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GOLDEN GAZETTE

A Monthly Newspaper for Senior Adults in the Fairfax Area

APRIL 2005 | *Serving Seniors for 28 Years* | VOL. 28, NO. 12

National Volunteer Week—April 17-23

Every April we pay tribute to our wonderful volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents to help make the world a better place for many senior citizens in the greater Fairfax area. This past year, our 2,200 volunteers contributed 83,674 hours and served 3,000 clients.

The services they perform run the gamut from delivering hot meals to staying overnight with a client whose spouse had just died; to reading mail; home repairs; trips to the doctor and the grocery store; and just plain old friendship so essential to everyone's well-being. ***See additional photos on page 12.***

Scott Waters, age 8½, helps his grandmother Joanne Brownsword deliver Ensure.

This is an abridged version with links to senior centers and county tours. Policy prohibits publishing the ads that are included in the print version. If you would like to receive the print version on a monthly basis, please e-mail *kathy.wilson@fairfaxcounty.gov*. It's free! Large-print and recorded formats also are available. We welcome your comments *(see page 2 for contact information)*.

Shaking the Salt Habit

by Granger Benson, M.D.

This won't be the first time you have read that excessive salt intake is linked to certain health problems. However, most discussions of this topic explain how to cut down, but aren't very clear about why. If you're an average American, you are probably consuming about twice the recommended amount daily, and about ten times what your body needs for basic health. So, this topic might be important for you.

Sodium Basics

By salt, we commonly mean table salt—sodium chloride. The health implications discussed here relate to the sodium component. The body needs only about 500 milligrams (abbreviated mg) of sodium daily, which generally can be achieved with a diet completely free of table salt or salty-tasting foods. Most experts recommend that, for general good health, salt intake be limited to 2400 mg per day. The average intake for Americans is about double that. Sodium intake is linked to the development of hypertension through mechanisms that are still widely debated. Some people seem to be particularly "sodium-sensitive," but it is difficult to distinguish them from people who are not. High sodium intake also has been linked to a higher risk of stroke.

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GOLDEN GAZETTE

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The *Golden Gazette* is a free, monthly newspaper dedicated to serving persons age 60 and over in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

Grace Starbird
Director, Area Agency on Aging
Becky Adams
Editor/Advertising Manager
703-324-5479
rebecca.adams@fairfaxcounty.gov
Katharine Wilson
Mailing List Coordinator
703-324-5633
kathy.wilson@fairfaxcounty.gov

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To comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the *Golden Gazette* is available in large-print and recorded formats. Call **703-324-5633** to request an alternative format.

DEADLINES

***ALWAYS** the first of the month a month in advance (for ads, ad payments, and announcements)*

Issue	Due Date
May	April 1
June	May 1
July	June 1

ADDRESS ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Although the *Golden Gazette* accepts limited paid advertisements, reader contributions are critical to ensure continuation of the publication. We are very grateful to all of you who do send contributions, regardless of the amount (the average contribution is about $7.00). ***Please note that contributions are entirely voluntary*.**

If you have an address change, are receiving duplicates, or if you would like to make a contribution, please complete the form below and mail to: ***Golden Gazette*, Area Agency on Aging, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 708, Fairfax, VA 22035-1104**. Checks should be made payable to **Fairfax County**. Please list your current address below or attach your mailing label and check the appropriate lines. If you prefer to call about address changes, the number is **703-324-5633**.

_____ Contribution check attached.
_____ I am NOT currently on your mailing list. Please add my name and address.
_____ I am already on your mailing list.
_____ I am moving. My new address in the Fairfax area will be:

NAME_____
CURRENT ADDRESS_____
_____Zip:_____
NEW ADDRESS (*if applicable*)_____
_____ Zip:_____
TELEPHONE *(in case we have a question)*_____

The names and addresses of persons receiving the *Golden Gazette* are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, VA Code Sec. 2.1-340 thru 346.1. Inquiries or complaints concerning this policy should be directed to the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, 12011 Government Center Parkway, #708, Fairfax, VA 22035-1104.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging contracts with Southern Maryland Printing in Waldorf, MD, for printing and mailing services.

Fairfax Area Commission on Aging Monthly Meeting

The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) will meet on **Wednesday, April 20, at 1:00 p.m.**, at the Wakefield Senior Center (located in the Audrey Moore RECenter, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale). A public comment period is held at the beginning of each meeting. (Note: The COA meets on the third Wednesday of each month, **except August**.)

Call **703-324-7746** for information or to be placed on the mailing list. If you need a sign language interpreter or any special accommodation or auxiliary aid, please call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at **703-324-5411** (voice) or **703-449-1186 (TTY)** at least five working days in advance of the meeting. There is no charge for these services.

LETTERS OF INSTRUCTION BENEFIT HEIRS…AND YOU

Provided by Tim Murray, CFP®

While most adults know they should have a will—regrettably many don't have them—few realize they also should have a companion document known as a *letter of instruction*. This letter can help organize their finances, ease the stress for their surviving heirs at a difficult time, and ensure that none of their estate is "lost."

A letter of instruction is a flexible, informal, cost-free personal document that is not legally binding but it can serve multiple purposes, including:

- Provide a list of the estate's assets. Every year people die and leave behind abandoned assets that are never found by their heirs. One attorney, for example, recalls a case where, years after a woman's death, her squabbling heirs discovered concealed cash and jewelry.
- Indicate the location and details of assets. Examples include:

☑ Bank and investment accounts (and any automatic withdrawal/deposit information)
☑ Stock and bond certificates you've kept instead of the brokerage firm
☑ Real estate documents
☑ Retirement accounts including 401(k) plans and individual retirement accounts
☑ Life insurance and annuity policies
☑ Assets held in trust
☑ Post-death benefits due from employers, the Veteran's Administration, Social Security, etc.

