



# VRTA Newsletter

Publication of Virginia Retired Teachers Association

Member, NRTA—Division of The AARP

Fall 2013 Edition

## Your Voice Makes a Difference

**Jim Bradford, VRTA President**



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

What retirement benefits did your grandparents have?

What retirement benefits did teachers have?

Who initiated the change for retirement benefits?

The desire of retired teachers to encourage and promote retirement benefits for teachers and other Americans can be

documented by the following:

### Virginia

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

1942 - The Virginia General Assembly passed the Retirement Act.

1950 - All Virginia teacher salaries were equalized.

1952 - VRS became an independent trust fund.

### National

1947 - Dr. Percy Andrus, teacher, founded the National Retired Teachers Association.

1958 - Dr. Percy Andrus, teacher, founded the AARP.

1982 – NRTA merged with the AARP.

1935 – President Roosevelt established Social Security.

1965 - Medicare and prescription benefits were established by the U. S. Congress.

2010 – Affordable Care Act was passed by the U. S. Congress.

My message to each VRTA member is to honor the past, but recognize the fact that your retirement benefits are under tremendous political pressure for change. The NRTA, VRTA, and AARP have an overwhelming challenge of safe guarding your retirement benefits. The VRTA state conferences have been a successful forum for informing the membership with factual information. The VRTA conferences provide a meaningful and effective way for our membership to address the membership's legislative goals and objectives.

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“This year there will be a striking difference between our approach to legislators and the approach of businesses and other interest groups as we focus on the positive and look for the good....We are going to appeal to the human need that money and fear do not assuage.”

### President's Goals and Objectives

**Membership Enhancement** – 60,000 plus Virginia retired teachers – 7000 plus

VRTA members—Continue to increase VRTA members.

**Legislative** – Keep members informed about legislative concerns/interests.

**Maintain Professional Relations and Contacts** —Work with other groups to promote VRTA/NRTA interests.

**Volunteerism** – Encourage members to be active in youth and community activities. Teachers/educators are a very talented group.

**NRTA** – Encourage membership for a national voice in legislative issues.



## FOCUS ON THE GOOD

Recently, I heard a sermon in which a reference was made to an English philosopher who was studying evil. I can't think of a more depressing and less productive way to spend time. Although there is an abundance of evidence of evil in the world, we only need to stop and think for a minute to realize how much good also exists. Good just usually doesn't make the front page. It would be foolish to ignore the presence of evil and of problems around us; however, down through history, those who have made a positive impact on the world have believed that good overcomes evil. Without this belief, they would not have had the perseverance to pursue their dreams and the stamina to overcome obstacles. Therefore, the challenge for VRTA this year is to focus on the positive and look for the good.

Our history reminds us of successes in the past, recent ones being the establishment of the enhanced retirement benefit and the health insurance credit with additional improvements and the defeat of the attempts of legislators to place limits and requirements on VRS investments. These successes resulted from knowledge of the issues and the persuasive techniques teachers used in their classrooms for years. Although we sometimes refer to ourselves as education advocates lobbying for or against a particular bill, we really are "encouragers" with the goal of bringing out the best in others who will work to provide "the good" not just for ourselves, but for others who will follow us.

This year there will be a striking difference between our approach to legislators and the approach of businesses and other interest groups as we focus on the positive and look for the good. Legislators are besieged by lobbyists with deep pockets and those who demand or threaten in order to be successful. We are going to appeal to the human need that money and fear do not assuage.

We hope that every unit will have at least one member at the Legislative Workshop in Blackstone on Monday, October 7, where we will discuss this approach. Also, immediately after lunch on Monday, VRS staff will make a presentation to the assembly in the auditorium.

Together, with determination and a belief that good eventually will overcome problems, we look forward to a productive, successful 2014 General Assembly session.

