



VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Spring 2023 Edition

From the VRTA President — Spring Delegate Assembly



The VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly will be held Tuesday, April 18—Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at our usual location, DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Midlothian, Virginia. This will be the second in-person, Spring Delegate Assembly since Covid and another opportunity to connect with other retired school personnel. Joyce Williams, AARP State President, has again, agreed to sponsor a reception on Tuesday evening. Members have expressed a desire for VRTA to incorporate a reception into all future state meetings. This gives those that attend the conference the opportunity to socialize and make new friends.

Door prizes will be awarded on Tuesday, following the virtual presentation and again on Wednesday, after the business session.

Both the Registration Form and hotel information can be found in the VRTA Newsletter. The Registration Form must be postmarked by March 31, 2023, and mailed to Maudie Scott, P.O. Box 282, Amelia, VA 23002. VRTA has reserved a block of rooms at a special rate. The rooms may be reserved via the hotel link, <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/ricksdt-vta-9e778fe0-e5d0-4c0f-aec2-c65cd1529b09/>. The hotel prefers everyone use the hyperlink to register. Rooms may also be reserved by contacting the Hilton at 1-800-222-Tree or 804-379-3800. Attendees must request the Virginia Retired Teachers' Association rate of \$134.00/night (\$152.76 with tax). The rate is good for up to 4 people per room. Additionally, this room rate is good 3 days prior to our event and 3 days after. Should you decide to make a reservation directly through Hilton.com, the three-letter code is VT2. Friday, March 31, 2023, is the deadline to reserve a room.

The Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. The board will elect the Nominating Committee. The Committee shall consist of a chair and at least two additional VRTA members. Members of the Board will also vote on the budget.

Following the luncheon, there will be a virtual presentation by Lily Liu. Lily is recognized for her story-telling expertise. She is an award-winning editor and speechwriter. Most recently, she is serving as AARP's historian and archivist. She will entertain us as she relates the history of NRTA and AARP. James DuBrueler, Jr., VRTA Benefits/Advisor, and his staff, continue to offer members advice concerning the latest benefits, as well as answer insurance and investment questions. VRTA Legislative Chair, Bea Morris and Lobbyist, Bonnie Atwood, have been busy collecting information and reporting on the passage of relevant bills and actions of the Senate Committees. Recognition of the value of investing in educational needs and the VRS Board voting to provide a 5% COLA increase in our August checks can be considered good news.

Reba Evans, VRTA secretary, will appreciate a brief synopsis of committee chair reports. This helps her with the accuracy of the minutes.

The Door Prize Patrol needs donations from districts, units, or individuals. Please contact Rose Ann Burgess at 540-989-7414 or Judy McConville at 703-402-8840. They suggest donating prizes that showcase your area of the state.

Those of you that plan to participate in the Marketplace are asked to contact Karen Whetzel, kswhetzel@gmail.com. She needs to know the name of your group, what the group is selling, and how the group will be using the money (Scholarships, etc.) The deadline is March 31. I ask that District Presidents forward this information to Unit Presidents. District and Unit Banners will continue to be on display, but because of the various viruses, scrapbooks will not be displayed. Please bring a stand for displaying your banner.

Wednesday begins with a presentation by the Virginia Retirement System. Many benefits offered by VRS enrich retired school personnel's lives. Following VRS, there will be a business session and announcements. Door prizes will conclude the Spring Delegate Assembly.

All retired school personnel will be safe, productive, informed and financially secure in retirement is VRTA's vision. Please, come and support the organization whose mission is to be the voice, resource, and connection for all retired school personnel.

Jean Marrow, VRTA President email — marrow.j@aol.com

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Page 3—"VRTA membership is currently around 4,900 members. The Virginia Retirement System reports that there are currently over 99,000 retired educators in Virginia. I hope that we will continue to work to maintain our current members and attract new members to our organization."

Many Thanks from Bonnie Atwood

Exactly 10 years ago, instead of working the halls of the Virginia General Assembly, I was confined to a hospital bed across the street at the MCV-VCU cancer ward. Early in 2013, as a complete surprise, I was diagnosed with leukemia. I spent three solid months in that hospital, coming close to death. I am now in perfect health.

It will never be lost on me, how much the Virginia Retired Teachers Association came to my assistance. There are many people I need to thank.

Without this help, I might have opened death's door, and missed out on the wonderful events that came later, including the passage of the health credits for school support personnel. Or not have been here to attend the memorial for one of your great colleagues, Barbara Jureidini, my math teacher.

Heading the list of people to thank is the Executive Committee of VRTA. While I was non-functional, they could have written me off as dead weight. But I wasn't dead yet, and they optimistically kept my paychecks coming so that I could support myself and my dependent son at home. I cannot say "Bless you" enough.

Huge thank-you to David Bailey, who offered to step in with lobbying help. Another huge thank-you to the awesome Charlie Todd, who lobbied for VRTA before his death.

Please know how much you are appreciated.

A Different Perspective



Some of the more idealistic among us believe, or would like to believe, that schools are a safe place where our children can go every day to learn and develop apart from the cares and challenges they will meet sometime in the future in the big world outside the brick walls of a school building. The reality is that school is a microcosm of that big world.

The problems of the world affect the children, and they bring them into the classroom with them. To teachers that seems obvious; however, we are all shocked when the violence we see in society penetrates that safe haven we try to provide.

The Legislative Session at the VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly on Tuesday afternoon, April 18, will provide a different perspective on this topic. Plans are to have a diverse panel of young people, high school and college age, to give us their reflections on what they see as the nature of violence in their schools and communities, the effectiveness of safeguards, and the effects on themselves and those around them.

Join us for an enlightening discussion that may hold some different ideas from those shouted at each other by adults for so long.

Bea Morris, Legislative Chair

2024 Directory

Send unit and district president, treasurer, and legislative chair updates to Leigh McKay, 540-529-5131, clo49lm@gmail.com

Virginia Retired Teachers Association Directory

Are You a Voting Delegate?

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

All voting delegates to the Spring Delegate Assembly must be members of the VRTA.

