



# BRTA NEWSLETTER

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

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

President: Thomas Giambra

Recording Sec.: Stephen Parada

1st VP: Russell Gervasi

Corresponding Sec.: Elisa Harting

2nd VP: Renate Yuhnke

Membership Sec.: Linda Parada

Treasurer: Floyd Kruschke

Past Pres: Al Marabella

At Large: Josephine Cross, Arnold Harting, Michael Marszalek

Board Members: Mary Boblak, Carolyn Cardarella, Clarann Josef,  
Cynthia Mehary, Ann Peters, Theresa Pope, Sara Rodland  
Dolores Scanlon, Guy Schiavi

Winter Edition

November, 2023

## Upcoming Events

December 7, 2023--

Holiday Luncheon at Salvatore's Italian Gardens  
Information on page 6

Winter Luncheon--TBA

Spring Luncheon--TBA



## President's Message

I hope that everyone is doing well and is enjoying the fall season. As I write this, the weather has been cooler and more damp than usual for this time of year. It would be nice to have a few more sunny and warmer days before winter sets in.

It was nice to see you at the BRTA Fall Luncheon in September. Thank you for supporting the split club. The money will be used for the BRTA Scholarship Fund. As reported by Chairperson Clarann Josef, the committee awarded three Buffalo students a scholarship this year. The names of these recipients can be found on page 4. I would like to thank the committee for all the work on this project.

BRTA did have one problem with the banquet management of the Hotel M. There was an attempt to charge BRTA for twenty additional meals. The banquet manager claimed that people went up to the wait staff with tickets claiming that they had to take meals to people who could not attend the luncheon at the last minute, but had paid for a lunch. I am convinced that this did not happen. Elisa Harting, who was in charge of reservations, marked the nametags of the absentee with her initials and a code. The banquet manager was aware of this. This is the first time a banquet facility attempted to charge us for extra meals. The problem was caused by the way the facility served the meals. They brought out trays of each meal. They had no idea what each person at a table had ordered. I think that I have worked out the problem with the banquet manager. At least I was told to ignore the invoice which had been sent to us.

Continued on page 3

Benefits Available to  
BRTA Members

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

Tonawanda, NY 716-694-4388

**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 Janet Field at 885-5001 for discount tickets

**West Herr Select Vehicle Purchase Plan**

Activate benefit plan ***before*** going to the dealership. Go to [www.westherrselect.com](http://www.westherrselect.com) or call your **Select Benefit Concierge (716) 202-3091**.

***IN MEMORIAM***

Marion Anderson

Barbara Fildes

Frances Harris

Marilyn Foote Krapke

Charles Latona

Peter Schifferli

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 (716-636-3014).

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the following on their 50th wedding anniversary:

Daniel and Dodie McLaughlin

Steve and Linda Parada

Wayne and Barbara Wojdyla

BRTA would like to congratulate those celebrating landmark events. Please notify Elisa Harting (716-838-3708) if you would like such an announcement posted.

Frequently Requested Numbers

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

**President:** Thomas Giambra—716-877-7796

**Membership:** Linda Parada—716-875-3392

**Luncheons:** Elisa Harting--716-838-3708

**Travel:** Russ Gervasi—716-839-5781

**Newsletter:** Elisa Harting—716-838-3708

**Friendly Service:** Josephine Cross—716-636-3014

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

I attended the RENY Annual Convention at the Turning Stone Casino. There was a workshop to update delegates on the status of the retirement system. I am happy to report that the New York State Teachers Retirement System is in very good shape at this time. The system is funded to a total of 99.3% as of June 30, 2022. The five year return on investment is 7.7%. The ten year return is 8.9%. The total membership of the retiree system is 448,800. The retiree membership is 180,700. The largest tier of active teachers is Tier 4. However, Tier 6 is rapidly catching up. There is a bill before the state legislature to attempt to fix Tier 6. Teachers in this tier have to work to age 63 to receive full benefits. The members of this tier receive 1.5% credit for each year that they work. Also, the penalty for early retirement is very severe.

The COLA, which began in 2001, for this year is 2.5% of the first \$18,000. The maximum monthly increase is \$37.50.

As a reminder, November is change of health care month. If you have health care insurance as part of your retirement package and wish to change to another insurance offering, call Benefits at City Hall and they will direct you to the appropriate person.

The next BRTA luncheon is at Salvatore's on December 7, 2023. It is the annual holiday luncheon. I hope there will be no weather issues. I hope to see many of you there. Until then, take care.

---Thomas Giambra

## Travel News

BRTA is announcing the following trips in 2024:

Norway.. July 20 to July 28 9 days

Shades of Ireland.. August 10 to August 19 10 days

Spain.. October 11 to October 22 12 days

Iceland.. November 5 to November 11 7 days

Brochures will be mailed with the newsletters. Norway and Ireland are included with this newsletter and the remaining will be included in the next mailing.

Please remember that your passport must be active for 6 months before the first day of the trip which you are considering. This is required by most countries for entry and by Collette for the discount offered for each trip.

