

A Message From Our President, Gayla LePage



It is hard to believe that I am starting the second year of my presidency. I thank you all for making this year go by without any major issues. As your president, I work for you. It is an honor. Remember you can contact me anytime by emailing at luer913@hotmail.com or calling at 518-569-3612.

I am so grateful for all of you who donated to the President's Appeal. We exceeded our goal of \$60,000. As of October 21, the total is \$60,916.11. Wow!! Our only sources of income are dues and the President's Appeal. This will help us so immensely. Once again, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I visited two zones (NEZ and CWZ) this year where I was greeted with much kindness. I hope to visit more this year so please let me know when you are meeting. I will do all I can to make it. I love road trips which give me a chance

to see our great state.

The annual meeting and convention went very well. The Central Zone did an excellent job. it was nice to see the four workshop rooms all full. I heard nothing but praise for all of the workshops. The TRS as keynote did a great job on telling us how they manage our retirement funds. I am now looking forward to next year's conference honoring the Eastern Zone. On an aside, I was glad Northern Zone wasn't dead last in the trivia this year.

In conclusion, I am continuing the history of NYSRTA/RENY. I feel it is important for the membership to know our history.

"Teacher Benefits in the 1950's and 60's - The average teacher salary in 1950 in NYS was about \$3,000 and a starting salary was about \$1,500. In 1960 the average teacher salary was \$5,000. Teachers in NY State were not allowed to enroll in Social Security until 1957. The reason, they already had the Teachers' Retirement System pension and many thought it would have been double dipping. Health Insurance would not be offered by employers/school districts until the 1970's, with the advent of collective bargaining.

In that setting, NYSRTA President Robert R. DeCormier, in 1956 crafted, along with Leonard Davis, a young insurance agent, the first health insurance plan for retired educators in the United States. Needless to say, membership for NYSRTA began to soar. It's reported that as many as 75,000 retired educators belonged to NYSRTA in the early 60's. By then Units, subdivisions of Zones began to form, especially in the larger zones.



SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

Submitted by **Judith Farmer*CR**



The 2025 RENY Annual Meeting and Convention was a success. The Central Zone did a great job. The welcome reception room was an inviting place with much information about Central Zone and the area of New York State where its members reside. It was interesting to see where our members fell on the timeline, which showed when each member began and ended his or her career in education. The centerpieces were a beautiful addition to the dining tables. On Thursday morning, conference attendees got to enjoy

the workshops presented by Central Zone members: “Colorful Creative Card Making”, by **Carolynne Whitefeather**, and “How A Child’s Fascination With The Circus Led To An Amazing Hobby”, by **William Tenity*CR**. Congratulations to **Ray Pitcher** and his committee.



There were two other workshops available to the attendees: “Fraud Prevention” presented by the NYS Division of Consumer Protection, and “Citizen Preparedness” given by the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. Both were well attended and beneficial to our members.

This year, instead of offering the TRS presentation as a workshop, it was the keynote speaker address. By doing this, all attendees got to hear about how our pensions are funded and managed. It was reassuring to know that our pensions are secure.

Once again, teams of six members from the various zones engaged in playing trivia. The competition was fierce. The questions were hard, but everyone seemed to enjoy the challenge.

Next year, the Eastern Zone will be our “Honored” Zone for the 2026 Annual Meeting and Convention. They have already begun planning, and we can look forward to another interesting time together.



BYLAWS REPORT

Submitted by **William Tenity*CR**



The Bylaws Committee presented the following proposed bylaws for approval at the Annual Meeting on October 15-17 2025. Both propositions were approved by the delegates present.

First Proposed Amendment - **Proposition RMFBOD** (Required Meetings for Board of Directors) **2025** changed the policy from at least three-face-to-face meetings a year to just two-face-to-face meetings each year.

Second Proposed Amendment - **Proposition AMAWAC** (Annual Meeting, Annual Workshop, & Annual Convention) **2025** eliminated the line “On a yearly basis, one (1) or more of the ten (10) zones, based on a rotation schedule, will host the Annual Convention.” Under this change, zones may opt to host or not host or may host with another zone.

Respectfully submitted: Chair: **William Tenity*CR**- CZ, **Pete Atchinson** -NEZ, **President Emeritus Carlyle T Campany*CR** - NCZ , **Bruce Croucher** - CWZ, **Helen Hoering** - SEZ.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION REPORT

Submitted by Janice Mullins, VP for Legislation



What are the issues most important to RENY members, all retirees, and all seniors? Over the past year and for many years, we have advocated for protecting Medicare, Medicaid, and our supplemental health insurance from our school districts. We have advocated for legislation to improve our pension COLA and for fixing the Tier inequities faced by newer retirees and future RENY members. We have advocated for protecting the Social Security Trust Fund. We have advocated for protecting seniors from fraud and abuse and for the increased training of professionals who work with elders in daycare settings and nursing homes. We have advocated for programs to increase the teaching workforce and to prevent the dismantling of the Federal Department of Education.

At times, it seems that our advocacy is to no avail, but if we don't advocate for change, nothing will change. We will not stop asking for positive change that protects you in retirement. We were hopeful that the Health Equity for Retirees Act (HERA) would protect us from being forced from traditional Medicare into Medicare Advantage Plans without having a choice. Where one judge rules against the practice (in NYC), another judge recently overturned that ruling. If the President's "Big Beautiful Bill" is only addressing fraud in its cuts to Medicaid and Medicare, then why don't these changes occur now instead of going into effect in 2027, after the midterm elections? Are they afraid that many voting seniors will be so adversely affected that control of the House and Senate will be flipped?

For the first time ever, beginning in September, qualifying New York taxpayers began receiving inflation refund checks. If you qualified, you did not need to do anything. The check was automatically sent to you. However, scammers are calling, mailing, and texting taxpayers about income tax refunds, including the inflation refund check. Stay Alert!

It is also important to be cautious of **false claims** circulating on social media about new federal stimulus checks funded by tariff revenue. As of the date this report was written, October 20, 2025, neither Congress nor the IRS has confirmed any new stimulus payment for 2025 and online rumors suggesting checks of \$1,390, \$1,702, or \$2,000 are **false**. Even the legal foundation for the tariffs that would fund these rebates is currently under judicial review. The IRS is warning taxpayers to be wary of scams seeking personal information based on these rumors.

