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YORK

state

NO. 2 VOL. 62

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE
QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL RETIRED EDUCATORS, THEIR
FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Summer 2014

President's Message; Judie Byndas

By the time you read this, I will be a grandmother! Without question, the oldest first time grandmother in New York State, if not the U.S.! I am certain (like all grandmothers!) that this child will be intelligent, athletic, and musically inclined. This is a plus considering the genes they are inheriting. Both parents attended college, played complete sports from ice hockey to field hockey), my son was a piano major in college and his wife played clarinet in the marching band. My concern rests with the nurturing and developing of this inheritance and the source of this development.

As schools, especially elementary public schools, continue to cut programs and staff in order to provide for unfunded mandates and concentrate on testing, using materials that are incomplete, inaccurate, and cut out basic "baby steps" in learning procedures, what are the chances my grandchild will continue to be motivated? Not to mention, will there be appropriate time for other activities? Reading for pleasure as well as reading for content? Exercise for the body as well as for the mind? Will there be 35 other 3rd graders in his or her class? Will there be a librarian, an art instructor and other specials, including elementary music programs? Check your newspapers ... these are usually the first positions to be cut!

Will I be the grandmother (like others I know) who will pay for private art lessons and music instruction so these talents won't be lost? I know my son will perch his child on his knee at the Steinway as well as instill a love of reading. And my daughter -in-law, a 3rd grade teacher in a private school (with 12 students in her class and a teaching assistant for a hard of hearing student and a strong parent support group) will insure a love for learning and respect for education and educators. But as they leave for school, will there even be a trained educator in her classroom as prospective teachers are being discouraged by the amount of testing and accompanying stress as well as new standards for certification and performance reviews?

All of us, as retired educators, want to see the best in public education. Not even necessarily a return to the good old days! But a wise use of public funds, an equitable treatment for all school districts, an encouraging program for prospective teachers in colleges, certification, and appraisals, and some professional educators determining educational standards would help! An easement of public criticism of educators' hours, salaries and pensions would also benefit our system. If you are a teacher or married to one, you know the truth!

I cannot complete this tirade without mentioning the Pearson Corporation. British public schools are not like NYS or the U.S. They are for the rich: the elite with high tuition and entrance standards. We have well trained (I wrote curriculum and competency state exams for years as I am sure many of you did) exam writers. Get politics out of education and let sanity prevail!



Legislative Action; Mary Johnson, Vice President for Legislative Action

Don't get sold short During a Hospital Stay

The difference between "inpatient" and "under observation" could be costly.

By Karen Sweet-O'Neill, CLTC

Have you been in the emergency room lately? If so, were you transferred to a room and thought you had been admitted to the hospital? Did you receive meals, an IV drip and other services? You probably assumed you were considered an "inpatient."

Beware – more frequently, patients are being categorized as "under observation," and it is costing them thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket expenses.

Let's say you are on Medicare, suffer a stroke and are taken to the ER. Several hours later you are transferred to a room in the hospital, tests are ordered and you are being cared for by the nurses and doctors on that floor. You stay in the hospital for three nights and are transferred to a Skilled-Care Nursing Facility for rehab. If you were categorized as an "inpatient" in the hospital, the first 20 days at the facility would be paid in full by Medicare. In addition, the remaining 80 days could be covered partially by Medicare and the balance by supplemental insurance. At an average cost of \$300 a day, you may be covered for approximately \$30,000.

However, if you were classified as "under observation" in the hospital, Medicare will not pay one nickel towards your bill in the Nursing Facility, even though you spent three nights there. So, your hospital bill will not be covered as much under Part B of Medicare reimbursement, and you could potentially owe \$30,000 or more for the Nursing Facility.

Why is this happening? The costs associated with the single highest payer, Medicare, are to blame. Hospitals are being scrutinized for medically unnecessary admissions and are also being penalized if their readmission rate is too high. So, if a patient was never classified as an "inpatient" in the first place and they are readmitted within 30 days, the readmission cannot count against the hospital and they will not incur monetary penalties.

How do you protect yourself from this risk? Ask about your classification when you are admitted to the hospital. Also, the hospital can change your status on a daily basis so it is very important that you question the status every day. If you are "under observation," you should have a discussion with your doctor to determine whether you can get the status changed to "inpatient."

It is unfortunate you have to add this to your list of worries when you or a family member are in the hospital, but it can save you a great deal of money and time if you are properly prepared.

Karen Sweet-O'Neill operates KSO Insurance Solutions in Vestal, NY. She specializes in Senior Health Insurance Consultations, Long Term Care Insurance, Life Insurance and Retirement planning.

NYSRTA Remembers President Emerita Charlotte Huff *CR



Miss Huff was elected as the tenth NYSRTA President and served from 1991 through 1994. She passed away on December 5, 2013

President Emeritus Huff began the practice of hiring an "outside the Association" parliamentarian for the Annual Meeting. Also for the Annual Meeting, she invited representatives of The New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSRTS) to be present for a question and answer period. These two innovations continue to this day.

Miss Huff's final President's Message in *YORK STATE*, September 1994, included the following:

"having an opportunity to visit each of the ten Zones, as well as being given the opportunity each year to speak at a meeting of our members in Florida, gave me the privilege of knowing hundreds of wonderful people who are part of the Association. Thank you for giving me the honor of serving as your president".

Charlotte also served as Long Island Zone President and President of the South Nassau Unit. A year after her final term in office, the Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service Award was presented to Charlotte at the Annual Convention in 1995.

What Does it Mean?



Many of our members have asked us "What does the *CR after some member's names stand for?"

The answer is: *CR stands for **Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Services Award Winner.**



Resolutions; Doris Kirsch, Chair

The Resolutions Committee will meet in Utica on July 14th. At that time the proposed resolutions submitted by Zone Presidents prior to the June 14th deadline will be reviewed and considered for recommendation to the delegates of the 2014 Annual Meeting. At this writing, five proposals are known to be under consideration by the various zones. It is hoped that additional ones will be forthcoming.

