



# VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Fall 2023 Edition



## From the VRTA President

VRTA's Fall Conference is scheduled for September 26-27, 2023, at DoubleTree by Hilton Richmond-Midlothian, Virginia. The cut-off date for hotel reservations has been changed to September 8, 2023. The direct booking link for a hotel reservation is <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/ricksdt-92e-81cd9ab4-dcc4-43bd-a2e7-1a246b905d8c/>. Guests are advised to make their reservations directly through this link. The three-letter group code is 92E if booked through the Hilton App. The link can also be found at [vrta.org](http://vrta.org) and on the registration form. Hotel check-in time is 4:00 PM and check-out time is 11:00 AM. Also, the Fall Conference Registration Form must be postmarked by September 8, 2023.

Units and Districts are asked to display their banners at the Fall Conference. Banners will be displayed inside the Conference Room and the Prize Patrol will be collecting donated prizes. Again, the Market Place will be featured and those who wish details and to request a table should contact Karen Whetzel at [kswhwtzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhwtzel@gmail.com). Refreshments will be available on Wednesday morning.

The Board of Directors will meet in the Conference Room from 9:00-11:00 AM on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. In order for the hotel staff to arrange the luncheon, members will be asked to vacate the Conference Room at 11:00 AM.

Although more than 100 new members have been added to the VRTA roster, we are always seeking ways to increase membership. Conscious efforts have been dedicated to introducing VRTA members to an array of presenters starting with Alfred Campos, Director for the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA): AARP's Educator Community. He serves as NRTA's national spokesperson representing 850,000 members nationwide. Next, The Honorable Jennifer L. McClellan, State Senator, was the featured keynote speaker. She became the first Black woman elected to Congress from Virginia. Then, Lily Liu, (NRTA/AARP) Historian Emeriti, who worked for more than two decades at AARP, informed and entertained us using her special skills in storytelling about the history of NRTA and AARP. These outstanding voices focused on resources and connections leading to information and knowledge to enhance learning for all members.

Tuesday's keynote speakers, AARP State Director, Joyce Williams, and AARP Program Specialist, Timothy Bothe will continue to bring us sessions that include resources that allow our organization to function more effectively. The presenters will focus on strengthening ties with VRTA and membership recruitment strategies. At the end of the presentations there will be a question-and-answer period.

Jim DuBrueler, Jr., VRTA's Benefits/Advisor, and staff members will be available to answer insurance and investment questions, as well as questions concerning Estate Planning and Legal Documents. Take advantage of the availability of the staff for meetings and programs. Contact information can be found on VRTA's website, [vrta.org](http://vrta.org).

Information involving ranked-choice voting will be part of the Legislative Session. Chairperson, Bea Morris and Lobbyist, Bonnie Atwood will tell us more about plans involving the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) that was introduced at the Spring Delegate Assembly.

Wednesday, September 27, 2023, the Virginia Retirement System's (VRS) presentation will keep us abreast of the latest facts and updates. The Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of 5% was added to your August check.

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**President’s Message, continued**

The Fall Conference will close following the Business Session, Committee Reports, and the drawing of door prizes. Committee chairs are asked to provide the secretary with a list of committee members and a summary of their report.

Please, make plans to attend the Fall Conference and enjoy two days of camaraderie. Dedicated VRTA members are the backbone of the organization and make VRTA’s **Vision** possible. **“All retired school personnel will be safe, productive, informed and financially secure in retirement.”** Our **Mission** is, **“To be the voice, resource and connection for all retired school personnel.”**

**Jean Marrow**  
VRTA President

**Phone: 804-350-7719**  
**Email: marrow.j@aol.com**

**VRTA in the Know**

Bea Morris



With the constant bombardment of political noise these days, where is the best place to get accurate information? How can we overcome the frustration of feeling powerless to make a difference when we see such serious problems in our state and in our country? Each one of us has the power to make that difference. Each one of us has a vote and that gives us power, but too often people think that the value of their one vote is lost in the sea of votes cast. Obscene amounts of money are being spent by candidates to persuade each voter to cast a ballot for them. As teachers, we know the importance of learning the facts of a situation and basing decisions and actions on those facts, not on emotion or tradition. And we can’t wait until the last minute to prepare.

VRTA constantly endeavors to provide accurate information about issues and voting that will enable members to be knowledgeable and to make informed decisions. We must understand our institutions and the changes that the times force upon them. At the Fall Conference September 26-27, there will be expert speakers in the Legislative Session Tuesday afternoon that members rarely have an opportunity to hear at the local or district level. Since the very important election on November 7 is not far away, a registrar will give us first-hand information about the integrity and security measures that take place in the polling places. We must not let propaganda shake our confidence in our institutions and those who work so hard to perform their duties with honesty and professionalism. Also with changing times, come new, and maybe improved, methods of doing things. Liz White, Director of UpVote Virginia, a non-partisan organization promoting the ranked choice voting method of casting ballots, will also speak. Arlington experimented with this method in the primaries in June. We need to understand what this entails, including the positives and negatives, before this becomes a hot button issue.

As always, on Wednesday morning we will welcome a presentation by VRS. This is the place to get accurate information about the health and the benefits of the retirement system on which we all depend.

Please join us for two days full of information and inspiration.

