



VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Spring 2016 Edition



From the VRTA President

My, how time flies! It seems that only yesterday I was installed as President of VRTA. The end of my term is drawing near. It has been an interesting journey, thanks to you wonderful people who have so willingly helped and encouraged me. I am forever grateful for this experience and for you, the people who make up VRTA .

Serving VRTA has taught me much, has offered me the opportunity to travel, to meet people and to make new friends who share the same joys and frustrations of our profession. In an article written by Becky Smith, President of Pittsylvania Retired Teachers Association, she commented, “I find immeasurable value in this organization and I will continue to meaningfully contribute to it.” I parrot those thoughts.

VRTA continues to touch the lives of our youth and people in our communities evident through the thousands of volunteer hours logged each year. Important to our organization is the lobbying force that we have to work toward the passage of legislation favorable to quality public education and to the interest of retired education personnel. VRS representatives keep us updated on changes and benefits in retirement. VRTA has an exclusive VRTA endorsed insurance benefits program. We offer pertinent workshops and sessions that are of interest to and have relevance to retirees. Last but not least, we provide awards to individuals and local units for their accomplishments, and we have fun and fellowship. Hopefully, in the next year, I can provide a book of teacher stories that you contribute.

I extend an invitation to you to attend the Spring Delegate Assembly April 25-26. I believe you will find it significant and enjoyable. Nina McClanahan will be installed as the new VRTA President. She will be an excellent leader. Please give her the same helping hand that you extended to me. Make VRTA the best ever. Abraham Lincoln once said, “And in the end it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.” Make the most of it.

VRTA Benefits Update

- Medicare Supplement: Compare plans and pricing throughout the state instantly
- Fixed Annuity: Very competitive interest rates compared to bank CDs
- Long Term Care: New asset-based LTC options available

For more information, go to www.vrtabenefits.org

For an instant rate quote, call [\(800\) 467-5425](tel:8004675425) to speak with a VRTA Benefit Specialist

For a local or district unit program presentation, contact Janice Jones at [\(800\) 467-5425](tel:8004675425) or janjones04@comcast.net

Thank you,
Jim DuBrueler Jr. VRTA Agent of Record

Inside this issue:

<i>Five Reasons You Should Run for Public Office</i>	3
<i>From the Legislative Committee</i>	4
<i>News from Around the Commonwealth</i>	5-11
<i>VRTA Fall Delegate Assembly Information</i>	12-14
<i>VRTA Delegate Assembly Registration Form</i>	15
<i>From the VRTA Treasurer</i>	16

Page 4

“ Henry Adams said, ‘A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops.’ What an awesome statement and what different forms that influence sometimes takes! “

VRTA Awards Report

The Awards Committee had a great year this year. It was much better than last year. Thanks for your cooperation, support, and heeding the appeal in the VRTA Fall 2015 Newsletter. Our strengths are numerous, so please keep up the good work and encourage others.

A summary of the Fall 2015 report follows:

- 49 unit reports were received by June 30, 2015
- 19 unit reports were received after June 30, 2015
- 68 total unit reports were received
- 10 Early Bird reports were received
- 6 districts had 100 % unit reports by June 30, 2015
- 22 unit banners were displayed at the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 VRTA conferences
- 4 districts had 100% unit banners displayed at the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 VRTA conferences
- 3 district banners were displayed at the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 VRTA conferences
- 66 units gave scholarships
- 7 districts gave scholarships
- \$125,436 total given in scholarships
- 15 districts had 100% scholarship participation
- 18 units have equalized membership in the unit, district and state

These are the five districts receiving the most awards:

D— 46	N — 29
P— 21	E— 18
T—16	

There were 225 total awards given.

Let us make the number of awards even greater at the Fall 2016 VRTA Meeting.

Canzata B. Turner, Awards Chairperson

VRTA Members Attend Ladies Luncheon

VRTA members Phyllis Eastridge from Patrick County RTA and Mary Lou Lewis from Botetourt RTA attended Radford University's Alumni Ladies Luncheon on February 29 in Roanoke. Others attending were Nancy Love of Collinsville; Pat Honts of Botetourt; Kenna Colley, Dean of College of Education and Human Development; and Jocelyn Stephens, Assistant Director of University Advancement.



L-R: Phyllis Eastridge, Mary Lewis, Nancy Love, Pat Honts, Kenna Colley, and Jocelyn Stephens

Returned Newsletter-Fall 2015

Even though we have been working diligently to rectify the problem we have with returned newsletters, there is still work to be done. Progress is being made with each publication but we are still having way too many returns. In the fall of 2015 we were able to remove 113 more names from the mailing list. These members have had their newsletter returned 3 times. Another astonishing fact is that 101 more members had their newsletter returned for the first time. It appears that these members either have a new address or they have passed away.

I am asking each unit and district to keep their membership records accurate and notify Weldon Martin, VRTA Treasurer, of address changes and deceased members. He may be contacted at hooman4949@gmail.com.

Also, I am suggesting that we seriously consider delivering the newsletter electronically to all those who have computers and are willing. Several VRTA members are already receiving the newsletter electronically and are pleased with the fact the newsletter is in color. Those who receive the newsletter electronically receive an email as soon as it becomes available on the VRTA website, vrta.org. The voice of all our members is important and we want to hear from you.

