

## ARTA Board Begins 2014 with Meeting

The ARTA Board met on January 28, 2014. Business included the selection of Donna Morey as the new Executive Director as well as updates from George Hopkins, Director of the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, Mary Alice Hughes, independent insurance agent, and Paul House, Legislative Chair of the ARTA Board.

Donna's message is located on page 3. Information from the other speakers is summarized here:

### **Holding Your Ground**

*George Hopkins, ATRS*

Mr. Hopkins offered his customary report on the state of the ATRS. He expressed some disappointment in the market at the beginning of the year, but emphasized that the system is still projected to show strong earnings. He went on to encourage ARTA members to not only continue working hard to strengthen and protect the interests of retired members, but more importantly, not to give up any of the ground that we have gained so far.

Mr. Hopkins mentioned three areas where retirees have fought for improvements and why maintaining those improvements are important. Specifically, he pointed out the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) that was implemented for retirees, the ability of the ATRS Board of Trustees to make adjustments to the system as needed, without legislative action, and the fact

that the Board of Trustees is member-elected rather than governor-appointed. He gave examples of how these factors have helped retirees, or in some cases, kept outside organizations from negatively impacting the system.

Mr. Hopkins reiterated that each of these factors is not only important on its own, but that the fact that they are in place at all provides some security. In his opinion, ceding any of these gains would be the first step in the undoing of the retirement system. He urged ARTA members to continue working for needed improvements but not to compromise any of the progress we have made.

### **Proactive vs. Reactive**

*Paul House, ARTA Legislative Chair*

Paul House reported that no legislation affecting ARTA members is expected to take place during the current session, the focus of which is budgetary. However, he did provide some information about the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force that was created during the October 2013 Special Legislative Session.

This task force was created to find permanent solutions to the public school employee health insurance crisis.

Mr. House stated that the task force had



Retiring Executive Director Steve Singleton and his wife, Becky.

Board Meeting, continued on page 3

## 2014 Area Meetings Scheduled

Area V	April 22	Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff	Lura Campbell, 870-247-4734
Area III	May 1	Marion United Methodist Church, Marion	Paul House, 870-935-0229
Area IV	May 6	Central Baptist Stokes Center, Prescott	Naomi Butler, 870-899-2473
Area VI	May 7	Woodland Heights Sr. Living Ctr., LR	Sharon Rapp, 501-327-4216
Area II	May 8	Ash Flat Church of Christ, Ash Flat	Jesse Davis, 870-523-2418
Area I	May 14	Presbyterian Church, Fort Smith	Linda Riley, 479-651-3621

The Area Meetings are a great opportunity to meet and visit with ARTA staff and other members, as well as to learn about current pension and insurance issues, travel opportunities, annual reporting and recognition, and other helpful information. All ARTA members are encouraged to attend.

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# Message from the *President*

## Looking Forward

I was very saddened by the resignation of Steve Singleton as Executive Director of ARTA. I've worked closely with Steve for almost a year. I've found him to be a man of great knowledge, especially knowledge of the workings of ARTA. He has such a great memory of people's names and knowing where they're from. His ability to create a budget and work with all those figures always impressed me. I never understood why for several years he's not even given himself a raise! He took care of the ARTA business in a gentle, kind way and with great integrity. He even put up with me! When I found out I had cancer, he, his wife, Becky, and Mary were there to comfort and console me. He will be missed by ARTA members all over the state but especially by me!



The good news is...we have an excellent person to take his place, Donna Morey. The committee recommended her to the board, who then elected her to be our new Executive Director at our last board meeting in January. With her background and sweet spirit, we felt she would be a good fit for ARTA. I know we will get to know Donna and will grow to love and respect her as we have Steve.

How about this weather? After all the snow and ice we've had, we have a winter advisory for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the state tonight! Will spring ever get here? Don't forget the shut ins. Days inside all alone can be depressing. Also, we need to be aware of those who are homeless or just needy. Jesus said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

As many of you know, I enjoy singing. The county unit meetings around the state, where I've gotten to speak, have also joined me in singing Christian and patriotic songs. We even sang "The Old Time Religion" at the last board meeting! At our age it's good to hold on to that old time religion. As the song says, "It makes me love everybody," "It will do when I am dying," "It will take us all to heaven".

Thank you for putting up with me as your state president. I'm looking forward to the Spring Area Meetings and getting to meet so many of you. I love each and every one of you! If you'd like to contact me, my number is 870-406-0505, and my address is 1321 East Main Street, Gurdon, AR 71743.

— Pat Talley, President

## 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](mailto:office_arta@att.net).

Thanks for helping us all stay connected.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR !

ARTA State Convention—September 23, 2014

## 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](mailto:office_arta@att.net)  
<http://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@artrs.gov](mailto:info@artrs.gov)  
[www.artrs.gov](http://www.artrs.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](mailto:AskEBD@dfa.state.ar.us)  
[www.arbenefits.org](http://www.arbenefits.org)

### Long Term Care Insurance Annuities • Dental Insurance Medicare Products

Mary Alice Hughes  
AR Insurance License # 29888  
1-501-988-2726  
[maryalice@insuranceadvantagellc.com](mailto:maryalice@insuranceadvantagellc.com)  
PO Box 646  
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**Delta Dental Insurance**  
501-988-2726  
[www.deltadentalar.com](http://www.deltadentalar.com)



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Dr. Ella Walker-Rolfe ..... Vice President  
Paulette Parker ..... Secretary  
Donna Morey ..... Executive Director  
Mary Huie ..... Office/Travel Manager  
Tammy Gray ..... Communications

# Message from the *Executive Director*

## Here to Serve

It is a high honor to be named the Executive Director of the Arkansas Retired Teachers Association. I would like to thank the Interview Committee and the ARTA Board for their vote of confidence in me.