Virginia Retired Teachers Association

"Organized November 28, 1936"

2022- 2024 Officers

Table listing officers: President—Jean Marrow (804)275-7278, marrowj@aol.com; President-Elect—Karen Whetzel (540)740-8589, kswhetzel@gmail.com; Vice President—Mable Scott (434)836-1699, mesone@comcast.net; Secretary—Reba Evans (366)200-1093, 1924rlevans@gmail.com; Treasurer—Weldon Martin (540)473-2636, hooman4949@gmail.com; Immediate Past President Glenn Pair, Sr. (434)594-9661, gpair42@gmail.com

From The Treasurer

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Spring Delegate Assembly of VRTA. The meeting is always a good time to connect with fellow retired educators and to learn about what is going on around the state and with VRTA. I will be available to meet treasurers and other local and district unit representatives at the Treasurer’s Table in the assembly hallway. I will have membership cards and forms available for pick up by treasurers if they are needed. I can also mail forms to you upon request.

I appreciate the hard work of our local and district treasurers in promptly submitting membership forms and dues to me and updating me on deaths in your local units. I will accept dues at any time during the year so please feel free to send them in to me as you receive them. You are reminded that it is now time to start collecting dues for the 2023-2024 membership year. Also, don’t forget to send me your 2022-2023 budgets, signed by two officers, if you haven’t already done so.

VRTA membership is currently around 4,900 members. The Virginia Retirement System reports that there are currently over 99,000 retired educators in Virginia. I hope that we will continue to work to maintain our current members and attract new members to our organization. There is strength in numbers and we need to make sure that our voice is heard when decisions that affect us are made at VRS and within the state and national governments.

Regards,
Weldon Martin, Treasurer



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!”

COVID-19 Concerns

The leadership of VRTA hopes that you will be able to attend the VRTA 2023 Delegate Assembly. Because COVID-19 is still a concern for many of us, VRTA wants to assure you that everything possible will be done to ensure your safety. Each person will have to decide about his/her own level of comfort.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

On Tuesday, April 18, the Board of Directors will meet from 9:00-11:00 AM during the 2023 Delegate Assembly.

Members of the Board of Directors shall consist of the President, the President-elect, the Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, all past VRTA Presidents, District Presidents, and VRTA committee chairpersons. The parliamentarian and the editor of publications shall be ex-officio, non-voting members. All members of the Board of Directors must be members of the VRTA.

News From Around the Commonwealth

District G

District G of the Virginia Retired Teachers Association (VRTA) met on October 26, 2022, at The Thomas House in Dayton, VA. Retired educators (teachers and other categories) from Augusta County, Harrisonburg/Rockingham County, Page County and Shenandoah County attended the meeting. Two retired teachers who currently substitute in Rockingham County in all grade levels and subject areas, Mary Etta Cornett and Virginia "Jenny" Schlabach presented the program "Through the Eyes of Substitute Teachers: What Is Going on in Our Schools." During the business meeting, President of the Augusta Retired Educators Association (AREA) Chris Paskvich of Stuarts Draft and President of the Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) JoAnn Racey of Woodstock reported on the recent VRTA Fall Conference which they attended. Bea Morris, District G and VRTA Legislative Chair, who also attended the VRTA conference, gave updates on Legislative issues and the upcoming election. District G will meet again in May 2022. All educator retirees are invited. Contact District G VRTA President Karen Whetzel (who is also VRTA President Elect) at 540-740-8589 or kswwhetzel@gmail.com for more information on joining VRTA/District G



Mary Etta Cornett & Virginia "Jenny" Schlabach

News from the Floyd County Retired Teachers' Association

The Floyd County Retired Teachers' Association has just completed a productive year, and we're looking forward to exciting events in 2023. Our last meeting of 2022 was held at the Presbyterian Church of Floyd on November 16. Attendees brought silent auction items to be used as a fundraiser for mini-grants to deserving teachers. We plan to award 3 or 4 grants in the amount of \$300 each. We enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving lunch prepared by the ladies of the church, including some in our membership. All members brought canned food items that were delivered to PLENTY, a local organization open to all residents in need of food. The FCRTA continues to acquire new members, and to enjoy the fellowship and scheduled events with each other.

The FCRTA has planned new projects for 2023. We will hold our first meeting for the new year on March 15 where we will listen to an informative talk by a representative of the AARP. Our next meeting will be on May 17 at the Floyd Center for the Arts. This is a community arts center in Floyd where we celebrate and facilitate regional arts through classes, exhibits, community receptions, and more. Our third meeting will be on July 19, where we will gather at Slusher Park for a potluck picnic. This is an annual visit by the FCRTA, hosted by Alice Slusher, former elementary school teacher in Floyd. Our September meeting on the 20th may take us to the Riverstone Organic Farm in Floyd which provides natural, organic foods, and then to Spikenard Bee Sanctuary close by. We will conclude our meetings for 2023 on November 15 with a traditional Thanksgiving meal and a memorial service for those who have passed.

In addition to awarding mini-grants to deserving teachers, we will be awarding our yearly scholarships to deserving seniors at Floyd County High School. We will be making our usual monetary contributions to Young Life, Reading is Fundamental in Floyd (RIFF), Christmas for Children, and the New River Community Action Backpack Program, all local organizations in Floyd. Reaching out to the community is important to us, and we will continue to adhere to the motto, "To serve, not to be served."

Rockbridge County



Rockbridge Retired Teachers Memorial Service conducted for Retired Teachers and Educators - on left Nadine Crane; on the right Clyde Keen



Rockbridge Retired Teachers - Arts and Crafts Fund Raiser for Two Scholarships - Pictured: Top Left-Barbara Cash, Top Right-Mary Jane Mutispaugh, Bottom-Maria Qullen

Visit VRTA's Website at VRTA.org

News From Around the Commonwealth

Arlington Retired Teachers Association (ARTA)

This year, ARTA members have enjoyed a variety of opportunities to gather in person and learn. On October 12, twenty members visited the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. Its director Dr. Scott Taylor, an Arlington Public Schools (APS) graduate, was there to greet us and answer any questions. Our visit was a follow up to Scott's popular virtual program in February 2022 about Arlington's Black heritage. The Museum celebrates the African American Journey to Freedom, providing a focal point exhibit on Arlington's Freedman's Village and the contributions made by its residents and their descendants to local and national history. As participant Judy Jankowski shared with friends, "The small museum includes informative displays, photographs and artifacts" that document Arlington's Black Heritage from Colonial Times to the present, including information about the Washington and Syphax families, Arlington House, and the integration of Stratford Junior High. ARTA member Joan Mulholland, a Civil Rights activist who was one of the Freedom Riders and a participant of the Jackson, Mississippi, Woolworth Sit-in joined us for the visit. Joan's participation in the Arlington sit ins is documented in the museum's exhibits. It was a wonderful learning experience for all the ARTA visitors.