Bea Morris  
VRTA Legislative Chair  
540-867-5109

### 2013 Fall Meeting Schedule

Sunday 7:00pm — Executive Committee Meeting

Monday 8:am — Breakfast  
9:00am — 11:30am — Registration  
9:30am — Board of Directors meeting  
11:45am — Lunch  
12:50pm — Virginia Retirement System Assembly  
2:00pm — Workshop Sessions  
6:00PM — Supper  
7:15pm — Entertainment  
8:30pm — Popcorn and Bingo

Tuesday 8:00am — Breakfast  
9:00am — Morning Session  
11:10am — Keynote Speaker  
12.00noon — Lunch

### Virginia Retired Teachers Association

*"Organized November 28, 1936"*

2012-2014 Officers

President—James Bradford	(540)261-3242 drjcb@embarqmail.com
President-Elect—Phyllis Eastridge	(276)694-6766 pneastridge@embarqmail.com
Vice President—Dennis Henry	(540)635-4472 doheny@embarqmail.com
Secretary—Daphne Miller	(757)638-1994 ma_d_miller@hotmail.com
Treasurer—Weldon Martin	(540)473-2636 wlmartin@ntelos.net
Immediate Past President Helen Tippie	(540)330-3863 htippie@cox.net



### A Word from Our Lobbyist by Bonnie Atwood

I think that most of you, if not all of you, know about my serious illness this year. For those who don't, I will briefly say that after a wonderful Christmas and New Year's holiday, I was looking forward to getting back to life at the Virginia General Assembly. As I learn more each year, and step up my skills, it is actually fun to strategize and to spar with the decision makers. The year 2013 was going to be my first year free of eldercare; I felt like I was in perfect health; and I was going to give lobbying my full attention.

But that first week of January, I was diagnosed with a form of leukemia, picked up by a routine blood test. I was rushed into the hospital, and a brand new—and harsh course of chemotherapy was immediately begun. Many of you have undergone chemo, and various treatments, so I don't have to tell you how it ravages your body and tries to rob you of all your hopes and dreams. It was especially frustrating to be lying in a hospital bed that was just a short walk to the Virginia Capitol, which is where I wanted to be.

But my story has a very happy ending, and the Virginia Retired Teachers Association is very much a part of that. I felt your prayers they gave me strength. I received notes and cards and emails from so many of you. That's what got me through.

I went home from the hospital in April, weak but lucky to be alive. I could not go out at all, but I could read the papers, and witness the shocking news coming out of the Capitol. I have had improvement ever since. Every day is a little victory.

This coming year will be a critical one for VRTA. Frightening stories about pension rights are playing out all over the country. This year I am strong; this year I am re-committed; and this year our VRTA team will be a strong voice working with the Virginia legislative process. I promise you that.

It's a new day. As you know, I am totally nonpartisan. I will support the women and men who work best for VRTA, no matter which side of the aisle they sit. With help from all of you, I will do my best to explain YOUR views. We've had a rocky time these past few months with the highest elected official in the Commonwealth, but we are on the verge of an election. I am following each candidate and his platform. During this election season, I will be speaking personally with each one of the statewide candidates. Some I see as dangerous for the priorities of VRTA; others I find to be more helpful. I will continue to work with Bea Morris to bring out all relevant information so that we can be an informed membership.

Regarding the Senators and Delegates, the time most effectively spent is the time spent with those who are resting on middle ground: legislators who may not have yet taken a stand for retired teachers, but who have not dug in their heels against us. I can identify three issues right off the bat that have to be on our radar: 1. Avoiding becoming another Detroit. 2. Watchdogging the homeschool movement, which is now being framed as a civil right. 3. Examining national educational standards initiatives, like online learning and Common Core.

Identifying these individuals and providing a clear, accurate, persuasive, persistent message is the key. Your membership has done a great job of communicating with your lawmakers. Any good salesman will tell you: don't stop. You and I must keep courteously reminding them who we are and what we stand for, building relationships that will take us well beyond the year 2014, and serve the members who are yet join us. These are services that I will provide for you, and it is my pleasure to do so.

