



# 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: Floyd Kruschke

Immediate Past Pres: Al Marabella

At Large: Russell Gervasi, Stephen Parada, Theresa Pope

Board Members: Carolyn Cardarella, Josephine Cross, Clarann Josef, Michael Marszalek, Cynthia Mehary, Suzanne Nyitrai, Elaine Pietka, Peter Riester, Guy Schiavi, Marie Wu, Renate Yuhnke

Winter Edition

January, 2019

## Upcoming Events

**Feb. 21, 2019**—Winter Luncheon at Sean Patrick's. Info on page 8.

**April 1-4, 2019**—Laurel Highlands Trip. Info on page 6.

**April 26-May 3, 2019** — Canadian Rockies by Rocky Mountaineers

**May 21, 2019**—Trip to Comedy Center. Info on page 3.

**May 23, 2019**—Spring Luncheon at Park Club

**July 6-17, 2019**—Discover Scotland

**Sept. 5, 2019**— Fall Luncheon at Millennium Hotel

**Sept. 19-28, 2019**— Discover Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria

**Oct. 21-26, 2019**—Fall

## VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that everyone had a great holiday season and a very happy new year. On behalf of BRTA, I wish all of you the very best in 2019!

It was good to see that so many of you made it to the Holiday Luncheon at Salvatore's Italian Gardens on such a difficult weather day. I hope that everyone enjoyed the luncheon and the music provided by the Tech Tones of Hutch Tech. Thanks for your generosity in buying tickets for the split club and your contributions to the buckets on the tables. The money raised was sent to Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight and the Teachers Desk. I am sure that many of you had an opportunity to talk with friends that you had worked with over the years. I know that I have seldom missed a luncheon since I retired for that very reason.

The Medicare Part D grievance, which is being handled by the BTF, is going to arbitration. As far as I know, the date for the hearing has not yet been scheduled. It is unfortunate, but grievance cases like this do take time to come to a conclusion. Also, it is possible that a grievance case like this one could end up in court.

Joseph Montante, Presidential Assistant of the BTF, wrote an excellent article for a recent issue of the BTF newspaper entitled "The Political Landscape and Your Pension." In it he discusses how the NYSTRS works and its current health. He points that NYSTRS is without question the best public pension system in the country. He also discusses a number of reasons for this. For example, one major reason is that the pensions of public employees are guaranteed by the NYS Constitution. Also, our state budget is completely separate from the NYSTRS. He points that the NYSTRS is very well managed. If you remember, in the last newsletter, I had reported how well funded the teachers' pension system is at the current time. He then points out that public pension systems in many states are not doing so well. Many are extremely unfunded. Forty-eight states

(continued on page 4)

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**

Eugene Bartkowski

Louise Kluge

Marcia Boguslawski

Ann M. Mills

Margaret Tronolone Debo

Joseph Minuto

Theresa Drew

Anthony Paige

Jean Haas

Judith J. Ricca

Joseph Hawayek

Harriet W. Sacks

Willie E. Janisch

Mary Ann Van Dyke

Kenneth L. Jones

James Wlodarczk

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).

**Card Club** is alive and well! Interested in playing cards? Card club will meet on January 21st at Friendly's Restaurant on Maple Road at 10AM. Call Carolyn Cardarella (689-8838) for additional information.

Frequently Requested Numbers

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

**Vice President:** Thomas Giambra 877-7796

**Membership:** Linda Parada—875-3392

**Luncheons:** Elisa Harting—838-3708

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

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

**Friendly Service:** Josephine

Cross—636-3014

## Travel

Need the uplift of Laughter after the letdown of Holidays' end?

How about enjoying a day trip to Jamestown to visit the National Comedy Center, which is rated very highly, with lunch and other activities? Set aside May 21<sup>st</sup> and join us for the fun! Below this article are the details.

Still in the works is a trip to Falling Waters by Frank Lloyd Wright in the first week of April. Kentuck Knob, another Wright home, will be visited. We will stop in Pittsburg and visit Ligonier, a Coal Barron town. See page 6 for details.

We'd like to see Vermont in the fall except that it's the height of the season for leaves, etc. Prices rise. Maybe it's worth extra just to see nature's show up close. A five day trip will include visits to cider mills and a dinner cruise on Lake Champlain.

I'm sure by now you are familiar with the trip to Scotland in July for ten days or Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria in September. Just to see the steep slopes of the Alps is worth the trip. Not to mention that, if you ski, bring it on.