As I looked around the ARTA Board meeting, there were many colleagues from around my years in public education. Then, when the names of the former Executive Directors were shared with me, I personally worked for or knew the previous six Executive Directors. I stand proudly on their shoulders and will be tapping their knowledge of what is best for this organization. Each member of ARTA and their views are also important to our organization. I look forward to meeting all ARTA members and potential members to better represent our collective mission.

My experience includes 35 years teaching and coaching in schools in Pulaski County. In 2009, I was elected President of the Arkansas Education Association, serving two terms until I was term limited. In 2010, I was elected the Teacher Trustee representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District on the Arkansas Teacher Retirement Board, serving until I retired in August of 2013. My personal interests include family time, church, civic and charity organizations, with Pulaski Heights UMC and Special Olympics Arkansas being paramount.

We as retired educators have some challenges with the Public School Employee Health Insurance Plan that will need all of our members and active educators to become engaged with their local legislators. The Joint Education Committee Task force will present their recommendations in June. The group meets monthly, as does the Employee Benefits Division Board. I will be sending email updates to our members on those meetings. Monitoring the Arkansas Teacher Retirement Board meetings will be a pleasure, too.

In order to share information effectively, it is vital that the ARTA office has current email, US mail addresses and working telephone numbers for ALL of our members. Please notify the ARTA office of any changes to your contact information so we can better communicate with each of you.

It is my pleasure to serve as your Executive Director. Thank you for your service to the public school students of Arkansas. ARTA will continue to represent the needs of all retired public school employees who are truly public servants.



## Board Meeting, *continued*

been given broad leeway to study the issue and encouraged to put “all options on the table”. He felt that considering the latitude given to the task force, and based on the meetings so far, the proposals could extend to recommendations that affected all Arkansans, including public school retirees and those participating through the healthcare exchange.

Mr. House will continue to attend the task force meetings and keep ARTA members apprised of the developments. In return, he strongly encouraged ARTA members to become involved now in educating their elected officials about the needs of retirees, such as proposing specific solutions for funding health insurance. A list of the task force members and their contact information is located on page 4.

Mr. House and Tammy Gray, ARTA Communication Coordinator, are also working to develop an email distribution list

so that information and requests can be sent quickly to as many members as possible when your help is needed to advance or withdraw legislation. A Facebook presence for ARTA is also in development.

### Delta Dental

Mary Alice Hughes of Insurance Advantage spoke briefly about insurance products that might be of interest to ARTA members. Most notable was the announcement that Delta Dental will once again offer a discounted plan for ARTA members. Application forms are available from the insurance providers listed on page 2, from the ARTA office or on the ARTA web site at [www.artanow.com](http://www.artanow.com).

The date for the next board meeting was not set. The meeting was followed by a retirement party for Steve Singleton, outgoing Executive Director.

## REMINDER:

Local units are asked to submit annual reports to ARTA each year.

Unit presidents will have an opportunity to review the revised reporting packets for 2013-2014 with an ARTA staff member at their Area Meetings this spring.

Reports should be submitted by **June 15, 2014**.

## Following the 2013 Special Legislative Session

The Arkansas Legislature met in a Special Session last October to address the funding “spiral” in Public School Employee Health Insurance. No measures were taken to address the same needs for public school retirees at that time. However, there were two outcomes from the session that ARTA will be monitoring closely.

First, the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force was established. The purpose of the task force is to develop a plan to improve the State and Public Life and Health Insurance Program’s financial condition. The program serves state and school employees and retirees.

The task force states that it will study what regulatory and legislative barriers need to be removed, and what needs to be restructured, to lead to “transformational” changes in health care delivery.

The ARTA board and staff plan to participate in the task force meetings to ensure that the best interests of retirees are truly represented. ARTA members are also welcome to attend the meetings and to stay abreast of any developments by following us on our web site, [www.artanow.com](http://www.artanow.com).

The next task force meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2014. The members of the task force at the time of publication are listed below.

Second, the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Board was dissolved. Fairly or not, the legislators placed blame for the public school health insurance crisis on the board, stating that they had failed to fulfill their mission and provide a stable and actuarially sound system of health insurance benefit for public school employees (Act 6, 2013 Special Legislative Session). The new board, including two additional members provided for in Act 6, all to be appointed by the governor, was not known at the time of publication.

We do know that the board is supposed to meet monthly to set policy and to select plans and coverages for the state and public school personnel health insurance, life insurance and self-funded medical programs. They are also propose future goals and measures to address the common objectives of both groups, including improving quality of health care services under the program, increasing participants’ understanding of the program features, and slowing the rate of growth in health care expenses under the program.

ARTA believes the mission of this board is important and hopes to continue working with the new members to ensure that the health insurance needs of public school retirees are given as much consideration as state and public school employees.

