

West Virginia
Association of
Retired School
Employees
Affiliated With
AARP/NRTA



Newsletter



Volume 36 – No 2

Spring 2026

From Your President, John Moyers



I am approaching the end of my two-year term as WVARSE President. I have enjoyed meeting members and visiting sites across the state of West Virginia. I am looking forward to visiting Summers County members on April 18th. I encourage members to attend the HUBS meetings in June. We listened to your input and have revised the program. Door prizes have been well-received, and I hope that all chapters will contribute. I plan to attend all four HUBS meetings and hope to see many of you there. John Taylor, WVARSE Legislative Chair, asked members to send letters urging legislators to support WVARSE bills. I personally thank those of you who did. Remember, volunteer hours are due to Unit chairs May 10th and regional chairs by May 25th. John Moyers WVARSE president

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Reminders

1. May 10 Deadline for sending Volunteer Hours to Unit Chairs
2. May 15 Membership determination for Annual Council delegates
3. May 25 Deadline for List of members attending WVARSE HUBS due to Executive Director
4. May 25 Deadline for sending Volunteer Hours to Regional Chairs
5. June 1 Deadline for sending Volunteer Hours to State Chair
6. June 1 Deadline for sending list of deceased to Regional I & P Chairs
7. June 1 Deadline for sending Volunteer Hours to State Chair
8. June 1 Deadline for sending list of deceased to Regional I & P Chairs

Another legislative session has ended. None of our bills were successful. We hope members will attend the 2026 **HUBS (Helping Units Be Spectacular)** meetings. These meetings will be in the following areas on the designated dates:

**HUBS
2026**

- June 2 – Ripley - West Ripley Baptist Church 611 Main St W Ripley WV
- June 3 - Beckley - Beckley United Methodist Temple 201 Templeview Dr, Beckley, WV
- June 10 - Mt. Clare - Quiet Dell United Methodist Church 96 Trinity Rd, Mount Clare, WV
- June 11- Moorefield - Eastern WV Community and Technical College 316 Eastern Drive Moorefield



**William G "Bill" Milam
Executive Director**

Food will be served at each location. June 2 and 3 - tables will be set up with condiments for members to make sandwiches. Water and drinks will be available. June 10 - The church will provide a plate lunch consisting of pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, cold slaw, dessert, lemonade, tea and water. June 11 - a boxed lunch will be available from Subway. The subs will be served on white bread unless someone indicates a food allergy. A veggie platter with lettuce, tomato, onion, cucumber, green peppers, pickles and olives. The meal comes with a cookie and a bag of chips. Packets of mustard, mayonnaise and Italian dressing will be in the boxes. The choices for the subs are as follows: Cold cut; Ham; Tuna; Turkey and Veggie. Registration forms will be sent to each president. I will be asking for names of members attending and their choice of meat for the subs. We will be asking units to bring door prizes.

Legislative Article by John Taylor Legislative Chair

This year was a very successful year for AARP, not so much for WVARSE. AARP got several bills through to passage.

- HB 5353** – Licensure of cryptocurrency kiosks that are frequently used in scams. This will help protect seniors
- SB 617** – Financial Services provider protections for eligible adults from financial exploitation
- SB 54** – criminal penalties for abuse or neglect of incapacitated adults
- HB 4990** – relating to crimes using gift cards
- HB 4599** – Relating to the WV Cares background check variance process
- SB 659** – Prohibiting certain restrictions on accessory dwelling units
- HB 4474** – Extending the Alzheimer’s Advisory Council sunset date
- HB 4982** – Make WV Healthy Act (Food as Medicine)



As you can see, the AARP Team was very active and successful. The actives got a 3% pay increase that passed the Senate 7 minutes before the deadline. **Retirees were left out again this year.**

Tyler County

November—Members of the Tyler County Association of Retired School Personnel were treated to an extensive presentation on the services provided by the Tyler County Senior Center through the Council of Senior Tyler Countians, Inc. Executive Director Amy Haught and her team (Nurse – Shawna Thomas and Program Director – Belinda Stevens) outlined the amenities at the center: quilting room, wellness center, game room, pool room and lunch service, as well as the support services provided: in-home care services, housekeeping, home delivered meals and transportation. The Senior Center is a crown jewel in the community dedicated to serving Tyler County seniors.