The Legislative Action Committee will begin meeting virtually in November to identify our State and Federal Legislative Priorities for the 2026 Legislative Session. Discussions with State Legislators begin in late February and continue into March. Discussions with Federal Legislators begin in May. We need

to increase RENY member participation in our advocacy efforts. Every Zone is assigned a list of State and Federal Legislators to contact. Sadly, we are reaching very few of them. If you are interested in becoming a RENY Legislative Advocate, please contact Kristen Valentine at the RENY office. She will pass your name on to the LAC member who represents your Zone.

If you change Nothing... Nothing will change. We do have the power for change. We all have a voice. We all have a vote.



ROBERT R. DECORMIER MEMORIAL TRUST FUND REPORT



Submitted by **Anne Flansburg*CR**, Chair and Trustee



Our 501(c)(3) Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund has proven to be a lifeline for RENY members who have requested financial assistance. This Trust, named after the first President of NYSRTA, namely **Robert R. DeCormier**, can continue, thanks to the donations of Zones, Units, and Individuals.

There are two grants available to all members of RENY, which includes educators, spousal members, and affiliate members. The individual must be a member for at least three years prior to the request. The **monthly stipend grant** is an amount determined by the individual needs of the recipient and sent monthly. This is evaluated every two years. A **special needs grant** is a one-time grant, given for specific needs, such as hearing aids, dental work, home maintenance, and others. Special assistance was given to RENY victims of hurricane damage.

For the year 2025, thus far **NINE of the ten Zones** have donated. They are: **Central, Eastern, Central Western, Long Island, Northern, Northeastern, Southern, Southeastern and Western.**

NINETEEN locals have donated. They are: **Amsterdam – EZ, Cayuga County - CZ, Chenango - CZ, Clifton/Fine/Edwards – NZ, Corning – SZ, East End – LIZ, Eastern Niagara – WZ, Genesee County – WZ, Oneida – CZ, Ontario - CWZ, Oswego – CZ, Rensselaer County – EZ, Saratoga Springs - EZ, Springville/West Valley – WZ, Sullivan - SEZ, Upper Montgomery County - EZ, West Seneca – WZ, Wyoming County – CWZ, Yates - CWZ.** The **Buffalo Retired Administrators Association (BRAA)** also donated.

Since the office is no longer located in a central area, make **donations payable to:**
Robert R DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund and send to:

Mary Lou Davis, Treasurer 125 Andrews Rd; LaGrangeville NY 12540.

This Chair, on behalf of all RENY members, wishes to thank the members of the Trust: **Colette Astoria, Richard Brogowski, Mary Lou Davis, Beth Green, and Joe Russo** for their untiring efforts and co-operation, as well as **President Gayla LaPage** and the office staff Kathi Bassett and Kristen Valentine, who assist us in our endeavors. Our heartfelt thanks to our donors, who enable us to help retired educators of RENY in need.





FRIENDLY SERVICE REPORT

Submitted by **Judith Corigliano**, VP for Friendly Service



Notes from Convention to a Road Trip -Route I -80 westward....

Heard from a dinner table at '25. "Kaleidoscope" Convention.... "What happens at TS, stays at TS" was spoken, in jest of course, but telling all is.... that the message is good news. The Annual meeting and Convention was fun; a time to learn, share, hug oldies, and meet new friends. You are never too young or old to meet new faces of retired teachers.

The workshops that I attended were just right for me. Fraud and a fun (making a greeting card) and the former fraud workshop was reinforced when I entered an Ohio travel center and heard a public service announcement warning travelers about e-Scams that we are exposed to daily. From the NYS Consumer Protection division, we learned how scammers work on our worst fears, play on your emotions with the pressure of deadlines and urgent need for personal and financial information. Strategies to deal with calls, notifications, and emails were also shared. Also, the public can file complaints or concerns with the State. The fraudsters have become increasingly sophisticated and convincing with their methods and abilities to mimic official graphic logos. We were informed that all our important government related accounts only use US mail to notify you, not phone calls/e-notifications. Both NYS and AARP have extensive guides available online to advise members how to protect themselves.

The annual Friendly Service Committee meeting of Zone Chairs was most productive. LIZ FS chair, **President Emeritus Angelo Grande*CR** shared a box of greeting cards from a deceased retiree's family and even the clean stray envelopes were snapped up by two friendly service members who make their cards by recycling, creating new cards. Two zones shared thank you notes from appreciative 85-year-olds and from families whose parents also enjoyed being remembered over their lives with the cards, calls from Friendly Service workers.

We learned that RENY has one 107-year-old and although she may not be at her sharpest, her pension like yours is in the very capable hands of a smart and young group of bright ones, from accountants, managers, and lawyers... lead by a dedicated group of trustees. This we learned from a lively and most informative keynote group presentation.

In these times of turmoil and uncertainty for many in our nation, I overheard at an Iowa truck stop...a smiling cashier was being greeted by people asking how he was doing, he replied "Living the dream, one nightmare at a time". Dreams, nightmares, uncertain times, I saw thousands of miles of new roads are being improved westward, hundreds of wind turbines, miles of tilled soil, silage, baled hay, cattle, oil wells, soda and coal mining all, along the way greeting by smiling service workers wishing you good travels, nice day.

Best wishes for safe and happy holidays from Friendly Service and may your only nightmare be running out of Halloween candy or your oven quitting the day before Thanksgiving. (this has happened to a lot of us)

From Wyoming - yours, **Judith Corigliano**

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CENTRAL ZONE

Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, & Oswego Counties

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



Prior to the Central Zone's hosting the RENY 2025 Convention in October, the Zone held its annual meeting hosted by the Cayuga unit. This early September luncheon meeting was held in Auburn at the Ward W. O'Hara Agricultural & Country Living Museum's Dr. Joseph F. Karpinski Sr. Educational Center back-to-back with Cayuga's annual meeting. The museum has amazing past country life exhibits including audio tours and agricultural exhibits. Definitely a place to visit again.