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### RETIRED TEACHERS DAY IN VIRGINIA

In 1996 the General Assembly passed a resolution declaring January 31 Retired Teachers Day in Virginia. However, until last year, this designation had not been observed. On January 31, 2013, eighteen retired teachers gathered at the General Assembly building and met with Del. Ken Plum and Del. Joe Morrissey and then were introduced at the beginning of the noon session in the Senate by Sen. John Miller and in the House by Del. Morrissey.

**On Thursday, January 30, 2014, we are planning a similar observance. (January 31, a Friday, is not the best day to meet legislators.) Please plan to join us as we talk with legislators and are recognized in both chambers of the General Assembly.**

Details of the day will be discussed at the Legislative Committee Workshop at Blackstone on Monday, October 7. Information will be posted on the website and will be sent to district presidents later in the fall.

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## Phyllis Eastridge Attends NRTA Community Service Conference



Phyllis Eastridge, VRTA President-Elect and Community Service Chair, represented Virginia's retired teachers at the NRTA Community Outreach and Service Conference held at the Union League Club of Chicago, June 10-13, 2013. Forty-three executive directors, presidents, community service chairs, and volunteers from throughout the country were represented at the conference which was aimed at building skills, networking with community service counterparts from around the country, and sharing innovative approaches to engaging volunteers.

The theme for the conference was **Better Together: Inspiration and Innovation in Community Outreach and Service**. Phyllis enumerated projects in which VRTA members were active. Those areas included community service programs, successor planning, sharing recognition programs, volunteer recruitment, and logging volunteer hours. Other breakout sessions included recruitment and retention of membership, volunteer recognition brainstorming, telling volunteer stories, and inspired leadership.

Leaders at the conference were Rebecca Villarreal, NRTA; Richard Leider, Life Reimagined Institute for Innovation; Jennifer Baier, Associate State Director, and Terry Edwards, Innovation Advisor for Office of Volunteerism.

## Focusing on Our Past

VRTA President Ruth S. Andrews was named Virginia Retired Teacher of the Year at NRTA's 50th Anniversary Convocation in San Diego, California. During her presidency, the Virginia General Assembly declared January



Ruth Andrews

31 to be Retired Teachers' Day to honor retirees and led to our Lobby Day. VRTA pushed the passage of a state constitutional amendment making our retirement funds a true trust; our first health care premium credit paid by the state passed; we maintained the automatic COLA (cost of living

Rosa Davis Overby,  
VRTA Historian

## Treasurer's Tidbits

VRTA lost a faithful and hardworking member, and I lost a friend, when our immediate past treasurer, Betty Vance Craft, passed away this summer. Although fighting cancer during much of her tenure as treasurer, Betty led VRTA through a difficult financial period. VRTA was spending much more than it was taking in when Betty took on the job as treasurer of VRTA. In her quiet, slow and methodical way, Betty led the organization back to a much more stable financial status, where we are once again spending within our means. Betty will be greatly missed and her support and assistance to your current treasurer during this transitional year has been gratefully received and appreciated.

Reminders for local unit and district treasurers:

There will be a session for treasurers at the Fall Conference on October 7 in Blackstone.

Treasurer contact info:

Weldon Martin  
1049 Martins Lane  
Fincastle, VA  
Email [wlmartin@ntelos.net](mailto:wlmartin@ntelos.net)  
Phone 540-473-2636

Annual dues for new or renewing VRTA members are \$15.00. Life memberships are available for a one-time payment of \$200.00.

Membership enrollment forms and Dues Settlement Statement forms will be available for pick-up by treasurers or designees at the Fall Conference or can be mailed upon request.

Treasurers are requested to notify the state treasurer when members pass away.

If you are one of the districts and units that are approved as part of the VRTA Group Tax Exemption for IRS (Group Number 5658) as a 501 (c)4 tax exempt organization, you are reminded of the following:

Submit your 2013-14 budget, signed and dated by two officers to the state treasurer no later than December 31, 2013. (Must be done annually.)

If you revise your constitution /bylaws, you must submit a signed and dated copy of the revised document to the state treasurer.

