



VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Spring 2021 Edition

A Message from the VRTA President



VRTA President Glenn C. Pair has gone from being hospitalized on January 23, 2021, to limited driving on March 7, 2021. Is that progress or what? He is no longer on oxygen, but he has been warned by his physician to “take it easy, not to rush.” President Pair has reduced his involvement in his many activities and is trying “to get in shape.” He continues to communicate daily with his healthcare provider’s nursing team and therapists, and is waiting to complete his final Covid-19 vaccination.

President Pair expresses his gratitude for the many cards that he received during his hospitalization, and asks that they continue because he really enjoys reading them. If you have misplaced his address, it is listed below. We will continue to pray for President Pair’s full and complete recovery.

Glenn C. Pair, Sr.
6316 Broyhill Court
North Chesterfield, Virginia 23224

Other announcements:

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam continues to guide citizens of the Commonwealth regarding the COVID-19 vaccination process. During a recent press conference, the governor suggested that we answer our telephones even if the number appears to be one that you do not recognize; it might be someone from the health department giving you the information you need for your vaccinations.

(Editors Note—In case you were not aware, Glenn has been fighting Covid-19 since January. He is much better. I spoke to him recently and although he is still taking it easy, he is slowly recovering. Members of VRTA wish Glenn well.)

Awards! Yes Awards!

Awards are our business. This has been proven across the years. We are delighted to reward the work of our units and districts.

We have added a new dimension, Special Awards that have been graciously received.

We congratulate and thank the units and districts that sent in their 2020 reports. This is a true spirit of commitment and dedication.

Hopefully, some activity and virtual meetings are being held. We look forward to reward faithfulness when we can meet again.

Whatever you have done or are doing could qualify for an award. **Do not hesitate to send your report in by June 30, 2021.** Be careful and do not miss the deadline.

Canzata B. Turner
Awards Chairperson



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Page 4 -“Virtual meetings, both planning meetings for leaders and meetings for members, are one way to keep VRTA members connected.”

“Thanks for all you do to keep everyone connected during the pandemic!”

Old News, Worth Repeating By Bonnie Atwood



It seems like it took forever for me to learn how a bill becomes a law. There are at least 17 steps, and for a long time, I had to have a chart in front of me at all times. If you're like me, you might like a review of these steps. A bill (or suggestion for a law) originates from a delegate or senator in either the House or Senate. Sometimes there are "companion" bills that say the same or similar things. When VRTA asks for a bill it is not "our" bill. It is Delegate So-and-So's bill.

The bill goes to the office of Legislative Services, where it is carefully drafted. Sometimes the bill has a problem, such as a conflict with the U.S. or state Constitution. Most problems are solved, and the bill is printed. The bill then gets assigned to a committee, or if the bill is complicated or controversial, it gets assigned to a subcommittee. That's where the real discussion takes place. Citizens and lobbyists get to have their say.

Several different things can happen to that bill. It can be "passed" or "referred" to a full committee or full house; it can be "killed," either through vote, "laying on the table," or "passed by indefinitely." It can be "ignored," by either being left off of the agenda, or failure to be moved upon. All of these things make a bill go away, but in rare circumstances, it can be brought back to life.

When the bill goes to the full House of Delegates or Senate, it is read and voted on three times. This is to make sure the decision is sound.

First reading- This puts the bill on the "calendar" or list of bills. There is no debate.

House: Second reading- The patron may explain his bill before the later debate. The bill can then be amended, "engrossed," and re-printed. An engrossment is a temporary acceptance.

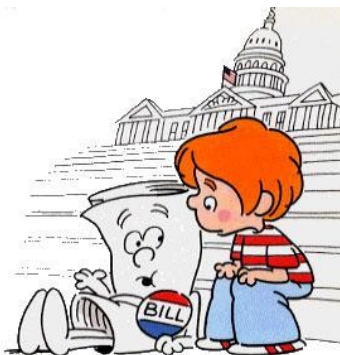
Senate: Second reading- The bill is "engrossed."

House: Third reading- The bill is passed, killed, or returned to committee. A recorded vote is taken.

Senate: Third reading- Bill is debated. Few legislators change their minds at this point, but some do. Bill is then amended, returned to committee, or killed.

