

FCRE

FAIRFAX COUNTY RETIRED EDUCATORS



Advocate



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FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

MARCH 2018

GREAT LOBBY DAY!

By

Barbara Allen, Director, Government Relations Committee



That is the “spoiler alert.” I was not sure how Lobby Day would go this year when it was being planned. The building that we were used to, where we knew how to find our legislators, is being rebuilt and renovated and out of commission for four years!! The temporary facility to house the legislative offices, the Pocahontas Building, supposedly had narrow halls, nowhere to eat lunch, no seating areas, and no conference/caucus rooms. Great!

Last fall I thought it would be terrific idea to meet with the newly elected Governor Ralph Northam when we went down to Richmond for Lobby Day in January. But how on earth does that happen?!! I have been escorting groups of retirees to lobby for issues in Richmond for more than ten years, and I always figured that the Governor was way too busy for us to take his time. WRONG!! We are citizens of the Commonwealth, and we have a right to meet with the Governor just as any other group of citizens.

I found out that Janet Muldoon, Senator Dick Saslaw’s Chief of Staff, was on Governor Northam’s transition team. I thought if anybody has access to the Governor, it would be the Transition Team members who were helping the newly elected Governor. I shared my idea with Janet Muldoon, and she said, “I certainly don’t see why not.” But I had no idea if such a meeting would take place. Janet said she would get back to me.

About a week before we went to Richmond, Janet emailed me and said that Governor Northam would meet with us at 2:30 the afternoon of our Lobby Day!! Wooweee!

It took all my constraint not to burst forth with my good news. Of course, a few people had to know because of the planning logistics of the day, but they were sworn to secrecy. I figured that a meeting with Governor Northam would be a very exciting experience, but there were certainly no guarantees that if the Governor had a pressing issue or emergency, our meeting would be canceled.

Thank you to all of the members of FCRE and FEA-R who participated in LobbyDay this year. We visited all of our Fairfax legislators or their legislative staff and took Welcome Bags to newly elected members of the House of Delegates, so many of whom were elected with the help of educators.

After our busy morning of visit.ing and lobbying, we headed across the street to have lunch at the Sun Trust Bank building cafeteria. The instructions to our group, “Meet me at the flagpole at 2:00!” I am sure that veteran lobbyists thought I was crazy and wondered why we were not just getting on the bus to head home.

At 2:00 we met Janet Muldoon at the flagpole, and she led us up the hill to the Patrick Henry Building where we entered through security to the Library Reading Room. By this time everyone had pretty much figured that somebody important was going to be coming!! Janet gave a very eloquent introduction of the Governor’s background and experience. We were told that we were all to stand when he entered the room and then, there he was! What a kind and gentle soul he seems to be. He is a pediatric neurologist who treats terminally ill children when he is not serving the Commonwealth as Lieutenant Governor or Governor. I think compassion must be his middle name.

Clearly, education at ALL levels is a high priority for Governor Northam. He spoke of filling the vacancies in our classrooms, the necessity of retaining quality teaching staffs, and of course, being able to provide adequate salaries.

I hope that our Government Relations Team members enjoyed our 2018 Lobby Day. I know I thought it was a “Great Lobby Day.”

Now I have a year to think about what kind of surprise we can have next year!♦♦



Governor Ralph Northam of Virginia and Barbara Allen, Director of Government Relations for FCRE and FEA



A RETIREE HONORED

by
Dennis Joseph Pfennig

On Friday evening April 20, 2018, the Virginia Education Association-Retired will award Barbara Allen its **Distinguished Service Award**. Ms. Allen is being honored for her decades plus of work on behalf of retired educators, children, and public education.

Before retiring from Fairfax County Public Schools in 2005, Barbara served as a president of the Fairfax Education (2002-2004). During that time she and others were interested in forming a local retired organization associated with the National and Virginia Education Associations. She formed an ad hoc committee of retirees to begin work on the project.