At the July Committee Meeting the committee will also finalize its work on the important review of all of the resolutions that have been adopted since 1994. Based on the advice of the parliamentarian, the Resolutions Committee can only *RECOMMEND* the deletion or rescinding of an action taken by the delegates at a previous Annual Meeting. A list of those resolutions which the committee will recommend for deletion (due to fact that they have been accomplished or are no longer relevant or timely) will appear in the Fall Issue of *YORK STATE*. It is advised that the unit, zone and state leaders and delegates seriously study these recommendations *before* the Annual Meeting. Please note that a time will be scheduled on the Tuesday afternoon of the convention for delegates to bring their questions/concerns about any of these recommended deletions to the Resolutions Committee. This will afford the delegates an opportunity to get clarification and answers prior to the Annual Meeting. These recommendations will be presented at the Annual Meeting in a consent agenda format. Any of these items will be handled separately, upon the request of even a single delegate. "Be It Resolved...", a complete index and compilation of all resolutions adopted since 1994, can be accessed by going to the Committee Work section on the NYSRTA website.

Workshop; Angelo Grande, Senior Vice President

William Tenity and members of the Central Zone have been preparing for our Fall Convention at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino in Verona, NY. Just a reminder, the Convention will be held from *Tuesday, October 7th through Thursday, October 9th*. You will be checking out of the hotel on Thursday, October 9th. The theme of the convention this year is, "The Heart of New York". The full schedule will be printed in the Fall Issue of *YORK STATE*.

Cocktail Party – The theme of the Cocktail Party is, "Back to College". You are encouraged to dress in your favorite college outfits.

Box Lunches – will be provided after 11:30 AM on Thursday, October 9th. You may stay at the hotel to eat your box lunch or take it with you and eat it on the road.

Please Note: We are not scheduling a Golf Tournament during this Convention. You may play golf on Tuesday or Thursday on your own, but remember that check-in is 3 PM and Check-out is 11 AM.

Note from the *YORK STATE* Editor regarding submitting photos for publication:



We love to receive photos from our members for inclusion in our publications. Consider providing your zone public relations chair with your special events photos, preferably in digital format. Some guidelines to help you with your photo submissions are listed below.

These are just general guidelines which will improve the quality of your photos. Remember to check your camera manual.

- Take your photos using the highest resolution possible on your camera (if it is 5 megapixel, shoot at that, if 12 megapixel, shoot at that setting, etc.)
- Your camera probably saves photos as a jpg or jpeg file. Use the highest resolution here. You may also choose to save the photo as a TIF file. Use as little compression or no compression as it removes the quality in your picture and reduces the number of pixels able to print
- White balance is really important. Set your camera for incandescent if shooting under artificial light, FL if in fluorescent light, or day for outdoor shooting. The color of skin tone changes significantly under incorrect settings. If flash will be brighter than the available light when shooting indoors, set WB to flash
- To improve photos, always use a flash, even outdoors. Just remember to not get closer than three feet from your subject or more than 12 feet from your subject when using flash.
- If your camera has RGB settings, set it for Adobe RGB
- Composition – Rule of Thirds; an easy rule is to look at your viewfinder as a tic-tac-toe grid and place the most important subject in your photo at an intersection point. It's an easy rule to try (there are more than 20 common ones)
- Composition – check for distractions before you shoot (that telephone pole out of the persons head or door frame splitting the body)
- Composition – think about the size of the printed photo, you want the faces to appear large enough to be recognizable (or best you can with a group shot)

If you have difficulty attaching a file to be sent via e-mail to NYSRTA or your zone chair, want additional advice on photo submission or using your camera, feel free to contact me via e-mail at brian.sherman001@gmail.com.





Community Service; Patricia Dietrich, *Chair*

The Community Service Chairs for the zones across the state are beginning to get rallied for new and successful projects from the past. Zone chairs shared some of their favorite projects and some projects that they hope to pursue in the near future with their zones. Our first teleconference had participation from five zones. We found that the time of year made it difficult to get everyone together because of visits south or returns from there and of course, catching up on appointments in the good spring weather.

We heard about such projects as various Relay for Life involvements and Read First Project from CWZ; support for a kennel project in LIZ with a plan to help out a VA hospital for rehab with money for patient needs; Northern Zone's last project involved a Flood Relief effort and plans in progress for new ideas; NEZ explained that highway cleanup was a big project of involvement *this time of year*, and Toys for Christmas earlier, along with plans to explore other project possibilities. The NCZ has not met during the winter months, but will begin with an early June meeting that will involve collection for Food Pantries in Jefferson County.

Our task for State Level is working with Public Relations to promote projects and our organization, prior, during, and after projects. It was brought to our attention by comment from past chair, **Jennifer Gardella *CR**, through e-mail communication that there is a wonderful article on Elements of a Good Press Release in our State project notebooks. The comment about it being important to tout the projects we are doing was stressed. **Angelo Grande*CR** remarked that at his recent attendance at the National Retired Teachers Convention it was given emphasis as important to increasing our membership to do this. Angelo also stressed the importance of photos to go with articles. Everyone was in agreement.

It was a consensus that we need to have a “boilerplate” aspect to each article or Public Relations media used for our projects that states what our organization is and what it does. The chair is going to see that the Public Relations article from NRTA is not only in our note books but shared with Public Relations chairs in each zone, if they do not already have access to it. Also, any community service chair is to make sure it is shared in their zone, as well. Each chair was given the task to try to meet with their Public Relations Chair at their next meeting to share ideas for how to best tout or promote their projects in the future.

Friendly Service; Mary Ella Moeller, *Vice President for Friendly Service*

Friendly Service Committee has had a busy winter attending to the needs of retirees in each zone. Unlike when we were teaching and may have had summers off, the Friendly Service Committee does not take the summer off. We keep sending cards, making calls, celebrating special occasions, and spreading good wishes & smiles.

This year, at the Annual Meeting/Workshops, October 7th- 9th, the Friendly Service Committee has been asked to conduct a workshop. You will find that the number of days for the convention has been shortened. The Friendly Service workshop will be on Tuesday after you register. We hope that you will want to attend our workshop, as each zone chair will be taking part in the presentation. Come and find out how Friendly Service works. We look forward to seeing you there!