**Please note!!! You must file your e-postcard on line at IRS.gov in order to remain in the group!!** This must be done in the time period from July 1, 2013 – November 15, 2013. You will need to have your unit's EIN number available when you file online. This is a simple process but it must be done annually in order to remain in the group. If your district or unit is not currently included in the VRTA Group Tax Exemption Plan under section 501 © 4 of the Code, you may submit the necessary documentation to the VRTA treasurer prior to March 1, 2014, along with a check to VRTA for \$18.00 to defray the cost associated with adding the district or unit to the group.

Please contact the treasurer for more information.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### District B

The May, 2013 District B Retired Teachers Association luncheon meeting was held at The Chesapeake in Newport News, VA.

The scholarship recipients were announced - Kristina Clarin of Denbigh High School in Newport News, VA, and Kaleigh Crouse of Poquoson High School in Poquoson, VA.

Nancy Paschall, Executive Director of Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center in Toano, VA, gave a video-talk about the organization. Averaging over 100 students per week, ranging in age from 4 to 80, the center provides horse-related activities to help the students "reach their potential and make dreams come true." After the question and answer session, the luncheon attendees were encouraged to volunteer at the facility.



Pictured from left to right: Kaleigh Crouse, Nancy Paschall, MSgt. Lydia Crouse (Kaleigh's mother) and Fran Hermance (Poquoson Unit President).

### District G's Spring Meeting

District G RTA held a spring meeting on May 8, 2013, at Traditions Restaurant in Harrisonburg. Jim DuBrueler Jr. of Creekside Insurance Providers presented the program on impact of health care reform on retirees and maintaining financial security as a senior. Thirty-eight members attended; the District G business meeting followed. Officers elected for 2013 - 15 were Karen Whetzel, President; Randy Bailey, Vice President; Rich Thompson, Secretary; and Betty Carey, Treasurer. Legislative Chairperson Beatrice Morris reported on actions from the General Assembly. VRTA attendees Jackie Stephenson, Virginia Nowlin, Beatrice Morris, and Shirley Crawford talked about the VRTA Delegate Assembly which they attended. Each local unit (Augusta, Bath/Highland, Page, and Shenandoah) mentioned activities they held for the year.



Jim DuBrueler, Jr.

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### Hampton Retired Teachers Association

The June luncheon-meeting of the Hampton Retired Teachers Association was held at the Embassy Suites in Hampton, VA. A memorial service was held for deceased members: Gabriel Christie, Beatrice Courtney, Bessie Jacobs, Angela Lieblein, Frances Pearson, William Still and Richetta Weaver. Mrs. Sue Smith, Family and Consumer Sciences teacher at Kecoughtan High School, explained the Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow course which the two student scholars had taken last year.

The 2013 scholarship recipients were introduced, and Superintendent Linda Shifflette gave congratulatory remarks. Hannah Ruck and Katherine Spinelli, HRTA Student Scholars; Sieu Tran, 2013 Elizabeth Jordan Scholar were the scholarship recipients for this year.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### FRANKLIN/SOUTHAMPTON RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



Members seated Left to right: Callie Williamson and Mary Powell  
Standing left to right: Dorothy Jones, Rosalind Holland, Sylvia Claud, Josephine Jones, Carol Logan, Annie Johnson, Daphne Miller, Cheryl Roberts, Rose Galloway, Louise Bryant, Catherine Wilson, Elizabeth Barnes, Effie King, and Marvia Goode. Present but not pictured: Jean Copeland and James Wilson the photographer.

Franklin/Southampton retired Teachers' Association held its first scholarship banquet on Saturday, April 20, 2013 at the Sportsman's Association, Franklin, Virginia.

The mistress of ceremony was Mrs. Marvia Goode who gave the purpose. The welcome was given by our treasurer, Mr. James Wilson. Scripture/Prayer given by Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Goode, pastor Emeritus of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church. Greetings from Mr. Berry Cheatam, vice mayor of the city of Franklin, Virginia; also, Mr. Dallas O Jones chairman of Southampton County Board of Supervisors.

