

WVARSE

West Virginia Association
of Retired School Employees

Affiliated with AARP/NRTA



Newsletter

Volume 34

Number 1

Fall 2023

From Your President



Fall is here and with it comes the smell of bonfires, crackling leaves, sweaters, apples and pumpkins. We are so fortunate to live in a state where we can experience all four seasons. The changing colors of the leaves make the Fall season one of my favorites. Annual Council was held in August. I was very pleased with the attendance and all that was accomplished. Members voted to replace the annual Leadership conference and Regional Meetings with one new meeting in four areas of the state. These meetings will be conducted in June. As a member, you may choose which site you want to attend. This new meeting will soon have a name. Much planning and thought have gone into making this meeting exciting. The focus will be training for our leaders. I am working on a power point presentation and would ask if anyone has a picture to share of activities your county association has done, please send or email it to me. County associations will be asked to bring a project board showcasing their meetings and perhaps something that makes their county unique. I really hope you will plan to attend these meetings. Your WVARSE Executive Board listened and heard that you wanted something different.

One day, while I was looking at back issues of our WVARSE Newsletter. I came upon an article in the Fall 2010 issue written by then WVARSE President, Garry Lynne Shearer. She wrote that there were three weaknesses found in the state and local levels of our association.

These three weaknesses were:

1. New Leaders (Recruiting/Training)
2. Pensions/ Legislative issues
3. Recruiting and Retaining Members

President Shearer asked the members for suggestions to help resolve these dilemmas. Isn't it amazing that the problems we face today were the same problems our local associations and WVARSE were having in 2010? Apparently, there is not an easy answer or a way to fix these issues. We can work on the "Pensions/ Legislative" concern if we all work together and make our voices heard in Charleston. Follow the advice of our WVARSE Legislative Chair, John Taylor and contact your Legislators now! In the coming months when your county doesn't hold meetings, continue to stay active. Keep track of your volunteer hours, contact other members of your association to see how they are doing, invite other counties to come to your meeting and work on getting pensions increased for all retired school employees.

Save The Date! (2024)

You are cordially invited to attend the meeting of your choice.

June 4 – Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Charleston, WV

June 5 – Beckley United Methodist Temple
Beckley, WV

June 11 – West Virginia Eastern Community
and Technical College
Moorefield, WV

June 13 – Lincoln High School
Shinnston, WV

Mark your calendar! More information will be coming soon.

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WVARSE NEWSLETTER
200 Elizabeth St.
Charleston, WV 25311

Executive Director's Column



We welcome John Riddle (Jackson County), a WVARSE past-president, as Regional Director for Region III and Libby Casto (Nicholas County), a past WVARSE Secretary as Regional Director of Region V. Both have big shoes to fill. Melinda Walker and Ann Pauley did a great job as Regional Directors. We still need a Regional Director for Region I. Teresa Taylor did a great job and I am sure she is being missed by the counties in Region I. We hope someone in Region I will step up and take the duties of Regional Director. Duties for Regional Director were reduced by action taken at the 2023 Annual Council when Leadership Conference and Regional Meetings were eliminated. We are planning four leadership meetings in four areas of the state. We have not yet determined what these meetings will be called, but we have determined when and where they will be conducted. The first meeting will be conducted in Charleston at Trinity Lutheran Church. The second meeting will be conducted in Beckley at the Beckley United Methodist Church. The third meeting will be conducted in Moorefield at the West Virginia Community and Technical College. The fourth and last of these meetings will be conducted in Shinnston at Lincoln High School. More information will be shared concerning these meetings later. You may attend your choice of the four meetings. These will be conducted in one day. A registration form will be sent out the early part of May, 2024 with a return date of May 25, 2024. This date is critical and must be observed. We will be providing lunch and must have an accurate number of attendees. Having your email and phone number on our membership file is an asset. We have sent emails to members using this several times. Remember life dues increased to \$150, effective July 1, 2023. We must continue to increase our membership. It is the responsibility of each member to do his/her best to enroll new members and retain old members. We still accept the old enrollment forms and members can enroll on the website. We have had a great response to our member list with names, addresses and phone numbers. We are working on getting these corrected. We have found quite a few discrepancies, and we will work with each unit to make corrections. You are now able to pay your membership dues online by using a credit card or a check draft. Go to www.WVARSE.org, click on membership, and then click on join online. Karen Nicholson's address and phone number have changed. Her new address is: Karen Nicholson, 1902 Hamilton St. Parkersburg WV 26101-9375, and her new number is 304 699-8882. 10 of our 55 county units are now defunct. I am pleased with how the resolution of Jefferson County unit was handled. A letter was sent to current members asking them to continue membership in WVARSE. Betty Walter enclosed a membership form and gave them the address of our membership clerk. I am not pleased that they dissolved, but it was well-handled. I encourage county units to seek help if they are having trouble in finding members willing to take leadership roles. Contact your regional director and work with them in seeking a resolution. Your sharing of email addresses with us would be most helpful. Many of my email addresses are not valid. If you have changed your email address, please send me an email at williammilam.bm@gmail.com so that I can update my files.

