



VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, N.R.T.A.—Division of The AARP

Spring 2012 Edition

From Your VRTA President



It is difficult to believe that I will soon be ending my term as VRTA president. It has been a privilege to work with the wonderful members of such a dynamic organization! It has also been a lot of work, but most of it has certainly been worthwhile. I have served you to the best of my ability. It is the help and backup of members, officers and committee chairpersons that has allowed me to move forward during my years as president.

We have made some changes. Registration for our two state meetings has been streamlined. The format of these meetings has been rearranged and we have had some great presenters, speakers and entertainers. The newsletter has had a big upgrade, and the directory has been presented in a revised format. We are under the IRS umbrella. Our bylaws have been updated. I have learned from my mistakes and attempted to rectify them. For example I have read and evaluated every comment on evaluation forms after each meeting. Then I have tried to meet your needs and requests. The Executive Committee and I have addressed every positive suggestion and constructive criticism. We've made changes such as where banners and scrapbooks are displayed, what types of presentations are offered, what is on the web site, etc. We have become better connected with Central Atlantic Insurance Company which provides us with great benefits. We have worked closely with the AARP and the NRTA to provide information, services and community service opportunities. We have given and received numerous awards.

It has been a real pleasure to travel to various districts and local units to speak and to meet our members. I treasure YOU. What a great group of interesting, hard working, dedicated retirees you are. I still have "car-will-travel" if you want me for future events.

One of the most important things we do is to maintain our presence in the Legislature with our lobbyist, our representatives and our members. There's a lot of crazy "stuff" going on in Richmond. It may not affect us personally, but we must guard our retirement system for future retirees. We must be vigilant and keep the legislators informed and warned that we care and we know what they are doing.

I'm never sure exactly what to write in these letters from the president so I am trying to keep it short. I won't even try to thank all the people by name who have worked so hard along side me for these two years. Without their help and support, I would have accomplished nothing.

On a personal note, I have been less than effective as your president for the past six months. I was in the hospital for major surgery on 4 different occasions and had way more time in recovery than I thought I could endure. (I have no patience with my body's fragility.) If I didn't answer your email or respond to a letter that you sent me, please accept my apology. I am playing a furious game of "catch-up" at this time. Thank you for your cards, calls, and emails while I was sick. I promise to continue to work hard for the VRTA. You are wonderful!

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"Make no mistake about it, there is a concerted, nationwide effort to destroy public education under the guise of reform and improving education. VRTA is working hard to preserve public education, the backbone of our society for two centuries. It is sad that more effort must be expended to save it than to improve it."

Report from the Legislative Committee



"A man works from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." This old saying aptly describes the work of the men and women in VRTA since our October meeting. Our members studied and became better informed on the issues and probably worked harder than they ever have as they met with and contacted legislators by phone, emails, and letters.

VRTA members spoke at all five of the budget hearings held around the state in January.

Bonnie Atwood, our lobbyist, worked tirelessly to support units and districts in their lobbying efforts. Also, she testified before numerous committees on our issues and represented us in meetings with other groups that have positions similar to ours. Jason Winter, our webmaster, posted information on the VRTA website to provide facts and statistics useful to us in lobbying. I tried to keep the membership informed by almost daily emailed legislative updates during the General Assembly session, and the members responded by using the information to make legislative contacts.

VRTA joined the Virginia Pension Coalition in order to partner with other groups to save the defined benefit retirement plan. We participated with this coalition in a tele-press conference and a tele-townhall to publicize information about retirement to both the public and our members across the state.

Make no mistake about it, there is a concerted, nationwide effort to destroy public education under the guise of reform and improving education. VRTA is working hard to preserve public education, the backbone of our society for two centuries. It is sad that more effort must be expended to save it than to improve it.

I encourage you to come to the spring Delegate Assembly in Blackstone April 23-24. Again this year, the VRS staff will make a presentation to the entire assembly. Since this article is being written just after crossover, legislation is far from finalized. In the Legislative Workshop on Monday, April 23, we will analyze the 2012 General Assembly session and begin our work for 2013. Successful advocacy depends on the preparation, strength, and continuous efforts on the grass roots level in each locality. All teachers know that our work is never done.