During the summer, we may gather with family, friends, neighbors, and former colleagues at picnics and outdoor parties. There is one sure thing that will be at every gathering is lots of good food. Here are some tips to help keep your gathering safe:

- Keep hot foods hot, at or above 140°F.
- Keep cold foods cold, at 40°F or below.
- Pack separate coolers for drinks, as they will be open frequently.
- Discard any perishable food left outside for more than two hours (one hour if the temperature is above 80°F).

More tips can be found at <http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm109899.htm#s4>





Membership; Salvatore Sedita, Vice President for Membership

Across the state, zones have put their current membership drives into motion. In almost all cases, recruitment efforts are being planned at the unit level. That makes sense. Just as all politics are local, recruitment efforts are most effective when done at the unit level.

Most units have planned to do their recruiting on a one-to-one level. That is, matching current members with prospective new members assigning one prospective member to a specific current member. To do this, a great number of current members need to be active in the recruiting effort. Current unit members are urged to let your unit membership chair know that you are willing to become involved in the campaign. When recruiting becomes an “activity of the whole”, the load is light and the job is easy for each member involved.

There is no more successful recruiting than the one-to-one method. The personal invitation to a meeting or unit social event, offering a ride to the event, and making a prospective member feel welcome and engaging him/her in conversation is the approach that gets the best results.

There are four distinct target groups in our recruiting efforts. These are: newly retired teachers, retirees from past years who have not yet joined, those retirees who have joined their local unit but have not joined the zone and NYSRTA, and those members who were members in good standing, but have fallen arrears in their dues.

In recent years, new retirees seem to have been unwilling to join anything. Do not neglect those who retired in past years but have not joined. As the years pass, those who were initially resistant to joining seem to become more willing.

Those members who have fallen arrears in their dues are a special problem. They need to be reminded of the advantages to being a member and of all the work done on their behalf by fellow retirees. They need to be reminded that their support is needed and wanted.

Finally, if any zones or units want to run recruitment workshops for their members, please contact me via email at sjsedita@roadrunner.com. The workshops will be provided at no cost to the zones/units by NYSRTA. Thank you all, again, for your good work and support. We all look forward to a successful recruitment campaign this year.

Update: Cost-of-Living Adjustment

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for September 2014 through August 2015 benefit payments will remain at the current 1.0%. As a result, an eligible retired member with an annual benefit of \$18,000 or more will receive a maximum increase of \$15 per month beginning with the September 2014 payment. (Eligible members receiving an annual benefit under \$18,000 will receive a lesser monthly increase.) This latest COLA brings the cumulative maximum monthly increase since COLA legislation was enacted in 2001 to \$282.

New York's permanent, automatic COLA is designed to help offset inflation's adverse effects on the fixed retirement benefits of the state's public retirees. By law, the COLA is calculated by taking 50% of the March-to-March Consumer Price Index increase (rounded up to the next higher one-tenth of 1%) and multiplying it by the first \$18,000 of the retirement benefit. (The CPI increase from March 2013 to March 2014 was 1.51%.) The annual increase is a minimum of 1% to a maximum of 3%.

To be eligible for a COLA, you must either be:

- At least age 62 and retired at least five years; or,
- At least age 55 and retired at least 10 years; or,
- A retiree receiving a NYSTRS disability benefit for at least five years (regardless of age); or,
- A surviving spouse of an eligible retiree receiving a lifetime benefit. *(By law, the spouse receives an increase equal to one-half the COLA the retiree would have received.)*

Retirees who become eligible for the COLA after September will receive their adjustment when first eligible.

YORK STATE

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For a complete listing of NYSRTA contacts, please visit our website at www.nysrta.org.

2014 YORK STATE Article Due Dates

July 13, 2014—Fall Issue

November 14, 2014—Winter Issue



ZONE NEWS



Central Zone; Mary Radloff, Public Relations Chair

Central Zone Legislative Action Chair **Tom Parsnick** had a busy spring organizing county groups to contact their local state representative to urge support for NYSRTA legislative priorities.

In Cayuga County **Tom Parsnick, Joan Sigona** and **Patricia Nunno** met with **Assemblyman Gary Finch** at his Auburn Office on April 25. At **Senator Michael Nozzolio's** Seneca Falls office the advocates met with **Joan Grela**, Mr. Nozzolio's Administrative Assistant. Tom and Joan had a telephone conference with the senator on the same date. Both Legislators agreed to support the NYSRTA legislative priorities.

Members of the Oneida-Herkimer Retired Teachers' Association recently met with **Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi**. At the meeting there was a very positive discussion on legislative bills and other issues of concern to their organization and many senior citizens.

The important work of Legislative Action, contacting state legislators to secure their support for NYSRTA legislative priorities, is also carried out by officers in other Central Zone counties: Chenango, **Carolee Wright**; Madison, **Wayne Shaul**; Onondaga County, **Katherine Hawthorne** and **Mary Buske**; and Oswego, **Patricia Kush**. We are truly grateful for the contributions they make toward the continuing efforts to improve the lives of all retired educators.



Pictured left to right are: **Johnnie Jones, Angela Smith, Assemblyman Brindisi, Judith Schad,** and **Annette Shaffer**. They also met with State **Senator Joseph Griffo**.

Any retired educators interested in learning more about the Association can call **315 865-6357**.

Central Western Zone; Phyllis Dunlap, Public Relations Chair

Ontario County Retired Teachers added 20 new members to our roster this year so far. Now we will work on them to join NYSRTA. Our present project is Budding Readers, a non-profit educational organization carried out entirely by volunteers. Founded in 2007, by retired teacher, **Elizabeth Mosher**, its mission is to educate parents about the importance of reading aloud to infants and young children and to provide the tools to do so at the youngest possible age. It provides free books and a parent's guidebook with tips for reading to babies. The program is available in five school districts. It also works with WIC to connect with new mothers. Its funding comes solely through grants, charitable contributions and donations. OCRT also participated in a Red Cross Blood Drive by providing persons to call donors and baking cookies for the canteen.

Livingston County Retired teachers had a great Spring meeting and luncheon at the Avon Inn on May 15th. Their program was "Avon's Glory Days, the Spa Era". It was enjoyed by all. Monroe County Retired teachers looked forward to their luncheon meeting on June 4th.

