



# VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Spring 2024 Edition

## From the VRTA President Spring Delegate Assembly



The VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly will be held Tuesday, April 16 and Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at DoubleTree by Hilton in Richmond-Midlothian, Virginia. The cut-off date for making a hotel reservation is March 26, 2024, before 11:59 p.m. The VRTA group rate will expire at this time. The direct booking link and the three-letter group code can be found in the VRTA Spring Newsletter and on the website, [vrta.us](http://vrta.us). The registration form must also be postmarked by March 26, 2024.

The Hilton reservation system and pricing structure have been updated to provide a transparent and straightforward view of the bill. The link will list the price details leading to the total cost at the end of your stay. As of February 1, 2024, guests staying at the hotel will be required to pay a \$10.00 parking fee, per day. This charge will be added at check-in.

Districts and Units are asked to display banners inside the Conference Room. Each group is responsible for setting up and removing its banner. Banners that are removed before the Awards Committee records the displayed banners may not receive recognition.

The Marketplace will be featured again. Contact Karen Whetzel at [kswhetzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhetzel@gmail.com) for details. The Prize Patrol asks Districts, Units, and individuals for door prize donations. Refreshments will be available in the corridor on Wednesday morning. AARP Virginia will not be sponsoring a reception for this Assembly. The reception has been limited to one a year. We look forward to its return in the fall.

Tuesday's agenda begins with the Board of Directors Meeting at 9:00 a.m. Among the items that will be discussed are the budget and the election and installation of officers. Members will vacate the Conference Room at 11:00 a.m. to allow hotel staff to set up the Luncheon.

Following the Luncheon, the first presentation will be representatives of The Virginia Retirement System. VRS staff will give us an updated overview of VRS and remind VRTA members of the many benefits VRS offers. Next, James DuBrueler, Jr., VRTA Benefits Advisor, will highlight various topics ranging from the VRTA Monthly Newsletter to Medicare and Principal-protected Finances. In addition, Jim will introduce Kevin McKannan and Glen Loch, Legal PLC, who will enlighten us on Estate Planning. Finally, President-elect, Karen Whetzel will preside over the long-awaited breakout sessions. The presenters and their topics are:

- ◇ Vice President, Mable Scott, "The Membership Funnel: Getting the Full Picture of Getting New Members"
- ◇ Past President and current Parliamentarian, Ben McCartney, "Leadership" (Presidents, Vice Presidents, Secretaries, Committee Chairs, and more)
- ◇ VRTA Treasurer, Weldon Martin, "Treasurer Tips"

Breaks will be given throughout the sessions. The Prize Patrol will have a drawing for prizes following each session. Among the prizes is a chance to win a free night's stay and breakfast at the DoubleTree.

**From the President continued on page 2**

## Inside this issue:

*From the VRTA President* 1-2

*From the Treasurer* 3

*Around the Commonwealth* 4-12

*NRTA Advocacy Conference* 13

*Tentative Schedule for Delegate Assembly* 14

*Delegate Assembly Registration Form* 15-16

Page 13—"VRTA is part of a coalition working for Nursing Home Reform. Lobbyist Bonnie Atwood, Legislative Chair Bea Morris, and President Elect Karen Whetzel participate in this effort."

## From the VRTA President, continued

Wednesday, April 17, begins with the Legislative Session. The Legislative Chair, Bea Morris, Co-Chair Tina Whitaker, and Lobbyist, Bonnie Atwood, continue to keep us informed on various bills introduced at the General Assembly. Many bills that may be of interest to VRTA are listed in reports submitted by these officers. SJ9—Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) remains an issue of discussion. The guest speaker for this session is Justin Brown, the senior associate director at JLARC.

The second session on Wednesday will feature Jessica Eglin, AARP Virginia: Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach. The topic of her presentation is “Social Security, Myths and Facts.”

The Spring Delegate Assembly Business Meeting includes committee reports, the election and installation of officers, and the incoming President’s speech. The event will end with door prizes.

Plan to attend the Spring Delegate Assembly and show your support for VRTA. The organization is only as strong as its members and their pledge to work together and make a difference. My term will end on June 30, 2024. It has been my pleasure to serve.

Jean Marrow  
VRTA President

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

## Never Stop Learning



Teachers have always advised their students never to stop learning, and they themselves continue to acquire knowledge in many fields long after they retire. Some learn something completely new to them, and others study a passion they have had for many years. Learning is an important and very enjoyable part of the VRTA

Spring Delegate Assembly.

Want to learn in more depth about your pension after having read some scary articles about the economy and the roller coaster stock market? The VRS staff will give us confidence in the most important part of our livelihood in their presentation right after lunch on Tuesday, April 16.

Or maybe you have a curiosity about this nebulous acronym JLARC that apparently makes reports on many topics for the Virginia General Assembly. Who are these people? Why do they study and report on certain topics related to state government? Your curiosity will certainly be satisfied in the Legislative Session on Wednesday morning, April 17, at 9:00 a.m. when Justin Brown, senior associate director at JLARC, takes away the mystery surrounding this valuable commission.

And what fun it is to learn from friends across the state! Lunch and dinner on Tuesday always allow us time to catch up with what’s happening in their lives and in their units and to make new acquaintances.

Be sure to make your hotel reservation early and send your meeting registration as soon as possible so you won’t miss these opportunities to continue learning.