### State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Program Legislative Task Force

Sen. Jim Hendren	District 2	479-787-6222	<a href="mailto:jim.hendren@senate.ar.gov">jim.hendren@senate.ar.gov</a>
Sen. Cecile Bledsoe	District 3	479-636-2115	<a href="mailto:cecile.bledsoe@senate.ar.gov">cecile.bledsoe@senate.ar.gov</a>
Sen. Linda Chesterfield	District 30	501-888-1859	<a href="mailto:lchesterfield@comcast.net">lchesterfield@comcast.net</a>
Sen. Jason Rapert	District 35	501-336-0918	<a href="mailto:jason.rapert@senate.ar.gov">jason.rapert@senate.ar.gov</a>
Sen. David Sanders	District 15	501-682-6107	<a href="mailto:davidjamesanders@gmail.com">davidjamesanders@gmail.com</a>
Sen. Eddie Cheatham	District 26	870-364-5659	
Rep. James McLean	District 63	870-613-0617	<a href="mailto:vote.james.mclean@gmail.com">vote.james.mclean@gmail.com</a>
Rep. Allen Kerr	District 32	501-225-3454	<a href="mailto:allen.kerr@arkansashouse.org">allen.kerr@arkansashouse.org</a>
Rep. Tommy Wren	District 62	870-613-7585	<a href="mailto:tommy.wren@arkansashouse.org">tommy.wren@arkansashouse.org</a>
Rep. Harold Copenhaver	District 58	870-919-2930	<a href="mailto:harolduiagency@yahoo.com">harolduiagency@yahoo.com</a>
Rep. George McGill	District 78	479-651-2107	<a href="mailto:georgemcgill@sbcglobal.net">georgemcgill@sbcglobal.net</a>
Rep. Bill Gossage	District 82	479-667-2122	<a href="mailto:bill@billgossage.com">bill@billgossage.com</a>

**REMINDER:** The deadline to participate in the Cash Buyout Program offered by the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System is **June 30, 2014**. For more information on this program, see page 6.



# Spotlight on Service

In 2012-2013, ARTA members reported more than 576,000 hours of volunteer service in their communities. The estimated dollar value of these hours is \$9,676,172.61. In other words, you contributed more than 9 million dollars' worth of time, plus your talent and expertise, to your communities.

Volunteering obviously has a significant impact on your community. But did you know that it can provide many benefits to you as well?

## **Personal Contacts**

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people with similar interests or concerns, forming the basis for new friendships. It's also a great way to keep in touch with those you know from a previous career or venture even after retirement.

## **Personal Satisfaction**

Volunteering is about giving freely of your time, energy and skills. It is generally not considered an obligation, but a choice. Volunteers express a sense of motivation and achievement, generated by enthusiasm and a genuine desire to make a meaningful contribution.

## **Personal Growth**

Volunteering provides you with an opportunity to explore hobbies or interests you have not tried before. In so doing, you can develop new skills and gain information or experience you might not have otherwise. You might even discover a second career!

## **Polish Your Image**

People pay attention to your life outside the environment in which they have direct contact with you. Volunteering reflects a complete picture of you, and gives real examples of your commitment, dedication and interests. Show people what you are passionate about and maybe you will inspire them too!

## **Community Connections**

Maybe you want to continue doing the same work as a volunteer that you did as an employee. Or maybe you have more time to devote to a cause or hobby that has always in-

terested you. Maybe you just see a need that you can fill with service. Either way, volunteering is a way to give return something to a community that has given something to you.

## **Health Benefits**

Volunteering increases satisfaction with life. Doing good for others and your community provides a natural sense of accomplishment. Your role as a volunteer can also give you a sense of pride and identity. The better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life in general.

Volunteering combats depression. A key risk factor for depression is social isolation. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others, which in turn gives you a sense of purpose and a solid support system. These in turn can protect you during times of stress or feeling down.

Volunteering helps you stay physically healthy. Volunteering is good for your health at any age, but it's especially beneficial in older adults. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not, even when considering factors like the health of the participants. Volunteering has also been shown to lessen symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease.

One of the stated purposes of ARTA is to foster desirable social connections. Another is to support the welfare of retired educators. We believe that providing service to your community is an excellent way for you to stay involved and to stay healthy and will continue to promote outstanding community service by our local units as a group and as individuals.



## **RTAs Serving Others**

- Encouraging new teachers with notes and small gifts
- Mentoring, tutoring and literacy programs
- Collecting and distributing food, clothing, toys, books, school supplies, and other necessities
- Programs for nursing homes and shut-ins
- Spelling bees, poster contests, essay contests, etc.
- Preservation and beautification projects
- Health fairs, voter registration drives and other community education programs
- Individual service to schools, libraries, hospitals, museums, civic organizations, churches and other community organizations

## National Volunteer Week

## April 6—13, 2014

## ATRS Cash Buyout Program Expiring

The Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (ATRS) Cash Buyout Program allows vested, noncontributory, inactive members to obtain a cash payment now instead of receiving monthly retirements in the future. The program is currently set to expire **June 30, 2014**.

Many inactive vested members with only noncontributory service have requested authorization to convert their membership in ATRS from a future benefit to a current cash amount. Without the program, inactive, noncontributory, vested members have no right to a benefit until they reach retirement age. If they die before reaching retirement age,

nothing is payable to the member, the member's estate, or the member's family. This includes the survivor benefits, disability benefits, or the lump sum death benefit. In other words, upon an inactive member's death, before retirement age, there are no benefits whatsoever for the member's survivors.

Through the Cash Buyout Program, eligible members have a limited-time opportunity to receive a cash payment or have their payment amount rolled over into another retirement plan. For an application, tax forms, and more information about the Cash Buyout Program and how it works, contact ATRS at 501-682-1517, 1-800-666-2877, or [info@arts.gov](mailto:info@arts.gov).

