

RENY YORK  
RETIREDCEDUCATORS OF NY

STATE

Vol 74  
Issue 3

Summer 2025

## ***A Message From Our President, Gayla LePage***



I hope this finds you enjoying your summer and lots of sunshine. I love sitting on my front patio listening to the sounds of summer - birds singing, kids playing, and, yes, bugs buzzing (not biting).

I attended the Northeastern Zone meeting in June. I was honored to attend this meeting and meet the people who make up this very active zone led this year by **Tracey Howard**. The Northeastern Zone is doing a superb job growing membership. **Sandy Lashua** as well as the entire membership of the zone should be commended for their success. At this meeting, Sandy reported that they had 17 retirees interested in joining RENY/NEZ. Wow! They have formed a membership team to keep this going. What a great idea! Please let me know when you are meeting. I

have had a few invitations that I have had to decline because of my schedule, but please keep asking.

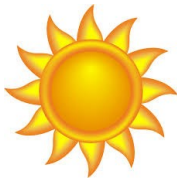
The new website is live. Please check it out if you have not done so already. [Retirededucatorsny.org](https://Retirededucatorsny.org) I want to give a huge shout out to Kathi Bassett for the time invested in training for this to happen. In much larger groups, keeping a website up to date is usually a paid IT person's job. Kathi has taken this on without any grumbling. The two women who keep this organization going on a day to day basis are a true gift. Their commitment to RENY is evident in their dedication to it.

The news for the annual meeting and convention is in this *York State*. I think the new format is so exciting. It is fiscally responsible and still is informative, fun, and productive. If you can, try to attend in October as a delegate or just to enjoy the convention and to see how RENY works.

It is hard to believe that a almost a year has passed since I started as President of this great organization. It has gone quite smoothly because of the efficiency of the office staff, the Executive Board, and the committee chairs. I thank you. I value all of the friendships and relationships I have forged with all of you. I will continue to do my best for all of us. (History lesson of NYSRTA/RENY will continue in the next *York State*)

Remember I am only a phone call or email away - (518) 569-3612 or [luer913@hotmail.com](mailto:luer913@hotmail.com)

- Gayla



# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Submitted by Dell Ford Jordan, V.P. for Membership

***“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”  
“We Are the RENY Team”***

Half of the year 2025 is gone and our stats are still going down. This is mainly due to the passing of many of our dedicated members and also due to non-payment of renewal dues. New members are being added but not in the numbers we had hoped for. We still have six (6) months to increase our membership through recruitment and reclaiming non-payers.

Our May 31, 2025 stats for the organization are as follows: Total Members – **9207**; Active Members – **4199**; 90 Year Olds – **639**; 100 Year Olds – **104**; Associate Members – **3**; Life Members – **3222**; 90 + Life Members – **963**; 100 Life members – **77**; and, Current Non-Paid Members – **366**. Since January 1, 2025 we have added **32** new members and have grieved the loss of **239** Members. We have to, we need to, increase our membership. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said in a motivation speech, “the only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.” If we have doubts that it will happen, let’s get rid of those doubts now. We know teachers and administrators who are retiring; we know members who have chosen not to renew their membership. Let’s reach out to them. We can turn this around. Let’s do it.

**Gentle Reminders:** We have updated our application with our new annual fee and disseminated them to all Membership Chairs in the Zones and the office is still receiving old applications. **You must be a RENY member if you want to hold an office in the Unit, Zone, and/or the State.** You also have to be a member in order to be a Delegate at our Annual Meeting and Convention. Included with the updated application was a list of RENY’S Key Services and Benefits.

On behalf of RENY, the Board, the Membership Team, we thank the membership for all that you do. If you have any questions and/or suggestions, you can contact me at [reny.dfordjordan@yahoo.com](mailto:reny.dfordjordan@yahoo.com).

***We are the ONLY statewide organization which works solely on behalf of retired educators.***

# Legislative Action Report

Submitted by Janice Mullins, V.P. for Legislation



As I sit down to recap our progress on this year’s advocacy agenda, the 2025 state legislative session will be ending in two days. Consequently, by the time you read this, it will have ended. I want to thank all advocates for the time and effort that you put in to inform our State and Federal Representatives of the issues important to RENY members and all seniors. Our efforts remind them that “We Are Retired Not Expired.”

We do not have an expiration date. There are so many ways that we stay connected as retired educators and members of RENY. As educators, in our communities, through our philanthropy efforts, through advocacy, through friendly service, and through our Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund, we remain committed to service. When legislative decisions are made, we are not to be ignored.

Continued on next page



# Legislative Action Report

Submitted by Janice Mullins, V.P. for Legislation

However, our state legislative agenda has met with little progress. The Health Equity for Retirees Act (HERA) does not have the support that it had in the prior legislative session. The number of Assembly and Senate co-sponsors has fallen significantly.

With the plan to dismantle the Federal Education Department, we advocated for an increase in school aid to compensate for a potential decrease in school funding from the Federal Government. Representatives told our advocates that they could not make a request for funding to replace a loss that has not yet happened. The 2025-2026 enacted state budget did set aside \$37 billion dollars toward education; an \$8 billion dollar increase since Governor Hochul took office. However, with the budget approval so late, school districts had to adapt their own spending proposals having to guess on the amount of state aid they would receive. Luckily, overall, 97% of NYS school district budgets passed.

As long as so many retirement pension groups are pushing for Tier 6 reform, confidence is high that more positive gains for Tier 6 members will come.

Finally, even though legislators agree that improving the COLA computation formula is long overdue, as of this date, the legislation has yet to be reintroduced. Securing the required fiscal notes from the numerous pension systems to acquire a bill number takes time. This was expected since it is the first year of the new session. I will continue to work with the bill sponsor to secure reintroduction of this legislation.

Trying to keep track of the myriads of cuts at the federal level due to Presidential Executive Action along with funding cuts included in the “One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act” and how they will affect retirees and seniors has my head spinning. We advocated for Protecting Social Security and Medicare for the future, Protecting, Preserving, and Strengthening Medicaid, and Protecting the Federal Department of Education. We cautiously approached the elimination of Social Security Benefit Income from taxation.

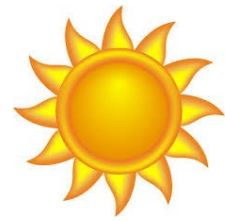
The “One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act” passed in the House on May 22<sup>nd</sup> but is facing some opposition in the Senate. As currently written, “How will its provisions affect our advocacy priorities?” The answers to that question will depend upon which side of the aisle your Congressional Representative sits on. One thing for sure is that no tax on Social Security is **not part** of the legislation. The bill would expand the standard deduction for seniors with income limitations allowing many of us to keep more of our social security income in our pockets. However, the bill’s tax cuts, along with other provisions, are projected to add significantly to the national debt, potentially increasing the strain on government resources and reduced benefits for Social Security recipients in the future. The “OBBA” planned cuts to Medicaid can ultimately increase costs for the Medicare program and state budgets.

President Trump’s U.S. Department of Education budget document for 2026 renews his commitment to close the Federal Education Department and calls for a 15% reduction in funding for education. The funding stream for Title I and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) would remain but with no increase. The money sent to school districts that support teacher training, at-risk students, literacy instruction, rural schools, art education, school safety and students experiencing homelessness recommends combining them all into one grant and dramatically cutting funding from \$6.5 billion to only \$2 billion. As grants, school districts can decide how the money they receive gets directed.

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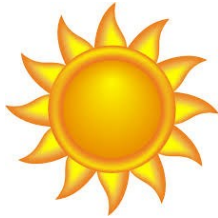
# Legislative Action Report

Submitted by Janice Mullins, V.P. for Legislation



Can NYS and school districts pick up the funding shortfall without affecting senior health insurance benefits? Of course, Congress must approve the President's education budget request.

If, in the long run, you find yourself facing financial hardship because of these changes, remember that RENY's DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund may be able to help. If you have concerns about what appears to be a lack of Congressional oversight, send the letter to your representative that we provided for you in the President's Appeal, making your Congressional Representative aware of your concerns. (DO NOT SENT THE LETTER TO THE OFFICE) If you have already mailed your letter, thank you! If you have not already done so, please mail the letter especially to your Representative in the House based upon your zip code. They need to hear from all of us.



## Senior Vice President Report

Submitted by Judith Farmer\*CR

Plans for the 2025 RENY Annual Meeting have been finalized. Many thanks to the Workshop Committee, office staff, and the Central Zone for their work in making this event happen. The theme is Kaleidoscope, and it promises to be a colorful and enjoyable event.