Nina McClanahan-President Elect

mcclanahannina@gmail.com

Virginia Retired Teachers Association

"Organized November 28, 1936"

2014 - 2016 Officers

President—Phyllis Eastridge	(276)694-6766 pneastridge@embarqmail.com
President-Elect—Nina McClanahan	(276)935-5004 rognina@vmmicro.net
Vice President—Leigh McKay	(540)989-4417 cwmck5@cox.net
Secretary—Daphne Miller	(757)638-1994 ma_d_miller@hotmail.com
Treasurer—Weldon Martin	(540)473-2636 hooman4949@gmail.com
Immediate Past President James Bradford	(540)261-3242 drjcb@embarqmail.com

Five Reasons You Should Run for Public Office

By Bonnie Atwood



Be honest. Do you ever watch the presidential candidates on TV and think, “I could do a better job than that guy!” Of course, you do. It was a silly question. And just maybe you can. I think you should consider running for public office.

You don’t have to throw your hat into the presidential ring right away. Why not announce you are running for your local school board? Or board of supervisors? You’ve had a teaching career. That counts for a lot. I ran for school board in my City of Richmond in the 1990s. I did not win, but I ran a good race, and I’m glad I did.

Here are some reasons why people like you and I should run for public office:

1. **You get an opportunity to shape the dialog.** When you’re on a panel, or on the stump, or writing your campaign literature, YOU bring up the issues that you think are most important. Your opponents may try to stay within their own agendas, but sooner or later, they can no longer ignore you. They HAVE to respond to the good questions you raise. Win or lose, you have brought public attention to the things that you want people to be talking about.
2. **You learn about your locality, the issues, and the constituents.** The campaign trail is a steep trek up the learning curve. Once you’ve declared you are a candidate, you spend every day—make that every minute—learning your territory: what people want, how much things cost, what the arguments are, etc. You learn fast and you learn well. You make yourself an expert.
3. **You learn about politics.** It’s not only the issues that you learn about; it’s also the system. You get an inside look at how people are selected, or become volunteers, to represent others. You learn about key supporters, fundraising, and, well, let’s face it: party drama. It will give you a new perspective on how things work.
4. **You learn a lot about yourself.** From the start, you set the tone of your campaign. Will it be positive? Will it be fierce? Will it be aggressive? It becomes your responsibility to communicate your style to everyone around you. That includes your volunteer team, the press, and the voters. You have to be strong about maintaining that tone, even if it means showing some of your supporters the proverbial door. To thine own self be true.
5. **You become disciplined.** If you’re outgoing, then running for office is fun. But it requires great discipline. You’ve got that. You were a teacher! You’ve got to get up early and stay up late. You’ve got to carry out every promise you make. You’ve got to read, read, read, and listen, listen, listen. You’ve got to be gracious, even when the people around you are not.

And here’s the icing on the cake: If you win, you get big say in what happens in your jurisdiction. Have I talked you into it yet? I’m beginning to think you can do this!

Charles Todd

*with
Sympathy*

On February 25, friends and family celebrated the life of Dr. Charles Todd (1929-2016). Charlie, as he was known by his many friends and colleagues, was a teacher in some capacity all his life – in his home, in the classroom, in various administrative positions, and in his tireless efforts as lobbyist for the VRTA. He will be remembered for his intellect, keen wit, and genuine love for people. He will be missed.

VRTA Newsletter is published twice annually, in the spring and fall. Submit articles to Editor Susan Martin at 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090 or email at: hooman4949@gmail.com or smartin@bcps.k12.va.us

Deadline for the Fall 2016 newsletter is Wednesday, August 17, 2016.

From the Legislative Committee



As you anticipated retirement, what was it that you looked forward to most? Was it not having the responsibilities that you fulfilled for so many years, or was it new opportunities that awaited you? Or was it both?

Teachers by nature readily assume responsibilities of one kind or another. That's just the way we are. It's part of our DNA. Many of you stepped in to rescue family members in crisis before and after retirement. Some accepted leadership responsibilities in your church or in your community because you recognized the need and knew that you were prepared to do what needed to be done. Others did jobs that no one else would do, not because you had an abundance of self confidence but because you were willing to give it a try and take the heat if it didn't turn out so well. At times you recognized the support that people needed who were struggling with one problem or another and continued to be the encourager you always were in your classroom, unafraid of getting too close and "involved."

It's strange how things work out. I'm willing to bet that each one of those responsibilities you took on also had an opportunity or a kind of gift that you never would have dreamed of. How many relationships were strengthened and how many people had a new and profound love for you as you went about picking up broken pieces of family problems or gently caring for those who were seriously ill? How many wonderful people have you met and new friendships have you made because you went to meetings when you would rather have stayed home to work in your garden or play bridge with friends?

Henry Adams said, "A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops." What an awesome statement and what different forms that influence sometimes takes! Some of you have dared to use your skills and give of your time in the political arena where it seems no matter what you do you leave yourself open to criticism. Ask teachers who are now serving on school boards or city councils. Others spend time keeping up with bills in the state legislature that affect retirees and the education and the very lives of our young people. A Grisham novel is much more compelling than the emails I send out during the General Assembly session, but you use that information when you call and email your legislators. Just as in the classroom, you often are unaware of the impact you make, but, believe me, you are making a difference in lives now and in the future. It's the trust in this that keeps us going.

Just as we took advantage of opportunities to refine our craft, socialize, and support each other as a faculty, we will come together at Blackstone on April 25-26 to learn how to enrich our personal lives and our organization, enjoy seeing old friends, and look forward to making new ones. After lunch, the VRS staff will bring us up to date on the retirement system. In the Legislative Workshop on Monday afternoon, Dr. Kitty Boitnott, Immediate Past President of VEA and now a VRTA member, will share with us some of her insights as a current member of the adjunct faculty at the University of Richmond teaching Education Ethics, Policy and Legal Issues and Education and Public Policy.

Please don't miss these opportunities!