Allegany County retired Teachers are searching for a President as is Seneca County which also needs a Vice President. Seneca County had a wonderful luncheon and meeting led by our State President, **Judie Byndas *CR**. Our CWZ President, Tim Quill, was present as well. **Sal Sedita**, Vice President for Membership, attended and helped us format a plan to entice new retirees to join our local, county and state retired teacher's associations. Let's hope it is fruitful.

Hopefully, all the counties have beneficial meetings. I know we all enjoy the camaraderie, but we need to look forward to those fall luncheon meetings when we can get newly retired members. Perhaps, you are planning a summer event to introduce them to your officers and the organizations as Seneca County does at our annual ice cream social. We hope you all have a wonderful summer. Remember CWZ's Finger Lakes area is a beautiful place to visit with our wine trails, state parks, lakes various canals and museums.



Eastern Zone;

Pamela Love, Public Relations Chair

I am so sad to announce the passing of **Jack Hickey** *CR, Eastern Zone and NYSRTA leader and friend, a very kind and humble man. He passed away on May 7th, 2014. Jack had been a teacher and principal before retiring in 1989. He joined the Schenectady Unit of NYSRTA and served as President of the group. In 1999, he became President of Eastern Zone and served in that position until 2001. Jack was NYSRTA State Treasurer from 2000 - 2006 and received the Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service from NYSRTA in 2004. During his later years, Jack suffered from macular degeneration of the eyes but kept involved with some help from others. Eastern Zone still has its meetings at the Turf Tavern in Scotia, NY which Jack was able to find for us. Besides NYSRTA, Jack was involved with a Senior Walking Group in Schenectady and loved collecting Orchids and antiques.



North Central Zone; Patricia Dietrich & Nancy Roberts, Public Relations Co-Chairs

Community Service projects are just getting started for this year. **Burt Phillips** *CR got the wheels spinning as our organizer for NCZ team for this event with WPBS as we prepared to man a booth at the Ready, Set, Fun, Bookfest on May 10, 2014 at a new venue, The Bruce M. Wright Memorial Conference Center, Faichney Drive, Watertown. Our job was to organize and hand out free books to pre-school and school aged participants. This is always such a pleasure for us.

We are pleased to announce that we have several members participating that are new to NCZ involvement. Members volunteering this year will include **Kathie Connor**, **Patty Crandall** (returning), **Pat Dietrich** (returning), **Barb Eldridge**, **Ron Roberts** and **Margaret Roberts**, **Nancy Allen**, **Vicci Farney**, **Pat Newell** (returning), and **Kim Oliver**.

We are looked forward to our Spring Luncheon at the Ramada Inn in Watertown on June 3rd. The highlight of the meeting was the awarding of our Education Scholarships to the winners. This year's recipients were **Nancy C. Bauter**, General Brown Central High School and **Alexandra L. Davis**, Beaver River Central High School.

Ms. Bauter is the daughter of **Stacy and Kristen Bauter**, Dexter, and a senior at General Brown Central. She was influenced with life challenges and experiences with special needs students to pursue an education at Nazareth College majoring in Secondary education with a major in Special Education.

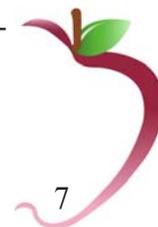
Stacy says, "I want to be able to show students that no matter what obstacles are in their way, they can achieve their goals like I am achieving mine."

Ms. Davis is the daughter of **Robin and Ann Davis**, Croghan, and is a senior at Beaver River Central. She has had several teaching influences with family and friends in the field of education. Nancy says, "I have always wanted to be a teacher and want to be able to help students reach their goals in their education."

Thank you to our committee members in their great choices from a competitive pool of applicants.

I'm sure as retired educators many of us can relate back to such wishes when we were first seeking education as a career and would wish these future educators success in their field of choice as we feel in ours.

Also, at this meeting, we are collected for Jefferson County Food Pantries. Community Service Chair, **Patricia Dietrich** encourages everyone to bring one canned good, box or other non-perishable item. If you want to bring more, that is fantastic, and we appreciate every item we get. Please make sure the dates are not expired on goods. Those with Food Pantries in their communities volunteered to deliver to the site following the meeting. This is such a worthwhile service to our community and so easy to incorporate at your meetings.



**Long Island Zone; Eileen Holmes,
Public Relations Chair**



West End Retired Teachers have enjoyed a long and successful association with Adelphi University, located in Garden City and in April, WERTA officers **Evelyn Paola** and **Candy Misner** attended a donor reception there.

They were treated to presentations in the ARTS - drama, music, choral and dance, as well as thoughts and reflections from graduating seniors about their years at Adelphi. It was a very interesting evening. In June, WERTA awarded their annual scholarship to a student in the STEP Program at Adelphi.

At their spring luncheon WERTA President **Evelyn Paola** and Friendly Service Chair **Margery Williams** presented **Candy Misner** and **Edith Whitaker** with Certificates of Recognition and Precious Moments figurines. This was in honor of their 85th birthdays and to thank them for years of service to WERTA.

On the East End, **Roma Karp** of East Hampton celebrated her 90th birthday in April. Roma is now home-bound and unable to attend EERTA activities, so **Carrie Gilbert**, East Hampton Town Director took the party to Roma, complete with yellow roses and a lovely luncheon, prepared by Roma's wonderful, full-time caregivers. Carrie arranged for the local radio station WLNG in Sag Harbor to announce Roma's birthday and many of her former students and colleagues sent her cards and called her. She was delighted with all the birthday festivities! Roma Micus was born in Schenectady. After graduating from Plattsburgh, she came down to Long Island to teach in Greenport. Two years later she married **Sy Karp** and they settled in East Hampton. Roma was offered a job as a substitute teacher at Bridgehampton High School and ended up teaching Home Economics there for the next 35 years! Roma was a very active parishioner at Most Holy Trinity Church in East Hampton. For many years she put her "Home Ec." talents to use, taking care of the altar linens, Christmas teas and participating in all church activities. An avid golfer, Roma earned the distinction of being the first woman to score a Hole-in-One at the South Fork Country Club in Amagansett !