The speaker was Rev. Dr. Lillie A. Faison, Associate minister of Shiloh Baptist Church, Boykins, Virginia, who was introduced by Mrs. Rose Galloway, Chair.

Our very own president, Mrs. Daphne M. Miller was honored. Reflections were given by her daughter, Miss Crystal M. Miller. A tribute to the honoree was made by musician, Mr. Charles Haskins who rendered other musical selections throughout the program. A token of appreciation from the unit was presented by Miss Dorothy Jones.

Acknowledgements were extended to the participants spiritually and financially for the success of our first scholarship banquet.

We are proud to announce that Miss Katrina Williams is the recipient of our 2013 annual scholarship. She is a graduate of Southampton High School. She will attend Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia, in the fall, studying in the area of Early Childhood Education. She will enter as a sophomore due to taking dual credits at Paul D. Camp College, Franklin campus. We wish her much success.

### Hampton Retired Teachers

The highlight of the March, 2013 HRTA meeting at the Hampton Roads Convention Center was a presentation about the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute (HUPTI). Proton therapy is non-invasive, and its advantages are that it precisely targets tumors, spares healthy tissue and has reduced side effects. After a question and answer session, the HRTA members were invited to tour the facility and did so a few weeks later. That experience provided more information and opportunities to ask questions and a tour of this state of the art facility.



Meeting Attendees - Left to right: Monica Brown, HUPTI Public Relations Specialist; Joyce Geithmann, HRTA Health and Insurance Chair; Sarita Scott, HUPTI Director of Human Relations.



Tour Participants - Front row, left to right: Cheryl Griffin, Evelyn Dawkins. Second row, left to right: Diane Lutz, HUPTI Nursing Supervisor Sheree Cummings, HUPTI Chief of Clinical Services Ed Dickey, Guest Marian Hartman, Emily Tangney, Eliza Mackey, Alma Luck, Faye James, Katie Luck, HRTA President Miche'le Meadors.

### Kudos to Rappahannock RTA

This unit, part of District N has a membership of 15. President Linda Brosgol says that they are a very active group, and in 2013 they awarded two \$1000 scholarships.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Roanoke County Presents Lifetime Achievement Award

Roanoke County Retired Teachers Association recognized Betty Bowles Hosp as an outstanding contributor to retired teachers. Betty is a past president of the RCRTA and a long time Legislative Chairperson. She is a passionate Democrat and has been a member of the Roanoke County Democratic Committee for 50 years. They presented her with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Betty was also president of the Roanoke Valley Democratic Women for 12 years. Betty taught French for 30 years with the Roanoke County School System where she was known as a teacher who loved her subject and her students. Since she had minored in History and Music, her students sang a lot and studied French History and literature, in French! She led field trips to France and adjoining countries twice. Betty is the daughter of a Latin teacher and a French Teacher, and her great-aunt and uncle were also teachers. Thus she is a third generation educator. Betty graduated *magna cum laude* from Mary Washington College in 1948 with a B. A. in French. She obtained her MALS degree from Hollins College in 1986.



Betty Bowles Hosp

### Roanoke City Busy During 2012-13

The Roanoke City Retired Educators' Association had a productive and interesting 2012-13 year. In September, Sharon Beasley, a personal trainer from the Roanoke Athletic Club, presented us with tips and exercises on how to stay physically fit and healthy. At our December holiday luncheon at the Hidden Valley Country Club, we were honored to have a former Roanoke City Schools' graduate, David Jenkins, perform selections on the violin. David has been blind for many years and has graduated from Radford University to become a musical therapist. In March, we welcomed David Webb, Head of References at the newly built Roanoke County Library. He described the services that the library offers as well as explaining that he not only helps with reference questions, but offers tutoring. At our May meeting, Brian Jacks, Associate State Director for AARP brought a message entitled, "AARP, Not Your Mother's Organization Anymore". Also at our May meeting, the 2013 officers were installed.