March- Members were treated to a presentation by J.J. Barrett, WVU Extension Agent from Parkersburg on the Master Gardener program. The presentation focused on pollinators and plants that promote a healthy relationship for growing flowers, herbs, plants and fruit trees. In addition, our Region 1 Director, Kevin Brown, attended the meeting to introduce himself and meet our members. He updated us on contact information with regional chairs, legislative action and upcoming events for the spring.

Randolph County

The Randolph County Unit met in December at the Randolph Technical Center. The Elkins High School Jazz Band presented a concert for our group, the ProStart students prepared a wonderful luncheon. We presented the Elkins High Band with a check toward their Spring Disney Trip, a donation check for the ProStart Class and a check for the Tiger Express, which gives Christmas gifts/food to underserved students' families.

UNIT/COUNTY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS: April—July

If you are interested in visiting any of the unit meetings, contact that unit president to get more information. This schedule is especially important for members whose units are inactive but also for neighboring members who may want to visit other units.

REGION I Kevin Brown, Director kebrown78@icloud.com

HANCOCK contact Melanie Donofe madonofe@frontier.com

All meetings at 12:00pm

- **April 21 Peach Tree Inn at the Orchard Retirement Community in Chester WV.** Members will participate in chair exercises. A collection for the Gabriel Project (diapers, baby blankets, and formula), magazine collection for county art teachers and donations for the county scholarship fund will be accepted. Deadline for scholarship applications is April 17.
- **May 19 Giovanni's Restaurant, Weirton WV.** Memorial Service. Members will donate to local hospice visitation centers (packaged snacks/crackers/cookies, candies or tea/coffee). Still collecting magazines for art teachers and donations for the scholarship fund. Scholarships will be awarded at the high school honor assemblies.

MARION contact Diana Yanero yanero6@aol.com

Apple Annies in the Middletown Commons 12:00 pm

- **April 21**
- **May 19**

OHIO contact Diana Carroll dc Carroll1450@comcast.net

All meetings 11:30am

- **April 16 Elm Grove United Methodist Church, Wheeling \$15 lunch** Speaking: a representative from Wheeling Soup Kitchen and Region I Director Kevin Brown will attend. Donations to the soup kitchen will be collected.
- **May 21 Elm Grove United Methodist Church, Wheeling \$15 lunch .**Memorial Service. Donations to the Methodist Church Food Bank will be collected.

PLEASANTS contact Charmel Radcliff charmelr@hotmail.com

- **April 16 Pleasants County Library 6:00pm** Home Health Care
- **May 21 Pleasants County Senior Center Pavilion 6:00pm.** Memorial Service and Sundae Ice Cream Bar

REGION II Kevin Brown, Director kebrown78@icloud.com

BRAXTON contact Boody Talbott boodyt@frontier.com

- **April 16 Braxton County Senior Center 9:00am.** Field trip to Audra State Park.
- **June 18 Sutton Lake Picnic Shelter 10:00am.** Memorial Service and picnic.

GILMER contact Marie Schimmel mgschimmel@live.com

- **May 19** Joel Thacker from Humana, Memorial Service. Handbag auction by Scholarship Committee
- **July 19** Picnic with Scholarship winners and parents as guests

HARRISON contact Dennis Stromberg stromberg53@icloud.com

- **April 14 Lost Creek UMC 12:00 pm** Luncheon/Meeting...Program-Harrison County Supt. of Schools
- **May 13 St Ann Catholic Church, Shinnston 12:00 pm** Luncheon/meeting. Lost Memorial Service and introduction of Scholarship winner from a Harrison Co High School
- **August** Picnic Covered dish, good fellowship and a game

LEWIS contact Barbara Zirkle bobbyzirk1@aol.com

- **April 29 Museum of American Glass, Weston.** Catered Lunch at 12:00, Meeting at 1:00 Amy Cochran from AMBA will speak.
- **May 30 4H Building, Jesse's Run Road, Jane Lew WV.** Catered meal at 4:40pm. Awards Banquet
Call Barbara (304-669-0819) for meal price.