Bea Morris, Legislative Chair, can be contacted by telephone at 540-867-5109 or by email at beam1340@verizon.net.

Future VRTA Conferences

The fall conference this year will be October 8-9 in Blackstone, Virginia.

Entertainment for the October 2012 conference will be Madeline McNeil, presenting a dulcimer program. The key-note speaker will be Dara Dawn, senior legislative director for NRTA.

Dates for the 2013 conferences will be April 28-30 and October 6-8.

Visit the VRTA website at
www.vrta.org

Virginia Retired Teachers Association

"Organized November 28, 1936"

2010-2012 Officers

President	Helen Tippie	(540)330-3863 htippie@comcast.net
President-Elect	James Bradford	(540)261-3242 drjcb@embarqmail.com
Vice-President	Denise Carson	(757)898-1289 dewcarson@aol.com
Secretary	Dennis Henry	(540)635-4472 dohenry@embarqmail.com
Treasurer	Betty Craft	(276)228-5112 dbkcl2@msn.com
Past President	Kennon Bland	(434)836-0542 kbland112@comcast.net

VRTA Update From the Treasurer

By Betty Craft, Treasurer

Thanks to all for your cooperation during 2011-2012. The membership rosters will be available at the 2012 Spring Meeting for review by each unit. If your unit will not have a representative present, please have someone from your district pick up your roster. This process helps to keep our membership current. However, you may notify me at any time of a deceased member. For units with newly elected treasurers, please free to contact the State Treasurer if you have questions about submitting dues, the IRS Group Tax Exemption, or need Membership Enrollment Forms or Dues Settlement Statement Forms.

Each District and Unit listed by the IRS as subordinates of the VRTA Umbrella for tax exempt status is reminded to file with the IRS for the year ending June 30 by November 15. The VRTA Group Exemption Number is 5658. This number must be included along with the individual EIN on the return of each district or unit included in the Group Exemption of VRTA.

A reminder to all districts and units that are approved as a part of the VRTA Group Tax Exemption for IRS, that documentation must be on file with the State Treasurer to continue to be a part of the VRTA Group Tax Exemption Plan under section 501 c 4 of the Code. The documentation includes: Constitution/Bylaws signed by two officers and the date approved or amended, the current budget (2011-2012) signed by two officers the date approved, and the Policy Statement signed by two officers and dated when approved (if not already submitted). If your district or unit has not submitted this documentation, do so immediately or it may be too late.

Four units have requested to be added to the list for approval on the IRS Report that will be submitted March 2012. Three units have completed documentation and one still has to submit materials. This will make a total of 81 districts and units approved.

Report from the Virginia General Assembly

By Bonnie Atwood, VRTA Lobbyist



Politics has always been a rough and tumble world. Those who would make, execute, and enforce our laws are generally well educated, gentlemanly or ladylike (for the most part), and gifted in verbal and social skills. But, in spite of that civilized demeanor, they can sure pack a punch.

They've been packing punches pretty hard for retirees and educators the last couple of years. Without getting into the many technicalities right now, let's take an overview of just a few of this year's bills affecting teachers (note this was written in February, so some points may be outdated when you read this):

Hybrid retirement plans: I think these are designed to try to make everybody happy, but they don't. This year's proposal would create a new hybrid program, administered by VRS, with components of both DB and DC. New state employees (commencing after 2014) would make an irrevocable election to participate in hybrid or traditional. Employees in service at the end of 2013 would have the opportunity for a one-time irrevocable election of hybrid.

Reduced retirement plans: "Reduced" is a relative term, and some proposals don't call themselves reductions, but that's what they are. If a retiree is required to pay more money into the system, then the money in his pocket is reduced—whether the bill proponents call it that or not.

Teachers' contracts: This was a nail-biter, and as I write this, it's not over. The Senate defeated a Senate bill (promoted by the governor), which would phase out the current employment system in favor of a three-year contract plan, which would make it a lot easier to dismiss teachers. The vote was rather close. The House version did cross over to the Senate, so we'll see what happens.