**Charitable Contributions**

Legal and Justice Center is one of the organizations that VRTA supports with a \$250.00 donation each year. Recently VRTA received an acknowledgement of the donation. The letter said, “Your gift will help us to fight alongside our clients and their neighbors as they assert their rights and push for a more just and equitable Virginia. Together, we’ve accomplished a lot over the last year including successful advocacy that resulted in distribution of over a billion dollars of illegally withheld unemployment insurance payments. But we know that many families continue to struggle especially as rents and other costs continue to rise. . . . Fortunately, thanks to a new law that passed last year, discrimination based on source of income is illegal in Virginia. . . . All of this is to say that your support matters, to us a LAJC and the clients and communities we fight alongside.”



**Virginia Retired Teachers Association**

*“Organized November 28, 1936”*

2022- 2024 Officers

President—Jean Marrow	(804)275-7278 marrowj@aol.com
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## Visits to Lawmakers

By Bonnie Atwood

Why visit your lawmaker? Don't we have designated VRTA members who do that? Does it really make a difference? It's so time consuming. And what if I don't really like my lawmaker? To be honest, it can be a little scary. What shall I say? What if he asks me questions that I cannot answer? That could be...well, embarrassing.

Not to worry. Be assured it DOES make a difference. My favorite lobbyist, David Bailey, told me about a legislator that voted against his expressed wishes. "Why?" he asked the legislator. Here's what that legislator said:

*"Well, David, I almost voted for that bill you wanted. Almost. But I voted against it. Why? Because you were the only one who came to me about it. No one in the organization talked to me about it at all. And I thought, if they don't care enough to come to me, I guess they don't want it very much."*

It's just a short, little lesson, but it stuck with me. It made me become more persuasive about asking constituents to communicate their wishes. Don't have time? I understand. That's why one needs to "pick your battles," and work on the legislation that means the most to you.

This Session officially starts in January. We have more brand new legislators than ever. They are learning the ropes, and probably would appreciate the education that you're going to provide. Bea and I will be sending out bills that are introduced late this calendar year. Read the list. Choose one. Choose more if you can. Think about your position on that bill. Write some "talking points"--things you'd like to say. Why you like the bill. Why you may not like the bill. The legislators like to say, "What does the bill do, and what does the bill not do." They also like to talk about "unintended consequences." Think it through. Make an appointment. And most of all: Visit your lawmaker!

## From the VRTA Treasurer

As the fall is approaching, I am hoping many of our local and district treasurers are making plans to attend the Fall VRTA meeting at the Doubletree Hotel in Richmond. I know that another informative meeting is being planned and it will be good to see many of you there.

I will plan to have a table set up outside of the meeting room and to be available to talk with you, answer questions, and provide membership enrollment forms, dues settlement forms and membership cards to you if you need them.

Please remember that I can accept membership dues at any time. You should be collecting and submitting 2023-2024 dues at this time. Some units collect dues in the spring for the upcoming year. Others have their big membership drive in the fall. As always, I hope that you are reaching out to your membership in various ways to encourage them to renew membership in their local, district and state. VRTA is a vibrant, proactive organization and is a wonderful advocate for retired educators across the state of Virginia. I hope that we will see many members renewing their membership in VRTA in order to help us keep our organization healthy and strong in the years ahead. In addition, I hope that you will recruit new members to join our organization. Thank you for all you do to encourage your members to join and support VRTA.

If you are a part of the VRTA IRS Group exemption (tax umbrella), don't forget to file your e-postcard this fall. The deadline for your electronic submission is November 15. Don't forget to send me a copy of your verification that the report has been submitted. It is important to maintain your tax exempt status with the IRS, as required by law.

You are also reminded to submit a copy of your 2023-2024 budget to me, signed and dated by two officers. These are due no later than December 31, 2023. In addition, please submit a signed copy (two officers) of your by-laws any time that they are revised or updated.

I appreciate the good job our local treasurers and presidents do in keeping me updated on any deceased members in your local units, so that I can update the VRTA membership rolls.

I am grateful for your help and assistance. Please keep up the good work.

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!"

### ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

**On Tuesday, September 26, the Board of Directors will meet from 9:00-11:00 AM during the 2023 VRTA Fall Conference**

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

### Alexandria

In February, we were fortunate to have Ms. Gretchen Bulova, Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria speak to the group about Freedom House. She explained that Alexandria recently acquired the building which was originally a major source for the internal slave trade. The buildings currently surrounding the house were originally the "slave pens" where enslaved people were held until sold and shipped south. The House had many incarnations since the Civil War and most recently was owned by the Urban League. The hope is to ultimately turn Freedom House into a museum. At this point it is only partially complete. The building is open to the public on a limited basis and tours are restricted to only one floor. The hope is that the building will be completely renovated and designed to be open to the public on all three floors by 2026.

