

Hot Flashes

March 2024

Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

Chairman's Message

Another fairly mild winter this year. I've been grateful that whenever we've had a really cold spell, it has been followed by a few warmer days. Spring is our area's prettiest time of year, and I know we all are ready for the daffodils and tulips to bloom!

This month's issue has a lot to share. For instance, Bob Carlson, Chairman of the Employees' Retirement System, retired from Board service at the end of December 2023.

Additionally, the Fairfax County Public Library has contributed an article outlining the many available services for patrons. As times have changed, branch libraries have evolved from sharing books and information in reference books to "offering lifetime learning to all County residents" and circulating items in "The Library of Things." There is something useful for all of us in our Public Library.

Our annual meeting will be via Zoom on Wednesday, May 1st at 10 am. The July cost-of-living increase will be announced then, so tune in! Details will be shared as soon as they are available.

Editor Chuck Higdon is always happy to receive contributions to Hot Flashes. Email yours to Chuck at FCREA99@gmail.com.

I hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,
Pam Martin, Chairman
Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

Reminder to all members: if you change your email address, please let us know so we can update our records to ensure you continue to receive our newsletter and other important information.

With over 1.2 million residents, it's no surprise to employees and retirees that Fairfax County Government is very busy!

In fact, [Fairfax County Public Library](#)

(FCPL) is the largest and most active public library system in, not only Virginia, but also in the entire southern United States. FCPL currently operates eight regional libraries, 14 community libraries, and an Access Services branch to serve the residents and visitors of Fairfax County. It has over 550 staff members. Each library has community meeting spaces, computers for public use, printers, copiers, and free WiFi throughout the building.



FCPL provides free access to an array of materials, [programs](#) and services for the [50+ community](#).

[The Library's collection](#) includes adult and children's books in English as well as several other languages, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, audiobooks, eBooks, eMagazines, and eAudiobooks. In 2023, FCPL circulated over 12 million items and, for the first time, recorded over 3.2 million checkouts of digital materials. Only a handful of other library systems worldwide that use Overdrive as their provider have met that milestone in a single year! A unique collection called [Library of Things](#) includes dozens of items for checkout, including laptops with WiFi hotspot devices, board games, binoculars, and more.

Fairfax County Public Library strives to be a community hub of innovation and education, offering lifelong learning to all Fairfax County residents, from early literacy up to continuing education and activities for adults and seniors. Your local library is a place to pursue your interests, connect with like-minded individuals, and discover the world around you. FCPL [offers free programs and events](#) throughout the year, ranging from author presentations to musical and cultural performances, crafting workshops and yoga classes to tax assistance with AARP. Some programs are even virtual, and you can attend from the comfort of your home.

FCPL also currently offers three [Do-It-Yourself or “Maker” Labs](#) at Herndon Fortnightly Library, Pohick Regional Library, and Sherwood Regional Library. These are places where you can learn, tinker, create, craft, make, and do it yourself! Each of the three labs has various tools for whatever you can imagine. Maybe you need access to jewelry-making tools, a sewing machine, or a button maker. You can use these items for free at a maker lab. Want to learn how to knit or program a robot? Free classes are offered at the maker labs and other branches as well.

Many of FCPL’s branches offer one-on-one [technology assistance and tutoring programs](#), where you can sit down with someone knowledgeable who can teach you how to use a new phone, tablet or eReader, or how to navigate the internet more efficiently. FCPL’s six [Memory Depot stations](#) also have tools to digitize older format photos and videos.

[The Access Services](#) branch, located in the Government Center, provides a variety of services for those with special needs and disabilities - including assistive technology and help applying for the Talking Book Program offered through the Library of Congress.

Dozens of [online resources for lifelong learning](#) are also free, many without a library card. Some popular examples include:

- [LinkedIn Learning](#) - Anyone with a library card can access LinkedIn Learning and their thousands of online courses for free.
- [LearningExpress Library](#) - Offers video courses to learn popular software and computer basics. All content is free with your library card.
- [Universal Class](#) - More than 500 free courses, including over 55 in the Computer & Technology category, are available.

Last but not least, the librarians staffed at the information desk of every library are an excellent resource to assist seniors with any reference search and can help with selecting reputable books and information on any topic. Fairfax County residents can go to the website or visit the information desk at any library branch to apply for a library card.

