



BRTA NEWSLETTER

www.brta.biz

brtamembership@yahoo.com

President: Al Marabella

Recording Sec.: Dolores Scanlon

1st VP: Thomas Giambra

Corresponding Sec.: Elisa Harting

2nd VP: Charles Peszynski

Membership Sec.: Linda Parada

Treasurer: Stephen Parada

At Large: Mike Marszalek, Ophelia Nicholas,
Theresa Pope

Board Members: Carolyn Cardarella, Josephine Cross, Russell Gervasi, Clarann Josef,
Floyd Kruschke, Cynthia Mehary, JoAnn Meyer, Ross Monteleone, Sue Nyitrai, Peter Riestler

Winter edition

January, 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 26, 2014—Winter Luncheon at Park Country Club (Info on page 8)

Apr. 3-10, 2014—Trip to London and Paris

May 29, 2014—Spring Luncheon at Windows on the Green

June 10, 2014—Don Guerra Golf Tournament

June 19-29, 2014—Trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota (Info on page 6)

July 3-11, 2014—Trip through Canadian Rockies

Sept. 3, 2014—Fall Luncheon (site to be determined)

Sept. 16-18, 2014—Trip to Eastern Pennsylvania and Philadelphia

Oct. 29-Nov. 4, 2014—Trip to Israel and the Holy Land

Dec. 4, 2014—Holiday Luncheon at Salvatore's Italian Gardens

President's Message

Happy New Year! Hope all enjoyed the season of giving. For those of you who belong to NYSRTA, this should be old news. But for those who are not, it is relevant.

I quote Jennifer Gardella of the Eastern Zone. "Health Insurance Debacle Impacts Retirees: Solidarity Forever? Guess again. A cautionary tale to all about health insurance contract wording and NYSUT's alleged protection of its retirees."

Teacher retirees have no bargaining standing as a group such as the BTF that represents **active** teachers. It is only by this group's bargaining power that it graciously represents retirees as it bargains for retirements of its **active** members in Buffalo. This said, apparently a Mohawk Valley group negotiated a new contract for active teachers which has increased the cost of health care for retirees, both past and future, for the pre-Medicare and Medicare recipients already retired. My understanding has been that the teachers enjoy a NYS law that insures health care coverage as given by the local board at retirement is to be continued throughout the lifetime of the retiree without diminution. Retirees' only option in Mohawk Valley is to bring suit.

Those of us in Buffalo know that the going to a single insurance provider saved the Board of Ed tons of money. But it violated teachers' contracts. This matter is currently before the courts, and has been for many, many years. By the time the Mohawk Valley retirees finally win the case, many may not be around to enjoy the victory. Enough said. Be vigilant. One of the reasons retirees are usually considered is that they vote and make their feelings known. Call your state representatives and senators. Talk about the matter. Ask "Is my health insurance guaranteed by state law?" The state and federal governments will always be looking for ways to cut expenses. Medicare and Social Security are always in the discussions about budget. Be vigilant.

Actually the only group that exclusively represents retired teachers is NYSRTA in advocating in NYS and on the federal level. With this said, I recently attended a Western Zone meeting of NYSRTA. Several new state strategic committee recommendations have been presented. Of course money for all

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

Dental Plan Insurance

Dental Pay Direct 716-836-7013

Group Medical Insurance for those who do not receive the benefit from their school district—Call Pam Styn at Dental Pay Direct at 716-836-7013 or toll free at 1-800-683-3682

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

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

IN MEMORIAM

Harold (Butch) Baumann	September, 2013
Kaia Joks	September, 2013
LeVern Davidson	October, 2013
Shirley May Froebel	October, 2013
Harold Sunshine	November, 2013
Werner Joseph Birrer	November, 2013
Katherine Mistretta	December, 2013
Roslyn Clement	December, 2013

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).

Frequently Requested Numbers

Website: www.brta.biz Email: brtamembership@yahoo.com

President: Al Marabella—635-9530

Membership: Linda Parada—875-3392

Luncheons: Ophelia Nicholas—633-1690

Travel: Russ Gervasi—839-5781

Newsletter: Elisa Harting—838-3708

Friendly Service: Josephine Cross—636-3014

The Journey through Grief and Loss

The last newsletter covered the subject of depression and I was asked to write about the grief process for this edition. The following is based on my training as a counselor, grief counseling experience and personal experience.

Part of the human condition is to experience loss and the accompanying grief. We have come to understand that this is a process thanks to the work of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross. In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the “five stages of grief.” These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of negative life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up.”

The five stages of grief, as defined by Kubler-Ross are: **Denial**: “This can’t be happening to me;” **Anger**: “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?;” **Bargaining**: “Make this not happen, and in return I will ____;” **Depression**: “I’m too sad to do anything;” **Acceptance**: “I’m at peace with what happened.”