In March our speaker was Matthew Quinn, from Quinn's Auction Gallery. He is frequently seen on Antiques Roadshow, actually seen the same night as our meeting date! We also had a number of our fellow retirees from Arlington County join us. It was a fascinating talk with questions from the attendees and it was very difficult to finally end the meeting at 3:30!! Matt spoke and answered questions the entire time, even providing evaluations for items members and guests brought with them. Mr. Quinn explained to us that there are two generations of collectors (our parents and ourselves) and items from these generations are now flooding the market. The younger generations are not interested in collectibles. They are looking for experiential collections like fine wine, something they can use, rather than just look at. He jokingly suggested that collector plates could be used for skeet shooting since their value is practically non-existent on the market. Value to an individual frequently depends on the sentimental association with an item. He also urged us NOT to have a garage or yard sale until items have been valued by a professional. An example he gave was that of a gentleman who wanted to sell his "junk" vases, one of which turned out to be worth over \$800,000! Who knows what you may have in YOUR attic! Several members enjoyed the talk so much that they want to have him speak to us again.

In April Mr. Harry Elanko spoke to us about tea and how it began, how it has become a world wide drink, and how best to serve it. He explained how and where all the different flavors of tea are grown and harvested. Did you know that some tea actually costs of over \$25,000? Our meeting venue was held at Annandale United Methodist Church. Following the talk, a real tea was held with loose leaf Indian tea being offered, (quite different from our Lipton tea bags!) with tea sandwiches and other goodies for everyone.

Our annual luncheon was held in May with the speaker, Ms. Jasmine Mahone, Director of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. Each year ARTA provides a \$3000 scholarship to a graduating senior. Ms. Mahone explained how the Scholarship Fund began and explained how students were selected. Later that month we presented our scholarship to Ms. Lyric Tyler. Lyric is the youngest of five children and the first in her family to attend college. She plans to attend Virginia State University an HBCU and is very excited about becoming a part of the college community. She plans to become a social worker, based on her experiences working at the Lee Center and seeing how important and helpful the social worker is to the children. She is an extremely bright and articulate young lady who will be, I am sure, successful in whatever she pursues.



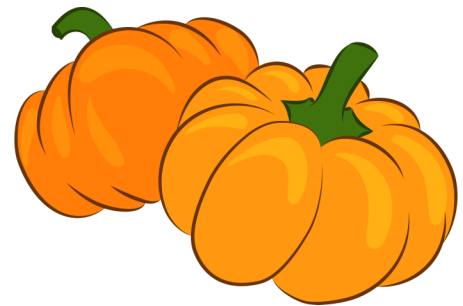
Scholarship Winner, Lyric Tyler

### Augusta Retired Educators

Augusta Retired Educators Association held its May meeting at the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Staunton. The main program event was the annual scholarship award ceremony.



Georgianne Hull presented the \$1000 Carrie Cook Scholarship to this year's winner, Eleanor "Ellie" Todd Lockridge, from Staunton High School.



Visit VRTA's Website at [VRTA.org](http://VRTA.org)

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Allegheny Retired Teachers

At our March 7 meeting, Allegheny Retired Teachers met at Jackson River Technical Center in Covington. The meeting was catered by the Culinary Arts students. Stephanie Hepler, LPC, from Allegheny Highlands Community Services Board, presented a program on senior mental health. She discussed some causes of forgetfulness such as stress, the side effects of some medicines, and lack of sleep. She emphasized the importance of keeping the mind and body active. Food items and monetary donations for the local food pantries were collected at the meeting. ARTA was able to give each of the three local food pantries \$167 plus the food items collected. The membership has been very generous and supportive of the local food banks.

ARTA was able to give three \$700 scholarships at the March meeting to three well deserving high school seniors. This year the scholarships were given to Alivia Hoover and Gracie Barron from Allegheny High School, and Brianna Tetreault of Covington High School. Each recipient was recognized and given a gift. The scholarship recipients and their parents were guests for the luncheon following the meeting.

In May, we met at The Allegheny Highlands Arts and Crafts Center in Clifton Forge. Betsy Carter, a retired schoolteacher, and a volunteer at the center, spoke briefly about the arts and crafts center before the program. The guest speaker for our program, Connie Baker, the Executive Director of the Arts and Crafts Center, gave a presentation on the history of the arts center and discussed the three main goals of the center. Following Ms. Baker's presentation, Chuck Swope with Creekside Insurance Advisors briefly updated the members on the services offered. Betsy catered the meal.



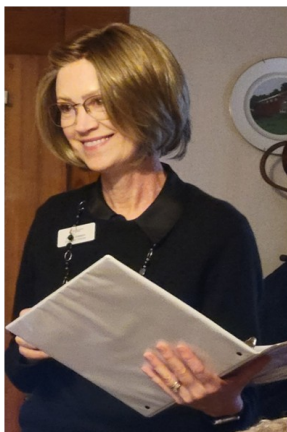
Dewey and Brenda Lawson, Scholarship Co-Chairpersons, with Scholarship Recipients, Alivia Hoover (AHS), Brianna Tetreault (CHS), and Gracie Barron (AHS) at March meeting.

### District G

Virginia Retired Teachers Association (VRTA) District G held the Spring 2023 meeting on Friday, April 28, at the Thomas House in Dayton, VA. Penny Imeson, Executive Director of Rocktown History, presented an informative program on Doing Public History and the role of Rocktown History in interpreting history and making it inclusive and accessible to all. She gave an overview of how the role has changed and the name evolved over the years. She used many historic photos as illustrations.