In addition to what and where, the letter of instruction should provide the approximate value and account numbers, how the assets are owned (jointly or individually, for example), and how they will pass at death (directly to a beneficiary, through the will, through a trust). Compiling a list of assets provides an opportunity to be sure your designated beneficiaries are the ones you want. It minimizes fees from financial professionals who might otherwise have to assist in locating assets.

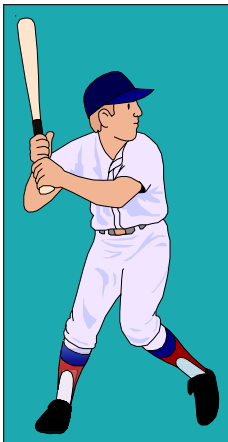
- Instruct disposition of personal effects. Because a valid will is legally binding, you may want to use your will to instruct who is to receive valuable or key personal possessions. But a letter of instruction can be useful for lesser items, as well.
- List advisors and others. Provide the names and phone numbers of your financial planner, accountant, brokers, insurance agents, attorney, and other financial professionals. Also list such contacts as clergy, employers, trustees, and your estate executor.
- Tell location of other essential documents and information. Tell your heirs where they can find your safe-deposit box (and the key to it), your will, tax records, birth certificate, military records, and credit card accounts (you may want them closed).
- Compile a list of debts. Detail debts you owe and that are owed to you (and what you want done with debts owed to you).
- Spell out funeral arrangements. Granted, this task is difficult to do, but it will help your loved ones if you describe the type of funeral or memorial service you want. Cremation? A particular type of casket? Provide information for your obituary. Include the name and address of a cemetery/funeral home if you've already bought a burial plot or prepaid for a funeral. Your heirs are not legally bound to follow all your wishes, but spelling them out is usually far better than letting loved ones guess.
- Include personal messages. A letter of instruction can be a good place to leave personal comments to survivors, instead of cluttering up a will with them.
- Write it out clearly. Don't shorthand information. Your heirs may not understand your instructions as easily as you might think, or responsibilities might fall to family members or friends less familiar with your estate and desires.
- Organize your finances. The very act of locating your financial assets and important documents, plus spelling out other details for your heirs, provides a great way to organize your finances for your own benefit.

Cont. p. 4

Letters of Instruction *Cont. From p. 3*

- Don't keep copy only in a safe deposit box. You'll want your heirs to obtain the letter of instruction right away. Don't store the only copy in a safe deposit box where it might be difficult to reach. Keep a copy at home, with your executor, or with an attorney.
- Update annually or when needed. Because letters of instruction are not legally binding, it's easy to update them annually or when there are major changes such as a marriage, divorce, or the purchase of valuable property. All you have to do is make changes and provide freshly dated copies to the appropriate sources. You don't have to have them witnessed as you do a will.

Source: This column is produced by the Financial Planning Association, the membership organization for the financial planning community, and is provided by Tim Murray, CFP®, CSA, an independent Certified Financial Planner™ practitioner and Certified Senior Advisor with Capital Planning & Investments in Fairfax, Virginia. Tim offers consultations on an hourly basis. He may be reached at 703-352-3337 or by e-mail at: TMurray @Capital-Planning Direct.com



Let's Play Ball! Northern Virginia Senior Softball (NVSS) seeks men 50+ and women 40+ to play two 7-inning slow-pitch softball games on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. For information, call Dave Scheele at **703-524-5576** or Joyce Pfeffer at **703-860-1876**.

Monthly Support Groups

✱ The **Amputee Support Group of Northern Virginia** meets on the first Tuesday of every month, 7:30-9:00 p.m., at the Telestar Court Building, 2990 Telestar Ct., Gemini Room, Falls Church. Contact Irvin Axelrod at **703-222-7120** or *asgnva@earthlink.net.*

✱ The **Fibromyalgia/Arthritis Support Group** meets on the second Thursday of the month, 1:00 p.m., at Sherwood Library, 2101 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. Call Barbara at **703-913-0890**.

✱ The **Mended Hearts Support Group** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, 7:30-9:00 p.m., at the Telestar Court Building, 2990 Telestar Ct., Gemini Room, Falls Church. Contact John Braddon at **703-385-9694** or *jbraddon@cox.net*.

✱ The **Neuropathy Organization of Northern Virginia** meets on the second Saturday of the month, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at 2990 Telestar Court, Falls Church. Call Mary Baldridge at **703-491-6690,** or Joanne Holman at **703-998-8143**.

✱ The **Northern Virginia Post-Polio Support Group** meets on the second Saturday of each month, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., at the Mason Government Center, Annandale. Call **703-560-8852**.

✱ The **Northern Virginia Support Group of the Well Spouse Foundation (WSF)** meets on the third Monday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m., in Supervisor Bulova's Conference Room, at the Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The WSF supports spousal caregivers for the chronically ill or disabled. Call **703-425-2430**.

✱ The **Parkinson's Disease Care Partners Support Group** meets on the third Wednesday of the month, 7:30 p.m., at Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Call **703-891-0821**.

✱ **Widow/Widower Support Groups** meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Sponsored by Haven of Northern Virginia, 4606 Ravensworth Road, Annandale. Call **703-941-7000**.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

One of the best ways to spend your time is to volunteer. Everyone benefits from volunteering. The agencies receive the help they need, and the volunteers receive satisfaction from helping others.

The **Center for Multicultural Human Services** needs volunteer mentors for the CHAMPS program. Mentors provide children of prisoners in Northern Virginia with friendship, recreational activities, and constructive example. Call Ellen Klene at **703-533-3302, Ext.107**.

Frying Pan Park in Herndon needs volunteers to guide small group and individual tours of the 1930s-era Kidwell Farm House. Tractor drivers for interpretive hayrides also are needed. Training is provided. Call Sherry Bizette at **703-437-5318**.