RANDOLPH contact Lorraine Corley lcorley69@gmail.com

Meeting at The Steer Steakhouse, Elkins, 12 pm with a program and a white elephant auction which supports the scholarship program

- **April 24**
- **May 29**

TAYLOR contact John Taylor johntaylor1@comcast.net

Mary Battle Studio at Grafton High 12:00pm Call John for \$11 meal reservation at GHS ProStart class the Friday before meeting

- **April 1 Mary Battle Studio ProStart meal.** Auction
- **May 6 Church of Christ 12:00pm** Covered dish. Richard Colosky-National Cemetery
- **May 21 Mary Battle Studio 4:00 pm** Covered dish. Retiree Reception
- **July 16 Baptist Church Pavilion 4:30pm** Covered dish Picnic

TUCKER contact Eleanor Nester enestor2022@gmail.com

Parsons Senior Center 12:00pm

- **April 15; May 20; June 17**
- **July 15 Parsons Park .** Picnic

WEBSTER contact Renee Anderson reneea@mountain.net

- **April 1 Upper Glade Presbyterian Church 2:00pm** Beth Roberts, HS program
- **May 1 . WS UMC or Calvary Baptist 6:00pm** TBA Memorial Service
- **June 10 Holly River State Park 2:00 pm.** Park Naturalist

REGION III John Riddle, Director jriddle@casinternet.net

BOONE contact Kimberly Duty kimduty1@yahoo.com

- **April 16 Boone Memorial Hospital 11:00am** Boone Memorial Health Resources (Angie Price)
- **May 20 Racine Baptist Church 11:00am** Memorial Service; Scholarship Recipient

JACKSON contact Jim Mahan jimmahan1961@gmail.com

- **April 23 First Baptist Church, Ravenswood 12:00 pm** Silent Auction for scholarships
- **May 28 Cedar Lakes Conference Ctr Dining Hall 12:00pm**
RSVP Jim Mahan (304)532-6456 or Jimmahan1961@gmail.com

KANAWHA contact Pat Schillingspurrfectpat48@gmail.com

Trinity Lutheran Church, Charleston

- **April 14 2:30pm** Community in Schools Prepare bags for Shanklin Ctr. Light snacks.
- **May 12 4:30 pm** Memorial Service . Catered dinner by St. Albans HS culinary students
- **June 9 2:30pm** Planning meeting for 2026-2027 Light snacks.

ROANE contact John Gray jlgray2022@yahoo.com

- **Roane County Public Library at 1:00 pm**
- **April 8 Paper bag Auction** for Roane Co Scholarship Foundation to fund scholarship for RCHS senior
- **May 13 Memorial Service**
- **June 10 Mayor William's home.** RCARSE End of Year Picnic

WIRT contact Pat Egbert egbertpat@gmail.com

- **May 11 Wetlands with primary center**
- **June Planning meeting**
- **July 13**

REGION IV Denis Chapman, Director dhchapma@aol.com

CABELL contact Linda Fornash lsforinash@gmail.com

New Baptist Church, 610 28th St. Huntington 1:00pm catered lunch 12:00 pm

- **April 23** Installation of officers. Delegates will be introduced and speak 3 minutes each
- **May 16** Memorial Service. Thunder Tones will sing

MASON contact Rick White eagle310@suddenlink.net

Village Pizza , Pt Pleasant 12:00pm

- **April 10** Candy Spurlock, Rich White Food Donation: peanut butter
- **May 8** Sheila Ball, Cyndi Spradling Wright Food Donation: macaroni & cheese

PUTNAM contact Dianne Harrah dianne.harrah1977@gmail.com

- **Winfield Riding Club 11:00am**
- **April 14** Installation of Officers. Covered dish
- **May 12** Picnic. Planning for 2025-2026

REGION V John Staats, Director john.staats2@shentel.net

GREENBRIER contact Danny Gray Dp135gray@hotmail.com

Greenbrier County BOE 10:30am

- **April 3**
- **June 5**

REGION VI Rowanne Shockey, Director rlpshockey@gmail.com

HAMPSHIRE contact Carol Schultz cfultz@frontier.com

- **April 23 Main Street Restaurant 11:30am** Memorial Service
- **June 10 Gloria McKee’s 2675 Slanesville Pike, Points WV 3:00pm** RSVP Carol (304) 813 2641