From left to right: Bonnie Mann, president; Shirlye Doherty, first vice president/president-elect; Brenda Dellis, second vice president; Molly Scanlan, recording secretary; Annette Yeatts, corresponding secretary; (not pictured) Marie Bright, treasurer.

### Allegheny Retired Teachers Present Scholarships

At the May meeting of the Allegheny Retired Teachers Association two Allegheny High School students were awarded a scholarship of \$500. Co-presidents Dewey and Brenda Lawson presented these to Analea Deeds and A.J. Keith. At the September meeting the ARTA will collect school supplies and distribute these to local schools. Hoping to improve membership the officers and committee chairperson will provide lunch to kick off the September meeting.

**VRTA Newsletter** is published twice annually, in the spring and fall. Submit articles to Editor Susan Martin at 1049 Martins Lane, Fincastle, VA 24090 or email at [wlmartin@ntelos.net](mailto:wlmartin@ntelos.net) Deadline for Spring 2014 newsletter is February 25, 2014.

## News From Around the Commonwealth

### Rockbridge Retired Teachers Association

Irma Thompson received the Dabney S. Lancaster Community College Medallion of Merit for 2011. She is a lifelong resident of Buena Vista, retiring in 1985 after teaching for 42 years. She taught at a one room school in Goshen, Glasgow Elementary, Park Avenue School in Buena Vista, and Enderly Heights Elementary School. She served as Title I reading teacher for the school system. After retiring, Mrs. Thompson was employed by Mary Baldwin College to supervise student teachers. She has also been very active in her church, community, and governmental affairs. In 1988 she was awarded the honor of being selected as Buena Vista's Citizen of the Year. At the age of 96, Mrs. Thompson was elected to life membership in Rockbridge Retired Teachers Association in April 2013 for being active in community service.

VRTA President Jim Bradford and Irma Thompson



### Botetourt Retired Educators

The Botetourt Retired Educators met in May at Santillane in Fincastle, Virginia. This historic home which is on the National Register of Historic Places is believed to be on the site where William Clark married Judith Hancock whom he met on his travels through Fincastle. It is documented that both William Clark and Meriwether Lewis made several trips through Fincastle and Botetourt County. Weldon Martin presented a program about the Lewis/Clark connection to Fincastle and Lissy Merenda, owner of Santillane, told about the history of the house. The scholarship winners from each of the two high schools in Botetourt County were announced, and it was reported that BRE presented each school in the county with a book for their media centers.



BRE Members at Santillane

### WCRTA Serves the Community

Joyce Wimmer, president, and Peggy Heyden represented the WCRTA at Samuel's Library serving Campbell's alphabet soup at the annual Taste of Books fundraiser. This year the Warren County Retired Teachers Association awarded \$5,300 in scholarships, accumulated 6000 volunteer hours, and distributed \$2,000 and a variety of items to local charities. These include the men and women's shelter, food bank, the Humane Society, St. Luke's Community clinic, and disaster funds. The WCRTA sponsored a scholarship for a future teacher while a senior in high school, donated to the Future Teachers of America's efforts to attend the national conference, and presented eight \$50 gift cards to current teachers. The WCRTA is represented on every major non-profit board in Warren County. Because of the unit's involvement in the community, membership has doubled in the last five years.



### VRTA Fall Conference

Join your fellow VRTA members in Blackstone October 7-8 for a time of fun, fellowship, and information. On Monday directly after lunch there will be a session to give members current information about the Virginia Retirement System. Then you can take the opportunity to attend a variety of sessions including senior health, VRTA insurance, the Affordable Care Act, European adventures, and many more. On Monday evening entertainment will be provided by Turf Fire. After the entertainment, join the group in playing bingo. You could win a prize. On Tuesday morning the keynote address will be presented by Kelly Kenneally, who has worked on establishing a national research and education public policy non-profit, the National Institute on Retirement Security. Plan to be in Blackstone in October.