The **Literacy Council of Northern Virginia** needs volunteers to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Volunteers teach foreign-born adults to read, write, speak, and understand English. Training is provided. Volunteers also are needed to tutor in libraries and other public places. Call Ellen Bloom at **703-237-0866**.

The **Meals on Wheels program** (MOW) needs volunteers to deliver meals in the Centreville/Chantilly and Fairfax areas. Drivers deliver meals once a month on weekdays from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Also needed is a volunteer treasurer for the Fairfax group. Duties include managing the finances of the MOW group and filing a monthly report to the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. Call the Volunteer Intake Line at **703-324-5406.**

The **National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society** needs volunteers opportunities to help with its 17th annual MS Walk on April 9 & 10, (there are six walk sites to choose from) and with the MS 150 Bike Tour on May 21 & 22. Volunteers are needed to host rest stops, run check-ins, drive support vehicles, and more. Call **202-296-5363.**

The **Volunteer Home Services for Seniors** program needs volunteers in the Route 1 area to provide transportation for seniors. In the Falls Church area, volunteers are needed for a variety of jobs, including grocery shopping, light housework, yard work, and providing transportation. Call the Volunteer Intake Line at **703-324-5406.**

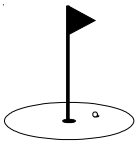
To have a volunteer opportunity considered for this column, e-mail or fax your submission to **Retha Lockhart** by the first of the month one month in advance.
E-mail:
retha.lockhart@fairfaxcounty.gov
Fax: 703-449-8689
Phone: 703-324-5407

Pets on Wheels Needs Editor

The Fairfax Pets on Wheels program (POW) needs a volunteer to edit and publish its quarterly newsletter. Responsibilities include soliciting input from other volunteers; selecting articles; doing page layout; and coordinating printing and mailing activities. Good writing and editing experience are needed. Experience with software such as PageMaker is required.

Call the Volunteer Intake Line at **703-324-5406**.

Burke Lake Seniors Golf Club Wants You



The Burke Lake Seniors Golf Club is looking for new members. You must be 55 or older. The annual dues are only $20. It has reserved tee times Tuesday and Tursday mornings at the Burke Lake Golf Course.

For information, please call Betty or Ron at **703-866-4403**.

Diabetes in Older Americans: It's Not Too Late to Get the Facts

by Elsa A. Nicholson

Did you know 18% of all Americans age 60 years and older have diabetes? Another 20% have impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). This is a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to diagnose diabetes. Along with age, the risk of developing diabetes is greatly increased by being overweight, physically inactive, or having a close relative with diabetes.

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. When you eat, glucose is produced by the breakdown of starches in fruits, milk, starchy vegetables, and grains. Glucose is metabolized by the hormone insulin. Glucose in the blood rises when the body does not produce insulin (Type 1 diabetes) or produce enough or use insulin properly (Type 2 diabetes). Type 2 diabetes may account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases.

Many older adults are unaware they have diabetes. Common symptoms include extreme thirst and hunger, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, blurry vision, and slow healing sores. The symptoms are not always obvious, which is why some people may have the disease for years without knowing it. For this reason, it is important to have a thorough diabetes screening as part of your annual physical exam.

Once a diagnosis of diabetes is established, the following steps should be taken:

- A comprehensive initial visit and follow-up visits with your diabetes care team. This team should include a primary care doctor, nurse educator, registered dietitian, oph thalmologist (eye doctor), podiatrist (foot doctor), and pharmacist. By working to gether, the team develops a plan that is most appropriate for the individual.
- Diabetes tune-up visits as necessary.
- Labs tests as indicated by the diabetes care team, including a Hemoglobin A1c test to measure the blood glucose level and a urine microalbumin test (measures the amount of albumin, a type of protein, in your urine). The presence of albumin is often the first sign of early kidney damage.
- Dilated eye exam by an eye doctor at least once a year to test for retinopathy (eye disease).
- Complete foot exam to assess for nerve damage annually.

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, nerve disease, and even death. Although diabetes cannot be cured, it can be controlled. Some people can control their diabetes with diet and exercise. Others may need oral medications or insulin as well.

People living with diabetes can lead long and healthy lives by keeping their blood sugar under control. Education, nutrition, and lifestyle management are the keys to living successfully with diabetes.

Source: Elsa A. Nicholson graduated from the University of Maryland Dietetics Program in May 2003. Following graduation, Elsa, who is bilingual, coordinated the diabetes education program for the Spanish Catholic Center in Langley Park, MD. At the center, she worked with low-income, uninsured Hispanic immigrants living with diabetes. Elsa is currently doing her dietetics internship through Virginia Tech and has completed her community rotation with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. Elsa will graduate in May 2005 and take her licensing examination to become a registered dietitian this fall.

Diabetes Screening Tests Under Medicare

Beginning this year, Medicare beneficiaries identified as "high risk" for diabetes will be able to receive screening tests for early diabetes detection. Medicare Part B will cover diabetes screening tests for those who have a referral from a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or a clinical nurse specialist. Beneficiaries will be able to receive these tests at no cost up to two times per year.

You are considered at high risk for diabetes if you meet one of the following criteria:

1. You have any one of the following risk factors: high blood pressure; cholesterol and other lipid problems; obesity (body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30); previous identification of impaired glucose tolerance.
2. If you have at least two of these risk factors: overweight (BMI greater than 25 but less than 30); family history of diabetes; a history of diabetes during pregnancy or delivery of a baby weighing more than 9 lbs; or are age 65 or older.

Conservation District's Annual Shrub and Tree Seedling Sale

The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District is offering native seedlings to make your landscape bird-friendly and visually appealing year-round. The package includes 14 seedlings for $16.95.

The deadline to order is April 8. Seedlings will be available for pickup on April 15-16 at a convenient location in Annandale. Supplies are limited, so order now.

For additional information or an order form, call the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District at **703-324-1460**, TTY 711. You may see what the seedlings look like and download an order form from the Web site at: *www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/seedlingssale.htm.*

Gardens: Ready, Compost!