During the Central Zone's Annual meeting, the highlight was the reading of passed 2025 Zone members with the ringing of bells. This was followed by the RENY convention's host's preparation. After the meeting, members toured the museum and got a preview of the miniature circus display prepared by Cayuga President **Bill Tenity*CR** on which he would have an informational presentation at the convention.

Members were delighted by the convention favors: small, zippered bags created by **Lee Beals** with **Stella King's** kaleidoscope fabric, enclosed with small kaleidoscopes ordered by **Ray Pitcher**, and notebooks and pens prepared by **Bill Tenity*CR** and **Stella**. **Marilyn Dominick** and **Lee** discussed their preparation of the timeline to demonstrate when conference attendees started and ended their educators' careers. **Ray Pitcher** created a pictorial display of the Central Zone's five seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter, and mud displayed near the raffle baskets created by each of RENY's 10 Zones. (welcome photo of Stella & Lee at right)



Several of Oswego Unit members took charge of selling the Zones' baskets' raffle tickets the first day and a half of the convention. Proceeds from this raffle are shared equally between the Zones. The Onondaga and Oswego units were tasked with creating the Central Zone's sumptuous baskets this year. One featured delicious food products available in the Central Zone area, and the other totally chocolate. Pictured at right is Oswego Unit selling basket raffle tickets.



Aprons, ordered by **Kathy Pfeifer** of Chenango for the Zone's

worker bees were embellished at the



convention by Oswego **Lynn Grandjean's** sparkly kaleidoscope stickers. Kathy also produced the Kaleidoscope theme program cover. **Carolynne Whitefeather**, **Mary Ann Luciano**, and **Lee Beals** produced RENY Central Zone pins for all the Central Zone's attendees. (photo of Carolynne & Lee putting together the pins.)



More from CZ on next page...

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CENTRAL ZONE

Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, & Oswego Counties

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



Following the Zone's Annual meeting, the Chenango unit produced multiple centerpieces made from donated vases, artificial flowers, dried flowers, and ribbons with a small kaleidoscope in each. Members **Diana Torta, Judith Smith, Sharon Wilson, and Mary Ann Luciano** made up the flower arranging team after which the arrangements filled Mary Ann's living room for two weeks before the convention before being transported to the convention site. (photo on right of Judith Smith creating basket)



At the convention, the Central Zone was also responsible for selling tickets for a 50/50 raffle with the 50% of the proceeds going to the convention's host zone to help defray convention costs. The total intake for this raffle was \$1,396. A lucky winner on each night after dinner was surprised at their winnings. (photo at left of Stella King selling tickets)

The RENY Convention was formally opened by **Gayla Page**, RENY President who graciously remarked that the President's Appeal made its goal of \$60,000. and thanked all who participated. Ray thanked all in the Zone who worked on the conference from the units and the Central Zone and the Zone's delegates attending. See list at the end of this article.

Following the opening remarks, **Carolynne Whitefeather** gave a First People's Invocation highlighting community and coming together for the greater good. **Mary Ann Luciano**, joined by her sister **Adel Luciano**, a delegate from RENY's Eastern Zone, led the group in the national anthem. Carolynne gave a different invocation on the second night focusing on words and their meanings to First Peoples, followed by Mary Ann and Adel leading the song *America to the Beautiful*. Carolynne also produced a greeting card making workshop that 40 members enjoyed working from packets and materials. (photo at right of the workshop)



During the Delegates' Business Meeting, **Dell Ford Jordan** presented her Membership Report as outgoing RENY Vice President for Membership. We thank Dell for her dedication and continuing impressive work as the Onondaga Unit's Co-President with **Marilyn Dominick** and the Central Zone's Vice President for Membership and Friendly Service.

Previous to the RENY Convention, the Chenango and Onondaga units held their annual and last summer meeting, respectively. Chenango held their catered lunch at the Oxford Memorial Library and featured RENY member **Renee Korver** who did a reading from his new book *Riding with the Milkman* about his early childhood and emigrating from Holland after World War II. Ron Zisa, certified yoga master, then lead the group in gentle chair yoga. Chenango is now preparing for their winter programs: a holiday tea, January workshop, and National Pi Day before the April Central Zone meeting. (Continued on next page)

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CENTRAL ZONE

Cayuga, Chenango, Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, & Oswego Counties

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

In July, the Onondaga Unit invited Chenango to their future educators' scholarships and 90+ age celebration where each unit learned about the other. In addition to Onondaga's 90+ attending members, they jointly honored Chenango RENY member **Arleen Russ**, 100 years young, who now lives in Syracuse. Arleen, attending with her daughter, and two other 90+ members gave teaching advice to the future educators. Arleen advised patience. (Photos at right, Arleen Russ and the 90+ members)



Onondaga's September meeting featured the "In the Interest of Others" group that collaborates with school nurses, counselors, and social workers in several area school districts to meet unmet needs of families usually not identified, who need support to provide for their children. This organization is one of many whom Onondaga members provide volunteer service.

The Central Zone thanks all the RENY members and staff who join and participate in RENY activities: in the units, the Zones, and the statewide organization. The following Zone members participated in the Central Zone's host activities with * indicating a delegate: **Bill Tenity*CR***, **Dell Ford Jordan***, **Peg Reading***, **Colette Astoria***, **Stella King***, **Marilyn Dominick***, **Gwynne Bodle***, **Dr. Mary Ann Luciano***, **Lee Beals***, **Lynn Grandjean***, **Vera Wolczek***, **Diana Torta***, **Jane Hicks***, **Carolynne Whitefeather (Alt *)**, **Dr. Brian Brennan**, **Rachel Ruf Baker**, **Wynnette Dohse**, **Shirley Hanley**, **Storm Hammond**, **Kathy Pfeifer**, **Judith Smith**, **Sharon Wilson**, and **Adel Luciano** (Eastern Zone). Together we created a standard for all the other Zones to follow. A special thank you to all the delegates and the alternates at the convention. Your willingness to step up and serve was greatly appreciated during this changed pilot convention.