Learn more about what your Fairfax County Public Library offers by visiting a branch during business hours, or online anytime at [Library](#).

Department of Human Resources

Retiree Benefits Reminders

The best way to access retiree benefit resources or to keep up with the latest is to visit the Department of Human Resources, Retiree Benefits Page on the public website, click [here](#)

The Retiree Benefits Page includes general information on retiree programs, including health and life insurance, becoming Medicare Eligible, and details on the Retiree Benefits Academy.

In 2024, the Retiree Benefits Academy will continue to provide education on retiree benefit options, special financial sessions, and well-being workshops with LiveWell. Find out more about the Retiree Academy on the Resources and Video Library section of the Retiree Benefits Page on the public website: click [here](#)

Have benefit questions?

The Benefits Division in the Department of Human Resources administers health and other benefits for employees and retirees of Fairfax County Government. Our team can assist you with verifying and updating benefit enrollments, premium and benefit deduction inquiries, and escalated service and claims concerns after connecting with vendor customer service.

Remember, for plan-specific questions regarding coverage and provider assistance, you should contact the carrier directly before contacting the Benefits team. Contact information for our medical plan vendor partners can be found below.

Cigna OAP Coinsurance Plans (90% & 80% Co-Insurance and MyChoice CDHP)	(888) 244-6224
Cigna True Choice Core Medicare Advantage PPO	(888) 281-7867
Cigna RX Part D Prescription Plan	(800) 558-9562
Kaiser Permanente HMO Plan	(800) 777-7902
Kaiser Medicare Advantage Plan	(888) 777-5536
UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage PPO	(866) 859-5402

Hot Flashes – LiveWell: Feb 2024

Stroke Symptoms? Act FAST

Do you know the warning signs of a stroke? Strokes are medical emergencies, and when you see signs or symptoms of a stroke, it's critical to get to a hospital. Prompt treatment may reduce damage to the brain—or even save a life. Don't wait. Call 911 immediately, even if the symptoms go away.

Stroke Symptoms: Spot a stroke F.A.S.T.

1. **FACE DROOPING**
Does one side of the face droop, or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.
2. **ARM WEAKNESS**
Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
3. **SPEECH DIFFICULTY**
Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat simple sentences like "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?
4. **TIME TO CALL 911**
If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital immediately.

Prevention is also important. Schedule your annual physical and talk with your doctor about your stroke and heart disease risk and what health screenings are best for you based on your age, gender, and risk factors. Visit the [American Stroke Association Website](#) or [CDC Website](#) to learn more.

MotivateMe

The 2023 MotivateMe rewards are coming soon! If you earned MotivateMe rewards in 2023, they will be distributed in late March 2024. Retirees receiving an annuity or pension from Fairfax County Government will see their rewards as an additional subsidy in their March pension statement. If you don't see the rewards or have questions about the amount, please email LiveWell@fairfaxcounty.gov or call LiveWell at 703-324-3311 (TTY 711) for assistance.

The 2024 MotivateMe incentive rewards program has been simplified and streamlined. Retirees who subscribe to an eligible Fairfax County Government medical plan when rewards are distributed can earn up to \$250 in rewards annually. MotivateMe eligibility may vary by individual circumstances, such as Medicare Advantage plan enrollment. Please get in touch with LiveWell@fairfaxcounty.gov to discuss your eligibility or with any questions. Visit the Retiree Benefits page on the Fairfax County Government website to learn more: [Health & Wellness](#)

Opportunities to Help

Volunteer Solutions - Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

offers meaningful volunteer opportunities to improve the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. It's a partnership between Fairfax County's Department of Family Services and Neighborhood & Community Services. Volunteers assist in one-on-one or group settings. Drivers, social visitors, grocery shoppers, and household organizers are needed. Do you have a skill to share? Fairfax County Senior Centers are looking for leaders, entertainers, and instructors in fitness, dance, the arts, music, languages, and more. Visit bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.





RSVP-NV (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program - Northern Virginia) is one of the core programs of AmeriCorps Seniors and is sponsored by Volunteer Fairfax. RSVP-NV

mobilizes the skills and experience of its volunteers, aged 55+, to help meet community needs in Arlington County, Fairfax County, and the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church, and Alexandria. The program focuses on matching volunteers within the specific framework required through the AmeriCorps Seniors federal grant that funds the program. The various volunteer activities currently range from community food support, education success, transportation assistance and companionship for seniors, workforce preparation, capacity building, and emergency preparedness.