Learn how to grow vegetables in harmony with the environment. Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia will explain preparing the garden and share the techniques of composting at this free program on Sunday, April 3, 2005, at 2:00 p.m., at Potomac Overlook Regional Park, 2845 N. Marcey Road, Arlington.

Reservations are required; call **703-528-5406** or e-mail *Potomac@nvrpa.org.*

Directions: Exit I-66 at the Spout Run-Lee Highway exit; turn left onto Lee Highway and continue to a left turn on Military Road. Bear left when Military Road forks, continuing on the left-hand Military Road side. Turn right on Marcey Road and continue to the end of the cul-de-sac and the parking lot for the park.

New COA Representative for Providence District

Joseph A. Heastie has been appointed to represent the Providence District on the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging. He replaces Lilyan Spero.

Mr. Heastie may be reached at **703-938-0542**. His e-mail address is *Heastie@aol.com.*

Finally!!!!! Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday, April 3, at 2:00 a.m. Move your clocks forward 1 hour.

SABINE ARNDT—VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

by Chris Williams, Volunteer Reporter

Watching Sabine Arndt and her Great Dane, Daytona, walk down a hallway at Powhatan Nursing Home makes you understand why this dog breed often is referred to as magnificent. Standing almost 3 feet tall, Daytona is probably the largest dog in the Fairfax Pets on Wheels (POW) program.

Sabine has volunteered with POW since 1997. She used to take both her standard poodle, Gianco, and her wired-haired dachshund, Purzi, to Powhatan several times a week. Purzi is about 15 years old now and is retired from POW. Gianco still comes with her on alternate visits from Daytona.

Great Danes are known for their gentle nature, and 6-year-old Daytona certainly is gentle and easygoing when he is around the residents at Powhatan. Sabine has trained him to respond to a command called "go visit." Upon hearing this command, Daytona places his head on a resident's lap or bed so that he can be touched and petted. He does this with utmost care. He also knows how to shake hands and can bow, with his long front legs stretched out and his rear still up in the air. Both acts bring smiles to the residents' faces! Daytona and some of the residents have become very attached to each other. One resident, who is very fond of dogs, changed rooms. Daytona entered the resident's former room and upon finding her not there any more, used his great sense of smell to locate her in her new room, which was several doors down the hallway. He wagged his tail and was quite happy to see her again.

Sabine, a former POW board member, currently serves as the POW liaison for the facility. She trains new volunteers and has helped expand the program to include about 15 volunteers. One successful aspect of the Powhatan POW program is the group visits, during which there are usually 8 to 10 dogs and their volunteers visiting the facility at the same time. This has built camaraderie among the group.

(Photo by Chris Williams)

Sabine and Daytona Arndt

The POW volunteers also hold potluck dinners for the residents, along with grab bags of small gifts. Sabine is appreciative of the great support for the POW program that the Powhatan staff has shown. They help out with the potluck dinners and have bought toys for the dogs. The staff involvement makes the Powhatan POW program a real team effort.

Sabine lives with her husband, Rui, in McLean. When asked why she volunteers in the POW program, she said: "If I were in a nursing home, I'd want someone to bring a pet in to visit. The dogs make people happy who can't have their pets around any more."

HEALTH INSURANCE QUESTIONS?
Call the Virginia Insurance Counseling & Assistance Program (VICAP) at
703-324-5851.

SENIOR CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

These programs are administered by the Department of Community & Recreation Services, with the exceptions of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church senior centers and the Gum Springs Community Center. If participation accommodations are needed in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, please call 703-324-5544 or TTY 703-222-9693 at least 10 working days in advance of the event. <u>All events are free unless otherwise noted</u>. *The symbol RR means reservations are required.* These are just a few of the activities offered. Call the center nearest you for a complete listing or if you have questions.

Bailey's ***Bailey's Community Center*** ***5920 Summers Lane*** ***Bailey's Crossroads, VA 22041*** ***Phone: 703-820-2131***	Wednesdays	11:00 a.m., Chair Aerobics With Mindy.
	Wednesdays	12:30 p.m., Line Dancing With TJ.
	Mon. 4/4	10:30 a.m., Trip: Cherry Blossoms, Washington. (RR)
	Tue. 4/19 Thur. 4/21	9:00 a.m.-2:00, 2-Day AARP Driver Safety Program. $10. (RR)
City of Fairfax ***4401 Sideburn Road*** ***Fairfax, VA 22030*** ***Phone: 703-359-2487***	Mon. 4/4	11:00 a.m., Beltone–Hearing Outreach Presentation. 1:00 p.m., FREE Hearing Screenings and Ear Inspection.
	Tue. 4/5	10:10 a.m., Golf Outing at Burke Lake. $15 (includes 9 holes of golf, lunch, prizes). (Rain Date 4/12). (RR)
	Thur. 4/14	10:30 a.m., Monthly Book Club Luncheon. Free.
	Mon. 4/18	11:00 a.m., New Program: *History Remembered*.
	Wed. 4/20	11:00 a.m., Music With Celebration Singers. $3 Lunch.
City of Falls Church ***223 Little Falls Street*** *(Next to City Hall)* ***Falls Church, VA 22046*** ***Phone: 703-248-5020/5021*** **Reservations are required for all trips, programs,and guest speakers.**	Early April	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Cherry Blossom Trip and Picnic. Call Center for Details.
	Fri. 4/8	10:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Tyson's Corner Mall. $1 Bus. (RR)
	Mon. 4/11	12:30-2:30 p.m., Lunch Bunch to Anthony's (lunch on your own). (RR)
	Fri. 4/22	10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Spring Fling With Entertainment. (RR by 4/15)
	Tue. 4/26	9:30-10:30 a.m., *Muscle Pain* by Dr. Schack.
	Thur. 4/28	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Trip: Washington Post Printing Plant. $1 Bus. (RR)
Franconia/Springfield ***Lane Elementary School*** ***7137 Beulah St.*** ***Alexandria, VA 22315*** ***Phone: 703-924-9762***	Thursdays	12:30 p.m., English as a Second Language Class.
	Tue. 4/5	10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Trip: Cherry Blossoms, Washington, DC. (RR)
	Thur. 4/14	10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Franconia Moose Lodge Party. Lunch Donation. (RR)
	Fri . 4/15	11:00 a.m., Shiang Kung Class. Learn a New Exercise and Stay Fit.
	Tue. 4/19	12:45 p.m., CVS Presents *Proper Care & Disposal of Drugs.*
Groveton at South County ***8350 Richmond Highway*** ***Ste. 325*** ***Alexandria, VA 22309*** ***Phone: 703-704-6216***	Tuesdays	1:00 p.m.-1:45 p.m., Conversational Spanish.
	Fri. 4/1	1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m., CVS Presents *Proper Care & Disposal of Drugs.*
	Thur. 4/7	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Tax Aide Assistance at Sherwood Hall Library.
	Fri. 4/15	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Groveton Groovers Sing-Along.
	Thur. 4/21	10:30-11:00 a.m., Fire Safety Presentation.

