



# BRTA NEWSLETTER

[www.brta.biz](http://www.brta.biz)

[brtamembership@yahoo.com](mailto:brtamembership@yahoo.com)

President: Charles Peszynski

Recording Sec.: Dolores Scanlon

1st VP: Thomas Giambra

Corresponding Sec.: Elisa Harting

2nd VP: JoAnn Meyer

Membership Sec.: Linda Parada

Treasurer: Stephen Parada

Immediate Past Pres: Al Marabella

At Large: Floyd Kruschke, Michael Marszalek, Loretta Peszynski

Board Members: Joel Carter, Carolyn Cardarella, Josephine Cross, Russell Gervasi, Mary Ann Janiga, Clarann Josef, Cynthia Mehary, Sue Nyitrai, Theresa Pope, Peter Riester

Spring Edition

April, 2016

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 11, 2016**—Long Term Care Insurance Workshop. Information on page 4.

**May 25, 2016**—Spring Luncheon. Information on page 10

**June 7-13, 2016**—Trip to South Dakota & Badlands

**June 14, 2016**—Don Guerra Golf Tournament at Terry Hills. Information on page 6

**June 21-July 4**—Alaska Cruise and Land Tour

**September, 2016**—Fall Luncheon

**Sept. 22—Oct. 3, 2016**—Discovering Poland

**December, 2016**—Holiday Luncheon

## President's Message

As residents of Buffalo and Western New York, one of the things we have learned to cope with over the years is change and the unexpected turn of events. Take our weather situation this year as an example. This past summer was cooler than normal and this winter was one of the mildest on record yet, right now, in the first week of April, there is snow on the ground again! But take heart, we can look forward to a real Spring and our annual Spring Luncheon at the Park Country Club on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

There are, however, some changes with which we should not have to cope. The first of these is a New York State Constitutional Convention. By law, there must be a referendum on the ballot every 20 years asking voters whether a convention should be held and the next referendum is scheduled for 2017. It is in the best interest of educators, both active and retired, as well as ALL public employees to vote NO in this referendum and to urge their friends and relatives to vote NO also. As it stands now, there are provisions in the state constitution which guarantee our pensions and which exempt our pensions from state tax. There is also a provision in the constitution which guarantees a free public education from K to 12 to all children in the state. A state constitutional convention would discard the current constitution and write a totally new one. There is little chance these three guarantees - or other socially responsible provisions - would be included in a new constitution given the resentment felt by some factions against retiree benefits and the push by the Governor for more charter schools. In addition, it would cost the taxpayers millions of dollars and the voters could reject the new constitution - as they did in 1967.

Another change with which we should not have to cope is a significant increase in the cost of our health care and prescription drug co-pays. We have been assured repeatedly that we are entitled to the health care plan that was in effect when we retired, but it seems that there is a loophole which allows the Board

Benefits Available to  
BRTA Members

**Long-term Care Insurance; BRTA Discounts on Long-term Care Insurance:** 1-800-655-4899

**Eyewear Discount**

Eyewear Unlimited: 716-834-3511  
Niagara Labmasters, Inc.  
Niagara Falls, NY 716-297-9115  
Gary Optical  
Lewiston, NY 716-754-255  
Boulevard Optical  
Tonawanda, NY 716-694-4388

**Tires and Service**

Discounts at Dunn Tire

**Dental Discounts**

The North Park Dental Group  
716-836-2242

**Vital Savings by Aetna**—Mention membership when you are inquiring about discount programs designed to help you save on dental or pharmaceuticals. 1-877-MY-VITAL (1-800-698-4825) or [www.vitalsavings.com](http://www.vitalsavings.com)

**Ballroom, Latin, Swing and Other Styles of Dance**—Tara Scime at 716-491-0186 or [TMSDance@yahoo.com](mailto:TMSDance@yahoo.com). Mention your BRTA membership and receive a discount.

**Faculty Rewards**—Discount magazine subscriptions. Go to [www.facultyrewards.com](http://www.facultyrewards.com) and use code 403360

**BPO**-Call Ambrose Price at 885-5001 for discount tickets

***IN MEMORIAM***

Ron Banks

Anne “Nancy” H. Brandi

Diane DelSanto

Louise Elias Firsich

Geraldine Kocher

Victor Lama

Walter Mucha

Malala Louise Stewart

Barbara Winkler

James Yuhnke

BRTA would like to acknowledge the passing of those teachers who served the children of Buffalo. If you would like to have someone included in the “In Memoriam” listings, please notify Josephine Cross (636-3014).