Tax credits for scholarships for private schools: A Senate Bill and a House Bill with innocuous sounding language are making their way through both sides of the Capitol. They would establish tax credits to corporations who provide scholarships to students who attend private schools. What's wrong with that? It takes away our resolve, not to mention our financing, to make public schools good, better and great.

Health credits: We had legislators from both House and Senate introduce bills that would help, through health credits, our personnel who are not necessarily teachers. Both got left in committee.

Bad news notwithstanding, the good news is that teachers and other labor groups are fighting back.

This is the year to be unified, strong, and confident. It's hard for me even to imagine a teacher needing to be told such a thing. Teachers still stand out as models for me, as orators, as community-minded, and as exemplary citizens. Keep it going!

On a personal note, thank you to all who expressed sympathy for the death of my mother. She was a wonderful person. She was not a professional teacher as you are, but as a mother, she was a "teacher" to me. And she possessed all these qualities that I so much admire.

News from Around the Commonwealth

District M Creates Banner

In spring 2011 the District M Retired Teachers Association asked each local unit to contribute a quilt square for the district banner. Mrs. Effie Brown, retired from Floyd County Schools, volunteered to create the Floyd County square. Mrs. Brown has been a member of the RTA since 1974.

Mrs. Brown created the pattern for the square, which was called "Little Red School House." The pattern originated in either New Hampshire or Vermont in the 1890s. After an attempt to create the square and finding the red dye in the fabric bled onto the white, she enlisted the help of Judy Blackwell, a local historian to help finish the work. The "Little Red School House" is now the center block for the District M RTA banner.

Effie Brown, who recently celebrated her 101st birthday, is known for her hand sewn quilts. She has donated close to 30 sample quilt squares, along with the stories behind them, to the Floyd community through the Old Church Gallery, located on Wilson Street in Floyd.



Effie Brown with the "Little Red School House" quilt square.



Hampton Retired Teachers Association

The Fall meeting of HRTA was held at the Hampton Roads Convention Center in Hampton, Virginia. The featured speakers of the presentation, "The VRS and You: What Retired Educators Need to Know," were Donna Blatecky, Deputy Director of the Virginia Retirement System, and Jeanne Chenault, Director of Public Relations of VRS. The members brought school supplies for the students at Bryan Elementary School and made monetary donations for the uniform fund at Aberdeen Elementary School.

In December the meeting was held in the Embassy Suites Ballroom. Members, dressed in their holiday attire, enjoyed a program of holiday music presented by Nancy Watkins, a retired educator from Chesapeake, Virginia.



Winners of the door prizes were Doris Williams, Melody McCloud, and Roselyn Moxley.



HRTA members Albernia Clark and Katie Luck collected donated school supplies.



District B Has Fall Meeting



The Fall meeting of District B was held at The Chesapeake in Newport News, Virginia. The members enjoyed an informative session offered by Langley Investment Services entitled "Taking Control: A Financial Management Presentation." The annual Memorial Service, led by Alma Landis, honored the 12 members who had died in the past year.

Music was provided by Shelia Rogers.

Pictured from left to right are new District B members, Barbara Gibson, and Barbara Biasi, and Investment Representative Advisors Bonnie Fox and Ann Marie

District D Presents Unit Awards

District D held its quarterly meeting on December 12, 2011. The meeting was hosted by the Dinwiddie Unit. District President, Daphne Miller from the Franklin-Southampton Unit, presented awards to individual units for scholarship donations, equalized membership in local, district, and state levels, banner display at VRTA meetings, reporting in a timely manner, and participating in community service projects.

District D is comprised of 12 units which represent 13 counties and four cities in central Virginia. The District was highly recognized at the VRTA fall meeting, receiving 52 of 210 awards. Daphne Miller, District president, expressed appreciation and pride for the work and encouraged units to continue the legacy of serving.