MINERAL contact Jane Fout jlfout@gmail.com

- **April Fountain Ruritan near Keyser, 12 PM.** Doors open at 11am for socializing and the meal is served at 12:00 noon. Memorial Service. State delegates. Finalize plans for HS senior scholarship and Teacher /Service Personnel of the Year

Braxton County



Braxton County Association of Retired School Employees welcomed Jane Marks, AARP President, to their August meeting. Jane eloquently spoke of health issues affecting seniors as the 90th anniversary of Social Security, a financial lifeline for millions was celebrated.

Roane County

The annual Christmas Dinner was held in December where RCARSE shared good fellowship with our members as well as WVARSE Executive Director Bill Milam and his wife Darlene. Holiday music was provided by the Spencer Middle School Choir. Additionally, the chapter hosted story time following the Spencer Christmas Parade where Roane



County High School students read Christmas stories at the one room Newburne School located at Heritage Park in Spencer. The chapter also donated food and cash to the Roane County Helping Hand food pantry.

The Roane County chapter had a busy winter of activity and giving back to the community. In November they hosted Senator Kevin Bartlett and stressed the importance of addressing issues of concern for retirees related to COLA increases, PEIA issues, the lack of accountability and requirements for homeschooling and its impact on public education as well as school funding issues and how it is affecting rural counties.



RCARSE started spring by hosting Roane County Board of Education candidates to discuss their vision for local schools and began organizing April's paper bag auction.

Cabell County

The Cabell County Retired School Personnel Association gathered to celebrate the Christmas season with a joyful blend of fellowship, gratitude, and community spirit. Members enjoyed reconnecting with former colleagues, sharing stories from their years of service, and reflecting on the impact they continue to have in the community. The celebration featured festive decorations, holiday music, and a shared meal that brought everyone together in the spirit of the season. With laughter, camaraderie, and a renewed sense of purpose, the group embraced the holiday as an opportunity to honor their legacy in education while looking forward to the year ahead. Denis Chapman provided special music for the meeting. All committees reported an update of their events for the incoming year.



Membership Article written by John Riddle

Well, another Legislative Session and retirees were ignored again this year! Retirees deserve and need some help with their pensions. I know personally, after twenty years of retirement we have not seen any help, but continue to struggle with increasing costs in everything, just as active employees. We can't offset these increasing living costs. This has been difficult for us all! As the WVARSE Region III Director, working with our Legislative Chair, John Taylor, members have contacted our representatives, without any success. Retired state employees did not see any effort to “fix” PEIA, an issue that is of major concern for retirees! WVARSE was active during this past Legislative session and continued to work tirelessly on established goals. I encourage you to go to our website to view past Legislative successes. This Legislative year (2025-2026), we requested that you send handwritten cards and notes (no form letters) to county legislative representative. We asked them to consider retirees in our need of help with an increase in pensions. Evidently, the message was not received as important or there weren't enough contacts made. In any case, we failed in our effort to get our message of need to Charleston.



I also want to commend our retirees and our active school personnel for their tremendous efforts by keeping education moving forward in West Virginia! They make us proud! However, we need to increase our county involvement and increase our membership!

I would like to report that our membership is growing but feel it is too early to report. As we move into a new year and membership comes in, we hope recent retirees will see the value of belonging. We should reactivate inactive counties. We need your help! WVARSE is the single largest group of retired public employees, with over 35,000 potential members. There are many benefits to membership in our organization. The strength of your numbers would be a great help for retired school employees. Your voice joining ours is needed now more than ever.

We would like you as a veteran member to welcome our new members for this coming year. Reach out to colleagues with whom you worked, let them know of the benefits of belonging to WVARSE. Contact members that you know have stopped coming to meetings or are no longer members. Visit www.wvarse.org for details on our goals, membership, contacts, benefits, and more. Join now to get involved. NOW is the time to become an active member of your county WVARSE group and have a voice in what is needed for retired West Virginia school employees.