Volunteers connect to opportunities that best match their interests, location preferences, and preferred time commitment and serve directly with one of the program's 40 nonprofit and community partners. Some benefits of joining RSVP-NV include personalized volunteer experiences, recognition events, optional mileage reimbursements, and supplemental volunteer insurance.

Join other RSVP members and consider serving in the local RSVP-NV program to put your skills to work for causes you care about.

Go to bit.ly/RSVPNova to learn more and register. You can also reach out to Karen Coon, RSVP-NV Volunteer Specialist, for more information at kcoon@volunteerfairfax.org or 703-403-5360.



Daylight savings time begins at 12:01am on March 10

Office of Elections

The Fairfax County Office of Elections is committed to providing each citizen with the opportunity to exercise their right to vote efficiently and equitably in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Code of Virginia.

For this year's general election, Fairfax County needs approximately 2500 election officers (the staff who work at polling places) for our 265 precincts across the county. We need support in ensuring the polls are fully staffed on election day.

If you are interested in serving as an election officer, please go to [Election Officers](#)

Retirement of Long-Time ERS Board Chair

Bob Carlson, long-time Chairman of the Employees' Retirement System, retired from Board service at the end of December 2023. He was



appointed to the ERS Board of Trustees in March of 1993 and served as Trustee for 31 years. He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees since January 1995. Of the three county retirement system boards, only one other member served on a board longer than Mr. Carlson.

During Mr. Carlson's tenure on the Board, the System's assets have grown from \$689 million in 1992 to \$4.6 billion. Over the same period, the number of active and retired members served has increased from 14,800 in 1992 to 25,100 today.

Under Mr. Carlson's leadership, the Board and staff adopted and perfected the innovative risk-based asset allocation methodology still in use today. Over Mr. Carlson's 31 years on the Board, the Employees' Retirement System portfolio has had an average annual investment return of 7.4 percent per year. The ERS, its members, staff, and the County have significantly benefited from his leadership.

Jeff Weiler, Executive Director
Fairfax County Retirement Systems

Tax Documents: Form 1099-R

You should have received your Form 1099-R with information to file your taxes. If you need a copy, you can print the form from your online account, which is accessed from our website and at this link: [Web Member Services](#). You can also verify your mailing address, and if changes are necessary, please submit a [Change of Address Form](#).

If you have questions, contact your payroll specialist:

Last names A-G Nydia Rivera, [email: Nydia Rivera](#), 703-279-8211

Last names H-O Dayle Bartholow, [email: Dayle Bartholow](#), 703-324-2338

Last names P-Z Yvonne Ta, [email: Yvonne Ta](#), 703-324-8230

Exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam

Veterans who served anywhere in Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides, as specified in the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

These Veterans do not need to show that they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides to get disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure.

For more information, go to: [US Department of Veterans Affairs/Exposures](#)

Here's what's happening at NextMark.



Introducing Scout - NextMark's virtual phone assistant!

Scout is an AI (artificial intelligence) powered virtual assistant who can help you with basic requests and quickly answer questions. With Scout's help, we will create seamless interactions for you anytime.

How does it work? When you call our main number, 703-218-9900, Scout will answer. You can then use simple phrases such as "open an account," "find a branch," or "get my balance," and Scout will provide you with answers. Here are some other examples:

- Ordering or activating a debit card or credit card.
- Registering for Online Banking
- Resetting your Online & Mobile Banking password.
- Finding NextMark's routing number.
- Locating your account number.
- Checking your account balance.
- Checking the status of your deposit.
- Checking your transaction history.
- Transferring funds from one NextMark account to another.
- Making a credit card or loan payment.
- And a lot of other things, too!

Scout is not replacing our amazing NextMarkers; instead, she is helping expedite phone calls so that there is less wait time if you need to speak with someone.

Take advantage of extra loan savings!

As a county retiree, NextMark is offering you additional discounts on loans. Every little bit helps in this high-rate environment. Get the details and other benefits [here](#).

Get paid up to 3 days early.