Bea Morris, Legislative Chair

NRTA Advocacy Conference

NRTA Advocacy Conference was held in Arlington, Virginia, from September 28-October 1, 2015. Beatrice Morris and Nina McClanahan represented VRTA. Representatives from 47 states attended a marathon of workshops that were organized by NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) staff members. These workshops gave an insight to the Legislative climate and outlook for all retirees, not just teachers. Participants in the conference had the opportunity to visit their state legislators on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Beatrice and Nina met with Caroline Robinson, a Legislative Correspondent in Senator Tim Kaine's office, Lauren Marshall, a Legislative Correspondent in Senator Mark Warner's office and Adam Harbison, the Legislative Director in Congressman Morgan Griffith's office. At the end of the conference there was an opportunity to hear and share information about the Capitol Hill visits.



Pictured L-R Nina McClanahan, VRTA President-Elect; Mary Beth Dixon, NRTA Advisor; Dara Dann, NRTA Vice President; Bea Morris, VRTA Legislative Chairman

News From Around the Commonwealth

Loudoun Retired Teachers Have Busy Fall Season

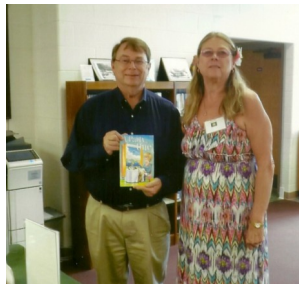


Our February silent auction for the LRTA scholarship fund raised \$923.00, double from last year!

Wine tasting at Bluemont Vineyards on September 24, 2015



Ann Thorsen at our 11/5/15 LREA meeting packed turkey dinners. Members brought food for 13 complete turkey dinners. At our November meeting LREA Members collected 224 pounds of food and \$1,015.00 in cash and gift cards (to buy turkeys and produce).



President Becky Smith presenting "A Party of One" to Library Director Mike Barnes to Clifton Forge Library



Margo Oxidine talking at the September 1, 2015 meeting.

Franklin/Southampton Retired Teachers

Members of Franklin/Southampton Retired Teachers' Association completed one of their yearly community service projects. They presented non-perishable items to the Franklin Cooperative Ministry. The items contributed helped to replenish the food pantry for the Thanksgiving holiday.



L to R: President Mrs. Daphne Miller, Mr. Charles Haskins, Mrs. Ann Johnson, Director Mrs. Veronica Ferguson, Ms. Cheryl Roberts, Mrs. Goode and Ms. Dorothy Jones.

Alleghany Retired Teachers Association

At the September 2015 meeting we had the local author and journalist Margo Oxendine. She shared entertaining excerpts from her book, "A Party of One" which after the meeting, she sold and autographed the book. Chuck Swope, Central Atlantic Insurance Company, gave us an update on long term care policies. We gave a monetary donation to the local school systems, along with school supplies which were donated by our members. President Becky Smith presented a book "A Party of One" to the Clifton Forge Library to Library Director Mike Barnes. The ARTA presented a check to the Covington Library.

We sponsored the AARP food drive at Kroger's in Clifton Forge. The Alleghany Retired Teachers Association donated 180 pounds of food and money to the area food banks. We plan to sponsor the AARP drive in September 2016.

In December 2015 we had the Alleghany Choirs under the direction of Mrs. Amanda Spouse entertain us with Christmas Music. Our guest Speaker was the Christmas Mother Lisa Schoppmeyer. She spoke on the needs of the 2015 Christmas Mother Program. We collected paper products, toys and cleaner along with \$500.00 check donation for the Christmas Mother. Vic's Restaurant catered the lunch which was wonderful. President Becky Smith thanked everyone for the work they had done during the year. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and wished their families a happy holiday. She stated that the rest of the meeting was to get in the spirit of Christmas and enjoy their fellow teachers.



ARTA members at the October 2015 District P meeting at the Roanoke Country Club.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Buchanan County RTA

On December 14, 2015, Buchanan County Retired Teachers met at Grundy Baptist Church to celebrate Christmas with lunch, fellowship, giving and entertainment. The group made a donation to the "Coal Miners' Christmas and Special Needs Fund," and to the "Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia." They also provided gifts for four residents of Heritage Hall Nursing Home. Shane Sparks, a talented Grundy resident, presented the group with a magical program of music and Christmas songs.



Left to Right: Nina McClanahan, Patricia Hogston, Ruby Looney, Cindy Matney, Glinda Sollien, Janie Mullins, Luanne Capps, Donna Hager, Sharon Lester, Joan Boyd, Judy Holland, Mary Salyer, Betty Looney and Doris Stiltner.

Members of the HRSPA Legislative Committee participated in the VRTA Day at the General Assembly by visiting legislators and attending and being recognized in the Senate.



Henrico Retired School Personnel



Henrico Retired School Personnel held its October 2015 luncheon, A VETERAN'S DAY CELEBRATION, at the Willow Oaks Country Club. Veterans were honored with a special program including music from the Douglas Freeman High School Choir and a presentation by Candi Shelton from the Virginia War Memorial. Becky Goshorn, HRSPA President, was acknowledged with a bouquet of flowers for being awarded the 2015 VRTA Most Active Member.

Alexandria Retired Teachers Association



District H (Alexandria Retired Teachers Association) had Karenne Wood, a member of the Monacan Indian Nation, give a wonderful slide show on the history of Indians in Virginia. In October Pericles Konstas, an 11th generation member of a 12 generation family of olive oil producers, gave a slide show and olive oil tasting. The slide show featured the history, culture and dietary significance. In November we joined Arlington ARTA for a book review of the Shenandoah National Park. In December we had a wonderful holiday concert performed by the Hammond Middle School Orchestra (6th, 7th, and 8th graders) under the direction of Veronica Jackson.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Charles City/New Kent Retired Teachers Report on Fall Activities

The Charles City/New Kent Retired Teachers Association has had a busy fall 2015 and we are looking forward to a 2016 New Year filled with lots of activities. Our September 2015 meeting was held on the 20th and we had many topics to bring before our group at that time.