Once retired, Barbara joined the Board of Directors of the recently founded Fairfax Education Association-Retired (FEA-R). She became that organization’s Government Relations Director. She began lobbying members of the Fairfax County School Board and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on behalf of education issues. However, she also became active in Fairfax County Retired Educators (FCRE), joining its Board of Directors as well. When asked to head FCRE’s Government Relations Directorate, she agreed on condition that the lobbying efforts of FCRE and FEA-R be joined—one director, one committee, one set of goals and activity. Both organizations’ presidents agreed.

Ever since, Barbara Allen has led retired lobbyists into meetings with county and state lawmakers. Politicians recognize her and her colleagues’ efforts. Virginia Sate Senator Richard Saslaw wrote recently that Barbara is “a staunch advocate for public education...she is no stranger to the halls of the General Assembly...[She] is known for her grasp of the issues”. State House of Delegates member Vivian Watts agreed, writing, “I don’t think any General Assembly member from Fairfax would be able to recall a time when Barbara was not shepherding a group of colleagues to meet with us...[to] have a meaningful, relevant dialogue...”

This past winter, once again, Barbara led a group of about 25 retirees to Richmond to lobby lawmakers. This is done in the morning as the General Assembly goes into session about 11am. Usually, that is the time for the tired retirees to lunch and get ready for the bus ride back home. But this time, a surprise awaited the group.

Unbeknown to nearly all, Barbara had arranged for them to meet with Governor Ralph Northam in the afternoon. It was a special treat all because of Barbara’s effort.

Fairfax County Retired Educators applauds the decision of VEA-Retired to honor Barbara Allen.

Well done, Barbara!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Need a hearing aid? The FCPS health care contract with Kaiser now provides for two **free** hearing aids every three years for those who qualify.

To get hearing aids, start by having your Kaiser primary care physician to refer you to an audiologist. Once you fail the hearing test by the audiologist, you are referred to a technician who will have pre-programs for you three different brands of high end, re-chargeable hearing aids. (On the market, these sell for about \$4800 a pair.) You try each brand on to see how it works and looks. The technician will give your choice of brand and color and order your choice and make a return appointment in about two weeks for a fitting and adjustments. You are entitled to return to the technician as often as needed with a 45 day period for additional adjustments. And if during that time period you become completely dissatisfied, you are entitled to return your hearing aids and start all over again with a different brand. If you lose a hearing aid during the three-year time frame, a replacement costs \$250, but that is a one time offer!

PLEASE EXCUSE US.....

January was not kind to the FCRE Office and staff, and it was freezing cold.

The computer went off line, and it took forever to repair; we ended up with Verizon, Fios, and much time spent while technicians finally got us back on line.

Then the telephone went out. Verizon said it was on our end after many hours of technicians and our staff working with them. No one could call us and leave a message..

But to make a long, long, long story a little shorter, we think we are back in operation.

Wait, spoke too soon. We are also putting in a new data base with all the problems that entails! Bear with us. We are working on it!

Thank you for your patience. As this goes to press, we can get messages by phone. Fingers, eyes, ears,paws all crossed. Just keep trying us by phone! Don’t forget, you can email us at fcrc@fcrc.org

Keep checking on the phone!



TRAVEL REPORT FOR MARCH, 2018

by
Doris Patteson, Director, Member Services Tours

So sorry if you were not able to attend the travel presentation on February 13! We had a great turnout of people interested in traveling! We reviewed three of our trips which are approaching deposit date time. We still have availability on all of them so if these trips are on any list you have, get your registration in right away! Our coming trips are:

Discover Croatia, Slovenia, and the Adriatic Coast (October 20-31).

We will spend three nights in Dubrovnik which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, known for its distinctive Old Town, encircled in massive stone walls completed in the 16th century. It is nicknamed “Pearl of the Adriatic” because it is one of the most beautiful and fascinating cities on the entire Adriatic. The Croatia trip will provide us the opportunity to enjoy medieval architecture, tranquil lakes and local villages. The Croatian charm will delight us on this tour featuring not only Dubrovnik but Lake Bled, Ljubljana, and other pearls of the stunning Dalmatian coast.