We returned to the Goodwin House retired community for lunch with some of our member residents on Thursday, January 12. Though a longtime annual event, it had been more than two years since we visited together over an always delicious lunch. Resident member and former ARTA president Lynn Juhl made the arrangements for our visit and the Goodwin staff was most welcoming. Lynn was joined at lunch by five other resident members. Fourteen visiting ARTA members rounded out the three tables shared by the group. It was a happy event, as old friends and colleagues chatted, catching up on the present and sharing memories of their work together at Arlington's schools.

On February 8, we commemorated Black History Month by welcoming Jessica Kaplan, an Arlington Historical Society (AHS) Board member and retired archivist. Via Zoom, Jessica shared the work of an active project titled *Memorializing the Enslaved*, a collaboration between AHS and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. After extensive research, the project is recovering the largely unknown history and stories of Arlington County's enslaved population and chronicling their lives. Jessica shared some of the interesting, unusual resources used by the project and the family histories that have been uncovered. Also partnering with APS, AHS is developing teaching materials on the history of slavery in Arlington County and creating a website with stories, documents, and an interactive online map of the areas where the enslaved lived and worked. The last task of the project will be to create memorial markers linked to the website and place them in the locations in Arlington where the enslaved were held in bondage. ARTA members expressed eagerness to learn more information about this project, and Jessica directed them to visit the AHS website at arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.



Arlington RTA members gather before visiting the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington on October 12.



ARTA member Joan Mulholland, a renowned Civil Rights activist, and fellow member Michele Milden, visit the museum's exhibit chronicling the Arlington sit-ins, in which Joan participated.



Arlington RTA residents of Goodwin House Rosalie and Lynn Juhl and Mike Morton welcomed 14 nonresident members for lunch on January 12.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Present and Past Connection

The Lunenburg-Nottoway Retired Teachers Association hosted a "Current Trends in Education" presentation facilitated by Dr. Sharon Stanislas and Mrs. Dawn Bacon, Directors of Instruction for Lunenburg County Public Schools on October 20, 2022. LNRTA President Ruby Ingram stated that the event had a two-fold purpose: (1) to keep retired school personnel abreast of the phenomenal growth in education upon the foundation for which they have attributed and (2) to promote ongoing networking between present and retired personnel, as they reflect on the premise that "it takes the whole village to continue educating our children." Invited as special guests were school personnel retirees representing former superintendents, central office, principals, guidance counselors, librarians, teachers, nurses, custodians, food service, bus drivers and maintenance employees. This made for an impactful connection between past and present school personnel.



Pictured from left: Evelyn Cunningham, presenters: Dr. Sharon Stanislas and Mrs. Dawn Bacon, Florence Oliver, Alice Birkhead, Thelma Craig, Marilyn Jones, Doris Fisher, Becky Nowlin, Gloria Pinckney, Sherman Vaughan, Ruby Ingram, Rose Ann Sweetney, Shirley Lee, Marjorie Crowder, Alvoid Crowder, Evelyn Staples, and not pictured: Chrystal Wynn, Jean Overman, Willette Hazelwood and Barbara Jones.

Shenandoah County

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) met on September 6, 2022, at the Moose Lodge in Woodstock for their annual Back to School meeting. The SCRTA was started in 1970. The banner created then was large and hard to transport to display at events, so President JoAnn Racey of Woodstock asked for volunteers to help redesign a more portable banner. Margaret Figgins of Woodstock, and MaryAnn Sherry of Maurertown, created a new banner which was presented at the meeting. President JoAnn Racey will represent SCRTA at the Virginia Retired Teachers Association Fall Conference on October 18 - 19, 2022, in Richmond, Virginia. The new SCRTA banner will be on display along with other banners from across the state.



JoAnn Racey, President of SCRTA, receives the new banner from Margaret Figgins and MaryAnn Sherry at the September meeting



New Banner

Shenandoah County

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA), a group with members in all education retiree categories, met in December at Triplett Tech in Mt. Jackson for a lunch and business meeting. Ramona Daugherty, former president, lead the group in singing carols. Daugherty was also recognized for her leadership as president in 2018-2020. The group approved a budget and bylaws revisions. Lunch was prepared by the Culinary Arts students at Triplett Tech under the direction of Chef Paje Cross, and enjoyed by all.

Ramona Daugherty, leading songs.



Adina McInturff, treasurer and Virginia Stultz, secretary at registration table. Far left, Kathy Gangwer selling raffle tickets for ADK scholarship



JoAnn Racey, President

News From Around the Commonwealth

DISTRICT E –

LOCAL UNITS DEVOTED TO SERVICE

The six units comprising District E of VRTA held a luncheon meeting for all board of directors and other attending unit members on August 24, 2022, in Danville, Virginia. District E is comprised of retired educators from Charlotte, Halifax, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties, Danville City, and Henry County/Martinsville City. During the meeting, attendees received an update from the mother of the 2022 District E scholarship recipient, Haleigh Giles. Haleigh is pursuing a career as a middle school band director and had been invited as a guest for the meeting.

Attendees shared reports of community service projects undertaken by each of the local units. Providing birthday bags for nursing home clients; supplying material and monetary donations for local food banks, battered women’s shelters, and facilities serving handicapped individuals; funding local college scholarships for future educators; and acquiring classroom sets of books represent several of the ongoing service projects supported through the local units. Identifying community needs and implementing strategies to address those needs remain the focus for the local units. Attendees also celebrated the accomplishments of Mable Scott, of the Pittsylvania County unit, who was recently recognized as VRTA’s Most Active Member.