Bea Morris, Legislative Chair

## 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!”

## Virginia Retired Teachers Association

“Organized November 28, 1936”

2022- 2024 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



## Saying Goodbye to Almost 50 Years of Institutional Knowledge

By Bonnie Atwood, J.D.

As most of you know, I am not just a professional lobbyist. I am also a professional writer. I hope you have seen the winter issue of *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine*, a publication that I have enjoyed working on for the past 25 years.

Twenty-five years. If you double that, you get the number of years of institutional knowledge and customs that we have lost this year. Mostly as a result of redistricting, we have lost a record number of legislators, dating back to Dick Saslaw, who was sworn in as a delegate (later a senator) almost half a century ago.

The most senior of our legislators have shaped the Commonwealth in which we live at this time. Colorful, cranky, funny, and smart, this cast of early characters has been delightfully interesting to work with. Saslaw, a Democrat, and Tommy Norment, a Republican, have gone toe to toe all these years, with anger, humor, and robust argument.

They and their departing colleagues represent such a loss! They've been great friends to VRTA, especially, Ken Plum and Emmett Hanger, again, lawmakers from both side of the aisle, who have stood together on our behalf.

All that history. Veteran lobbyist David Bailey calls it the biggest shift since Reconstruction. Facts and legislative history left and lost. Funny stories left and lost. Customs and habits left and lost. Fifty years ago, people smoked in the General Assembly Building. They had no regular use of computers. Every morning we collected the bills on paper. I carried stacks of them to my office and eyeballed each and every one. There were no zoom calls. Indeed, there wasn't even email.

For better or worse, deals were made in a more old fashioned style, over highballs among mostly men, at the Hotel Jefferson. "Chicken's" was the place to grab a sandwich and one of those wonderful limeades. The press room at the Capitol was an open door hangout. Carmella Bills gave you the latest news at the center of the Capitol Building.

There were no metal detectors; no checking of bags and purses; no massive number of police or security. It felt safe. It was safe. Most of today's lobbyists were not born yet. They will never know what it was like to come and go without the surveillance of today.

Maybe wonderful things are in store for the future. For now, though, this all leaves me feeling a little sad.

### From the VRTA Treasurer

As the time is approaching for our spring delegate assembly in Richmond, I am reminded of how many good friends I have made over the years during my time attending the two meetings of VRTA each year. If you have never attended one of these meetings, I encourage you to consider doing so. They are informative and enlightening and a good way to see what VRTA is all about. These meetings are intended to be open for all VRTA members. Many folks attend who do not hold a local or state office. They are VRTA members wishing to be an active part of our association and wanting to learn more about what is going on. Come on out this spring to Richmond to learn more about VRTA.

This year for the first time in several years I will be doing a special session during the conference for local and district treasurers. This session will hopefully be especially useful for new treasurers and will give you an opportunity to hear some tips and updates from me, to network with other treasurers, just like you, and to ask questions and share information. During the session and prior to the conference convening on Tuesday morning, (at my treasurer's table in the hallway), I will have membership forms, cards, etc. available for pick up by local treasurers. I am also planning to have available the most recent VRTA Membership Rolls for each unit to pick up and review for accuracy.

Here are some reminders for treasurers:

- ◇ November 15 each year is the IRS deadline for submitting your e-postcard annually.
- ◇ You are encouraged to start collecting and submitting VRTA dues (\$20 annually) for the upcoming year (2024-2025).
- ◇ Approved 2024-2025 budgets for local units and districts are due to the VRTA Treasurer, signed and dated by two officers, by December 31, 2024.
- ◇ Send the names of VRTA members from your units who have passed to the VRTA Treasurer so that the rolls can be updated.

Many thanks to local treasurers for all that you do. Let me know if you have questions or need assistance.

Weldon Martin, VRTA Treasurer

# News From Around the Commonwealth

## Alexandria Retired Educators

Our October meeting was our very own OKTOBER-FEST, which was held on October 16 at the Port City Brewery in Alexandria. Following a brief history of the brewery and tour of the facility, members were given tastings of the gold medal winning brew, Optimal Wit. Members were then given five tickets for five additional tastings and if they wanted to save any tickets, they could redeem them for tastings at a later time! Members also had an opportunity to taste Bavarian bratwurst, German pretzels and a variety of German cookies. Everyone seemed to enjoy our time together!



OKTOBERFEST at Port City Brewery

December's annual concert and holiday get together.



## Buchanan RTA

Since the VRTA Fall Conference Buchanan County retired teachers have completed several service projects. We donated food to "Feeding My Sheep," a local food pantry, sponsored a storyboard and distributed treats during Buchanan County Public Library's "Haunted Story Walk," and collected personal care products for Heritage Hall residents, our local nursing home. Donations have been made to the Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia, Shop with a Cop, Buchanan County Social Services' "Coal Miners' Christmas," and the "Imagination Library." BCRTA's meetings include socializing, eating, and supporting VRTA's Vision, "All retired school personnel will be safe, productive, informed and financially secure in retirement." Programs are designed to enhance VRTA's Mission, "To be the voice, resource and connection for all retired school personnel."



## Allegheny Retired Teachers

The Allegheny Retired Teachers' Association met at Granberry United Methodist Church in Covington on September 5. AARP speaker, Connie Scaggs, presented a program on "Home Fit Workshop." Our service project for the September meeting was to support our local schools resulting in school supplies and monetary donations being collected. ARTA was able to give each of the four schools \$75 plus the school supplies collected. The meeting was catered by the Granberry Agape Ladies.

