

Hot Flashes

Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

July 2025

Message From the Chair

So, how has your summer been so far? It sure got hot fast, didn't it! I hope everyone is having fun, nevertheless. Share your adventure with your fellow retirees via Hot Flashes! Contact the editor, Chuck Higdon, at FCREA99@gmail.com for more information.



Our annual meeting was very informative. Thanks to the Retirement Office for making a recording of the virtual meeting available to our retirees. It's available at this link: [Annual Meeting](#).

I'm looking forward to our annual picnic in September (when the weather hopefully will be cooler) and our holiday luncheon on December 17th (when the weather hopefully will be atypically warm)! I always have a great time catching up with everybody's news.

Is there another activity you would like us to undertake? COVID put an end to our day trips for a while, but the Board is ready to get us on the road again if there is interest! Please share your ideas with me or another member of the Board of Directors. Our contact info is at the end of this newsletter.

That's my news for this issue. Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Sincerely,
Pam Martin, Chairman

Fire Safety with Fairfax County Fire and Rescue

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 71% of Americans have a home fire escape plan, yet only 47% of those have practiced it. Your risk of dying in a home fire is greater as you get older. Knowing what to do can make a big difference.



Take these essential steps to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Identify two ways out of every room.
- Keep exit routes clear.
- Discuss your escape plan with friends and neighbors.
- Keep essentials - eyeglasses, keys, hearing aids, phone - within reach of your bed.

Practice twice a year.

Community Connect

Fairfax County's Community Connect is a free and secure platform where residents can share critical information with first responders.

You can provide information on:

- Your property
- Household members
- Access or functional needs
- Pets



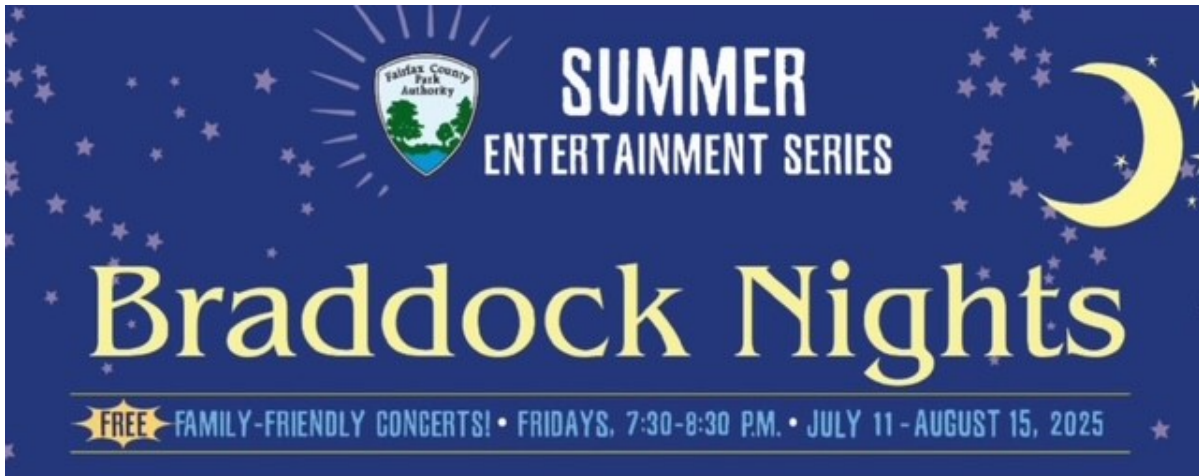
Click on photo for link or scan QR code

Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms give you extra time to escape. Be sure to:

- Install smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and every level of your home.
- Test alarms monthly and replace them every 10 years.

Fairfax County residents can request FREE battery-powered smoke alarms. To request one, please call [703-246-3801](tel:703-246-3801) or email us at [smoke alarms](#).