Members of our organization were informed about some of the decisions that were made at the Spring and Fall VRTA meetings. Plans were also discussed about our Christmas activities. We planned our annual Christmas luncheon and decided that we would participate in the Annual Angel Tree Activity in Charles City County. The President, Hazel Charity, visited the BB&T Bank to select a family from the Angel Tree and the next week we were busy shopping for our Angel. The majority of our members participated in the project. We were happy that we could bring joy to a local family at Christmas.

Our annual Christmas luncheon was held at the Rose & Crown Restaurant in New Kent County, Virginia, on Thursday, December 10, 2015. Our guests and the members had an enjoyable afternoon. We were happy to see our newly elected school board member, Mr. Herbert Johnson, who is the husband of Mrs. Francine Johnson, a retired teacher in our group. Some of our other guests included: Mrs. Mary Collins, who retired from the Charles City County School System, but is a member of the Richmond Retired Teacher Organization. However, she often graces us with her presence at our Christmas activities. Mr. Eugene Williams and Mr. Lewis James were also guests at our luncheon. We were happy to celebrate the Christmas season with all of our members and guests. Many of us exchanged gifts and cards and enjoyed a delicious lunch.

The luncheon attendees also got to sign a petition that was sent to us from the Roanoke County Association. We signed the petition in support of some financial matters that need to be discussed in the General Assembly. By signing the petition, we are hoping for some positive results.

On Friday, December 11, 2015, we were asked to have all gifts for our Angel Tree Family delivered to the BB&T Bank located at 9200 Courthouse Road in Charles City, Virginia. A representative from our local newspaper (The Charles City/New Kent Chronicle) met our group at the bank to photograph us for the paper. The newspaper representative was Mr. Andre Jones, a graduate of Charles City High School. We were happy to see him and he informed us that since most of us taught him, he would make certain that our article got special attention from him. The new bank manager greeted us and we invited her to be photographed with our group.

This coming spring we will continue to work toward obtaining funds to give a scholarship to a worthy student from the senior class from New Kent High School. We rotate the giving of a \$500.00 scholarship to a student at Charles City High or New Kent High School.



Pictured below from Left to Right: Ms. Melissa Jeffries, the BB&T Bank Manager in Charles City, VA, Clemmie Miller, Doris Parker, Bonnie Gardner, our newest member, Carol Wilson, District C Vice-President, Hazel Charity, CC/NK President of the Retired Teachers, and Maggie Payne Edwards, our Legislative Chairperson.

Portsmouth Retired Educators

The Portsmouth Retired Educators Association participated in two service projects in support of its adopted school, Park View Elementary. In September, members donated various school supplies to students in grades K through 6 to begin the year.

In November, members Iva Foust, Judith Morgan, Mozelle Parker, and Deloris Oliver launched a book drive **"100 Books for 100 Children"** to collect books to distribute to children of all ages. Members gathered new and gently used books. These were presented at the school's November PTA meeting. Mrs. Foust, Mrs. Parker, and Mrs. Oliver spoke to the attendees about the importance of reading and the PREA's commitment to assist whenever needed.

After the meeting adjourned, books on four tables were displayed for children and parents to choose. Most were able to take two or more of the two hundred books collected. All were excited and left with smiles.



Richmond-Henrico Retired Teachers

Richmond-Henrico Retired Teachers Association members have committed to giving of their time and resources in support of "Youth In Our Community."

In October, members donated money to the Feed More/Back Pack Program. This program fills the nutrition gaps for school-age children in need.

The December giving spirit was reflected in our annual school supply donations that were delivered to nine Elementary Schools in District Q.

We were happy to have our 2015 Scholarship recipients attend the December luncheon. Johonna Cruze is attending J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College and Rakiyat Irbrahim is a student at Brigham Young University.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Scott County Retired Teachers Have a Busy Fall

Scott County Retired Teachers Association met on Wednesday, September 23, 2015, in the Cove Ridge Center classroom at beautiful Natural Tunnel State Park. Our morning program was presented by Joan Boyd Short and Grace Bradshaw, both members of the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Association. Joan Short, President of the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Association, presented a fascinating history of the Wilderness Trail Blockhouse and of those pioneering individuals who came to the area prior to Daniel Boone. Although many of our members are quite knowledgeable of the history of our region, most were surprised to learn something new from the presentation. Grace Bradshaw, from the Appalachian Writing Project, then led us in a writing workshop. She read several intriguing poems to us and then gave us a prompt entitled "Where I'm From." We were then ask to recall meaningful and poignant memories from personal experiences and record them in a poem. Some members then volunteered to read their creation to the group. After lunch, the entire group toured the historic Wilderness Trail Blockhouse located high atop a ridge on the Natural Tunnel State Park grounds and overlooking the Rye Cove community. Everyone had a wonderful day learning and enjoying the company of old friends. Later, on December 9, 2015, our group enjoyed a festive Christmas luncheon at Olive Garden, bringing our year to a close.



Scott County Retired Teachers visit the Wilderness Trail Blockhouse.



Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association held its annual Back to School Breakfast on the first day of school, September 8, 2015. Food was collected for Luke's Backpack, a local ministry that supplied 48,198 weekend meals in backpacks, to hungry students last year. The retirees brought 280 food items and \$230.00 cash to help fill a hay wagon during the Shenandoah Valley Lutheran Ministries, Inc. Back to School food drive. The group also heard from Teresa Funkhouser, Senior Services Program Coordinator for the Shenandoah County Department of Parks and Recreation, who talked about opportunities for seniors through Parks and Rec - teaching classes, taking classes, taking trips, volunteering. In December, the unit will collect food for a local food pantry.



