

Hot Flashes

September 2026

Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

Message From the Chair

Children are back in school, so it is time to turn our thoughts to fall. Summer goes by so quickly, even when you're retired! FCREA is kicking off the fall season with our annual picnic. Join your Board of Directors in Nottoway Park, Shelter A, at 11:30 on September 16th. You will find the park's address and all the details in the article below. I hope you can join us!

On December 16th at 11:30, we will return to the International Country Club in the City of Fairfax for our Holiday Luncheon. Editor Chuck Higdon will provide all the details in the next issue of *Hot Flashes*, but put it on your calendar now. We always have a big turnout, and it is great to catch up on the news with old friends!

Open enrollment for the County's 2027 health insurance plans will begin soon. The Benefits Division is still finalizing the details, so the November issue of *Hot Flashes* will come out in mid-October, and we can get the Open Enrollment information to you as soon as possible. **If you have County health insurance, watch your mail for the Open Enrollment packet sent by the Department of Human Resources!**

See you at the picnic!

Sincerely,
Pam Martin, Chairman
Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

A Rhine River Cruise – Two Sisters

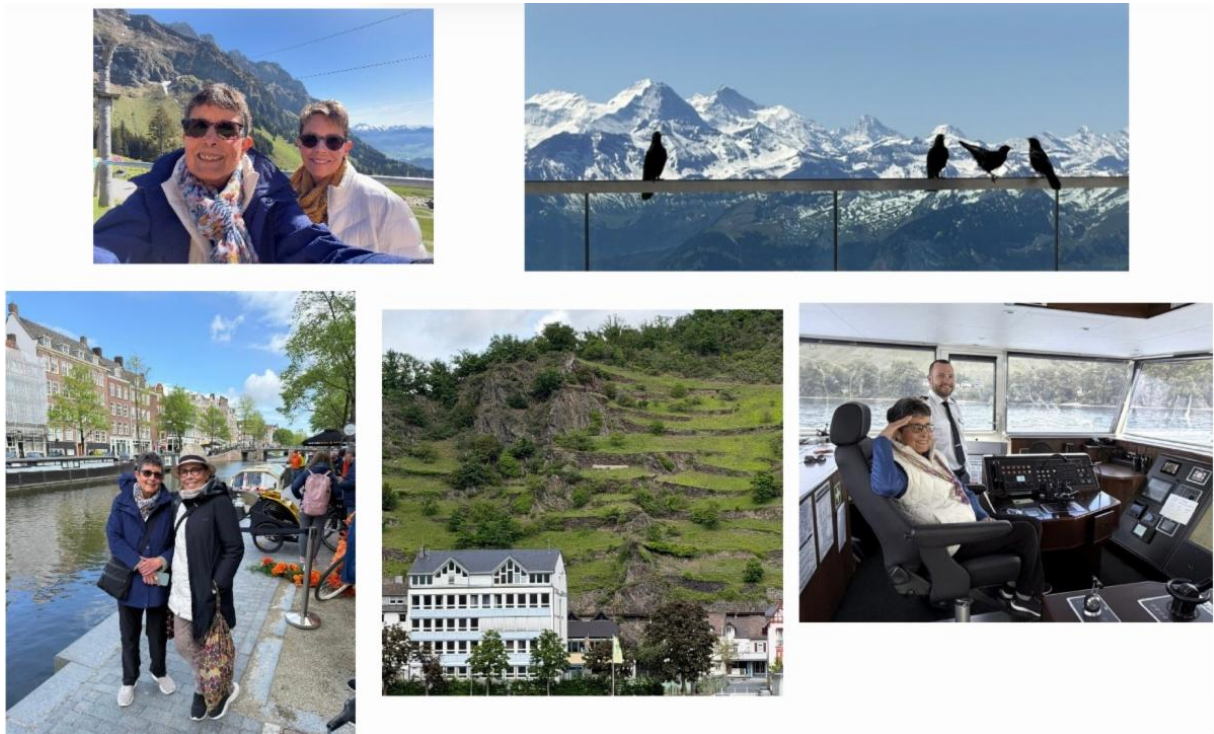
by Laurie Eytel (can be reached at leytel@outlook.com)

Now that I've reached 70 (yikes!), my sister and I have decided to travel to Europe. I drove



up from where I live in the Pittsburgh, PA, area to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (where I lived in my youth), where she and her husband live, and we flew out of Montreal. We've both been in Europe before, but never on a Rhine River cruise. We went with Gate 1 Travel. We visited Amsterdam, several cities in Germany and France, and we ended our trip in Lucerne, Switzerland. We toiled around Amsterdam a few days on our own first – lots of bikes EVERYWHERE – literally! We did lots of walking and visited the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum, and the Anne Frank Museum.

The trip was fantastic! From sipping wine in outdoor cafés, we enjoyed the riverboat's fine food, amenities, and city tours. We went up 7000' to Mt. Pilatus, Switzerland, in a gondola and came down later in a cogwheel train (the steepest in the world at a 48-degree angle), and did so many other activities – too many to mention here. Here are just a few of MANY photos—a trip to be treasured by both of us. As my sister suggested, plan to travel every 1–5 years in the future– do it while time is still (for now!) on our side. A good suggestion to follow!