In December, we met at Temple Baptist Church in Covington. The members were entertained by the Allegheny High School Choirs under the direction of Amanda Sprouse with Ben Snedegar accompanying on the piano. They presented a selection of songs which is an anticipated annual highlight of our Christmas season. The AHS Treble Choir sang a selection of three songs, followed by the Concert Choir presenting a selection of three songs. Our membership presented a check in the donated amount of \$280 to show our appreciation to the AHS choir program. After the choir performance, the meeting resumed with our guest speaker, Becky Perkins, the 2023 Allegheny Highlands Christmas Mother. The theme for the Christmas Mother program was "God Bless Them Everyone." ARTA members collected monetary donations of \$500 and needed items for the Christmas Mother program. The meeting was catered by Scott Hill Retirement Community of Clifton Forge.



Connie Scaggs presenting the "Home Fit" Workshop.

## Pittsylvania County



Rosa Chambers was Pittsylvania County's nominee for the Most Active Member.

### Note Change

Be aware that the VRTA Website is now:

[vrta.us](http://vrta.us)



## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Franklin County Retired Teachers

In the Spring of 2023, Franklin County Retired Teachers Association (FCRTA) was honored when Carrie Russell, former Franklin County student and daughter of a member, spoke to our group. Many of us knew Carrie and watched her grow up in our classrooms. An Elementary teacher in our school system, Carrie gave an inspiring talk about teachers struggles through the COVID period in our schools. She shared the following statistics from Virginia teachers.

- ◇ 15% of K-12 teachers stated they were leaving their job in 2023
- ◇ 45% of teachers work more than 50 hours/week
- ◇ 65% show signs of burnout physically and mentally

Teachers are leaving because of increased actions of parents and school boards, school shootings and the need to spend their money on curriculum. Basically, the lack of community support.

Carrie reminded us how we can help this generation of teachers by being active in the schools as volunteers to read, adopt a student, eat lunch with students, support groups to meet and teach the parents the subjects so they can help their children, and support from male retirees as role models.

As Carrie phrased it "Don't be done just yet. Be our family, because with the world today we need more support and backup than you and even we realize."

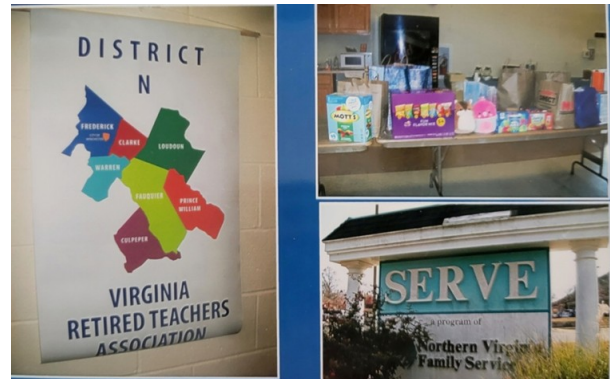
The FCRTA continues to support local non profits in our county with donated items for their organizations. At each meeting members collect and deliver donations to specific groups such as a rest home, an organization that provides meals, a family resource center and a facility that provides child care and classes for parents. As part of our education outreach, the members award two scholarships yearly to Franklin County High School graduates studying in the education field. This award has helped return teachers to our area.

### District N Attends VRTA Fall Conference



Winchester's Gary Braswell (far right) was recognized as Honorable Mention for the State's Most Active Member.

District N held its Fall Meeting in Prince William County. For their community Service Project, members collected over \$900 in cash, toys, and snacks for SERVE. We were entertained by the Hylton High School Troubadours.



### Greenville Retired Educators

The Greenville Retired Teachers participated in the Toys for Tots, partnering with the County Sheriff Department, Greenville County Board of Supervisors and local businesses in Greenville County. The GRTA will host a canned food drive on Match 13th at our local meeting. We are donating the canned goods to the Samaritan House that feeds senior citizens and people in need.



# News From Around the Commonwealth

## Lunenburg-Nottaway Retired Teachers

The Lunenburg-Nottaway Retired Teachers Association for the 2022-2023 year is using meeting time to highlight the many talents and hobbies among its membership. In October Mary Jean Overman and Evelyn Staples were in the spotlight for their "quilt-making" over the years. Both ladies shared stories of quilt making within their families' histories. Their mothers and grandmothers used whatever they could find to make quilts for their families. They concluded with updated quilting techniques.

In February Florence Marie King Oliver of Crew was spotlighted. As a teenager Florence learned to crochet and gradually developed a hobby in crocheting doll clothing. Her collection includes many special memories. Some of her scrap yarn was used to make bookmark worms. Many dolls, numbering over 100 in the collection, have been donated to family members, friends, and given as door prizes for special events. At 91 she enjoys crocheting outfits for her collection of dolls.



Samples of quilting projects— Log Cabin Pattern, on the right and Circular Pattern on black background, on the left

Part of Florence Oliver's doll collection



## Richmond-Henrico

The focus of our December luncheon meeting was "Youth in Our Community." Members donated jumbo 2.5-gallon Hefty bags full of school supplies for K through 5<sup>th</sup> grades at four elementary schools and quart-size ziplock bags filled with mittens and hats for kids at two preschool child development centers. Volunteers were also recognized for their service to this project.

We were entertained with "Melodies of the Season" by well-known retired Richmond Public School music teacher/band leader/flutist Glennroy Bailey and his long-time accompanist, Billy Evans. Meeting attendees also enjoyed a little holiday fun by playing "Christmas Bingo" and sharing a delicious catered Christmas buffet together.