Back to School Food Drive



The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association officers for 2015-16 are (left to right) Past President, William "Bill" Moyers, President Karen Whetzel, Vice President Connie Fauber, Treasurer MaryAnn Sherry, and Secretary Virginia "Ginny" Stultz. The group collected food for the weekend feeding program, Luke's Backpack, and a local food pantry; raised funds to give two scholarships; and held three meetings - Back to School breakfast in September, December lunch, and May dinner.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Hampton Retired Teachers Hold Fall Meeting

The Hampton Retired Teachers Association held its fall luncheon meeting on September 9, 2015, at the Embassy Suites in Hampton, Virginia.

The members were honored that the new Superintendent, Dr. Jeffery Smith, took time during the first week of school to attend the meeting. He gave an interesting presentation which introduced us to his background and his expectations for the school system and after his presentation, he posed for a picture with HRTA President Jacqueline Smith-Watson.

Additionally, at this meeting the members participated in two programs which will benefit Hampton elementary school students. Karla Young, Principal of Aberdeen Elementary School, attended the meeting and accepted a donation of \$575 for her school's uniform fund. Kraft Elementary School's Assistant Principal, Sean Holleran, also attended the meeting and accepted backpacks and school supplies for his school.

With over 100 attendees at the meeting, the unit continues to thrive.



Dr. Jeffery Smith
and Jacqueline
Smith-Watson

Sean Holleran accepting
school supplies for
Kraft Elementary
School



Brunswick Retired Teachers Association Host Fall Membership Luncheon

The BRTA began its fall activities with a membership luncheon held at Nottoway Restaurant, Warfield, Virginia. Guests included recently retired educational personnel who expressed an interest in joining the association.

President Louise Mont-Tucker warmly greeted the guests and highlighted the purpose of the association. Of special focus was emphasis on the association's continued service to educational programs and support for programs that benefit retired personnel.

Most entertaining and inspiring were the stories shared by the guests as they talked about their many years of service in education.



Members and guests pictured, left to right: Velma Bruce; Elizabeth Mallory; Emma Staples, chair of luncheon committee; Mary Smith; Louise Mont-Tucker, president; Aubrey Nelson; Lula Walls; Delores Hardy; and Clara Smith

Dinwiddie County Has a Fulfilling 2015

At the March 2015 meeting our guest speaker Mrs. Lori Stevenson, Commissioner of Revenue for Dinwiddie County, spoke briefly to our members about how her office serves the citizens of Dinwiddie County and surrounding areas.

During the June meeting at the Nottoway Restaurant in McKenney, Virginia, we honored Haley Hornsby with a scholarship to VSU. She will pursue a career in teacher education.

On Monday, December 14, 2015, members of the Dinwiddie County Retired Teachers' Association hosted the District D meeting with a catered luncheon at the historic Southside High School Education Center, Dinwiddie, Virginia. Mrs. J. Goodwyn, President of DCRTA, presided. Our guest speaker for the occasion was Reverend Louis Collins of the Garden of Gethsemane Ministries of Richmond, Virginia. His message to retired teachers was to rethink retirement and dedicate a small percentage of their time to go back into schools and assist educators and students in a meaningful way. Then Ms. Patricia Holland, District D president, conducted the business session of the meeting. Units in attendance were Amelia, Brunswick, Chesterfield, Franklin-Southampton, Greenville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Petersburg-Prince George, Sussex, and the host unit, Dinwiddie.



Pictured on the left: Mrs. Julia Goodwyn, DCRTA president, and Ms. Patricia Holland, District D president

News From Around the Commonwealth

Sussex County Retired Teachers' Association

In keeping with our motto: "To serve, not be served" the SCRTA has

- Strived to make a positive difference in the lives of others
- Partnered with youth and seniors in the community
- Mentored teachers in the education professions
- Donated individually wrapped treats for students
- Donated playground equipment for recreation activities
- Served as tutors in the areas of reading and mathematics
- Volunteered at food banks and nursing homes

Volunteered and visited schools during:

- Open houses
- Holiday celebrations
- SOL nights
- Read Across America
- Dr. Seuss Breakfast
- Grandparents' Day (Week)
- Career days
- Book Fairs (purchased books for children, putting smiles on their faces)

Lending a helping hand during an emergency

An area hit by severe weather – Waverly in Sussex County, Virginia

- Tornado –Clean up after a storm
- During illness, distress, and death of a loved one
- Collection of food and monetary donations

Dr. Seuss Day



Phyllis Eastridge, VRTA President, reads to a group of Pre-K students during the celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday.

Memorial Service honoring deceased members.

Pictured: Eleanor Alexander, Clyde Keen.



Greensville Retired Teachers' Association Installation



The Greensville Retired Teachers' Association held their installation of officers for 2015-2017 on September 17, 2015, during their quarterly meeting. Pictured are from left to right: Glenn Pair, President; Dorothy Thomas, Vice President; Minnie Mayes, Secretary; Thelma Atkins-Riley, Assistant Secretary; Victoria Clark, Financial Secretary; Sarah Seaborne, Corresponding Secretary; Ella Pugh, Sunshine Chairman; and Bowman Burton, Chaplain. Carolyn High, Treasurer, was not present due to illness. Rev. George Pugh conducted the installation and provided detailed responsibilities for each position and challenged the officers to perform to their fullest potential.

The Greensville Retired Teachers' Association in cooperation with AARP held a successful Community Food Drive on September 11-12, 2015 at Piggly Wiggly.