### ATRS 2014 Benefit Payment Schedule

<u>Checks Mailed</u>	<u>Direct Deposit</u>
March 28, 2014	March 31, 2014
April 29, 2014	April 30, 2014
May 29, 2014	May 30, 2014
June 27, 2014	June 30, 2014
July 30, 2014	July 31, 2014
August 28, 2014	August 29, 2014
September 29, 2014	September 30, 2014
October 30, 2014	October 31, 2014
November 25, 2014	November 26, 2014
December 30, 2014	December 31, 2014

## Coming Soon...

A First Diagnosis Policy for Cancer, Heart Attack and Stroke will soon be available for ARTA members. The policy will pay a lump sum benefit upon first diagnosis of eligible events.

Online enrollment should be available as early as April, 2014. To learn more about the policies or for information about how to enroll via paper application, contact Mary Alice Hughes at Insurance Advantage, 501-988-2726.

## New York City Adventurers

Front Row: Rita Love, Mary Huie, Nina Row, Ruth Cook, Connie Dardenne, Rebecca Holloway, Linda Geiger, Gloria Nethercutt, Rita Smith

Second Row: Jean Linn, Lloyd Linn, Donna Garcia, Martha Durham, Rhonda McFarlin, Shelby Stone, Lena King, Dolly Tees, Sherra Hamilton, Pat Audirsch, Orvalene Holbrook, Kathy Tadlock, Carol Baker, Lura Campbell, Suzanne Bergeron, Michael Williams

Third Row: Virginia Eastwood, Elizabeth Leak, DeLois Pippen, Jimmy Penn, Billie Pippen, Carolyn Meyers, Joel Cullen, Levona Cullen, Velta Riggs, Michael Emery, Ronald Riggs, Brenda Browning, Rachel Safley, Pete Stone, Charles Tadlock, Kathy Cross, Verna Baker, Velma Warner, Mackie Tiner



*Photo provided by Mary Huie*

## West Coast Tour, Summer 2013

On July 24, 2013 twelve retirees and guests from Arkansas traveled to Seattle, Washington, where we joined 31 other travelers from around the United States and Canada for a coach trip from Seattle to San Francisco.

This genial group was first treated to a tour of Seattle that included the Space Needle and Everett, Washington, where we visited the impressive Boeing Everett factory. From inside the world's largest building, we viewed workers assembling 737, 747, 777 and 787 jets (NO photography allowed!)

Beautiful weather during the trip enabled us to see snow-capped Mt. Rainier on day three, as we made our way to the Mt. St. Helens visitor center for a walking tour of an area affected by the eruption. Next we visited a winery, and because of the continued clear weather we were also able to see both Mt. Hood and

Mt. Adam. The next stop was the "City of Roses" in Portland, Oregon, where the highlight was walking among five acres of gorgeous blooming roses at the International Rose Test Gardens in Washington Park. Signs let us know that the penalty for taking a rose was \$500.

On day four we joined a large crowd of tourists to view beautiful Multnomah Falls, which at 620 feet is the fourth highest waterfall in the U.S. From there we moved on to the Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in McMinnville, Oregon, to walk through displays of military and civilian aircraft and spacecraft, most notably, the Hughes H-4 Hercules "Spruce Goose". This stop seemed to one of the favorites of the men.

Day five brought us to the Gleneden Beach area where we visited the Oregon Coast Aquarium with its impressive display of sea animals and birds. On day six, stops were made just to enjoy the beauty of the scenery, to see lighthouses and to go to a beach along the rugged coast so that we could walk in the warm sand and put our feet in the cold Pacific Ocean.

Day seven found us experiencing a thrilling ride through the wild and remote Rogue River region in a glass-enclosed jet boat that allowed us to see awesome scenery as well as bears, deer

West Coast Tour, continued on page X



From Left: George Condray, Glynna Condray, Charles Talbert, Becky Talbert, Wanda Tapp, Marlene Bush, Linda Geiger, Sherry Sherwood, Corrine Gilbreath, Mary Billingsley, Dana Mitchell, and Ron Mitchell standing at trunk of BIG TREE (304' x 21.6' diameter, 68' circumference 68', 1500 years old) in Humboldt Redwoods State Park in California. Photo provided by Glynna Condray.

## New York City Adventure, Fall 2013

A lively group of 46 members and guests left North Little Rock by bus Friday, November 15, 2013 for an adventure to New York City. It was a dreary, rainy start but we finally saw the sun on the second day after we crossed into Virginia. After a stop in the country at D's Market (a rest stop that took a while and proved to be interesting) we continued on to Baltimore, MD where we enjoyed a really nice dinner at McCormick and Schmiks Seafood Restaurant. Nice weather welcomed us to New York mid-afternoon on Sunday.

The Holiday Inn Times Square proved to be a central and convenient location for exploring as the remainder of that day and the next were free for us to pursue individual interests. Some enjoyed the Empire State Building, Madison Square Gardens, various museums, Central Park, Macy's, Times Square and of course shopping.

On Tuesday, a local tour guide took us to visit Central Park (Strawberry Fields area) and to tour Radio City Music Hall, Trump Tower and Rockefeller Center, where we enjoyed the Christmas Spectacular performance of the Radio City Rockettes. Wednesday, we visited St. Patrick's Cathedral, Wall Street,

the United Nations, and the Apollo Theater. We also toured the 911 Memorial and had a short walk in China Town. That afternoon, we took a cruise to the Statue of Liberty.