S E N I O R C E N T E R

Gum Springs ***Gum Springs Community Center*** ***8100 Fordson Road*** ***Alexandria, VA 22306*** ***Phone: 703-360-6088***	Mondays Tuesdays Wednesdays Thursdays Fridays	10:00 a.m., Sewing and Quilting. 10:30 a.m., Ceramics. 10:30 a.m., Shopping/Bowling (Alexandria Bowling Center). 1:00 p.m., Bingo. 10:00 a.m., Low-Impact Exercise.
Hollin Hall ***1500 Shenandoah Road*** ***Alexandria, VA 22308*** ***Phone: 703-765-4573***	Mon. 4 /11 Wed. 4/13 Tue. 4/26 Thur. 4/28 Sat. 4/30	1:00-3:00 p.m, DJ Steve Celebrates April in Paris. (RR) 1:00 p.m., Questions & Answers With Officer Kotteman & Officer Cook, Mt. Vernon Police Station. (RR) 11:00 a.m., Opera Appreciation. (RR) 1:00 p.m., CVS Presents *Nighttime Leg Cramps*. (RR) 1:00-4:00 p.m., Renaissance Fair—St. George Production Renaissance Troupe. Crafts for the Young/Young at Heart.
	Advance Notice. Every Thursday, Beginning May 5. 8:10 a.m., Beginning Tai Chi. One-Year Commitment. Popular Class, Register Early.	
James Lee ***James Lee Community Center*** ***2855 Annandale Road*** ***Falls Church, VA 22042*** ***Phone: 703-534-3387***	Mon.-Fri. Mondays Tue./Thur. Tuesdays Mon. 4/4	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Free Billiards and Ping-Pong. 10:30 a.m., Gentle Yoga. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Fitness Center. 10:30 a.m., Art and Mosaic Classes. $5/Class. 12:30-1:30 p.m., Tea Time/New Member Welcome.
Lewinsville ***1609 Great Falls Street*** ***McLean, VA 22101*** ***Phone: 703-442-9075***	Fri. 4/1 Mon. 4/11 Mon. 4/11 Tue. 4/26 Thur. 4/28	April Fools' Day: A Day of Comedy, Riddles and Jokes. 10:30 a.m., Red Hat/Tie Guy Trip to Red Lobster. $1 Bus + Lunch on Your Own. (RR) 12:00-1:00 p.m., Blood Pressure Checks by CVS. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Trip to Lake Accotink. Pontoon Ride and Picnic. (RR) 11:30 a.m., April Birthday Party.
Lincolnia ***4710 North Chambliss St.*** ***Alexandria, VA 22312*** ***Phone: 703-914-0223***	Thursdays Thursdays Tue. 4/12 Tue. 4/12 Fri. 4/29	10:30 a.m., U.S. History Discussion Group. 12:00 p.m., Duplicate Bridge. (Fee) 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Blood Pressure Screening—Walk- in). 10:00 a.m., Low-Vision Program. (RR) 1:00 p.m., Birthday Celebrations and New Member Welcome. (RR)
Little River Glen ***4001 Barker Court*** ***Fairfax, VA 22032*** ***Phone: 703-503-8703***	Mon. 4/4 Tue. 4/5 Fri. 4/8 Thur. 4/21 Fri. 4/22	10:00 a.m., Mended Hearts With Helen C. 11:00 a.m., CVS Presents *Nighttime Leg Cramps*. 10:00 a.m., VIB (Visually Impaired/Blind Adult) Support Group. 11:30 a.m., Red Hat Society Get-Together. 10:00 a.m., Blood Pressure Check.

HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Lorton ***7722 Gunston Plaza*** ***Lorton, VA 22079*** ***Phone: 703-550-7195***	Fridays		12:30 p.m., Begins 4/8. Double-Deck Pinochle. (RR)
	Tue.	4/5	12:30 p.m., Medical Directives Workshop, Part 1. Elder Law Attorney K. Cossa. Must Bring Information. (RR)
	Mon.	4/11	10:00 a.m., Travel Training, Part 1: Learn Local Bus Routes Using Special Training Bus. (RR)
	Fri.	4/15	10:00 a.m., Trip: American Indian Museum. $1 Bus. Lunch on Your Own at Museum. (RR)
	Thur.	4/21	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 2-Day AARP Driver Safety Program.
	Fri.	4/22	$10. (RR)
Pimmit Hills ***7510 Lisle Avenue*** ***Falls Church, VA 22043*** ***Phone: 703-734-3338***	Mon.	4/4	11:00 a.m., Jazzercize Class.
	Tue.	4/5	10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 2-Day AARP Driver Safety Program. $10. (RR)
	Wed.	4/6	
	Mon.	4/11	1:00 p.m., Line Dancing Class.
	Wed.	4/13	10:30 a.m., Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS). Fee.
	Fri.	4/22	1:00 p.m., Line Dancing Class.
Reston-Herndon ***1850 Cameron Glen Drive*** ***Reston, VA 22091*** ***Phone: 703-481-4200***	Fri.	4/1	10:30 a.m., April Fools' Foolery.
	Wed.	4/6	11:30 a.m., Spring Fling Party. (RR)
	Tue.	4/12	10:30 a.m., Be Good to Yourself Pampering Day.
	Wed.	4/13	1:00 p.m., Advisory Council Meeting. All Welcome.
	Wed.	4/27	7:00-8:30 p.m., Caregivers' Seminar: *Survival Tips for Family Caregivers*. **To register, call 703-324-5205**.
Sully ***5690 Sully Road*** ***Centreville, VA 20124*** ***Phone: 703-322-4475/4479***	Mon.	4/11	10:00 a.m., Trip: U.S. Botanic Garden, Washington, DC. $1 Bus. (RR)
	Thur.	4/14	10:15 a.m., Moose Lodge Party. (RR)
	Fri.	4/22	10:15 a.m., Walk for Life.
	Tue.	4/26	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Spring Fling With DJ Steve.
	Wed.	4/27	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Line Dancing With Cascade Steppers.
Wakefield ***Audrey Moore RECenter*** ***8100 Braddock Road*** ***Annandale, VA 22003*** ***Phone: 703-321-3000***	Fri.	4/1	10:00 a.m., Beginning Yoga With Clare. $5. (RR)
	Mon.	4/4	11:00 a.m., Fire Safety. (RR)
	Fri.	4/8	1:00 p.m., CVS Presents *Cholesterol*. (RR)
	Mon.	4/11	11:30 a.m., Movie of the Week. (RR)
	Tue.	4/26	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 2-Day AARP Driver Safety Program.
	Wed.	4/27	$10. (RR)
	Fri.	4/29	12:00 p.m., Nostalgic Music With Jasmine. (RR)

Additional Locations for Meals/Other Activities

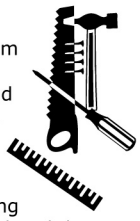
David R. Pinn Community Center
10225 Zion Drive
Fairfax, VA 22032
Phone: 703-250-9181

Huntington Community Center
5751 Liberty Drive
Alexandria, VA 22303
Phone: 703-960-1917

If you prefer the *Golden* Gazette in large print, call 703-324-5633.

FREE HOME REPAIRS

Fairfax County's Home Repair for the Elderly Program provides free home repairs to homeowners who are 62 or older, and/or handicapped or disabled; and have a maximum income of $40,250 for 1 person*, or $46,000 for 2 persons.*



Typical services include:

- Minor electrical repair
- Plumbing work
- Painting
- Repairing steps, floors, etc.
- Installing ramps and grab bars

Fairfax County Residents - Apply now for **FREE REPAIRS**

Call 703-246-5154 TTY: 703-385-3578

** Other restrictions apply.*

National Volunteer Week—April 17-23

Friendship, Senior volunteer Amy Marchiando with client Mrs. A.

Meals on Wheels volunteers Robert Sherman and Kathryn Lytle (husband and wife) on the Centreville-Chantilly route.

Nutrition Supplement program volunteer Scott Waters and client Mrs. G.

Fairfax Pets on Wheels volunteer Amy Rideout and Belle.

For information on volunteering, please call our Volunteer Intake Line at 703-324-5406.

Another important reason to be concerned about sodium is its importance in fluid-retaining states like heart failure and kidney disease. Why should sodium have anything to do with fluid build-up? Because, as they teach you in medical school, where salt goes water goes. The sodium concentration of body fluid is tightly controlled at 0.9%. When we ingest excess sodium, the body compensates by retaining fluid to maintain the concentration at this level. That's why people with disorders causing fluid overload should restrict sodium, sometimes to as little as 1000 mg per day. It's also part of the reason that sodium intake can increase blood pressure. But restricting sodium is easier said than done.

Restricting Sodium May Not Be Easy

Table salt is certainly the most common source of sodium. A level teaspoon contains about 2000 mg. Avoiding the addition of salt during cooking or at the table is therefore the first step. But by itself, that won't be enough.

To successfully keep sodium intake down, one must avoid many processed and prepared foods. Canned vegetables and soups are big culprits. Anything that tastes overtly salty or is cured in salt also should be avoided. Restaurant food, especially fast food, is notoriously high in sodium. In contrast, fresh vegetables, fruits, meat ,and fish generally have very little sodium.

To get a "flavor" for the sodium content of various foods, here are a few examples. (On this list, one serving is defined as 3½ ounces):

- Cooked bacon, 1021 mg
- Canadian bacon, 2500 mg
- Fresh green beans, 4 mg
- Canned green beans, 236 mg
- Roast beef, 60 mg
- Corned beef, 1740 mg
- Canned beef stew, 400 mg
- Cottage cheese, 406 mg
- Pizza, 702 mg
- Pickles, 1428 mg
- Canned soup, 350 to 450 mg

In the past, of course, salting was an important means of preserving food. But, why is salt so prevalent in the foods we eat today? For one thing, salt improves flavor. Also, salted foods like soups seem thicker and less watery. Surprisingly, salt also increases the sweetness of foods like cookies and cakes. Salt also helps reduce the dryness of crackers, pretzels, and similar foods. Despite all of this, you can still learn to shake the salt habit.