Rockbridge Retired Teachers Association



Installation of Officers — Phyllis Hockman; Cheryl Ryan, Secretary; Clyde Keen, Treasurer



Dr. Bradford recognizes callers — Left to right Eleanor Alexander, Rhunell Hotinger, Betty Teague, Lemme Miller, and Pat Knick

News From Around the Commonwealth

King and Queen/King William/West Point Retired Teachers Association

"Be Aware of the Many Scams" was the topic presented at a recent local meeting of the King and Queen/King William/West Point Retired Teachers Association. Sergeant Ron Hirtz of the King and Queen County Sheriff's Department spoke to the membership about the many scams in the public arena directed towards the elderly population. Sergeant Hirtz made the membership aware of the many devious manners in which others will pose as someone they are not, in order to gain access to the financial resources of the elderly population. Sergeant Hirtz described how we can lose "our shirts" in a few minutes. There are many phone scams. One scam which seems most prolific is that of declaring that the elderly person who answers the phone owes money to the Internal Revenue Service. All must remember that the IRS will never notify anyone of incorrect tax monies paid via phone. After that meeting, one member received three such phone calls the next day! The caller always states that you need to call the number given right away, it is urgent that you do so. To prove how urgent it is they will make repeatable calls. The thieves will also state that you owe money to various companies, that a family member has been arrested and needs bail money right away or was traveling and had their money stolen so you need to send them money as soon as possible. Another scam is that you need to purchase some products from traveling steak salesmen, as they are at the end of their day and the home office has authorized the driver to sell them at a discounted price. He also mentioned people coming to your home to sell you books, pavement left over from highway paving jobs, house painting jobs, tree cutting, etc. Many times you are told of money you have won, cars, etc., but you just need to pay this surcharge amount which, again, is false information. He stated, "Scams are at every turn and increasing daily. You should not be surprised by any scam stories they present."

Sergeant Hirtz further stated, "If it sounds too good to be true, it is probably really is too good to be true. People don't give away things at no cost." Sergeant Hirtz provided these guidelines to live by: (1) Don't say "yes" to anything over the phone. (2) Don't give out any personal information over the phone. (3) Call the police or sheriff department if you think any kind of scam or personal information seeking occurs over the phone. This was a very interesting and timely program for our membership.



President-Elect Linda Hunt Byrd, President Jacqueline Smith-Watson and Sprately Gifted Center Choral Director, Pamela Young.

Superintendent Supports Retirees Service

In her address to Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers Association, Superintendent Dr. Linda Shifflette encouraged retired teachers to join her in supporting Petersburg City Public Schools' challenge in any way they can: mentoring, tutoring, chaperoning, contributing school supplies, reading to classes (especially during Read Across America Day), and buddying for lunch.

The most significant committee report was the legislative by Annie Mickens which updated members on all the bills concerning retired educators before the General Assembly.

Following the business session, a reminder of our upcoming December District D meeting was given and then door prizes were distributed before adjournment.



Vice-president, Patricia Bates, Superintendent Linda Shifflette, President George Henderson

Hampton Retired Educators' December Activities

At the December 9th luncheon meeting, at the Embassy Suites in Hampton, Virginia, the members wore holiday attire and were entertained by over 50 members of the Sprately Gifted Center Chorus, under the direction of Mrs. Pamela Young and accompaniment of Priscilla Lockett. The chorus' melodic sounds, happy faces and varied musical selections (including "I'm sick of all the fa, la, la") put everyone in the mood for the holidays. After the usual reports and business, we participated in the 2nd Annual "Twelve Days of Christmas" Competition. Despite the best efforts of the other eleven tables, the 7 Swans A Swimming table - with arms flailing in some kind of swim stroke - won. There was considerable unrest (and verbal dissent) when the judges, some members of the hotel wait staff, ruled that the Two Turtle Doves table had beaten the Three French Hens for 2nd place. We all departed having enjoyed this afternoon activity.

On December 18th, President Jacqueline Smith-Watson hosted a holiday party for the HRTA Executive Board. In addition to enjoying the wonderful Christmas decorations and delicious food, we had a lively competition for the exchange of Dollar Tree gifts. One would have thought the gifts were from Neiman Marcus!

VRTA 80th Anniversary Celebration — Your Voice Makes a Difference

Think back to the 1930's before teachers established the NRTA, AARP, VRTA and local teacher retired units. What retirement benefits were available for retired teachers and other retired Americans?

What retirement benefits did your grandparents have?

What retirement benefits did teachers have?

Who initiated the change for retirement benefits?

The desire of retired teachers to encourage and promote retirement benefits for teachers and other Americans can be documented by the following:

1935 – Dr. Conelia Storrs Adair, teacher, founded the Virginia Retired Teachers Association.

1942 - The Virginia General Assembly passed the Retirement Act that included the index system. The VRS was originally passed only for teachers.

1950 – All Virginia teachers salaries were equalized by the General Assembly.

1952 - The General Assembly approved the VRS as an independent trust fund.

1960 - VRS group life and disability was approved by the General Assembly.

1967 - VRTA published the first statewide newsletter.

1970 - The General Assembly approved automatic annual cost of living adjustment.

1990 - VRTA approved the first insurance contract with Central Atlantic Insurance Agency, making John Jones our Agent of Record. John was a national leader in the development of long term group and home care policies for VRTA members.

1996 - Lobbyist – The VRTA membership approved their first lobbyist to present to the membership's legislative agenda to the General Assembly.

1996 - The Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Retired Teachers Day (January 31th of each ensuing year).