We concluded our New York experience back in China Town for a meal at Ellen's Stardust Café where aspiring Broadway singers/actors entertain and perform waiter services.

Thursday was a driving day as we headed back home, stopping in Charlottesville VA for an excellent evening meal at the Boars Head Inn. On Friday we made our way to Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson, where we toured the home and grounds. Not far from Monticello we enjoyed a lunch of fried chicken at Michie Tavern. Our next stop was Montpelier, the home of James Madison. Here we toured his home and surrounding land. Our last night was spent in Johnson City, TN.

Saturday was another rainy day as we made our way back to North Little Rock. In spite of arriving that night to find that winter had already beat us home, it was a very good trip with a congenial traveling group who enjoyed the services of an excellent bus driver and tour leader.

- Submitted by Gloria Nethercutt



## ARTA Communications

ARTA has a diverse membership of more than 11,000 members around the state. It is vital to us that we are able to share information with you, and you with us, in a timely manner. It is also important that we provide ways for each of you to reach out and stay connected with each other.

ARTA offers several ways for staff and members to communicate with each other:

**Newsletter**—The INTERLINK is published quarterly. It includes the following information:

- President's Message
- Executive Director's Message
- News and current topics of interest in article format
- News from the ARTA office
- New Life Members
- Deceased members; memorials and other donations
- Available travel opportunities
- Content provided by members, such as Local Unit news, travel stories and photos, and personal news such as recognition/accomplishments or milestones.

**Web Site**—ARTA is currently redesigning our website. We hope to make it more visually appealing and user-friendly. It will include much of the same information as our current site, such as membership information, contact information, important forms and links, and plenty of photos. We're also adding a blog where we will post links to articles from other sources as well as news

and information that can't wait until the next newsletter. Please let us know if you have requests or suggestions for the content and features you would like to see included in the new site.

**Facebook**—ARTA will be joining those of you who are already on Facebook. We'll use it as a way to let you know when new information has been posted to the web site or when we are asking you to respond or take action on important issues.

**Email**—Many of you have already provided us with your email address. We appreciate this and will use it with care. In addition to individual communication, we may ask to send your newsletter via email in order to save postage, or when asking you to contact your local members, elected officials, etc.

And as always, you may still contact us at the ARTA office:

Pulaski County: 501-375-2958  
Toll Free: 1-888-929-0955  
office\_arta@att.net

Donna Morey     donna\_arta@att.net  
Mary Huie        mary\_arta@att.net  
Tammy Gray      tammy\_arta@att.net

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association  
Parkview Towers  
1200 Commerce Suite 103  
Little Rock, AR 72202

## Parsons-Burnett Grant Applications

Members of the Arkansas Retired Teachers Association demonstrate their support for quality education at the elementary and secondary levels by funding incentive grants for teachers to improve their professional skills through graduate study.

Contributions by ARTA members to the Association's Memorial Fund allow us to provide grants of \$1,500 to practicing

educators in Arkansas. ARTA members are also encouraged to promote the availability of the grants to teachers in their area each spring.

The deadline to apply for a grant is **June 15, 2014**. Eligibility guidelines and application forms are available on the ARTA web site at <http://artanow.com>.

## Welcome *New Life Members*

**ARKANSAS COUNTY:** Sana Fay Bryant and Alda Vicki Hachmann; **ASHLEY COUNTY:** Linda K. Land; **BAXTER COUNTY:** Marion Gay King, Patricia N. Marion and Sandra Claire Thorn; **BENTON COUNTY:** Debby L. Holobaugh, Rebecca Paneitz-Danks and Marsha G. Swim; **CLARK COUNTY:** Ruby J. Henry; **CRAIGHEAD COUNTY:** Donnis K. Moyer; **CRAWFORD COUNTY:** Mary Jane Hurst, Larry Roe and Ollie Lou Scroggins; **FRANKLIN COUNTY:** Catherine (Cissie) Pendergrass and Martha L. Smith; **FULTON COUNTY:** Stephanie M. Leslie and Donna A. Sanders; **GARLAND COUNTY:** Kenneth J. Cook, Brenda A. Frensley, Carol Sheets and Linda M. Woodson; **GREENE COUNTY:** Sherri K. Purcell; **IZARD COUNTY:** Debra A. Everett; **JEFFERSON COUNTY:** Anna Beth Wolfe; **LEE COUNTY:** Clyde E. Noel; **LOGAN COUNTY:** Catherine M. Catlett and Susan R. Green; **MONTGOMERY COUNTY:** Mary M. Willmuth; **PIKE COUNTY:** Carol L. Bright and Regina D. Ray; **PULASKI COUNTY:** Maria D. Cunningham, Joyce Griffo, Mary C. Johnson, Marie L. Pierce, Clara L. Redden and Willis B. Winston; **RANDOLPH COUNTY:** Kathie A. Adkins; **SEBASTIAN COUNTY:** Laura Leslie Drummond; **UNION COUNTY:** Mike Brown and David B. Offutt; **VAN BUREN COUNTY:** Linda M. Harder; **WASHINGTON COUNTY:** Marjorie A. Keyes, Martha K. McNair and Kay D. Phillips.



Thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity of individuals and local units, \$685.00 was mailed directly to the ARTA office during the months of November, December and January. An additional \$30.00 was contributed by Continuing Members (above and beyond the regular monthly dues) bringing the total to \$715.00. Your gifts to ARTA, for whatever reason, are a meaningful and substantive part of the association's budget and are greatly appreciated.