Registration will begin at 2 pm on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, in the Mohawk Room. A cookie and brownie reception, as well as the usual Basket Raffle sale will also be in that room. Dinner will be held in the Oneida Room at 6 pm. Following the meal, the Certificate of Recognition will be awarded, and the keynote address will be presented by the TRS.

Breakfast on Thursday, October 16, 2025, will be available from 7-9 am in the Oneida Room. As approved by the Board of Directors, the number of workshop sessions has been reduced to four. You may choose one from each session.

9:00-10:00 am Citizens Preparedness Corp (NYS Division of Homeland Security  
Colorful Creative Card Making

10:30- 11:30 am

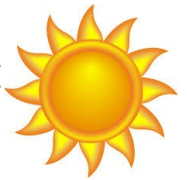
Fraud Prevention (NYS Division of Consumer Protection)  
Miniature Circus Display (by **Bill Tenity\*CR**-Central Zone Member)

Lunch will be served at noon in the Onedia Room. Session I of the Annual Meeting will begin at 1 pm. It will include the Election of Officers and a discussion and vote on the proposed Bylaw changes. The October 2025 meeting of the RENY Board of Directors will be held following the end of Session 1. At 5 pm, there will be a cocktail Party in the Mohawk Room followed by dinner in the Onedia Room. Later, teams will gather in the Mohawk Room for Trivia. Will your zone have the winning team?

Breakfast on Friday will again be available from 7-9 am. If needed, Session II of the Annual Meeting will be held in the Oneida Room. Then it's time to say "Goodbye" for another year.

# Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund Report

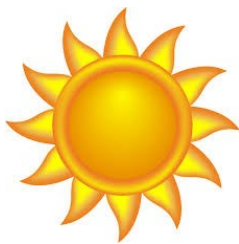
Submitted by Colette Astoria, Trustee



We continue to provide non-contractual aid and relief for needy retired teachers. We all know that fixed income pensions get smaller in the light of inflation. Certainly what looked like a good pension in 1980's is looking pretty paltry now! If you or someone you know is struggling to make monthly payments and meet their financial needs, we're here to help. Retired teachers can apply for a monthly stipend to help close the gap.

The DeCormier Trust Fund, named after the first President of our organization, also distributes one time grants to those who have a major unexpected expense, such as a broken chimney, a handicap ramp, leaky roof, hearing aids or uncovered dental work. To apply for assistance you must be a state RENY member in good standing for at least 3 years.

For additional information or questions, contact Anne Flensburg (716)-863-3631 or [anneflanswz@aol.com](mailto:anneflanswz@aol.com)



## Bylaws Report

Submitted by William Tenity\*CR, Chairperson

The Bylaws Committee is presenting the following proposed bylaws, as requested by the BOD at the March and July meetings, to be voted on at the Annual meeting in 2025. Respectfully submitted,

Chair: William Tenity\*CR

CZ Pete Atchinson

NEZ President Emeritus Carlyle T Campany\*CR

NCZ Bruce Croucher

CWZ Helen Hoering SEZ

First Proposed Amendment - was approved by the BOD at the March meeting: \* lines in red are the parts of the Bylaw that are being changed.

### 1, **Proposition RMFBOD** (Required Meetings for Board of Directors) **2025**

2. **Rationale:** The Board of Directors, according to ARTICLE VI, Section 2 are required to
3. meet face-to-face three times a year. Since COVID ended the BOD has only been
4. meeting face-to-face twice a year, once in July and again in October, after the annual
5. meeting. The reason for this is save the Association the money it requires in hotel meal
6. and room fees for these meetings. Therefore the Bylaws Committee is requesting the
7. following change to the Bylaws.

### 8. **Main Amendment**

### 9. **Presently**

10.

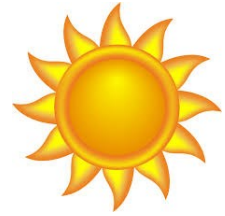
**ARTICLE VI**  
**Board of Directors**

*In Bylaws booklet p 8*

Continued on the next page

# Bylaws Report

Submitted by William Tenity\*CR, Chairperson



11. **Section 2.** The Board of Directors will meet as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
12. **At least three face-to-face meetings shall be held annually.** Additionally, electronic
13. meetings are authorized in accordance with the parliamentary authority
14. identified in Article XVII of these bylaws. Electronic meetings must provide an
15. opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all in attendance.
16. Additional requirements and guidelines shall be developed, approved by the Board
17. of Directors, and published in the Association's policy and procedures handbook, the
18. "Leaders' Manual." These additional rules shall govern electronic meetings that
19. may be held by any board or committee of the Association.

## 20.. Motion

21. **Amend Article VI, Section 2** by adding the following:
22. Line 231: **(a) At least two face-to-face meetings shall be held annually.**

## 23. New

### ARTICLE VI

*In Bylaws booklet p 8*

## 24.

### Board of Directors

25. **Section 2.** The Board of Directors will meet as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
26. **At least two face-to-face meetings shall be held annually.** Additionally, electronic
27. meetings are authorized in accordance with the parliamentary authority
28. identified in Article XVII of these bylaws. Electronic meetings must provide an
29. opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all in attendance.
30. Additional requirements and guidelines shall be developed, approved by the Board
31. of Directors, and published in the Association's policy and procedures handbook, the
32. "Leaders' Manual." These additional rules shall govern electronic meetings that
33. may be held by any board or committee of the Association.

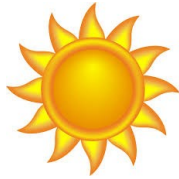
Second Proposed Amendment - was approved by the BOD at the July meeting:

1. **Proposition AMAWAC** (Annual Meeting, Annual Workshop, & Annual Convention)  
**2025**
2. **Rationale:** Article V11, Annual Meeting, Annual Workshop, and Annual Convention,
3. section 2, page 11 currently reads: "Section 2. The Association's Annual Convention
4. consists of the Annual Workshop and the Annual Meeting plus other activities of the
5. Association at the time the Annual Meeting is held. On a yearly basis, one (1) or more of
6. the ten (10), based on a rotating schedule, will host the Annual Convention
7. *Proposed Change:* **Delete the last sentence, "On a yearly basis, one (1) or more of the ten**
8. **(10) zones, based on a rotating schedule, will host the Annual Convention**

9. Rationale- It was felt that it is becoming very difficult and for some zones impossible to

Continued on the next page





# Bylaws Report

Submitted by William Tenity\*CR, Chairperson

10. host the convention and workshops in the future due to the cost and shrinking enrollment.
11. Individual zones will not be responsible for hosting the Convention. The State
12. Organization will assume that responsibility.
13. Making this change will allow the Organization to either continue with past practice or
14. stay with the format being used to plan the 2025 Convention; whichever the membership
- 15 chooses.
- 16 \*We could also, on a rotating schedule, have an Honored Zone instead of a Host Zone.
17. The Honored Zone would participate in the planning of the Convention as much as they
18. are able.

19. The Board of Directors voted on this change at the March meeting and directed the
20. Bylaws Committee to prepare a proposition for the July meeting

## 21. Main Amendment

22. **ARTICLE VII** *In Bylaws booklet p 11*
23. **Annual Meeting, Annual Workshop, and Annual Convention**
24. **Section 2.** The Annual Convention of the Association consists of the Annual
25. Workshop and the Annual Meeting plus other activities of the Association at the
26. time the Annual Convention is held. **On a yearly basis, one (1) or more of the ten (10) zones, based on a rotation schedule, will host the Annual Convention.**

## 27. Motion

28. **Amend Article VII, Section 2** by eliminating the following:
29. Line 351: **(On a yearly basis, one (1) or more of the ten (10) zones, based on a rotation schedule, will host the Annual Convention.**

30. **ARTICLE VII** *In Bylaws booklet p 11*
31. **Board of Directors**

## 32. Section 2. Annual Meeting, Annual Workshop, and Annual Convention

33. **Section 2.** The Annual Convention of the Association consists of the Annual
34. Workshop and the Annual Meeting plus other activities of the Association at the
35. time the Annual Convention is held.

# NYSRTA—74TH CONVENTION AND ANNUAL MEETING

TURNING STONE RESORT AND CASINO, VERONA, NEW YORK

HOSTED BY THE CENTRAL ZONE

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025**

**2:00-5:00pm Registration and Vendor Exhibits | Mohawk**

Welcome Reception—Coffee, Tea and Danish Pastry.

Raffle tickets will be available to purchase. Trivia Team registration at raffle ticket table.