(RENY Central Zone Group photo)



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EASTERN ZONE

By Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair



At the RENY/Eastern Zone Fall Meeting held in September 2025, Officers were elected for a two year term starting November 1, 2025. The included President: **Janice Mullins**; Senior Vice President: **Mark Notarnicola**; Secretary: **Lisa Devaren**; V.P. Membership: **Joyce Notarnicola**; V.P. Friendly Service: **Marjorie Leibowitz**; V.P. for State Legislation: **Janice Mullins** and V.P. For Federal Legislation: **Albert Ciejka**. **Marjorie Leibowitz** was elected Treasurer for a six year term. Picture at left was sent by **Virginia Madore** (left Joyce Notarnicola) {standing Pam Love & Lisa Devaren} (right Mark Notarnicola & Rosalie Oliver)



At RENY/New York State Retired Teachers Association Annual Meeting held October 16th 2025, Eastern Zone's President, **Janice Mullins**, was elected State Chairperson for Legislation Action. Delegates for the Annual Meeting includes **Carolyn Bovee**, **Albert Ciejka**, **Gloria Ciejka**, **Lisa Devaren**, **Marjorie**

Leibowitz, **Pamela Love**, **Adel Luciano**, **Virginia Madore** and **Rosalie Oliver**. {Pictured on right, top, at the Annual Meeting and Convention in October are **Virginia Madore**, **Rosalie Oliver** and **Marjorie Leibowitz**} {Pictures on right, bottom, is **Lisa Devaren** and **Carolyn Bovee**} {Pictured on left, top, at the convention are **Albert** and **Gloria Ciejka**} {Pictured on left, bottom, are **Adel Luciano**, **Tom Mullins**, **Marjorie Leibowitz** and **Janice Mullins**.}



Former Eastern Zone President, **John Mizerak** passed away on September 20, 2025. He also served as Eastern Zone Historian. He was 90 and had retired from Germantown Central School District after spending 35 years in Education.



Unit Activities: Capital Region (RCRTA) Unit President, **Marjorie Leibowitz** said that her unit will have the end of the year business luncheon on December 10th at the Gateway Diner in Albany. At this luncheon, the unit will be collecting food for the Food Bank in Latham. Over the past several years, the unit has collected over 200 pounds of food for the Food Bank. **Donna French** wrote that the Columbia County Unit held their final luncheon meeting on October 16, 2025. They met to see old friends and discuss continued involvement with RENY in other ways. Delaware County Unit President, **Pat Reynolds**, said their Fall gathering was held at the Schoolhouse Restaurant in Downsville with a short meeting before lunch. Christopher Durbom, an actor, artist, author and wildlife rehabilitator was their speaker.

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LONG ISLAND ZONE

By Eileen Holmes*CR, Zone President



The Long Island Zone held its annual Fall meeting on September 24th at the Birchwood of Polishtown Restaurant in Riverhead. Election of officers for the 2025-26 term took place: **Eileen Holmes*CR** was reelected President, **Lois Thornberg*CR** was elected Vice President, **Alicia Winowsky**, secretary and **Dom LiCausi**, treasurer.



Congratulations to **Lois Thornberg*CR**, Long Island Zone's newest Silver Pin recipient!! Awarding the Silver Pin was a highlight of the Fall meeting. The award recognizes exemplary service given to LIZ, RENY and the local units. Lois has been an active member for many years, serving in many positions for LIZ, RENY, and for the West End unit.

The East End RTA held its annual Fall meeting and election of officers for the 2025-26 term resulted in **Dom LiCausi** being reelected president, **Agnes Dansereau**, vice president, **Susan LiCausi**, secretary and **Eileen Holmes*CR** treasurer. EERTA Community Service Chair **Rosemary McKinley** announced that the next Love Your Public Library donation will go to the Riverhead Library in November and **Agnes Dansereau** announced the EERTA Holiday Party will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at Sophie's Restaurant in Southold, NY.

Hats off to the Central Zone for their admirable results in presenting the 2025 RENY convention. The LIZ sent 12 delegates and enjoyed the 4 workshops, the very informative keynote address by NYSTRS pension speakers and the trivia night entertainment. We didn't win anything but it was fun!

Pictured in back from left to right is **David Keefe**, **Eileen Holmes*CR**, **Alicia Winowsky**. Front from left to right is **Lois Thornberg*CR**, **Rosemary McKinley** and **Agnes Dansereau**. Not pictured but also attended are our other delegates **Angelo Grande*CR** and **Kathy Grande*CR**, **Mary Ella Moeller*CR**, **Dom and Sue LiCausi** and **Robert Svoboda**.



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NORTH CENTRAL ZONE

By Nancy Roberts*CR & Patricia Newell, Public Relation Co-Chairs

NCZ website: www.renyncz.org



"In every walk with nature, one receives more than he seeks." **John Muir**

June 23, 2025 proved to be one of those hot (88 degrees) but perfect summer days! Ten NCZ members and friends went out that day in search of adventure and beauty. They were not disappointed. **David Schryver**, NCZ Leisure & Travel Chairperson and co-author of Waterfalls of New York State and author of five other books on waterfalls in the northern NY region, was the guide for this hiking excursion. He planned and researched the itinerary for a trip to several remarkable waterfalls in Jefferson & in Lewis County.

The adventurers carpooled to the first stop which was NCZ member **Judi Greene**'s home in Adams. Lower Talcott Falls, which consists of several distinct drops, runs along the back of her property which has been in her family for several generations. Judi was an informative guide and gracious hostess. The group was also able to view the iconic Talcott Falls not far from her home.



From there, these brave hikers made their way to the Totman Gulf Falls south of Adams. It was worth the challenging walk through downed trees and branches from a recent storm to view this gorgeous site. The beauty of this waterfall will take your breath away. The cool, refreshing mist felt heavenly on this warm day. In short, the setting was picture perfect. Pictured at right is the waterfall adventurers: L to R: **Woody Lyndaker, Judy LaDuc, Marcia Schryver, Teresa Lyndaker, Mary Hall, Jim Newell, Kathy Allan, Patti Stephens, Pat Newell, and David Schryver.**

Next, the group continued on and viewed Lyons Falls and then arrived at the Center Street Diner. Lunchtime was a great time to chat and to refuel. The food was good and plentiful. The service was friendly, and all the homemade pies looked luscious. After lunch, this hardy band visited Kosterville Falls, Gould Mills Falls, Agers Falls, and the Double Drop/Lyonsdale Falls/T-Bone on the Moose River. It's traditional at the end of these tours to enjoy an ice cream treat. The Cold Rush in outer Watertown with its parlor chairs and AC turned out to be the ideal spot to close out the day! For NCZ members, this was a memorable day filled with friendship, laughter, and a deeper appreciation of the glorious beauty of the North Country.