**Southeastern Zone; Maureen Coffey,
Public Relations Chair**



Southeastern Zone has a long history of awarding scholarships to deserving young men and women as they graduate high school, and 2014 was

no exception. Some of our units raised money to help young people who wish to pursue a degree in education; others gave to deserving students no matter what their employment goals.

Putnam County presented scholarships to **Catherine Caput**, **Anthony Rupolo**, and **Christina Zito** from Brewster; **Austin Barnett**, **Steven Conran**, **Christian Fagani**, and **Edison Tuquinagul** from Carmel; **Edward Trimble** from Haldane; **Michael Miller**, **Nicholas Mastrocola**, **Charlie Miller**, **Ahmed Gonzalez**, **Samantha Westcott**, and **Janice Ungaro** from Mahopac; and **Randy Schwartz** and **Megan McCarron** from Putnam Valley.

Mid Hudson Area Retired Teachers' Association awarded \$3,000 each to **Miss Taylor De Marco** from Marlboro HS; **Stephanie Niknam** from Minisink Valley HS; and **Sean Rice** from Warwick Valley HS.

Not all of our units had announced their scholarship winners at the time this article was submitted, so this list is incomplete. However, we in Southeastern Zone wish to extend our heartfelt congratulations, to not only the winners, but to all of our 2014 graduates. Be true to yourself, treat others with dignity and respect, and strive to make our world a better place. We're proud of you!



Dave Keefe is the Retiree Representative on the NYS Teachers' Retirement System Board.

If you have questions, specific concerns or need some information regarding your pension, Dave can be reached at:

**The New York State Teachers' Retirement System
10 Corporate Woods Drive
Albany, NY 12211-2395
Phone: (518) 447-2666 or
(516) 741-1241**



Northeastern Zone; Nancy Olsen & Marilyn Smith, Public Relations Co-Chairs

NEZ membership is growing not only through the efforts of **Sandy Lashua**, membership chair, but also through our members sponsoring memberships for new retirees. Getting to know our most recent retirees strengthens our bond as retired teachers and also as members of NYSRTA.

Our members are active in many of their community organizations and as a zone we have several projects to which we are dedicated. At Christmas, in conjunction with our holiday luncheon, members bring new gifts for local children and youth. The gifts are delivered to our county Christmas Bureau and they distribute them. Under the leadership of **Carol Lowery**, Community Service chair, we collected over 500 pounds of food while we were stationed in front of local supermarkets. The food and monetary donations were given to the local Interfaith Food Shelf which serves a tremendous need in our community. In the summer we turn our efforts toward the environment and have adopted a three mile section of State Route 9 south. Our litter collection volume seems to be decreasing so maybe we do make a difference.

After serving 18 years, **Nancy Olsen** and **Marilyn Smith** are retiring from Public Relations. **Marti Martin** is going to replace us. She has already been helping select the state scholarship winner for NEZ.



Our spring project supports literacy in Clinton County. NEZ members serve as tutors and we also sponsor a team to compete in a "Jeopardy" style challenge against more than 20 teams from other service groups and schools. In 2010 our team-Emily Castine, Beverly Kie, Matt Smith and Norbert Yackey were the grand champions.



Group Hospital & Home Care Recovery Insurance is now available to the Members of NYSRTA

Underwritten by: New York Life Insurance Company, 51 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010 on Policy Form GMR

How it Works

This exciting new benefit can help provide extra money to help cover the cost of hospital stays and the recovery afterwards. It pays a cash benefit in addition to any other insurance you have, which can help pay for things like home care bills, or other expenses, such as groceries, utility bills, and daily living expenses.

Eligibility

Members of NYSRTA under age 75 are eligible to apply. Acceptance to the plan is guaranteed for eligible Members. There are no medical exams or health questions to sign up, and once you are enrolled, there is no termination age for this coverage. Spouse coverage is also available.

To enroll or request more information, contact an insurance representative at 1-866-478-8907

Dental and Vision coverage also available!

Monthly Rates for Hospital & Home Care Recovery Insurance

Age	Monthly Rate
Under 70	\$25
70 - 74	\$35
75 - 84*	\$50
85+*	\$60

*For Renewal Only

Rates as of October, 2012



pearlcarroll.com/nysrta

Southern Zone; Mary Lou Wood, Public Relations Chair

Summer has finally arrived bringing sunshine, warm weather, and flowers. The snowbirds have returned in time for our groups to celebrate birthdays with our 90+ friends, and special friend, **Mildred Rugur**, who turned 101. We also spent time reflecting on our friends who have passed on. In addition, our groups have set up programs to entertain and to educate our members.

The Southern Zone Executive Board recently held its spring meeting. Reports were given by standing committee chairs and unit presidents. Nominations for officers were presented and will be acted upon at the annual zone meeting to be held September 17, 2014.

President **Vince Smith** discussed results of the NYSRTA Executive Board meeting held in March. He noted the change in the October Conference duration and also a possible change in future logistics, discussed at the president's Monday evening meeting, to make the Conference less stressful on future hosts. He also presented a resolution, approved by Southern Zone Executive Board, which will be offered at the July Resolution Committee meeting. The recent new Bylaws were discussed and approved by the board. They, and resolutions accepted at the July above committee meeting, will be presented to zone retirees at the September zone meeting for review, approval or disapproval.

Committee chairs were informed of the date for **Grace Risley's** (pictured right) memorial service. She was past president of CARTA and Southern Zone as well as being very active in NYSRTA.

Unit reports were:

The Schuyler County Retired Teachers' Association will be hosting the Southern Zone Annual meeting on September 17, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00p.m. at the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel. After lunch the entertainment will be the South Wind Musical group.

Eastern Broome Branch has elected chairs at their meetings. The Executive Committee will be reorganizing and approving programs, meeting dates, charities selected for donations, and other general items. These will be published in their yearbook for the fall.

The Elmira and Area Teachers' Association has had several speakers such as **Dr. Ronald Champagne**, Interim President of Elmira College; **Brandon Saylor** from the Literacy Volunteers of

Chemung and Schuyler counties; and speaker **Richard Shore** who talked about the trolleys that once existed in Elmira.