With three nights in Dubrovnik, we have a great opportunity to see a great deal. Dubrovnik continues to be one of the most beautiful and fascinating cities on the entire Adriatic. The Croatian charm will delight us on this tour featuring not only Dubrovnik but Lake Bled, Ljubljana, and the stunning Dalmatian Coast. Our exploration begins with two nights in Opatija, the Riviera of Croatia and an Istrian gem. We will explore Plitvice National Park by foot and by boat. It is a place where waterfalls cascade down sheer cliffs connecting sixteen pristine lakes. We will visit a local family and have dinner with them outside Dubrovnik. We will explore white stone buildings, winding alleys, and massive city walls of the ancient harbor town of Dubrovnik. We even go back to Roman times in Diocletian’s Palace which comprises the city of Split’s Old Town. Slovenia’s quaint capital city of Ljubljana is a must and so is floating on a pletna boat on the serene Lake Bled.

Our deposit date for this trip is **April 12**, but it is a good idea to get your reservation in to save your place. Single spots are limited, and the early bird gets the worm! The deposit is \$250 and the insurance is \$290.

America’s Music City Holiday (November 30—December 7):

This is our Holiday Trip for 2018. We will enjoy holiday shopping and experience the lovely decorations at the places we visit. We will take in the sights and sounds of the holidays in America’s most famed musical cities. Picture New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville as we revel in the sounds of the blues, jazz, country, and good old rock and roll!

New Orleans—where jazz, food, and fun are always on the menu. There is a choice here—either stroll through New Orleans’ famed French Quarter on a walking tour with a local expert or set out on a panoramic motor coach tour for a different perspective of the city.

Memphis—one night in the Birthplace of the Blues and tour Elvis Presley’s Graceland decked out for the holidays. And then on to Nashville.

Nashville and three nights at the Gaylord Opryland Resort. decked out with more than two million holiday lights along with stunning décor. We will also discover the historic Belle Meade plantation decorated for the holidays and indulge in warm wassail and homemade sweets. Then we will be going to the Ryman Auditorium with reserved seats to enjoy some of the Grand Ole Opry show. As a part of the Grand Ole Opry, we will tour historic RCA Studio B and see where country legends recorded hit songs. We will visit the Country Music Hall of Fame is sure to have us humming along after we return home.

So, come along on this trip and enjoy such choices such as a horse drawn carriage ride or a Delta River cruise. Staying at the Gaylord Opryland Resort is a very special experience and almost worth the trip for that opportunity and experience alone!

Exploring South Africa. The deposit date for this trip is March 12, 2018. Trip dates are: October 10-23.

This is a small groups tour of 20 or fewer. The trip includes Botswana and Victoria Falls. From cosmopolitan Cape Town to the power of Victoria Falls to the remote wilds of Botswana, this is the complete African travel experience. Gaze out from the top of Table Mountain. Explore the tip of the continent at the Cape of Good Hope. Make new friends during a home hosted dinner. Search out legendary wildlife along the remote Chobe River. Marvel at the biodiversity of the Entabeni Conservancy. Sample wines at a vineyard. And that is just the start.

Multiple game drives and unique culinary experiences provide the perfect blend of culture and thrills. There is also an available 3-night Pre-Tour Extension to Dubai on this trip. I highly recommend this! I have been to Dubai twice, and both were amazing experiences. This is my favorite of Collette’s South Africa trips. The small groups trips allow you to do so much more at a more leisurely pace—and a more intimate experience. The Botswana safaris gives you so much opportunity to see more animals at the close up range than you are able to experience in Kruger. This is my favorite Collette trip! I have been three times and am ready to go again! This trip takes place October 10-23, 2018.

(Continued on page 4)

TRIPS, continued.....



Highlights of South America

This trip has a deposit date of March 2. The trip will be September 9—18.

This trip features Buenos Aires, Iguazu Falls, and Rio de Janeiro with a 3 night optional extension to Santiago., Chile, and a post trip to the Amazon. It will be springtime there with the blooming of the lovely jacaranda trees. We will experience Argentina’s famous tango as we savor some of the Argentine’s best cuisine and wine. We will see the spot where Evita Peron sang “Don’t Cry for Me, Argentina” and visit her final resting place.

