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SAVE the DATE

ARTA State Convention

Sept 27, 2016
Benton Event Center
Benton, AR

Area Spring Conferences Announced

The dates and locations of the Area Spring Conferences have been announced as follows:

Area I

May 4 Fort Smith Presbyterian Church
 Contact: Linda Riley, 479-651-3621

Area II

May 12 ASU Heber Springs
 Contact: Sue West, 870-668-3615

Area III

May 5 Wynne United Methodist Church
 Contact: Jessica Foster, 870-275-6885

Area IV

May 3 Ashdown
 Contact: Bob Thompson, 870-403-1195

Area V

May 9 Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff
 Contact: Lura Campbell, 870-247-4734

Area VI

May 17 Second Presbyterian Church
 Cantrell Road, Little Rock
 Contact: Linda Remele, 501-392-6184

These regional meetings are for the benefit of ARTA members in each of the six membership areas.

Programs typically include a business meeting, speakers and entertainment. The ARTA leadership and staff will be on hand to provide information on a variety of issues. A representative of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System usually reports on the condition of the system.

All members are encouraged to make plans to attend one of these fun, informative meetings with their colleagues.

For more detailed information about each conference, contact the person listed or another Area Director.

Refer to page 11 for a list of counties by area.

ARTA Members Run for ATRS Board of Trustees

Two ARTA members are running for Retirant Position #9 on the ATRS Board of Trustees. Both have completed the nomination process and met the established eligibility requirements. A com-

plete description of the eligibility and voting process is located on page 5. As a courtesy to ARTA members, ATRS has allowed us to share the Candidate Statements of each as filed with ATRS:

My name is **Beverly Leming**.

In 2013 I retired after 36 years as a business and computer educator at Malvern High School. I served seven years on the Board as the 4th District's active teacher representative. I served as Chair of the Investment Committee and Vice Chair of the Board. I need your vote to return as a retiree representative and use my experience to keep the system sound for you. Member of ARTA.

Dear Retiree,

It has been an honor to serve you on the ATRS Board of Trustees in Retirant Position #9. I ask you to vote to re-elect me to a second term in the March 2016 election. Our collective efforts have been designed to protect and increase the funds of ATRS and reduce the unfunded liability; maintain the annual 3% COLA and its Defined Benefits Plan guaranteeing lifetime benefits. Our efforts have been successful.

Lloyd W. Black

Message from the President

Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all I have not seen this year! Welcome to ARTA in 2016! Can you imagine the ARTA year is half over? As I write this, we have just completed the ARTA Winter Board Meeting and I am happy to report that we are off to a good start. January brings with it thoughts of beginning anew, setting new goals/resolutions and recommitting to old ones. We, in ARTA, will continue working on the membership goals set in 2014. Yes, this is a new month in a new year, and we ask you to help us resolve the *old membership gap* – one of our most important ongoing goals.



The number of public school retirees and their membership in the local units and in ARTA, the state organization, is still much too low. This gap weakens our strength at the local and state levels. And we have yet to close the dual membership gap. We have some retirees affiliated with the local units and some with the state, but not enough in both organizations. We need your help to unify the organizations and close the membership gaps. As of December 1, 2015, we had 72,539 active public school employees. There are 42,889 retirees and survivors who receive some type of benefit from the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (ATRS). However, *of the 42K retirees*, only 12, 299 belong to ARTA, the state organization, and just under 7,500 belong to the 65 local RTA units. We have much work to do to get the dual memberships to fifty percent or higher. Several local units have turned in their membership reports for the mid-year. However, we are waiting for the membership reports from all units to determine the amount of growth from September, 2015 until January, 2016.

Would you join us in resolving to make membership your primary focus? Continue to ask non-member public school retirees to join at the local and state levels. Resolve now to work to recruit members to close the membership gap. Resolve to not stop asking until you get a member to join. Put into practice “every member gets a member”. Share with potential members why you are a member of the local unit and ARTA, and all the benefits you have received. Let them know that ARTA is the parent organization and it is the only professional organization that works for the benefit for all retired public school employees. Joining ARTA sends a clear message to legislators, neighbors, and businesses alike, that retired public school employees are important and vibrant members of our community. Collectively, you make ARTA’s/RTA’s presence known through volunteer efforts in the area in which you live as well as through legislative advocacy in the statehouse.

Finally, as ARTA members, we must continually work to increase our membership. If each of us would contact two or three retirees and get them to join as dual members, what a difference it could make at the local and state levels. There is strength in numbers. Can we count on you? Will you do your share? Can we make this an unforgettable year of change and growth in dual membership? Can we close the membership gap? Can we eliminate the gap? *Do not forsake ARTA, and ARTA will continue to work for all public school employees/retirees, and not forsake you.*

I hope to see you this spring as I visit the six area meetings throughout the state. Go, grow and glow in your county and in the state. Make ARTA/RTAs shine in your community and in our state.