MotivateMe Incentive Reward

Program

MotivateMe is an incentive reward program for employees and retirees enrolled in an eligible Fairfax County Government medical plan (Cigna 80%, 90%, and MyChoice), offering \$250 each year for completing healthy activities that promote engagement in personal health and well-being.



The MotivateMe program is updated annually to reflect participant feedback, the evolving health of our population, and logistical considerations. Please note a few considerations for the 2026 MotivateMe program:

Participants must complete all of the following to earn any rewards for 2026:

- 1-annual physical
- 1-screening (A1C, colon cancer, prostate cancer, mammogram, or a well-woman exam)
- 1-dental exam
- 1-vision exam

All MotivateMe activities are self-reported by you (the subscriber) on the [2026 MotivateMe Submission Form](#); however, Cigna will confirm the annual physical before reward distribution. The claim must be submitted to Cigna promptly and coded appropriately. Medicare enrollees will be asked to submit verifying documentation for their annual physical on the submission form.

All MotivateMe submissions must be successfully submitted via the [2026 MotivateMe Submission Form](#) by the FIRM deadline of **November 30th, 11:59 PM EST** to earn rewards. Retiree rewards will be distributed through pension checks received around the end of March 2027. Additional information is available on the [Fairfax County Government website](#). Questions? Email LiveWell@fairfaxcounty.gov or call [703.324.4556](tel:703.324.4556) (TTY 711).



Address Changes – yours AND ours

As always, if you moved or are planning to move, please update your address with us. Tax forms get mailed in January to your address on file at the end of the year. Please complete and return this form for updates to your address: **Change of Address form**.



As for OUR address: We're moving up – to the 8th floor. But we aren't there yet. Please continue to visit and send correspondence to us in Suite 350. We're just letting you know of the pending change.

Contact Information

If you have questions about your benefit payment or changes to your direct deposit, please contact your retirement specialist. Please note the division of last names based on the matter you need help with.

Account Updates, Refunds, Income verification, Last Name A-K	Christina Storr Barnes	christina.storrbarnes@fairfaxcounty.gov 703.324.4861
Account Updates, Refunds, Income verification, Last Name L-Z	Yvonne Ta	yvonne.ta@fairfaxcounty.gov 703.279.8230
Deaths of Retirees, Address Changes Last Name A-K	Brittany Pistolessi	Brittany.Pistolessi@FairfaxCounty.gov 703.877.2887
Deaths of Retirees, Address Changes Last Name L-Z	Maria Foltz	Maria.Foltz@fairfaxcounty.gov 703.279.8202

FCPL Fix-It Clinic: November 14, 2026

Have a broken or damaged item you've been looking to get repaired, but it's too costly or inconvenient? Bring it by a Fairfax County Public Library Fix-It Clinic on Saturday, November 14, from 1-5 p.m.

We will have fixers skilled in various types of repairs available to help you bring your items back to life for FREE!

Types of repair assistance offered at the clinic will include:

- Electrical repair
- Fabric mending
- Jewelry repair
- Knife sharpening
- Small appliance repair
- Bike repair

Volunteer Your Skills

Are you skilled at bringing broken and damaged things back to life? We are looking for volunteer fixers to help with the event. We welcome fixers skilled in the types of repairs above, as well as other types of fixing!

Participating Branches (more information coming soon):

- **Chantilly Regional**, 1-5 p.m.

- **Kingstowne Regional**, 1-5 p.m.
- **Sherwood Regional**, 1-5 p.m.

For a Volunteer Slideshow, go to [Slideshow](#)

Opportunities to Help

Save the Date!

Venture into Volunteering and the Beacon 50+ Expo are returning to the Springfield Town Center, on Sunday, October 18, 2026, from 12:00–4:00 p.m.



Discover a wide variety of volunteer opportunities and local resources all in one place. Meet representatives from local nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses, and learn how you can get involved in your community.

Learn more about the Volunteer Fair: bit.ly/VOLFAIR

Questions? Email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call [703-324-5406](tel:703-324-5406).

For information about the Beacon 50+ Expo and exhibitor opportunities: Visit bit.ly/BeaconExpo or call [301-949-9766](tel:301-949-9766).

Fairfax CASA is building a better, stronger, and more empowered community through advocacy.

Our volunteers are committed to ensuring abused and neglected children do not fall through the cracks of the child welfare system. Be the voice that helps change a child's story. Applications are currently being accepted for Winter Training!



Upcoming Virtual Information Sessions

September 10th @1PM
September 24th @7PM
October 8th @1PM
October 22nd @7PM
November 5th @1PM
November 19th @7PM
December 3rd @1PM

December 10th @7PM

Please visit us at www.fairfaxcasa.org to sign up and learn more



Already Have Medicare? Here's Why Fall Still Matters.

