

On October 1-3, I represented HRSPA at the 2018 VRTA Fall conference. My participation started with the Executive Committee meeting on Monday night. As the chair of three committees, I attended that meeting to provide committee reports and stay abreast of new information. The next morning I attended the Board of Directors Meeting in the same capacity. I was joined by our President Jackie Warren at that meeting. At noon the two of us were joined by Tina Whitaker, our Legislative chair and after lunch by Bea Dalton, interested HRSPA member.

Together we enjoyed a spirited presentation from Delegate Schuyler Van Valkenburg, Glen Allen HS Government teacher. He provided an overview of what he foresees will be the top legislative concerns in the 2019 General Assembly session, redistricting, the Opioid crisis, and number one is school safety. Three Legislative committees have been appointed to address school safety. Later in the day, we heard from participants on all three committees. HRSPA members of the 72nd House district should be proud to have such a vibrant, well-spoken, youthful, committed Delegate. He certainly made all retirees of HCPS proud at the conference.

The afternoon concluded with three break out sessions. Each of us participated in different sessions and gathered info to bring back to our membership. I, personally, attended the Treasurer's session. While there I received information about the new VRTA membership cards. All new annual and Life members will receive cards. Those Life members who have not received cards, probably those who retired from about 2000 to 2010, will need to contact me to get a Life membership card. All other annual members who joined since last March should have received a card with your October newsletter. Life members will receive cards from the VRTA treasurer by US Mail. I also got info about using AARP more effectively, especially the FaceBook page.

The third session of the day, Legislative, was to be hosted by Bea Morris, VRTA Legislative chair, but she was ill and could not attend. Karen Whetzel, District G President, did an admirable job in Bea's absence. She introduced and moderated a panel discussion regarding the three Legislative committees who have been investigating School Safety and what to do and/or not do. The panel consisted of Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian J. Moran, Delegate Jeffrey M. Bourne, and Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn. Although I may be easily impressed, I was impressed at the quality and passion of all three panelists. It is gratifying to see that a crowd of retired educators could draw such impressive and knowledgeable leaders to serve on a panel. Each described his role on the various committees, the products (bills) that they are working on, and the public input that has been solicited. One take away stuck with me- we will probably NOT be seeing bullet proof white boards in our schools or armed teachers. Viable security plans are in the offing and collaborative security will be practiced.

Wednesday kicked off with muffins and beverages for all followed by a superior presentation by VSRS Executive Director Trish Bishop. It is always a pleasure to hear her provide a detailed overview of what VSRS is doing now, what it has done, and where it is going. I was pleased to speak with her personally after her remarks and delighted to hear that newly hired teachers who have not been able to contribute as much to retirement as hoped due to exhaustive student loan debt are being given some additional options for contributions. The retirement financial security of these young folks is not guaranteed, as was ours. Fortunately, the health of the 43rd largest public or private pension system in the world, VSRS, is very good. Reminder to all to log in to varetire.org to update your beneficiaries, especially if you have experienced divorce or the death of a spouse. Also, be certain to update your profile pages to change address, email, emergency contacts and phone numbers.

The VRTA business meeting closed out the session. Currently VRTA has 5329 members statewide and \$157,603.61 in savings and checking. The fiscal year ending on June 30, 2018 showed \$162.61 difference between income and expenses indicating that the budget was on target, but membership growth is needed. I am delighted to report that VRTA leadership is more open to change than ever and the DoubleTree at Midlothian is a great venue for the conference. Please consider attending the spring meeting, April 30-May 1 at the same venue. Visit VRTA.org for more info on joining, to see back copies of the newsletter and to stay informed.

Finally, to benefit all of us, remember that every single vote counts and **VOTE on November 6!**

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Goshorn

VRTA Liaison