PPGRTA Members Attend State Meeting

Eight members of the Petersburg-Prince George Retired Teachers and District D Association attended the Virginia Retired Teachers fall meeting in Blackstone, Virginia. In attendance were Petersburg-Prince George co-presidents, Cynthia Mitchell and Lavern Turner; delegates Canzata Turner, Rosa D. Overby, Jeanette Watts, Arnetta Jones, Mavis Farrar and Andrew Farrar. The group attended meetings and seminars including one on the Virginia Retirement System.

A large group of PPGRTA members celebrated the holidays with District D members at Pamplin Park, including a buffet lunch and fantastic door prizes. PPGRTA members will present three \$500.00 scholarships. Questions about the association can be sent to marar19521@verizon.net.



Members of the Petersburg-Prince George Retired Teachers Association attended the state meeting of the VRTA.

In Memoriam

Howard M. Blackmon passed away at the age of 89. He was VRTA Treasurer for many years.

Victor Marco Egidi, age 77, died on December 21, 2011, in Lawrenceville, Georgia, after a battle with cancer. He was a past president of the VRTA.

VRTA Newsletter is published twice annually, in the spring and fall. Submit articles to Co-Editors Weldon and Susan Martin at 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090 or email at wlmartin@ntelos.net

Greenville RTA Active in Community Service Projects

The Greenville Retired Teachers Association was the recipient of several awards at the District D meeting held on December 12, 2011. The unit, under the leadership of Reverend George Pugh, has been very active in community service projects. Mrs. Genell Smith, community service chairman, documented 3,400 volunteer hours for 2011. Service hours included volunteering at the hospital, serving on boards such as Habitat for Humanity and Crater District 19. Many hours were also given in service to church boards and auxiliaries, visiting nursing homes and transporting neighbors to doctor's appointments and shopping. Special projects included donating books to a local day care and collecting canned food in participation with the third AARP Food Drive. For this effort the unit received a monetary award to benefit its scholarship fund. The unit awards two scholarships annually to high school graduates.



GRTA members who attended the District D Quarterly Meeting hosted by Dinwiddie: Back, from left, Carolyn High, Victoria Clark, Rev. George Pugh, President, Rev. McKinley Tucker, Genell Smith, Gladys Robinson and Patricia Holland. Front, from left, Ella Pugh, and Dorothy Grant.

Winchester RTA

The Winchester Retired Teachers' Association had a busy 2011. Some of the highlights of their year included the presentation of a scholarship of \$3,000.00 to Tessa Uiimer who is attending Shenandoah University, majoring in Music Education.

Terry Heder, Director of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, spoke to the organization at the September meeting relating the impact of the Civil War on Winchester and Frederick County.

The Daniel Morgan Middle School Chorus entertained the group with Christmas music in December.

The WRTA continues to collect food and/or money each month for the local Food Bank. This has been a very successful endeavor.

Roanoke County RTA Reports Its Volunteer Activities

Roanoke County Retired Teachers Association was one of many that participated in the September 2011 collection of non-perishables in connection with the AARP and the Ruritan Clubs. We collected nearly 1000 pounds of food at local Roanoke County Kroger Stores. What set us apart in that venture is that we won one of the \$150.00 random drawing prizes for participating! It was great fun as well as productive.

More recently our group participated in the Soup for Seniors Drive for the Fifth Planning District in coordination with the AARP and the League of Older Americans. The goal was to collect 30,000 cans of soup for the District. The goal was far surpassed with thousands of additional items such as crackers, tuna, peanut butter, etc. Our VRTA slogan of "We are to serve not to be served," has never had more meaning to our chapter than now.

At our September meeting and then again in November, the RCRT honored two of our own for their years of service in education and for their commitment to our unit since their retirement. Lucy Martin Harmon, our oldest active member at 97, retired in 1980 after years of dedication to the youth of our community. She demonstrates her commitment by continuing to attend our meetings. Christine Ferguson Huddleston retired as Assistant Principal of William Byrd High School in 1983 after her years in the classroom teaching science, math, and physical education and even coaching the boys' varsity basketball team for a while early in her career. She also served our organization as treasurer for years, stepping down only four years ago. Ladies, we love and appreciate you both!



