



December 2018

Greater Bridgeport Retired Teachers Association

Bridgeport Easton Fairfield Milford Monroe Shelton Stratford Trumbull

From the President's Podium



A Brief History . . .

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind. Khalil Gibran

In 1951, a group of retired teachers from Bridgeport and neighboring towns, decided that it would be in their best interest to form an organization dedicated to supporting the social, emotional, and financial needs of retired teachers. It was the beginning of the Greater Bridgeport Retired Teachers Association under the leadership of Miss Lucy Curtiss.

In its early years the organization focused on social activities—card parties, trips and lunches were popular. Annual dues were \$1.00. Contributions to local charities depended upon the funds left in the treasury at the end of the fiscal year.

Soon the members realized that, in order to be able to take advantage of various State and Federal rules, the organization needed to have a legal Certificate of Incorporation as well as a set of By-laws and these were established and duly filed on August 14, 1963.

In summary, the certificates established the mission of the GBRTA as providing for the needs of retired teachers, supporting community charities, and providing scholarship assistance to students in order to promote the teaching profession. The certificate allowed the organization to solicit and manage funds to support those goals.

Bequests from members allowed the GBRTA first to save and later to invest funds that now support the \$1,000 scholarships that are awarded to a graduating senior in each of the 16 public schools in GBRTA's eight town area.

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Next Steps?

It's over! No more mailboxes filled with literature from candidates for office! No more phone calls asking for your support. No more promises; no more speeches!

Now legislators, both the newly elected and reelected, will be driving to Hartford to make decisions that are important to us. Our job is to make sure that they know what issues are of concern to us. And we are the only ones who can tell them - again and again. One experienced legislator told a group of retired teachers that "retired teachers need to negotiate better." After eight years in the legislature she still did not realize that retired teachers, unlike retired State employees, did not negotiate. There is no union for retired teachers and no collective bargaining.

We all know that there are serious problems with the State budget. A consistent underfunding of our pension and health insurance funds have forced changes to our health insurance plan and resulted in suggestions for "creative" ways to finance pensions. For example in campaign speeches and literature, candidates for office have mentioned changing pensions for new teachers from the current defined benefit to a defined contribution plan .

The election is over but the need to maintain contact with our legislators is not. Take a minute to write a note to your representatives. Congratulate



GBRTA Members at the ARTC Fall Conference

them on their election. Tell them that you appreciate their concern for our pension and health insurance and are confident that they will continue to support retired teachers.

A suggestion— research has shown that hand-written notes attract more attention and are more likely to be read than computer-generated ones! We all know that there was a good reason to learn to compose a friendly letter and to write it—in cursive!

GBRTA Trips

Members have made us aware of their preference that single day trips be on weekdays rather than on weekends. Unfortunately T&A Travel prefers to schedule their trips on weekends. Beginning in January, GBRTA will schedule its trips through Friendship Tours and *Friends of Marcella*.

Descriptions of trips and instructions will be available at GBRTA meetings, on the website www.GBRTA.org and in our newsletters.

Marcella's first trip, ***Gaelic Meets Garlic***, will be on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 to the Grand Oak Villa in Oakville, CT. Entertainment will be provided by George Casey and Tony Riccio.

On arrival, you'll enjoy cheese, crackers and pepperoni with your choice of red or white wine.

A Family Style Menu offers a lunch of Corned Beef and Cabbage, Chicken Parmesan, Garden Salad, Pasta, Roasted Potato, Vegetable, Zeppole, Tea and Coffee at a cost of \$95.

Departure will be at 10:15 from the Commuter Lot at the junction of Route 25 and Route 111 (Main St.) in Trumbull.

Estimated return is 4:30 pm.

Reservations should be made by March 1st with: Marcella Chamberlain, 203-261-6182 Checks should be payable to Friendship Tours and mailed to :

President's Podium

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As pension and insurance issues became more complex, it became clear that our group of retired teachers could not keep up with developments in the State legislature. Our influence on legislation was limited.

As a result, the GBRTA along with 14 similar organizations in the State became affiliates of the Association of Retired Teachers of Connecticut (ARTC) with a combined membership of 12,000 retired teachers.

This relationship continues with the ARTC providing information on legislative issues, supporting a lobbyist who maintains constant contact with legislators and organizing *Lobby Day* at which retired teachers meet with and inform legislators of issues of concern to them.