1. If the House and Senate pass different versions of a bill, a "conference committee" iron out the differences and consolidates the bills.
2. The new bill goes back to both chambers, and they must pass identical bills.
3. When passed, the bill is "enrolled," and sent to the governor.
4. The governor may sign the bill, veto the bill, or ignore the bill. If the governor ignores the bill, it is considered approved.
5. If the General Assembly does not like the governor's action (or inaction), it can override the governor's bill or amendments, but that requires a larger than normal majority vote.
6. If passed, the bills become law on July 1, unless stated otherwise. The budget becomes law on July 1.

That's about as succinct as I can get. Bills and laws are so important; they must go through this process. The more we understand it, the better.



Virginia Retired Teachers Association

"Organized November 28, 1936"

2020- 2022 Officers

President—Glenn Pair, Sr.	(434)594-9661 gpair1949@gmail.com
President-Elect—Jean Marrow	(804)275-7278 izybellha@verizon.net
Vice President—Karen Whetzel	(540)740-8589 kswhetzel@gmail.com
Secretary—Reba Evans	(366)200-1093 1924rlevans@gmail.com
Treasurer—Weldon Martin	(540)473-2636 hooman4949@gmail.com
Immediate Past President Ben McCartney	(540)347-9516 bhmccart@gmail.com

Transition



Change is a constant in life. We certainly have experienced changes this past year, many of which were abrupt, hard to accept, and difficult to adapt to. Transition, defined as passing from one condition to another, is a kind of change that's less abrupt giving time to adjust and prepare for differences in the future.

Three transitions that are coming are new legislators, three new statewide leaders, and new districts. All seats in the House of Delegates are up for election this year, and both parties are fielding candidates for most of them. It's important for us not to put off paying attention to those in our localities who are announcing their candidacies. Although November 2 is seven months away, we must make use of the time we have to find out about their positions on issues, their integrity, and their reasons for running. This needs to be done over time. Although political parties are important, just voting for or against a party is taking the easy way out. There are incumbents with valuable experience who should be returned to office as well as potential new leaders with visions for the future who should be given a chance to make their contributions. We can't vote wisely if we wait until the last minute to do our homework.

Nominees for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general will be chosen this spring. Republicans will choose their nominees on May 8 by a convention to be held for the first time in 36 satellite locations to be announced soon. Democratic nominees will be chosen by an open primary on June 8 at regular polling places. The names of candidates for these offices can be found in the March Creekside E-Newsletter. These two events are of utmost importance because we can only vote for good leaders if we have chosen good candidates for these offices.

We will have a little longer to transition to new districts than we had thought. The redistricting commission has begun working, but elections will be based on current maps until the U.S. Census Bureau sends data to the states. It's almost a certainty that the current maps will have to be used in the November 2 elections. Once the data is delivered, the commission will hold public hearings and then draw new maps. The commission will send its House of Delegates and Senate maps to the legislature for approval within 45 days of receiving the census data. About two weeks later, it will send the legislature its new congressional maps. It is not yet clear whether the delegates will run under new maps in 2022 special elections and then again in the regularly scheduled 2023 elections, or keep the current districts until the 2023 elections. This may ultimately be decided by the courts.

The Constitutional Amendment that established the commission provided for transparency of the workings of the commission, but some believe there should be better publicity of the meetings and that they should be scheduled when more working people can take advantage of them. We should be seeing publicity concerning the time and location of meetings in our local media, and there should be follow up reports. The website (redistricting.dls.virginia.gov) gives information about the commission, and I encourage you to consult it; however, it's disappointing that it does not have up to date reporting of commission activities. Information can also be found at www.onevirginia2021foundation.org/commission. During this transition period, we must let the commission members know that we expect to be kept abreast of their current activities and progress.

As teachers, let's remember how important and productive homework is and vow to use the transition periods that we have to become better prepared voters and citizens.

Bea Morris, Legislative Chairperson



VRTA Fall 2021 Newsletter

Since the statue of the VRTA 2021 Fall Meeting is unclear at this time, the deadline for the fall newsletter has not been determined. As soon as possible, information will be sent to VRTA officers, chairpersons and district presidents.

Articles for the newsletter should be sent to Susan Martin at: susanmartin730@gmail.com. You may mail articles to Susan at: 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090.

Reminder: People who in pictures that are to be included in the newsletter must give permission for the picture to be used.

VRTA 2021 Delegate Assembly Cancelled

Because of continued Covid-19 concerns, the VRTA will be unable to hold its 2021 Delegate Assembly. It is hopeful that VRTA will be able to resume meetings in the fall. More information will be forthcoming.



Staying Connected With Members: VRTA Leaders Are Lifelong Learners Too!