The Corning Area Retired Teachers have had both entertainment and educational venues. **Shirley Magana**, President and Chief Operating Officer for Corning-Guthrie Hospital informed the teachers of the new Corning Hospital which will open in July. Joel Robinson will be educating us on the many programs performed by the Red Cross. The Executive Committee will inform our retired teachers on programs such as 9-1-1, the Yellow Dot, 2-1-1, and the File of Life. We have added Corning Community College food pantry to our list of places to donate.

All of our units are busy educating our retired teachers, making them laugh, and just giving them time to enjoy each other's company. We need to socialize, exercise, and educate to help us release stress and enjoy life.

Grace Risley, the Southern Zone lost a friend and colleague when Grace Risley passed away this spring. Grace was optimistic and good humored



whether she was teaching, coaching and advising young people, or cooperating with friends or colleagues. After graduating from Ithaca College, Grace taught at Campbell, Addison and Corning schools. Some of her innovative ideas, such as girls' interscholastic sports, are still practiced today. Being a versatile PE teacher,

Grace took on the job as coach of the boys' baseball team when no one else was available to do it. Her enthusiasm for sports continued after she retired and in 1986, she was inducted into the Corning-Painted Post Sports Hall of Fame. Grace was busy in her community of Campbell during her retirement years as a member of NYSRTA, becoming a unit president (CARTA) and then as the Chair of Southern Zone's Membership Committee and the Public Relations Committee. As Southern Zone president, Grace led our zone as it hosted at an Annual Convention. Along with the Retired Teachers' organization, she undertook many community commitments. One of them was being school board member for 24 years. Enthusiasm, leadership and innovative ideas were Grace's life-long traits. She will be missed and remembered by all who worked with her, students who had her as instructor, and friends who all enjoyed her wit and wisdom.



**The following is an excerpt from the Wyoming County Retired Teachers' Association Spring Newsletter
Written by Sandy Kushner, President**

A funny thing happened to me at the Spring 2012 WCRTA meeting. While I was sitting at the registration table chatting with members arriving for the luncheon, **Lucy Ely** approached me with a question. She smiled and asked, "Would you like to be president of WCRTA?" I was totally caught off guard, and the election of officers followed less than thirty minutes later.

To Lucy's great relief, I said, "Yes."

In my mind, I was thinking, "It's only two luncheons a year. I can do that, no problem."

However, I would soon learn that as the President of WCRTA, you automatically become a member of the Executive Committee for the Central Western Zone of the New York State Retired Teachers' Association. This committee meets four times a year, plus the Annual Meeting, and you can attend the NYSRTA Convention as a delegate. My calendar began to fill up just a little bit more than two luncheons a year, but I am not complaining. **WHY NOT?**

What have I learned? In the past two years, I have seen how retired teachers' organizations operate from the local Wyoming County unit, to the Central Western Zone which is made up of ten counties, up to the state level. Also, I have met some very nice people who genuinely CARE, and who are willing to work for the good of all retired New York State teachers.

What has happened in the past two years? While attending CWZ Committee meetings a vacancy arose for Awards Chair, the Epke-Meagher Award for Newly Retired Teachers. Not wanting this award to become a fatality, I volunteered to help. This act led to another big decision, saying "Yes" once more to the office of Vice President for the Central Western Zone...so you can guess what comes next in two years! I am happy to say I'm not alone in either of these positions as **Jane Behnk**, President of Steuben County, is my partner as Co-Chair for both positions, and I think we make a good team!

What's next? I would like others to step up to the plate and say, "YES," when asked to become an officer, director, or a committee chair. We are a fun bunch to work with, and none of these jobs are too time-consuming. Saying, "YES," when asked to help an organization should not be thought of as a "chore." It is an "opportunity" to be helpful, use your organizational or people skills, and meet new people. The time requirement is not a terrible burden, usually your duties are limited to a few hours in a year's time. Filling these vacant positions are needed to help this organization run efficiently.

Western Zone; Irine Denis Zinter, Public Relations Chair

WZ is making good strides and since time waits for no one the following has been accomplished : increased our membership, contacted new retirees, organized the Ad Hoc Committee for Scholarship and Incentives , collected photos and memorabilia for our historian books to be viewed at our September annual meeting and the October NYSRTA convention, and are planning the trip to Montreal and Quebec City, Canada, July 14-19, 2014. We have given generously to our Buffalo City mission, Meals on Wheels of Buffalo and Erie County, Network in Aging, Salvation Army, Lockport and Alden Community Centers, Amherst, Ken Ton, Chautauqua County and Seneca Nations as well as others. Our *Western Currents* publication will feature "In The Spotlight" to highlight unit members and acknowledge their accomplishments.

During recent months Common Core has been featured prominently in the news. **Kevin Mulligan**, President of the Northeastern Zone of NYSRTA addressed the topic "Testing and the Common Core" at our monthly meeting on May 21, 2014 at Michael's Banquet Facility located at 4885 Southwestern Blvd., Hamburg, NY. The presentation was scheduled at 12:30 pm and open to the public. Mr. Mulligan has deep roots in WNY as his parents were born and raised in Buffalo and at present his son, Sean, and family live in North Tonawanda. Kevin has risen through the ranks of the educational profession having been a Social Studies Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, School Superintendent, Negotiations Representative and Adjunct Professor for SUNY at Plattsburgh – Graduate Program for School Administrators. His presentation was timely and of current interest to educators, parents and others interested in the field of education.





The New York State Retired Teachers' Association, Inc.

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2014

President

Mrs. Judie Byndas

Vice President for Legislative Action

Ms. Mary Johnson
8 Airport Park Blvd.,
Latham, NY 12110-6414
518-482-3509

Minimum Pension Bump Up

Extends minimum retirement benefit for retirees of NYSTRS retired prior to 06/01/1980, and receive a pension equal to or less than \$550.00 per year of service (to a maximum of thirty five years of service or \$19,250).

A•04981-A Abbate

S•4496-A Libous

Pharmacy Reimbursement

To Clarify and strengthen provisions in current law to ensure that consumers have the option to access every covered medication from a local network participating pharmacy and are not forced into mandatory mail order.

A•05723-A Heastie

S•03995-A Maziarz

Elder Abuse

To expand the definition of caregiver to a person who voluntarily, or otherwise by operation of law, assumes responsibility for providing care for a vulnerable elderly person, or an incompetent or physically disabled person.