**THEME: “ A Kaleidoscope of Color ”**

**6:30pm Dinner | Oneida**

**Greetings/Introductions:** TBD

**Invocation:** TBD

**Pledge of Allegiance:** TBD

**Song:** TBD

**Song Leader:** TBD

**8:15pm Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service Award | Oneida**

*(Immediately following Certificate of Recognition)*

**Keynote Speaker:** Teachers Retirement System (TRS)

**Introduction:** TBD

The logo for the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) is displayed in a blue square. It consists of the letters "NYS" stacked above "TRS" in a bold, sans-serif font.

Established in 1921 by the New York State Legislature, the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) provides retirement, disability and death benefits to eligible New York State public school teachers and administrators. The System is among the 10-largest public pension funds in the nation based on total assets. NYSTRS is one of the most secure and well-funded public pension plans in the country.

We serve more than 272,000 active members and more than 182,000 retirees and beneficiaries. As of June 30, 2024, NYSTRS paid approximately \$8.4 billion in annual benefit payments, nearly 80% of which was distributed to New York residents.

Membership in NYSTRS is mandatory for all full-time teachers, teaching assistants, guidance counselors and administrators employed in New York State public schools (excluding New York City), Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and eligible charter schools that opted to participate as an employer in NYSTRS.

Membership for teachers employed less than full time is optional. Employers are required to notify part-time teachers in writing of their right to membership in the System.

Teachers employed by a New York State community college or SUNY (excluding graduate assistants or teaching assistants) may elect membership in NYSTRS or the Optional Retirement Program.



# NYSRTA—74TH CONVENTION AND ANNUAL MEETING

TURNING STONE RESORT AND CASINO, VERONA, NEW YORK

HOSTED BY THE CENTRAL ZONE

Thursday, October 16, 2025

7:00am—Breakfast Buffet | Oneida



7:00-9:00am Breakfast Buffet | Oneida

9:00-10:00am Session 1 Workshops

10:30-11:30am Session 2 Workshops

9:00-NOON Registration & Basket Raffle Ticket Purchases | Mohawk

**\*\* DON'T FORGET TO HAND IN YOUR TRIVIA NIGHT SIGN UP SHEETS AT BASKET RAFFLE TABLE BY NOON \*\***

\*TICKETS FOR THE BASKET RAFFLE SELECTIONS MUST BE MADE BEFORE 11:45AM-NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN\*

11:30-1:00pm Lunch | Oneida

*Delegate seating for Luncheon will be by Zones. Designations will be on the tables.*

1:15-4:30pm Session 1 Annual Meeting | Oneida (SEE PAGE 8 FOR MEETING AGENDA)

5:00-6:00pm Cocktail Party | Mohawk

*"A Kaleidoscope of Color" Suggested attire is to wear something bright! (Cash Bar)*

6:00-8:15pm Dinner | Oneida

Invocation:

Pledge of Allegiance:

Song:

Song Leader:

*~~~~~ Basket Raffle winners to be announced immediately following meeting ~~~~~*

8:15pm Trivia Night | Mohawk

(Cash Bar Available)



## SESSION 1

9:00-10:00AM

*Choose one of the two workshops offered*



### **Citizen Preparedness Corps**

**Introducer:** Judith Farmer\*CR

**Presenter:** SFC Esmel Nicodeme and 2LT Perkins Lydia

The Citizens Preparedness Corps is a program led by the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES). It was created by the Governor's Office as a result of Superstorm Sandy, and the increase in active shooter events across the nation.

Natural Disasters are unpredictable and are becoming more devastating each year. Active Shooter events are on the rise and, just like other disasters, are becoming more dangerous. We teach basic principles of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, to strengthen our communities in the event of a disaster or an active shooter event. We also teach on the basic principles of fire safety for both home and workplace. The course takes approximately one hour and includes a certification by the state, which is also recognized by numerous State agencies including OCFS.

We present a broad range of material, such as developing a family emergency plan, building a "Go-Bag", include important information on active shooter scenarios, and Public Health/ Diseases.



### **Colorful-Creative Card Making**

**Introducer:** Dr. Mary Ann Luciano

**Presenter:** Carolynne Whitefeather

Enjoy a playful and easy hands-on card making activity with stamping, coloring, gluing and take home treasures to keep or share.

From bits and pieces, pencils, pens and markers, stamps and collages come your creative, handheld masterpieces where each become a part of the kaleidoscope group named RENY.

## SESSION 2

10:30-11:30AM

*Choose one of the two workshops offered*



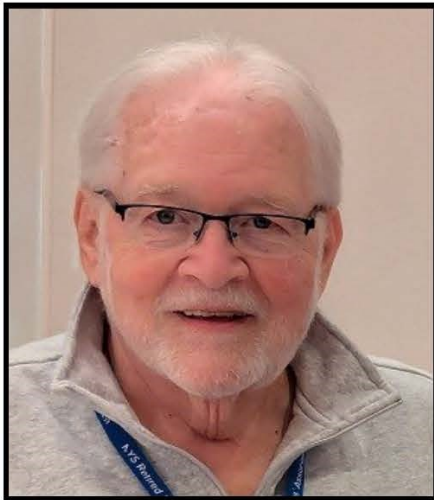
### Fraud Prevention

**Introducer:** Patricia Newell

**Presenter:** Kimberly Maercklein-NYS Division of Consumer Protection

It's not in your head. Fraud has increased exponentially over the last few years. Fraudsters are more sophisticated than ever and better at their jobs. Join the New York State Division of Consumer Protection to learn how to detect the signs of fraud, the latest trends, and how to avoid becoming the victim of fraud.

Kim Maercklein has a Bachelor's of Science in Community and Human Services from Empire State College. Before joining the Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection in January, she worked as a Community Nutrition Educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension. Since completing her training with NYS, she has been travelling all over Upstate NY hosting workshops on Identity Theft Prevention and Fraud Prevention.



### How a Child's Fascination With The Circus Led To Amazing Hobby

**Introducer:** Judith Farmer\*CR

**Presenter:** William Tenity\*CR - Central Zone Member

RENY member and State Bylaws Chair, Bill Tenity became fascinated and enamored with everything circus at the age of 9 when his dad took him to see the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, "The Greatest Show on Earth" under the big top. That started a lifetime infatuation with circus history and upon his retirement from teaching, the building of his own miniature circus. His presentation will combine his memories of that day

at the Ringling Show in 1954, including films from the circus that year and a slide show of his model circus. There will also be samples of his model circus. This is a workshop for "children of all ages"!



## THE RENY 74th ANNUAL CONVENTION

Hosted by Central Zone

Turning Stone Resort Casino

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday **October 15-17, 2025**

**Registration Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2025**

**Tower rooms are very limited and are on a first come first served basis. Once tower is full, guests will be placed in the hotel.**

Wednesday: REGISTRATION BEGINS 2:00pm

\* Welcome Reception – Coffee,  
Tea, and Danish pastry @ Registration

\*Keynote Speaker

Thursday

\* Breakfast  
\* Workshops  
\* Lunch  
\* Annual Meeting – Session 1  
\* Cocktail Party (cash bar)  
\* Dinner  
\* Entertainment

Friday

\* Breakfast  
\* Annual Meeting – Session 2

### **REGISTRATION FORM – ANNUAL CONVENTION --- OCTOBER 15 – 17, 2025**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ (confirmation will be emailed to you)

SHARING ROOM WITH \_\_\_\_\_

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

**FULL PACKAGE** - Wednesday and Thursday Nights

(Includes dinner Wednesday evening, all meals Thursday, breakfast on Friday)

TRIPLE: \$467 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_ DOUBLE: \$531 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_ SINGLE: \$745 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_

All rates include applicable sales tax and dining room gratuities.

**A CREDIT CARD WILL BE MANDATORY UPON CHECK-IN**

NON-SMOKING \_\_\_\_\_ SMOKING \_\_\_\_\_ HANDICAP \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**DAILY RATES** - Daily Rates include overnight accommodations, plus dinner, breakfast, lunch

TRIPLE: \$255 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_ DOUBLE: \$287 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_ SINGLE: \$393 Per Person \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTURE DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

*Please clip and mail completed form to:*

**Turning Stone Resort Casino**

**Attn: Accommodations Dept. 5218 Patrick Road, Verona, NY 13478**

Upon receipt of a confirmation letter from Turning Stone Resort Casino, please call 1-800-771-7711 with your confirmation number to guarantee your room with credit card.