Ella Walker-Rolfe
ARTA President

Important Contact Information

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

Inside Pulaski County: 501-375-2958
Toll Free (Nationwide): 1-888-929-0955
Fax: 501-376-0955
E-mail: office_arta@att.net
www.artanow.com

Arkansas Teacher Retirement System Retirement Benefits and Checks

Inside Pulaski County: 501-682-1517
Toll Free (Nationwide): 1-800-666-2877
E-mail: info@artsr.gov
www.artsr.gov

Employee Benefits Division (Health and Life Insurance)

Inside Pulaski County: 501-682-9656
Toll Free (Nationwide): 1-877-815-1017
E-mail: AskEBD@dfa.state.ar.us
www.arbenefits.org

Long Term Care Insurance Annuities · Dental Insurance Medicare Products

Mary Alice Hughes
AR Insurance License # 29888
1-501-988-2726
Email: info@ia-office.com
www.ia-office.com
PO Box 646
Jacksonville, AR 72078

Matt Hughes
AR Insurance License # 29891
479-967-1339
matt@matthughesinsurance.com
2000 West Main Street
Russellville, AR 72801

Delta Dental Insurance
501-988-2726
www.deltadentalar.com



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Paulette Parker Vice President
Sharon Rapp Secretary
Donna Morey Executive Director
Mary Huie Office/Travel Manager
Tammy Gray Communications

Message from the Executive Director

The Future is Now

2016 is off and running, from Oaklawn racing to political campaigning. On March 1st, Arkansas was part of the "SEC Primary". My wish is that everyone did and will exercise their right to vote at each opportunity. ARTA, as well as NRTA and AARP, are nonpartisan. Our organizations do not endorse or give financial contributions to any candidate. Each of you has the freedom to support the candidates who best represent your personal ideologies. Organizationally, we will visit with those elected to voice the interests and concerns of *all* retired public school employees. The run-off election date is March 22nd.

The Arkansas Teacher Retirement System will hold an election for Retiree Position #9. Those ballots will be mailed to your home post office address on 15th. Two

ARTA members are running for the position: Mr. Lloyd Black and Mrs. Beverly Lemming. Please vote and send your ballot back to ATRS in the postage-paid envelop by April 15th.

The six ARTA Area Spring Meetings are in the planning stages now. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend your area meeting. It is a great time to visit with other ARTA members and to stay informed on issues that affect your life. I would love to have the opportunity to personally greet each of you at your area meeting. Lunch is usually pretty good, too!

I would like to brag on the ARTA Area IV Leadership who decided last August to actively increase donations for the Parsons—Burnett Scholarship Fund. Thanks to members in the local units in Area IV that have taken up donations for the fund at their meetings. This effort and the silent auction at the ARTA State Convention should help us award at least one additional scholarship to an active educator to help further their education.



"What I spent, is gone; what I kept, I lost but what I gave away will be mine forever."

*~ Ethel Percy Andrus
Founder, NRTA and AARP*

The original challenge was to ask each member to give one dollar to the fund. If all 12,200 ARTA members would do this each year, along with the

donations received for memorials, we could grant more and larger awards. My heart was touched in December when we received a large check for the scholarship fund from the husband of a member who passed away. What a wonderful tribute and gift for the benefit of students and teachers in Arkansas schools. I challenge each of you to send a donation for the Parsons—Burnett Scholarship Fund to the ARTA office in honor of your favorite educator.

In closing—vote, see you at your area meeting, send money and enjoy life.

Donna

Welcome New Life Members

Boone County
Kathy W. Bryant

Chicot County
Linda C. Branch

Craighead County
Patricia A. Brun

Crawford County
Joyce L. Bassham

Hot Spring County
Debra K. Marsh

Independence County
Willie C. Strong

Jefferson County
Patsy L. Borecky

Lawrence County
Freda Ruelene Foley

Lee County
Cecilia Baker
Arlean S. Hamilton

Logan County
Deborah Scoggin

Lonoke County
Pauletta S. Perryman
Sandra L. Robert

Madison County
Patricia A. Commerford

Phillips County
James R. Melvin
Frances C. Stackhouse
Ulysses Williams

Pulaski County
Sandra Edwards
Martha "Ginny" Pace
Beverly A. Raley
Mary E. Vancura
Carolyn R. Whiteside
Loletha Wilkins

Saline County
Anne Nowlin Elder

Sebastian County
Barbara Dalke
Ruth E. Skelton

Washington County
Mary Faye Jones
Out-of-State
Lela B. Harrison

Clark County RTA Enjoys Helping Others

Nellene Roberts of Arkadelphia writes that members of the Clark County Retired Teachers Association (CCRTA) try to reach out and help others as well as enjoying retirement. The group reports that at their December meeting, they donated to the Sheriff's Ranch and Amity Elementary School.