**BRTA TRAVELING GOLF CLUB PLANS SEASON**

The BRTA Traveling Golf Club is beginning its 6<sup>th</sup> Season. The league is informal, playing a different course each month. We meet on Mondays at 10:30 am. The courses for this year are not yet set but in the past we have played at Bob-O-Links, Audubon Par 3, Gothic Hills, Bright Meadows, Oakwood and Newfane. With no set foursomes, those who can make it form a group when they arrive. No one is obligated to keep score and no attendance is taken. Most Mondays we also go to lunch and share stories about the day’s play. If you are new to golf or would like to have some fun with little competition, this league is for you. Feel free to invite your friends who are like-minded.

For more information or to get on the e-mail list contact Mary Agnes Marabella at 635-9530 or [masm36@gmail.com](mailto:masm36@gmail.com).

Frequently Requested Numbers

Website: [www.brta.biz](http://www.brta.biz) Email: [brtamembership@yahoo.com](mailto:brtamembership@yahoo.com)

**President:** Charles Peszynski—631-3717

**Membership:** Linda Parada—875-3392

**Luncheons:** Loretta Peszynski—631-3717

**Travel:** Al Marabella—635-9530, Russ Gervasi—839-5781

**Newsletter:** Elisa Harting—838-3708

**Friendly Service:** Josephine Cross—636-3014

## **President's Message** (continued from page 1)

as a self-insured entity to raise co-pays for some retirees. Some of our members have also contacted me about a Form 1095-C which they received from the Board and I noticed some data on those forms which I felt was inaccurate (one of the members sent me a copy). I will be in touch with the BTF on this to see what we can do to alleviate the concerns of our members.

Then, there is the drastic change that could take place at the national level if the Republican Party gains control of the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives – a political trifecta. They plan to eliminate Medicare as we know it and replace it with a voucher for \$660 to pay for your entire medical and prescription drug expenses for the year. They are also looking to extend the life of Social Security by reducing benefits and adopting a stricter COLA rather than increasing revenue by removing the \$109,000 ceiling on which Social Security taxes are paid. Please be vigilant as this election year moves along.

— Charles Peszynski

## **BUFFALO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION—YEAR IN REVIEW—2015**

**BRTA Contributes to Charities**—Monies collected in December, 2014 from the “Holiday Buckets” amounted to \$600 and were donated to Seneca Babcock Community Center. Monies collected from the split club at the same luncheon in the amount of \$650 were given to the St. Luke’s Mission.

The Winter Luncheon split club collected \$200 for the Variety Club Telethon.

The spring and fall luncheons’ split clubs collected money for the BRTA Scholarship fund in the amounts of \$ 348 and \$528 respectively.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**—So far this year, we have awarded \$1000 scholarships to Wahida Dipa, Marnisha Brooks, Lina Akther, and Arysha Santiago. Thanks to chairwoman, Clarann Josef.

**TRAVEL**— Members have travelled this year to England, Sicily, Thailand, Cape Cod, and Classic Christmas Markets of Europe. Thanks to Russ Gervasi and Al Marabella.

**GOLF OUTINGS**—The annual Don Guerra gold tournament at Terry Hills Golf Course in Batavia last June was a success once again. Forty eight golfers, both men and women, participated in a fun filled day of golf. Upon returning to the picnic shelter, the golfers shared in a steak dinner and contributed to the prize raffle, raising over \$534 for the scholarship fund, Thanks to the chairman, Steve Parada.

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**Buffalo Retired Teachers Association Long-Term Care Insurance Workshop**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2016**

**Ways to Register:**

Mail this completed form (address and phone required) to:  
SMP Agency, 1320 Buffalo Rd., Ste. 211, Rochester, NY 14624

Call 1-800-655-4899 (24 hours a day)

Online: [www.insurancemate.com/brtaseminar.html](http://www.insurancemate.com/brtaseminar.html)

I cannot attend but I would like more information.

Please send me an informational packet.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Save lower portion as a reminder!!!