President Margaret Smith closed the meeting with expressions of gratitude to the leadership of St. Peter Baptist Church and Thomas Jefferson High School for allowing us the use of their facilities for R-HRTA meetings. She also thanked members for their continued support and looks forward to our 2024 projects.



Collected School Supplies

Entertainment by "Melodies of the Season"



## Winchester Retired Teachers

The Winchester Retired Teachers Association began the year with a presentation by J2W Foundation, a local initiative for grade level reading literacy in partnership with Winchester Public Schools. At the District N meeting, we contributed substantially to the Prince William unit's community service collection for Northern Virginia Family Services. Our own Gary Braswell was presented with a certificate by District President Janet Dye for Honorable Mention in recognition of total Community Service hours in the state. In December, we were treated to an annual holiday presentation by John Handley High School's Chorus and we collected over \$1000 at the meeting for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign. We are looking forward to the spring thaw and the beauty of the season.

Gary Braswell receiving certificate from District President Janet Dye



# News From Around the Commonwealth

## Newport News Retired Teachers

Newport News Retired Teachers Association (NNRTA) started its year with focusing on increasing membership for the new year. We prepared and welcomed all new members as well as returning members to the organization. The Main Street Library in Newport News was the setting for the meeting on October 5, 2023. The Newport News Teachers Association invited the superintendent from Newport News Public Schools, Dr Michele Mitchell, to speak to the retirees. Dr. Mitchell is a former special education teacher, principal and administrative leader. She served as the Executive Director of NNPS Student Advancement prior to her appointment as superintendent. She is a very impressive leader for our school system. Dr. Mitchell has worked to rebuild trust and positive relationships among families, students, staff and the community through three new advisory committees. NNRTA is excited to have the support of Dr. Mitchell. She gathered notes on ways that she could assist the NNRTA and she thanked us for our dedication to the field of education. NNRTA is looking forward to this partnership.

On December 7, 2023, The Alfresco Italian Restaurant in Newport News provided a great atmosphere for delicious food and wonderful fellowship for our winter meeting. This event provided everyone an opportunity to get to know each other in a very relaxed setting. Music, games, and door prizes set the tone for our holiday gathering. Everyone looked great in their festive attire. Several new members attended this event based on the determination to increase our membership. Notes, texts, emails and telephone calls are used as avenues to inform and encourage new members. NNRTA is pleased to announce that there was an increase in membership for 2023. Newport News Retired Teachers Association is on the move to get new retirees to join the organization.



Dr. Michele Mitchell  
Superintendent of Newport News Public Schools

New members, Stephanie Cuffee, Gurkamal Gill and Theresa Miles were excited to see fellow educators, Margaret Chengiah, Justine White, and Charlyn Bonk.



## Roanoke City Retired Educators

The Roanoke City Retired Educators met on September 14 at the Williamson Road Library with a red, white, and blue theme. Sheriff Antonio Hash, a William Fleming graduate, spoke and members enjoyed a lovely catered lunch. For the service project, socks and underwear were collected for Round Hill Elementary, and a raffle raised money for the Scholarship Fund.



Sheriff Antonio Hash



Catered Lunch

The Holiday Luncheon on December 14 at the Marriott Courtyard featured an Italian buffet with entertainment by vocalists Cathy Fisher and Mo Aulick. Activities included donations for Soup for Seniors, a \$5 gift exchange, prizes for holiday fashions, and scholarship contributions on a holiday tree.



Entertainment by Cathy Fisher and Mo Aulick

Roanoke's City Holiday Luncheon



## Rockbridge County

Long time retired teachers Clyde and Jerri Keen retired on July 1st from their respective jobs in the Rockbridge Retired Teachers Association. Clyde served as treasurer for 28 years and Jerri collected lunch money and greeted folks as they arrived for 25 years



# News From Around the Commonwealth

## Franklin/Southampton Retired Teachers

Members participated in a tree planting ceremony in observance of Arbor Day in the month of April with their Greek organization, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Lambda Psi Omega Chapter, in honor of a former Principal, Mr. Lloyd Sykes at Capron Elementary School in Southampton County. The crab-apple tree was planted in the courtyard between the school and the home of Mr. Sykes. In July, President Miller traveled with BNOC (Boykins Neighborhood Outreach Center) to Washington, DC, touring the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The group also toured Martin Luther King, Jr.'s monument. During the year, each month on Monday evenings 6 -7pm, Mrs. Miller tunes in with CEO, Rev. Dr. Lillie Faison via zoom with students of the BNOC doing activities in the areas of writing, math, reading, and history. During the year other activities include back-to-shopping, movies, cook outs, distribution of school supplies, eating out, and taking field trips. During the month of February, there will be a focus on Hhstory in recognition of Black History Month. The 2023 year concluded with a Christmas Celebration on December 15th at Shiloh Baptist Church, Boykins, Virginia. Members of the unit assisted with games, prizes, and serving dinner.



Mrs. Daphne Miller and Mrs. Sylvia Claud with students of the BNOC with their prizes won playing games



Mrs. Daphne Miller, Mrs. Sylvia Claud, and Mrs. Carol Logan at the tree planting ceremony

## Hanover County

Hanover Retired School Employees Association supports local students through membership and dues. A \$500 Scholarship is presented to a Hanover County Public Schools graduating high school senior who plans to major in education. Deborah Roane, our HRSEA President Emeritus, presented the scholarship in person to Kaeleigh Hughes. Kaeleigh, a 2023 Mechanicsville High School Hanover Scholar Honor student, is attending Christopher Newport University, majoring in English for her Master's Degree in Education. The HRSEA is excited to be able to support her as she furthers her education. Kaeleigh was in Mrs. Roane's second-grade class during the 2012-2013 school year. Mrs. Roane retired from Hanover County Public Schools in 2013. It was a pleasure for her to present this scholarship award to her former student.