The Sheriff's Ranch is located outside of Amity. They had six

girls to care for at the time. The CCRTA donated \$400 along with some other gifts for Christmas. Teresa Fortner, house parent, says the girls feel the retired teachers really care about them.

For their part, the teachers at Amity Elementary were excited to receive cleaning supplies to help keep germs at bay.



The Arkadelphia Central Singing Bears performed for the CCRTA group along with the senior citizens gathered for lunch at the Arkadelphia Senior Center. The children were bright and cheerful as they entertained with several Christmas songs including some modern day holiday songs. Afterward, everyone was in the Christmas spirit.



Members of the CCRTA gathered for a Christmas photo at their December meeting.

Send your stories and photos for Facebook or the INTERLINK to Tammy Gray, ARTA Communications, 1200 Commerce Suite 103, Little Rock, AR 72202 or tammy_arta@att.net.

Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (ATRS) Board of Trustees Election

Election of the following two (2) positions on the ATRS Board of Trustees will take place in March 2016:

Position #9 (Member Trustee—Retirant Trustee)

Candidates for Position #9 must meet the following criteria:

1. Retirant member of ATRS.
2. Resident of the State of Arkansas.
3. In accordance with A.C.A § 24-7-301(6), an employee working for the system is not eligible to be elected or appointed to the board, or a candidate to be elected or appointed to the board.

Eligible voters for Position #9 shall be all retirants of ATRS, regardless of present employment status or residency.

Position #2 (Member Trustee—2nd Congressional District)

Candidates for Position #2 must meet the following criteria:

1. Employed by a participating employer located in the congressional district for which he or she is seeking election.
2. Active Member of ATRS (Includes T-DROP Participants).
3. Minimum of five (5) years of actual service.
4. Employed in a position that requires a state teaching license or the equivalent.
5. In accordance with A.C.A § 24-7-301(6), an employee working for the system is not eligible to be elected or appointed to the board, or a candidate to be elected or appointed to the board.

Eligible voters for Position #2 shall be active members, regard-

less of credited service, employed by participating employers located in the respective congressional districts and who are employed in a position that requires a state teaching license or the equivalent.

The Board of Trustees shall employ an independent contractor who will mail ballots to eligible voters' addresses on record and will also collect, count and certify election results.

- Ballots mailed: Tuesday, March 15, 2016
- Deadline for ballots to be returned: Friday, April 15, 2016
- Results Certified: Wednesday, April 20, 2016

If a candidate receives at least 50% of the votes cast on the first ballot, he/she will be declared the winner of the election and will assume office on July 1, 2016. If a run-off election is necessary, the candidate receiving at least 50% of the votes cast will be declared the winner of the election and will assume office on July 1, 2016.

The term of office for each elected trustee is six (6) years. Each trustee shall continue to serve as trustee until his or her successor is elected.

If no candidate received at least 50% of votes cast by eligible voters on the first ballot, a run-off election will be held between the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes for the position.

For information about run-off election procedures, as well as complete information about the candidates, visit the ATRS web site at www.atrs.gov.

TAX STATEMENTS

Income statements for tax purposes (1099s) are sent from the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System. If you have not received your statement, do not call ARTA.

Contact ATRS directly at 1-800-666-2877.

REMINDER

ARTA and ATRS are two separate organizations. You are encouraged to report changes to your contact information to both ATRS and ARTA. Changes to other personal information (beneficiaries, marital status, employment status) will be referred to ATRS.

ATRS 1-800-666-2877
ARTA 1-888-929-0955

2016 ATRS BENEFIT PAYMENT SCHEDULE

CHECKS MAILED	DIRECT DEPOSIT
March 24, 2016	March 25, 2016
April 26, 2016	April 27, 2016
May 26, 2016	May 27, 2016
June 23, 2016	June 24, 2016
July 26, 2016	July 27, 2016
August 25, 2016	August 26, 2016
September 27, 2016	September 28, 2016
October 26, 2016	October 27, 2016
November 22, 2016	November 23, 2016
December 21, 2016	December 22, 2016

Election Season Lasts All Year

By the time you read this, Arkansas will have participated in what is being called the SEC Primary. Within a few more months, many political races will have narrowed considerably. While some of you may already be experiencing election fatigue, others may feel you have plenty of time to research a candidate. The fact is, this is an excellent time to contact both current and potential elected officials.

Your Arkansas Congressional Delegation should be hard at work through the spring. Most are fairly responsive to their constituents, whether you are encouraging them to vote for or against a bill or simply sharing your thoughts on an issue. We've listed their Washington D.C. contact information, although they also have local offices for your convenience. All delegates except for one are running for reelection in 2016.