**Cancellations must be made prior to September 30 to avoid penalty of forfeiture of the food and beverage portion of the package.**

If you would like to attend the Annual Convention as a **Day Guest**  
please fill out the form below

**REGISTRATION FORM – DAY GUEST ONLY**  
**TURNING STONE RESORT CASINO**  
**THE NYSRTA 74th ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**ANNUAL WORKSHOP & ANNUAL MEETING**

**OCTOBER 15th – October 17, 2025**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the appropriate meals.**

WEDNESDAY ☐ Dinner (\$100)

Dinner Choice:

**The Corporate Buffet** \_\_\_\_\_

THURSDAY ☐ Breakfast (\$36) ☐ Lunch (\$45) ☐ Dinner (\$100)

Dinner Choice:

**Evening Gathering Dinner Buffett** \_\_\_\_\_

FRIDAY ☐ Breakfast (\$36)

***Please clip this form and mail with a check made out to NYSRTA***  
***for the total amount to:***

**Kathi Bassett, EOM**  
**RENY**  
**63 Stewart St**  
**Amsterdam, NY 12010**

**REGISTRATION**  
**DEADLINE:**  
**SEPTEMBER 1, 2025**

# ZONE NEWS ZONE NEWS

## CENTRAL ZONE

Submitted by Ray Pitcher, Zone President & Mary Ann Luciano Ed.D., Zone Public Relations Chair with contributions from the Unit Presidents, Bill Tenity\*CR, Cayuga; Co-Presidents Marilyn Dominick & Dell Ford Jordan, Onondaga; Colette Astoria, Oswego

Lots is happening in the Central Zone with the summer weather upon us. This year the Central Zone has joined with President **Gayla LaPage** to try a new format for the state RENY convention. The following is a description of the Central Zone provided by **Marilyn Dominick**, **Mary Ann Luciano**, and **Ray Pitcher**—a true collaborative effort.

“RENY’s Central Zone is in the middle of New York State where the Haudenosaunee. (Keepers of the Longhouse) or the Iroquois Confederacy with the Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk, and Seneca tribes later joined by the Tuscarora resided as the oldest participatory democracy. RENY recognizes with respect the Oneida Nation, the “People of the standing stone” the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Indigenous people on whose ancestral lands the Turning Stone Resort now stands. The Oneida Nation was important in their support of the patriots during the Revolutionary War.

The Erie Cannel, the Mohawk River plus seven other rivers, the New York State Thruway, and the historic Route 20 runs through our Zone. Central New York was an important gateway to freedom during slave holding years with the Abolition Museum located in Peterboro, Madison County.

Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and Oswego counties make up our Zone. Recently the local units of Oneida-Herkimer and Madison disbanded. due to the lack of participating members but still participate with enthusiastic working leaders for the Zone.

We have a strong educational base. Annually, our high school graduating classes range from 15 to over 600 students. We are lucky enough to have multiple community colleges and several world class universities and colleges.

Our region is melting pot of languages, religions, and nationalities. Immigrants helped and continue to build this area. Now today, their history, food, and traditions are moving us in new and exciting directions including facilities to produce yogurt (Chobani Yogurt just broke ground for a new one million square foot plant in Rome, Oneida County and has another in Chenango County) and several international manufacturing organizations.

Our arts communities vary from music to individual fine arts and crafts to drama productions with many museums and historic venues being important to women’s history and other groups. There has been a push in recent years to make our region the second NYS Silicon Valley. Currently, in Onondaga County there is one chip fabrication facility with work beginning on a second facility.

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## CENTRAL ZONE



Submitted by Ray Pitcher, Zone President & Mary Ann Luciano Ed.D., Zone Public Relations Chair with contributions from the Unit Presidents, Bill Tenity\*CR, Cayuga; Co-Presidents Marilyn Dominick & Dell Ford Jordan, Onondaga; Colette Astoria, Oswego

Our geographical location gives us a balanced climate for farms to grow the food we need. This climate provides us with five seasons: winter, mud, spring, summer, and fall. These seasons enable us to enjoy many outside activities, skiing, hiking, boating, camping, four wheeling, snowmobiling, flower or leaf peaking, and birding to name a few and many inside activities too.

We truly are a Kaleidoscope of color and opportunities that we enjoy and encourage others to explore. Welcome to our beloved Central New York State, one zone of many for which we are all blessed—the Empire State.”

We need your help! We are all a Kaleidoscope that is modeled by our childhood, family, faiths, school district that we attended, colleges, professional careers and colleagues, and our adult life. Please bring non-delegates to the convention to help them learn about our Retired Educators of New York and to help us build our organization. Please wear your brightest and wildest outfits that you like and what helps to model your passion. See you in October!

Central Zone next meeting dates are July 22, 2025 in Canastota, a convention work session in August TBA, and on September 8, 2025, the Annual Meeting is in Cayuga County. While Zone members are busy contemplating and creating for RENY’s Annual Convention in October the four units (Cayuga, Chenango, Onondaga, and Oswego) are initiating their own events.

RENY/Cayuga held its Spring meeting on Tuesday, May 27th at the Knights of Columbus in Auburn. Twenty-five members attended. The dinner was catered by the Downtown Deli. The meal consisted of Chicken Parm, Tossed Salad, Macaroni Salad, Italian Oven Roasted Potatoes, Italian Bread & Butter and Cookies and Brownies for the amazing cost of \$26 per person. The Downtown Deli will be catering our annual zone meeting in September.

During the meeting before dinner we discussed the need for recruiting new members and encouraging former members to come to the next meeting. A report was given on the RENY Annual meeting last October the Central Zone spring meeting held in April. We discussed the role that our zone will play as host zone this year.

Friendly Service reported that there are 69 retirees in our unit that have reached the age of 80 and in 2024 164 cards were sent out.



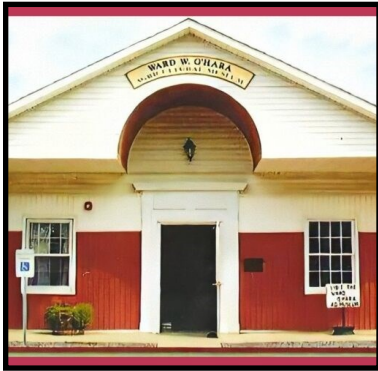
We discussed the Legislative report that was presented at the zone meeting and encouraged members to send out Gayla’s letter to their congressional reps. Finally we encouraged people to send in recommendations for grants for the DeCormier Fund. The membership voted again to donate \$300 to the DeCormier Fund. We also collected \$200 to be donated to the local food pantry.

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## CENTRAL ZONE



Submitted by Ray Pitcher, Zone President & Mary Ann Luciano Ed.D., Zone Public Relations Chair with contributions from the Unit Presidents, Bill Tenity\*CR, Cayuga; Co-Presidents Marilyn Dominick & Dell Ford Jordan, Onondaga; Colette Astoria, Oswego



We are proud to announce that RENY/Cayuga will be hosting this year's annual zone meeting on Monday, September 8th at the Ward O'Hara Agricultural Museum in Auburn, pictured at left. After the meeting members will be able to tour this interesting museum and get a look at president **Bill Tenity\*CR's** miniature model circus, on right, that he will be doing a workshop on at Turning Stone in October.



**Chenango's** spring dinner meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup> happened at the recently renovated Sherburne Inn with an amazing menu from a grazing plate with bread service to salad to a plated entrée to dessert. After dinner and following the Community Service raffle for the Chenango County Office on Aging, three antique assessors (two are state RENY members) provided assessments on "oldies but goodies" brought in by the attending Chenango members. One of the items, a banjolele with its original case was assessed for \$350.

Pictured at left is **Sharon Wilson**, Member at Large and **Mary Ann Luciano**, President selling raffle tickets for Chenango's Community Service

With the registration notice for this meeting, the annual future educator's scholarship request is sent out. For this small unit, \$1,000 is collected each year. The 2025's winner is another Sherburne-Earlville HS teacher's child, Claire Barth, who lives in Oneida County in the Central Zone but not in Chenango County where the required high school scholarship eligible students are located. Many students live outside of Chenango County but attend schools within the county. The application form is a business letter to the scholarship committee that must contain some essential elements.

With summer now here, travel will be a little easier for a road trip from Chenango County to Ithaca's Cornell Lab Ornithology Center with new interactive exhibits. Several members enjoy watching and feeding the birds throughout the winter both north and south, so this trip should be fun.

**Onondaga** had a joyful May 21<sup>st</sup> Spring meeting at the Spinning Wheel Restaurant in North Syracuse with two presentations. One was by K.J. Angels whose mission is to assist bereaved Onondaga County parents for "expenses (such as headstones or cremation and burial assistance) incurred after a miscarriage or loss of a baby or young child under two years of age." Families also receive emotional support.