At the business meeting, at which all four local units in District G (Augusta, Bath/Highland, Page and Shenandoah) were represented, Lois Comer of the Page County Retired Educators was elected Vice President, and JoAnn Racey of the Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association was elected Secretary. Jim Hines continues as Treasurer. A new president will be elected in October; anyone interested should contact current president Karen Whetzel at [kswhetzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhetzel@gmail.com) or 540-740-8589.

Agatha Coleman and Bea Morris of the Augusta Retired Educators Association and JoAnn Racey reported on the recent VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly. Morris is also VRTA and District G Legislative Chair, and reported on a new initiative for informing members she is starting. Karen Whetzel (President Elect of the Virginia Retired Teachers Association) added information on VRTA Benefits available. The next meeting will be held in October 2023, with the place to be determined.



Penny Imeson,  
Rocktown History

### Rockbridge Retired Educators



Clyde Keen, Treasurer, administers the oath of office to Cheryl Ryan, Secretary, for another two-year term as secretary while James Bradford, President, looks on

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Henrico Retired School Personnel

The Henrico Retired School Personnel Association held its spring luncheon at Deep Run Park Recreation Center on April 27, 2023. We were so pleased to present a \$2000 student scholarship to Carlisah Benbow from Highland Springs High School and \$500 scholarships to three Henrico County Public School employees Angela Loughridge, from Henrico High School, Carter Reilly from Freeman High School, and Lindsay Steele from Glen Allen High School.

Besides the camaraderie of fellow school personnel and delicious food catered by Deep Run Roadhouse, we enjoyed presentations by Dr William Crowder, Jr. the Assistant Director of Career and Technical Education for Henrico County Public Schools and Tom Lappas the owner and publisher of the Henrico Citizen a non-partisan publication of local news.

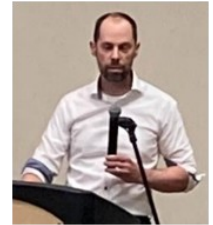
We were also joined by Dr. Amy Cashwell, Henrico County Public Schools Superintendent, Holly Coy, HCPS Chief of Staff, school board members Kristi Kinsella, Marcia Shea, and Alicia Atkins, and Henrico County Supervisor Frank Thornton. Staff from the Career and Technical Education Center attended as well.



Scholarship Winners



Guest Speakers



### Richmond-Henrico Retired Teachers

R-HRTA Scholarship Chairperson, Barbara Ulschmid presented the W. Roland Gavin Scholarship to two Thomas Jefferson High School Seniors on May 31, 2023, at the Senior Awards Program. This scholarship was established to honor the memory of W. Roland Galvin, former TJHS Science Teacher/Administrator and R-HRTA Finance Committee Chairperson.

Ivori Randolph and Mya Dabney, each received \$1000.00. Both students plan to attend Old Dominion University in the Fall. R-HRTA members extend their best wishes for the college success of these two students and look forward to supporting this scholarship every year.



Scholarship Winners



Photo: JoAnn Racey, President of SCRТА, presents the scholarship to Heather Hall at the SCRТА spring dinner meeting at Peter Muhlenberg Middle School.

### Shenandoah County Retired Teachers

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRТА) has awarded a \$1000 scholarship to a future teacher, Heather Hall, who recently graduated from Mountain View High School. Heather plans to attend Laurel Ridge Community College, and then transfer to a four year college. She will study Early Childhood Education. Heather has worked at a daycare after school in addition to her activities while a senior in high school.

Heather says "my main goal in life is to make a positive difference in as many children's lives as I can. Teaching young children is the job I have passion for. When teaching, I believe every child is different, therefore a successful teacher needs to have different ways to teach so that each child can learn."

Ashley Painter, a teacher at MVHS, gave Heather a glowing recommendation. She notes that Heather is "an incredibly hard worker, a leader in her classroom, and her peers look up to her as a role model." Heather will be the first in her family to attend college.



## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Lunenburg-Nottoway Retired Teachers Award Scholarships

The Lunenburg-Nottoway Retired Teachers Association meet on Thursday, July 20, 2023, at Bravo Italian Grill in Crewe. This year the unit awarded three scholarships. The Nottoway recipient was Joseph “Jojo” Alvis of Nottoway High School. Joseph recently completed the “Teachers for Tomorrow” course under instructor Lindsey Layne and received the “Paraprofessional Certification.” He will be attending Virginia Commonwealth University with a major in political science and a minor in history. The Lunenburg recipient was Ragen Harris of Central High School. She will be attending Mary Baldwin University majoring in history. Her future plans include returning to Central as a history teacher. Also, L-NRTA contributed to the Southside Virginia Community College Scholarship Foundation Fund. The unit continues to be active and productive in the community with the membership reporting 3,918 volunteer service hours for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.



Members pictured (l-r): Mary Jean Overman – scholarship chairperson, Florence Oliver – chaplain, Ruby B. Ingram – president, Joseph Alvis – Nottoway scholarship recipient, Evelyn Staples – treasurer and Chrystal Wynn – secretary

### Roanoke City Retired Educators

The Roanoke City Retired Educators met on March 9, 2023, at the Raleigh Court Library. Teacher Eddie Janney and students from the Roanoke City Public Schools Teach for Tomorrow program demonstrated lesson plans they implemented at an elementary school. The May 11 meeting was held at the Gainsboro Library where Jordan Bell reviewed history of the Gainsboro neighborhood. Personal items were collected for students staying at the Rescue Mission, three \$850 scholarships were awarded to seniors who will major in education, and officers were installed. Lunch and hospitality were enjoyed at both meetings.