**STAY IN CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH CARE OPTIONS AND  
SAFEGUARD YOUR HARD EARNED RETIREMENT SAVINGS**

**Workshop highlights:**

- Learn the Difference Between Health Care and Long-Term Care
- How to Avoid Being forced to Sell Your Assets or Surrender Your Money to Medicaid
- Review the NEW and More Restrictive Medicaid Eligibility and Asset Transfer Rules
- How to Maintain Your Estate While Getting the Healthcare You Need
- Review the Benefits and Discounts of the BRTA Long-Term Insurance Plans
- How to Know if Long-Term Insurance is Right for You
- Compare Long-Term Care Insurance Premiums from Several Companies
- Learn About the Five New York State Partnership for Long-Term Care Plans

**LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE WORKSHOP**

Conducted by Stephen M. Polizzi, CMFC, CLTC, CRPS

**Wednesday, May 11, 2016**

**4:00pm to 5:30pm**

Buffalo Teachers Federation, 271 Porter Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14201

Program is open to family members!

## How to have safe and successful health care stay at the hospital\*

Whether you were admitted to the hospital because of an illness or injury, or have planned a hospital stay for surgery or testing, being in any hospital can be an overwhelming experience for you and your family. But no matter your level of anxiety or concern, there are a number of things you can do to participate in your care and to help achieve the health care outcomes you desire.

### Don't Hesitate to Communicate

First and foremost, talk to your doctor and all members of the hospital staff. Tell them how you feel and if you are experiencing any pain or other symptoms. Let them know about all the medicines, vitamins, or other remedies you take. Tell them about all the illnesses you currently have or have experienced in the past as well as anything that might keep you from following your prescribed treatment plan.

### Be a Team Player

Every team assigns specific responsibilities to team members. As a member of your health care team, it is your role to ask the doctor and hospital staff about your illness or injury. It is your responsibility to learn about your diagnosis, know what you need to do about it, and understand why it is important to follow the treatment plan. Don't be afraid to ask questions, to ask the staff to repeat the directions, or to provide written directions for you. And, if you have a specific concern or problem, tell a member of your health care team. Although this information does not include every question or topic you may need to discuss with your health care team, it can help you play an active role in your care at the hospital and understand what you may need to do after you leave the hospital.

Remember, you are the MOST important member of your health care team!

### STEP 1: PREPARING FOR YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

- Review with your doctor why you are being hospitalized — your diagnosis, any planned tests, and who will be in charge of your care while you are in the hospital.

- If you need or want a family member, caregiver, or friend to act as an advocate for

you while you're hospitalized, ask the person in advance and inform your doctor and admitting health care professionals.

- Take these items with you to the hospital: Personal identification with your photo (such as a driver's license), health insurance card(s) and, if needed, referral form.

An up-to-date list of all medications you are currently taking, including prescription and non-prescription medicine, supplements, vitamins, herbs, etc. Give the list to the hospital. A list of allergies or sensitivities to any

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## Announcement

Lafayette's Masters of Music will be in concert saluting the late MR. SAM SCAMACCA on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 6:00PM. The evening will feature music greats including Gary Mallaber ('64), Joe Baudo ('66), Jim Tudini ('67), Bobby Millitello ('68) and Joe Parisi ('70). The doors of the Mellon Memorial Auditorium at Lafayette High School will open at 5:30pm. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. *Early ticket purchasers will receive preferred seating.* Advance ticket requests by mail may be sent to Joyce DiChristina ('69), 695 Columbus Parkway, Buffalo, NY 14213. Make checks payable to Lafayette Alumni Association. For return of tickets, please enclose a self-addressed envelope. Tickets may also be held at the door for pick up.

**BUFFALO RETIRED TEACHERS ANNUAL GOLF OUTING—The Don Guerra Open**

Will be held at the Terry Hills Golf Course, 5122 Clinton St. ( 1 mile east of Batavia on Route 33...8 minutes from NYS Thruway Exit 48) on Tuesday, June 14, 2016. Report and sign in at 11:15 am but no later than 12:00pm. Cost is \$75.00 per golfer and includes 18 holes of golf with cart, hot dog or hamburger before tee-off, steak dinner after golf with free beer and a limited number of door prizes.

Reservations no later than June 1, 2016. Limit: 108 golfers. Foursomes and individuals welcome.

Make checks payable to Buffalo Retired Teachers Association.