Legislative News

When the leaves start falling it's time to gear up for the next legislative session. While they are still home, you should be in contact with your legislators. Give them a copy of our goals and let them know that they have constituents that are paying attention to what they do. Your contacts now will make it easier to lobby them when they do get to Charleston. There are two things we really need to plant into their minds prior to the session. The first is PEIA. Our premiums are slated to go up in January of 2025 and for the next several years. Now is the time to take action to prevent this. Action MUST happen this year. The talking points you need are that we are, unlike the actives, on a fixed income. There are no raises to help supplement our pensions and cover the increased cost of premiums. Please pay attention to alerts for PEIA public hearings. They will be starting on the 6th of November and running through the 16th. It is important that we show up in numbers and wear RED to show our membership. We need to have folks present at EACH hearing and have an audience that shows our speakers support. The second is our request for a one-time supplement. Yes, we got something last year. However, it only covered the poorest 8% of our members. That's right, 92% of our members got nothing. Your legislators need to know several things. First, on behalf of those poorest members, we appreciate their help. Second, now we would like something that covers a broader number of retirees and is not limited to the poorest of us.

Your efforts will help our organization to make a difference. Don't ever discount the fact that one more contact may result in positive legislative outcomes.

2024 Legislative Goals

1. That WVARSE will promote legislation to continue and maintain the quality of PEIA coverage, without increases in premiums, copays or reduction in benefits.
2. That WVARSE will promote legislation to increase the pension of those who retired 20 or more years ago by two dollars per month per year of service.
3. That WVARSE will support legislation to provide a one-time supplement of \$1,500 for retirees 70 and over who had at least 20 years of service.
4. That WVARSE will support legislation to provide a Cost-of-Living-Adjustment or COLA for state pensions.
5. That WVARSE will support AARP efforts at the legislature.

Contact Us

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www.wvarse.org

New Email for Bill Milam

williammilam.bm@gmail.com

New Address and Phone Number

Karen Nicholson, Membership Clerk
1902 Hamilton St.
Parkersburg, WV 26101-9375

PEIA HEARINGS

PEIA will conduct hearings for the 2024 year in November. Some of these may take place before you receive this newsletter.

It is proposed that Medicare retirees' premiums be increased 10% beginning January 1, 2026, with no change in premiums or benefits until then. However non-Medicare retirees are projected to have 10% increase in premiums, but no changes in benefits on July 1, 2025. Please try to attend one of these meetings. The Teleconference on November 16 may be the easiest to attend.