1998 - The General Assembly approved the health insurance credit as a benefit to offset the court's ruling that the VRS monthly payments and life insurance were to be taxed. In 2007, the health credit was increased to \$4.00 for each year of service with no cap for the years of service.

Plan to Attend the 2016 VRTA Delegate Assembly

Again, I invite you to come to the VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly April 25-26. The sessions planned for Monday afternoon will be informative, educational, and entertaining. The sessions are designed around the suggestions you offer on the evaluation forms. Those suggestions are so helpful especially when you provide resources for presenters. Keep them coming.

There is something for everyone Monday afternoon:

Travel and travel tips for seniors

Elder Law

VRTA History that is a continuation from VRTA's 80th birthday celebration last fall—Iva Faust and Mary Copeland

Calligraphy--Katherine Ralston,

Tips for Treasurers-- Weldon Martin,

Legislative-- Bea Morris and Bonnie Atwood

Insurance Benefits—Jim DuBrueler

Louse Mont-Tucker and Patricia Holland will be conducting a workshop on Community Service; come by to collect your nomination forms for MAM and MAU

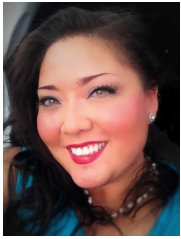
Becky Goshorn, her son, and Jason Winter, our webmaster, will be presenting sessions on Smartphone instruction for both novices and those with more experience; come with your Smartphones and questions.

Phyllis Eastridge will continue with a session on her passion of Writing Teacher Stories or poems such as the following one written by Green Abram Dehart and submitted by his great granddaughter, Ella Sue Goard.

WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL IN THE 1870'S

I went to school in an old log house
Where we only had one room.
Had a big broad shelf for a writing desk,
And swept with broom as-broom.
We took our dinners to the schoolhouse,
And hung our pails on the hook.
We all drank water from the guard at the spring
And washed our faces in the brook.
The old house had a roof of boards,
The wind whistled through the cracks.
Had a big log fire in the fireplace,
And sat with seats without backs.
At 12 o'clock we had an hour
To play upon the lawns.
We washed our faces and combed our hair
'Til the teacher blew his horn.
We stayed at the school 'til 4 o'clock,
We were due to arrive at 8.
Had no excuse when we stayed away
And were never kept in for being late.
We had no bus to ride in those days
Tho' we had 3 and ½ miles to go.
But oh' what a jolly time we had
As we trudged thru the mud and the snow.

Gabrielle Francesca Bergeret To Entertain at VRTA



Soprano, Gabrielle Francesca Bergeret, will entertain members of VRTA on Monday evening April 25th at Blackstone. She is a graduate of Mary Baldwin College, with a Bachelors of Arts Degrees in Music Performance and Music Education. She has studied and performed abroad in Rome, Italy. She performed with The Richmond Ballet for its production of George Balanchine's 'Liebeslieder Walzer'. Gabrielle has also performed with The Richmond Symphony Orchestra, The Richmond Symphony Chamber Chorus, and The Richmond Symphony Chorus. She currently studies in the studio of Irish Soprano. Plan to hear this delightful entertainment on Monday evening at the VRTA conference.

Report from the Nominating Committee

The following slate of officers will be presented to the VRTA Delegate Assembly in April:

President-elect — Ben McCartney

Vice-president — Reba Evans

Secretary — Daphne Miller

Treasurer — Weldon Martin

Dr. Stewart Roberson to Deliver Keynote



Dr. Stewart D. Roberson will deliver the keynote address on Tuesday, April 26th at the VRTA Delegate Assembly. Dr. Stewart grew up and attended school in Patrick County, Virginia. He received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Virginia where he is now a professor; and he received post graduate certificates from Harvard and Oxford.

Dr. Roberson has been a public educator for thirty-eight years, serving as a school superintendent for twenty-one years in Hanover County and Falls Church. Until his retirement in 2011, he was one of the longest serving superintendents in Virginia and the third longest serving in Hanover since 1870. Also in 2011, the Hanover County School Board named him Superintendent Emeritus.

Dr. Roberson has been the recipient of many honors including Virginia Superintendent of the Year in 2000, and the first national AdvanedED Excellence in Education Award. The University of Virginia presented Dr. Roberson the Raven Award, UVA's highest honor for public service. Together with former Governor Gerald Baliles, Dr. Roberson formed the Patrick County Education Foundation to support the educational aspirations of students and adults in their home county. The list of his leadership roles is unending.

In 2011, Dr. Roberson was named Chairman/President/Chief Executive Officer of Moseley Architects headquartered in Richmond. He commented that he wanted this second chapter of his life "to include opportunities to provide leadership to an entity serving the public interest."



Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center — 707 Fourth Street Blackstone, VA 23824

Phone — 434-292-5308

Directions to Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center

From the North:

I-95 South to I-85 South at Petersburg
Take I-85 South to Route 460 West to Blackstone
Take first Blackstone exit (Business 460) Main Street
Follow Main Street into town, go through 5 traffic lights
Take right on Fourth Street to BCRC

From the East:

Route 460 West to Blackstone
Take first Blackstone exit (Business 460) Main Street
Follow Main Street into town, go through 5 traffic lights
Take right on Fourth Street to BCRC

From the South:

I-85 to South Hill Exit 15
Route 138 North to Kenbridge
Right turn at traffic light
Route 40 into Blackstone on Main Street
Follow Main Street into town to Fourth Street
Left on Fourth Street to BCRC

From the West:

Route 460 East to Nottoway Exit (Business 460)
Route 460 Business into Blackstone on Church Street
Right at College Avenue to BCRC

Future Conferences



2016 Fall VRTA Meeting — October 3-4

2017 Spring Delegate Assembly — April 24-25

Who is a Voting Delegate?