Braddock Nights Flyer

For more information on Fairfax County's entertainment series, go to

Summer Entertainment Series

Staff Changes for Your Payroll Specialist



There have been staff changes in our Retiree Services department, so your payroll specialist may have changed. Christina Storr Barnes is a new employee, and she is assigned to members whose last names begin with letters A-K. Yvonne Ta continues to serve our retirees and is assigned to members whose last names begin with L-Z.

Last Name Starts With		
A-K	Christina Storr Barnes	christina.storrbarne@fairfaxcounty.gov
L-Z	Yvonne Ta	yvonne.ta@fairfaxcounty.gov

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

Your COLA is effective July 1, and you'll see it in your July 31 benefit payment. This year, the COLA is 2.4%. It is applied to your base benefit and any accumulated COLAs from prior years. Remember that if you've been retired for less than a year, your COLA is prorated.

	\$1,000.00	\$100.00
2.40%	\$24.00	\$2.40

The July pay advice will be mailed to your address of record. Please verify your current mailing and email addresses by logging into your [online account](#) to review. To change your address, please download the [Change of Address form](#) and return it to our office. If you have questions, please contact the Fairfax County Retirement Systems office at [703-279-8200](tel:703-279-8200) or email your payroll specialist.

Last Name Starts With		
A-K	Christina Storr Barnes	christina.storrbarnes@fairfaxcounty.gov
L-Z	Yvonne Ta	yvonne.ta@fairfaxcounty.gov

We also mail pay advices in January and December. You can access all of your pay advices from your account in [Web Member Services](#).

How to Properly Display and Dispose of American Flags

Did you know the average outdoor flag lasts only about 90 days? Flying the stars and stripes outside your home is a great way to showcase pride in our County. But the ever-changing weather and the sun's blasting rays will inevitably result in a worn-out flag.

The United States has a [set of laws](#) about disposal known as the United States Flag Code, or "retiring the flag."



For more information, see [Display and Disposal of Flags](#)

The federal government's USA.gov website provides resources about the American flag, including instructions on how to display it properly in various settings.

[Learn More about the American Flag](#)

Opportunities to Help

Help Support Older Adults – Volunteers Needed



Volunteer Solutions (Dept. of Family Services) is looking for volunteer **Grocery Shoppers** and **Social Visitors** to assist older adults in the eastern and southern regions of Fairfax County. **Drivers** are also needed for medical appointments.

Your time and compassion can make a big difference in someone's life.

To learn more or sign up, visit: bit.ly/DFS-VS.

Volunteer to Teach Kids About Staying Safe

Are you available on weekdays during school hours? Do you enjoy working with kids? If so, this opportunity is for you! The Department of Family Services' **Body Safety Program** needs volunteer classroom instructors to help empower elementary students with the tools they need to prevent or interrupt child abuse. Apply online at bit.ly/BodySafeVol or contact the Body Safety staff at DFSBodySafety@FairfaxCounty.gov or **703-324-7459**. We continuously onboard volunteers throughout the school year, but help us reach our goal of 30 new volunteers! The next orientation is in person on Friday, August 8th. Si usted habla español, ¡nosotros necesitamos su ayuda! La orientación en español es el miércoles 13 de agosto.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. We genuinely appreciate your support in helping us protect and empower children in our community.

Protecting Your Nest Egg:



Cybersecurity and Financial Safety

Retirement brings digital convenience for banking and connecting. At Apple FCU, we're committed to safeguarding your assets, but your vigilance is key. Think of cybersecurity as protecting your financial

home.

Here are vital tips to keep your financial accounts safe:

1. Scrutinize Financial Communications:

Be wary of emails, texts, or calls claiming to be from your credit union, government, or even family, asking for sensitive financial details or urgent transfers. **Apple will never ask for your login or full account numbers via unsolicited communication.** Always verify by calling us directly using a trusted number from our official website or your statements. Be suspicious of "too good to be true" offers or threats demanding immediate action, common in grandparent or investment scams.

2. Fortify Passwords and Use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):

Your passwords are your financial keys.