Tips for Getting the Low Sodium Habit

People adapt to the taste of salt. At first, food may not taste good after you start to cut down on sodium, but after a while you will find that the food you used to eat tastes too salty. Here are some tips that can help you get the low sodium habit:

- Avoid seasonings that are high in sodium or have salt as part of their name such as soy sauce, garlic salt, onion salt, and celery salt.
- Add flavor to food with herbs, spices, and condiments such as lemon, vinegar, garlic, onion powder, pepper, dill, dry mustard, curry powder, basil, oregano, and mint.
- At restaurants, ask about the salt content of foods. Some chefs will omit salt when asked. (If they won't, at least they'll begin to notice that their customers care about this issue.)
- Read food labels. As a general rule, avoid foods with more than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Foods labeled as "low sodium" have less than this amount per serving.
- Compare labels on similar products and choose the lower sodium brand.
- Finally, consider using salt substitutes, but ask your doctor first. The reason is that many such products are very high in potassium, which can be a problem for certain people.

Source: Dr. Benson is an internal medicine physician and president of Ready Hands Home Care, a Fairfax County company that provides companion care, personal assistance, and other services to help seniors remain safely independent at home.

Identity Theft—What to Do When the Credit Bureau Won't Correct Your Records

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your name, Social Security number, date of birth, or other identifying information, without authority, to commit fraud. For example, someone may use your personal information to open a credit card account or get a loan in your name. It has become one of the most prevalent crimes in the United States. The Identity Theft Clearinghouse maintains a national identity theft victim complaint database of 460,000 complaints.

A reader recently requested information on the physical addresses and the agents for Virginia of the three credit reporting agencies for the purpose of pursuing legal action against them for refusing to delete inaccurate information from his files. Those addresses are:

Equifax, Inc.
1550 Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
1-800-525-6285

Experian, Inc.
C.T. Corporation System
4701 Cox Road, Suite 301
Glen Allen, VA 23060-6802
1-888-397-3742

TransUnion, LLC
Corporation Service Co.
11 South 12th Street, P.O. Box 1463
Richmond, VA 23218
1-800-888-4213

Correcting Errors

Here are the basics of correcting errors in your credit history:

- Both the credit report agency (CRA) and the organization that provided the information to the CRA, such as a bank or credit card company, are responsible for correcting inaccurate or incomplete information in your report. To protect all your rights under the law, contact both the CRA and the information provider.
- First, tell the CRA **in writing** what information you believe is inaccurate. Include copies (NOT originals) of documents that support your position. In addition to providing your complete name and address, your letter should clearly identify each disputed item in your report , state the facts, and explain why you dispute the information, and request deletion or correction. You may want to enclose a copy of your report with the items in question circled.
- Send your letter by certified mail, return receipt requested, so you can document what the CRA received. Keep copies of your dispute letter and enclosures.
- CRAs must reinvestigate the items in question—usually within 30 days—unless they consider your dispute frivolous. They also must forward all relevant data you provide about the dispute to the information provider. After the information provider receives notice of a dispute from the CRA, it must investigate, review all relevant information provided by the CRA, and report the results to the CRA.
- If the information provider finds the disputed information to be inaccurate, it must notify all nationwide CRAs so they can correct this information in your file.
- Disputed information that cannot be verified must be deleted from your file.
- If your report contains erroneous information, the CRA must correct it.
- If an item is incomplete, the CRA must complete it.
- If your file shows an account that belongs only to another person, the CRA must delete it.

Where to Find Help

Possibly the best and fastest solution, if you need help, especially if you do not have access to the Internet, is to call the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Division at **703-324-5962**. There also is a lot of information on the Internet.

Source: Federal Trade Commission. For more information, visit www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Tax Relief for the Elderly and Citizens With Disabilities

Fairfax County provides real estate tax, personal property tax and vehicle decal fee relief to residents who are 65 or older and/or persons who are permanently and totally disabled. The county also offers rental grants to eligible seniors and those with disabilities.

Real Estate Tax Relief

Senior citizens and those with permanent disabilities who owned and occupied their residences in Fairfax County as of December 31 of the preceding year may qualify for real estate tax relief from the county if they meet certain income and financial worth qualifications:

Gross Household Income	Amount of Relief	Net Combined Financial Worth
$40,000 or less	100%	Up to $240,000
$40,001-$46,000	50%	Up to $240,000
$46,001-$52,000	25%	Up to $240,000

** County Code excludes $6,500 of the income of relatives other than the spouse or owner who reside in the household. The Code also excludes $7,500 of any income received by an applicant with permanent disabilities that render them totally disabled.*
*** The value of the residence, up to one acre of land and household furnishings, are not included in the net combined financial worth.*

Rental Grants

Fairfax County provides grants to senior citizens and persons with disabilities who rent their residences to relieve them of the indirect burden of county taxes passed on by their landlords.

To qualify for a rental grant, the 2004 household gross income of the applicant, spouse and relatives living in the household cannot exceed $22,000, excluding the first $6,500 of the income of each relative other than the spouse or renter. Also excluded is the first $7,500 of any income received by a renter who is permanently disabled. In addition, the combined financial worth of the applicant and spouse living in the household must not be more than $75,000.

Personal Property Tax, Vehicle Decal Fee

The county also provides relief from personal property tax and the county vehicle decal fee to eligible senior citizens and residents with disabilities. The personal property tax relief applies to one automobile per household. The assets and income limitations for these programs are different from those for real estate. To qualify for personal property tax relief, the total 2004 gross income of the owners of the vehicle cannot exceed $22,000, or if the applicant has permanent disabilities that render them totally disabled, the gross income cannot exceed $29,500. In addition, the combined net financial worth may not exceed $75,000, excluding the value of the applicant's residence, household furnishings, and up to one acre of land. Applicants approved for personal property tax relief will be mailed a decal.

People with disabilities applying for the first time for real estate tax relief, personal property tax and vehicle decal relief or grants to renters must show evidence of disability. This can be by certification from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Railroad Retirement Board. A person who is not eligible for certification by these agencies must provide a sworn affidavit, verifying permanent and total disability, by two medical doctors who are either licensed to practice medicine in Virginia or are military officers on active duty who practice medicine with the U.S. Armed Forces. The affidavit of at least one of the doctors may be based on medical information contained in records of the Civil Service Commission relevant to the standards for determining permanent and total disability as defined by state and county codes. However, certification by the Social Security Administration will be accepted as long as it states "permanently and totally disabled" and the person remains eligible for these benefits.