Many of us claim to be lifelong learners, and of course, most of us are. With the pandemic, however, I see concrete examples of this among our VRTA retired leaders and members. (Of course, there are the occasional folks who choose not to learn anything new. They may be facing increasing isolation during the pandemic, unfortunately.)

As new vice president of the Virginia Retired Teachers Association (VRTA) beginning in July 2020, I am also membership chair. Normally, the VRTA holds two statewide meetings a year: a fall conference and a spring delegate assembly. When I became involved with VRTA, the meetings were held at Blackstone at the United Methodist Conference Center. When it was sold, the VRTA moved to the Doubletree Hotel in Midlothian, VA. Leaders and members of the association had many learning and networking opportunities at the state meetings. VRTA officers could stay connected with district and local leaders, as well as members, though these statewide meetings.

Unfortunately, with the pandemic a lot changed with VRTA. The group has no executive director, and the leaders who plan the state meetings and other activities are retired educators with differing skills. Both state meetings for 2020 were cancelled. The statewide meeting for spring 2021 has also been cancelled. The group has a web site, a newsletter, and a Facebook page, but without the statewide meetings there were not many opportunities for learning.

Afraid of losing connections among members, the VRTA applied for and was given a grant from the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) to help keep members connected. VRTA used the funds to purchase a dozen ZOOM licenses to give to district presidents. As membership chairperson, I was asked to distribute the licenses. There are 21 districts, some of which already had their own ZOOM (or another virtual platform) license, some of which were not interested in a ZOOM license, and everything in between. Some of the districts, and the local units within them, are inactive.

As membership chair, I started thinking about how to bring more VRTA district leaders onboard with virtual meetings. In addition to being VRTA vice president, I serve as District G president. Working with Linda Dinsmore who lives near Brocks Gap, who was scheduled to speak for our district meeting in October 2020, we decided to try our first virtual meeting. I was able to set up the meeting, send out the link, start the meeting and introduce Linda as speaker. Then, my computer froze up! I was able to call Linda on her landline phone and listen as she spoke. However, I had pressed record so I could watch the whole program later. For the business meeting, Linda held her landline phone to the computer while I conducted the meeting! True blend of older and newer technology!

After assigning ZOOM licenses, several district presidents asked for help with using ZOOM. Dr. Mary Ann Stripling, who is president elect of the Augusta Retired Educators Association (a local unit in District G) and teaches a ZOOM class for Blue Ridge Community College, was helpful in planning for the virtual meeting. I enlisted her help, and together we planned a virtual class on ZOOM for VRTA. The virtual meeting happened on February 18, during a snow and ice storm with area schools closed. The good news was that we didn't have to cancel due to weather! I introduced the class and Mary Ann did most of the teaching. We recorded the class for those who didn't make it and those who needed to watch it again. (Even teachers need remediation sometimes!) We were pleased that 60 retired educators joined the class. Early evaluations showed that 75% of them found the class very helpful, 25% somewhat helpful, and 0% not helpful. If any VRTA members missed the class, and would like to review the recording, contact me at kswhetzel@gmail.com.

Some of the lessons learned, which might not have happened without the pandemic, were that we need to look for ways we can connect with one another, we need to reflect on successes and not just what we cannot do, and we need to support one another. (I now have an even greater appreciation for our educators who are teaching virtually, using hybrid models, and going above and beyond for our students. Kudos to our frontline heroes in our schools!) These lessons apply to any organization, club, church, etc. If members don't feel connected during the pandemic, they may not be inclined to continue their membership or activity when the pandemic is over. And life long learning is important to us all!

Virtual meetings, both planning meetings for leaders and meetings for members, are one way to keep VRTA members connected. There are many other ways! VRTA has a Facebook page, as do some districts and local units. Check out the Facebook page, and consider developing a page for your district or local unit. As mentioned at the beginning, let me know if you do! Some districts and local units are using email to keep in touch with members. If this is something that is working for your members, let me know! Also, send other ideas on how you are keeping members connected that can be shared. Thanks for all you do to keep everyone connected during the pandemic! Looking forward to seeing many of you in person when conditions permit! Meanwhile, stay connected!