A•02781 Morelle

S•02951 Valesky

Tier I Reinstatement

Relates to certain members who re-enter public service; extends tier reinstatement provisions to a retiree of a public retirement system who was an active member of a public retirement system on or after January 1, 1989

A•07490 Gunther

S•05165 Seward

The New York State Retired Teachers' Association, Inc. supports efforts underway to improve implementation of the Common Core Standards. We believe this is in the best interest of all students.

It is time to remove the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) from the school aid formula and allow school districts to begin the reduction recovery process so that our students have access to all programs necessary for a quality education (related legislation: A•08295 Corwin/S•05452-A Flanagan).

If you are interested in advocating for your zone. Please contact your Zone's Legislative Action Chair:

Vice President for Legislative Action: Mary Johnson 607-797-3225

Central: Thomas Parsnick, 315-889-5942

Central Western: William Lesniak 315-483-8061

Eastern: Janice Mullins 518-272-1749

Long Island: Kathryn Grande 516-676-7436

North Central: Richard Bushnell 315-232-4258

Northeastern: Robert LaFontaine 518-563-0587

Northern: Donna Finnerty 315-528-3482

Southern: Mildred Rugur 607-732-6307

Western: Judy Klug 716-632-6251

Where are the amendments to DASA now? by, Brian Sherman, *Editor*

As many of you know, the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) added Article 2 to the Education Law which went into effect in July of 2012. Our members had considered a tentative resolution for the 2013 annual conference which was withdrawn when the current legislation was amended by the state legislature and was to become effective in July 2013. What is the status of that amended law, and what action was taken by the Board of Regents to comply with the new law? Happily, the Regents did act quickly. The Legislature amended Chapter 102 of the Laws of 2012, regarding the Dignity Act to include a requirement that school professionals applying for a certificate or license on or after July 1, 2013 complete training on the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

In response to the new law, the Education Department consulted with a diverse and well represented work group to seek recommendations on how many hours and the types of training needed to ensure that school personnel have adequate training in harassment, bullying and discrimination. The three components of the work group recommendations were approved by the Regents and put into place; (1) Part 52 of the Commissioner's Regulations were amended to require teacher and school leadership preparation programs to include at least six hours of training in Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention, (2) a new subpart of the Commissioner's Regulations was added to establish standards under which the Department will approve providers of this training, and (3) Part 80 of the Commissioner's Regulations were amended to require that anyone applying for an administrative or supervisory service, classroom teaching service or school service certificate or license on or after July 1, 2013, shall have completed at least six clock hours of coursework or training in Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Prevention and Intervention.

This action was important for many of our members and we wanted to provide an update on what actions were taken by the legislature and the Board of Regents.

The NYS Property Tax Freeze Credit by, Brian Sherman, *Editor*

When New York State passed its 2014-15 budget, it enacted a property tax freeze credit for homeowners. The credit will be implemented as rebate checks for STAR-eligible homeowners based on property taxes levied by school districts and municipalities (village, town, county, library, etc.) that are subject to the property tax levy cap.

If a school district's adopted tax levy is under the cap, homeowners will receive a rebate for the increase in their school taxes for the 2014-15 year.

If a municipality remains under the tax cap, then the rebate will include the increase in those taxes also. If a school is under the tax cap and the municipality is over the tax cap, then only the increase in tax from the school district will be included in the rebate check.

The rebate check will reimburse homeowners for the increase in their school tax bills and will NOT include an increase in taxes due to an assessment increase for property improvements or loss of exemptions.

The rebate check will be issued by the NYS Department of Tax and Finance in the fall of 2014 and/or fall 2015.



NYSRTA Remembers President Emeritus Glenn W. Clark, *CR

Mr. Clark was elected as the ninth NYSRTA President and served from 1988 through 1994. He passed away on June 9, 2014.

During Mr. Clark's Presidency, the Association's membership increased to 36,000. His President's Message in the Winter 1990 *YORK STATE* spoke of everyone's role in helping to keep membership strong. He wrote, "*We are a viable, vital, and vivacious group of mature individuals who are doing great things for our members and all retired citizens! Above all, we must continue to explain our organization, its accomplishments, and its programs to fellow retirees so that all eligible persons belong to the NYSRTA. Each of us is a public Relations Specialist. Let's let everyone know, WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, AND WHERE WE ARE GOING.*"

Mr. Clark was awarded the Certificate of Recognition for Distinguished Service Award in 1995. He was described in these words, "*Master of organization and leadership in education and NYSRTA; for perseverance in protecting the insurance rights of retirees; courage in time of peace and war; tenacity in keeping honesty as his watchword.*"

Mr. Clark also served as State Vice President for Federal Legislation of NYSRTA for three years.

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 64th ANNUAL CONVENTION
ANNUAL WORKSHOP & ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 7 – 9, 2014

NAME _____ TELEPHONE # _____

ADDRESS _____

Please check the appropriate meals.

TUESDAY Dinner (\$49)

Dinner Choice:

Cinnamon-Apple Stuffed Roast Pork Loin
(Walnut Dressing, Hard Cider Sauce & Seasonal Vegetable Medley) _____

OR

Roasted Eggplant Rollatini (stuffed with Spinach and Ricotta Cheese,
Topped with Marinara Sauce, Ricotta Salata & Fresh Basil) _____

WEDNESDAY Breakfast (\$20) Lunch (\$24) Cocktail Hour & Dinner (\$51)

Dinner Choice:

Roast Prime Rib of Beef (slow roasted rosemary peppercorn, horseradish cream & stuff baked potato) _____

OR

Baked Boston Haddock (Herb Butter Crust, Lemon Butter and Parsley Rice & Seasonal Vegetable Medley) _____

THURSDAY Breakfast (\$20) Lunch (\$24)

Thursday Boxed Lunch:

Honey Roast Ham (Honey Ham & Swiss Cheese with Lettuce & Tomato on Marble Rye Bread) _____

OR

Turkey Club Wrap (Smoked Turkey Breast, American Cheese, Lettuce & Tomato in a Spinach Tortilla) -----