Applications for all 2005 programs are due April 1. However, first-time filers and citizens filing late due to hardship have until December 31 of the year following the year the application is due. Applicants filing late due to hardship must provide detailed substantiation that a hardship existed that prevented a timely filing.

For more information or an application, call **703-222-8234, TTY 703-222-7594** (Español:703-324-3855) or visit *www.fairfaxcounty. gov/dta.*

Caregiver Seminars–Spring 2005 Series

Registration for these events is not required but strongly encouraged so that adequate handouts are available. To register, request accommodations, or receive information on the entire series, call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at ***703-324-5205 or TTY 703-449-1186****. Leave your name, phone number, and the names of the sessions(s) you plan to attend. You also may find more information on the Web site at: www.fairfax county.gov/service/aaa.*

Thursday, April 7. 3:00-4:30 p.m.
Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N.Chambliss Street, Alexandria. 703-914-0223
Topic: *What to Expect as a Caregiver: Fostering Harmony in Decision-Making*
An overview of what new and experienced caregivers may face will be presented along with strategies to reach decisions that everyone can live with.

Wednesday, April 13. 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. 703-978-5600
Topic: *Transitions: When More Help is Needed*
How will you know when more help is needed? How can you evaluate the safety of the person and their functional and cognitive status? What are the options for care? What are the possible consequences of the choices you make? Learn how to assess the current situation, consider what services or options are available, and prepare for future needs.

Tuesday, April 19. 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Falls Church Government Center, 6245 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. 703-533-5300
Topic: *Strategies for Independent Living*
Learn from the experts. From removing scatter rugs to installing handrails, this program will provide a variety of methods to increase home safety and functionality for older adults.

Wednesday, April 20. 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. 703-503-8703
Topic: *Introduction to the Legal/Financial Planning for Caregivers*
Learn important legal tools to aid in family decision-making such as Powers of Attorney and Advanced Medical Directives, as well as other alternatives. Discussion of financial planning during caregiving, e.g., cash flow, liquidity, and portfolio management.

Wednesday, April 27. 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Reston Senior Center, 1850 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston. 703-481-4200
Topic: *Survival Tips for Family Caregivers*
Learn practical tips and helpful community resources to utilize when caring for a family member in the home.

May Seminars—Mark Your Calendars!
Details in May Golden Gazette

Wednesday, May 4. 12:00-1:00 p.m.
Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Virginia Room (10th floor), Fairfax. 703-324-5411
Topic: *Humor for the Caregiver's Soul*

Monday, May 9. 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Alzheimer's Family Day Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Suite 210, Fairfax. 703-204-4664
Topic: *Navigating the Legal and Medicaid Maze of Long-Term Care*

Tuesday, May 17. 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Mt. Vernon Adult Day Health Care Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Ste.137, Alexandria (703) 704-6050
Topic: *Mental Health Issues in Aging*
Note: Limited respite care will be available at this session. Please call 703-704-6050 to reserve a spot.

Wednesday, May 25. 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Lewinsville Adult Day Health Care Center, 1609 Great Falls Street, McLean. 703-734-1718
Topic: *Avoiding Financial Pitfalls When Paying for Long-Term Care.*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

April 2. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Save-the-Bay Work Day. Be part of the solution for pollution! Meet at the marina, dressed for the weather. Rain or shine. Gloves and trash bags provided. Registration not necessary, but very helpful. Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield. **703-569-3464**.

April 2. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. McLean Community Spring Garage Sale. No commercial vendors allowed. Over 70 individual sellers. A treasure hunter's dream! Business Bank Parking Garage, Ingleside and 1451 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. **703-790-0123**.

April 3. 3:00. Travel Deals on the Internet. Learn about the best Web sites for saving money on your next trip. Pohick Regional Public Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Rd., Burke. To register, call **703-644-7333**.

April 8. 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
April 9. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
2-Day Annual Used Book Sale. More than 40,000 books—most $2 or less. Sponsored by the Falls Church Area American Association of University Women. Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church. **703-534-5345**.

April 9. 2:00 p.m. Opera! Read All About It! A Family Opera Workshop. Stories, hands-on activities, and music-making guided by artists from the Washington National Opera and related to the Magic Flute by Mozart. Patrick Henry Public Library, 101 Maple Ave., E, Vienna. To register, call **703-938-0405.**

April 17. 2:00 p.m. Bluebell Walk. Stroll through one of the East Coast's largest bluebell displays, as a naturalist shares wildflower lore. Self-guiding tour pamphlets will be available at the park's camp center for weekday hikers during Bluebell Week. Bull Run Regional Park, 7700 Bull Run Dr., Centreville. **703-631-0550**.

April 30. 2:00-4:00 p.m. 2nd Annual Senior Prom. Everyone dresses up, enjoys the dancing or just listening to the live big band music. Delightful buffet, photo souvenirs, boutonnières and corsages; swing dancer show and more. Abundant dance partners! Observer Newspapers are taking the reservations, which are a must. St. Joseph's Hall, 750 Peachtree St., Herndon. Free. Call **703-437-5886**.

Upcoming Event

May 5. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. 5th Annual Writing Your Personal History Symposium. Inspirational speakers will inspire you to begin writing and attend future classes that will keep you on track from concept to completion. Advanced registration a must. There are two ways to register: (a) pick up your ticket immediately from the Center's front desk; or (b) send a $5 check (payable to *Town of Vienna*), with notation "Hold for Symposium." Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. **703-255-6360**.

If you have questions about aging services in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at **703 -324-7948** (TTY 703-449-1186) to speak to an Aging Information Specialist. You also may visit the Web site at *www.fairfax county.gov/service/aaa.*