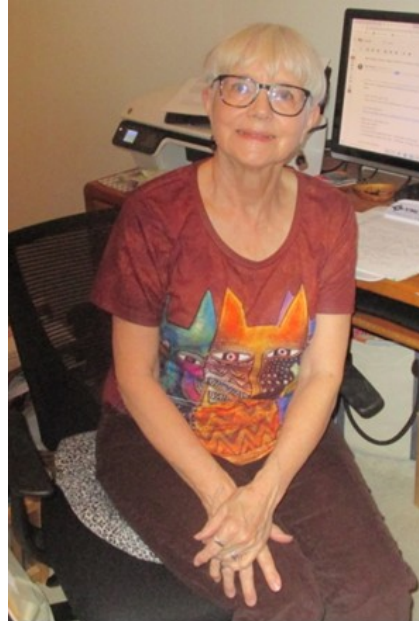
Karen Whetzel
VRTA Membership Chair



Let's Do ZOOM!

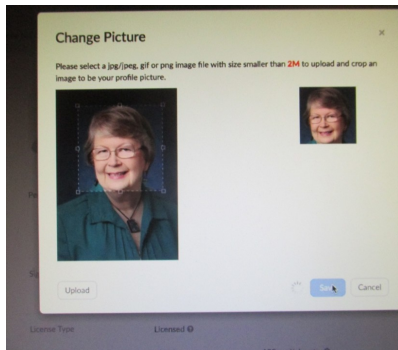


Linda Dinsmore presenting a real life program which she modified to present virtually to VRTA District G in October 2020



Karen Whetzel gets ready to co-teach a ZOOM class for VRTA on using virtual platforms for keeping members connected.

Dr. Mary Ann Stripling shows "students" how to change their photo on their ZOOM account in the class for VRTA retired educators



From the Old Farmer's Almanac

First Signs of Spring

1. Birds are singing.
2. Trees are budding, sap is flowing.
3. Peepers are peeping.
4. Fresh soft scents are in the air.
5. Butterflies and bumblebees return.



AARP Latest on Fraud Watch

Criminals are now contacting individuals asking them to take a Covid-19 survey in exchange for cash, an iPadPro or other prizes. These messages are received in emails or texts claiming that the recipients need to pay only shipping and handling to receive the prize. These phishing scams may appear to come from government agencies, financial institutions, shipping firms and social media companies. Do not click on a link in an unsolicited email or text. Companies will not contact you asking for your user name or password.

The Justice Department urges victims to report the communications to the National Center for Disaster Fraud hotline by calling 866-720-5721 or by filing an online complaint.

VRTA MISSION STATEMENT

“TO BE THE VOICE, RESOURCE, AND CONNECTION FOR ALL RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL”

VRTA VISION STATEMENT

“ALL RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL WILL BE SAFE, PRODUCTIVE, INFORMED AND FINANCIALLY SECURE IN RETIREMENT”

VRTA BRAND

“WE ENRICH RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL’S LIVES!”



2021-2022 Directory Update

District and unit presidents should send Leigh McKay updates of 2021-2022 officers to clo49lm@gmail.com or 4720 Sweetfern Row, Apt. 210, Wilmington, NC 28411. Please notify her if your officers remain the same as well. New directories will be available in the fall.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Alexandria Retired Teachers-Spring 2020

At our last meeting in February 2020, we had Audrey Davis speak to the group. Ms. Davis is the Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum and she gave a talk on the history and development of integration in Alexandria. She included a number of pictures of people and places in the city with historic significance.

The TC Williams Class of 2020, unfortunately, did not have their usual senior activities: no prom, no awards assembly, no graduation ceremony, BUT scholarships were presented. The Alexandria Retired Teachers Scholarship was given to Jennifer Blanco Argueta. The Del Wilson Memorial Scholarship was given to Alberto Hernandez Argueta.

Botetourt Retired Educators

The Botetourt Retired Educators has not been able to meet since March 2020. We have been able to continue some of our activities during the year. We were able to present two \$1,000 scholarships to a senior at each of the county's high schools in 2020 and will be able to do so again in 2021. We normally present books to each of the school's libraries in May, but since schools were not open last year, we were unable to complete that project. This May we will be able to give the books to the schools once again.

Each year in the fall BRE members contribute items to the Botetourt Food Pantry. Our members were able to donate items and \$240 to the Food Pantry in November. In December we donate items for the residents at the Cave Creek Assisted Living Facility in Troutville, Virginia. Most of the residents there are veterans. BRE members supply items for Christmas bags for each person living in the facility. This year items were collected and \$215 was also donated. We felt very fortunate to be able to continue these activities this year.

We look forward to being back together again. Hopefully, we will be able to meet in person beginning in September.