Travelers have agreed that the best part is the comradery before dinner, after dinner, with dinner, sharing a glass, reliving the day or just laughing together. Hope to see you on some of our excursions!

Remember to check our website ([brta.biz](http://brta.biz)) for additional information about our trips.

— Al Marabella

### Buffalo Retired Teachers Assn.

Presents A Day Trip to  
National Comedy Center  
May 21, 2019

#### Itinerary:

8:00 am Board Motor Coach St. Leo's Parking Lot  
8:30 am Depart for Jamestown  
10:00 am Arrive at **National Comedy Center** for self-guided visit of interactive exhibits  
12:00 pm Depart for Chautauqua  
12:30 pm Lunch at **Landmark Restaurant**  
3:30 pm Tour and tasting at **Mazza Chautauqua Cellars/ Five & 20 Spirits & Brewing**  
5:00 pm Depart for home with brief rest stop en route  
6:30 pm Approximate arrival in Buffalo

**Cost: \$99.00 per person**

Make Checks Payable to BRTA.

Mail to: Al Marabella, 2 Steinway Court, Buffalo, NY 14221  
(716) 635-9530

Please include your Name, Address, Phone Number, and email.

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

have reduced benefits for teachers currently working. Some twenty-eight states have reduced or eliminated their COLA. Six states have eliminated their defined benefit plan. He also discusses some of the reasons for states having such problems with their pension systems. For example, many pension systems were hit hard by the recession that started in 2008. NYSTRS lost 20% of its value in 2009. Some state pension systems have never recovered. Finally, he concludes that we cannot take NYSTRS for granted. He points out that NYSUT is constantly working to improve benefits for teachers. Of course, the New York State Retired Teachers Association constantly works to protect the benefits of retired teachers. It also keeps attempting to have the State Legislature improve the COLA system.

I hope that many of our members will be able to take advantage of the travel opportunities offered this year. Please check the calendar on page one for the dates of the upcoming luncheons and travel opportunities.

I hope to see many of you at our Winter Luncheon at Sean Patrick's Restaurant on February 21, 2019. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate. Until then, take care!

—Thomas Giambra

## Preventing Falls

It's that time of year when many of us are concerned about falling due to winter weather conditions. Some of us have been walking outside this summer and fall and would like to continue this exercise outside on nice winter days. Others will take their walking to the inside of a mall. Another concern is walking to and from our vehicles and to and from our homes without falling.

If you would like to continue your walking outside in the winter, I have tried Stabilicers. Each Stabilicer has metal studs attached to it and each can be easily pulled on or taken off shoes or boots. These Stabilicers have prevented me from falling when I needed to get out on a nice winter day for a walk. They can be purchased from most stores dealing with winter gear.

Falling makes you become tentative in how you walk and move around; you are not as secure. You must not become less active. If you become less active, you are more likely to fall again because you will start to lack strength and balance. So if you haven't, you need to start a regular exercise routine working on strength, stamina, balance and reflexes (how you respond and react to obstacles in your path).

Working on balance is something you can do every day. While brushing your teeth, stand on one leg then change to the other. While watching the television, stand on one leg for a count of 20, then change to the other leg.

How do we prevent falls in our homes? As we get older, items in our homes that use to be harmless now pose a greater risk. Stairs, bathrooms, dimly lit hallways, a little extra clutter around the house, pets under foot and rugs all may become problems. Most can be minimized though. Just take more time and attention, make a few changes to your home to reduce your risk of falling.

Enjoy the outdoors this winter!

## From the BRTA Scholarship Committee

The Buffalo Retired Teachers Association is looking to award three (3) non-recurring \$1500 scholarships to 2019 Buffalo Public Schools graduating seniors.

Our objective is to endorse and assist the graduating seniors' efforts in pursuing a post high school education. One of these scholarships is in honor of Josephine Slacer, a Buffalo Public School Teacher who was dedicated to the Buffalo community.

Eligible applicants are limited to graduating Buffalo Public High School seniors who will be entering an accredited post high school educational program. SAT scores, grades, recommendations, and an essay will be among the criteria used to determine the awardees. At least one of the scholarships will go to a high academic achiever. At least one scholarship may be awarded to a student who demonstrates qualities that include perseverance, community awareness, leadership and the desire to continue his/her education. The scholarship in honor of Josephine Slacer will be awarded to a highly motivated merit roll student who has demonstrated community service and awareness.

Applications will be available in the BPS HS School Councilors' Office at each high school in January and February. In order to be considered for a BRTA Scholarship, the completed application must be sent to the BRTA Scholarship Committee with the postmark no later than April 15, 2019.