The Arkansas State Legislature will meet for a Fiscal Legislative Session, and possibly a Special Legislative Session this spring, but will likely not take up any other legislation this year. Attention will instead turn to fall, when 17 Senate seats and all 100 House

seats will be up for reelection. Note that many of these races are uncontested, making for a few less candidates to contact.

We encourage you to use the next few months to contact or meet with your elected officials as well as with those who are running for office. Learn about where they stand on issues that are important to you by attending their meetings or inviting them to yours. You can also request a one-on-one meeting to share information with them on issues where you may be more knowledgeable than they are, such as retirement, pensions, or Medicare, to name just a few. Regardless of your political affiliation or your personal ideology, the goal is to develop a relationship with them now, ahead of their election or the next legislative session.

Please also let the ARTA leadership know what concerns you have as a retired school employee. While ARTA can not endorse a particular candidate, we can continue to advocate for legislation that benefits all retirees. We will also continue to encourage and support you in your efforts to do the same. If we can provide information or other assistance, please let us know.

Arkansas Congressional Delegation

U.S. Senate

* Senator John Boozman
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4843
www.boozman.senate.gov

Senator Tom Cotton
124 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-2353
www.cotton.senate.gov

* Running for reelection in 2016.

U.S. Congress District 01

* Congressman Rick Crawford
1711 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4076
www.crawford.house.gov

U.S. Congress District 02

* Congressman French Hill
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-2506
www.hill.house.gov

U.S. Congress District 03

* Congressman Steve Womack
1119 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-255-5713
www.womack.house.gov

U.S. Congress District 04

* Congressman Bruce Westerman
130 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-3772
www.westerman.house.gov

Arkansas State Legislature

Space does not allow for us to list the current members of the Arkansas State Legislature. You can obtain a list of all members, along with their contact information, at www.arkleg.state.ar.us.

For a complete list of **all** candidates who have filed for election in Arkansas in 2016, visit **www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections**. Click on "Search 2016 Candidate Information" under the heading Latest News.

Up, Up and Away!

“Up, up and away...” goes the popular song of the 1970s and that’s the way it was at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta as hundreds of hot air balloons of all sizes, colors and shapes took to the cloudy New Mexico sky.

My wife, Mary Ann, and I were witnesses of the “sunrise mass ascension” at the fiesta which was held October 3-11, 2015. We were on a trip with members of the Arkansas Retired Teachers Association that traveled from Sherwood to Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico via Oklahoma City (OK) and Amarillo, Texas.

That morning the weather was cool and the sky was overcast. There was very little breeze at Balloon Fiesta Park, a facility that has to be large enough to handle all of the balloon participants, not to mention thousands and thousands of spectators and the vehicles they arrived in. Still, the desert air was filled with excitement as balloon crews readied their craft for inflating and ascent. As that was going on, streams of headlights could be seen from all directions as carloads and busloads of people arrived for the event.

Because of the weather conditions, the event was under the yellow flag for what seemed a long time before conditions changed and the green for go flag was hoisted and things began happening.

The balloons were spread out on the park. Burners were lit, gas-powered fans were started and the tasks of inflating the balloons began. Festival officials said about 600 balloons were supposed to fly that morning.

It was still not daylight, but kind of twilight as the burners flared, both lighting up and inflating the balloons, causing them to stand upright. The flames inside made them glow in the pre-dawn light. As the balloons were inflated, the crowd cheered, anticipating the mass liftoff.

It is called the Dawn Patrol Show, which has been a part of the fiesta since 1978. The Dawn Patrol Show is not only beautiful but practical. Dawn Patrol pilots take off before sunrise and fly until landing sites become visible, giving other balloonists an idea of wind speeds and direction at different altitudes.

See **Balloons**, page 9

My Tropical Costa Rica

November 5, 2015 a group of ARTA travelers arrived in San Jose, Costa Rica after about a six hour flight. The following day, after a short bus ride through the beautiful countryside, a tour of the Doka Coffee Estate allowed us to see the complete coffee process including all the machinery and workers involved from “seedling” to the “final” beans in a bag. Later we traveled to the Guanacaste Region for lodging at the hotel RUI. The hotel is encompassed on three sides with almost 30 acres of fenced rain forest (the fencing keeps animals out.) The fourth side faces a sandy beach with crashing waves and beautiful blue water with the ocean temperature in the seventies. Many took advantage of the nice beach and warm waters for the rest of the afternoon. Sunday we experienced Monteverde Cloud Forest for a nature walk through a spectacular ecosystem of flora and fauna (trees, bushes, vines, flowers, etc. for us novices).