See more from Nancy and Pat on the next page...

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NORTH CENTRAL ZONE

By Nancy Roberts*CR & Patricia Newell, Public Relation Co-Chairs

NCZ website: www.renyncz.org

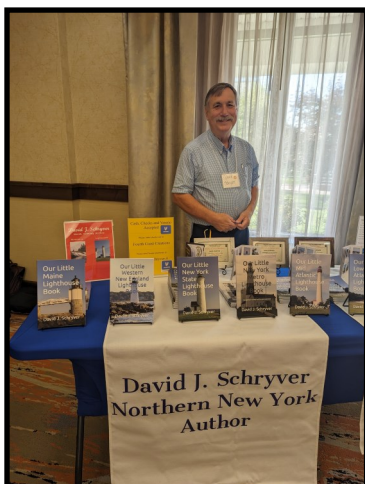


Pictured are **Pat Dietrich** (on the left), NCZ Chairperson of the community service project "Love Your Public Library," arranged for a raffle drawing at our Scholarship Luncheon in June. Four raffle tickets were drawn. Four libraries will each be awarded a \$50 donation to build their collection or to support a special project. On June 20th, NCZ Treasurer **Barbara Cole-Russell** (on the right) presented the donation to Patti Hughes, Library Director of the Lyme Free Library in Chaumont. Another raffle drawing was also held at our September Luncheon. NCZ/RENY supports literacy!

The Fall Business Luncheon is always a celebrated event for NCZ. Members were excited that we would hold this luncheon once again at the



Hilton Garden Inn in Watertown. Some of the important business to be conducted was the election of new officers and reports from our various committees. The elected NCZ leadership team for 2025-2026 will be: **Rick Morris**, President; **Toni Gigliotti**, 1st VP; **Patricia Newell**, 2nd VP; **Barbara Cole-Russell**, Treasurer; and **Elwood "Woody" Lyndaker**, Secretary. Congratulations to these dedicated officers!



After a tasty soup & sandwich luncheon, members were treated to a beautiful power point presentation by **David Schryver**. "Lighthouses of NYS" focused on general information on lighthouses with a brief video trip to visit several local lighthouses. It was delightful to see the Tibbetts Point Lighthouse on Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River along with so many other fascinating lighthouses. An accomplished researcher and published author, David has seven books in his Little Lighthouse series. These books and his waterfall books were available for purchase at this event.

One of the questions raised on the presentation was who determines the characteristics of a lighthouse. David initially responded that it was the Coast Guard and said he would look into it. Upon further research, his answer was correct. In the United States, the Coast Guard does determine this. David

posted a detailed explanation on our NCZ website.

Continue to the next page for more from the North Central Zone....

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NORTH CENTRAL ZONE

By Nancy Roberts*CR & Patricia Newell, Public Relation Co-Chairs

NCZ website: www.renyncz.org



The 2025 RENY “Kaleidoscope of Color” Annual Meeting and Convention at Turning Stone was enthusiastically attended by our NCZ delegates... NCZ member **Debbie Hagan**, Membership Chair **Jackie Maloney**, President **Rick Morris**, Former RENY President **James Newell & Patricia Newell**, 2nd VP. We are proud that Kimberley Maercklein from the NYS Division of Consumer Protection was one of the presenters at the Convention. Her workshop on Fraud Prevention was very well received. Ms. Maercklein presented at our NCZ Fall Business Luncheon in September 2024.

This year’s RENY Convention proved to be a colorful event which in addition to conducting business treated attendees to interesting workshops, delicious food, and opportunities to socialize with good friends and new acquaintances. Pictured L to R: Dr. Jim and Patricia Newell, Rick Morris, Jackie Maloney, and Debbie Hagan.



NORTHEASTERN ZONE

By Cindi LaFountain, Public Relations Chair



As you know, last month was our annual convention and the first one that I have attended. I didn’t know what to expect but was sure that I would learn a lot. It was hosted by the Central Zone at Turning Stone Casino and the theme was Kaleidoscope. After our four and half hour drive, we checked in and got a handmade goody bag that included our very own kaleidoscope. I then headed to the Membership Committee Meeting. Our energizer bunny, **Sandra Lashua**, was unable to attend and I was going to try to fill in for her. The meeting was attended well and I got some great ideas to share with Sandy and her committee. The people there were friendly and welcoming. We had a wonderful dinner that night and the keynote speakers talked about our retirement system and how our pension is managed. I was sure I’d lost in all the numbers and terms but they did a great job explaining it all.

The next day, after breakfast, I attended a workshop where we made greeting cards using our creative skills. Needless to say, I don’t have many. It was a fun and relaxing way to meet people from other zones. Our next stop was the annual meeting. I wasn’t too sure what it would entail and was pleasantly surprised how efficiently it was and how quickly it went. Everyone was heard and listened to before each



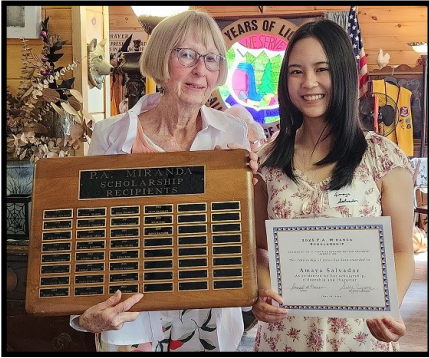
vote. We finished so another meeting wasn't necessary which made us all happy. The day ended with us all wearing something bright to go along with the theme, another delicious dinner and a fun game of trivia. NEZ started strong and ended up last on the board. We left with our heads held high and a smile on our faces. We left the next morning satisfied with what we experienced and learned in the past two days. If you ever get the chance to go to the convention, take it. You won't be sorry. I can't wait for next year. Pictured: attendees **Dick Brogowski, James and Tracey Howard, Kevin Mulligan*CR, Glenda Smith Rowe, Cindi LaFountain and James and Fran Shutts.**

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NORTHERN ZONE

By Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



On a hot, sunny day, **Gayla LePage** and I traveled to Star Lake to visit with members of the NZ Unit, Clifton-Fine Retired Teachers Association, at their Annual Membership Meeting on August 14, which took place at the Twin Lakes Hotel. The always welcoming group had a business meeting at 10 a.m., a basket raffle put together by **Debbie Yartz**, the presentation of the P.A. Miranda Scholarship, a delicious lunch, and a special guest speaker.