The upcoming Onondaga RENY unit meetings are on July 9 to honor 90+ year old members and to provide future educator scholarships and September 25 as an Annual Unit Meeting.

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## CENTRAL ZONE

Submitted by Ray Pitcher, Zone President & Mary Ann Luciano Ed.D., Zone Public Relations Chair with contributions from the Unit Presidents, Bill Tenity\*CR, Cayuga; Co-Presidents Marilyn Dominick & Dell Ford Jordan, Onondaga; Colette Astoria, Oswego

### Oswego

RENY Oswego gave out four scholarships at their spring meeting. **Colette Astoria**, President of the RENY Oswego Unit, Secretary of the Central Zone, and a Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Fund board member (many hats) wants to remind everyone about the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund.



Diane Jarvis, Scholarship Chair and Collette Astoria at far right, RENY Oswego President present scholarship winners at their spring meeting

### Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund

We continue to provide non-contractual aid and relief for needy retired teachers. We all know that fixed income pensions get smaller in the light of inflation. Certainly, what looked like a good pension in the 1980's is looking pretty paltry now! If you or someone you know is struggling to make monthly payments and meet their financial needs, we are here to help. State RENY members can apply for a monthly stipend to help close the gap.

The DeCormier Trust Fund, named after the first President of our organization, also distributes out one-time grants to those who have a major unexpected expense like; a broken chimney, a handicap ramp, leaky roof, hearing aids or uncovered dental work. To apply for assistance, you must be a state RENY member for at least 3 years.





## CENTRAL WESTERN ZONE

Submitted by Carol Lord\*CR, Public Relations Chair



**Mary Beth Tyndall** of Monroe County continues to serve as Central Western Zone President until someone steps up to replace her. The zone now consists of seven counties in the Finger Lakes Region. Unfortunately, three counties, Allegany, Stueben and Wayne have disbanded due to lack of officers and new members. Wayne County has recently divided up their remaining treasury to each of the county school libraries. The other counties remain vital and active and recently have held exciting spring meetings.



**Kathy Grandjean** along with her husband Dennis and retiree **Les Buell** have made maple syrup for the last three years with Williamson Middle School students. It began with 7th grade Social Studies and has expanded to Agriculture and Tech classes. The students tap the trees, boil the syrup down and enjoy a French toast and syrup breakfast. See picture at left.

Livingston County: **Mary Corey**, President, organized a June meeting at the Big Tree Inn in Geneseo featuring Cindy Duprey, a Retired teacher, teaching a class on creating a "Lunch Bag Junk Journal". A fun time.

Seneca County: Woody's Restaurant at the Lux Hotel in Waterloo was the site of a nice meeting and excellent luncheon on May 15th. Chris Lajewski, Director of the Montezuma Audubon Center presented a fabulous slide and talk program on the Restoration Project for the Bald Eagle. From one remaining to thousands now across the country. Do visit Montezuma if you are in the area.

Wyoming County: A presentation was given by a unit member and Arcade Town and Village Historian Jeff Mason speaking about author Fran Striker, writer of *The Lone Ranger* radio show which began over 90 years ago!! So much history in our area.

Yates County: President **Linda Snyder** reports that even though Yates is the smallest county in NYS, their retired teachers are very active!! Each year they have a meat raffle to finance many local organizations primarily for children and youth. They give 2 scholarships of \$500 each to graduates entering education. They contribute to the local backpack program and Christmas project, they donate \$500 worth of books to middle and high school students and they are contributing to the Theatre Company Youth Summer program. Congratulations on your efforts!!

Monroe County: Presidents **Nettie Shiano** and **Meena Gehani**, pictured at right, arranged an uplifting fun meeting reflecting on KINDNESS presented by



retired educator Chet Fery aka The Bread Man! Chet started baking bread to give away nineteen years ago and found that to spread happiness is amazing and needed in today's world. He has given away, from his best guess around 100,000 loaves that he baked in his own kitchen. Find a way for you to spread kindness.



Central Western Zone remains committed to RENY and serving our retirees and districts.



## EASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair



RENY/Eastern Zone Executive Committee had their Spring Meeting at the Turf Tavern in Scotia, NY on May 20th. Besides all the reports and business which was conducted at this meeting, the winner of the RENY/Eastern Zone Hudson-Kramer Grant was announced. Corrina Pelkey, Behavior Specialist for Lansingburgh Central School District was the winner of this grant. Currently, Lansingburgh School District is one of two school districts in New York who are participating in a program called Project AWARE. This project is designed to develop a sustainable infrastructure for school-based mental health programs and service, The \$2,000 Hudson-Kramer Grant will allow the purchase of much needed resources to design a calm down zen room located in Lansingburgh Middle School. With the money, they will be able to purchase sensory tools and equipment and interactive resources.



The room will be accessible to all students during scheduled breaks or as part of Individualized Educational Plans. **Pictured is Pam Love, PR for RENY Eastern Zone with Lansingburgh Staff related to this project; left to right : Corrina Pelkey, Joseph Otter and Ryan Kelly.**

**Joyce Notarnicola**, Community Service Chairperson for RENY/Eastern Zone said that their will be three opportunities to volunteer at the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York. The dates and times are: Friday, July 25th

from 1-3 p.m.; Wednesday, August 13th from 1-3 p.m. and Wednesday, September 17th from 1-3 p.m. RSVP to **Joyce Notarnicola** at least 1 week in advance. [jnotar50@hotmail.com](mailto:jnotar50@hotmail.com) or (518) 929-6151

RENY/UNIT UPDATES: The Amsterdam Unit President, **Ann Marie Dufresne**, reported that their Unit had their June dinner meeting at the Lyon St. Grill and Pub in Amsterdam on June 16th. They honored 10 teachers who are retiring this year in the Greater Amsterdam District and joining their unit hopefully. The recipient of the Amsterdam Retired Teachers' Association \$1,500 Scholarship was Daniel Giaimo who was required to write an essay on why he wanted to become a teacher for this scholarship. He will be entering SUNY Albany in the Fall and majoring in History.

**Donna French** reported that the Columbia County Unit met at Yanni's Restaurant in Chatham on May 22nd. They had a speaker, Adam Miller, from Columbia County Tourism.

Capital Region (RCRTA) Unit President, **Marjorie Leibowitz**, reported that their unit met for a Luncheon Meeting held at Gateway Diner in Albany on June 11th. Members contributed donations for homeless animals at this meeting. **Mary Ellen Caporta**, chairperson of the scholarship committee reported that Izabella DeLorenzo from Tamarac Central School District was the winner of RCRTA's 2025 \$1,000 Education Scholarship Award. Izabella is attending SUNY Plattsburgh in the fall and majoring in Childhood Special Education (1-6). Izabella was chosen based on her academic performance, leadership in and out of school, written essay and 3 excellent references.

Saratoga County Unit President, **Kenneth Bollerud**, reported that his unit meets every first Tuesday of each month following the school calendar except when the first Tuesday coincides with a holiday such as in September when they will meet on the second Tuesday, etc. The unit meets at The Ripe Tomato Restaurant in Saratoga. Each meeting fears a Treasurer's Report and a Legislative Action Report. This unit has guest speakers at luncheon meetings and invites the Saratoga High School Choral group to sing holiday music at December's luncheon meeting. Something new is a silent auction put on by crafters in our group. This was so well received this year that they would like to feature two of then next school year.

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## EASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair



The Upper Montgomery County Unit President, **Rosalind Carron**, reported that they enjoyed their Unit's Spring Meeting on May 22nd. Thirty members met at the Holiday Inn in Johnstown. The Scholarship Committee asked again to reward 2 students with \$500 scholarships. A violin/piano duet was the program for this luncheon meeting.



## LONG ISLAND ZONE

Submitted by **Eileen Holmes\*CR**, President and Public Relations Chair



The Long Island Zone held its Spring meeting/luncheon using a new format: co-hosting the luncheon with the East End and West End units. The gathering was held at Villa Paul Restaurant in Hampton Bays on June 11th with a Flag Day theme. Invited guests included Dr. Lisa Liberatore, founder and president of Luv Michael and US Autism Homes. Luv Michael is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. established in 2015 and committed to providing autistic adults opportunities in the workplace and in the community. In 2019, Luv Michael Homes was established to create residential homes for autistic adults, providing them with a chance to live independently from their families in a safe, educational, supportive environment. On eastern Long Island, as of 2025, Luv Michael has expanded to three homes serving nine families. Dr. Liberatore brought 2 singers, Anthony and Christian to entertain us and we were very happy to have them lead us in singing "God Bless America" at the opening of our luncheon as well as performing for us later on. Other guests included Dr. Mark Bodi, educational advisor for Luv Michael and his daughter who was visiting from Chicago after finishing her first year of college.