During the meeting, Priscilla Merricks, Necrology Chairperson, conducted an inspiring memorial program to celebrate the life and service of the nine deceased District E members who had passed away during the previous year.

A slate of District E officers was presented for the two-year term July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025, as follows: Mable Scott, President; Phyllis Eastridge, Vice-President; and Judy Lacks, Secretary/Treasurer. The next meeting of District E members will be held in March 2023.



District E members attending the August 24, 2022, meeting.

District N

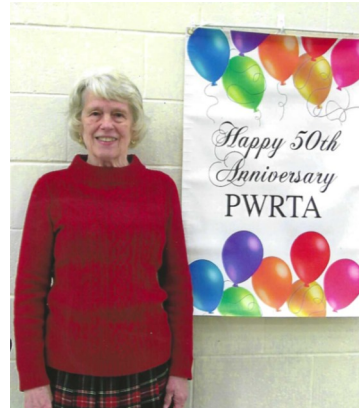


District N’s President Elect, Nancy Vollmer, led a memorial service to remember 44 District N members. Prince William RTA President, Susan Powell, lit a candle to remember their eight members.



District N held its Fall Meeting, hosted by Frederick County Retired Teachers. They collected a truck load of single serve snacks for the Bright Futures Organization of Winchester and Frederick County, along with a cash donation of \$876.

Prince William Retired Teachers



Prince William Retired Teachers, serving Prince William, Manassas and Manassas Park, met on December 12, 2022. PWRTA President Susan Powell led the meeting. We were entertained by the Hylton High School Troubadours. We collected hats, gloves, socks, and mittens for S.E.R.V.E.

Save the Dates



VRTA Fall Conference — September 25-27, 2023

VRTA Delegate Assembly — April 15-17, 2024



News From Around the Commonwealth

Henrico Retired School Personnel Association

HRSPA held its fall luncheon on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at the Recreation Center at Deep Run Park. It was great to meet and connect with everyone after not meeting since 2019 because of Covid. We enjoyed a great lunch catered by Deep Run Roadhouse, a presentation by the staff of Deep Run Park, a warm welcome and vote of support from John Vithoulakas, Henrico County Manager. We received an update about the 2022 Henrico Christmas Mother Program by this year's Christmas Mother, Maria Bagley. We were entertained by a delightful performance by the Glen Allen High School Chorus.



Allegheny Retired Teachers Association

The Allegheny Retired Teachers Association met at Granberry United Methodist Church in Covington on September 6. The meeting was catered by the Granberry Agape Ladies. Matt Smith of the Highlands Community Bank presented a program on "Scams and Frauds." School supplies and monetary donations were collected for the local schools at the meeting. ARTA was able to give each of the four schools \$65 plus the school supplies collected.

In December, we met at Temple Baptist Church in Covington. The meeting was catered by Scott Hill Retirement of Clifton Forge. The members were entertained by the Allegheny High School Choirs which is an anticipated annual highlight of our Christmas season. The AHS Treble choir, the Upperclassmen Men's choir, and the Concert choir each presented an inspiring holiday selection under the direction of Amanda Sprouse. ARTA members showed our appreciation to the choir by presenting a check for the donated amount of \$145. Our guest speaker was Mary Asma, the 2022 Allegheny Highlands Christmas Mother. The Christmas Mother program serves over 400 Allegheny Highlands families. The theme for the program was "Be That Someone." Donations to the Christmas Mother program were collected at the meeting. ARTA was able to present a check for \$550 to the Christmas Mother along with gift items.



Matt Smith from Highlands Community Bank

Mary Asma,
2022 Allegheny Highlands
Christmas Mother



Fall 2023 Newsletter

The deadline for the fall newsletter is Friday, August 11, 2023.

Submit articles and pictures to Susan Martin at:

susanmartin730@gmail.com or at:

1049 Martins Lane Fincastle, VA 24090



News From Around the Commonwealth

District D Awards Scholarship

Darreon Jo'Mel Barner was the recipient of the VRTA District D 2022 Scholarship. Darreon graduated from Brunswick High School in June and is now attending North Carolina A&T University. His goal is to become filmmaker or screenwriter. The Brunswick Retired Teachers Association and Darreon's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Jones acknowledge with appreciation the scholarship award.



Suffolk Retired Teachers

The Suffolk Retired Teachers Association is on the move seeking new retirees to join the organization. Notes, texts, cards and telephone calls are used as avenues to inform and encourage new members.

Our first meeting for this year was January 23, 2023, using the Free Conference Call. At this meeting highlights were covered from the District T meeting (December 9, 2022). We expressed a desire to partnership with Salvation Army, increase membership and find ways to increase the scholarship fund.

Monetary gifts will be given to two charitable organizations in March and April. Books, puzzles and pencils will be donated to Booker T. Washington Elementary School.

The SRTA will award \$1,000 to a graduating senior from the Suffolk Public Schools. This recipient must attend a college /university in the fall of 2023. Hopefully, we will receive donations to increase this amount in 2024.

Members are gearing up to attend the Spring 2023 Delegate Assembly.



District P News

On Wednesday, October 26, District P met at Montano's Restaurant, in Roanoke, VA. The program was a Legislative Focus with Delegate Sam Rasoul as the speaker. Del. Rasoul is a member of the House Appropriations Committee, among several others, and is both knowledgeable and forthcoming. He had been provided with a list of topics and questions surrounding these topics: fully funding public education and nursing home reform, both VRTA legislative priorities. It was obvious that these two issues are important to Del. Rasoul, as well as those members present for the discussion. Some of the other issues discussed included:

1. The probable role the state will play in the teacher shortage
 2. The funding of the Standards of Quality at a more realistic level
 3. State plans that insure that all students and schools have access to broadband
 4. The draining of resources from public education to fund private schools and vouchers
 5. Funding public schools to close the learning gap caused by the pandemic
 6. Funding needed for renovations to ever aging school buildings
 7. Who will be leading the charge to reform nursing home care and establish a minimum standard in care?
 8. Plans to secure the VRS Trust fund
 9. The legality of the governor using executive power to undo General Assembly actions such as the LBGTO+ policies in public schools
 10. The establishment of a drug price affordability board that would review prescription drug prices to help avoid price gouging to benefit people regardless of age
- His responses were both realistic and informative.