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

Lisa Dolen, EOM
NYSRTA
8 Airport Park Blvd
Albany Airport Park

REGISTRATION
DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

THE NYSRTA 64th ANNUAL CONVENTION
ANNUAL WORKSHOP & ANNUAL MEETING

Hosted by Central Zone

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, **October 7 – 9, 2014**

Registration: Tuesday, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday: REGISTRATION BEGINS 2:00pm

- * Welcome Reception – Coffee, Tea, and Danish pastry @ Registration
- * Vendor Exhibit
- * Dinner on Tuesday evening.
- * Certificate of Recognition Presentation
- * Keynote Speaker

Wednesday

- * Breakfast
- * Workshops
- * Vendor Exhibit
- * Lunch
- * Annual Meeting – Session 1
- * Cocktail Reception
- * Dinner
- * Entertainment

Thursday

- * Breakfast
- * Annual Meeting – Session 2
- * Boxed Lunch

REGISTRATION FORM – ANNUAL CONVENTION --- OCTOBER 7 - 9, 2014 - NYSRTA

NAME _____ TELEPHONE # _____

ADDRESS _____

SHARING ROOM WITH _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

FULL PACKAGE - Tuesday and Wednesday Nights

(Includes dinner Tuesday evening, all meals Wednesday, breakfast & lunch on Thursday)

TRIPLE: \$308 Per Person _____ DOUBLE: \$358 Per Person _____ SINGLE: \$528 Per Person _____

All rates include applicable sales tax and dining room gratuities. A minimum seven-day cancellation notice is required

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: \$155 Per Person _____ DOUBLE: \$180 Per Person _____ SINGLE: \$265 Per Person _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____

DEPARTURE DATE _____

PLEASE MAKE DINNER SELECTIONS AND RETURN WITH YOUR RESERVATION FORM

Tuesday Dinner – Cinnamon-Apple Stuffed Roast Pork Loin (Walnut Dressing, Hard Cider Sauce & Seasonal Vegetable Medley) _____

OR

Roasted Eggplant Rollatini (stuffed with Spinach and Ricotta Cheese, Topped with Marinara Sauce, Ricotta Salata & Fresh Basil) _____

Wednesday Dinner – Roast Prime Rib of Beef (slow roasted rosemary peppercorn, horseradish cream & stuff baked potato) _____

OR

Baked Boston Haddock (Herb Butter Crust, Lemon Butter and Parsley Rice & Seasonal Vegetable Medley) _____

Thursday Boxed Lunch – Honey Roast Ham (Honey Ham & Swiss Cheese with Lettuce & Tomato on Marble Rye Bread) _____

OR

Turkey Club Wrap (Smoked Turkey Breast, American Cheese, Lettuce & Tomato in a Spinach Tortilla) -----

Please clip this form and mail with deposit of \$50 per person to:

Credit Card is mandatory at check-in

TURNING STONE RESORT & CASINO
ATTENTION: Finance Dept.
5218 Patrick Road
Verona, New York 13478

1-800-771-7711

REGISTRATION
DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

Robert DeCormier Memorial Trust;

Imogene McKendrick, *Trustee*

Then & Now

In July of 2000, I was selected by the then DeCormier Trustees; **Fred Salzer** (Chair), **Ted Henry** (Vice Chair), **Julia Jones** (Secretary), **Paul Vogan**, and **Alice Bennett**, to fill the vacancy on the Trustee Board created by the passing of **Aubrey Byer**. Presently, the Trustees include **Alex Boschi**, **Anne Flansburg *CR**, **Agnes Hudson *CR**, **Imogene McKendrick *CR**, **John Olsen *CR**, and our newest member, **Jackie Moller *CR**. Over the past fourteen years, in addition to those mentioned above, **Frank Mayer *CR**, **Carolyn Normile *CR**, and **Robert Wallace *CR** have served as trustees.

As of January 1, 2000, over half of the income received by the DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund was distributed to retired teachers receiving monthly stipend checks. The maximum check for financial help at that time was \$300.

As of January 1, 2014, in order to honor the Trust's obligation to the monthly stipend recipients, \$17,638. had to be used from its assets. Income received from contributions was no longer able to meet the cost of the monthly stipend distribution. The maximum check for monthly financial help was \$650.

There have been some structural changes within the Robert R. DeCormier Memorial Trust Fund during that 14 year span that you may find interesting.

Trustee terms have been changed from life-time to renewable six year terms. Trustees, that used to be selected by the Trustee Board, are now first nominated by the NYSRTA Board and then elected by the Trustee Board.

Another type of grant, underwritten by the DeCormier Trust Fund, called the Special Grant has been made available to those who qualify for it. It is a "lump sum" grant to provide financial assistance for an emergency, unexpected, unreimbursed expense. To qualify for either the Monthly Stipend or the Special Grant, among other things, you must have had three current years of NYSRTA membership. Grant application forms have been rewritten and updated several times so that the information requested is pertinent to current needs.

The DeCormier Trustees have found it necessary to implement new ways of funding the grant program. Letters have been written to zone and unit presidents requesting to have the DeCormier Trust Fund included as a line item in their budgets. A booth to encourage delegate contributions has been set-up by the Trustees at the Annual Convention for the past three years. There has been, in recent years, a special appeal for BJ membership of which the Trust Fund receives a portion of each new or renewed

**The New York State Retired
Teachers' Association, Inc.
8 Airport Park Boulevard
Latham, NY 12110-6414
Ph: 518-482-3509**

Dated Material—Please Do Not Delay

membership. NYSRTA members are encouraged to send a donation in memory of a deceased individual or in honor of someone. Acknowledgements are sent to the donor and the family or individual who is being remembered.

The DeCormier Trustees are open to innovative ideas and suggestions from you for increasing contributions so that money will not have to be taken from the assets. It is the Board's goal to use just the interest from those assets, plus contributions, to pay for the monthly stipends for those retired teachers who are in need of financial assistance.

My fourteen year journey as a trustee has been a rewarding and learning experience. I personally thank all who have helped the Trust to accomplish its goal of helping retired educators in financial need, and I ask you to continue to make this possible.

Imogene

For More Information

Visit our website at www.nysrta.org

Click on Financial Assistance in the Member's Benefits Box!