Dr. Liberatore spoke about the purposeful and meaningful paid employment that Luv Michael creates for its young adults: Granola Production, Craft Making (tags, cards, and jewelry) and Artwork and Design, with original pieces featured on packaging and in outreach materials. She also spoke on 3 unique Luv Michael events: Luv is in the Air Dance, held in February, Surfers Healing in August when world-class surfers make Long Island the last stop on their summer tour and share surfing techniques and fun with Luv Michael members, and in September, the Luv Michael Conference, where families are invited to join the

mission or start similar efforts in their own towns. **Rosemary McKinley**, pictured at left, East End's Community Service chair presented a donation to Luv Michael and we are hopeful that this empowering program will continue to flourish, providing education and local housing where autistic adults can live, work and thrive with dignity and community acceptance.

In May, the Long Island Zone was pleased to make a donation to Helping Makes U Happy, a Center Moriches-based community action group. Among their many programs and projects, they sponsor a free Memorial Day breakfast for local veterans. This year, they were coming up short on food donations and LIZ stepped in, providing funds to cover the sausages and other condiments. This is an early morning affair, breakfast is served by volunteers at the Center Moriches VFW starting at 7AM and finished by 9:30, in time for everyone to go out front and watch (or march in) the Memorial Day parade.

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## LONG ISLAND ZONE

Submitted by **Eileen Holmes\*CR**, Zone President and Public Relations Chair

The LIZ officers and board will hold a joint meeting with the East End and West End unit officers in late August at **Agnes Dansereau's** home in Greenport, overlooking the Long Island Sound. The breeze will be blowin' and the wine will be flowin', the burgers will be grillin' and the desserts are always thrillin' as we enjoy a covered dish luncheon on her deck and plan our fall and winter activities. We need to keep our fingers crossed for good weather!!



Alicia Winowsky and  
Emily Sloane



Frank and SuzAnne Jessup



Sue and Dom LiCausi



## NORTH CENTRAL ZONE



Submitted by **Nancy Roberts\*CR** and Patricia Newell, Public Relations Co-Chairs

**NCZ website:** [www.renyncz.org](http://www.renyncz.org)

*"The hum of bees is the voice of the garden. " Elizabeth Lawrence*

We welcomed 47 members and guests to our June 19<sup>th</sup> Scholarship luncheon at the Hilton Garden Inn. It was an exciting event this year as we honored, for the first time, *three* outstanding graduating seniors. **John Gaffney**, Scholarship Chair, introduced the winners: Gracielynn Black, from South Lewis Central School, plans to attend Jefferson Community College to major in elementary special education. Anthony LaSage, from General Brown Central School, plans to attend Jefferson Community College before transferring to SUNY Potsdam to major in secondary social studies. Lillian Marra, from South Jefferson Central School, plans to attend SUNY Brockport to major in elementary education. Mary Perrine, from Northern New York Community Foundation, presented \$1,000 awards to our Future Educator winners.



Michael Comet, a biology teacher at South Lewis Central School was our guest speaker. Michael is a two time winner of the Hudson Kramer Memorial Grant. Michael used the grants to build a bee observation hive to educate his students about the lives of honey bees, and later added honey harvesting capabilities. Michael was at our luncheon in 2023 with an exciting power point presentation about bees. We all left that day with a better understanding of the life and importance of bees.

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## NORTH CENTRAL ZONE

Submitted by **Nancy Roberts\*CR** and Patricia Newell, Public Relations Co-Chairs

**NCZ website:** [www.renyncz.org](http://www.renyncz.org)

Michael returned to our June, 2025 luncheon ready to give an updated presentation about honey producing bees. However, even more exciting was Michael's recent experience as a "*HERO in SAVING THE QUEENS*"! Briefly, Michael came upon a crashed SUV and pickup truck. The SUV was transporting six boxes of nucleus colonies containing honey bees and queen bees. Some of the boxes broke during the impact. Michael happened to have his bee suit as well as nails and screws in his car. He stopped at the crash site, donned his gear, began putting boxes back together, scooping up clusters of bees, identifying the queens, and returning them to their repaired hives. Michael's retelling of his rescue story was seen on WWNY TV and published in the Journal & Republican and Watertown Daily Times. Elaine Avallone was the journalist who covered the story. She also gave RENY/NCZ a little publicity in the article. We were all enthralled as he related his experience to us in person! He is a true HERO!

Michael's power point presentation update was another amazing lesson for us, his students, school and community. Michael said, "The first pound of honey that was sent to our cafeteria was my proudest moment in my 32 years of teaching." All the honey from the South Lewis Honeybee Project, which was developed entirely through grant funding, has gone directly into the school's cafeteria. It is used in recipes that encourage the farm-to-table concept.

An interesting side note to Michael's story: Michael was a student teacher years ago under our Scholarship Chair, **John Gaffney**. John was a biology teacher at General Brown Central School. They remained in contact through the years. Gracielynn Black, one of our scholarship winners, has been a student in two of Mr. Comet's classes.



We would like to recognize and say thank you to some of our Executive Council members who work very hard to make RENY/NCZ successful. Our Hospitality gals, **Patti Scordo** and **Alicia Bach**, pictured at left, who handle reservations and make our luncheons run smoothly with decorated tables, name tags and friendly smiles of greeting.

We recognize our very important 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Community Service Co-chairs, **Toni Gigliotti** and **Patty Corey** pictured at right. Toni is also our Health Care contact. These two members work very hard to be sure every child in Lewis County who needs a winter coat, hat, mittens or boots is outfitted and warm.



We want to give a sincere thank you to our "Love Your Public Library" organizer, **Pat Dietrich**, for having this great idea years ago and keeping it alive and well. We thank her husband, past NCZ President **Doug Dietrich**, for being Pat's faithful helper with this project. Many libraries in the two counties have been surprised with \$50 donations through the years. Thank you! We also thank NNYCF photographer, Kenneth Eysaman, for the scholarship winners' photo. Pat and Doug are pictured at left.

### Dates to Remember:

NCZ Executive Council Meetings: August 6, 2025 10:00 a.m. NNYCF, Watertown  
Fall Business/Luncheon Meeting: September 17, 2025 Hilton Garden Inn, Watertown



## NORTHEASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Cindi LaFountain, Public Relations Chair



We are so happy that the rainy spring has left and looking forward to summer.

Our meeting in June was held in a new venue and well attended. Members brought personal healthcare items that will be distributed to those in need throughout our community. We had Thom Hallock, pictured, as our guest speaker. He was a local news anchor and currently works at our PBS station. He spoke about the Tristan Fund that was named in memory of the Hollacks' son. This fund gives support to The Hallock Giving Library. It provides free books to children in the greater Plattsburgh community every year. It also purchased books to give to the UVM Medical Center for parents with children in palliative care and in the NICU so they may read to their children, just as Tristan's parents enjoyed during their time with him. Our members donated books and money to the Tristain Fund at our luncheon. This touched us all.



We held our annual food drives at the end of the month and as always the public stepped up with their generous donations. Our new member numbers are growing thanks for the hard work of that committee. The Scholarship Committee announced that they have chosen a student and will announce him/her at our next meeting. We will be bringing items in the coming months that the Community Service Committee has found the need for in our local area.

NEZ wishes everyone a wonderful summer filled with sunshine and fun.



## NORTHERN ZONE

Submitted by Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



The sky has returned to a dazzling blue now that the Canadian forest fire smoke has mostly cleared here in Malone, NY. So sorry, Canadian friends, you have had it worse than we did! After taking my vehicle to the car wash last week to clear off the ash (and smashed bugs), I found it necessary to go again today to clean off a thick layer of pollen and dust. At least it's not snow--for now!

With that gorgeous blue sky overhead, it was a beautiful Saturday when I traveled to Brasher Falls, N.Y. on the St.Regis River in the St. Lawrence County part of NZ to attend the first Author Festival on June 14 presented by the new Badenhausen Library in Crapser Hall above the library.