Some of the items collected for the residents at the Cave Creek Assisted Living Facility

Alexandria Retired Teachers Association Fall and Winter 2020-2021

Here is a summary of our "activities" during the pandemic year of 2020! We had a bit of an adjustment going to the ZOOM meeting process. Our first meeting in September was canceled. We had planned to have a luncheon and that, of course, was not possible.

On October 19 we held a Zoom meeting with 29 members in attendance. We had Dr. Elizabeth Hoover speak to us about the ACPS online instruction. Alexandria has not experienced the kinds of difficulties in online instruction that other Northern Virginia localities have. According to Dr Hoover, this was due, in large part, to the planning and formation of online instruction as early as 2003. She also stressed that it has been the ACPS staff, the IT professionals as well as all the teachers and support personnel, who have spent long hours to create a successful program for all the students. The system has provided all students with the ability to have online instruction, and while there have been shortages in materials; ACPS has been able to meet the needs of the students. Attendees were able to ask several questions and actually see one another! What a difference!

Our November meeting was a joint ZOOM meeting with Arlington County Retired teachers. The speaker was Charlie Clark, who has been a Washington Area journalist for the last thirty years. He has been a writer and editor for the *Washington Post*, *National Journal*, *Congressional Quarterly*, and Time Life Books. He is currently a senior correspondent for Government Executive Media Group. The program is designed to commemorate the Centennial of Arlington's renaming. This was an opportunity to learn about Arlington's previous name and its relationship to Alexandria.

In December, we did something a bit different! We had a terrific ZOOM meeting with Stacie Hussmann, of **Cooking Thyme with Stacie**. This was a private ZOOM cooking lesson for members and friends. Stacie gave us three recipes for interesting appetizers and provided a list of ingredients which we purchased prior to the class and then we cooked together!

In February, we were fortunate to have Susan Cumby, director of Fort Ward Park Museum, who gave us a brief history of the creation and use of the fort during the Civil War. She then went into detail about the African American community which was established on the remains of the fort following the Civil War, how it grew and ultimately was eliminated for "urban renewal" purposes. She explained how the museum, through archeology and oral history, is now bringing information about the community to light.

Our March meeting was a bit problematic since our speaker canceled at the last minute. However, we were able to put together a virtual tour of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria shelter, led by Echo Keif, manager of volunteers and events. Several members have since asked if they could become volunteers!

Visit VRTA's Website at VRTA.org

News From Around the Commonwealth

Allegheny Retired Teachers

The Allegheny Retired Teachers Association has been unable to hold in-person meetings since our March 2020 meeting due to the Covid-19. The ARTA board met in June to make plans for 2020-2021. Since the board meeting, we have handled all business through email or phone. Even though we were unable to have in-person meetings this year, we were still able to continue our service projects.

Before each planned meeting date, a letter was sent out to the membership either by email or snail mail which let them know the meeting had been cancelled due to the restrictions of Covid-19, updated them on current business concerns, and informed them about current service projects.

In the past, our service project for September has been to collect school supplies. Since we did not have our September meeting this year, the members mailed monetary donations to our treasurer totaling \$200. We were able to send \$50 to each of the four elementary schools. The principals were very appreciative of our generosity.

At our December meeting, we usually have collected donations for the Christmas Mother as our service project. The members sent monetary donations for the Christmas Mother to our treasurer. The Christmas Mother expressed her gratitude for the impressive donation of \$275.

At our March meeting, we traditionally have collected donations for the area food banks as our service project. We collected \$345 from our members to be dispersed between three local food banks. In March, we also collect community service hours to compile a report which was mailed to our treasurer with the donations. ARTA has been blessed with 35 awesome and generous members during the pandemic.

The needs for our support through our service projects were even greater than usual this year with these challenging and uncertain times and the unrelenting pressure that the pandemic has placed on the community.

We also collected monetary donations throughout the year for our scholarship fund. We plan to present three \$500 scholarships at our May meeting to three seniors who plan to pursue a career in education.

We are hopeful that the conditions will improve and allow us to hold our May meeting.

Buchanan County RTA

COVID-19 has forced all of us to find new ways of conducting business. Sometimes, living in a remote area has its advantages. During the early months of the pandemic, Buchanan County only had a few COVID cases. Taking precautions, we still participated in the annual, AARP food drive and BCRTA picnic. We all wore a mask, packed our own lunch and met at Poplar Gap Park. The group donated 453 pounds of food to *Feed My Sheep*, a local food pantry. September was our last in-person meeting.

