

Retiree Report

February, 2002

A Quarterly Publication from the
Fairfax County Retirement Agency

My, oh my, what a mild winter we have had so far

It makes you wonder what blizzards might be lurking around the corner . . . Just in case . . .

Are You Prepared for a Power Loss?

In the event of a power loss, call your local power company. If you go outside to assess the situation, beware of downed power lines that could still be energized. Do not go near downed power lines or touch anything that may be in contact with them. Report downed power lines immediately.

Turn off all major appliances to avoid an overload when power is restored.

Keep food cold. Food can be kept cold for a day or two if the refrigerator doors are kept closed. If temperatures are below freezing, freeze water outside in containers and then place them inside your refrigerator.

Use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns to illuminate the home. Candles and kerosene lanterns are not recommended for lighting because of the inherent fire safety hazards.

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The Retirement Agency is looking for a few happy retired volunteers!

?Are you comfortable speaking in front of a group of people?

?Are you enjoying your retirement?

?Have you learned valuable lessons about changes in lifestyle since you retired?

?Do you have helpful information you want to share with others who are getting close to retirement age?

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As you may know, the Retirement Agency conducts classes for County employees who have fewer than 10 years to go until retirement. We currently offer employees a 12-hour class to help them prepare for the "rigors of retirement". One element we would like to include is an up-close and personal view of life *after* retirement. All we would need is approximately 15 minutes of your time. This class is offered five times a year. A little personal perspective from a current retiree will be a nice addition to this class. If this sounds interesting to you, please contact Carol Patterson at 703-279-8227.

! We Could Use You as a Volunteer !

Spotlight on The Retirement Agency



Melissa Olson has recently joined the Retirement Agency staff as our new Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. Relocating from Minnesota, she is enjoying the warm transition to Virginia. (No matter what our winter weather throws us here in Virginia, she promises a sunny disposition.)

Prior to her move, she worked for the Target Corporation Property Tax Department at their Corporate Headquarters in downtown Minneapolis.

She is looking forward to learning more about Fairfax County and how the retirement systems work. Some of Melissa's duties include administrative support to the Boards of Trustees. She will also be the Agency's Payroll Coordinator. She takes pride in learning all that she can about her position and duties and is determined to be an asset to the Retirement Agency.

In some of her spare time, she has gotten involved with her church, Family Worship Center in Springfield. She has met many new friends and considers them her family away from home. She also enjoys singing and being a part of the various outreach activities. Overall, what she loves most is helping people and bringing encouragement into their lives, not just in the church, but wherever she is.

Often the staff in an office are just voices on the other end of the phone or a name you hear in passing. Each upcoming issue of Retiree Report will spotlight one individual of the Retirement Agency staff in an effort to help you get to know them better.



Free Home Security Surveys

At this time of year, when it is cold (usually) and there are fewer people out and about in your neighborhood, incidents of crime and vandalism may be more prevalent than ever.

Did you know that the Fairfax County Police Department offers a wide range of crime prevention services to citizens? Included are steps you can take to avoid being the victim of a crime against property such as burglary.

By appointment, the crime prevention officer from your local district station can do a FREE survey of your property and point out the trouble spots. The officer will examine your outside lighting, your locks, and your shrubbery, among other things. A community presentation can also be arranged to provide tips about Neighborhood Watch, personal safety, robbery prevention, or any other crime prevention program.

To make an appointment, please call your local crime prevention officer located at one of the following district stations:

Mount Vernon District Station
2511 Parkers Ln.
703-360-8928

Fair Oaks District Station
12300 Lee Jackson Mem. Hwy.
703-352-2163

Franconia District Station
6121 Franconia Rd.
703-922-8263

West Springfield District Station
6140 Rolling Rd.
703-644-5026

Mason District Station
6507 Columbia Pike
703-354-5889

McLean District Station
1347 Balls Hill Rd.
703-734-0756

Reston District Station
12000 Bowman Towne Dr.
703-478-0799

Get to Know Your Trustees

While many retirees are familiar with their System's Board of Trustees, others may not know anything at all about the people who are charged with the proper operation of the System to which they belong. This quarter's column, features **Firefighter Harry Scott** Vice Chairman of the Uniformed Retirement System.

