increasing care needs may want information on a variety of long-term supports and services available through self-pay or government benefit programs. NY Connects is the state agency that connects seniors with various local assistance programs ranging from transportation to Medicaid benefits administration. It can also offer unbiased, free referral information for seniors or caregivers seeking help with making next-step decisions.

Center For Hearing Communication 1-917-305-7700

Hearing loss can contribute to a sense of isolation that is prevalent among seniors. The Center for Hearing and Communication assists seniors who may be experiencing hearing loss with acquiring assistive devices such as hearing aids or through other therapies targeted at improving communication

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NORTHERN ZONE

By Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



Pictured above
**President
Emerita Agnes
Hudson*CR**
enjoying the
outdoor
meeting.



Fall is always a beautiful time of year, even though this year's foliage wasn't quite as brilliant as usual; according to our local television meteorologists in Plattsburgh, this past summer's weather caused the muted colors we later experienced. Northern Zone celebrated the season with an outdoor membership meeting on September 20 at the Bend in the River Park in Canton, N.Y. The sun was shining and the chatty Canada geese were flying overhead as NZ members threw on sweatshirts or stood in the sun for an informative meeting. Regular business was conducted. President **Gayla LePage**, pictured below, relayed much news from the state level and the 2023 convention delegates were named: **Gayla LePage, Tom Cook, Betty Cook, Ron Boyea, Helen Boyea and Phil LePage**, proxy for Gayla. Thank you to **Holly Chorba** for volunteering to present a convention workshop on your latest book. Thank you to all the NZ members who donated items to the NZ convention raffle baskets. There was discussion of the RENY investments (improving), cost saving decisions, state bylaw changes (approved by NZ), possible changes in dues, and committee reports. We warmly welcomed our newest members: **Ron Boyea, Helen Boyea and Anne Boyea** (all from Chateaugay, NY), **Cyndi Hanley, Connie Reitz** (Massena, NY), **Kent Walrath** (Fort Covington, NY), **Kim Cartier, Barbara Gorham** (Medina, NY), and **Donna Andre** (Moir, NY).

After the fall meeting, we enjoyed Jreck subs plus yummy desserts baked by **Betty Cook**; thank you, Betty, for the fabulous job done setting up our picnic. We then toured the TAUNY Center in Canton to view the current art exhibits and arts and crafts created by local artists in the store. NZ members generously donated to TAUNY as well as to the Akwesasne Cultural Center (\$120) at the Spring meeting. High school scholarship donations from our NZ members were \$400 from the spring meeting and \$200 from the fall meeting-thank you, friends, for your help!



Clifton-Fine-Edwards Unit members, pictured at left, gathered for their annual Summer meeting on August 1 at the golf course clubhouse, where **Sally Capone** Scholarship Chairperson, presented the 2023 P.A. Miranda Scholarship (\$1,500) to Grace Southwick, Valedictorian of the Class of 2023 at Clifton-Fine C.S.D. and daughter of Matt and Traci Southwick. Grace is now attending SUNY Polytechnic in Utica where she will play on the volleyball team. Grace's dad is School District Superintendent, Matt Southwick, who was guest speaker at the

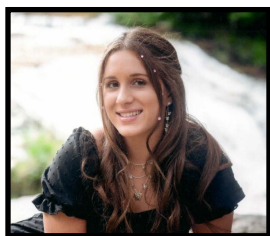
meeting and discussed future renovations at the school. Grace's mom Traci is the school guidance counselor. CFE Unit celebrated the first day of school at a special breakfast and is planning a delicious lunch for their annual Christmas Party on December 20 at the Packbasket Lodge in Wanakena, NY. They always welcome anyone from NZ to attend; if you are interested, contact **Alice Galvin**. The CFE Unit will also be celebrating their 50th year of existence next year; special plans are in the works. Pictured at right, is Sally and Grace.



More from the NZ on the next page...