- **Strong, Unique Passwords:** Use long, complex passwords (12+ characters, mixed case, numbers, symbols) for each financial account. Consider a password manager.
- **Enable Multi Factor Authentication (MFA):** This adds a crucial second verification step (e.g., a code sent to your phone). Even if a password is stolen, MFA protects your account. Enable it for all financial accounts.

3. Monitor Accounts Diligently:

Be your own fraud detection system.

- **Enroll in Alerts:** Sign up for alerts for large transactions or changes.
- **Monitor Accounts:** Carefully check all credit union, credit card, and investment accounts for unusual activity and report anything suspicious immediately.
- **Check Credit Reports:** Annually review your free credit reports at annualcreditreport.com to spot fraudulent accounts that may have been open in your name and under your social security number.

4. Exercise Caution on Public Wi-Fi:

Avoid sensitive financial transactions on public Wi-Fi. These networks are often unsecured. Use Apple's secure mobile app or a trusted home network for banking.

5. Stay Informed and Ask for Help:

Knowledge is defense. Taking a few moments to visit [Apple's Fraud Prevention](#)

Center is a proactive step towards maintaining your peace of mind. It's about staying informed and empowered with the tools you need to navigate the digital world with confidence. If something feels off, trust your gut. Don't hesitate to contact us directly; we're here to help protect your financial well-being.

Your friends at Apple Federal Credit Union

Sad News

Charlene Mae Krohn of Fairfax, Virginia, passed away peacefully on April 24, 2025, at 92, surrounded by friends. Charlene retired from the County in 2011.

[Obituary](#)



FCREA

Membership

[Membership Application](#)

[Membership Facts](#)

New Members

- Isha I. Barrie, Retired on 6/30/2025
- Jennifer Milburn, Retired from the Police Dept on 5/2/2025
- Nancy Owens, Retired from the Health Dept. on 5/6/2



Members we have lost track of...

If anyone knows any of these members, please remind them to update their address by contacting FCREA99@gmail.com or Bobbie Deegan at [301-937-7070](tel:301-937-7070) or BobbieDeegan@aol.com.

- Sandra Haun, who retired from DFS in 2013

- Richard Taibi, who retired from CSB in 2009
 - Monika Sullivan, who retired from FCPS in 1994
 - Leander Wick, who retired from the Health Department in 1996
 - Walter Guarino, who retired from the CSB in 2017
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2025 FCREA Events

FCREA Picnic mid-September DTBD

FCREA Holiday Luncheon, December 17 at 11:30

Members Information

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](#)

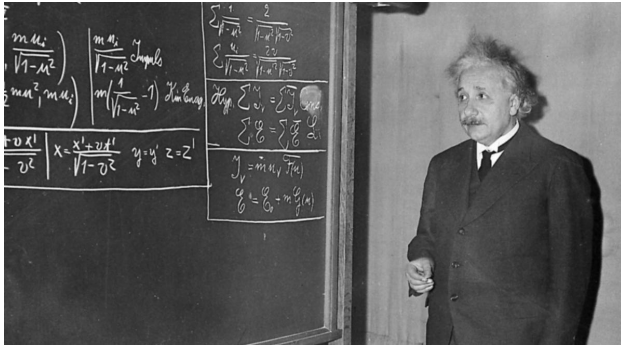
[Retirement Web Member Services](#)

[Retirees Benefits](#)

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

[Retirees Resource and Video Library](#)

**Finally... Did Einstein
make a mistake?**



Renowned for his groundbreaking theories, Albert Einstein stood before a classroom, writing multiplication tables. As he reached the equation 9×10 , he mistakenly wrote down 91 instead of the correct answer, 90.

The students erupt into laughter and confusion. How could Einstein, the epitome of intellectual mastery, make such an error?

Amidst the chaos, Einstein seizes the opportunity to impart wisdom upon his students, a lesson that transcends mathematics and touches upon the essence of human achievement:

"Even though I analyzed nine problems correctly, no one congratulated me. But when I made one mistake, everyone started laughing. This means that even if a person is successful, society will notice their slightest mistake."

"So don't let criticism destroy your dreams. The only person who never makes a mistake is someone who does nothing."

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