### Lynchburg Retired Teachers

Lynchburg Retired Teachers presented Riley Comerford of Heritage High School and Elias Jarvie of E.C. Glass High School with the Edward Christian Glass Scholarship of \$2,500.00 each. Riley will attend Longwood University and Elias will attend West Virginia University. This scholarship was created in 1986 in memory of Lynchburg's first Superintendent of public education for any student planning on entering the field of education.



- E.C. Glass High School- George Elias Jarvie is the grandson of Sue and Michael Reeves. Also pictured is Betsy Ballowe, Scholarship Committee



- Heritage High School - Riley Comerford is the daughter of Larry and Susan Comerford. Also pictured is Betsy Ballowe, Scholarship Committee Chairperson.

### Franklin/Southampton Completes Community Service

On March 2, 2023, in recognition of Read Across America Day, Mrs. Carol Logan volunteered to read to students in a first grade class at S. P. Morton Elementary School in Franklin City Public Schools. The book selected by the classroom teacher was by Dr. Seuss, entitled Oh the Thinks You Can Think. The school is named after a member's spouse of Alpha Kappa Sorority, Inc. Mrs. Logan is a member.



In celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day during the month of January, Mrs. Sylvia Claude volunteered to read for students in a 2nd grade class at Riverdale Elementary School in Southampton County Public Schools, in Courtland, Virginia. Mrs. Claude also volunteers at Food Banks in Sussex County and Southampton County several days each week.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Portsmouth Retired Educators

**Connecting and networking** have been the Community & Services buzz words for Portsmouth Retired Educators Association: **PREA**, as we vow to work smarter not harder. In March we **connected** with the Southampton YMCAs and filled the **Y** bus with much needed household items for our second annual **Pack the Bus for HER Shelter** families in our major **community networking** project. Pictured are **connected partners** from **six area YMCAs**, the **HER Shelter** community coordinator, Melody Hasley, and PREA president, Valerie Brown (black hat). We delivered ALL donated items to the **HER Shelter** headquarters for victims of domestic violence who find themselves displaced and attempting to start over. And YES, we're gonna do it again in 2024!!



Five members attended the Spring Delegate Assembly and shared many highlights in our end of the year meeting in May. New officers were installed after **THANKING** those who had served in these positions. This was a special time to reflect on, access and celebrate our successful service projects within the community.

The year's community **networking** ended with 12 of our members actively facilitating the Special Education Advisory Committee's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Community Resource Fair on Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Each facilitator will receive certificates from the SEAC president, Shirley Edwards, at our September meeting.

We are committed to continued **connections** and **networking** throughout our communities.



Pictured are Gina Harris, middle, Resilience Officer for City of Portsmouth, with 4 PREA members, Gail Porter and Maurice Taylor, on her right and members, Valerie Brown and Pam Green, on her left.

### Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers

The Petersburg/Prince George Retired Teachers' Association 2023 Scholarship was awarded to Makayla Tierra Hamlin in the amount of \$1,000.



Makayla is a 2023 graduate from Prince George High School, Prince George, Virginia. She will attend the University of Richmond this fall, and major in English literature. Her career goal is to become a Journalist. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Hamlin.

### Winchester Retired Teachers

The Winchester Retired Teachers Association had a fulfilling 2022-2023 year. In September, we heard from WPS Superintendent Dr. Jason Van Heukelum about the state of the school system. In December, we collected well over \$1000 for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle during the meeting and we were treated to a holiday performance by the John Handley High School Choir. In March, we hosted Family Promise of the No. Shenandoah Valley as our speaker, in May we presented two scholarships of \$2500 to two Handley graduates, and in June we heard from a representative of the Alzheimer's Association. We also donated some hefty snacks to Bright Futures Frederick/ Winchester and school supplies for SW VA as part of the District N community service projects. It was a very good year, indeed.



John Handley High School Choir

### Thoughts on Going Back to School

"Respect your parents. They passed school without Google." Anonymous

"There's more treasure in books than all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."—Walt Disney

"First day of school, make sure you know your locker combination."—Jordan Francis

"I said school starts tomorrow, I didn't say I was going to be there."—Kim Harrison





## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Floyd County Retired Teachers

The Floyd County Retired Teachers' Association has enjoyed another year of fellowship and learning. We continue to recruit new members, as well as retainment of prior members. We meet in the months of March, May, July, September, and November of each year, and our meetings in 2023 have been predominantly local. Floyd is a haven of natural beauty, and is renowned for its hospitality and for a vibrant culture of music, arts, local foods and wines, and outdoor recreation.

We kicked off 2023 with our March meeting which was held at Calvary Baptist Church in Floyd. One of our guest speakers, Elizabeth Warriner, talked about "Story Walk", a project just beginning in Floyd along the Heritage Road. A suggestion was made that the Floyd County Parks and Recreation would be a good location for the project. Other guest speakers, Amy Ingram, General Registrar in Floyd, and an Election Board member, led an interesting discussion about voting security. We enjoyed a lunch of homemade soups, grilled cheese sandwiches, and homemade desserts.