Deborah Roane also participated in the Virginia General Assembly's Legislation Day at the Richmond Capital on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. This legislative day provided an informative insight into the 2024 legislative session. She met with Virginia House of Delegate Alex Askew, representing the Cities of Norfolk (part) and Virginia Beach (part). He is inspired to fight for affordable healthcare, quality education, economic opportunities, and a safe environment for all of us. Deborah enjoyed meeting with Del. Askew as she shared the laws she would like to see passed in this session of the General Assembly. You may contact Deborah Roane at the HRSEA Website: [hrsea.org](http://hrsea.org).



Kaeleigh Hughes, Scholarship Winner



Virginia House of Delegate Alex Askew

## Williamsburg James City County

Christine Jordan, President of the Williamsburg-James City County RTA, welcomes Dr. Tonya Fisher-new member and gives her a copy of the Local RTA Notebook.



Linda Fields installed Doris Randall as treasurer of the organization.

Members collected food for distribution at Thanksgiving and during the Christmas Holiday Season. They attended the Christmas Wagster's Magic Show and plan to tour the W&M Marine Institute In Gloucester, Virginia, in either May or June.



## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Partrick County Retired Teachers are Staying Busy

The Patrick County Retired Teachers Association continues to provide interesting, informative, and entertaining programs at the regular quarterly meetings along with refreshments and door prizes. September's meeting focused on orientation and reorientation. Committee and executive members reviewed PCRTA history, by-laws, budget, membership, duties of committees and chairmen, and distributed an updated directory.

In December, local agents Dana Dehart and Terri Alt offered a wealth of services offered in our area through Piedmont Community Services and VPI-SU Extension.

Brooke Gill, program manager of Alzheimer's Association, spoke in March on Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body.

Our purpose is to provide programs pertinent to our age and needs.

Patrick County Retired Teachers continue to serve the youth and community through projects and donations. Some of those services have been providing necrology services for deceased members; birthday bags to nursing home residents; pizza party for PARC Workshop; a donation to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library; Christmas stockings full of items, paper supplies, and monetary donation to clients at Developmental Center; a scholarship to a graduating senior who plans to enter the field of teaching; and a donation of \$1000 to a high school senior who was seriously injured in a car accident. Teachers in different subject areas spoke to students at the local career fair about the teaching profession and worked at the Reality Store for Seniors. We make an effort to stay in touch with shut-in members, provide needs for students, and recruit and retain members. We are involved in life-long learning by continuing to take classes for older adults and holding monthly book club meetings.



We hold a Christmas social with food, music, and gift exchange and we are joining with the Senior's Group for travel to area venues. We also attend state and district meetings and have officers in each.

Patrick County Retired Teachers are aging but active; they are making a difference!

### Shenandoah County Retired Teachers

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA), a group for all retired educator categories from any school division, hosted the annual Back to School Breakfast on Tuesday, September 5, 2022, at the Woodstock Moose Lodge. All new retirees from Shenandoah County Public Schools were invited as guests. Lt. Whitney Mauck from the Shenandoah County Sheriff's Department gave a talk on The Role of School Resource Officers (SROs) and School Safety. Lt. Mauck is the supervisor of the SROs. JoAnn Racey presided over the business meeting. Members are encouraged to volunteer in the community, and record volunteer hours and activities to be sent to the Virginia Retired Teachers Association. Canned products and money were collected for Luke's Backpack, which provides weekend food to students in Shenandoah County Public Schools who might not get meals otherwise. Donations were also accepted for the SCRTA scholarship fund.



Lt. Whitney Mauck and JoAnn Racey

The Shenandoah County Retired Teachers Association (SCRTA) met for lunch on December 5 at Triplett Tech. The Culinary Arts students under the direction of Chef Paje Cross prepared a gourmet lunch for the group. The program on the history of SCRTA was presented by Anne Sheetz, who noted that the school history books published by SCRTA ended in 2000. Sheetz encouraged members to sign up for the committee to start work on the next history.

A budget was approved and the following officers were elected for 2024-26: President, Barbara Halvorson; Vice President, Carolyn Brittingham; Secretary, Virginia Stultz; and Treasurer Adina McInturff. Current President JoAnn Racey will stay on the Executive Committee as Past President.

Officers will be installed at the May dinner meeting on May 6, 2024, at the VFW in Edinburg and will take office on July 1, 2024. A scholarship for a future teacher will also be presented at May event.



Adina McInturff, Virginia Stultz, Barbara Halvorson, Carolyn Brittingham

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Suffolk Retired Teachers

The Suffolk Retired Teachers Association (SRTA) has continued to make a difference in the City of Suffolk. Our goal for this year was to increase membership. We welcomed to the organization three new members: *Cidra Davis, Gloria Mizelle and Beverly S. Washington-Williams*. Your participation makes SRTA stronger and visible!

SRTA held two in-person meetings at The Salvation Army to discuss ways of recruiting retired educators and some general projects/activities to promote for the year. Members actively participated in and supported the following: purchased and collected can and dry goods for the pantry at Salvation Army and gave monetary donations to Genieve Shelter, Salvation Army and the American Cancer Society. These organizations provide services and support to our community.