**Gayla LePage** was also spotted in the audience. Congratulations to two of our NZ members who presented their books, signed and sold copies, and chatted with all the people and many North Country authors(13) gathered in the event hall. **Holly Chorba, pictured at right and left**, talked about her new book, *Forest Bathing in the Adirondacks*(2025) and had some of her other books on hand. You may remember that Holly has presented her books and travel adventures at our NZ meetings, as well as, at the RENY Annual Meeting and Convention.



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## NORTHERN ZONE

Submitted by Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



Holly describes herself as a naturalist/photographer who has never stopped teaching and learning about the beauty of our world through the sharing of her gorgeous photography and inspired storytelling after her retirement from teaching Biology/Chemistry at Brushton-Moira C.S.D. and from her position as High School Principal at BMCS D and later, at Potsdam C.S.D. She still hikes, kayaks, back-packs, reads, travels the world and creates multi-media productions which she has presented in many venues near and far. Her award winning photographs have appeared in many publications. Holly grew up in Buffalo, but, made Winthrop, N.Y. and Green Valley, Arizona her home for decades with her late husband, Ron.



Holly's long time friend and hiking companion, NZ member Francoise Goodrow, at left, presented her book, *The Resistant*, to a rapt audience. Fran was inspired by the stories her mom used to tell about her life in France during World War II and as a young(24) member of the French Resistance. Germaine Bessard was captured by the Gestapo, convicted at trial, imprisoned by the Nazis for six months and later released; she continued her work in the Resistance. When Fran was four, her family emigrated to Canada and then to Northern New York(Moira). Fran felt a strong compulsion to preserve her mother's history and stories for her own children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to come. Her beautiful book has many photos, maps, and historical documents as well as her mom's stories. She also presented her book at one of our NZ membership meetings. Fran was a French Teacher at several North Franklin County schools, spending many years at Brushton-Moira C.S.D. before retiring from BMSCD. She lives in Malone, N.Y. with her husband, Paul Goodrow, also an NZ member.

The Northern Zone membership met for their Spring meeting at the Potsdam Country Club on June 16. President **Gayla LePage** welcomed all and presided over the usual business with the minutes from Secretary **Betty Cook**, a Treasurer's Report from **Roxann Finley**, and committee reports. Roxann presented the new budget which was approved by the membership. Gayla relayed the latest state news from RENY. She thanked all NZ members who gave donations to the RENY President's Appeal. As NZ Scholarship Chairperson, Gayla also announced the names of the two NZ High School Senior Scholarship(\$400) recipients and recognized **Phil LePage** for his work on the NZ Scholarship Committee. We are still looking for a new NZ Membership Chair and Historian. Gayla announced that NZ has a new member: welcome to **Dennis Byrne** of Norfolk, NY. Chairperson **Betty Cook** gave her Friendly Service report; she received many thank you notes from members in appreciation of birthday cards she had sent.



Pictured is Gayla and Roxann

Public Relations Chair **Linda Crosby** said the 2025 Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant (increased to \$2,000!!) will be given this year (odd years) in the NZ; she has received all applications by the deadline and a recipient will be chosen soon. The grant honors the memory of NZ member Ross C. Hudson, late husband of RENY Past President Agnes Hudson of Gouverneur, NY.

Clifton-Fine/Edwards RTA President **Joe Russo** was thrilled to report that on May 19, the CFE unit joined Clifton-Fine CSD students and local fire department members to form a human U.S. flag while wearing red, white, blue and carrying white stars to celebrate Memorial Day. More on the next page...



## NORTHERN ZONE

Submitted by Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



The Madrid- Waddington CSD's drone team recorded the whole event from above. Joe also stated that all NZ members are always welcome to attend the unit's Annual Summer Membership Meeting which will take place during the second week in August in Star Lake, N.Y. where the annual P.A. Miranda Scholarship will be presented to a Clifton-Fine C.S.D. graduating Senior. It's amazing that their scholarship has been increased to \$2,000! The CFERTA also purchased a full-page yearbook ad that commemorates past recipients of the scholarship; that is a great idea that supports yearbook and CFERTA. More news and photos to come in the next *York State*.



**Gayla LePage** announced that Hagen Norman-pictured, son of Wendy and Joel Norman, Brushton, NY, is the recipient of our zone's Janet P. Dana Memorial Scholarship. A graduate of Brushton-Moira Central School, Hagen carried 7 plus courses every year in high school including ten courses earning North Country Community College credit during his Junior and Senior years. He graduated fourth in a class of 69 seniors with a 97.35 average. Hagen was very active in CFES Brilliant Pathways, Dollars For Scholars, National Honor Society, Varsity Soccer(Captain) and Varsity Hockey while serving as a Panther Peer Mentor. On his application, he stated that he believes "engaging students with the wonders of the natural world can ignite lifelong learning." His fascination with ecosystems, geology, and life sciences has motivated him to seek a career in Adolescence Education in Earth Science and Biology at SUNY Plattsburgh after being accepted at four other SUNY colleges, too.

The NZ recipient of the Ross C. Hudson Memorial Scholarship is Thomas Burkum, son of Claire and Ryan Burkum of Norwood, NY. Thomas graduated from Norwood-Norfolk Central School where he achieved a 97.12 average in a class of 74 seniors. While carrying a heavy academic load of classes, he enthusiastically participated in Key Club, Baseball, Varsity Cross Country, Varsity Indoor Track, Varsity Basketball, and Varsity Track and Field. Thomas stated that he has always been greatly inspired by his Instrumental Music teachers, who pushed him to improve his music skills, taught him life lessons, and offered him many opportunities. His school band program, he said, "has made me more disciplined, given me a creative outlet, and made me a better person." His positive experiences with music have inspired him to pursue a career in Music Education. Thomas has been accepted at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, Ithaca College and Nazareth University. Gayla LePage read at the meeting well-written, very sincere thank you notes from both NZ scholarship students.



After the meeting and lunch, NZ member **Holly Chorba** presented a multi-media program on Iceland: Land of Fire, Land of Ice depicting her adventures on the island. Pictured below. She described Iceland as a popular destination at northern edge of the North Atlantic Ocean and only 5 1/2 hours from New York City by airplane. Most people speak English, as well as Icelandic, and Iceland is the most peaceful nation in the world. Her beautiful photography and video revealed the stunning beauty of Iceland's geography, architecture, people, culture and ecology. One other NZ member, **Ronald Day**, at the meeting with his wife, Sheila, took a trip down Memory Lane while viewing the presentation. During his U.S. Navy service, he helped build a Quonset Building on Iceland!



Other NZ folks who attended and contributed to the meeting were **Alice Galvin**, **Diane Bonenfant**, **Rae Louise Tate**, and **Ellen Smith**. Thank you to **Holly Chorba**, **Gayla LePage**, and Betty Cook for planning a great NZ meeting.



## SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



"Life's persistent and most urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" ~Martin Luther King, Jr.

"What are you doing for others?" It really is a great question. Many retired teachers in Southeastern Zone have consistently shown generosity towards our graduating seniors by donating to scholarship funds. This year was no different. Thirteen deserving seniors have received cash awards because of the donations from former teachers.

Southeastern Zone awarded four \$500 scholarships. **Patti DeLeo**, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, did a great job in her write-ups of both the criteria used and the recipients ultimately chosen for the awards.

"A different approach was taken to reward accomplished students scholarships. Instead of focusing on students pursuing traditional degrees, the awards were reconfigured to include students seeking Voc Ed and Oc Ed post secondary training for certificated and licensed positions as well as those seeking bachelor degrees. Three scholarship recipients attend Beacon High School: Daveya Rodriguez, Ayanna Dennis and Lani Lopez. Richard Oliveras represents the Chester Academy.



Daveya Rodriguez, a high honor roll scholar athlete with fifteen college credits, plans a career in radiology. She is pursuing an AA and full certification as a radiology technician but is open to expanding her skills in the field as opportunity and new technology develops. After spending a great deal of time exploring certificated positions in the medical field, and shadowing the work and experiences of her mother, a surgical technician in infant and patient care, Daveya first chose ultrasound. After researching, she decided that radiology would allow her a more advanced exposure to patient care and be part of an ever-evolving field and new opportunities. Daveya played varsity basketball, varsity volleyball and volunteers in the Unified Basketball Program encouraging young athletes to participate in sports. She has maintained part time employment to save for her education and she will begin Westchester Community College.