Lucy Martin Harmon



Christine Ferguson Huddleston

Commonwealth of Virginia Budget Meetings

(Jim Bradford made the following report at the Lexington budget hearing of the Committee of Budget and Finance.)

My name is Jim Bradford, an officer (president-elect) in the Virginia Retired Teachers Association with 6900 plus members from 83 local retired teacher associations in Virginia. It is to be noted the VRS average annual teacher benefit is \$20,814. It is to be noted that 34% of the payment for this benefit comes from employer/employee contributions and 66% comes from the VRS investment of these funds.

The VRTA Legislative Priorities for 2012 are:

The VRTA supports the inclusion of the State Health-Credit Benefit Plan for school support personnel. This legislation passed the House of Representatives last year.

The VRTA supports the present VRS Defined-Benefit Plan over the Defined-Contribution Plan. Research supports the Defined-Benefit Plan as the less expensive of the two plans to the state.

The VRTA supports state programs that encourage persons to enter the teaching profession as a career. Let's give these professionals the freedom to teach.

The VRTA opposes additional legislation that increases the financial burdens on the local jurisdictions. Balancing the state budget has been at the expense of the localities. This has been a back door approach that has increased local property taxes in many jurisdictions.

Game Night

After the entertainment concludes on Monday evening at the VRTA Delegate Assembly, there will be a time for games and fellowship. Games are needed for this evening. If you have card or board games that you would like to bring for the evening, it would be greatly appreciated.



Give Us Your Ideas

The executive committee of VRTA welcomes suggestions for presenters and entertainment for both the fall and spring meetings. If you have suggestions for either presenters or for entertainment for future VRTA meetings, contact Jim Bradford at drjcb@embarqmail.com.

Committee to Review Possible District and Unit Changes

During the VRTA Delegate Assembly at Blackstone in April, the committee members would like to meet with each district president or representative and each local unit president or representative to express district and unit structural concerns. Some examples of possible changes are one unit as a district, an autonomous unit, a unit requesting transfer to a different district, dissolution of a unit or district, or a merger of two or more units. There could be no change in unit or district assignments. There will be an assigned break-out room on Monday to meet with the committee. Committee members are Jim Bradford, Chairman; Armand Harrell, Ridgeway; Dianne Shuler, Henrico; Mary Collins, Richmond/Henrico; and Kennon Bland, Danville.

Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center

707 Fourth Street Blackstone, VA 23824

Phone — 434-292-5308

Directions to VUMAC at Blackstone

From the North:

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

From the East:

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

From the South:

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

From the West:

Route 460 East to Nottoway Exit (Business 460)
Route 460 Business into Blackstone on Church Street

Free Tax Assistance Available

It's tax time, and that means it's time to gather your tax documents and prepare your forms and send them to the IRS. For those of you who would rather someone else prepare your taxes for you, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is available at 6,100 sites around the country in every state in the nation. Founded more than 40 years ago by volunteers, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide now has 35,000 volunteers, many of them retired teachers! Volunteers are trained by AARP Foundation Tax-Aide and certified by the IRS and have to pass a test to show their competence each year. If you or someone you know has a low to moderate income – no matter what age – you are invited to find a site near you at www.aarp.org/taxaide. Tax-Aide can even e-file your return, resulting in a quicker refund. The filing deadline this year is April 17.

Help Needed

Jessica Cox is a PhD student in Spanish applied linguistics at Georgetown University. Her dissertation is focused on the learning of foreign languages by younger and older adults. She is interested in recruiting former Spanish teachers as bilingual participants, especially older adults over the age of 60. Participants should have never studied Latin and should not attend religious services in Latin. They should be comfortable with computers.

The study consists of three sessions, each one to two hours long. Participants will be compensated for their time. The sessions will take place on Georgetown's campus or in a public location convenient for the participant between March and May.

If you are interested in the study, contact Jessica Cox as soon as possible. Jessica's email address is jgc48@georgetown.edu.