Nicholas County

The Nicholas County Association of Retired School Employees met October 17, 2025. Guest speaker was House of Delegates member Stanley Adkins. November 21, 2025 The guest speaker was Sara Neff, CPWA Financial Advisor who shared ideas for confident financial planning for life after education. December 2 several members met at Old Main (former NCHS structure) and decorated one of the many trees on display to the public as well as the window sill. The group's next meeting will be May 15, 2026 where the memorial service will be conducted.

The May meeting will also have a speaker, Wendy Thomas, who will speak on Senior Life Solutions.



WVARSE Membership Report

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 *Processed for Year Ending 6/30/2026*

Region I	Last Yr	Current	Region III	Last Yr	Current	Region V	Last Yr	Current
Brooke	169	133	Boone	228	147	Concord	3	1
Fairmont	17	11	Calhoun	21	6	Fayette	159	67
Hancock	224	149	Clay	15	17	Greenbrier	132	91
Marion	239	168	Jackson	137	109	McDowell	153	71
Marshall	193	84	Kanawha	388	254	Mercer	241	135
Monongalia	156	97	Ritchie	30	28	Monroe	16	13
Ohio	314	194	Roane	57	55	Nicholas	110	88
Pleasants	86	79	State Dept	36	20	Pocahontas	100	62
Tyler	60	46	Wirt	61	63	Raleigh	172	96
Wetzel	65	43	Wood	343	223	Summers	110	56
WVU	27	22	WVS	5	7	WVIT	3	3
TOTAL	1550	1026	TOTAL	1321	929	Wyoming	95	31
						TOTAL	1294	714

Region II	Last Yr	Current	Region IV	Last Yr	Current	Region VI	Last Yr	Current
Barbour	105	39	Cabell	183	145	Berkeley	174	136
Braxton	83	49	Lincoln	114	57	Deaf & Blind	35	12
Doddridge	20	7	Logan	33	34	Grant	63	105
Gilmer	42	38	Mason	58	16	Hampshire	69	49
Glenville	13	7	Mingo	28	14	Hardy	33	27
Harrison	338	217	MU	6	5	Jefferson	123	60
Lewis	107	76	Putnam	151	95	Mineral	125	115
Preston	161	94	Wayne	150	76	Morgan	82	49
Randolph	181	87	TOTAL	723	442	Pendleton	54	23
Taylor	144	108				Potomac	5	1
Tucker	57	66	Total Members			Shepherd	5	2
Upshur	262	188	Last Yr	7576	Current	TOTAL	768	579
Webster	69	53						
TOTAL	1582	1029						

Total Membership
 Spring 2025: 5122.
 Spring 2026: 4721
 Difference: 401

The loss is due to deaths, fewer new retirees joining and fewer members renewing. Please pay your membership dues to your county membership chair or go online (WVARSE.org) and pay. County units, please contact your members and collect dues.

~ In Memoriam ~

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| BRAXTON | PUTNAM |
| Harold K Skidmore * | Connie Leadmon ** |
| KANAWHA | Mildred Oldaker * |
| Dora A. Coleman ** | ROANE |
| Jane M. Lawson ** | Don Southall ** |
| LEWIS | TUCKER |
| Betty Leach ** | Ruth Ann Cooper ** |
| MINERAL | Jo Ellen Bland* |
| Diana Wimer ** | WEBSTER |
| Norberta Rygiel ** | Robert Waybright* |
| PLEASANTS | WIRT |
| Ruth Ann Carpenter ** | Beverly Prince * |
| PRESTON | |
| Thelma Garbart* | |



***Annual 6**
**** Life 9**

Marion County

The Marion County Association of Retired School Employees met on Tuesday Nov. 18th, 2025, at Apple Annies at the Middletown Commons. Joel Thacker was the guest speaker and presented information about Humana.

The group also collected blizzard bags which were donated to Meals on Wheels. They are given to the recipients of the program to be used on a day when the roads are hazardous and meals cannot be delivered.



Gilmer County

November

The Glenville State University dance band entertained the group at the November meeting.



December

The Gilmer County Retired Teachers had a Christmas Tea. They relaxed, ate good food, and played some reindeer games. They also collected Blizzard Bags for distribution to the families needing food during the cold months.