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Northern Zone, Continued



Scholarship Chairperson **Gayla LePage** has announced that the NZ Janet P. Dana Memorial Scholarship (Franklin County-\$400) was awarded to Vail St. Hilaire (pictured at left), a graduate of Franklin Academy, Malone C.S.D. and daughter of Craig and Michelle St.Hilaire from North Bangor, NY. She graduated in the top ten of her 2023 class, served as Class Treasurer, and participated in Volleyball, Hockey, Softball (Captain of all three sports), National Honor Society, Epsilon (Secretary), Varsity Club (Secretary) and Student Council. Vail is now attending SUNY Potsdam to study Early Childhood Education and to fulfill a long time dream of becoming an elementary teacher.

The NZ Ross C. Hudson Memorial Scholarship (St. Lawrence County-\$400) was presented to Caleigh Smith (pictured at right), daughter of David and Carol Smith from Lisbon, NY. Caleigh graduated third in her class and participated in Drama Club, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Marching Band, Interact, Model U.N., National Honor Society, Student Council, as well as serving as Class President for four years. Coming from a family full of teachers (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) to guide her through her high school years, Caleigh truly appreciated her education at Lisbon C.S.D. and is now studying Elementary Education and Special Education at SUNY Geneva. We wish Vail and Caleigh great success at their colleges.



NZ Grant Chairperson **Linda Crosby** presented the 2023 RENY Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant of \$1,000 to veteran teacher Angela Weston, (pictured at left with Linda) of Ogdensburg, NY on August 9 at John F. Kennedy Elementary School. Angela has worked as an elementary Science and, now, sixth grade Math teacher for the Ogdensburg City S.D. for over twenty years. With hard work, persistence, and professionalism, she has become an expert grant writer; her RENY grant application was perfect!! Angela is thrilled that the grant funds will continue her Mathematics Recovery Project and will purchase Math hands-on equipment and materials to help students improve their Math achievement and overcome the devastating and lingering effects of the pandemic. She has already sent a thank you note. Thank you to **Ellen Smith** for helping to judge the grant applications.

The NZ BOD met on October 25, 2023 in Potsdam to discuss many issues including the convention, new by-laws booklet, and budgets. Members are encouraged to support (contact your legislators/governor) the state passage of the Health Equity for Retirees Act (to guarantee our benefits) and the improvement of Tier 6 retirement (for our youngest active teachers). Thank you to North Central Zone for hosting a very successful 2023 RENY Convention. There will be a Zoom meeting in January 2024.

The Northern Zone would like to acknowledge a special lady; **Avis Ragan** passed away at the age of 94 on May 22, surrounded by her loving family. Her devoted service to the NZ spanned decades as she served for many years as NZ Friendly Service Chairperson; she was also very active in the Canton Unit. She was a staunch supporter of the NZ scholarship fund. She served her community as a volunteer in many other organizations and in her long career as an Elementary and Special Education teacher at many St. Lawrence County schools. We continued to enjoy her delightful company at all the recent NZ membership meetings escorted by her daughter, **Marcia Thompson-Amyot**, also an active NZ member. We will miss her very much. Avis was predeceased by her husband, Bernard, and is survived by her children, Marcia and David, her grandchildren, Dan, Mike, Don and Sarah, and her great-grandchildren, Addison, Kaia, Penelope, and Margaret.



In Memoriam 2023

Lawrence Spaulding	Avis Ragan	Nancy Douglas	Sandra Kukie	Marjorie McCullough	Jane Kohl
Lena Spadafore	Frances Lambert	Barbara Audycki	Donna Chase	Halbert Oney	Anne Simays
					Ken Cring

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SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

By Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." ~Abraham Lincoln

If Lincoln could see how busy our members in Southeastern Zone (SEZ) have been, he would be proud.



October 11th thru 13th saw 12 delegates from SEZ at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino for the 72nd Annual Convention for the Retired Educators of New York (RENY). SEZ would like to thank the North Central Zone, Kathi Bassett, Kristen Valentine, **Dr. James Newell** and the RENY Executive Board for hosting a great conference. We tackled tough issues including fair retirement benefits for all tiers. SEZ members were also big winners in the evening Trivia contest and dinner time raffles. So although we were busy, we all had a good time.



On September 28th, SEZ had it's annual meeting at the Kaz Americana Diner in Middletown. Two speakers from M & T Bank shared ways we can protect ourselves from fraud. Learning ways to better safeguard our assets, catching up on RENY information before the convention, and "doing lunch" with friends, were just what we needed for an enjoyable afternoon. In fact, we decided that going forward, we would meet once a month for lunch at the Diner in Middletown. It's very informal; if you're free and want to share a few enjoyable hours with colleagues, just show up every third Thursday of the month.