Trustee Tracking

Firefighter **Harry Scott** has been with the Fairfax County Fire Department since July 1975. Captain Scott is currently at Station 32 in Burke. His earlier assignments included Stations 20, 5, 9, 19 and the Public Safety Communications Center. In addition to being a Trustee and the Vice Chairman for the Uniformed Retirement Board, he is also an executive board member of the Fairfax County Firefighters Union Local 2068. With 27 years of experience as a firefighter and paramedic, Captain Scott brings a unique and personal understanding of the issues facing retiring firefighters.

Captain Scott grew up in Fairfax County, graduating from Groveton High School and attending Northern Virginia Community College taking business courses. He has handled grievances for employees through the Firefighter's Union. He has attended numerous conferences on 401k's, 457's, disabilities and deferred retirement option plans (DROPS). He has worked on local, state and national political campaigns for candidates who support public employment retirement issues.

On a personal note, Captain Scott has three grown children living in Florida, Tennessee and North Carolina. He is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys running, hiking, backpacking, wilderness camping and canoeing. His hobbies include traveling and building wooden boats, canoes and kayaks.

Community Centers Offer Something for the Entire Family

Looking for Volunteer Opportunities?

Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) operates a variety of services to residents of Fairfax County. CRS operates the *Fastran Transportation Services*; 13 senior centers and four meal sites; nine teen centers (one in each magisterial district); 35 different programs for people with disabilities; six neighborhood community centers; and provides support to the sports community in Fairfax County. Volunteers are an integral part of daily operations and help provide activities in all of these programs.

Volunteer opportunities are available in the following areas:

- Programs for elementary school children, teens, and senior adults

- Computer activities and workshops
- Arts and crafts, health and wellness, and hobby enrichment instructors and speakers on a variety of topics
- Mentors, tutors, chaperones for dances
- Leisure coaches for persons with disabilities
- Coaches and facility volunteers for sports activities

Volunteers may commit to short-term projects or long-term projects. Potential volunteers must be at least 18 years old, complete a background check, and participate in training. To receive details about volunteer opportunities, please call 703-324-5722, leave your name and telephone number, and your area of interest and someone will return your call.

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Medicare **UPDATE!** Social Security

New Medicare Part B Rate \$54.00 a month for 2002

If You Become Eligible For Medicare at ANY age and you have County health insurance, you MUST enroll in Medicare Part A and B. In order to receive a reduced premium on your health insurance, if applicable, please send a copy of your new Medicare card showing the effective date of your Part A and Part B coverage.

If you elect not to sign up for both parts of Medicare, the plan will pay your claims as though you had Medicare Parts A and B. Medicare will also add a 10% penalty to your premium for Part B for each 12 months that you could have been covered by Part B but elected not to enroll. The only exception is for periods when you were covered by an employers' (not a retirees') health insurance plan through your or your spouse's current employer.

By the time you read this, **you should have received your Social Security 1099**. The statement shows how much you received in Social Security for the year and may be used when you complete your federal income tax return **to find out IF any of your benefits are subject to tax**. If you do not receive your SSA-1099, you can request a replacement online from Social Security's website at www.ssa.gov/1099/. You will need your name as it appears on your benefit check and your Social Security number. You may also need your date and place of birth and your mother's maiden name (to help identify you). For information on taxation of Social Security benefits, call the Internal Revenue Service's toll-free number 1-800-829-3676 to request Publication 554, Tax Information for Older Americans.

Social Security's Internet website www.ssa.gov, receives over 300,000 hits daily. The website includes, among other services, program information, benefit planners and an online retirement application. The Medicare website www.ssa.gov, receives a tremendous number of hits as well.

Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program

Alzheimer's disease causes millions of Americans to lose their ability to recognize familiar places and faces. Many people cannot even remember their name or address. They may become disoriented and lost in their own neighborhood or far from home. It is common for a person with Alzheimer's disease to wander, many repeatedly, during the disease process. This behavior can be dangerous, even life-threatening to individuals and stressful for family members and care givers. There is help. The Alzheimer's Association *Safe Return* program can assist in the safe return of individuals with Alzheimer's or related dementia who wander and become lost.

Safe Return provides a nationwide identification, support and registration program. *Safe Return* provides assistance whether a person becomes lost locally or far from home. Assistance is available 24 hours every day, whenever a person is lost or found. The Alzheimer's Association charges a \$40 registration fee. With the registration fee, you receive the following items:

- Engraved identification bracelet or necklace and iron-on clothing labels.
- *Care Giver Checklist*, key chain, lapel pin, refrigerator magnet, stickers and wallet cards.
- For an additional \$5, receive Care Giver jewelry. In an emergency, it alerts others that care is provided to a person registered in *Safe Return*.

If a registrant is missing, *Safe Return* can fax the person's information and photo to the local law enforcement department. If a registrant is found, a citizen or law enforcement official can call the 800 number on the identification products. *Safe Return* can then access registrant information and notify listed contacts. Registration can be done by phone by calling the toll-free number 888-572-8566 (weekdays 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST).

For more information contact the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association at 703-359-4440 or their Web site at www.alz.org.

2002 - UpDate

Fairfax County Retirement Systems Board of Trustees Meetings

January

09	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
17	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
23	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

February

13	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
21	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
27	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

March

13	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
21	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
27	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

April

10	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
18	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
24	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

May

08	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
16	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
22	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

June

12	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
20	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
26	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

July

10	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
18	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
24	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

August

28	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM
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September

11	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
19	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
25	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

October

09	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
17	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
23	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

November

13	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
21	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM
27	Uniformed Retirement Board	8:00 AM

December

11	Police Officers Retirement Board	1:30 PM
19	Employees' Retirement Board	3:30 PM

Are You Prepared? *continued from page 1*

Portable emergency generators can be used to provide power during an outage. Place them outside and use appropriate extension cords. Never fuel or run a portable generator in the home or garage, as gas-powered generators pose a serious fire and carbon monoxide threat. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

Use alternate sources of water until power is restored. Water systems with electric pumps will not operate when the power is out.

Gas appliances may not work if the electricity is off.

Plumbing can freeze when power is lost during cold weather. Drain appliances and supply lines, and turn off supply lines to outside spigots.

Water heaters that are drained to prevent damage from freezing must have their power circuits shut off. Failure to do so could result in loss of the heating element when power is restored. Never turn on your water heater unless the tank is full.

Life support equipment should be listed with the power company, with your doctor's approval. You should have a contingency plan that includes an alternate power source and relocation of the person who needs the equipment.

Community Centers *cont'd from page 3*

Senior Centers : Opportunities for People Age 55 or Older

Older adults can participate in fun and educational programs at 13 senior centers. Computers are available for use at all locations. Some locations offer instruction, as well as access to the Internet. Seniors can find out about county services, maintain health and wellness through physical activities, have nutritious and delicious lunchtime meals, meet and mingle, and make new friends. Regular classes in dance, exercise, and arts and crafts are held daily. Discussion groups, trips, fine arts activities, and many special events are planned with the seniors.

The facilities are available for community meetings. Stop in and visit a center today. Community Centers are open Monday through Saturday. For a list of community centers, please call 703-324-5555.

FASTRAN Dial-A-Ride

Transportation is Available For Medical & Essential Shopping Needs

Fastran is a countywide paratransit service providing transportation to the elderly, individuals with disabilities, children and youth who are income eligible or participate in one of the county's human services programs. Fastran riders are individuals who are not able to drive or use METRO or other bus transportation to reach medical appointments, social service agency appointments, and essential shopping needs.

Fastran Customer Service can answer questions regarding eligibility and tell you about the transportation resources. Once certified, you will be able to schedule trips up to a week before the trip is needed. Reserve your rides as soon as possible. All trips are scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

To become certified for Fastran Dial-A-Ride call **703-222-9764**.

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