**Clark County RTA:** in memory of Juanita Baskin Barringer; **Columbia/Lafayette RTA:** in memory of Ernest Henderson, Mary Nygaard and Pat Weaver; **Desha County RTA:** in memory of Alice Banks; **Drew County RTA:** in memory of Jack Ferguson, Charles Lee Gray, Dean Rogers and Dennis Thurman; **Fort Smith RTA:** in memory of Jan Eddleman, Maxine Eggensperger, Gertrude Gramlich, Annabel Phillips, Bill Shaver and Carolyn Luce Wiggins; **Independence County RTA:** in memory of Delois Burge and Freda Jackson; **Miller**

**County RTA:** in memory of Jackie McDonald and Robert McDonald; **Sharp County RTA:** in memory of Don Carithers, Maxine Dark and Jerry Peebles; **Union County RTA:** in memory of Marzell Smith; **White County RTA:** in memory of Dorothy Carlisle; **Wyleen Crider:** in memory of Bobby C. Watson; **Jack and Glenda Kimbrell:** in memory of Don Carithers, Maxine Dark and Jerry Peebles; **Miller County RTA:** in honor of Steve Singleton.

## In Memoriam

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

**ASHLEY:** Teretha Sanders, Dennis V. Thurman and Albertine D. Vaughns; **BAXTER:** Robert L. Hackler, Mauzee M. Pitchford, Jane E. Siler and Edsel D. Weaver; **BENTON:** Wynona E. Anderson, William J. Bergen, Homer A. Brady, Jesse M. Coker, James L. Garside Jr., Carolyn L. Howell, Ann D. Mack, Marjorie G. Patti, Esther J. Sarratt and Tommy Thompson; **BRADLEY:** Patricia G. Parnell; **CHICOT:** Jerome R. Buckner and Teresa P. Mahfouz; **CLARK:** Billie M. Moseley and Roy F. Short; **CLEBURNE:** Bennie C. Adams; **COLUMBIA:** Suzanne B. Hicks, Lewis T. Porterfield and Shirley G. Smart; **CRAIGHEAD:** Kenneth R. Camp, Virginia D. Craig, Estelle M. Fox, Nina C. McKnight, Ruthann N. Nunnally and Betty L. Summers; **CRAWFORD:** Edna Carroll, Robert J. Denniston and Linda S. Rorie; **CRITTENDEN:** Linda N. Austin, George B. Mitchell and Doris C. Terwilliger; **DREW:** Floyd L. Daniels, Jack L. Ferguson and Alfred S. Hui; **FAULKNER:** Raymond H. Brown, Dale W. Castellaw, Betty N. Doty and John M. Hargis; **FRANKLIN:** Jerry G. Faught; **GARLAND:** Murle E. Harris, Joan S. Iwon, Lewin A. Newcomb and Patsy A. Sharp; **HOT SPRING:** Janyce A. Butler; **INDEPENDENCE:** Mabel F. Sinele and Janet L. Standridge; **JEFFERSON:** James V. Cash, Bobbie E. Hodge, Jerry W. Lybrand, Elvert McKnight, Delores M. Nolen, Betty M. Roberts and Frederick G. Whitted; **JOHNSON:** William E. Bourne, Margarette Cater; **LEE:** Johnny H. Massey Jr.; **LINCOLN:** Jimmie L. McGee; **LONOKE:** Gabrielle M. Lilly, Mary E. Lingo and Ernest D. Smith; **MILLER:** Will Johnson; **MISSISSIPPI:** Shirley A. Bridges, Fannie M. Burks, Harold L. Clemons and Gerald N. Kemp; **MONROE:** Helen B. Pearson and Glenda J. Stokes; **NEWTON:** Lacey D. Marshall,

Iva J. Norton and Levera Pruitt; **OUACHITA:** Rosie J. Jones; **PHILLIPS:** Wayne C. Williams; **POINSETT:** Katherine Mason; **POPE:** Gladys C. Hoover and Gail G. Kirtley; **PULASKI:** Elizabeth W. Alstadt, Juanita M. Baskin, Everett R. Baxter, Leon Carson, Carol E. Cato, Vhaness W. Chambers, Fredean Cotton, Edra F. Dimassimo, Ruth A. Douglas, Betty J. Fowler, Laverne N. Lacefield, Jonetta M. Lee, Bettye C. Overton, Carol A. Perrine, Carolyn A. Pickett, Mansell O. Twillie, Helena J. Ward, Muriel Watson and Frances E. Webb; **RANDOLPH:** George D. Williams; **SALINE:** Carolyn Adcock, Frank C. Chenault, Ronda S. Crossland, Daniel E. Davis, Betty C. Gault, Charles L. Gray, Brenda K. Lincoln, Howard A. Nobles, Wanda J. Pearce, Orville Roberts and Travis L. White; **SEARCY:** Kathryn L. Blair and Lula J. Smyth; **SEBASTIAN:** Linda G. Brown, Julia M. Carden, Eunice E. Carruth, Paula S. Combs, Joy L. Davis, Gertrude J. Gramlich, William N. Shaver III, Halton B. Stewart Jr., Ginger L. Stokes, Jerry W. Street and Carolyn L. Wiggins; **SHARP:** Edna L. Graddy; **ST. FRANCIS:** Dannice Hall, William K. Harrod and Tempie W. Moorehead; **UNION:** Bobbie J. Pierce, Donna G. Post and Marzell Smith; **WASHINGTON:** Betty C. Brown, Elsie I. Harris, Carol J. Hopper, Billy C. Monday and Lavoy M. Welch; **WHITE:** Truman H. Kelley and Louis O. Sanford Sr.; **YELL:** Wanda L. Clark and Virginia R. Johnson; **OUT-OF-STATE:** Joy R. Baker, Marjorie J. Barringer, Esther M. Burwell, Virginia F. Carter, Jack B. Connor, Letta M. Fryman, Lawrence F. Garrison, Helen V. Hendrickson, Will Johnson, Gladys J. Oliver, Allison O. O'Neal, Annabel D. Phillips, James A. Riddle, Kathleen J. Saquing and Betty A. Smith.