Our May meeting found us at the Floyd Center for the Arts, a community arts center in Floyd where we celebrate and facilitate regional arts through classes, exhibits, community receptions, and more. We enjoyed a guided tour of the facility, and ate a delicious catered meal from the Floyd Country Store, arranged by FCRTA member Ellie Roe.

In July, we met at the beautiful Slusher Park with FCRTA treasurer Alice Slusher hosting. We enjoyed a potluck picnic on the grounds of the park, as well as fellowship with one another.

In September, we will listen to an informative talk by a representative of the AARP. We will conclude our meetings in November, where we will enjoy a home-cooked Thanksgiving meal and a memorial service for those members who have passed. We will also visit the Wohlfahrt Haus Theater in November, a dinner theater in Wytheville, VA, where we will enjoy a Christmas presentation.

The FCRTA awarded three \$300 mini-grants to teachers Holly Conner, Jason Austin, and Kimberly Ingram. We awarded one scholarship to a Floyd County High School graduate who would pursue a career in education. We have made monetary donations to RIFF (Reading is Fundamental in Floyd), Christmas for All, Young Life, and the New River Community Action Backpack Program, all local organizations in Floyd. We contributed canned food items to PLENTY, a local organization open to all residents in need of food.

Some of our members are active in the Floyd Historical Society and Old Church Gallery. We have members who are volunteers at Angels in the Attic, a local charity. We take pride in our community, and we strive to give back as much as we can.



### Buchanan County Retired Teachers/ District K

Buchanan County Retired Teachers' Association is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. By remembering the past, we are honoring those that came before us. BCRTA's banner was created many years ago by its creative members, Josephine Rife and Edith Yuhasz. The Banner includes a map of Virginia that shows the coal mining county of Buchanan and a list of communities. Mountains separate communities and winding roads complicate travel. However, retired teachers are dedicated to serving the communities and their citizens.



On May 8, 2023, BCRTA's outgoing President, Patricia Hogston installed officers for 2023-2026.

The officers include President, Penny Jennell; President-elect, Kim Ratliff; Vice-President, Judy Holland; Secretary, Cindy Matney; and Treasurer, Nina McClanahan.



### District N Collects School Supplies for Appalachia



Loudoun County hosted District N Spring Meeting where school supplies were collected.

Dr. Sally Kenavan, PVRTA Past President, delivered two truckloads of school supplies.



## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Newport News Retired Teachers

Newport News Retired Teachers Association (NNRTA) members wrapped up the 2022–2023-year June I with a beach themed luncheon meeting that included beach music and table decorations and games coordinated by outgoing secretary Karen Carson. Members donned leis along with hats and casual attire. Brenda Fowlkes, president for the past seven years, highlighted the previous three programs for the year: a “Meet the Candidates” session for Newport News City Council, a NNPS Human Resources staff presentation of updates about retiree benefits followed by a question-and-answer session, and the annual Christmas social at a local restaurant. One goal achieved during the year included the approval of a revised NNRTA member recruitment brochure. Officers were installed for the upcoming 2023-2024 year as follows: Charlyn Bonk, vice president; Marian Harper, secretary; and Bobby Horne and Mildred Horne, co-treasurers. The office of president presently remains open.

In spite of the COVID-19 inspired restrictions during the past few years, NNRTA members also have continued their generous support for the yearly \$1000 scholarship offered to a graduating senior pursuing a career in education. Funds are raised at membership meetings with raffles for items donated by local merchants, 50-50 raffles and monetary donations. NNRTA met via ZOOM in June 2021 to present the scholarship to Woodside High School graduate Jordan Moody, who recently completed his honors sophomore year majoring in secondary history education at Norfolk State University. After COVID restrictions eased, members honored Jordan in person at the December 2022 Christmas luncheon meeting. Maya Joyner, another Woodside graduate, received the 2022 scholarship at the June luncheon membership meeting. Maya recently completed her freshman year at Virginia Commonwealth University, majoring in early childhood education.

Although there was no award recipient in June 2023, NNRTA members are inspired to continue their efforts to help future educators. In a letter to the scholarship committee after his first college academic year Jordan Moody shared that “Time and time again, I have exclaimed that your contribution to my educational journey lightened my financial burden, allowing me to focus on being the best scholar I can be”.



Jordan Moody 2021 scholarship recipient



Maya Joyner 2022 scholarship recipient



Officers June 2023  
Left to right: Bobby Horne, Charlyn Bonk, Brenda Fowlkes, Marian Harper



June 2023 beach theme end of year meeting

Karen Carson leads games June 2023 meeting



### A teacher’s Impact

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”—Benjamin Franklin

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener.”—Robert Frost

“I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.”—Lily Tomlin



## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Suffolk Retired Teachers

Suffolk Retired Teachers Association (SRTA) are making great strides to explore ways to increase the membership for the year 2023-2024. Meetings are still being conducted via the use of Free Conference Call. SRTA continues to connect with various organizations throughout the City of Suffolk, and have developed a partnership with The Salvation Army.

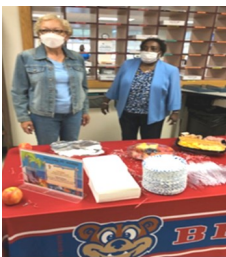
During the year, SRTA donated monetary gifts to the following charitable organizations: The Salvation Army, American Cancer Society, The Boys & Girls Club, and The Genieve Shelter. These organizations offer excellent support services to the people of our community.