We're Not There Yet!

Technology – don't you love it! Maybe not. There has been an effort in the past two years to move into the age of paperless newsletters and into the better use of the Internet, email and the VRTA website for our organization. We aren't there yet. This newsletter will still be sent through the US Postal Service. We simply have not heard from enough members about their preference. Less than one tenth of you have returned the survey to tell us in what form you prefer to receive your newsletter and of those who answered many still want it in the mail. Use of the web site has increased and email has been more successful. We have a great Web Master who works for a pittance, but who serves us well.

Let's not give up on this technology effort. Near this note you will see another questionnaire about your newsletter preference. Please fill it out and return it to Helen Tippie. If you sent yours previously, you don't need to send it again. Thank you for helping us to "Get There".

Newsletter Distribution Survey (may be sent with Registration Form)

In order to better serve our members, we are exploring the possibility of emailing newsletters to those members who would prefer it. Below you will find a brief survey. Please take the time to fill it out and mail it to:

Helen Tippie
14 Berkley Court
Troutville, VA 24175

Name _____

I wish to continue receiving the newsletter by mail. _____

I can access the newsletter through the VRTA website. _____

I would prefer to have the newsletter e-mailed to me. _____

My e-mail address _____

Please notify us of any address changes.

In order to update our records, we need to know if an active or life member has not been receiving the newsletter. If you are aware of this, you may also let Helen Tippie know.

Thank you,

The Executive Board of VRTA

With Our Youth Awards – Fall 2011

In 2010-2011 thirteen units in Virginia submitted With Our Youth reports. Seven of those reports were sent to NRTA to be judged among those throughout the country for the national excellence award.

A total of 20,813 hours were volunteered serving a total of 22,268 youth in Virginia. The estimated dollar value of volunteer time in Virginia in 2010 was \$458,510.

Those units submitting With Our Youth reports were Amelia, Brunswick County, Charlotte County, Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Franklin/Southampton, Lunenburg/Nottoway, Patrick County, Petersburg/Prince George, Rockbridge, Shenandoah County, and Suffolk.

Brunswick County RTA received the NRTA National Excellence Award for work with youth. Rebecca Villarreal said in the press release, "The Brunswick County Retired Teachers Association is highly involved in the daily operation of the Brunswick County Mayfield Recreation Center. This center provides a much needed place for recreation for underserved black youth with approximately 3,000 youth served per year. Members from the association provide 4,000 volunteer hours through a variety of activities which include operating the center; keeping the playground, pool, and buildings safe and clean; providing a full-time day care; and assisting with fundraising."

Along with the Brunswick County Retired Teachers Association, the Virginia Retired Teachers Association was also a recipient of this year's NRTA With Our Youth Dedication Award. Both Brunswick County and the state of Virginia were chosen for their service to youth by an independent selection panel.

In a press release, Megan Hookey, vice president of NRTA said, "Retired educators and school personnel are unsung heroes in their communities. They continue to give of their time and expertise even after leaving the classroom. It is an honor to celebrate the skills, passion, and commitment of the members of the Virginia Retired Teachers Association and the Brunswick County Retired Teachers Association with NRTA With Our Youth Dedication Awards."

Community Service Recognition – Fall 2011

Seventeen units submitted Community Service reports, and all of them were "most active units." The units were Amelia, Augusta, Charlotte County, Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, Fauquier, Franklin/Southampton, Greenville, Lunenburg/Nottoway, Patrick County, Petersburg/Prince George, Rockbridge, Suffolk, Warren County, Winchester, and Wythe County.

A total of 67,028 hours were given to community service by Virginia's retired teachers. A dollar value of that volunteer time amounted to \$1,476,626.80. Based on community service volunteer hours the Charlotte County Retired Teachers Association was the Most Active Unit Award winner.

VRTA Insurance Committee

The VRTA Insurance Committee has announced that the contract for our Agent of Record, John Jones, has been extended for an additional five year period by unanimous vote of the VRTA Board of Directors at the May 9th Blackstone meeting. Mr. Jones and Central Atlantic Insurance Services have provided exemplary service to our membership for the past 21 years.