A two year BOCES program in Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management sparked Beacon student Ayanna Dennis to recognize her love of smart eating. Ayanna has overcome early life eating disorders and wants to help others experience how to overcome the struggle and choose smart eating practices. Ayanna's ultimate goal is to be a full time pastry chef. She currently operates her own business as a baker and cake decorator while maintaining a full course load. For two years she has worked in the food industry and currently holds

certificates in food safety, sanitation practices, barista training and culinary techniques. Part time employment in a chocolate shoppe, ice cream shoppe and as an office assistant have sharpened not only her food creation, but her business skills and management techniques as well. Ayanna is planning to pursue a college degree while working but has not yet committed to a specific program. However, she sure has a choice to make with so many opportunities available to her.



More on the next page.....





## SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



A high honor roll student with several college credits and the highest scores available on AP exams, Lani Lopez will be attending the College of the Holy Cross with the goal of being a published author. Lani, fluent in English, French and Spanish, is a history and culture enthusiast. Her writing goal is to author pieces on environmental sustainability, cultural inclusivity and society's need to hold meaningful perspectives of nature. She volunteers time each week to an online program to help Ukrainian students learn English, is a docent for the Beacon Historical Society and operates her own business where she designs, sews, and sells tote bags. She is a recreational equestrian who volunteers at a local therapeutic equestrian program.

From Chester, Richard Oliveras has successfully participated in a two year Career and Tech Program that birthed a fascination with electrical theory, electrical construction, drafting and residential, commercial and green settings and their electrical needs. Richard engaged in hands on learning with power tools and technology systems and loved applying those skills in real life situations. He looks forward to developing his business skills. Richard plans to attend Eastwick College where he can complete his studies and receive licensure."

In addition to the scholarships awarded by SEZ, our individual units were not to be outdone.



Mikayla Mason, a graduate from Arlington High School, was awarded a \$750 scholarship from Dutchess County Retired Teachers Association. She plans to attend SUNY New Paltz, where she will study to become an elementary school teacher. Here is a beautiful thank you note written by Mikayla after she received her award:

"I am beyond grateful and want to thank you for this incredible opportunity. Being chosen for this award has given me not only financial support, but also encouragement that reminds me I'm on the right path. I want to thank my peers, teachers, mentors, and especially my boyfriend's family, who welcomed me as one of their own. This award reminds me that my hard work is paying off. I will carry it with me always as a reminder to keep going." Pictured with Mikayla is SEZ Scholarship Committee member **Mary Lou Davis**.

The Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association, MARTA for short, awarded a \$3000 scholarship to each of 5 deserving students.

Elizabeth Scheuermann, a senior at SS Seward Institute in Florida, NY, plans to attend Siena College to major in elementary education. She will minor in Spanish so she can work successfully with students of all backgrounds and abilities. Elizabeth has goats, chickens and bunnies and she loves to spend time with all of them.

Mia Villani from Valley Central High School is "beyond grateful" for her \$3000 scholarship. She plans to pursue a career as an adaptive physical education teacher at SUNY Cortland. She hopes to give kids with disabilities the same involvement in sports activities as their peers.



More on the next page.....



## SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

Submitted by Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



Daniel Hufcut, a senior from Pine Bush High School, plans to attend SUNY New Paltz this fall. He speaks two languages, English and Spanish. This will certainly come in handy as he pursues a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Alexis De Beauvernet is a senior from Minisink Valley High School. She will be attending The Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. Her future goals are to become a choir teacher at a high school where she can grow the music program and inspire more students to become involved with music. This year, Alexis was the drum major in her school's marching band.

Mason Oldham, a graduate of Port Jervis High School, will attend The Rochester Institute of Technology in the fall. His goal is to become a physics teacher. In his spare time, he enjoys astronomy and playing chess.

The Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association awarded a \$500 scholarship to Allison Rogers. Allison graduated from Tri Valley CSD and plans to major in Elementary Education at SUNY Cortland. Pictured is **Janet Carey** and **Sue Cecil** of Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association with Allison Rogers.



The Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association, NARTA for short, awarded two scholarships, each worth \$2000.



Joseph Crane, left, a graduate from Marlboro High School, also won a \$2000 scholarship. Joseph will attend Marist University where he plans to study History Education and Business Administration. Pictured is Joseph with SEZ Scholarship committee member **Ray LeDuc**.

Natalie Terwilliger, at right, graduated from Marlboro High School. She will be attending SUNY New Paltz and majoring in art education.



So there you have it! In a small way, our retired colleagues helped thirteen very deserving kids from the Hudson Valley as they set off to chase their dreams! Before we go, I have to thank my colleagues who shared all of the info about our winners: **Patti DeLeo, Mary Lou Davis, Barbara Topps, Janet Carey and Ray LeDuc**.

And now, to graduating seniors everywhere, we wish you all the best that life has to offer. Stay safe. We love you.

You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting so... Get on your way! ~Dr. Seuss

'Til Next Time...





## SOUTHERN ZONE



Submitted by Mary Lou Wood, Zone Co-President and Public Relations Chair

My hummingbirds have returned and are now tormenting my cats. Glad the feeder is hanging up high. Our snowbirds have returned and we are now reconnecting. With all of this rain our lawns are growing, flowers are blooming, animals are multiplying, families are cleaning out their homes, friends are helping each other and exercising together. Isn't it great.

Corning Area Retired Teachers (CARTA) enjoyed listening to Kip Zeiter, coordinator of The International Motor Racing Association. Watkins Glen car racing started from meager beginnings using the village streets as the first race track to the present time known as Watkins Glen International Race Track. This year Watkins Glen will host the 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of racing (1948-2023). The Watkins Glen race track came about after a fatal accident occurred on a street in the area. There was a need to make racing a safer enjoyable sport. As a little girl, I remember when Corning hosted racing cars in the middle of our streets.



CARTA enjoyed listening to the music group **Triple Treble**. These women played different instruments, wore different outfits, and sang enjoyable songs. The group consists of Rosie Madigan-Strong, Donna Gerych and Betty Gerych.



Eastern Broome Branch/ Western Broome Eastern Tioga retired Teachers' Association (EBB/WBET) presented the first annual Stephen Cornell scholarship to Charlie Ostrander a senior at Binghamton High School. He is number 5 with an average of 104% and will attend Middlebury College to study languages and translation.



hello  
Summer







## WESTERN ZONE



Submitted by Nancy White & Audrey Seidel, Public Relations Co-Chairs

The warm weather is finally here and Western Zone members look forward to the sunnier weather and re-energizing for the busy autumn ahead.

In this issue we would like to recognize another important committee of WZ, the Remembrance Committee. Members of this committee are as follows: **Anne Flansburg\*CR**, Chair; **Anita Blasiak**, **Therese Clarke**, **Josephine Cross**, **Amy Graves-DeMario**, **Beth Green**, **Rhoda Ann Harrington**, **Doris Kirsch\*CR**, **Pat Miceli**, **Marcia Myszka**, **Donna Potter**, **Sue Schmidt**, and **Marie Gerace Zafron**. The Remembrance Committee records the names of deceased educators who retired from or taught in the Western Zone's region, as well as any spousal member of RENY who passed away in the past year. A contribution in their memory is made to the DeCormier Fund of RENY which assists members in financial need. The list of deceased educators from the Western Zone is published in the summer issue of our WZ newsletter, *Western Currents*.

This is also the time of the year when we announce the recipients of 2024-2025 grants from Western Zone. This year's Grant Committee is comprised of: **Maria Hager**, Chair; **Carol Cascio**, **Therese Clarke**, **Ron Czapla**, **Elaine DeLisle**, **Geraldine Horton**, **Louise Klier**, and **Stanley Nowak**. The committee has selected and presented awards to this year's recipients and we congratulate them all.

The committee received approximately 40 applications and all were of high quality and very creative. The winners are as follows: Caroline Carr, Big Tree Elementary School, for her "Calm Down Corner" project; Craig Schroth, Byron Bergen Elementary School, for his "Meet the Microcosmos" project; Clare Foley, Westfield Academy and Central School, for her "Enhancing STEM Engagement through 3D Printing and coding with micro-bits" project; Shelaine Ress, Buffalo Public School #89/Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence, for her "Maglive Train Project"; and Karen Landahl, Michelle Porzio, and Tanya Gallagher, Wales Primary School, for their "Classroom Snack Cart for Special Education" project, and to Christie Waterman, Lake Shore Elementary School, for a visit from author Mat Heagerty.

The WZ Grant Committee also selected this year's NYSRTA Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant recipient. The recipient is Dr. Kristen Frawley from West Seneca West Elementary School for her "Outreach to the Community through Service Learning Projects". Pictured here is Grant Committee Chair **Maria Hager** with award recipient Dr. Frawley.

We congratulate the wonderful educators who were recipients of all this year's awards. We are also grateful to the Remembrance Committee of WZ for honoring the memory of so many.