---Russell Gervasi

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Volunteer Weekend Greeters are required to keep the Center at Tiff Nature Preserve open and operating while staff facilitate an outdoor program away from the Center. The staff is also occupied and alone facilitating birthday parties, scout programs, private group programs or public programs while the Center is open on the weekends. Volunteers are essential in the operation of the Center during the week but most critical on Saturdays and Sundays.

Greeters essentially welcome guests to the facility, give directions to the restroom and other areas of the preserve, and answer any questions that they may have. Staff is always available to assist if you have any questions or concerns.

The shift typically is a 9:45-1pm and then a 1-4:15pm -ish shift. Tiff Nature Preserve is located at 1200 Fuhrmann Blvd., in Buffalo.

If you know of individuals that are available to help with one or more Saturdays or Sundays a month, we could use your help. Fill-in "as needed" volunteers are also appreciated. Please ask volunteers to email me directly or they can apply on our website at [https://](https://www.sciencebuff.org/volunteer/)

[www.sciencebuff.org/volunteer/](https://www.sciencebuff.org/volunteer/).

Please if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you so much for your assistance!

Kathleen Daigler-Santana

Volunteer and Human Resources Coordinator office:716-896-5200 ext. 309

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The awardees selected for the 2023 scholarships are:

**HAYA ELAMIR**, a graduate of City Honors School where her GPA was 102.9. She graduated with a NYS Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation with Honors. She is also a National Merit Commended Student, an AP Scholar with Distinction and an IB Diploma recipient. Haya's interests are biology, writing and STEM research. She has written 4 publications and has participated in archeological dig. Haya has many more achievements which impressed the committee.

**EMAN SALEM** graduated from Frederick Law Olmsted where she participated in Model UN, Upstate NY Transplant Services and Chess Club and was a Yellow Tulip Ambassador for mental health awareness. She was on the honor roll for 4 years and was a member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honors Society. Her goal in life is to improve the quality of life for others by becoming a Speech Language Pathologist.

**ALYSSA WAFFORD** graduated from Hutch Tech and was awarded the Josephine Slacer Service Scholarship. Alyssa participated in JROTC and demonstrated her community awareness through various community activities. She is a member of the Girl Scouts, Black Student Union, Buffalo Urban League, School Council, the National Technical Honor Society and the Young Philanthropist. Her goal is to receive a BS in Computer Science and enter the field of Cyber Security. Eventually, she hopes to work with the FBI.

---Clarann Josef

## HEALTH NEWS

### HAVE YOU FALLEN LATELY?

This is a question asked each time you go to the doctor for your annual check up or perhaps for any other physical examination. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 28% of Americans aged 65+ will fall this year. The National Institutes of Health reports that “Falls in older adults are a common occurrence and may lead to serious injuries such as fractures and/or head injuries.”

Your questions are: “How can I reduce my risk of falling?” and “What are the most common risk factors for falling?” Most of these factors include age related changes such as decline in vision, decline in hearing, poor balance, and decreased mobility. Chronic health conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, arthritis, diabetes, stroke, dementia and side effects from medications are also risk factors which may cause falling. These conditions can cause physical impairments, such as muscle weakness, balance problems, and coordination difficulties. Some chronic conditions can also cause cognitive impairment, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, or instability which will increase the likelihood of falling.

Your environment is an important factor as well. These may include clutter, inadequate lighting, wet floors, unstable furniture, and improper footwear all which can again cause unstable footing and eventually falling. Remaining active with exercise can help prevent falls. Any exercise, even simple gardening, can benefit the body.

Ultimately, during any medical exam, be sure to talk to your doctor about medication side effects, and any of the above items in order to identify and manage factors that may increase your risk of falling.

The information for this article was summarized from:

Internet article from Mount Sinai Morningside Trauma Program--Falls, Mount Sinai Today--Your Health, June 8,2023--”How Can I Reduce My Risk of Falling?”

Article from “In Good Health--Buffalo & WNY’s Health Care Newspaper, September, 2023, page 18. Article entitled “CDC: 28% of Americans Over 65 Will Fall This Year--Tips on how not to be part of this group.”

--Cynthia Mehary

Cordially Invites Members & Guests to attend its

*BRTA Holiday Luncheon*

To be held at

**Salvatore's Italian Gardens**

6461 Transit Road

Depew, NY

716-683-7990

**Thursday, December 7, 2023**

Social Hour: 11:15 AM Complimentary Fruit Punch & Cash Bar

Luncheon: 12:15 PM Choice of:

1. Beef Prime Rib
2. Fresh Salmon served with lemon herb sauce
3. Chicken Parmigiana
4. Vegetable Napoleon-eggplant, red peppers, zucchini and yellow squash  
with balsamic glaze

Luncheon includes Salad, Vegetable, Potato, Dessert and Beverage

Cost: \$40.00 for Members - \$45.00 for Non-member Guests  
(BRTA subsidizes cost for members)

Payment: **Due by Thursday, November 16, 2023**

Payable to: Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Mail to: Elisa Harting, 344 Parker Ave., Buffalo, NY 14216 (716) 838-3708

**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_**