We are pleased to announce that the VRTA Benefits website is up and running as of May 1. The web address is vrtabenefits.org. Members are encouraged to visit the website or call John Jones at 800-543-4287 regarding our endorsed insurance products.

This committee and all the VRTA members are indebted to Central Atlantic Insurance Services and Mr. Jones for their devoted commitment to our health care.

Opportunity to Volunteer

Caryn Bonner is a MBA student at Georgetown University. She is working on a class project for a local nonprofit organization called Mattie Miracle (<https://www.mattiemiracle.com>). This organization is devoted to improving the lives of children with cancer. The project involves an in-hospital education program which would like to recruit retired teachers as volunteers. Trained educators are uniquely qualified to work with and engage these children who need intellectual stimulation and a sense of normalcy while receiving cancer treatments.

Members of VRTA, especially those living in the DC Metro area, can contact Caryn Bonner if interested in volunteering. Caryn's email address is cbb38@georgetown.edu.

VRTA Delegate Assembly to Meet

The VRTA Delegate Assembly will meet at the Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center on April 23rd and 24th. Hopefully, you can make plans to attend. On Monday afternoon there will be a general session to bring members up-to-date about issues relating to the Virginia Retirement System. Participants will then be able to choose from a variety of break-out sessions. After dinner the group will be entertained by Ricky Cox who is a faculty member at Radford University. He will present a program of Appalachian music and folklore. After the evening program concludes, those who would like to gather to play cards or games may do so.

The business meeting will be held on Tuesday morning. If you are a voting delegate, please indicate that on your registration form. If you are not certain whether or not you are a delegate, please check with your unit president. Name tags will be marked to indicate voting delegates. Also on Tuesday Brian Jacks from AARP will present the keynote address.

Plan to join your fellow VRTA members in Blackstone in April.

Brian Jacks to Present Keynote Message During Delegate Assembly



On April 24th Brian Jacks will speak to the Spring Delegate Assembly of the VRTA. He serves as Associate Director for AARP's Virginia state office. In this role he directs volunteer programs and community service. Working with local community leaders, Jacks leads programs with

volunteers serving on AARP Virginia's Community Outreach Teams in the western parts of the commonwealth. He has overseen educational campaigns which increased intergenerational physical activities opportunities in the greater Richmond area.

Brian Jacks' educational background includes an Industrial Management degree from Purdue University with a concentration in Health Sciences. His favorite physical activities include backpacking in the wilderness, kayaking on the James River, and sailing catamarans on Lake Michigan.

Who is a delegate?

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

Conference Schedule

Sunday 6:30pm — Executive Committee Meeting (Order box supper, if wanted)

Monday 8:45am-11:45am — Registration 9:30am — Board of Directors meeting
12:45pm — Legislative Assembly 2:00pm — Workshop Sessions
6:30pm — Evening Events

Tuesday 8:45am — Last Pickup of Registration Packets
9:15am — Delegate Assembly and Keynote Message

Ricky Cox to Perform Traditional



During the evening of April 23rd at the VRTA Delegate Assembly in Blackstone, Ricky Cox will entertain. He teaches Appalachian folklore, American literature, and an introductory course in Appalachian studies at Radford University. As an associate of Radford University's Appalachian Regional and Rural Studies Center, he coordinates the Farm at Selu, a living history site representing 1930s farm life in Southwestern Virginia.

Cox earned an Associate in Applied Science degree in machine technology from New River Community College and a BA in history and a MA in English from Radford University. He was a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia: An Introduction to the Region* (University of Tennessee Press, 1996), with Grace Toney Edwards and JoAnn Asbury. Cox co-authored *The Water-Powered Grist Mills of Floyd County Virginia: Illustrated Histories 1770-2010* with the late Frank Webb.

On April 23rd Ricky Cox will present a program of traditional Appalachian music for the VRTA. He will combine lecture and performance, accompanied by guitar and old-time banjo. Ballads and lyrical folk songs will be included in his performance. This will be a highlight of the VRTA Delegate Assembly.