**Buffalo Retired Teachers**  
presents  
**Treasures of Frank Lloyd Wright**  
a Motorcoach trip to  
the Laurel Highlands & Pittsburgh  
April 1--4, 2019

Highlights include:

- Guided Tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's "masterpiece over the falls", Fallingwater in Mill Run, PA
- Visit to Wright's Kentuck Knob in Chalk Hill, PA
- Free Time, Welcome Reception, and Dinner Show in Ligonier, PA
- Flight 93 Visitor's Center Complex and Memorial Plaza
- Quecreek Mine Rescue Site
- Country Pie Shop

**Cost: \$599.00 per person based on double occupancy**

**A deposit of \$100.00 is due no later than Feb. 10, 2019\*.**

**Final payment is due by March 8 2019.**

\*non-refundable after final payment due date unless a replacement traveler is found

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for me on the Treasures of Frank Lloyd Wright Trip

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

Street & Number \_\_\_\_\_ City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

eMail \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street & Number \_\_\_\_\_ City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

eMail \_\_\_\_\_

My deposit/payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Many of our members are looking for opportunities to give back to their communities. If you are aware of volunteer opportunities, please notify Elisa Harting (838-3708). We are willing to post volunteer opportunities.

## Shea's Performing Arts Center

Thousands of children experience live theater at Shea's Performing Arts Center each year and they need your help.

As a member of BRTA, we hope you will join our On-School Performance Series volunteer team. For more information, please contact Robert Brunschid, Director of Operations at RBRUNSCHMID@SHEAS.ORG

## Buffalo Museum of Science

Interested in gaining or sharing your knowledge? Then the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tift Nature Preserve are for you!

A wide variety of volunteer opportunities are available at both sites that will help you gain valuable work skills or enable you to share your knowledge and expertise all while giving back to the institution. These opportunities range in nature from working behind the scenes to engaging with the public. Contact Betsy Vazquez at 716-896-5200 x345 or email BVAZQUEZ@SCIENCEBUFF.ORG.

## Volunteers Needed

Your assistance is needed in helping us get volunteers for the Free Tax Preparation Program at the University at Buffalo's Educational Opportunity Center (UBEOC). In Western NY, each year the IRS partners with the Free Tax Preparation Network to provide free tax returns to the families and individuals. Last year the partnership completed over 8,000 returns saving families and individuals money from having to pay for their tax returns. However, we cannot continue to provide this service without the assistance of volunteers.

### Who volunteers?

Neighbors like you. And there's a role for everyone. We prefer that the person volunteering be at least 18 years or older. Here are some of the volunteer roles needed at UBEOC:

**Greeter/Screeners** – You greet everyone visiting the site to create a pleasant atmosphere. You screen taxpayers to determine the type of assistance they need and confirm they have the necessary documents to complete their tax returns. Tax law certification is not required for this position, but is preferred.

**Interpreter** – You provide free language interpreter services to customers who are not fluent in English. Basic tax knowledge is helpful, but it is not required for this position.

**Tax Preparer** – You complete and successfully certify in tax law training, including the use of electronic filing software, to provide free tax return preparation for eligible taxpayers.

Volunteers will be trained and have certification by the IRS to complete tax returns. Training will include tax law and software. Trainings will be conducted at **UBEOC, 555 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203** from November through January. We ask that those who are willing to serve as volunteers to commit at least 5 hours per week starting January 28<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. If anyone you know that is interested, please have them to contact me at the information below.

Sincerely,

**Charles A. Mays**

Financial Literacy Coordinator

Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

555 Ellicott Street

Buffalo, New York 14203-1707

Tel: [716-645-1865](tel:716-645-1865)

# Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

Cordially Invites Members & Guests to attend its

## *BRTA Mid-Winter Luncheon*

To be held at

### **Sean Patrick's**

3480 Millersport Highway

Getzville, NY 14068

716-636-1709

**Thursday, February 21, 2019**

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

Luncheon: 12:15 PM Choice of:

1. Filet Mignon
2. Fresh Char Grilled Salmon w/dill sauce
3. Chicken Cordon Bleu
4. Vegetable Lasagna

Luncheon includes Salad, Vegetable, Dessert and Beverage

Cost: \$27.00 for Members - \$32.00 for Non-member Guests

(BRTA subsidizes cost for members)

Payment: **Due by Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

Payable to: Buffalo Retired Teachers Association

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

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

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

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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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (If needed, list additional guest on opposite side)**