While in Monteverde we went to Selvatura Park, a cloud forest reserve, visiting butterfly gardens and hummingbird galleries with more than 100 hummingbirds. Our next exciting and enjoyable adventure was a leisurely-paced guided walking tour above the

forest floor crossing several “hanging” bridges that were long and very high. That afternoon, several of us “brave folks” did the Zip Line above the canopy consisting of twelve cables from 120 feet to 3,600 feet long and from 60 to 400 feet above the ground. This is among the best things I have ever done!



On Tuesday, November 10th, we cruised Lake Arenal, the largest lake in Costa Rica. The scenery on shore was absolutely beautiful and we got to observe lots of waterfowl and see the huge Arenal Volcano which has produced lava for the past 30 years. The next day we took a river boat trip in Cano Negro getting to see numerous waterfowl, monkeys, turtles, lizards and even caiman providing some good photo opportunities. Our last day was spent with a visit to landscaped parks and shopping.

For those who like trips where you can walk quite a bit, this is a wonderful trip with tour guides who are very knowledgeable and provide you with a very memorable trip.

*Submitted by ARTA Traveler Jimmie Hardcastle.
For more photos, view the Costa Rica photo albums
on the ARTA Facebook page.*

2016 Travel Opportunities

We invite ARTA members and their families to join us for fun and exciting trips of a lifetime! Whenever possible, trips are escorted by an ARTA staff member. Guests are welcome but must travel with ARTA members.

Detailed itineraries and cost for each trip are available by calling the ARTA office at 501-375-2958 or on our website at www.artanow.com. All price quotes are round trip from Little Rock to Little Rock. If you prefer to depart from an airport other than Little Rock (Northwest Arkansas, Fort Smith, AR, Memphis, TN, etc.) it is possible to join the group at the trip destination. You can discuss this with the travel coordinator when you make your reservations.

Most importantly, book early to ensure available airspace and receive the best price. **Reservations made after the airline seat reduction date are based upon availability and the early booking discount no longer applies.** Deposits are required to make your reservation and are refundable until the final payment deadline with trip cancellation waiver plan.

Many of our trips are arranged through Collette Travel and are eligible for their worry-free travel protection plan. If you need to cancel your reservation for any reason, you'll get a full refund, less the cost of the plan. Additionally, you are covered on tour. If you have to stop your trip or return home early, need medical assistance or evacuation, suffer baggage loss or delay, or are delayed for 12 hours or more while on tour, you are covered by this plan. Collette also offers a travel loyalty program. Complete the simple online process after booking a trip. Once you depart, you will receive a \$150 credit per person on your next trip with them.

ARTA strives to offer trips that are safe, affordable and fun. Call today to plan your next travel opportunity!

May 23-31, 2016 – Canyon Country. A journey through Canyon Country brings you into a colorful world of stunning southwestern vistas and the unique topography of three national parks: Zion, Bryce and the Grand Canyon. Delve into the region's Native American history during a chat with a local tribe member. Take time to shop in Sedona's marketplace and travel through Kaibab National Forest. Spend a night on the South Rim of the magnificent Grand Canyon. Luxuriate at the Lake Powell Resort for two nights. Personalize your tour by choosing to either take in the stark beauty of Monument Valley on a narrated jeep ride or take a cruise through the canyons for a different perspective on the spectacular scenery. Then it's off to the neon-lit spectacle of Las Vegas. **The airline seat reduction date has passed along with the early booking discount. Call the ARTA office to inquire about availability.**

June 6-14, 2016 – Bus trip to Niagara Falls, Canada. Please note: this trip will require a passport. Enjoy the thundering and awesome Niagara Falls where you are reminded of the power of Mother Nature. Highlights of this trip include: Historical tour of Niagara Falls; a trip on the Hornblower cruise boat that will get you as close as possible to the breathtaking flow of water, power and mist that is the magnificent Niagara Falls. Within the Niagara Great Gorge, you will journey past the American Falls, Bridal Veil Falls and into the very heart of the famous Horseshoe Falls; Behind the Falls Tour - descend 150 ft. by elevator, where a short tunnel gives access to two outdoor observation decks and two portals located directly behind the Falls. Additional highlights include a tour of the local wineries, guided tour of Niagara on the Lake, a visit to the famous Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Museum in Cleveland, Ohio and much more. Deposit is \$300.00