The first week of May 2023 marked "Teacher Appreciation Week" and this was the highlight for SRTA, to show love and appreciation to the staff at Booker T. Washington Elementary School and Elephant Fork Elementary School. A decorated food table was set-up at each school. Refreshments were served to the staff during their lunch period.

SRTA selected Justin Xavier Henderson as our scholarship recipient for this year. He is awarded \$1,000 dollars and will attend Old Dominion University in the fall 2023. The career he is pursuing is computer science. This award will be given to him during the first semester.

Finally, SRTA will begin meeting in-person in the month of August/September 2023. Items are now being collected for our Can Food Drive and our School Supply Drive. SRTA is on the move and looking forward to another exciting year.

"Stay positive. Work hard. Make it happen!"



Refreshments for teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.

### 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 Spring 2024 newsletter is **Friday, February 23, 2024.**

Susan Martin, Newsletter Editor

### Arlington Retired Teachers

ARTA had a busy year of generally Zoom meetings, so our end-of-year luncheon at Army Navy Country Club in Fairfax on May 24 was a well-attended opportunity to greet and chat with each other and celebrate 50 years of us! ARTA member and Civil Rights icon Joan Mulholland was our speaker. While remembered for her Civil Rights activities in the 1960's, Joan shared her travels and work as part of the many Civil Rights groups she supports and of the Joan Trumpauer Mulholland Foundation. The Foundation was founded by her son, author, and filmmaker Loki Mulholland, and is dedicated to "educating learners of all ages about the Civil Rights Movement and how to make a difference in their communities." Earlier in the year, Joan was recognized by the Virginia General Assembly for her 1960's Civil rights work and participation with the Freedom Riders and the Arlington Sit-Ins. For more information: [joantrumpauermulholland.org](http://joantrumpauermulholland.org).

On June 21, ARTA was honored by the Arlington County Community Service Board with its Community Partner Award. We were nominated by the staff of the Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence in "appreciation for [our] outstanding support of" the residents. President Lynne Lilly, ongoing leader of the project since 2018, and past president Nancy King were recognized for coordinating ARTA's support. In addition to the yearly gathering of holiday gift donations from our members that include art materials, gift cards for special outings to 7-11 and Target, and needed clothing and bedding, ARTA sends a generous check to fund needs that might arise.

ARTA invests its scholarship funds with the Arlington Community Foundation (ACF) which also handles the application/selection process. Our membership responds generously each year to an appeal letter sent by our scholarship chair Cathy Eckbreth. We award two \$2,500 scholarships each year, the Jack Wilson ARTA Scholarship, and the Future Educators Scholarship. Each recipient is eligible for five years of \$2,500 support. This year's recipients both attended Yorktown High School and will study at the College of William and Mary and James Madison University.



Member Joan Mulholland shared news of her recent Civil Rights work at ARTA's 50th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon.



President Lynne Lilly and past president Nancy King picked up awards for ARTA's service to the Mary Marshall Assisted Living residents.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Patrick County Retired Teachers

Melissa Hazzard is the recipient of the Patrick County Retired Teacher's scholarship presented at the Seniors Honors Banquet at Patrick County High School in May. The scholarship was presented by Barbara Pendleton, scholarship chair. Melissa aspires to become a math teacher and make learning math enjoyable for her students.

The executive board has been busy this summer planning interesting and educational programs and social events and revising their directory. PCRTA will hold a general meeting in September with an orientation/reorientation program. New directories will be distributed. Hostesses will prepare a light luncheon.

The retired teachers' book club continues to meet monthly sharing and discussing a different book at each meeting. Meetings are held in the local library and open to the public.

Patrick County Retired Teachers continue to serve both the youth and community through their outreach activities.



Melissa Hazard, scholarship recipient and Barbara Pendleton, scholarship chair

### District N Members Attend VRTA Delegate Assembly



### Prince William Retired Teachers



Vice President, Marcia Conway (left) leads line dancing at the May meeting.

### VRTA 2023 Delegate Assembly in Pictures



Door Prizes



Board of Directors Meeting



Tuesday's Luncheon

Our guest speaker, Lily Liu



### VRTA Marketplace Makes a Comeback

In the Spring, 2019 VRTA newsletter, then president Ben McCartney introduced the Marketplace to VRTA members in his president's message. Ben wrote "What's new this spring, you ask?.....we are going to have a Marketplace. Any unit or district who wants to sell/raffle items for scholarship can man a table and display their wares."

After two VRTA statewide meetings, COVID happened and the Marketplace was on hiatus until the 2023 VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly, where three local units had tables with a raffle or items to sell to benefit local scholarship funds.

To get a table for YOUR local unit or district at the VRTA Fall Conference, send an email to Karen Whetzel, VRTA President Elect, at [kswhetzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhetzel@gmail.com) by Friday, September 8, 2023, with information on what you plan to sell or raffle, and the purpose for which the unit/district will be using the proceeds. With limited space, tables will be assigned on a first come, first served basis.



### Membership Concerns

Many of the evaluations from the Spring 2023 VRTA Delegate Assembly asked for something in the fall to help with recruiting and retaining members. With this in mind, the lunch speaker, Timothy Bothe, AARP Program Specialist, will be including membership in his remarks. After the lunch break, VRTA vice president and membership chair Mable Scott will be leading a session for sharing membership ideas. Bring your best ideas to share!