SRTA is elated to award an annual scholarship to a high school senior that will be attending a college or university for the 2024-2025 academic year. Scholarship applications are available at the three high schools in Suffolk, Virginia. The amount to be awarded will be \$1,000 dollars. Determination and education is the key to success!

SRTA continues to face challenges in increasing membership, the average age of existing VRTA members, and health issues have impeded the participation of its members. We will continue to work collaboratively with school personnel to help students reach their dreams and aspirations.

Plans are being implemented to donate books and school supplies to two elementary schools in Suffolk, Virginia. Some members will attend the VRTA Spring Delegate Assembly on April 16-17, 2024, at the Doubletree Hotel in Richmond, Virginia.

SRTA remains a strong voice on public education for all students. The SRTA looks forward this year to recruiting more members and partnering with other organizations, as we continue to care, serve, and promote public service that transform lives.

### Create the Good

The National Retired Teachers Association provides quarterly calls to VRTA leadership on topics of interest. One of this year's sessions was on the Create the Good website at [createthegood.org](http://createthegood.org).

The website is free to organizations including state, district, and local retired groups and can be used for Do It Yourself Project Guides (like Back to School Supply Drives, many more), and to Post and Edit Volunteer Opportunities.

Anyone looking for volunteer opportunities can go on this website, enter their zip code, and find opportunities to volunteer on the Create the Good website. Our members seeking volunteer opportunities can use the website as they can search using zip codes and distances from the zip code.

### Arlington Retired Teachers

In September we held our first meeting in our new location, the Unitarian Universalist Church in Arlington. We welcomed a past popular show, the Appraisal Roadshow with Steve Gouterman from Paradigm Experts and Daniel Sanders from Four Sales LTD-Estate Sale Company. Many brought treasures for appraisal. We learned that most china, glass, and ceramic items are only worth something if there is a market for them! To the happy surprise of one attendee, an autographed Beatles photo was deemed valuable—at least \$700, but possibly \$3,000!

For many years, ARTA has supported the residents of the Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence with needed personal items and with gift cards to use during outings. This year, President Lynne Lilly gathered members' generous gifts at her home and coordinated the delivery of the beautifully wrapped presents to the Residence.

We returned to the Goodwin House retirement community where resident member and former ARTA president Lynn Juhl made the arrangements for our visit. Lynn was joined at lunch by other resident members. Twenty nonresident ARTA members rounded out the group's five tables. All savored a delicious lunch, joined in laughter, greeted old friends, made new friends, and shared APS memories. Our new ARTA banner was proudly displayed.

On February 14, we commemorated Black History Month by welcoming Scott Edwin Taylor, PhD., President and Director of the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. Dr. Taylor, a third-generation Arlington native and a popular past speaker, drew a crowd that included many first-time attendees. Very much a spokesperson and voice for Arlington's unsung Black citizens and their history, Scott shared information that was new for many of us, including that Freedman's Village, the first Arlington Black neighborhood, was begun by slaves freed 8-9 months before the Emancipation Proclamation. Other slaves escaped to come to Arlington. Many arrived with hope to learn to read, write and live the American Dream. The Village was Government-established to exist for two years and lasted for 32 years. Two present Arlington churches, Mount Olive and the AME Zion Church, began in Freedman's Village. For information about the Museum and its Arlington-focused exhibits visit

[www.arlingtonblackheritage.org](http://www.arlingtonblackheritage.org).



Mary Ann Bell and President Lynne Lilly present ARTA's holiday gifts to Katrina Holmes, Director at Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence.



Lynn & Rosalie Juhl, Nancy King, Mary Ann & Nick Penning at Goodwin House

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Floyd County Retired Teachers

The Floyd County Retired Teachers' Association is off and running for 2024. We meet in the months of March, May, July, September and November. We plan enjoyable and educational trips for our members in the "off" months.

Our March meeting will be held at Floyd County High School. Dr. Jessica Cromer, school superintendent, will talk about educational issues in the county. We are looking forward to a tour of the state-of-the-art CTE building, completed last year, at the high school. The food service classes will provide our lunch. We will have a Book Swap following our business meeting.

In July, we will meet at the beautiful Slusher Park with FCRTA treasurer Alice Slusher hosting. We will enjoy a potluck picnic on the grounds of the park, as well as fellowship with one another. Most of our meetings are held locally because our county is a haven of natural beauty and is brimming with music, art, local foods and wines and outdoor recreation.

Our association will be hosting the May District M meeting. The meeting has tentatively been scheduled to be held at the Floyd Country Store, which plays a central role in our community. Our District M guests may enjoy shopping for a jar of local apple butter, a pair of bib overalls, or a good old-fashioned dish cloth! The store is famous for its Friday Night Jamboree. We will have local musical entertainment and a speaker to talk to us about the history of the Floyd Country Store, which has been open since 1910. We will eat lunch on the premises. Reba Goff, our association and District M president, provides invaluable leadership to both groups

We continue to award \$300 min-grants to local teachers, as well as a generous scholarship to a graduating senior at Floyd County High School who will be pursuing a career in education after graduation. We make 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. We contribute canned food items to PLENTY, a local organization open to all residents in need of food.

We look forward to recruiting new members this year, and to giving back as much as we can to our county in which we take such pride.