September 13-25, 2016 – Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise. (This trip will require a passport) Relax for seven nights and enjoy the epic Alaskan scenery from aboard one of Princess Cruise Lines' lovely ships. Cruise through northern splendor, including the Inside Passage and Glacier Bay. Enjoy four nights at stunning Princess lodges and hotels. Travel deep into Denali National Park for the best opportunities to view the region's wildlife. Ride a luxury domed rail to Whittier and view incredible landscapes from glass-ceiling railcars and open-aired observation platforms as guides provide expert commentary. Explore Alaska's gorgeous capital, Juneau. Visit Ketchikan, the "Salmon Capital of the World." Enjoy lively entertainment and a hearty feast at the Music of Denali Dinner Theater. Explore vibrant Vancouver. **The airline seat reduction date is March 6, 2016. Book an outside cabin and receive an upgrade to a balcony FREE! Call the ARTA office for detailed itinerary, pricing and reservations. Reservations after March 6, 2015 is based on availability and the balcony upgrade no longer will apply.**

October 8-16, 2016 – Magical Rhine and Moselle. Set sail on a cruise along the Rhine and Moselle rivers that will take you to Netherlands, Germany and France. Sit back and relax in your outside stateroom, and enjoy the luxury of unlimited wine or beer with every dinner and daily onboard musical performances. Join a local expert for a tour Amsterdam highlighting the city's centuries-old canal system and famous 16th-century row houses stacked side-by-side. This cruise will bring you by charming panoramas while you get to know the interesting culture and deep history of the region. Spend time in Speyer, one of Germany's oldest cities. Pause in Rudesheim, to explore the famous Siegfried's Mechanisches Musikkabinett (or Music Museum). Tour the 2,000-year-old city of Koblenz. Your stop in Cologne features a guided walking tour of the city's old town

2016 Travel Opportunities

and Cologne Cathedral. Spend the afternoon in Bernkasel and sip wine in one of the famous cellars. Enjoy a guided tour of the world famous Strasbourg old town. **Because there are fewer cabins than on large cruise ships, river trips fill up very quickly. The airline seat reduction date of November 2, 2015 has passed along with the early booking discount. Call the ARTA office to inquire about availability.**

October 29-November 4, 2016 – Fall Foliage Bus Trip to Smoky Mountains including Gatlinburg, Biltmore Mansion and Pigeon Forge. Make plans now to sit back and enjoy the fall foliage as we travel to the Smoky Mountains. Great Smoky Mountain National Park covers over one-half million acres making it the largest national park in the east. The Greystone Lodge on the River located in Gatlinburg, Tennessee will be your home for four nights. Excursions from Gatlinburg will include: Dollywood Theme Park; a tour of the Biltmore Mansion in Ashville, North Carolina with lunch at the Deerpark Restaurant located on the estate; a guided trolley tour of Ashville; a ride on the Ober Gatlinburg aerial tram; and the Country Tonight Show. Other highlights of this trip include: a visit on the way, to Discovery Park of America, located in Union City, Tennessee. The park offers visitors a world-class entertainment and educational experience with more than 70,000 SF of exhibits focused on nature, science, technology, history, and art; and 50-acres of gardens, grounds and exhibits focused on history and ending with a visit to quaint Franklin, Tennessee on the way home. Deposit is \$200.00.

ience with more than 70,000 SF of exhibits focused on nature, science, technology, history, and art; and 50-acres of gardens, grounds and exhibits focused on history and ending with a visit to quaint Franklin, Tennessee on the way home. Deposit is \$200.00.

November 28-December 2, 2016 – Spotlight on New York Holiday. Experience the best of “the Big Apple” in this spectacular 5-day vacation. From Little Italy to Greenwich Village, New York City is a destination even the most seasoned traveler can enjoy. Spend four nights in the heart of Midtown close to Central Park and Times Square. Take your seat and watch the curtain rise for two exciting Broadway Shows. Ferry to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. See the Empire State Building and the United Nations. Explore The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s two million works. Enjoy plenty of free time to shop and explore this fabulous city on your own. Get ready to “start spreading the news!”. **The airline seat reduction date is June 28, 2016. Book before June 28, 2016 and save \$100 per person. Call the ARTA office for detailed itinerary, pricing and reservations. After the June 28, 2016 seat reduction bookings will be based on availability and the early booking discount will no longer apply.**

Balloons, *continued*

Immediately following the launch of the Dawn Patrol Show was the Krispy Kreme Morning Glow, in which a “baker’s dozen” of balloons light up the field with a balloon glow. It is an awesome sight, especially so with the beautiful desert sunrise forming the backdrop.

We were free to wander among the balloons and their crews as they prepared for the morning glow and flights. The crews were friendly and seemed happy to answer the questions of curious spectators.

There were balloons from all states, officials said, adding that 17 countries were also represented at the fiesta.

Besides the traditional balloon shapes, there were many others including animals, cartoon characters, a stagecoach and even Darth Vader and Yoda from “Star Wars”.