1. **NOV. 6th:** Wheeling
The Highlands Event Center
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

2. **NOV. 7th:** Martinsburg
Holiday Inn Martinsburg
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

3. **NOV. 9th:** Morgantown
Holiday Inn – University Place
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

4. **NOV. 13th:** Charleston
The Culture Center
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

5. **NOV. 14th:** Bluefield
Bluefield State College
(Basic Sciences Building)
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

6. **NOV. 16th:** Town Hall (virtual)
Google Meet/Phone
Registration: 5-6 pm Begins 6pm

Bill Milam: An Advocate for Retired School Employees



(Pictured: Bill Milam and Pioneer's President and Chief Executive Officer, Dan McGowan)

Practically all WVARSE members are aware of William G. "Bill" Milam's long-term dedicated service to our organization. Fewer may know that he is also an active leader in another organization which promotes financial wellness for retired school employees. Milam is a top-level volunteer leader at Pioneer Appalachia Federal Credit Union, who recently received a national award in Washington, D.C. as "Volunteer of the Year" from the National Association of Federally Insured Credit Unions.

As sharp as ever with 51 years of service, he still sets the pace for the credit union as its longest serving volunteer and current Board Chair.

Pioneer's President and Chief Executive Officer, Dan McGowan, says "We would like to celebrate Bill's recognition and his service to both WVARSE and Pioneer with something especially appealing to retirees looking for higher savings rates.

So, until the end of this year, we're offering a savings certificate at **5.5% APY** (annual percentage yield) on a 13-month maturity term. Stop by one of our branches or call us at **304-348-6648** and ask for a 'representative' for additional details and let us know you read this article."

Mayor Williams proclaims Retired School Employees Week

In recognition with the National and West Virginia Association of Retired School Employees, Mayor Steve Williams proclaimed this week, September 25 to September 29, as Retired School Employees Week. The City of Huntington has members of both the Cabell and Wayne Counties Chapters. The Association membership is composed of retired public-school teachers, administrators, classroom aides, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers. The membership of the association is active in charitable programs for the community and public-school system. The Association is open to all retired public-school employees and are accepting new members.

Pictured in the Proclamation presentation are: Front row Megan Carr, Linda Forinash, President of Cabell County Association of Retired School Employees, Mayor Steve Williams. Second row Bobbi Carr, Deborah Chapman. Back row Denis Chapman, Middy Aluise, Kathryn Rutherford



Executive Board

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WVARSE Week Celebrations

Braxton County

Boone County's Association of Retired School Employees Angela Price and Ester Bell delivered books to three area schools.



Gilmer County



Superintendent Dr. Tony Minney is giving update on school system.

Superintendent Dr. Tony Minney gave an update on the school system to the 20 retired GCARSE members in attendance at the September 19 meeting. Annette Bame led the group in a medley of songs that included "School Days," "West Virginia Hills" and "God Bless America." Members commemorated the 66th birthday of WVARSE with a carrot cake baked and served by Senior Center Director Sally Matthes. Also, WVARSE Week was celebrated with delivery of home baked goods and information about the organization to the school, bus garage and county board office employees. GCARSE made a monetary contribution to the senior nutrition program "Meals on Wheels." With

the arrival of cooler temperatures and beautiful fall foliage, the retirees are anxiously anticipating their field trip to Webster County on October 25.

Grant County

Pictured are;
Back row- Donna Kuhn, John Moyers, Brenda Sites, Sharee Bergdoll, Dave Adkins
Middle row- Barbara Smith, Erma Moyers, Libby Cooper, Larrie Mauzy, Dixie Groves
Seated- Patty Adkins, Mick Cooper, Carol Mauzy



WVARSE Birthday Cake



GCARSE members deliver baked goods during WVARSE Week.

Hancock County



Hancock County Association of Retired School Employees recently met on a Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at the Garden Grill Steakhouse in Weirton, WV. It was a Halloween theme with approximately 50 people in attendance.