If you've had Medicare for a year or twenty, you may see the flood of plan mailers every October and think, "not my problem — I already picked a plan." It's worth a second look. Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period runs every year from October 15 through December 7, and it applies to every Medicare beneficiary, not just people newly eligible. Changes made during this window take effect January 1.

Here's the part that catches long-time retirees off guard: your plan doesn't stay still even if you never touch it. Medicare Advantage and Part D plans can change their premiums, covered drugs, and provider networks every year. A plan that fit perfectly in 2019 may look very different in 2027 — a favorite pharmacy could drop out of network, or a medication could move to a pricier tier, without you doing anything at all.

A short list worth ten minutes this fall:

- Open the Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) letter your plan mails in September. It spells out exactly what's different for next year.
- Check that your regular doctors, specialists, and pharmacy are still in-network.
- Please confirm that your prescriptions are still covered and at the tier you expect.
- Compare your total cost — premium plus deductibles and copays — not just the monthly premium.

You don't have to sort through this alone, and you don't need to pay anyone to help you. Fairfax County's Area Agency on Aging runs the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), offering free, unbiased, one-on-one Medicare counseling by phone or in person — counselors are trained and certified, and they never sell insurance or earn a commission. VICAP also holds free Medicare 101 workshops at Fairfax County libraries and community centers each fall, including:

- Monday, October 5, 2–3:30 p.m. — Thomas Jefferson Library, Falls Church
- Wednesday, October 14, 2–3:30 p.m. — Kings Park Library, Burke
- Friday, November 6, 1:30–3 p.m. — Chantilly Regional Library, Chantilly

See the [full fall 2026 workshop schedule](#) for the complete list of dates and

locations, including several virtual options. Registration is required and can be done online or by calling VICAP directly at [703-324-5851](tel:703-324-5851) (TTY 711).

If open enrollment leads you to change plans, Apple FCU can help on the money side. A new plan often means a different premium amount, a new autopay date, or a different draft from your checking account. Our team can help you review your automatic payments, adjust your budget for any premium change, and make sure your Social Security or pension deposits line up with what's coming out each month. We're not insurance counselors — we'll always point you to VICAP for that — but we're glad to help you make sure the numbers work.

Please take the ten minutes to review; you'll thank yourself. Whether you end up keeping your current plan or making a change, you'll know it was still the right one — not just the one you happened to pick years ago.

Sources: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (cms.gov); Medicare.gov; Fairfax County Department of Family Services, VICAP.

Sad News

Phyllis Blanchard Brinkley of Stafford, Virginia, passed on April 28th, 2025. Phyllis retired from FCPS Food Services in 1993. [Obituary](#)



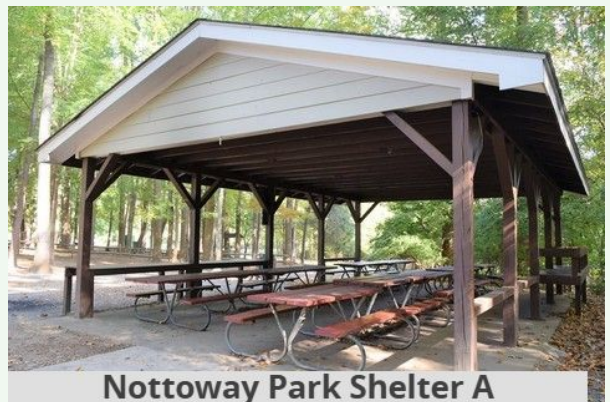
FCREA

2026 FCREA Event

Picnic

FCREA will hold its annual picnic on Wednesday, September 16, at 11:30 at Nottoway Park, Shelter A, on Courthouse Road in Vienna.

FCREA will provide hot dogs, plastic flatware, paper plates, and drinks. Bring a side dish to share and enjoy a beautiful fall day with your friends!



Nottoway Park Shelter A

Nottoway Park
9537 Courthouse Rd.
Vienna, VA 22181

Directions

Shelter A location

Holiday Luncheon - December 16, 2026 at 11:30 AM

New Members

- Martin Graves, Retiring from the Park Authority on 9/8/2026
- Elizabeth A. Hagg, Retired from Planning and Development on 5/15/2026
- Christina Magnotti, Retired from Health Dept on 6/17/2026



Membership Application

Membership Facts

FCREA Board Members

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

Please send address changes to Bobbie Deegan: BobbieDeegan@aol.com, or [301-937-7070](tel:301-937-7070)

FCREA Website

Fairfax County Websites with Retirees Information:

[**Retirement Systems**](#)

[**Retirement Web Member Services**](#)

[**Retirees Benefits**](#)

[**HR- Who to Call Contacts**](#) (go to Know Who to Call link)

[**Retirees Resource and Video Library**](#)

Finally: Too True



Little Miss Muffet
sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey.

When along came a spider
who sat down beside her,
and started watching videos on
his device without using headphones.

So that was pretty much
the end of lunch.

JOE DATOR

[View as Webpage](#)

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