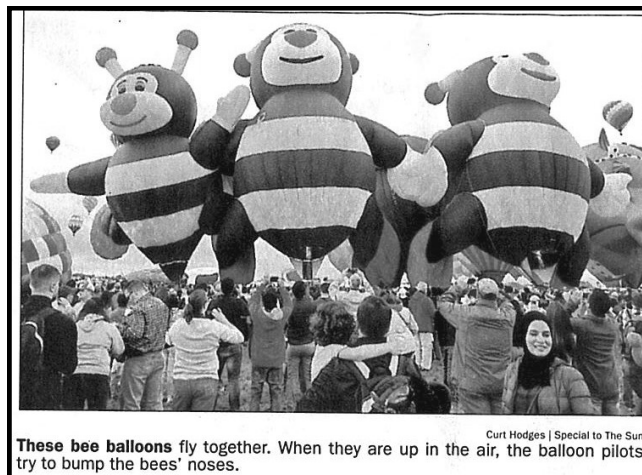
Our tour group tickets included breakfast at the festival grounds. It was good, particularly after arising at 4:00 a.m. to get to the site before sunrise - and before breakfast.

Albuquerque police did an excellent job of handling the traffic. There were few delays, and everyone seemed to get along fine without any kind of disturbances to mar the festival. Families

were everywhere, all enjoying the balloons and the other festivities, which included lots of food concessions, bounce houses, a zip line and slides for the children. While we were only at the festival for part of one day, it was enough to catch the spirit of the event and enjoy the sight of hundreds of colorful balloons filling the Albuquerque sky.

While in Albuquerque, the group also visited Old Town Albuquerque where we browsed through shops filled with mostly Native American

arts, crafts and jewelry, much of it handmade silver featuring turquoise and other colorful stones. We also visited Pecos National Park and the Loretto Chapel Museum, home of the “Miracle Staircase” while in Santa Fe.



These bee balloons fly together. When they are up in the air, the balloon pilots try to bump the bees' noses.

*Submitted by ARTA Traveler Curt Hodges.
His full article was originally published in
The Jonesboro Sun on October 25, 2015.*

In Memoriam

"These immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence"

Arkansas County

Rose E. Ford

Ashley County

Sara E. McCormick

Baxter County

Doyle L. Beard
Kathryn G. Fowler

Benton County

Jane R. Basse
Charlene S. Cathey
Worth W. Gibson
Marilyn Johnson
Patricia L. Pike
Randy S. Smith
Charles G. Standridge
Sheila B. Stanley
Vickie E. Taylor
Louis A. Thomas Jr.
Rhonda L. Younger

Boone County

Mary R. Hamm
Joe J. Huff

Bradley County

Katherine R. Mitchell

Calhoun County

Reba R. Harrell

Carroll County

Sandra S. Norris

Chicot County

Jo A. Greene

Cleburne County

Nancy P. Newcom

Cleveland County

Joyce A. Puckett

Craighead County

Mary L. Brown
Billie J. Bryant
Barbara A. Keller
Euza A. Meeker
Linda K. Riggs
Frances A. Smallwood
Leslie A. Warr
Frances E. Workman

Crawford County

Arnold D. Feller

Crittenden County

Bill M. Kessinger
Kathy C. Mitchell
Leon Murray

Drew County

Olivia W. Arnold
Carl F. Preston

Faulkner County

Mary E. Ferrell
Nelle A. Henderson
Sandra K. Mason
Nelda J. Morris
Carolyn Reeves

Fulton County

Thelma J. Funderburg

Garland County

Evelyn B. Burkett
Hubert A. O'Neal
Martin W. Powell
John S. Shewmaker
Katherine M. Willcox

Grant County

Harriett I. Boyd

Greene County

Betty J. Archer
Vivian N. Bass
Donna Horner

Hempstead County

Margaret M. Collums
Bonnie A. Routon
Harvey K. Smith

Hot Spring County

Mary A. Carter
Ray E. Jordan

Independence County

Katherine L. Stokes

Jefferson County

Martha S. Ashcraft
Ora D. Donaldson
Bobbie J. Joyce
Earnestine H. Lang
Victor K. Pighee
Frances M. Wallace

Little River County

William Jones

Lonoke County

Joe E. Jackson
Susan A. McGovern

Madison County

Mary A. Barron

Miller County

Evelyn D. Auck
Josephine B. Morris

Mississippi County

Carolyn S. Baugus
Lucille W. Harrison
Vaughn A. Jerome
Zeak Lacy
Brenda J. Metheny
Gloria J. Ray
Ronald Thacker Sr.