## Alaskan Cruise, Fall 2013

ARTA members traveled from Little Rock to Vancouver, British Columbia, where we boarded the Island Princess Cruise to Alaska on September 2, 2013. The cruise included Glacier Bay and College Fjord, where we saw whales and seals.

We also had numerous land tour options in Ketchikan, Juneau, and Skagway. Among the many choices were visits to parks and gardens, a salmon hatchery, tram or train rides, whale watching, viewing glaciers or a lighthouse, bus trips, a street car tour, visiting a suspension bridge, fishing or attending a salmon bake. More adventurous types could enjoy horseback riding, dog sledding, rock climbing and rappelling, kayaking or floating, hiking or biking. Explorers and wildlife watchers could do so via back country expedition, wilderness safari, Jeep adventure, or helicopter. Of course there were also plenty of opportunities to eat and shop!

The ship docked at Whittier, where we took an all-day train ride in a glass-domed car on the Historic Alaska Railroad through Anchorage, Eagle River, Wasilla, Houston, Willow, Talkeetna, and Cantwell to Denali National Park. There, we had several choices of tours where animals such as grizzlies, Dall sheep, moose, and eagles and other birds were observed in their natural habitat.

After two nights at Denali, a motor coach took us to Fairbanks for the last stop of our Alaska journey. Here, we cruised the Chena River on the Discovery III Sternwheeler. The riverboat stopped at an Athabascan Indian Village where we were able to see how the natives lived in by-gone years. One woman demonstrated the process used to smoke salmon, and others showed us furs and uses for furs, including a fur coat valued at \$15,000. We also saw some of the sled dogs used in the Iditarod Race and observed as a float plane landed and took off near the sternwheeler on the river. After a delicious soup lunch was served to us in the restaurant at the Discovery III dock, we listened to our sternwheeler guide and the Iditarod Winner discussing the dog sled races.

While in Fairbanks we also took a bus ride to Fox, panned for gold at Gold Dredge 8 and saw the Alaska pipeline. Those who were successful in panning for gold had the option of having the gold made into jewelry!

We ended our journey on September 13, 2013, when we flew back to Little Rock from Fairbanks International Airport.



First Row: Darrel Oglesby, Sharon Oglesby, Donna Bryan, Ray Bryan. 2nd Row: Carol Sanderson, Charlotte Wicks. 3rd Row: Alex Sanderson, Betty Petrik, Steve Wicks. 4th Row: Beverly Frazier, Bob Patrik, Linda Bittle. 5th Row: Harmon Bratton, Suella Bratton, Johnny Bittle. 6th Row: Mike Glen, Vicki Glen, Mike Brady, Wallace Aspinwall, Phyllis Aspinwall.

*Photo provided by Charlotte Wicks. Article by Suella Bratton.*

Traveler Charlotte Wicks commented that fall was the best time to take this trip:

"I personally loved seeing the leaves begin to change color, the slightly cool weather, the activity of the wildlife preparing for hibernation, equal daylight and darkness, and the bargains at the end of the tourist season",

but for those who missed it, this same trip is also available this spring. (see Travel Opportunities on page 11)

## West Coast Tour, *continued*

and eagles. Then back to our coach for a ride through the Redwood National Park with a stop in Eureka, California.

The next day we traveled from Eureka to Sonoma, which brought us to one of the most anticipated parts of the trip – actually walking among the giant trees. This we did in a grove of trees that was privately purchased in 1921 to preserve representative areas of primeval forests and is now Humboldt Redwoods State Park. This ancient forest has trees of all ages; many layers of canopy; large standing dead trees; large downed logs; and trees that had been though forest fires but continue to live, with openings in which we were able to enter, stand and have our pictures made. Seeing pictures and reading words are not enough to fully enjoy this part of the world – a person must see and walk through it.

Our last day of sightseeing started in Sonoma with a visit to the Solano Mission founded in 1823 and a visit to the Cline Cellar for a tour and tasting. We traveled through beautiful vineyards and country as we went south to San Francisco, where we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and parked for a picture taking session. From that point we could see the island of Alcatraz and the skyline of the city.

Following a bus tour of the city we went to our hotel, in walking distance of the famous Fisherman's Wharf. We were able to engage in a bit of souvenir shopping at the shops on the way to the Neptune Restaurant. Here we enjoyed not only the perfect view of the harbor, but a farewell dinner with our new friends from both Arkansas and other parts of the country before concluding our trip.

*- Submitted by Glynna Condray*

# Travel Opportunities

We invite ARTA members to join us for trips of a lifetime!

Detailed itineraries and pricing for each trip is available at the ARTA office or on our website: [artanow.com](http://artanow.com). If you are interested in one of our trips, please call the ARTA office at 501-375-2958 or 1-888-929-0955 to place your name on the trip list. Guests are welcome but must travel with ARTA members. Whenever possible our trips are escorted by an ARTA staff member.