Attention Districts and Local Units!!!

Don't forget to bring your banners and scrapbooks for display in the Registration Lobby at the Delegate

VRTA Delegate Assembly

April 23-24, 2012 Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center

NOTE: Registration fees and lodging rates are per person, not per room or per couple.

Each person attending the conference should fill out a registration form.

Registration postmarked by Friday, April 6, 2012	\$25.00	Amount paid _____	
(Late registration) _____	\$35.00		
	One Night	Two Nights	Total
Lodging: Main Building (one person/room-\$45.00/night)	_____	_____	_____
(two persons/room-\$42.50 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____
(three persons/room-\$40.00 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____
Goodson Lodge (one person/room-\$55.00/night)	_____	_____	_____
(two persons/room-\$52.50 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____
(three persons/room-\$50.00 per person/night)	_____	_____	_____

Roommates _____

Total for Registration and Lodging \$ _____

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

Meals: <u>Sunday</u> – Boxed Supper – 6:00pm	\$9.00	_____
<u>Monday</u>		
Breakfast – 8:00 am	\$7.00	_____
Lunch – 12:00 Noon	9.00	_____
Supper – 5:00pm	10.00	_____
<u>Tuesday</u>		
Breakfast – 8:00 am	\$7.00	_____
Lunch – 12 Noon	9.00	_____

Sub Total for Meals \$ _____

Total of enclosed check to VRTA (For total add Registration fee, Lodging and Meals) \$ _____

Mail completed registration form and check, payable to VRTA, **no later than April 6, 2012.** Send to: Weldon Martin, 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090 Phone: 540-473-2636 E-mail: wlmartin@ntelos.net

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT – NAME _____ PHONE _____

NAME OF LOCAL UNIT _____ DISTRICT _____

ROOM PREFERENCE _____ (Will be honored, if possible, as forms are received.)

SUNDAY ARRIVAL TIME (if applicable) _____. **(May register any time after 4:30 pm)**

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS (List on back if necessary.) _____

ARE YOU A VOTING DELEGATE? YES NO

VRTA
Helen Tippie, President
14 Berkley Court
Troutville, VA 24175

Return Service Requested

U. S POSTAGE PAID Daleville, VA Permit No. 38 ZIP CODE 24083 PRSRT STD

From Megan Hookey

One of the many common bonds that exist between your Virginia Retired Teachers Association (VRTA), AARP and NRTA is the value we place on volunteers. Quite simply, without volunteers none of our organizations would have had the decades of success that we have each experienced. Our connection to volunteers is not only part of our legacy but essential to our future.

I am pleased to let you know that AARP has recently made a re-commitment to its volunteers through the creation of a new department called the Office of Volunteerism and Service. I am also pleased to share that I have been selected as the new Vice President of Volunteerism and Service. The shift in my position will enable me to further support and promote the amazing work of retired educator volunteers who give so generously of their time to your VRTA as well as to AARP and NRTA activities. I will also be closely working with the newly formed Volunteer Engagement Advisory Council and with the first-ever National Volunteer Director, a volunteer position to be appointed.

Please let me assure you that NRTA and its team are not going away. NRTA will continue to be a department that is part of the States & Communities team within AARP, and will maintain its focus on supporting the needs and interests of the NRTA Network of state and local REAs. Our work on pensions is needed now more than ever and we are tapping into new levels of support from AARP on this critical area. Additionally, NRTA's leadership and membership development work will continue with virtual and in-person gatherings. Furthermore, our creative and inspiring work in community service and outreach will continue, and will likely be enhanced through the work of the new Office of Volunteerism and Service. Your interactions with NRTA will be unchanged and it is my goal to help develop and share additional resources that will strengthen the support you provide to your volunteers.

I am delighted that this position will allow me to remain connected to NRTA through this new department that is dedicated to strengthening AARP and NRTA's support for our most valuable, inspiring and enduring asset: our volunteers.

With best regards,

Megan