### TIPS FOR OFFICERS

Phyllis Eastridge, President-Elect, will be holding a session on Monday on Tips for Presidents, President-Elects, and Secretaries. Please send a representative from your unit to this session. Phyllis will also answer questions and have handouts on With Our Youth and Community Service reporting. It's time to start that process to be ready for May.

### VRTA Mailing List

In order to make the VRTA mailing list more accurate, names of people whose newsletters have been returned to VRTA three times in a row will be removed from the list this fall. If you know someone who should be receiving a newsletter and is not getting it, please let the newsletter editor know about this. Please continue to inform the VRTA treasurer about members address changes and deaths of VRTA members. With your help VRTA can cut the cost of the postage for mailing the newsletters.

### Newsletter Articles

VRTA wants your news for the newsletters. It would be helpful if articles submitted for publishing would be emailed to the newsletter editor. If an article cannot be emailed, typing the article helps to ensure accuracy. Pictures can be emailed or mailed to the editor. The people that are pictured should have given permission for their pictures to be used in the newsletter. This is especially important if pictures of students are included with the article. All submitted articles will be used if space permits. Articles received after the deadline will likely not be included. The deadline for the Spring 2014 newsletter is February 25th.

Susan Martin  
Newsletter Editor

### VRTA Structure and Bylaws

One session at the Fall Conference will concern structure of the VRTA. We have met previously but I am not sure of the direction we should take on certain issues such as one state meeting per year as opposed to continuing with two. After our meeting in October at Blackstone, President Jim Bradford will be sending a questionnaire to each district and they will be asked to poll their local units. The subjects in that questionnaire will be generated from our session in October. If you plan to participate that day, come prepared with your own questions, concerns. We want to move forward in the future, but we want to let the majority of our membership rule.

The bylaws committee will also be making some recommendations for changes in 2014. Please bring or send any suggestions to me. The committee will consider every idea we receive. We already have a few proposed changes.

Helen Tippie, VRTA Past President

540-330-3863

htippie@cox.net



Betty Craft lost her battle with cancer on July 19, 2013. Betty was the VRTA treasurer for many years and served on many local committees of the retired teachers organization. She taught at Alderson High School in Bluefield, Fort Chiswell High School, and Wytheville Community College. She was recognized as Professor Emeritus in 2005 by the college for her dedicated service as teacher and scientist.

Memorial Contributions may be made to the Dr. Betty V. Craft Scholarship Endowment at Wytheville Community College. The endowment fund has been established by the WCC Medical Laboratory Technology Advisory Committee.



### Future Conferences

**2014 Delegate Assembly — April 28-29**

**2014 Fall Conference — October 6-7**

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

### Turf Fire presents "Ireland in Song and Story"

During the VRTA Conference in October, Richmond based musical ensemble Turf Fire will present a rousing program of Irish songs that reflect the fascinating and turbulent history of the Emerald Isle. From lively slip jigs to haunting ballads, the songs tell the story of a people who endured famine, hardship and emigration, but retained a vibrant culture and indomitable spirit. Turf Fire is comprised of musicians Mary Smith (guitar and vocals), John Robison (banjo) and Marcy Horwitz (accordion). All three have a keen interest in music and history, making for a presentation that is both educational and entertaining.



### Kelly Kenneally to Give Keynote Address

During the VRTA Fall Conference Kelly Kenneally will be the keynote speaker on Tuesday morning. Kelly is a communications consultant with more than 20 years of public affairs & communications experience. In recent years, much of her work has revolved around establishing a national research and education public policy non-profit, the National Institute on Retirement Security. She has developed and implemented strategic communications programs that have generated national media coverage and raised awareness of policy issues. Prior to establishing a consulting practice, Kelly served in the White House as deputy director of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

Kelly has held public affairs positions at Micron Electronics, MCI WorldCom, Edelman Public Relations, and the American Nuclear Energy Council. She began her career as a legislative assistant with the Maryland General Assembly.