Voting members of the Delegate Assembly shall be members of the Executive Committee, district presidents, unit presidents, and two delegates from each local unit. If a unit has over 100 members, it shall have an additional delegate for each 50 members or fraction thereof. Before you register for the VRTA Delegate Assembly, determine if you are a delegate from your unit.

Menus for VRTA Delegate Assembly

Monday, October 5

Breakfast – Scrambled Eggs
Bacon
Diced Hash Browns
Biscuits
Cold Cereal



Lunch – Oven Fried Chicken
Side Salad
Green Beans
Baked Potato
Brownies

Dinner – Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
Side Salad
Fresh Fruit
Broccoli/Cauliflower
Sour Cream Pound Cake

Tuesday, October 6

Breakfast – Scrambled Eggs
Sausage Pattie
Fried Apples
Biscuits
Cold Cereal

Lunch— Pork Barbeque on Bun
Baked Beans
Cole Slaw
Ice Cream Bowl

(Menus are subject to change.)



Email Notification for Newsletter

Some of you are receiving the VRTA Newsletter, online at the VRTA website (VRTA.org). We will continue to add people who want to receive their newsletter in this way to our email list. If you gave us your email and did not receive a notification, it may be that your email address was transposed incorrectly. Send it to us again. You may send your email address to: Weldon Martin (hooman4949@gmail.com) or you can mail it to: 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090.

Newsletter Articles

VRTA wants your news for the newsletters. It would be helpful if articles submitted for publishing would be emailed to the newsletter editor. If an article cannot be emailed, typing the article helps to ensure accuracy. Pictures can be emailed or mailed to the editor. The people that are pictured should have given permission for their pictures to be used in the newsletter. This is especially important if pictures of students are included with the article. Also, because of copyright issues, pictures taken by a professional photographer cannot be used. All submitted articles will be used if space permits. Articles received after the deadline will likely not be included. The deadline for the Fall 2016 newsletter is **Wednesday, August 17.**

Susan Martin, Newsletter Editor

Attention Districts and Local Units!!!
Don't forget to bring your banners and scrapbooks for display at the Delegate Assembly in Blackstone!



NRTA
AARP's Educator Community

Visit the NRTA Website at:

www.aarp.org

VRTA Delegate Assembly
 April 25-26, 2016
 Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center

Note: Registration fees and lodging rates are per person, not per room or per couple.
Each person attending the conference should fill out a registration form.

1. **Registration** postmarked by Saturday, April 16, 2016 \$25.00
 Amount paid (**Late registration --- \$35.00**) 1.

	One Night	Two nights	Total
2. Lodging: Main Building (one person/room -- \$50.10/night)	_____	_____	_____
(multiple persons -- \$46.20 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____
Goodson Lodge (one person/room -- \$61.25/night)	_____	_____	_____
(multiple persons/room -- \$56.20 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____
Roommates _____			
Total for Lodging			

2.

Room assignments will be made based on the registration postmark. Later registrants may have to share a bathroom with an adjoining room.

3. **Meals:**

	Monday	Breakfast – 8:00 AM	\$7.50	_____	
		Lunch – 11:45 AM	\$9.00	_____	
		Dinner – 6:00 PM	\$11.75	_____	
	Tuesday	Breakfast – 8:00 AM	\$7.50	_____	
		Tuesday – 12 Noon	\$11.00	_____	
		Sub Total for Meals			

3.

4. **Total of enclosed check to VRTA** (For total add Registration Fee, Lodging, and Meals) 4.

5. NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
 PHONE _____ EMAIL _____
 EMERGENCY CONTACT – NAME _____ PHONE _____
 NAME OF LOCAL UNIT _____ DISTRICT _____
 ROOM PREFERENCE _____ (Will be honored, if possible, as forms are received.)
 SUNDAY ARRIVAL TIME (if applicable) _____ **(May register, any time after 4:30 PM)**
 DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____ (Will be honored, if possible; use back of form to list dietary issues)
 ARE YOU A VOTING DELEGATE? _____

6. Mail completed registration form and check, payable to VRTA, no later than Saturday, April 16, 2016. Send to: Leigh McKay,
 3025 McVitty Forest Dr., #209, Roanoke, VA 24018, Phone: 540-989-4417 (home) or 540-529-5131 (cell), email – cwmck5@cox.net

Virginia Retired
Teachers Association
Susan Martin
Newsletter Editor
1049 Martins Lane
Fincastle, VA 24090

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From the VRTA Treasurer

I want to remind everyone that state dues have been increased for the first time in many years, beginning with the upcoming membership year and are now **\$20**. **This is effective for the 2016-2017 membership year.** Don't forget to include this increase in your new budgets and to begin collecting this amount this spring as you are collecting dues for next year.



Our local unit treasurers have a hard job and much of their work is done behind the scenes. I appreciate their commitment and I hope that our members remember to thank your local treasurer once in a while for all that he or she does.

Here are a few additional reminders for treasurers:

It is now time to start collecting dues for 2016-2017 at **\$20** per member.

Membership forms, Dues Settlement Statement Forms and the Handbook for Local Unit Treasurers will be available at the Spring Delegate Assembly. These items can be mailed to you by request if you are unable to attend the delegate assembly.

Don't forget to send a copy of your 2016-2017 budget, signed and dated by two officers to the state treasurer no later than December 31, 2016.

Most Active Member



Becky Goshorn receives the Most Active Member Award at the Fall 2015 VRTA Conference

Continue to submit names of deceased members and address changes to the state treasurer. Contact information: Weldon Martin, 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090. Email: hooman4949@gmail.com. Phone: (540)473-2636.

Best wishes, Weldon Martin, Treasurer