### 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.

### PREA Continues Community Partnerships

The Portsmouth Retired Educators Association started our Back-to-School new year in partnership with the Third Baptist Church. We donated lots of needed school supplies, including 110 FILLED backpacks, to the Portsmouth Schools Foundation which will share with students throughout the school year.

In our November meeting, we brought needed items to re-stock the pantry shelves at Third Baptist Church which serves as a community hub for residents to receive assistance. We donated \$100 each to OASIS Food Ministry, Salvation Army, Union Mission, HER Shelter, Ida Barbour Learning Center, and the Effingham St. Family YMCA.

Members continue their on-going volunteer efforts within the Portsmouth community. They bag and distribute groceries monthly for the YMCA Food Pantry Weekend activities held every third Saturday in the parking lot of the Y, attracting those in need who might not feel comfortable coming inside to receive help. They also participate in reading and tutoring activities at various Portsmouth City Schools.



Pictures above show PREA members giving 100+ gift bags: blankets, toiletries, socks/booties, knitted scarves/hats/gloves to Bell's Residential, Mayfair Assisted Living, Fresenius/Goode Way Dialysis Center, Senior Sisters, Waterview Apartments, gave requested bed linens to the HER shelter and distributed bagged groceries at the annual WAVY-TV Coat Drive. All community agencies/groups requested assistance through our partnership with the Portsmouth Public Library, Little Grove Baptist Church, and the Effingham St Family YMCA. We also sponsored 4 siblings in the Giving Tree Wish List at the Y.

Our annual Pack the Bus for the HER shelter is scheduled for next month, March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Y, rain or shine. This annual community activity supports Women's History Month and lends needed support to victims of Homelessness and Domestic Violence-both impacting today's families.

We continue to be active and productive in serving our community and thank all who support us.

We look forward to the Spring Delegate Assembly in April and will celebrate our year of activities in the May Luncheon meeting when we present three \$1,000 scholarships to selected high school seniors.

### Attention District and Unit Presidents

Send updates or changes to the VRTA 2024-25 Directory to Leigh McKay at [clo49lm@gmail.com](mailto:clo49lm@gmail.com) (those are L's in the email and not ones) or call her cell 540-529-5131 by June 30, 2024.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Hampton's Year in Review

2023 has been a fulfilling year for the Hampton Retired Educators Association (HRTA). We moved our quarterly luncheon meeting location to the Hampton Yacht Club, which has been a very gracious and accommodating host. These quarterly meetings held in March, June, September, and December offered a mix of retiree education, scholarship awards, school donations, and good old peer camaraderie with fun.

The March meeting included a presentation by Oscar Alvarez from Adult Protective Services, who talked about avoiding scams. We each received a copy of the book, "Money Smart for Older Adults".

In June, we presented our annual high school scholarships and said farewell to their outgoing school division superintendent, Dr. Jeffery Smith. The following scholarships were given:

- Evelyn Dawkins Scholarship's recipient was Emily Ruch from Kecoughtan High
- Bessie Jacobs Scholarship's recipient was Renate Gerstner from Bethel High
- Two HREA scholarships were given, one each to Natalee Jackson and Ken'Nyah Wiggins, both from Bethel High.

In September, we collected and donated school supplies to Forrest Elementary, Principal Sara Meier. They we were also introduced to the new Hampton City Schools division superintendent, Dr. Raymond Haynes.

2023 ended with our December meeting, providing a mix of more heartfelt giving, adult education, and holiday fun. To encourage reading over the winter break, the HREA group collected and donated books to Mary Jackson Elementary School, Principal Ernriekus Williams enabling each child to go home with a gifted book. Two of our members gave a presentation on the "Lifelong Learning Programs" offered at Hampton University and Christopher Newport University. We also enjoyed a fun holiday ornament gift exchange game and Santa's Workshop, before wishing each other Happy Holidays.



Holiday Fun



Scholarship Recipients



Collected School Supplies

### Henrico Retired School Personnel

The Henrico Retired School Personnel Association held its fall luncheon at the Deep Run Recreation Center at Deep Run Park in Henrico County. The event was catered by Deep Run Roadhouse. We had very informative and entertaining information from Alexis Simms from Henrico FACE, Helen Wood, Henrico Christmas Mother; Kristin Blalock, CASA; and Brttany Flippen, Daniel Jongleux and Marci Goode from Henrico Education Foundation. We also enjoyed remarks from John Vithoukas, Henrico County Manager and Frank Thornton, Fairfield District Supervisor. Entertainment, food and fellowship were fabulous!

We gave our members an opportunity to donate and support our philanthropy projects: the schools' food banks, the HRSPA Scholarship Fund, the Henrico Christmas Mother and the Henrico Education Foundation.

### 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. Also because of copyright issues, pictures taken by a professional photographer cannot be used. If you send a PDF document, necessary changes cannot be made. Please send articles in Word. All submitted articles will be used if space permits. Articles received after the deadline will likely not be included. The deadline for the Fall 2024 newsletter is **Monday August 12, 2024.**

Susan Martin, Newsletter Editor

susanmartin730@gmail.com or 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA, 24090

### 2024 VRTA Marketplace

To get a table for YOUR local unit or district at the VRTA Fall Conference to sell items for your local or district unit, send an email to Karen Whetzel, VRTA President Elect, at [kswhetzel@gmail.com](mailto:kswhetzel@gmail.com) by the Spring Delegate Assembly registration deadline, March 26, 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, applicants will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Since the Double-tree now charges for each table, units/districts should bring their own tables.