Throughout the fall, the Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association (MARTA) offered an amazing selection of activities for its members. MARTA meets informally for lunch at Eduardo's in Salisbury Mills on the first Wednesday of the month. To kick off the fall activities and welcome 2023 retirees, two ice cream socials were held on September 14th. There were also outings to the Bear Mountain Zoo, Ringwood Manor and the Storm King Art Center. We enjoyed a Sip 'n' Paint, and participated in classes in cookie decorating and leaded stained glass making. There were many hiking and biking adventures as well as an

information session on coordinating current health benefits with Medicare. On October 4th, their fall luncheon was held in Delancey's in Goshen. On December 6th, MARTA will host their holiday party at Bella Luna in Blooming Grove. Members will donate cash for local food banks and children's games, books, art supplies, scarves, hats and gloves for local children in need. MARTA has certainly focused on giving back to the community and putting life in the years of its members.



More from the SEZ on next page...

ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

Southern Zone, Continued

Also busy was the Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association (NARTA). On September 8th, they had their Annual Kick-off Breakfast at The Coach Diner in New Windsor. The 2023 retirees were honored guests and it was a great time for them to meet fellow members.

October 5th, NARTA celebrated their "Over 85 Luncheon" at the Lakeview House in Newburgh. 16 members, 85 years of age and older, were the guests of honor. Their Holiday Luncheon will take place on December 7th, also at the Lakeview House. NARTA asks all of their members to bring donations of new socks to all of their events. As the temperature drops, the collected socks are donated to shelters where they are distributed to those in need. Again, members reaching out to help those who are less fortunate.



The Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) has also been busy. On September 13th, they held their annual meeting at the White Sulphur Springs Inn. An aide from Congressman Mark Molinaro's office was their guest speaker. Educational issues and other pertinent matters were discussed. SCRTA decided to support NARTA'S sock donations. They are all looking forward to their holiday party at the Elks Club.

Two final facts about SEZ before I sign off. First, over the past two years, SEZ has donated \$8,000 to the DeCormier Fund to help fellow retirees in need. In addition to that, our zone donated \$800 to World Central Kitchens, a charitable organization that donates food to people suffering from natural disasters and the horrors of war. I am personally proud to be part of an organization that is so socially aware, caring and generous.

Second, I'd like to thank all of the people who share newsy info so I will have things to write about. **Donna Harness, Joan Schauer, Leon Harrold*CR, Helen Hoering, Cheryl Fischer, Ray Leduc** and Barbara Topps....

YOU'RE THE BEST!!!

So fellow retirees, just keep doing what you're doing: help the less fortunate, get together and enjoy time with family and friends, continue to learn new things, stay healthy and be safe. All good things as we take another trip around the sun!



WESTERN ZONE

By Nancy White and Audrey Seidel, Public Relations Co - Chairs

Western Zone's strength can be found in its over 2,200 members and its 11 units, therefore we are continuing to highlight various WZ units. The Springville-Griffith/West Valley Retired Teachers' Association, has always been an active unit, but several years ago, they considered disbanding due to the inability to fill a full slate of officers. It was a serious dilemma for the group. They were not sure if they were able to continue having the SG/WV RTA unit. They decided to have a survey for members to determine if the unit was to remain, or dissolve. Members indicated that they didn't want to disband. However, no one stepped forward to fill the president and vice president's positions. The unit voted to be "on pause" for one year. The treasurer, **Donna Potter** and the secretary, Rhonda Moore, agreed to stay in their offices for the year.

More from the WZ on next page...

ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

Western Zone, Continued



Fortunately, one member stepped forward to fill the president's position. **Sharon Barley**, stated, "If we didn't find someone to take over, we would lose our scholarships. Pretty much everything in my career I did for my students, and not continuing our scholarship would directly affect kids in the district. It was a no brainer for me". She accepted the office of president. Then a second person stepped forward to fill the vice president's position, **Susan Reinhardt**. They were installed this past December. Now the unit is back in full force. Sharon is pictured her on the left.