The group has made donations to Buchanan County Social Service's *Coal Miners Christmas* and Grundy Police Department's *Shop-with-a Cop Program*. Buchanan County Retired Teachers Association received a Certificate of Recognition from the Grundy Police Department for our continued support of the less fortunate children in our community.

Sadly, during this pandemic, we have lost two of our precious members.



L-R Nina McClanahan, Patricia Hogston, Penny Jennell, Cindy Matney, Barbara Sutherland, Patricia Dales, Lillian Dales, Joan Boyd

Loudoun Retired Teachers

In January, February and March 2021, Loudoun Retired Teacher's Association has had their monthly meeting on ZOOM. Each month there are more participants. Our volunteer hours and donations continue to impress!

LREA has asked members to write notes of thanks to the helpers in this pandemic. In February LREA asked members to join the Loudoun Library program in sending Valentines to seniors in Assisted Living homes who have felt isolated. In March LREA asked us to clean out our closets and donate to Goodwill. Goodwill donations have fallen because of the pandemic.

Our April meeting will be in person, outside in a park. We will bring our own food/drinks and a chair. How wonderful it will be to visit with one another again!

Loudoun Retired Teachers participate in a ZOOM meeting.



News From Around the Commonwealth

District G

District G of the Virginia Retired Teachers Association has not met in person since the fall of 2019 due to the pandemic. However, the first ever virtual meeting was held with Linda Dinsmore, a retired teacher who now lives in Rockingham County presenting the program. Ms. Dinsmore gave an illustrated talk about her grandmother Rose Ida Main Warden, born in 1875, who used family traits of grit and strong-willed determination after getting her teaching credentials to set out for Montana to teach and claim land through the Homestead Act. Ms. Dinsmore's presentation about Rose Ida's experiences with native Americans, bringing a Carnegie library to Lewistown, working on women's suffrage, and more allowed her grandmother's story to come to life for participants! District G RTA usually meets twice a year, once in October and once in May.

Check the District G RTA Facebook page for information on the May meeting as it becomes available, or call District G president Karen Whetzel at 540-740-8589, for more information. District G includes the local units of Augusta Retired Educators Association, Bath/Highland Retired Teachers Association, Page County Retired Educators Association, and Shenandoah County Education Association.



Linda Dinsmore presenting the virtual District G RTA

Lunenburg - Nottoway Retired Teachers

In conjunction with the Crewe Public Library and the Crewe Garden Club Nottoway retired teachers assembled 360 gift bags to be distributed to Crewe Primary School students. Each bag contained vegetable and flower seeds as well as a list of library references on gardening and cooking. The purpose of the project is to encourage children and families to enjoy the outdoors, gardening and healthy eating.



Pictured left to right are Anne Stinson, Patricia Johnson, Joyce Inge, Linda Johnson and Ann Good.

Franklin-Southampton RTA Community Service

COVID-19 caused the closure of schools early. No end-of-year activities; proms, graduations, parties and goodbyes. Therefore teachers came up with means and ways to stay connected to their students and parents via social media with ZOOM class dojo, having virtual lunches, field trips and instructional learning.

President Miller joined kindergarten, first and second grade teachers of Victory Elementary School in Portsmouth, Virginia, in an end-of-year parade through the neighborhood of students that attended Victory Elementary. Ice pops were distributed to students as a treat. We drove and honked horns, waving, with signs, posters, balloons and banners attached to our cars. Students, as well as parents, were excited to see us and appreciated the treat. We wished them well and to stay safe during the summer vacation.



COVID-19 put a damper on performing community service activities. The members of Franklin/Southampton Retired Teachers' Association found a way to make a contribution to the community. The retirees made a presentation of books to Ruth Camp Library in Franklin, Virginia, in memory of deceased members, Mrs. Annie C. Johnson and Mrs. Marvia C. Goode. The books were donated by poetry author, Mrs. Latorial W. Faison. She is a former student of Southampton County Public Schools.



L-R: Mrs. Cheryl Roberts, Mrs. Carol Logan, Director of Regional Libraries, Mrs. Bessie Smith and Mr. Thomas Smith

News From Around the Commonwealth

Hampton Retired Educators

Even though the Covid pandemic has been devastating, the Hampton Retired Educators have found several ways to remain active and to be helpful to our community.

We last met as a group of almost 100 members and guests on March 11, 2020, just before the Covid restrictions were imposed. At the Paradise Ocean Club, on the historic, scenic, beachfront Fort Monroe property, William Shackelford, Community Outreach Coordinator, Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Virginia, shared information about "Scams That Affect Retirees."