Scholarship Committee Chairperson **Sally Capone**, pictured at left, and her committee of **Rogene Rice**, **Jean Pomerville**, **Chuck and Debbie Yartz**, **Margie Russo**, and **Laural Reynolds** reviewed many applications and chose

Clifton-Fine Central School District 2025 graduate Amaya Salvador, daughter of Bryan and Gloria Salvador and sister of Abela, of Star Lake, to be awarded the \$2,000 P.A. Miranda Scholarship, which was just increased this year from \$1,500. Amaya was very active in high school in sports (track, golf, softball, volleyball), music (band, chorus, musicals), and Senior Play. She will study Nursing in college. Her philosophy is to “work hard even when no one’s watching.” Photo provided by Alice Galvin.

Generous unit members donate to the scholarship fund, the School Backpack Pantry Program, and the local school supplies program in addition to their annual dues. The CFRTA welcomed two new members, **Pam Johnson** and **Mary Kay Durham**, to RENY/NZ/CFRTA membership. After lunch, President **Joe Russo**, pictured at right, introduced guest speaker Charles Shene of Fine, N.Y., who spoke about his relative, Marian Young Taylor, who was just featured in an article in the June 2025 issue of Adirondack Life magazine. Marian grew up in Star Lake and made a career in teaching, acting, fashion design, journalism, publishing, and as a foreign correspondent in Europe during pre-WW II years. Later, in New York City, as “Martha Deane”, for 31 years, she had her own radio show during which she interviewed hundreds of celebrities from presidents to governors, royalty, actors, and famous scientists; according to The New York Times, “she always wanted guests who would discuss pressing issues in life, politics and culture.” Marian had an amazing career. All NZ members are always welcome to attend CFRTA meetings, including the annual Christmas Party, which is being planned now.



The NZ Fall membership meeting was held on September 25 at Mo’s Pub and Grill, where President **Gayla LePage** conducted the business meeting and gave her president’s report with the latest RENY state updates concerning the RENY portfolio, the President’s Appeal, and the upcoming RENY Annual Meeting and Convention (held on October 15-17).

Pictured at left-Ellen Smith and RENY Treasurer Diane Bonenfant.

See more from Northern Zone on next page...

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NORTHERN ZONE

By Linda Crosby, Public Relations Chair



Gayla also discussed with the NZ members at the fall meeting our convention baskets, and announced the convention delegates (**Gayla, Phil LePage, Betty Cook, Tom Cook, Alice Galvin, Diane Bonenfant, Ron and Helen Boyea**). Thank you to **Ellen Smith** for donating the beautiful baskets which she acquired on a trip to Zimbabwe. The baskets were filled by The Holy Grail, a gift shop in Star Lake and the Macadam Cheese Plant in Chateaugay, N.Y. Pictured at right is **Alice Galvin** with one of the baskets.



The NZ members approved the new NZ budget prepared by Treasurer **Roxann Finley** and the state bylaws presented by Gayla. Committee reports were presented with many suggestions and ideas for Community Service (**Betty Cook** suggested street clean up, food pantry, raffle), Friendly Service, Spring membership meeting, and Nominations. Gayla announced the 2025 NZ Scholarship Awards (reported in the Summer York State). After the meeting, Charlie Shene gave a presentation on his relative Marian Young Taylor with a few different twists from his August speech at CFRTA.

The 2025 RENY Hudson-Kramer Memorial Grant of \$2,000 was awarded in NZ to Angela Brown of Canton, N.Y., who wrote a very impressive application. She is an English Teacher at Hugh C. Williams High School in the Canton Central School District. Angela will use the grant funds to establish a Yoga/Meditation Program for students during the after-classes activity period. As a 200 hour certified Yoga instructor, Angela has heartfelt sentiment for the physical and mental healing effects of Yoga. While volunteering her time, she will use the grant to purchase Yoga equipment (mats, bolsters, blocks, straps, eye pillows) and set up a room that her very supportive principal, Bob Kotz, found for the program. As Grant/Public Relations Chairperson, **Linda Crosby** presented the grant check and RENY certificate to Angela on July 11 outside her high school with her two daughters in attendance. After photos, I treated Angela and her daughters to lunch at the restaurant, 11 West, in Canton. Congratulations to a very honest, worthy, and dedicated teacher! Pictured at left is grant winner Angela Brown and Grant and PR Chairperson **Linda Crosby**.



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SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

By Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



Question: What do you call a teacher who is always happy on Monday morning?

Answer: RETIRED!

From October 15--17, 2025, many of us who are "always happy on Monday morning", attended The Retired Educators of New York State Annual Meeting and Convention at Turning Stone Resort and Casino in Verona, NY. This year's host was Central Zone and SEZ would like to thank them for planning and running a wonderful conference. It's great to catch up with retirees from all over the state.

Teachers are known to be lifelong learners. Between the keynote speaker, interesting workshops, and a brutal game of Trivia, we all left knowing more than when we arrived! Thanks again, Central Zone!

A bit more behind the scenes but no less important for the success of the conference are RENY's Executive Office Manager, Kathi Bassett and Executive Assistant, Kristen Valentine. SEZ is grateful for all you do and in awe that you make it all look so easy.

Besides our delegates attending the state conference, members of Southeastern Zone have had a busy and productive fall season. **Donna Harness**, SEZ President, held the annual fall meeting and luncheon at Denny's in Newburgh on September 25th. **David Keefe**, a retired teacher who served in various capacities on the NYSUT Pension and NYS Retirement Committee, was the guest speaker. He provided a behind the scenes look at the safety and security of our pension fund. It's always reassuring to hear this kind of information. We are all blessed to have been employed in a profession that provided a pension. Now that we're retired, we count on that monthly deposit into our bank account. It's nice to know that it's being managed so well.