Kübler-Ross herself never intended for these stages to be a rigid framework that applies to everyone who mourns. In her last book before her death in 2004, she said of the five stages of grief: “They were never meant to help tuck messy emotions into neat packages. They are responses to loss that many people have, but **there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss.** Our grieving is as individual as our lives.” (Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, MacMillan, NY 1969)

Instead of a series of stages, we might also think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like many roller coasters, the ride tends to be rougher in the beginning, the lows may be deeper and longer. The difficult periods should become less intense and shorter as time goes by, but it takes time to work through a loss. Even years after a loss, especially at special events such as a family wedding or the birth of a child, we may still experience a strong sense of grief. (Source: Hospice Foundation of America)

Another issue of the grief process is if you find yourself “stuck”. When you feel you are not moving forward. If you aren’t feeling better over time, or your grief is getting worse, it may be a sign that your grief has developed into a more serious problem, such as complicated grief or major depression.

Complicated grief

The sadness of losing someone you love never goes away completely, but it shouldn’t remain center stage. If the pain of the loss is so constant and severe that it keeps you from resuming your life, you may be suffering from a condition known as complicated grief. Complicated grief is like being stuck in an intense state of mourning. You may have trouble accepting the death long after it has occurred or be so preoccupied with the person who died that it disrupts your daily routine and undermines your other relationships.

Symptoms of complicated grief include: intense longing and yearning for the deceased; intrusive thoughts or images of your loved one; denial of the death or sense of disbelief; imagining that your loved one is alive; searching for the person in familiar places; avoiding things that remind you of your loved one; extreme anger or bitterness over the loss; feeling that life is empty or meaningless. If you believe what you are feeling is complicated grief or clinical depression, please seek help from a mental health professional right away. Remember, grief can be a roller coaster. It involves a wide variety of emotions and a mix of good and bad days. Even when you’re in the middle of the grieving process, you will have moments of pleasure or happiness. With depression, on the other hand, the feelings of emptiness and despair are constant.

Having read the above, it is important to remember that there is no “right” way to grieve or how long it takes. Grief will not diminish unless we allow ourselves to feel what we feel. Denial or ignoring does not work. Also, it is important to remember that the time it takes to work through this cannot be marked by a calendar. Grieving is natural and takes time to move through. That is why I call it a journey. It is part of our journey through life. (Source: www.helpguide.org)

NEWS BRIEFS

News from the Women Teachers Association:

The WTA Scholarship application is now available. If you know a current Buffalo Public School senior accepted to a two or four year college, please let them know about this. Applications can be downloaded from the Buffalo Public School website under "Scholarship Opportunities" or contact Carol Roberts at 512-8822. Deadline is April 12, 2014.

The WTA Spring Brunch is April 5, 2014 at Milo's with guest speaker the "Egg Lady", Jeanette Kreher, on the history of decorating eggs. All are welcome. Contact Betty Kulpa at 837-2504, email: CBSE@roadrunner.com

CANCER PREVENTION STUDY SEEKS PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Susan McCann and other researchers in Cancer Prevention at Roswell Park Cancer Institute are conducting a clinical research study of food and hormones in postmenopausal women. We are inviting postmenopausal women who have never had cancer and are not on a special diet to participate in the study. Certain hormones may be related to increased breast cancer risk, and some foods may alter hormones which could help to reduce this risk. We know that breast cancer risk factors, as well as how our bodies react to exposures, are different for black and white women. The purpose of the study is to determine whether the addition of flaxseed (a food high in compounds that can change hormones) to a regular diet can change hormones that are related to breast cancer risk, and whether the change is different for black and white women. Results from this study may help guide our future development of ways to prevent breast cancer. What will a participant have to do?

Participation in the study is voluntary. Eligible women who choose to participate in our study will be randomly assigned to eat 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed per day for 6 weeks or to maintain their usual diet. Two months later, you will switch into the other group for another 6 weeks.

You will complete an interview about your diet, health habits, medical history, reproductive history, and other information related to a woman's risk of developing breast cancer.

You will attend 5 morning visits throughout the intervention at the Prevention Center at Roswell Park Cancer Institute. We will take a blood sample, urine sample, fecal sample, and measure height, weight, and body fat. We will also call you periodically to ask you everything you ate and drank in the past 24 hours.

Participants in the study will be paid \$25 for each completed study visit during the intervention (\$100 total). We will also give you a report of your body fat and your nutrient profile at the end of the study. Although you will need your own transportation to Roswell, we will pay for your parking.

If you think that you meet the criteria and are interested in participating in the study, please contact Susan McCann, RD, PhD, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Elm and Carlton Streets, Buffalo, NY 14263 at 1-877-ASKRPCI (1-877-275-7724) or email: susan.mccann@roswellpark.org

BUFFALO RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

2013 IN REVIEW

BRTA CONTRIBUTES TO CHARITIES: Monies collected in December, 2012 from the “Holiday Buckets” amounted to \$938 and were donated to the William Floyd School District on Long Island for Hurricane Sandy Relief. Monies collected from the split club at the same luncheon in the amount of \$413 were given to the Cornerstone Manor of Buffalo. The Winter Luncheon split club collected \$200 for the Variety Club Telethon. The spring and fall luncheon split clubs collected money for the BRTA Scholarship fund in the amounts of \$320 and \$383 respectively.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED: So far this year, we have awarded \$1000 scholarships to Leatrice Bennett and Monique McBride from Hutch Tech and Rudra Khanal from Burgard. Thanks to chairwoman Clarann Josef.