Monroe County

Zelma L. Hamilton

Newton County

Charles J. Collins
Lester C. Ramsey

Ouachita County

Phyllis M. McClurkin
Nan Purifoy
Ruby G. Reynolds

Phillips County

Sarah E. Major
Joe Treat

Pike County

Elizabeth Feemster

Poinsett County

Oscar Grant
Verna S. Tate

Polk County

Betty S. Goss

Pope County

Arlene K. Harris
Velta H. Lynn
Opal Nelson-Gennings
William W. Payton Jr.
Esther L. Roberds
Mary A. Vaughn

Prairie County

John L. McNeil

Pulaski County

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Beverly Billingsley
Cleola O. Boles
Gladis Bright
Ether Bruce
Peggy J. Covington
Tressie O. Curry
Isaac Dale
Justine B. Frogge
John A. Fuller
Dorothy J. Green
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Howard H. Harper
Gloria M. Harris
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Shirley A. Hunter
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Terry L. Johnson
Frances J. Johnston
Carolyn B. McGohan
Mildred Patrick
Hulen D. Quattlebaum
Sybil D. Robinson
Norma V. Rodgers
Bonnie B. Salyer
Rose M. Sanders
Ira T. Scoggins
Eva M. Simpson
J.C. Skipper Jr.

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Floyd G. Lecroy
Jimmy D. Parker

Searcy County

Annabelle Treece

Sebastian County

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Willis G. Maddox
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Elizabeth Walker
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Clifton S. Lucas
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Frances G. Brody
Eva M. Brown
Peggy Cupp
Rizetta G. Davis
Thelma R. Fair
Elizabeth P. Gardner
Edith A. Hill
Timothy G. Johnson
Irma C. Mathys
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Margie I. McCord
Ann E. McLennan
James W. Murphy
Alford G. Murray
Denise K. Nash
Leonard B. Parrott
Ray B. Piatt
Zettie A. Spiller
Wanda K. Swank
Diane C. Vogler
Dorothy W. Williams

Memorials and Donations

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY

Thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity of individuals and local units, \$1,236.00 in memorials, honorariums and scholarship donations were mailed to ARTA in the last three month period. An additional \$15, over and above the regular monthly dues contributed by Continuing Members, brings the total to \$1,251.00. Your gifts to ARTA, for whatever reason, are greatly appreciated and are a meaningful and substantive part of funding the Parsons—Burnett Scholarship Grants. These scholarships are awarded for educators currently practicing in Arkansas to further their graduate studies.

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In memory of:

Grace Hill
Robert Neely
Alvin “Buddy” Seamster

Columbia/Lafayette County

In memory of:

Linda Warner

Grant County

In memory of:

Harriet Boyd

Independence County

In memory of:

Katherine Stokes

Johnson County

In memory of:

Earl Hayes
Dean Pitts
Linda Sinor

Miller County

In memory of:

Evelyn Galloway Auck
Josephine Morris

North Little Rock RTA

In memory of:

Fran Jackson
Inez Jackson
Margie Mattox
Lena Moore

Prairie County

In memory of:

Billie Mullen

Searcy County

In memory of:

Annabelle Treece

South Pulaski RTA

In memory of:

Jeanette F. Johnson

William L. Faught

In memory of:

Barbara Faught

Carol Kaffka

In memory of:

Carl F. Grummer Jr.

Peggy Sue Mason

In memory of:

Mary Alice Nantz

Paulette Parker

In memory of:

Brenda Joan Metheny

Miller County

Donation:

Parsons—Burnett Scholarship

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Donation:

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REMINDER

Senior members, that is ARTA members who are 90 years old or older, will be featured in a future issue of the INTERLINK.

If you or someone you know should be recognized, please send name, age, name of local RTA unit, and school district from which retired to the ARTA office or to tammy_arta@att.net.

You may also email or send a photo. Original photos will only be returned if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

STAY CONNECTED

Please let us know if you or an ARTA member you know has moved. Call us toll free at 1-888-929-0955 or locally at 375-2958.

You can also help us stay in touch between newsletters by sharing your email address with us at office_arta@att.net.

Thanks for helping us all stay connected.



Find us on Facebook



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Parkview Towers • 1200 Commerce Street Ste. 103
Little Rock, AR 72202

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Read about the ARTA trip
to the Albuquerque Balloon
Fiesta as well as other
travel opportunities inside.

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association Membership Form

Act 105 of 1985 authorizes the Teacher Retirement system to deduct your ARTA dues from your monthly benefit checks, if you de-
sire. This authorization may be canceled only by a written notice from you to ARTA. You may select one of the four ARTA member-
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(2) Annual Membership (\$28 check enclosed)

(4) Life Membership (One-time \$240 check enclosed)

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Address

City/State/Zip

County

Email

Signature

Telephone

Social Security # (last four digits)

Date

Complete this form and return it to:

ARTA Membership, 1200 Commerce Street Ste. 103, Little Rock, AR 72202

(Return this form only if you are not currently an ARTA member or if you wish to make a change.)