### A Breakout Session Returns to the 2024 Spring VRTA Delegate Assembly

For the 2024 Spring Delegate Assembly, a breakout session will be held on Tuesday, April 16. There will be four sessions from which to choose.

One session will be on Leadership. Another will focus on Information for Treasurers. A third session is called "The Membership Funnel: Getting the Full Picture of Getting New Members." The final session will focus on Community Service: Why, How, and Reporting.



### Most Active Member

Patricia Holland presents Joyce Williams with the Most Active Member Award at the Fall 2023 VRTA Conference. Joyce is a member of the Roanoke County RTA and currently serves as State President of VRTA Virginia.

### Voting Delegates



Unit presidents should send the names of the unit's delegates to the Delegate Assembly to VRTA President Jean Marrow at [marrowj@aol.com](mailto:marrowj@aol.com) before the meeting in April.



VRTA 2024 Fall Conference  
September 30-October 1, 2024

Note that this is a Monday-Tuesday Conference.

The Executive Committee will meet on Sunday evening, September 29 or virtually before the conference.

### NRTA Advocacy Conference

Attendees at the Advocacy conference learned about the Assisting Caregivers Today (ACT) bipartisan, bicameral caucus in Congress and when talking to members of Congress, thanked those who are members (Senator Kaine, Representative Spanberger, Representative Kiggins are all members) and encouraged others to join the caucus. Talking points on care giving were used as Tina Whitaker (VRTA Legislative Co-Chair) and Karen Whetzel (VRTA President Elect) talked with staff in the offices of Representative Spanberger and Representative McClellan.

Prior to visiting Congress, NRTA provided a day of education including Federal Legislative Climate and Outlook, Federal and State Retirement Security Landscape, New Resources to Support Public Pension Advocacy, AARP's Social Security Campaign, Pension Advocacy Engagement as well as an overview of Policy Solutions at the Federal and State Levels to support caregivers. Learning helped as we engaged with representatives in Congress and will assist us in Virginia.

Joyce Williams, President of AARP Virginia and a VRTA member, was co-leader along with Mary Beth Dixon, Senior Advisor, NRTA, of a "Water Cooler Conversation" at the end of the day of learning. Joyce and Mary Beth helped attendees explore the topic, "Working with Your AARP State Officers,"

VRTA is part of a coalition working for Nursing Home Reform. Lobbyist Bonnie Atwood, Legislative Chair Bea Morris, and President Elect Karen Whetzel participate in this effort.

Participants in the Advocacy Conference were able to meet and talk with retired educator leaders from other states, learning how they are organized and how they function. Most of the states have paid staff, at least part time, which we don't have in Virginia.

Hearing about the upcoming AARP campaign on social security, and the history of AARP campaigns and work in Congress was eye opening! There are many myths about Social Security, and AARP plans to educate members and the public about them, and work to continue this program which retirees have worked for and deserve.

# Virginia Retired Teachers Association 2024 Spring Delegate Assembly

Monday, October 17—Wednesday, April 17, 2024 **Preliminary Schedule of Events**

## Monday, April 15, 2024

5:00—7:00 p.m. Executive Committee Meeting

## Tuesday, April 16, 2024

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 Exec Committee or Board of Directors**

12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Door Prize Drawings and Break

1:15 p.m.—2:15 p.m. VRS Presentation

2:15 p.m.—3:15 p.m. VRTA Benefits: Jim DuBrueler & Kevin McKannan

3:15 p.m.—3:30 p.m. Explanation of Breakout Sessions

3:30 p.m.—4:30 p.m. Breakout Session

4:30 pm Door Prize Drawings

**Evening Dinner, socializing on your own**

## Wednesday, April 17, 2024

**8 am to 8:50 am Biscuits, coffee, tea in hall**

8:00 a.m.—8:50 a.m. Registration—Maudie Scott

8:50 a.m.—9:00 a.m. Welcome, Invocation, Pledge

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Legislative Session

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Speaker: AARP Social Security 101

10:45 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Break

**11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Delegate Assembly (voting by delegates)**

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Installation of Officers for 2024 - 2026

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, April 15  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
\*\* MEETS \*\*  
5:00 PM—7:00 PM

**VRTA Delegate Assembly**  
**Registration Form**  
Monday, April 15-Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Tuesday, April 16  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETS  
9:00 AM-11:00 AM

**Note: Registration fees are per person. Each person attending the Delegate Assembly 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 Tuesday, March 26.**

**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
- ◇ Sliced Tri Tip of Beef with wild mushroom demiglace
- ◇ 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 **Tuesday, March 26**, by contacting the Hilton at **1-800-222-Tree** or **804-379-3800**. Attendees request the Virginia Retired Teachers' Association rate of \$138.00 night. Check-in is at 4:00 PM. Check-out is at 11:00 AM. The direct link for registration at

<https://shorturl.at/oC048>

Should you decide to make reservations directly through Hilton.com the **three letter group code you should use is 92D**. **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. Are you a voting delegate?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**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 March 26 to indicate you plan to have a table for the MarketPlace.

\*\* Only members of the Executive Committee will meet on Monday, April, 15 \*\*

The luncheon at 12:00 noon on Tuesday 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 Spring Delegate Assembly on **Wednesday only**, 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 biscuits will be available beginning at **8AM**. Each person in your party must fill out a separate form.**

**Personal information for VRTA Delegate Assembly 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 **Tuesday, March 26**.