TRAVEL: Members, this year, have traveled to the Magnificent Cities of Eastern Europe and to Spain, and have taken a Mississippi Riverboat Cruise. Future plans include trips to the Canadian Rockies in the spring of 2014 as well as to the cities of London and Paris in April. Thanks to Russ Gervasi and Al Marabella.

GOLF OUTINGS: The annual golf tournament at Terry Hills Golf Course in Batavia last June was a success once again. Seventy-seven golfers, both men and women, participated in a fun-filled day of golf. Upon returning to the picnic shelter, the golfers shared a steak dinner and contributed to the prize raffle, raising over \$600 for the scholarship fund. Thanks go out to chairman Ross Monteleone for his over twenty years of service to this endeavor.

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, Harris Hill in Clarence, Newfane Par 3 in Newfane and Oakwood in Amherst. Each week 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 activity.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: Recently, a delegation of BRTA members joined the Western Zone delegation at the New York State Retired Teachers convention. The following resolutions were adopted: 1. that NYSTRA take any and all action to see that the Federal law be changed requiring your social security number as a form of ID for other government programs and cards (Identity theft may harm Medicare, etc.), 2. that NYSTRA support any bill that will improve Medicare coverage for the cost of rehab after hospitalization, 3. that NYSTRA support action that would prohibit pharmaceutical companies from advertising the sale of prescription drugs (cost of ads would increase cost of drug), 4. that NYSTRA urge the NYS Legislature and all school districts to enforce the Dignity of All Students Act (anti-bullying), 5. that NYSTRA is opposed to the trend to-

Buffalo Retired Teachers Assn.

Invites Members & Guests to visit

Black Hills of S. Dakota with Tour of Mount Rushmore & Crazy Horse Mountain Carvings

June 19—29, 2014

We have never offered this trip. Many have requested it. If interested, book early to insure viability.

Highlights Include:

Guided tour of Chicago

Wisconsin Dells cruise

Visit to Corn Palace & Wall Drug

2 days tour of Black Hills, Badlands, Mt. Rushmore & Crazy Horse Carvings, Museums, & Custer State Park

Visit to Black Hill Gold Factory, Historic Deadwood, Mt. Moriah Cemetery, & Silverado Casino

Some shopping at Wall Drug & Lunch at Al's Oasis

Stay at Riverfront Casino enroute to Buffalo

Trip includes all baggage handling, taxes & gratuities, 10 Breakfasts, 8 Dinners.

Cost: \$1159.00 per person (Double occupancy)

A deposit of \$250.00 per person is due by March 4, 2014*.

Final payment is due by April 18, 2014.

***non-refundable after final payment due date. Insurance is available.**

Please reserve _____ places for me on the Black Hills trip.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-Mail _____

Roommate _____ Phone _____

Address _____ e-Mail _____

My deposit/payment of \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make checks payable to Buffalo Retired Teachers Assn. and mail to: Russell Gervasi (839-5781) , 212 Burroughs Drive, Snyder, NY 14226

The Year in Review

(continued from page 5)

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER: Annual BRTA dues is \$12 per year with BRTA's fiscal year beginning on September 1. 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 which is a unit of the Western Zone of the New York State 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).

—Stephen Parada

President's Report

(Continued from page 1)

organizations is a concern. Annual dues will be raised to \$30. from \$27, a seemingly reasonable amount. But also recommended was a unified dues structure, meaning if you sign up for BRTA, the state will include its dues also. I'm **totally** against this proposal that is already being field tested in part of the state. If finalized, I would propose taking BRTA out of any association with NYSRTA. Otherwise we could be held responsible for the finances of the state organization.

Sorry I couldn't bring happier script for you to read. I hope all is well with you personally.

—Al Marabella



Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Cordially Invites Members & Guests to attend

BRTA Winter Luncheon

To be held at

The Park Country Club
4949 Sheridan Dr. Amherst, NY

716-632-2121

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

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

Luncheon: 12:15pm Choice of:

- 1) Tournedos of Beef with Red Wine demi glaze
- 2) Grilled Chicken over Penne pasta with pink vodka sauce
- 3) Salmon with dill buerre blanc sauce

Luncheon includes Salad, Vegetable, Dessert, and Beverage

Cost: \$23.00 for Members --\$28.00 for Non-member Guests

(BRTA subsidizes cost for members)

Payment: Due by Tuesday February 18, 2014

Payable to: Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Mail to: Ophelia Nicholas (633-1690)

9 Steinway Court

Williamsville, NY 14221

Note Bene: No cash refunds given after reservation deadline.
(Detach and mail lower portion only. Keep upper portion as your reminder)

Winter Luncheon February 26, 2014

Cost \$23. Members \$28. Non-Members

Please reserve _____ seat(s) for me for the Winter Luncheon.

My Check for \$_____ is enclosed

My Choice for Meal is # _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Guest Name _____ Meal Choice # _____

Guest Name _____ Meal Choice # _____