Mail entry and check to Stephen Parada, 23 Tremont Avenue, Kenmore, NY 14217

For information or questions, contact Steve by phone (716-875-3392) or email (srada48@yahoo.com)

**Send Foursome or Individual Name(s), Address(es), and Phone Number(s):**

1.

2.

3.

4.

## **How to have a safe and successful health care stay at the hospital ( continued from page 5)**

medicine. Results for tests done six weeks or less prior to hospitalization. Advance directive, if you have one (if you do not, it is strongly recommended that you complete one). Health care decision-makers you may have appointed, or who you desire to make decisions for you if you are unable to make them for yourself.

### **STEP 2: WHILE YOU ARE IN THE HOSPITAL**

Ask your health care team the following questions:

- Who can I talk with if I have questions about my treatment—for example, if I don't understand my treatment plan, who will direct my care, what will happen next, or when it will happen?
- What can I do if I feel my health concerns are not being handled in a timely, respectful manner—for example, if I do not feel my pain is being controlled? (Note: The hospital should provide a list describing your patient rights. Many hospitals also have patient advocates.)
- How can my loved ones and I reduce risks (such as falls, medicine mistakes, and infections) while I am in the hospital?
- If your health insurance is provided through Medicare, did you receive the document "An Important Message from Medicare"?
- Moves within the hospital (transitions of care) require cooperation among you, your loved ones, and your health care team. Be sure to ask where you are moving (for example, from ICU to a Step Down Unit), when, why, and who will be in charge of your care during and after the move.

### **STEP 3: BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL**

-Ask your nurse when your doctor will be by to discharge you. Be prepared to ask your doctor any questions you want to know, such as:

- What treatment you received, and why.
- What recovery may be like (length, how you may feel).
- What you need to do to take care of your health, such as caring for a wound or incision, changing your diet, limiting activities, and making follow-up appointments.
- A current list of medicines and their instructions. Expect a clear message regarding specific meds you should continue to take, which meds you should stop taking and any new medications that are important to the management of your disease or injury.
- Expect information about and ask for explanations of warning signs you might experience after your discharge that warrant contacting your doctor.
- Upon being admitted, ask your social worker, case manager, or nurse about any help you may need upon leaving the hospital, with such things as bathing, dressing, meals, or medical equipment, and who can help you arrange the services.
- Notify the medical staff of any responsibilities you may have, such as caregiving or babysitting for others.
- If possible, have a family member, caregiver, or friend with you when talking with your doctor, nurse, case manager and social worker before leaving the hospital.
- Review the guide, Taking Care of My Health Care, available at [www.ntocc.org](http://www.ntocc.org). The questions included there may assist you and/or your caregiver to be an active participant in your continuing health care plan.

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**How to have a safe and successful health care stay at the hospital** ( continued from page 7 )**STEP 4: WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME:**

Review all discharge information, including:

- When to make appointments with doctor(s), clinics, testing facility, who will be treating you after discharge.
- What follow-up tests or treatments are necessary and how to arrange them.
- A list of all the medicines you need to take, including prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine, or vitamins, herbs, or supplements.
- Understand how the prior medications you were taking fit in with the new medication list; which should be stopped, which continued, which continued but in a different dose or frequency.
- Report symptoms of disease recurrence or complications of your disease, injury or treatment immediately to your doctor, home health nurse, or pharmacist.
- Contact your doctor if you have problems managing your illness or questions about your treatment plan, such as needing help at home, making and keeping appointments, and getting your medications.

\*This guide was downloaded from [www.ntocc.org](http://www.ntocc.org): National Transitions of Care Coalition. More information and checklists are available on that web site.

—Jo Ann Meyer

**RESOLUTION TIME**

It's that time again. Yes, it's time to suggest issues about which resolutions can be written. Contact the WZ Resolutions Committee with your suggestions. The committee awaits your response. We usually have three resolutions to present to the Western Zone Board members. Now we only have two. Where is yours?

Contact: Theresa E. Pope, (716) 445-4804/ 838-3193/ jdp86 @live.com.

We want the WZ Board members to approve the Resolutions for submission to NYSTRA(New York State Retired Teachers Association). We want our voices to be heard. We want to be in the state competition, too. BE IT RESOLVED That You'll send us an idea or issue.