Because of his position on the appropriations committee, he was able to offer insight as to funding availability in the upcoming session. He told the group that at the end of the last session, there was a \$4 billion surplus, \$1 billion of which could have fully funded the SOQ, but was instead used to rebate \$250 to each individual state taxpayer. He also said that the General Assembly is aware of the need for school renovations and that there will be funds available to match, in part, what localities are able to fund.

Finally, he advised the unit representatives to meet in small groups, in person, with the representatives, if possible before the upcoming session. It should be noted here that four representatives from the other side of the aisle were invited to the meeting. All four were either unavailable or failed to reply to the invitation to participate.



Delegate Sam Rasoul at the District P meeting.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Alexandria Retired Teachers Association

In September, the Alexandria Retired Teachers Association invited the acting superintendent from Alexandria City Public Schools, Dr. Melanie Kay Wyatt, to speak to the retirees. Dr. Kay-Wyatt is a former special education teacher, a principal and an administrative leader. She served as director of ACPS Human Resources, prior to her appointment to superintendent. She is a very impressive leader for our system and is very encouraging to retirees saying that we are all part of ACPS and are needed. She called herself an advocate for her students and went on to say that Alexandria City High School (TC to all of us) has instituted a series of changes including three lunch periods and the use of student ID's. One of the many areas of her concern is what happens in the community **after** school. We need to consider what can be done to support working parents, what community groups can do to help "my kids."

Our October meeting had to be canceled. In November we shared a ZOOM meeting with Arlington County Retired Teachers Association. The speaker was Mr. Martin Bailey, an AARP Community Ambassador expert on Frauds and scams and a "member of AARP's Fraud Watch Network Hotline, assisting victims of fraud and identity theft." He focused on Cyber Security, a topic of great interest and importance to those of us who go online daily. It was extremely interesting!

In December we had our annual concert, which always puts us in the holiday spirit!



Members of ARTA with Dr. Kay-Wyatt



December Meeting

Hanover Retired School Employees

The Hanover Retired School Employees Association (HRSEA) held its first in-person Fall 2022 Meeting, on October 27, 2022, since the Pandemic, at The Hanover Center for Trades & Technology. Its guest speaker, Superintendent Dr. Michael Gill, shared information about the successful progress and accomplishments of Hanover County Public Schools. The first HRSEA meeting was held at Elmont Elementary School 53 years ago on September 1, 1969. The group has two meetings per year, spring and fall, to fellowship and discuss ways to help retired teachers volunteer and support the faculty, staff, and students of HCPS. Refreshments were prepared and served by The Hanover Center for Trades & Technology: Chef Brian Hubler and THCTT Culinary Arts students.

Through membership and dues, a \$500 scholarship is presented in May to a HCPS graduating high school senior who plans to major in the field of education. Our 2021 scholarship recipient was Haley Smiley - Atlee High School. She plans to study English and secondary education at James Madison University. Deborah Roane, our President Emeritus, was able to present the scholarship in person to our 2022 scholarship recipient, Sydney Waldrop, from Hanover High School. She plans to become a middle school history teacher. We are excited and thankful to be able to support her and all future HCPS students as they further their education.

HRSEA membership is open to anyone who has been employed in Hanover County Public Schools in any capacity. We are looking forward to our next HRSEA spring meeting which will be held on March 9, 2023, at The Hanover Center for Trades & Technology at 1:00 P.M. The HRSEA is currently accepting membership applications from current and new retirees. You may contact Deborah Roane at the HRSEA Website: hrsea.org.



Hanover Retired School Employees



News From Around the Commonwealth

Portsmouth Retired Educators Association Serves The Community

PREA members continue to connect with and support causes, groups and organizations that benefit the community. We have maintained an active membership of approximately 50 members, met bi-monthly since September and maintained an average attendance of 30 people per meeting. We THINK our on-going community projects and scheduled theme meetings with a cause have been very successful in welcoming active in-person participation.

September: Members generously gave school supplies to the Portsmouth Schools Foundation.

November: Cowpokes in **Country & Western** attire came and provided lots of VITTLES for the OASIS Food Pantry for Thanksgiving .

December: The **Holiday Gifts Project** provided gifts for youth and senior citizens at the Effingham St YMCA's **Giving Tree** and also provided lots of gifts and toiletries for all clients of the Bell's Residential Adult Care Home.

January: Members wore black, gold or Silver tops and **TOASTED** the New Year at 12 NOON at our first meeting of 2023. New Year decorations and a delicious lunch with games and prizes set the atmosphere for a real New Year's party.

March: We've planned our second **PACK** the **Bus** for **HER** Shelter women and their families who are victims of domestic violence.

April: Plans are being finalized for our requested participation in the Portsmouth Public Schools **Transition Fair** designed to assist parents and secondary students with services and community resources available post-graduation day.

May: Members have been challenged to document their hours of volunteer activities and receive a President's Appreciation gift during the May meeting. Three scholarship recipients will also be invited to attend and receive their \$1,000 scholarships for next year.

Country Western Day



Valerie Brown and Joyce Peeples share collected "vittles" with the OASIS Food Pantry staff for Thanksgiving family meal boxes.

Holiday Gift Project



PREA Support Team, Brent Ellis and James Brown join PREA members Linda Ellis, Gail Porter and Valerie Brown present **Giving Tree** gifts to YMCA Director, Tonja Williams.

Pack the Bus for HER Shelter



Brent Ellis loads the bus with assistance from PREA members Cynthia Harrison, Valerie Brown and Dr. Joe Rampersad, Granby St YMCA Executive Director.

News From Around the Commonwealth

Richmond Henrico Retired Teachers Association

Richmond Henrico Retired Teachers Association celebrated 60 years, 1061-2021, at the December luncheon meeting. We are proud to service the District Q community, thanks to the continued dedication and generosity of our members. Our December meeting included festive activities and installation of our new officers: Margaret Smith, president and Barbara Crump, 1st vice president.