Donna also shared that this year, SEZ generously donated \$1000 to the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund and another \$2000 to scholarship recipients. And, although winter is on the horizon which means social activities scale down quite a bit, we can look forward to our Spring Luncheon on May 28, 2026!

In addition to zone activities, our individual units have been quite busy.

MARTA, Mid-Hudson Area Retired Teachers Association, offered a full variety of activities for its members this fall. To kick off the school year, two Ice Cream Socials were held to welcome new retirees to our organization. Their annual fall luncheon on October 8th was held at Temple Hill Tavern. Their Holiday party on December 2nd will be at Christopher's Bistro in Chester. Donations of children's gifts, staples for local food banks, and socks for homeless shelters will be collected. There will be games, prizes, and lots of visiting and catching up with friends. Other activities include a Farm Lunch in Goshen, tours of Touro Medical College, houses in Goshen decorated for the holidays, and the Lyndhurst Manor Christmas Tour.

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SOUTHEASTERN ZONE

By Maureen Coffey, Public Relations Chair



Future programs include another presentation by Paul Clemente, local history teacher and collector of American history artifacts and antiques, titled "Before Yankees and Rebels...Royalists and Roundheads--- England's Forgotten Civil War". There's also a seminar on coordinating our health benefits with Medicare. Rounding out the already robust agenda, activities are planned in bowling, ceramics, hikes, Christmas cookie decorating, a Paint N Sip, a pottery class, and wreath decorating.

NARTA, Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association, held a kickoff breakfast on September 4th at Temple Hill Tavern to welcome new retirees. Their Fall Luncheon on November 6th, also at Temple Hill Tavern, honored members 85 years and older. Their Holiday Luncheon will be December 5th, also at Temple Hill Tavern. Their very successful Sock It To Me campaign continues to collect socks for shelters or anyone who needs them. At their holiday luncheon, they will also collect toys and children's books.

SCRTA, Sullivan County Retired Teachers Association held their annual fall meeting and luncheon on September 9th at Casa Mia in Hurleyville. Assembly woman Paula Elaine Kay was their guest speaker.

Looking back on the past few months, it seems that retirement hasn't slowed us down one bit! And to that I say, "Good for us!" To all members of NYSRTA/RENY, we in Southeastern Zone wish you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season.

'Til next time...



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SOUTHERN ZONE

By Mary Lou Wood, Public Relations Chair



We have now entered Fall with winter close behind. My flowers are frozen and the birds have flown south. I wonder if the birds hitched a ride with our snowbirds! We have noticed several hawks in the neighborhood. They might have taken up hunting like our deer hunters.

Our units are busy celebrating members' 90+ birthdays, and remembering our friends who have passed on. Programs are informing us on how to stay healthy and active, and providing entertainment.

Corning Area Retired Teachers invited Nicole Walker and Laurie Mault from the Office for the Aging. They provided excellent ideas on how to take care of ourselves as we age. They passed out a book called "Your Tool Kit for Active Living with Chronic Pain: Getting your life back". A CD-Rom titled "Relaxation for Mind And Body", Pathways to Healing by Catherine Regan, PhD and Rick Seidel, PhD were included.

Corning Area Retired Teachers celebrated their 90+ aged teachers' birthdays. The celebration and the tour of Heritage Village (Brown Town School House) were very well attended and very festive. Picture to the right is The Heritage Village, located in Corning, houses the Brown Town School house, a one room schoolhouse, the Cooley Blacksmith shop, the Benjamin Patterson Inn, and many other buildings. These original buildings dated back to the 1800's.



BIRTHDAY MEMBERS



Sylvia Ginnan & her son



Frank Anastasio, Jean Krebs,



Jo Andrysick, Susan Schue,
Winnie Peer, Sally Costello



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SOUTHERN ZONE



By Mary Lou Wood, Public Relations Chair



Our RENY/Southern Zone annual luncheon/meeting was hosted by Elmira and Area Retired Teachers' Association, EARTA, with **Nancy Spaulding** as their president. RENY/Southern Zone President **Vince Smith*CR**, pictured at right, resided over the meeting held at the Clarion Inn on East Water Street, Elmira, NY. Highly Esteemed Historian Jim Hare, and EARTA Member, pictured, gave the program "Is Our Constitution Alive and Well?" The program was very educational. "We the People"



At our RENY/Southern Zone annual luncheon/meeting we recognized two special members. **Vince Smith*CR** past president and co-president has occupied many roles within our zone, state, as well as his unit.

The next person we recognized was SZ secretary and scholarship person **Mary Suffern**. She occupied many roles within our state and unit organizations. She will finish as SZ secretary this November. Thank you both for your services.



The SZ has installed new officers:

Vince Smith*CR, past co-president; **Jerry Tagliaferri**, President; **Jessica Monahan**, treasurer; **Sue Pierce**, secretary; **Mary Lou Wood**, Public Relations, past co-president



The SZ Educator's Scholarship Committee sent an introductory letter and application form to twenty-nine SZ Central School District Superintendents requesting that they inform their educators of the opportunity to apply for the SZ \$500 Scholarship. **President Vince Smith*CR and Co-President Mary Lou Wood** presented the scholarship to **Carmen E. Roehm**, a physical education teacher at Union-Endicott CSD. We wish her well while continuing her education.



More on the next page from Mary Lou...

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SOUTHERN ZONE

By Mary Lou Wood, Public Relations Chair

Our RENY/Southern Zone delegates went to the Turning Stone in Verona, NY. Lots of learning, reviewing our retirement funds, and educational fun.

Front: Mary Johnson, Lynne Hunkovic, Sue Lemak, Jerry Tagliaferri Next Row:, **Nency Spaulding, Susan Walker, Lisa Frost, Vince Smith*CR**



RENY Immediate Past President **Jim Newell**, left, was in the Southern Zone recently as he was recognized as a **"Distinguished Graduate"** of the Chenango Valley Central School District. Sponsored by the Chenango Valley Alumni association Jim was honored at a dinner and recognition program on October 17th. Attending with Jim was **his wife Patricia** and daughter **Jessica**. Also in attendance were Southern Zone officers and local EBB/WBET Unit members **Vince Smith*CR, Sue Pierce** and **Gerardo Tagliaferri**. Our SZ congratulations to Jim



WESTERN ZONE

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



Fall is here and instead of us spending our days back at school, we're enjoying the fact that we have an active and wonderful life as retired educators. The individuals that we are highlighting in this article, are strong contributing members of Western Zone. We would like to tell you a little about the 2025-2026 Executive Committee officers of WZ.