Harrison County

The Harrison County Association of Retired School Employees met on Tuesday, October 10, at Saint Ann's Catholic Church in Shinnston. Mary Ann Ferris, State Executive



Council and State Membership Chair, secured a Proclamation from the City of Shinnston. Dennis Stromberg, President of Harrison County's Unit, secured a Proclamation from the City of Bridgeport. A birthday cake was purchased from a local bakery with HAPPY BIRTHDAY WVARSE, 66 YEARS written on it. A Proclamation was read, and the group sang happy birthday to all October birthdays, as well as WVARSE. There were 61 members in

attendance which marked the third consecutive luncheon/meeting with 60 or more in attendance. The program was about the Shinnston Tornado, it was a very interesting and informative. A delicious lunch and great fellowship were enjoyed by all. Included is a picture of the cake and proclamations.

Jackson County



Jackson Co School Superintendent William Hosaflook was the guest speaker at the first meeting this year. He was enthusiastic about the progress the students and staff are making in Jackson Co and is aiming for even higher successes.



John Riddle, a long-standing member of WVARSE and the Jackson Co chapter was selected to take on Region III Director.

Jackson Co attendees at the state conference this year were Ellaine Farra, Carol Burch, John Riddle and Jo Hendricks. Jackson Co was the recipient of the gold certificate for completing all the requirements for 2023.



Jackson Co Retirees attending the Leadership conference were:
Front- John Riddle (community service), Carol Burch (I & P chair), LeaAnn Puckett (treasurer)
Back: Jo Hendricks (president), Jim Mahan (vice president)
Jackson co participants at state conference
Ellaine Farra and Carol Burch.

Kanawha County

Dayton Beard, Pat Schillings, Mayor Frank Mullens of South Charleston, and Yvonne Martin, KCARSE member, who is responsible for writing the proclamations and setting up the signings. Mayor Mullens was very impressed with all the community activities they are doing.



Proclamation signing with St. Albans Mayor James, on September 5 with KCARSE member Yvonne Martin.

Lewis County



Lewis County Association of Retired School Employees gave cookies to all county employees. They went to Lewis County High School, Robert L. Bland Middle School, Leading Creek Elementary School, Peterson Central Elementary School, Lewis County Board of Education, and the Bus Garage.

Each tray of cookies had a Thank you card, members wanted them to know that they are appreciated. Most were given the association's handbook. The following members visited other schools: Debby Walker, Vice President, and Legislative Chair took homemade chocolate chip cookies to Jane Lew Elementary School. Becky Hall, Community Service Chair took cookies to Roanoke Elementary School. Barbara Mason, Nominating, Scholarship, and Birthday Committees took a tray to St Pat's School. Sylvia McNeish, Secretary and Scholarship Committee took cookies to the Maintenance Department.

Pictured l to r- Barbara Zirkle, President, Helen Derico, Treasurer, Sylvia McNeish, Secretary, Julie Williams, Secretary at Peterson Central School and Carol Bennett, I&P Chair

Marion County



Fairmont Mayor Ann Bolyard presented a proclamation declaring the last week of September to be "Marion County Association of Retired School Employees Week". This proclamation was presented to President Sandra Michael and Vice President Diana Moore Yanero.

Marshall County

Marshall County Commissioners sign a proclamation helping to recognize Marshall County Association of Retired School Employees.



John Grizinkas, Pam Schimmel, Christine McDonald, Mike Ferro, Scott Varner

Mercer County

Mayor David Graham presented a proclamation from the city of Princeton to Mercer County Association of Retired School Employees vice president Peggy Johnson and secretary Lynn Gilpin proclaiming September 25 -29, 2023 as "West Virginia and Mercer County Association of Retired School Employees' Week".



The first MCARSE meeting of the 2023-2024 year took place September 25th. Guest speakers were Joel Thacker, PEIA/Humana, and Keith Daugherty, AMBA.

Mineral County

Mineral County Association of Retired School Employees members gathered for an October 10th meeting. Guest speakers were WVARSE President-Elect John Moyers, Region VI Director David Adkins, WVARSE Community Service Chair Patty Adkins, and WVARSE President Charmel Radcliff.

Nicholas County



July 21 meeting was held at the Nicholas County Senior Center with John Riddle speaking on membership.