### Join or Renew Your Membership



VRTA 2024 Delegate Assembly

April 15-17, 2024

VRTA 2024 Fall Conference

September 30-October 2, 2024

Save  
the  
Date

### Spring 2024 Newsletter

The deadline for the spring newsletter is Friday, February 23, 2024.

Submit articles and pictures to Susan Martin at:

[susanmartin730@gmail.com](mailto:susanmartin730@gmail.com) or at:

1049 Martins Lane Fincastle, VA 24090

### Inflation Impacts VRTA State Meetings

Although the Executive Committee voted to keep the two day registration fee the same as Spring 2023 for the VRTA 2023 Fall Conference, increased participation is really needed to break even with income/expenses.

For the past two statewide meetings (2022 Fall Conference and Spring 2023 Delegate Assembly), VRTA had to use reserves as costs were approximately \$3000 more than was received through registration. Major expenses include renting the rooms, audiovisual support and food.

For this fall, the price of the plated lunches is up \$5 each. The price of muffins for Wednesday morning is up \$10 a dozen, so we are still deciding whether or not to serve them or just go with drinks.

Please be aware when you are paying your registration fee that it does not cover the whole cost of the VRTA Fall Conference. And the best way for the conference to break even is to have more participants, so please attend and bring some other members from your district/local unit!

**FALL CONFERENCE  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26,  
2023  
AARP SOCIAL EVENT, TBA.**

### 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](http://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.

**Virginia Retired Teachers Association  
Fall Conference Schedule (as of 8.11.23)  
Monday, September 25—Wednesday, September 27, 2023**

**Monday, September 25, 2023**

5:00 pm to 7:00 p.m.

Executive Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, September 26, 2023**

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

***VRTA members will vacate the room***

**(Hotel staff will set up for Luncheon)**

**12:00 pm**

**First event for those not on the Executive Committee or Board of Directors**

12:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m.

Luncheon, Guest Speakers (Membership Focus)

2:00 p.m.—2:15 p.m.

Door Prizes followed by Break

2:15 p.m.—2:45 p.m.

Membership Discussion/Sharing Ideas – Mable Scott

2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

VRTA Benefits Update – Jim DuBrueler and Committee

3:30 p.m.—4:30 p.m.

Legislative Session: Bea Morris

Evening

Social Activities TBD

**Wednesday, September 27, 2023**

**From 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 AM, coffee, tea and breakfast snacks will be available in the corridor.**

8:00 a.m.—9:00 a.m.

Registration—Maudie Scott

9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m.

Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Presentation

10:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 a.m.—12:00 noon

Memorial Service – Phyllis Eastridge

General Session & Door Prizes

Locations for the various events will be assigned by the Doubletree Hotel. Each registrant will receive this information in a packet when checking in at the Registration Table.

Monday, September 25  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
\*\* MEETS \*\*  
5:00 PM—6:30 PM

**VRTA 2023 Fall Conference**  
**Registration Form**  
Monday, September 25-Wednesday, September 27  
**DoubleTree Hotel — Richmond-Midlothian**

Tuesday, September 26  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETS  
9:00 AM-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, September 8, 2023.****

**Questions (?)** [maudie@tds.net](mailto: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 filet of salmon with a lemon beurre blanc sauce
- ◇ Tuscan grilled chicken breast with olive oil, garlic and nut free pesto sauce
- ◇ Vegetarian—**This will be the chef's choice.**
- ◇ Gluten free — **This will be the chef's choice.**

**Included with each entrée: spinach salad with strawberries, bacon and red onion with balsamic dressing; seasoned vegetables and oven roasted potatoes; rolls and butter. Coffee or tea will be served along with NY style cheesecake for dessert.**

**Room Registration:** Attendees make room reservations no later than **Friday, September 8, 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. **Rate is good for up to 4 people per room.** Check-in is at 4:00 PM. Check-out is at 11:00 AM. 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-92e-81cd9ab4-dcc4-43bd-a2e7-1a246b905d8c/>

Should you decide to make reservations directly through Hilton.com the **three letter group code you should use is 92E.** **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 conference.

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

**4. MarketPlace:** Send an email to [kswhetzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhetzel@gmail.com) by September 8 to reserve a table.

\* Only members of the Executive Committee will meet on Monday, September 25. \*

The luncheon at 12:00 noon will be the first function for those not on the Board of Directors.

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 help pay the cost of the meal and service fees. Add the cost to the registration and indicate his/her meal choice as well as yours.**

5. If you are planning on attending the VRTA Fall Conference on **Wednesday only** for the VRS presentation and the General Session, the cost of registration will be \$35.00 per person. Please come early enough on **Wednesday** for registration before the meeting begins at 9:00. Coffee, tea and breakfast snacks will be available beginning at 8AM. Each person in your party must fill out a separate form.

**Personal information for VRTA Fall Conference Registration. Please print clearly.**

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

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

District and Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Send your completed registration form with a check for **\$35.00**, payable to VRTA, to Maudie Scott, P.O. Box 282, Amelia, VA 23002 postmarked by **Friday, September 8, 2023**.

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