While card parties and fashion shows have gone the way of the hand-written letter, GBRTA maintains its mission of information and advocacy for retired teachers.

When you receive this newsletter, the political ads will have ended, the holiday season ads will be in full volume and we will have a new governor as well as several new legislators for us to educate Plan to attend Lobby Day.

Interestingly enough, when candidates Lamont and Stefanowski spoke at the ARTC lunch meeting, their responses to the four questions that they were given were nearly identical. They both vowed to protect our retirement and health benefits, leaned towards recommending that the state gambling revenues be used to help fund the retirement account, and both said that they would honor our agreements.

Obviously, there were differences on other issues, but when it came to retired teacher issues, they tended to agree. It will now be up to our state teacher retiree organizations, working together, to see that the new governor and the legislature live up to those promises.

Bob Pitzschler

2018—2019 Officers

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| President | Bob Pitzschler 203-723-8488 rbpitz@att.net |
| First Vice-President | Rose Marie D'Aquila 203-261-4693 eaglenest@att.net |
| Second Vice-President | Barbara Kmetz 203-268-8814 bfkmetz@earthlink.net |
| Recording Secretary | Marilyn Feranec 203-521-2432 marilynferanec@ymail.com |
| Corresponding Sec. | Rita McDougald-Campbell 203-459-1518 mccamp51@yahoo.com |
| Treasurer | Helen Scinto 203-375-1921 hscinto@aol.com |

Save the Dates

GBRTA General Meetings

April 11, 2019

May 9, 2019

ARTC Spring Meeting

May 21, 2019

In Brief

Scholarship Raffle

In keeping with past practice, the December GBRTA meeting will feature a special raffle to benefit the scholarship fund.

Scholarship chair Marilyn Mitchell would appreciate contributions of gift cards for the raffle.

Please contact her at 203-261-4767 if you would like to contribute.

Calendars

We get them in the mail—they're lovely, but we don't use them. Don't throw them away—bring them to the next GBRTA meeting. Trudi Black is collecting calendars for distribution to clients of the Mental Health Center. Many clients have difficulty keeping on schedule and the calendars will help with this.

Plastic Bags

Angela McElvey volunteers at Merton House. Guests at the House often receive a sandwich or leftovers to take home for an evening meal. The Center needs plastic bags—the grocery bags you get at check-out—for these leftovers. Their guests rarely shop and don't have access to the bags. Bring them to the next GBRTA meeting and Angie will get them to Merton House.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Dues—\$20

Life Membership \$250

The membership year runs from July 1—June 30. Members whose dues are two or more years in arrears will be dropped from the membership file and must repay two years of back dues for reinstatement.

Please check the address label on this newsletter. If the message after your last name is anything other than *Life Member* or *July 1, 2019*, your dues are in arrears.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Year Retired _____ School System _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Amount of check _____

Mail form and check, payable to GBRTA to

Ann Block 60 Ridgeview Avenue Trumbull, CT 06611

Join Us for Lunch at Testo's Restaurant

1775 Madison Avenue, Bridgeport

December 13, 2018 —\$27

Choice of

Prime Rib au Jus

Broiled Salmon
with dill sauce

Chicken Valdostano

with prosciutto and cheese

Reservations by Dec. 4 Cancellations by Dec. 10

Entertainment at this special Holiday Luncheon will be provided by the Trumbull High School Chamber Singers under the direction of Ann Tornillo. T

he program will begin at 10:30am with lunch served at noon. Members may attend the program portion without staying for lunch; please call to let us know you are coming. Make check payable to GBRTA with date, menu choice and your phone number on the check. CHECKS MUST ACCOMPANY RESERVATIONS; NO PAYMENT ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR.

Reservations and payment to: Trudi Black

487 Church Hill Rd.

Trumbull, CT 06611

Phone: 203-261-6576

Christmas Show at Tashua Knolls

For a number of years, members of the GBRTA have celebrated an early Christmas by enjoying a Christmas Musical and lunch at the Tashua Knolls Golf Course in Trumbull. The performance will be on Saturday December 15th at noon. The cost, which includes the show and meal, is \$60.

Please send your check (payable to GBRTA) by December 1st to Angie McKelvey, 273A Agawam Dr., Stratford, CT 06614. 203-227-3222