Early bookings ensure trips that require a minimum number of travelers are not pulled from us. Trips are listed in the **Interlink** two times and if there is no activity, the trips are replaced with other selections. All price quotes are round trip from Little Rock to Little Rock; however arrangements can be made for other departures and arrivals. Deposits are required and are refundable until final payment deadline with trip cancellation waiver plan. For further information, please call the ARTA office.

**April 20-25, 2014 – Bus Trip to Crystal Bridges, Kansas City & Oklahoma City—CANCELLED.**

**May 17-28, 2014 – Alaskan Cruise and Land Tour.** Includes airfare to Vancouver, return from Fairbanks and all transfers. Inside passage cruise on the Coral Princess with ports of call in Ketchikan, Juneau and Skagway. Land tour begins in Whittier or Seward through Denali to Fairbanks. Deposit is \$600. To register, call the ARTA office.

**June 20-30, 2014 – Bus Trip to Cape Cod, Massachusetts.** With nearly 559 miles of unspoiled coastline, Cape Cod is a destination rich in history. We'll visit Hyannis Port, summer home of the Kennedys, Provincetown, where the Pilgrims first landed in 1620, Sandwich, Chatham and other towns, each with its own character and charm, along the upper, middle and lower cape. A day trip to Nantucket Island, the whaling capital of the world from 1800 to 1840, and a whale watching cruise are just some of the many things being planned for this trip. Learn the history behind the famous Nantucket baskets, see historical lighthouses and watch glass blowers in Sandwich. This trip fills

quickly so book early. This trip includes gratuities, all breakfasts and eight lunches and/or dinners. Deposit is \$300. To register, call the ARTA office.

**September 7-20, 2014 – Magnificent Cities of Central & Eastern Europe.** This tour begins in Berlin (2 nights), with a tour of the city and a side trip to Potsdam. Next you travel to the Golden City of Prague (2 nights) for a tour and time to explore the city. Leaving Prague behind you enter the musical city of Vienna (2 nights) where you will have time to see the sights and relax in the Capital of Austria on your own. Historic Budapest (2 nights) is the next destination, also known as the Queen on the Danube. Then travel to lively Krakow (2 nights), complete with old world charm. Stop at Auschwitz for a guided tour on the way to Warsaw (2 nights). Day two in Warsaw will include a guided tour of the city and a farewell dinner with the group. Deposit is \$250. Insurance & Cancellation Waiver is \$270).

**October 3-10, 2014 – Canada/New England Cruise.** Includes airfare to Quebec City, Quebec, Canada and return from Boston, Massachusetts. Aboard the Norwegian Cruise Line Dawn your ports of call will include two nights in Quebec City, one night in Sydney and Halifax, Nova Scotia, one night in Saint John, Newfoundland and one night in Bar Harbor, Maine. The trip ends in Boston, Massachusetts. Deposit is \$600. To register, call the ARTA office.

**November 29-December 7, 2014 – Christmas on the Danube.** After an overnight flight from Little Rock, the tour begins in Vienna, Austria. Unpack once for a relaxing six-night Danube River cruise. In Vienna, tour the Hofburg Palace, the Vienna Opera House, the majestic Ringstrasse and St. Stephen's Cathedral. End with a visit to Vienna's most famous Christmas Market. Other highlights include: the Wachau Valley with magnificent castles; Passau, a 2,000 year old fairytale city; Regensburg, one of Germany's best preserved medieval cities with nearly 1,400 historic buildings; Nuremberg, featuring the Imperial Castle and the Justice Palace, where the War Crimes Tribunal sat in 1946; Rothenberg, one of the most well-preserved medieval walled towns in all of Germany; and the famous Christmas Markets in every town. Tour ends in Wurzburg. Space is limited so **BOOK before March 31, 2014 to SAVE \$250 PER PERSON.** Deposit is \$250. Insurance & Cancellation Waiver is \$315).

ARTA travelers pose for a group photo around the Arkansas Memorial at Gettysburg while on a trip to Philadelphia and Amish Country. Photo provided by Steve Singleton.







Arkansas Retired Teachers Association  
Parkview Towers • 1200 Commerce, Ste. 103  
Little Rock, AR 72202

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## Dates to Remember:

April-May, 2014	Area Meetings
June 15, 2014	Unit Reports Due
June 15, 2014	PB Grant Applications Due
June 30, 2014	ATRS Cash Buy Out Ends
Sept 23, 2014	State Convention

<b>Arkansas Retired Teachers Association Membership Form</b>	
Act 105 of 1985 authorizes the Teacher Retirement system to deduct your ARTA dues from your monthly benefit checks, if you desire. This authorization may be canceled only by a written notice from you to ARTA. You may select one of the four ARTA membership options listed below.	
ARTA CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP DUES	ARTA LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES
(1) <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to have standard dues of \$2 per month deducted from my retirement checks.	(3) <input type="checkbox"/> I elect to have dues of \$20 deducted from my retirement checks each month for 12 months. (Total \$240)
DIRECT PAYMENT	
(2) <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Membership (\$28 check enclosed)	(4) <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership (One-time \$240 check enclosed)
Name _____	
Signature _____	
Address _____	
City/State/Zip _____	
County _____	
Social Security Number _____	
Date _____	
Complete this form and return it to: ARTA Membership, 1200 Commerce Street Suite 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.)	