We held a May executive board Zoom meeting and began to plan our annual collection of school supplies, this time for the students at Bassette Elementary School. Via our quarterly newsletter and phone calls from our telephone tree, members were reminded to donate back-to-school supplies, and several members met at the school to receive the "drive by" contributions.

Because the June general meeting was canceled, we did not have the opportunity to meet our three 2020 scholarship recipients, two of whom are students at The College of William & Mary and one who is attending Old Dominion University.

Even though we knew there would be no December general meeting, the executive board met again, via ZOOM, in November. To continue our annual book drive for the holidays, we had another "drive by" collection. Our goal was to ensure that each child at Asbury Elementary School would have a book for the holidays.

We will continue our tradition of offering scholarships to 2021 seniors.

HUMOR FOR THE DAY - I just realized my trash goes out more than I do!



Front row: Patricia Denton, Kathleen Brown, President Joan Davis, Virginia Owens and Bassette Elementary School Principal Shelly Spain

Back row: Alice Capehart, Diane Mansfield and Penny Petersen

Portsmouth Couple Receives Annual Chapter & Retired Teachers Association Unit Community Service Award

Iva & Howard H. Foust, Jr. were recognized by the members and staff of AARP and NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) for exemplary service.

Every year AARP joins organizations and communities across the country in recognizing exemplary volunteers such as Iva and Howard and invite others to follow their example. Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP'S founder once said, "To our thousands of volunteers, words of appreciation for their enthusiasm, admiration for their fire, interest and energy, pride in the magnanimity that keeps alive the American spirit of neighbor helping neighbor and together helping their community become a neighborhood."

During the ZOOM January meeting hosted by Iva, who has served as president for the past 10 years, Maryland Spicely, courtesy chair, presented her with the awards. Howard Foust, past treasurer, passed on August 25, 2020. Iva graciously accepted both awards and thanked the association for nominating them.



Iva and Howard Foust

Prince William Retired Teachers' Association

In 2020 Prince William Retired Teachers mourned the loss of their treasure, Dick Gastley, and two past presidents, Bob Blevins and Mary Larson.

PWRTA held ZOOM meetings in December and March and plans to have a ZOOM meeting in May.



District N

The members of District N have tried to stay connected during the Pandemic by having ZOOM meetings, sending e-mails, and making phone calls. We sent cards and care packages to isolated members. We also visited members in nursing homes (as soon as they were permitted to have visitors). The Fauquier, Loudoun, and Winchester units donated socks, gloves, scarves, and sweaters to the Dakota Sioux community in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. This spring, Clarke, Culpeper, Loudoun, and Winchester Units will award scholarships.

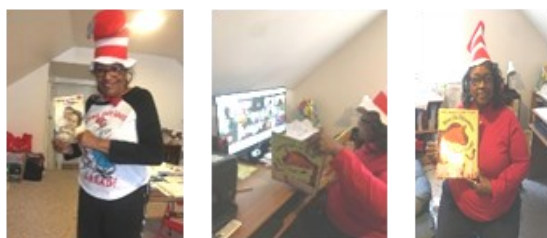
News From Around the Commonwealth

Richmond-Henrico Retired Teachers Association

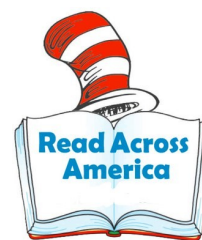
R-HRTA along with the nation has endured COVID-19 and countless other challenges. This pandemic shut down all of our in-person meetings, but not our spirit to keep our members informed and connected. R-HRTA board members did not let COVID-19 stop us from advancing our mission. We met via telephone conference and ZOOM.

The COVID-19 pandemic put many of our children into virtual or hybrid school settings, making it necessary for our teachers to find more creative ways to support them academically, socially and emotionally. R-HRTA 2020 projects which promote the theme, "Youth in Our Community" were postponed. We were able to recreate our March Project, Read Across America via ZOOM at our selected District Q schools.

Roselyn deCordova-Bolden and Bernice Anderson read via Zoom to kindergarteners at Barrack Obama Elementary School. Otelia Jones read via ZOOM to 3rd graders at Fairfield Elementary School. R-HRTA is committed to giving our time and resources in support of children at three elementary schools and two preschool learning centers. We look forward to implementing some of our 2021 projects.