R-HRTA members also supported "Youth In Our Community" Project with their generous donation of school supplies for District Q elementary schools, (Cardinal, Harvie, Lakeside, Laburnum) and gloves/hats for two preschool centers, (Blackwell and MLK, Jr.)

Each elementary school and preschool will also receive book marks and stickers for the children on March 2, 2023, Read Across America Day. During Teacher Appreciation Week, the teachers at these schools and preschool centers will receive a box of a variety of snacks.



Roslyn deCordova-Bolden and Judy Mitchell and Harvie Lakeside Elementary Cardinal Elementary School Liaison



Judy Mitchell and Harvie Elementary School Principal



Lakeside Elementary School Librarian



Ivy Nichols and MLK Preschool Child Development Principal



Virginia Hayes and Mary Brown with Blackwell Preschool Child Development Principal



Supplies for Laburnum Elementary School

Buchanan County Retired Teachers

On November 14, 2022, members of the Buchanan County Retired Teachers' Association honored seven of our recently deceased members. These precious individuals were active members, who participated in BCRTA's meetings and community events. The Memorial Service honored Joan Boyd, Lillian Dales, Virginia Garber, Ruby Looney, Mary Kay Owens, Glinda Sollein, and Sheldon Woods.

During the past year BCRTA members have sponsored a food drive and participated in Buchanan County Public Library's Haunted Story Walk. As a group, we have made donations to Friends of Buchanan County's Public Library, Shop with a Cop, Coal Miners' Christmas fund, and the Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia. Both as a group and individually, we inspire to serve our community.



Members attend Memorial Service

News From Around the Commonwealth

Roanoke City Retired Educators

The Roanoke City Retired Educator's Association (RCREA) has met twice during the 2022-2023 school year. At our fall meeting, several legislative items were discussed with the membership, items that were going to be addressed at the Fall District P Legislative Forum and the Fall VRTA Conference in Richmond. Our guest speaker for the day was the Superintendent of Roanoke City Schools, Ms. Verletta White. She presented an overview of her educational philosophy and a status report on our division's schools. We are very happy to report that since her visit with us, Ms. White was named Region 6 Superintendent of the Year. Funds were collected and given to the clothes closet of a local school.

At our Holiday gathering, we met at the Holiday Inn ballroom for fellowship and a festive meal. The Chanter Choir from William Fleming High School provided our entertainment. Their musicianship and holiday spirit were enjoyed by all. Members were recognized who were ninety or ninety+ years old. We collected funds to benefit our spring scholarship awards.

Franklin/Southampton Retired Teachers Association

Franklin/Southampton-RTA members as usual, have been busy volunteering as retired educators. On August 28, 2022, President Miller volunteered with BNOG (Boykins Neighborhood Outreach Center) back to school bash. President Miller manned the grill to cook hamburgers and hotdogs, while others assisted frying fish and preparing other sides. The students received back to school supplies (pens, pencils, notebooks, compositions, crayons, highlighters, earbuds, headphones, glue sticks, notebook paper, folders, books to read, and backpacks) to begin the school year well prepared.

December 2, 2022, and January 1, 2023, President Miller along with Rev. Dr. Lillie A. Faison, BNOG Director, students and parents went on a shopping spree to purchase school clothes. We had lunch and watched a movie as a special treat.

On January 15, 2023, members partnered with BNOG, Shiloh Baptist Church, Boykins, Virginia, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, INC., Lambda Psi Omega Chapter, to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We assisted with the serving of a delicious dinner.

The speaker for the program was Colonel Carl Jerome Faison. There was music, games, and prizes given for participants young and old.



President Miller, manning the grill



Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day
L to R: Sitting, Mrs. Sylvia Claude, Mrs. Carol Logan, and Director Rev. Dr. Lillie A. Faison

VRTA Fall 2022 Conference

Members of District G with Senator Barker and Chad Steward, speakers at the Legislative Session



News From Around the Commonwealth

Patrick County Retired Teachers

Patrick County Retired Teachers, under the leadership of President Betty Perry, have been meeting in person since September and have been busy with community and youth services.

Local meetings have been informative and entertaining. Jim DuBrueler of Creekside Insurance was present at the September meeting providing information on insurance needs. December's meeting involved making hands-on Christmas tree ornaments. Riley Ginger of Better Business Bureau in Roanoke presented a program on Scams Against Older Citizens at the March meeting. The public was invited to this informative meeting.

Teachers have been busy with youth activities. Retired teachers made balloon animals for the Community of Sharing, a group that provides supplies for underprivileged children, prior to the beginning of school. Head Lice Program is still ongoing with medicated shampoo provided to each school in the county. Retired teachers are participating in the Dolly Pardon Imagination Library Project which provides free books each month to registered county children from birth to age 5. The purpose of the program is to improve reading skills. Norma Bozenmayer and Phyllis Eastridge represented the teaching profession at the Career Day for Seniors at the local high school in October.

Patrick County RTA continues to provide a pizza party and monetary donation for PARC Workshop, a center for handicapped individuals. Handmade stockings filled with treats, paper products, and a monetary donation were presented to clients and staff at the Patrick County Developmental Center, a center for severely handicapped individuals. Birthday bags were given to nursing home residents with December birthdays. Retired Teachers Book Club continues to meet monthly at the local library for book discussions. Betty Perry, Phyllis Eastridge, and Sue Bleckley attended the VRTA Fall Conference in Richmond.

PCRTA has provided and attended a number of social events since September. A picnic was held for prospective new members; Christmas Social was held in December with covered dish, gift exchange, and music; and a group of teachers attended The Sound of Music at the Wohlfahrt Haus in Wytheville, Virginia, and Driving Miss Daisy at the Theatre Works in Martinsville, Virginia.

The Patrick County Retired Teachers Association continues to be active both as a group and as individuals.