Get your retirement pay up to three days early with NextMark's Early Pay. Early Pay allows NextMark checking account holders to receive incoming ACH payments, including direct deposits, pension payments, etc., up to three days earlier. If you already have a NextMark checking account, no action is required as you are automatically enrolled. If you would like to learn more about Early Pay and open a NextMark checking account, click here: [Early Pay](#)

Maximize your retirement earnings with a NextMark Savings Certificate.

If you haven't checked our savings certificates, you may be missing out on some earning potential. Check out our recently increased rates at [NextMark Rates](#) and open your certificate online today!

[Click here for Branch Locations and ATMs](#)

Don't forget, our [Quarterly Newsletter](#) is a great resource for current promotions and other news.

Sad News

Mabel L. Patrick passed away on May 22, 2020, at age 95. Mabel retired from the Fairfax County Department of Recreation and Community Services as the Administrative Division Supervisor in June of 1984. [Obituary](#)



Zofia "Sophie" Aniela Zager, aged 73, passed away on February 6, 2024. Zofia worked for Fairfax County's Department of Planning and Development and retired in April 2004.



A Celebration of Life service will be held on April 20th (11:30 AM) at the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax](#), 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, Virginia. [Obituary](#)

FCREA

Events 2024

FCREA Annual Meeting

FCREA will hold its 2024 annual meeting via Zoom on **Wednesday, May 1st at 10 am**. If interested in joining, please click on this link a few minutes early:

FCREA Annual Meeting - Zoom

You may have to download the Zoom App to join a Zoom meeting on a tablet (iPad) or mobile phone. On a desktop, a Zoom meeting will open in your internet browser (e.g., Chrome, Edge).

If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, click on [Zoom-Test](#) for setup. Once the Zoom test opens, click join, then click Open or Launch meeting. Next, follow the directions to test the video, microphone, and audio.

Other 2024 Events

- Picnic - September DTBD, at 11:30, at Nottoway Park, Vienna
- Holiday Luncheon - December 18 at 11:30, at the International Country Club, Fairfax

Membership

New Members

- Debra Dunbar, Retired from Information Technology on 12/31/23
- Penelope A. "Penny" Gross, Retired from the Board of Supervisors on 12/31/23
- Ashok Karra, Retired from McLean Community Center on 1/26/24
- Suzanne Lubkeman, Retired from Circuit Court & Records on 12/30/23
- Michael S. Ville, Retired from Community Services Board on 12/13/23
- Karen Walz-Fuentes, Retired from Human Resources on 12/15/23



Membership [Fact Sheet](#)

Membership [Application](#)

Members, we have lost track of. ..

If anyone knows any of these members, please remind them to update their email addresses by contacting FCREA99@gmail.com or Bobbie Deegan: 301-937-7070 or BobbieDeegan@aol.com

- Marion Horn, retired from DIT in 2003
- Mary Kegelman, retired from Zoning in 2003
- Mary Pascoe, retired from Planning Commission in 2003
- Geroge Galanis, Retired from DVS in 2002
- June Cook, retired from Library in 2001

Members Information.

FCREA Board Members

FCREA retirees are asked to forward any news concerning retirees or their family members who are ill or have passed away to Joyce Gerhart: 703-560-4785 or ggerhart2@verizon.net

Please send address changes to Bobbie Deegan: 301-937-7070 or BobbieDeegan@aol.com

FCREA Website

Fairfax County Websites with Retirees Information:

[Retirement Systems](#)

[Retirement Web Member Services](#)

[Retirees Benefits](#)

[HR- Who to Call Contacts](#)

[Retirees Resource and Video Library](#)

Finally... Taking Medications

Advertisements for medications often seem to have more side effects than benefits. So, what is meant by the various levels of side effects (adverse reactions)?

According to the Council for International Organizations of Medical

Sciences, the chance of having an adverse reaction is defined as:



- **Very common** affects more than 1 in 10 people – i.e., the risk is 10% or higher
- **Common** affects between 1 in 100 and 1 in 10 people – i.e., the risk is 1% to 10%
- **Uncommon** affects between 1 in 1,000 and 1 in 100 people – i.e., the risk is 0.1% to 1%
- **Rare** affects between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 1,000 people – i.e., the risk is 0.01% to 0.1%
- **Very rare** affects less than 1 in 10,000 people – i.e., the risk is less than 0.01%

So, for example, if a very rare adverse reaction affects one person in 10,000, then 9,999 people out of 10,000 are not expected to have that adverse reaction.



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