On August 19 NARSE members worked booths for the Back to School Bash at Veterans Memorial Park sponsored by the Summersville Chamber of Commerce. (Pictured Below)



Ohio County

Ohio County Chapter, OCARSE, started their year off with a picnic in September. The Chapter submitted an article to the local newspaper announcing WVARSE WEEK. OCARSE has several community service projects planned for the '23/'24 year. Informational speakers are being invited to the meetings as well. OCARSE has their meetings on the third Thursday of the months of September, October, November, March, April, and May. The meetings are held at the Elm Grove Methodist Church at 11:30. Previous members as well as new members are invited to join.

Pleasants County



Pleasants County Association of Retired School Employees members met with St. Mary's Mayor Paul Ingram to have a Proclamation signed to celebrate WVARSE Week. Pictured are Stella Amos, Margaret White, Mayor Ingram, WVARSE and PCARSE President Charmel Radcliff, Cynthia Alkire and Vicky Kyle.

Putnam County



Putnam County celebrated WVARSE week with a great lunch and delicious cupcakes.

Roane County



Members of the Roane County Association of Retired School employees gathered on Monday, September 25, to put together goodie baskets which were delivered to each of the Roane County schools, the bus garage, and the county board office to help celebrate the beginning of school and WVARSE week. The baskets included candy, cookies, chips, and even popcorn.

The members of Roane County Association of Retired School Employees have taken the responsibility of cleaning and keeping the Newburn School, located on the Heritage Park Campus, cleaned, and organized and open during the Black Walnut Festival for public tours and insights into the operation of one room schools located in Roane County. A committee of members, led by Melinda Walker, maintain the story walk at the Newburn School/Heritage Park area for all children to enjoy. The story walk is updated once a month.

The major event of the Roane County Chapter is to provide a scholarship to a Roane County High School student attending college to become a teacher, hopefully in Roane County! Members include retired bus drivers, classroom aides, cooks, custodians, school administrators, and classroom teachers who are striving to improve public education and benefits for their members.



Taylor County



John Taylor, receiving the Proclamation declaring the week of September 25th WVARSE week.

Pictured are County Commissioners Orville Wright, Tony, Veltri, John Taylor, TCARSE President and Commissioner Sam Gerkin.



Webster County



Webster County Retired School Employees celebrate WVARSE Week with a picnic and a visit from the new superintendent. Webster County members gathered for the first meeting of the new school year at Bakers Island City Park in Webster Springs Wednesday, September 27 for an early fall picnic on a sunny day. They enjoyed catching up while sharing a cover-dish lunch. The guest speaker was Webster County's new superintendent, Joseph Arbogast. Mr. Arbogast gave an update on schools including a new security program at the high school called PRO (Prevention Resource Officer). This will bring a specially trained law enforcement officer to campus daily to interact with and mentor students to prevent violence and drug use. Superintendent Arbogast also stressed that retirees are encouraged to sign up for the county's substitute list. He was invited to speak by retired teacher and BOE President Joyce Marple.



(photos by member Linda Alsop)



Joyce Marple and Superintendent

Wirt County

Wirt County Association of Retired School Employees served lunch to Wirt County staff on opening day 2023-2024. Pictured are Karen Nicholson, Linda Davies, Becky Watson, Brenda Metz, Dan Metz, Angie Domico-Cox & Linda DeMoss. It is exciting seeing all staff, seasoned and refreshed, as they begin their new school year!

Wirt County Retired School Employees enjoyed riding in Wirt County's Homecoming Parade September 22nd with the theme "Bad to the Bone; we know, we taught them!" For WVARSE week, they enjoyed bagging homemade cookies for each Wirt County School Employee.