Thoughts on Spring

“Don’t wait for someone to bring you flowers. Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul.” — Luther Burbank

“Spring is the time of year when it is summer in the sun and winter in the shade.” — “Great Expectations” by Charles Dickens

“Spring adds new life and new beauty to all that is.” — Jessica Harrelson



News From Around the Commonwealth

GRTA BACK IN ACTION AFTER LONG BREAK DUE TO COVID-19

The Greenville Retired Teachers Association, under the leadership of President Genell T. Smith, is active as a group after being unable to meet in person due to Covid-19. The members are thankful that they are able to meet and complete their community projects. Since getting back together, GRTA hosted the District D meeting led by President Ora Briggs at Oak Grove Baptist Church in September. A delegation from GRTA attended the District D meeting at Golden Coral in Colonial Heights in December. The Association held quarterly meetings in September and December. The Association celebrated Christmas at its December meeting at The Bank Restaurant.

At its last quarterly meeting, GRTA was able to complete its Community Service Projects for 2022. The project consisted of presenting two monetary contributions to Community Youth Center, Ltd. represented by Mrs. Thelma Atkins-Riley, President and Emporia/Greenville Fuller Center for Housing, Inc. represented by Rev. George W. Pugh, President.

GRTA's mission is: Sharing, Advocating, and Supporting. Members also participate individually in Community Service and With Our Youth activities and report to the district and state organizations. They log their hours for doing tutoring, visiting nursing/retirement homes, leading church ministry work, planning activities for the youth, etc. and send the hours to District D Retired Teachers Association and Virginia Retired Teachers Association. The VRTA uses this information when they go before the General Assembly of Virginia to make appeals for support of education. GRTA is a nonprofit organization made up of retired teachers/administrators and other school personnel.



Participating in this event were the following: Left to Right: Standing: Mrs. Joan Inniss Fleming, Mrs. Genell T. Smith-GRTA President, Mrs. Dorothy Thomas, Mrs. Arletha Cain, Mrs. Mary Pearson, Mrs. Vera C. Black, Mrs. Frances P. McDonald, Mrs. Carolyn J. High, Mrs. Minnie Mayes, and Mrs. Thelma Atkins-Riley. Seated: Mrs. Marveen W. Robinson, Rev. George W. Pugh, and Dr. Frederick D. O. Black, Sr. Not Pictured: Mrs. Elma Brown and Mrs. Cleo Goodwyn.

PANDEMIC!

Pandemic? Where?
 They tell me, it is everywhere.
 What did I do? What did I say?
 Every day is like every other day.
 All day at home choosing nothing to do.
 I hope it's not the same with you!
 I looked out the window
 Nothing to see.
 I looked in the magazine
 Again, nothing new to me.
 So, with shots and vaccines
 Applied in the arm,
 As I gladly endured
 For they were pain free and did good, not harm.
 The pandemic is here.
 When will it go away?
 Even the health professionals can't say.
 So, the pandemic is here, as we wait for the cure,
 And like good soldiers, patiently endure.

By
Ida Daisy Epps Allen
96 Years Old
(with poetic license by IDEA)

Member of Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers Association

Botetourt Retired Educators

The Botetourt Retired Educators has had a productive fall. In September Jamie Duval from the Botetourt County Library System spoke about the services available to its patrons. She especially concentrated on many programs available to students. In November members were reminded about the benefits that can be received from Creekside Insurance Advisors. Donations were accepted for the Botetourt Food Pantry. In December the group was entertained by the Mennonite School Chorus which includes students from kindergarten through high school. Items for Christmas gift bags were collected for the Cave Creek Assisted Living Facility, which is a home many veterans. The group continues to sponsor scholarships for a senior at each of the two high schools in the county. In the spring two books are donated to all of the schools' media centers in the county. Fellowship with each other is enjoyed at each meeting.

A trunk full of
 items for Cave
 Creek Assisted
 Living Facility



VRTA Charitable Contributions



Every year VRTA makes charitable contributions to several organizations. One of those organizations is Virginia Voice. According to its website Virginia Voice's mission is to "connect individuals with disabilities to information, culture, and community using technology and the human voice." The Virginia Voice Audio Reading Service use "daily broadcasts, volunteers read from current print and online publications, including information from organizations that provide services for individuals with disabilities. These readings are broadcast 24 hours a day via closed-circuit radio and on our website as live-streaming or on-demand programs. In several programs, our volunteers read from publications specifically for school-age listeners: KidStuff, Just for Teens, and Current Affairs. In partnership with Henrico County libraries and schools, we provide books that appear on recommended reading lists for middle and high school students."

VRTA also contributes to the AARP Foundation. Its website states, "More than 37 million people over 50 are either already in poverty or just one life event away from slipping into it. AARP Foundation, the charitable affiliate of AARP, provides resources so millions of older adults living with low income can secure good jobs, get the benefits and refunds they've earned, and stay connected to their communities. Our programs and services are available to AARP members and nonmembers alike."

AARP Foundation Objectives

"Increase income and earnings.

We are focusing on providing job readiness training, skills development opportunities, coaching, and other employment supports.

Secure benefits.

We are enhancing existing efforts to help older adults with low income take advantage of available benefits, including food assistance, help with student loan debt, and tax credits.

Secure refunds.

Many taxpayers miss out on credits and deductions they've earned. We are helping them increase those refunds on both their income taxes and their property taxes."

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, I cannot use pictures taken by a professional photographer. All submitted articles will be used if space permits. Articles received after the deadline will likely not be included. The deadline for the Fall 2023 newsletter is **Friday, August 11, 2023.**

Susan Martin, Newsletter Editor



"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts."- Dalai Lama

"It is the supreme art of a teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."- Albert Einstein

"Intelligence plus character-- that is the goal of true education."- Martin Luther King Jr.

"Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them." – Lady Bird Johnson

"A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind, and touches a heart." – Unknown



VRTA Benefits

Agent/Advisor of Record:

Jim DuBrueler, Jr.