Sharon was a Physical Education teacher at Springville-Griffith Institute for 33 years and a coach for 30 years. She coached track, cheerleading, softball, volleyball, tennis, and golf. She was also the first female Athletic Director in the district. Through her teaching and coaching career, she always believed that if the students weren't having fun they wouldn't even try. She plans on applying this same principle to gatherings for SG/WV RTA. Sharon is planning a golf event at a local golf course to help fund scholarships. New ideas sometimes help reinvigorate a group.

Another individual who has strongly supported the SG/WV RTA unit is **Donna Potter**. She has been the SG/WV RTA treasurer for 10 years. Donna was very dedicated to the unit while it was deciding its future, and currently, in addition to her treasurer's duties, keeps members updated through various emails. Donna has also supported her unit by being a WZ Board Director, attending WZ meetings and the RENY state convention in Albany. We recognize her various contributions to helping keep SG/WV RTA as a unit in WZ. Donna, is pictured to the right.



Since 2014, SG/WV RTA has awarded \$12,500 in scholarships. In addition to awarding a SG/WV RTA scholarship each year of \$500, it also contributes \$500 towards a scholarship given by the Springville Faculty Association.

One area that the unit is focusing on is increasing its membership. President Barley stated that she realizes that drawing younger retirees into the group and getting them involved is very important. Since December, three new members have joined thanks to the involvement of the new vice president. Also in December, SG/WV RTA members helped Springville Elementary School students holiday shop for their family members and the Children's League was chosen as the community service recipient.

SG/WV RTA has 130 active members and normally they have 30 members attend their meetings. The group enjoys getting together for social occasions and enjoying each other's company. The first day of school in September they have a breakfast/meeting to celebrate not having to go back to work. This year's meeting was well attended, and as usual was held at a shelter in Sprague Brook Park. At this meeting children's books and clothing were collected to donate to Project Flight and/or The Children's League.



Traditionally they have a holiday dinner/meeting, and installation of officers in December. This past December, 48 members attended this celebration at the American Legion Post in Springville. Proceeds from a basket raffle and a 50/50 raffle go directly to the scholarship fund.

Springville/West Valley Retired Teachers Association knows that the following are important in their unit: community service, increasing membership, scholarships, and activities that members are interested in supporting. We wish them well!!!!

PLEASE SHARE THIS APPLICATION WITH ANYONE WHO MAY WANT TO JOIN RENY. THIS IS THE ONLY APPLICATION THAT SHOULD BE USED WHEN PEOPLE ARE APPLYING TO RENY. THE OFFICE CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH A PDF VERSION IF YOU NEED ONE.

RETIRED EDUCATORS OF NY NEW MEMBER ENROLLMENT FORM AND PROFILE

Name (circle one) Mr. Miss Mrs. Ms. Dr. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone (____) _____ Date of Birth _____ Email _____

(Circle one) Retired Educator Active Educator Associate (non-certified support staff) Year Retired _____

County of Residence _____ School Dist./College/Univ Retired From _____

Subject Area _____ Level Taught _____ Level of Admin if Applicable _____

Spouse Enrollment - OPTIONAL Referred by: _____

Spouse Name (circle one) Mr. Miss Mrs. Ms. Dr. _____

Date of Birth _____ Email _____

Retired Educator? Yes No (year retired) _____ Active Educator? Yes No State Retired From _____

School Dist./College/University Retired From _____

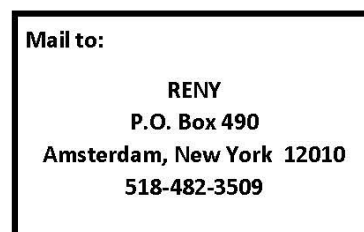
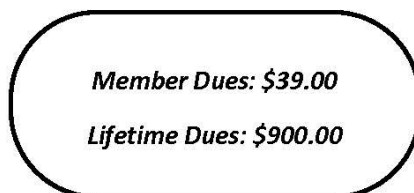
Payment Options

I have enclosed my check or money order made out to NYSRTA/RENY in the amount of: _____

Charge my: VISA Mastercard Credit Card# _____ Exp _____ CVV _____

Print your name clearly as it appears on your card _____

Authorizing Signature _____



The ONLY statewide organization which works solely on behalf of retired educators!