Read Across America



Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers Association is "Busy"

The Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers have maintained a constant membership. We have lost four members through death, and one committed competent leader, Mavis W. Farrar, by moving. President Reese keeps the membership informed of items of interest and especially the illness of President Pair.

We have complied with the rule to stay home, wear masks, wash hands and stay a distance from each other. This did not in any way completely stop our service, it really became an individual effort. Members contributed time, service and financially to special projects. A few includes: book drives, personal hygiene projects, The Salvation Army, Women in Service Everywhere (W.I.S.E.) of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, financial donations for incarcerated women and children, and more. One member coordinated a project for the Children's Home of Virginia Baptist which usually results in thousands of dollars.

Upon our reassembling, we hope to continue our service along with our association projects. We are pleased with our service.

Portsmouth Retired Educators Association

The Portsmouth Retired Educators Association (PREA) conducted its September, November, January, and March meetings via ZOOM. Members have used technology to stay in touch and to strengthen bonds. Despite prolonged social distancing, the members have continued to serve the community by volunteering and donating to worthy groups. Parkview Elementary School, the Salvation Army, Zion Baptist Church Drop-In, and the H.E.R. Shelter for victims of domestic abuse have been recipients of school supplies, food, or other essentials. The association will award several scholarships to worthy students in May.

Henrico Retired School Personnel Association

The Henrico Retired School Personnel Association has again canceled its April luncheon because of Covid-19. The board of directors handled all association business virtually including sending out the newsletter via email.

HRSPA continues to support its scholarship program awarding two \$2000 scholarships to Henrico County Public School's graduating seniors who will pursue a degree in public education and two \$1000 scholarships to current employees who are seeking further endorsements or degrees. Information was sent out in January and applications were due on March 17. The committee had already received some teacher and student applications and will convene either virtually or in person to review applications and select winners.

The members of HRSPA also supported their spring philanthropy project the Henrico Education Foundation's SS Challenge which provides much needed classroom supplies.

The board continues to address association business virtually in these unusual times. Stay safe and healthy everyone!!

News From Around the Commonwealth

Shout Out to Suffolk RTA

It has been a challenging year for the world; as well as SRTA not being able to see members for in-person meetings. However, SRTA is still standing strong and representing their voice in the community. Presently, we are utilizing free conference calls for meetings.

Despite COVID-19 threatening every area of our lives physically, emotionally, and spiritually, SRTA was able to do a Drive thru Canned Food project during November 2020-January 2021. More than 330 items were donated to the Salvation Army. Plans are now being implemented to purchase and deliver school supplies in April to the Salvation Army. Supplies will include notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, etc.

Scholarship applications were sent to the three Suffolk Public High Schools. The deadline ends May 3, 2021. Two seniors will be awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$500.00 dollars.

In the midst of this pandemic, SRTA was faced with a great loss. We are profoundly saddened by the loss of Bertha B. Turner, a dedicated member and past chairperson of the scholarship committee.

No Need to Panic! "Life's challenges are not designed to break us, but to bend us to do more in our community with great love." SRTA will persevere and continue to act and serve our community.



Salvation Army Drive thru Food Drive

From The Treasurer

Thank you to all of you who made the extra effort to submit your dues even though we have been unable to have in person meetings during this past year. I am including a membership report for you, listed below. As you can see, membership figures are trending downward and this has accelerated during the pandemic. I hope you will continue to make every effort to submit your dues for the upcoming year so that we can reverse this trend. Hopefully we can resume our in person gatherings soon and enjoy all the benefits of membership in VRTA.

The membership information listed below is usually tabulated for the spring meeting of VRTA, dated around April 24 of each year. This year's tabulation is based upon information available as of April 10. The total membership figure was not tabulated for 2019-2020.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
New Members	200	205	180	103	55
Renewals	1386	1284	1212	1234	925
New Life Members	16	15	12	16	5
Total Membership:	5676	5520	5309		4759

Thank you to our local and district presidents and treasurers for all the work you have done to continue to encourage our members to pay their dues and support our organization. Please keep up the good work. It's worth our efforts!

Local treasurers, please remember that I am more than happy to mail membership forms, dues settlement statement forms and membership cards to you whenever you need to be resupplied. My contact information is hooman4949@gmail.com or 540.473.2636. If you don't hear back promptly, call or email me again. Also, please continue to notify me when you have membership changes such as address changes or members who have passed away, so that I can update our rolls.

Weldon Martin, Treasurer

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Registration Table

VRTA Past Presidents