More from Audrey and Nancy on the next page...

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WESTERN ZONE



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



Our President, **Karen Thompson**, taught for 39 years at Wilson Central and received the NYSUT leadership award in 2016. She also served as an Ambassador from the US to Spain for its first International Education Symposium in Barcelona. After retiring, she joined the local WZ unit, Eastern Niagara County Retired Teachers Association. In ENCARTA, she served as an auditor of financial records. She joined RENY in 2019 and became a WZ Board of Director in 2023. After joining WZ as a BOD, she created and has been the administrator of our Facebook page, "Western Zone Retired Teachers". Check it out if you have a moment. It showcases our members and various events and trips that our members have attended.

Karen has been an involved member and held leadership roles in her church. She has been on the finance committee, served as membership chair and a lead grant writer for projects.

Our First Vice President, **Carol Cascio**, is serving a second term in this office. She was an educator for 34 years at Iroquois Central and Tonawanda Central. In 2002 she received the Pathfinder Award for Educational Improvement given by the Buffalo Business Council. Carol then relocated to Florida and while there, she became a supervisor of student teachers at the University of South Florida. After returning to WNY, she joined Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Association. In 2020 she became a member of the Board of Directors of Western Zone. Carol has been WZ Co-Recording Secretary, is a member of the Teacher Grant Committee, and the Membership Committee. She also serves on [WZ Retired Teachers' Founders' Fund, Inc.](#) as Secretary and is Secretary for RENY. Carol has been very involved with the planning of WZ's Annual Meeting and at this year's meeting Carol received WZ's Citation Award.

Our Second Vice-President, **Richard Siegel**, has been on the Board of Directors since 2020 and has also served as WZ's Parliamentarian. Rich began his teaching career at the age of 38. He taught HS Social Studies and then became the Middle School Principal at Cassadaga Valley in Chautauqua County. Rich joined RENY/WZ to honor his in-laws, **John** and **Janet Gibson** who were very active in the organization. In WZ, Rich is on the Legislative Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee. In addition to WZ committee work, Rich serves as a BOD on WZ Retired Teachers' Founders' Fund, Inc. Rich is also involved with the community. He is a member of the Jamestown YMCA Masters Swim Team and a lifeguard at the Y. In the summer he works at the Everett Jewish Life Center at Chautauqua Institute.

Continue to the next page for more news from Western Zone...

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Our Recording Secretary, **Amy Graves-DeMario**, taught for 20 years at Holland Central School. During her teaching career at Holland, she received various awards. She was recognized as an Emeritus NYS Master Teacher, a Business First Teacher of Recognition, and a RIT Distinguished Teacher. After retirement she joined the Eastern Erie Retired Teachers Association and in 2023 RENY/Western Zone. In 2024 she became a member of the Board of Directors. Amy has served as an appointed Recording Secretary in WZ, and is presently the Chair of the Remembrance Committee. Amy is also involved with community organizations. She is on the Wyoming County 4H FACS Committee and is the education coordinator at her church. Amy was a delegate at this year's RENY Convention.

Our Corresponding Secretary, **Audrey Seidel**, is beginning her fourth year in this office. She has also served as Recording Secretary. Audrey taught for 23 years at Springville Griffith Institute. Before her teaching career, Audrey served in the Peace Corps in Colombia and she remains an active member in the Buffalo Returned Peace Corps Volunteer organization. Audrey is also a past president of Springville/West Valley RTA. Presently in WZ, in addition to being Corresponding Secretary, she is the Awards Committee Chair, Co-Chair of Public Relations, and a recipient of WZ's Citation Award. She has been a delegate at RENY's Convention in the past and again attended this year's convention.

Our Treasurer, **Donald Lawrence**, has served as WZ Treasurer for 12 years. Don has been in education for 54 years and taught at the following schools: Buffalo City Schools, North Tonawanda, Lakeshore Central, Williamsville, and Buffalo State. Don joined RENY in 2004 and became a WZ BOD in 2008. In Western Zone, in addition to being Treasurer, he is the Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee. Don serves on the WZ Retired Teachers' Founders' Fund, Inc. as Vice President. He also has received WZ's Citation Award. Don has been involved in various community service organizations: Rotary Club, Hallwalls, Niagara Frontier Reading Association, and Vive la Casa. Don was recognized as Reading Teacher of the Year in the WNY Reading Assoc., a Rotary Lighthouse Award recipient, and a two-time Paul Hallis Fellow in Rotary International.

The President of WZ Retired Teachers' Founders' Fund, Inc, **Karen Gembar**, is a member of the WZ Executive Committee. Karen taught for 36 years at Frontier Central, Amherst, and Lancaster Central. While teaching she was a coach, which she continued to do after-retirement. Karen has been a member of RENY for 10 years and a BOD for 9 years. She has also served as Vice President of Membership and has been president of the WZ Retired Teachers' Founders' Fund Inc. for 3 years. Karen is president of the Lancaster/Depew Retired Teachers Assoc. and is active in community organizations too. Karen is past president of the East Aurora Rotary and currently a council member. At WZ's annual meeting this September, Karen was awarded the Citation Award and she was a delegate at this year's RENY's Convention.

Our new Vice President of Membership is our past president, **Michelle Claus**. Michelle taught at Hamburg and then Springville Griffith Institute for a total of 30 years. While teaching at Springville, Michelle was a Building Mentor for the district. Michelle is past president of Springville /West Valley Retired Teachers Association. In WZ in addition to serving as President, Michelle has been First Vice President, Second Vice President, Advertising Coordinator, Membership Chair, and Co-Chair of the WZ hosting committee for RENY's Annual Convention. Michelle also has been very involved in many WZ committees as a resource. She has been a recipient of WZ's Citation Award and at this year's RENY Convention, Michelle was elected as the new RENY Membership Chair.

The Western Zone Executive Committee is comprised of wonderful RENY members who have been actively involved in our zone, our educational institutions, and our communities. We look forward to goals their leadership will help us achieve.