Kelly holds a B.A. in Government & Politics from the University of Maryland, and has undertaken graduate coursework at The George Washington University in the political management program. Active in her local community, Kelly has served on the board of St. Luke's Day School and on the Parent Teacher Association of Hollin Meadows Elementary School, one of the most diverse schools in Fairfax County that is recognized nationally for its learning garden.

### WITH OUR YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Thanks to the units that submitted With Our Youth and Community Service reports. Six of the With Our Youth reports were sent to NRTA for national judging. The community service reports are still being reviewed for Most Active Unit Award. Keep up the good work in the reporting of your volunteer hours. You are making VRTA one of the leaders in the nation. Don't forget to bring your scrapbooks to the fall conference for display. Although they are no longer judged, they will receive certificates for participation and we look forward to seeing what you are doing in your units.



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

**Phone — 434-292-5308**

### Directions to Blackstone Conference and Retreat Center

#### From the North:

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

#### From the East:

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

#### From the South:

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

#### From the West:

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

**VRTA Fall Conference**

October 7-8, 2013

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 Tuesday September 24, 2013

\$25.00

Amount paid **(Late registration ----35.00)**

	<u>One Night</u>	<u>Two Nights</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Lodging:</b> Main Building (one person/room-\$47.50/night)	_____	_____	_____
(Multiple persons/room-\$43.75 <u>per person</u> /night)	_____	_____	_____
Goodson Lodge (one person/room-\$58.00/night)	_____	_____	_____
(Multiple persons/room-\$53.25 <u>per person</u> /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.**

<b>Meals:</b>			
<u>Monday</u>			
Breakfast – 8:00 AM	\$ 7.50	_____	
Lunch – 11:45 AM	\$12.00	_____	
Supper – 6:00 PM	\$9.00	_____	
<u>Tuesday</u>			
Breakfast – 8:00 AM	\$7.50	_____	
Lunch – 12 Noon	\$11.00	_____	

**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 Tuesday, September 24, 2013.** Send to: Leigh McKay, 3025 McVitty Forest Dr., #209, Roanoke, VA 24018, Phone: 540-989-4417 (home), 540-529-5131 (cell), email- cwmck5@cox.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.) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Return Service Requested

## Listening to the Membership

It has been a privilege to be able to communicate with so many members of the VRTA. It is amazing the number of idea you have for making the VRTA the organization you want.

**NEWSLETTER-** Members have suggested an opt out option for receiving the newsletter by email. Each unit will provide a list of members who still want it to be mailed. One person at the state level will then email the newsletter to district presidents who will then forward it to the units. The current state mailing list is being updated. This fall the names of members who have had newsletters returned three times will be removed.

**MEMBERSHIP-** The state VRTA tax umbrella now extends to cover most units. Units need to begin to require all members to be local, district, and state members. The VRTA needs to require that all new members must join all three.

**WEBPAGE-** The web page must become user friendly. Forms need to be posted in time to use for deadlines. Perhaps move the deadline for newsletter one month earlier.

**BLACKSTONE SESSIONS-** There is a need for a session on fundraising and ways to use the local media. The sessions could be brainstorming sessions to discuss these ideas.

These would then be compiled and sent to the local units.

**AWARDS-INCENTIVES-** The VRTA needs an incentive program for attending Blackstone. This might include a drawing for the top five units for most mileage to attend, largest percentage, and largest actual number attending. Along with the current awards, the VRTA needs to recognize the top five or ten active units in the state.

Many units do not do some of the current projects awarded but are very active.

This might be a monetary award toward a units scholarship program.

**STATE WIDE PROJECT-** Several groups have discussed the need for a statewide project. One idea presented was books for a library in need in a rural or intercity setting. Another idea suggested was school supplies or library books. A unit would fill out a form. If select by the VRTA, the newsletter would publish the goal and how members might donate to the fund. The VRTA would present this through the local unit with a picture and story for the newsletter.

**KEEP THEM COMING-** It is wonderful that we have an organization with so many ideas. Keep them coming and together we can make a difference. See you in Blackstone.

Dennis Henry