Hancock County

The Hancock County Association of Retired School Employees met for their Christmas luncheon at the vocational building, the John D. Rockefeller Center. Students in the Pro-Start Culinary program prepared a delicious meal under supervision of their instructor, Chef Steven “Bo” Fuscardo. Stocking stuffers were collected for our local Salvation Army.

A program from the Oak Glen Career and Technical Education Business class was presented by students preparing income taxes for free beginning in January. A group of students from Oak Glen and a group from Weir High both offer this service.



Culinary class along with instructor



Tax presenters from Oak Glen with Hancock president Melanie Donofe

Webster County

Webster County’s Retired School Employees met three times in the fall of 2025, and the programs for each meeting were informative and led to stimulating discussions.

1. During WVARSE week, Webster County Schools Superintendent Joseph Arbogast spoke on the successes and challenges of our local schools which led to a lively discussion on how state support for home schooling has cut into the county school budget.
2. The November meeting brought our Region Director Kevin Brown in for an enjoyable gathering replete with lively songs and piano accompaniment, a food drive for local pantries, and a charity auction. Kevin Brown also installed officers.
3. December’s get-together featured both State Senators, Sen. Bill Hamilton (standing) and Sen. Robbie Morris (seated) who spoke about the challenges the upcoming legislative session would face, as they answered questions related to retiree benefits, PEIA, school funding, and more.



1. Pictured above is Webster County Superintendent Joseph Arbogast
2. Pictured in the upper right corner is Region II Director Kevin Brown
3. Pictured at the right are senators Bill Hamilton and Robbie Morris

Scholarship Winners 2025

The WVARSE Scholarship Committee, chaired by Sharon Vance (Greenbrier); Mary Ann Ferris (Harrison); Danny Gray (Greenbrier); and Linda Stewart (Pocahontas), reviewed the three college applications and awarded scholarships to the following students:



ELIZABETH DYSART

ELIZABETH DYSART

Elizabeth is a product of Kanawha Co Schools for whom she eventually would like to teach math. She will achieve a 5th grade to adult certification, making her eligible to teach math in middle school, high school and adult locations. Elizabeth credits her former math teachers at Pinch Elementary and Herbert Hoover High Schools for igniting her desire to teach math. She states that both teachers were highly encouraging and inspirational and that their guidance to both her and fellow classmates led her to “follow her heart” and become a teacher instead of the more lucrative path of a degree in medicine. Elizabeth, after graduating Herbert Hoover High School, enrolled at WVU as a Pre-Med student, eventually transferring to WV State University once she became an education major. She will be doing her Clinical Experience in math at George Washington High School in Charleston. She hopes to inspire future generations by following in the footsteps of her aforementioned mentors, desiring to give back to her Elkview community.

Bracie ultimately wants to return to Pocahontas County to nurture programs such as Upward Bound which supported her as a first-Generation college student.

She believes that education is a calling for her, believing that her original invitation to attend an Upward Bound camp was a spark that launched her educational goals.

Bracie graduated from Pocahontas Co HS. She attends Davis and Elkins College and did her clinical experience at North Elementary School in Elkins. She plans to teach in Pocahontas County.

She credits her family for instilling her core values of “hard work, perseverance and the importance of education”. She states that although her parents were not wealthy, they encouraged her to pursue her dreams through education and supported her desire to give back to her community.

CALEB MESSER

Caleb is yet another example of someone choosing to follow his heart instead of searching for the best paycheck.

His parents were a perfect combination of two potential pathways: medicine and education. Clearly, his parents were excellent role models for both paths.

Ultimately, seeing the impact his father had on his students, provided the tipping point.

Caleb attends Marshall and his clinical experience was at Ona Elementary, in Ona.

Caleb graduated from Scott High, Boone Co., but he plans to return to Cabell County as an elementary school teacher. He states his later goal is to become a principal, like his father.

During his teaching journey, Caleb has pursued music and theatre and intends to include these passions—and his love for his soulmate—in his future plans.

Caleb seems not only committed to a career in education, but he is clearly well prepared and able to navigate and overcome all barriers to his success.



CALEB MESSER