In Memoriam

BERKELEY

Dorothy DeHaven *

BARBOUR

Betty Crawford **

Sylvia Humphreys**

Jean Kines *

CABELL

Giovanna Deveny**

HANCOCK

Susan Gracie*

JEFFERSON

Thelma Clay *

KANAWHA

Howard Daniels**

MARION

Geraldine Boyce**

MCDOWELL

Claude Lane*

OHIO

Rosemary Coury**

Lois "Pidge" Fleming*

Thomas Innocenti II**

James McGlumphy*

Mark Obermann**

PUTNAM

Ray Isaacs, Jr **

ROANE

Sybil Hickman**

UPSHUR

Fred Newman **

WAYNE

Dolores Boley**

William Lawman*

WEBSTER

Barbara Jean Sommerville**

WIRT

Adith Spencer **

WOOD

Jo Ann Farley**

* Annual Member

** Life Member



WVARSE Membership Report

Saturday, October 21, 2023 Processed for Year Ending

REGION I	Last Yr	Current
BROOKE	169	138
FAIRMONT	17	11
HANCOCK	224	147
MARION	239	160
MARSHALL	193	60
MONONGALIA	156	96
OHIO	314	207
PLEASANTS	86	76
TYLER	60	37
WETZEL	65	41
WVU	27	23
TOTAL	1550	996

REGION II	Last Yr	Current
BARBOUR	105	42
BRAXTON	83	75
DODDRIDGE	20	8
GILMER	42	30
GLENVILLE	13	4
HARRISON	338	224
LEWIS	107	60
PRESTON	161	64
RANDOLPH	181	78
TAYLOR	144	99
TUCKER	57	58
UPSHUR	262	185
WEBSTER	69	35
TOTAL	1582	962

REGION III	Last Yr	Current
BOONE	228	148
CALHOUN	21	6
CLAY	15	16
JACKSON	137	88
KANAWHA	388	267
RITCHIE	30	26
ROANE	57	58
STATE DEPT	36	23
WIRT	61	60
WOOD	343	224
WVS	5	5
TOTAL	1321	921

REGION IV	Last Yr	Current
CABELL	183	155
LINCOLN	114	56
LOGAN	33	35
MASON	58	37
MINGO	28	25
MU	6	5
PUTNAM	151	100
WAYNE	150	69
TOTAL	723	482

REGION V	Last Yr	Current
CONCORD	3	1
FAYETTE	159	68
GREENBRIER	132	98
MCDOWELL	153	69
MERCER	241	153
MONROE	16	12
NICHOLAS	110	91
POCAHONTAS	100	63
RALEIGH	172	105
SUMMERS	110	48
WVIT	3	2
WYOMING	95	31
TOTAL	1294	741

REGION VI	Last Yr	Current
BERKELEY	174	140
DEAF & BLIND	35	22
GRANT	63	103
HAMPSHIRE	69	62
HARDY	33	28
JEFFERSON	123	58
MINERAL	125	118
MORGAN	82	69
PENDLETON	54	31
POTOMAC	5	2
SHEPHERD	5	2
TOTAL	768	635

	last yr	current
Total Members	7238	4737



This will be the last Newsletter for members who have not yet paid their 2024 State dues.



West Virginia Association of Retired School Employees Enrollment form July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

State Life Member Paying	State Life Member membership	Annual State Dues
County Dues only \$ 5.00	Plus Annual County Dues \$ 5.00	Annual County Dues \$ 5.00
Supplemental Dues \$ _____	Supplemental Dues \$ _____	Supplemental Dues \$ _____
Total Life/County Dues \$ _____	Total Life/County Dues \$ _____	Total Annual \$ _____

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS IT APPEARS ON RETIREMENT CHECK

Name	_____	_____	_____	_____	Associate () Life ()
	Last	First	Middle	Date	Renewal () New ()
Address	_____				
City	_____	State	_____	Zip	_____
	Old Address _____				
	If Changed _____				

Retired From _____ Phone _____ Email _____

"Dues are not Tax Deductible"

Members receive newsletter, Insurance info/ Travel Opportunities & representation at the Legislature

If you have questions : call Karen Nicholson , membership Clerk 304 699-8882. Send this completed form with payment to:
Karen Nicholson 1902 Hamilton St, Parkersburg WV 26101-9375