—Theresa E. Pope



## Year in Review (continued from page 3)

Weekly golf outings to local par three courses in the summer months has proven to be a success as well. Thanks to Mary Agnes Marabella for coordinating golf outings at Bob-a-Link in Orchard Park, Bright Meadows in Akron, Gothic Hills in Lockport, Newfane Par 3 in Newfane, and Oakwood in Amherst. Each Monday, the group of men and women play for recreation and then have lunch at a local restaurant.

**CARD CLUB**—The third Monday of each month throughout the year finds BRTA members at the Friendly's Ice Cream restaurant on Maple Road near Sweet Home participating in card games. Pinochle seems to be the game of choice. Thanks to Carolyn Cardarella for coordinating this group.

**LUNCHEONS**—Our four luncheons in 2015 were held at Brookfield Country Club, Park Country Club, Millenium Hotel and Salvatore's Italian Restaurant.

**IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER**—Annual dues is \$12 per year with BRTA's fiscal year beginning September 1st. Life membership is \$150 and you are presented with a life membership card once. Only annual members are given renewed annual membership cards.

You belong to Buffalo Retired Teachers Association which is a unit of Western Zone—New York Retired Teachers Association.

You may also be a member of Retiree Council #44 of NYSUT.

More detailed information can be found on the BRTA website ([www.brta.biz](http://www.brta.biz)).

—Stephen Parada

## Travel Update

BRTA makes every effort to offer our membership travel destinations. If you have some particular place you would like to visit, please let me (Al Marabella, 635-9530, [almarbs@gmail.com](mailto:almarbs@gmail.com)) know your choice.

The new destinations for 2016 are pretty much set as reservations must be made well in advance to accommodate our group which usually entails the entire travel allotment. Our first destination in 2017 is Panama scheduled for March 10—17, 2017. See the Rainforest, visit an indigenous village, cruise the Panama Canal, travel through the locks, and more.

In the summer of 2017, travel to Eastern Canada by motor coach or train. We are still working on the transportation. This will include Montreal & Quebec. There is much to see and do. The food is as good as the best French meals in Europe.

Our group is offering a trip to Tuscany & the Italian Riviera, September 22—29, 2017. See Florence (meet David), see the Uffizi Gallery, Sienna, the seaside town of Santa Margherita Ligure. Visit a Tuscan Estate & Winery with wine & wine & wine. It is Italy you know.

Explore Cuba for 8 days in late October of 2017. Fly into Havana, see the Botanical Gardens, Fine Art Museum. Learn how Cuban cigars are made. See palaces, estates, and more, not to mention '50s cars. Bet you are too young to have had a first hand original experience out-of-the-showroom. One could file a 4' by 8' plywood into the trunk uncut!

Additional destinations being considered for 2018 are:

Visit to US Canyon Country, which includes Scottsdale, the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Bryce Canyon (Probably the most beautiful canyon and easily accessible by car), Zion National Park, and Las Vegas. (probably March 2018). America's Music Cities—New Orleans, Memphis & Nashville. Go to New Orleans, Graceland, Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame, French Quarter. Possibly Scandinavia in the summer of 2018 and Iceland in November, 2018.

—Al Marabella

# Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Cordially Invites Members & Guests to attend its

## *BRTA Spring Luncheon*

To be held at

### **The Park Country Club**

4949 Sheridan Drive  
Williamsville, NY 14221  
716-632-2121

**Wednesday, May 25, 2016**

Social Hour: 11:15 AM Complimentary Fruit Punch & Cash Bar  
Luncheon: 12:15 PM Choice of:  
1. Tornado of Beef  
2. Grilled Petite Atlantic Salmon Filet  
3. Grilled Chicken w/Vodka Sauce  
4. Vegetarian Pasta  
Luncheon includes Salad, Vegetable, Dessert and Beverage

Cost: \$25.00 for Members - \$30.00 for Non-member Guests  
(BRTA subsidizes cost for members)

Payment: **Due by Monday, May 16, 2016**

Payable to: Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Mail to: Loretta Peszynski (631-3717)  
149 Scamridge Curve  
Williamsville, NY 14221-5212

**N.B. No cash refunds given after reservation deadline**

**Detach and mail lower portion only. Keep upper portion as your reminder.**

Please list your name and the names of all other persons included in the enclosed payment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ BRTA Member: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Meal Choice (Number) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ BRTA Member: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Meal Choice (Number) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ BRTA Member: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Meal Choice (Number) \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_**