Don't forget that your VRTA Agent of Record is available for local meeting programs if desired. It is important to keep your membership updated on all that VRTA Benefits has to offer. Please reach out to Jim DuBrueler, Agent of Record at (800) 467-5425 to schedule or visit www.VRTABenefits.org

Benefits offered include:

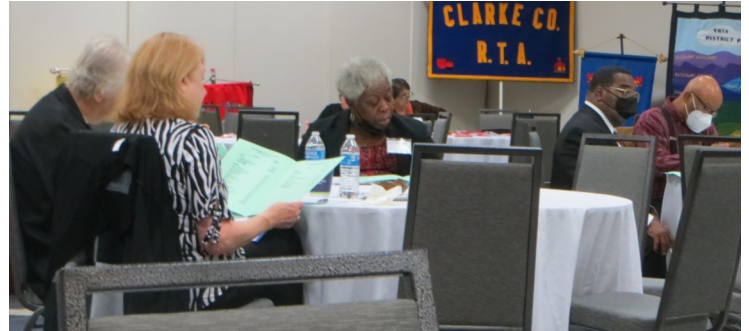
- ◇ Life, Health, and Annuity Benefits
- ◇ Home, Auto, Farm, Umbrella Benefits
- ◇ Financial Advisory Services
- ◇ Investment Management
- ◇ Estate Planning Document Preparation

Office locations are in Winchester and Richmond, but telephone and Zoom appointments are also available. Call (800) 467-5425 for service.



Executive Committee Meeting

VRTA Fall 2022 Conference



Board of Directors Meeting



Mable Scott, VRTA Vice President



State Senator, Jennifer McClellan



Louise Mont-Adams presenting the Most Active Unit Award



Patricia Bishop, Director of the Virginia Retirement System.

Virginia Retired Teachers Association Spring Delegate Assembly

Tuesday, April 18—Wednesday April 19, 2023

Preliminary Schedule of Events

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Breakfast on Your Own

8:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.	Registration—Maudie Scott
9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.	Board of Directors Meeting
11:00 a.m.—12:00 noon	<i>VRTA members will leave room while hotel sets up lunch</i> Visit MarketPlace, AARP, Treasurer, Creekside tables
12:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m.	Luncheon, Virtual Presentation NRTA/AARP Lucy Liu Reception Invitation – Joyce Williams, Pres VA AARP
2:00 p.m.—2:15 p.m.	Break
2:15 p.m.—3:15 p.m.	VRTA Insurance Benefits: Jim DuBrueler & Benefits Comm.
3:15 p.m.—3:30 p.m.	Break
3:30 p.m.—4:30 p.m.	Legislative Session: Bea Morris & Legislative Committee
4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Announcements & Door Prizes

Dinner on your own (see hotel list of nearby places)

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Reception, hosted by AARP Virginia	Atrium
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Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Beginning at 8:00 A.M., coffee, tea and pastries will be available in the Corridor

8:00 a.m.—9:00 a.m.	Registration—Maudie Scott Visit MarketPlace, AARP, Creekside Benefits, Treasurer tables
9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m.	VRS Presentation
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.—11:45 a.m.	Spring Delegate Assembly (business meeting)
11:45 – 12 noon	Wrap Up/Door Prizes

Executive Committee
Meets virtually prior to DA
Delegate Assembly meets
Wednesday, April 19
10:15-11:45am

VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly
Registration Form
Tuesday, April 18-Wednesday, April 19, 2023
DoubleTree Hotel
Richmond-Midlothian

Tuesday, April 18
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETS**
9:00-11:00 AM

Note: Registration fees are per person. Each person attending the conference should fill out a registration form. Send a completed registration form and a check for **\$70.00, payable to **VRTA**, to Maudie Scott, P.O. Box 282, Amelia, VA 23002 postmarked by **Friday, March 31, 2023.****

Questions (?) maudie@tds.net

The registration fee includes the organizational costs of the conference, as well as the Tuesday Luncheon at 12:00 noon. **Please indicate your choice of entrée for the luncheon. Select only one option.**

- ◇ Grilled Tri Tip Cut of Beef with Seasonal Vegetables and Oven Roasted Potatoes
- ◇ Grilled Salmon with Seasonal Vegetables and Oven Roasted Potatoes
- ◇ Vegetarian—**This will be the chef's choice.**
- ◇ Gluten free — **This will be the chef's choice.**

Garden salad, rolls and butter, coffee/tea and fruit tart dessert are included with meal.

Room Registration: Attendees make room reservations no later than **Friday, March 31, 2023**, by contacting the Hilton at **1-800-222-Tree** or **804-379-3800**. Attendees request the Virginia Retired Teachers' Association rate of \$134/night (\$152.76 with tax). **Rate is good for up to 4 people per room.** Additionally, this room rate is good 3 days prior to our event and 3 days after our event. The direct link for registration at the hotel is

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/ricksdt-vta-9e778fe0-e5d0-4c0f-aec2-c65cd1529b09/>

Should you decide to make reservations directly through Hilton.com the **three letter group code you should use is VTA**. **The hotel prefers everyone to use the hyperlink to register.**

1. Personal Information for Registration: Please print clearly.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

Email Address: _____

District: _____ Local Unit: _____

2. Emergency Contact:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

3. Banner Information District and local banners will be displayed in the banquet room at the assembly.

Local and District Units are required to bring a stand to display their banners.

4. Delegate Assembly: Are you a voting delegate? Yes _____ No _____

5. MarketPlace: Send an email to kswhetzel@gmail.com by 3/31/23 to reserve a table.

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

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Note: All VRTA members are required to pay the registration fee. Those of you that have a traveling companion who is not a VRTA member, can invite your companion to attend the luncheon by paying an additional \$35.00 to cover the cost of the meal and service fees. Add the cost to the registration and indicate his/her meal choice as well as yours.

6. If you are planning on attending the Spring Delegate Assembly on **Wednesday only**, the cost of registration will be \$30.00 per person. Please come early enough on **Wednesday** for registration and coffee, tea, water and muffins before the session begins at 9:00 a.m. Each person in your party must fill out a separate form.

Personal information for Spring Delegate Assembly Registration. Please print clearly.

Name: _____ Phone _____

Home Address: _____

Email Address: _____

District and Unit: _____

Send your completed registration form with a check for **\$30.00**, payable to VRTA, to Maudie Scott, P.O. Box 282, Amelia, VA 23002 postmarked by **Friday, March 31, 2023**.

Plan to come to Richmond early or stay later, after the assembly, and explore all that the Richmond area has to offer in the spring. This is a great way for retirees to have a less expensive holiday in a richly rewarding environment.