We will see some of the famous and lovely sights of Buenos Aires including the Teatron Opera House, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the former church of Pope Francis I, and the Presidential Palace. We will experience a traditional Argentine barbecue at a countryside estancia where we get to meet the gauchos as they do their magic with their horses.

One of the real highlights of this trip is experiencing the Iguazu Falls from both the Brazilian and the Argentina sides. This is the widest water fall in the world with 3 miles of unbelievable falls. It is one of the seven natural wonders of the world and considered to be the most beautiful waterfall in the world. It is certainly my favorite even after seeing Victoria Falls in Africa and Niagara Falls. We will board the Ecological Train inside the national park and walk to the powerful Devil’s Throat. We see the falls from several vantage points.

We fly on to Rio de Janeiro where we will experience lovely views, beautiful beaches, flamboyant Carnival costumes, great cuisine, and friendly people. And we will go to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain for spectacular views. The next day we journey to Corcovado by train to see the famous 98 foot Christ the Redeemer statue framed with magnificent views of the city. This will be a very special trip and certainly worth a second visit even if it is a return trip.

And for the future, where would you like to go in 2019? We are starting to plan for 2019 so if you have some place you would like to recommend or a destination you have not visited, just send me an email. We are considering Scandinavia and Japan as two possibilities. Let me know if either of these destinations is of interest to you!

Many of these deadlines are approaching quickly so get your deposits in right away. Call for brochures on any of our trips or any other trips presented by Collette. They have over 170 destinations, and we can book you for any of those destinations and give you our discounts!

COLLETTE WILL BE CELEBRATING THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2018!

We are here to give you the guidance you need and to share our experiences! Call me at **703-534-3975** or email me at : dwpatteson@gmail.com **Come on, let’s travel!!**



IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE *ADVOCATE* BY EMAIL, PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM BELOW AND MAIL IT BACK TO US!

FCRE Request for Digital Version of Advocate Newsletter

If you are interested in receiving the FCRE newsletter in a digital format instead of the hard copy presently mailed to you, please fill out the form below and return it to the FCRE office. We are offering this option as we move towards digital communications with our members.

Name (please print): _____

Email address (please print): _____

Send this form to:

FCRE
P.O. Box 682
Springfield, VA 22150



MEMBER ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH, 2018

by
Barbara Marshall, Director



CINEMA ARTS GROUP

The Cinema Arts Group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 9:30—10:00 a.m. depending on the movie selected. Following the movie, interested participants have lunch and discussion at First Watch Café located across from the Cinema Arts Theatre.

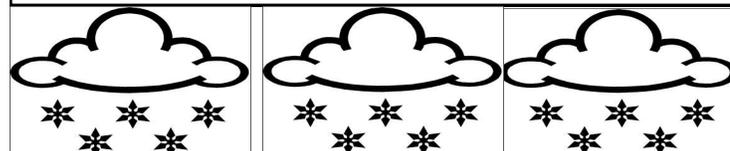
If interested, please email **Alicia Clelland** at clellaap@cox.net to receive details regarding the movie selected.

BOOK GROUPS

- Annandale Book Group--**Dottie Addison, coordinator.** Meets the **3rd** Wednesday at 12 noon in various locations. Call Dottie at **703-971-8479** for more information.
- Fairfax City Group--**Sue Williams, coordinator.** Meets at 10:30 a.m. on the **2nd Friday** in Barnes and Noble at Fair Lakes. Sue's contact information is suewms@cox.net
- Vienna Tuesday Book Group--**Joey Graves coordinator.** Meets the 2nd Tuesday at the Providence Community Center. Contact information is JoeyGraves1@gmail.com.

BRIDGE GROUPS

1. 2nd and 4th Monday Group--Meets 2nd and 4th Monday mornings at 9:45 a.m. Contact person is **Barbara Marshall** at 571-203-0375 or bmarshall12@verizon.net. This group will meet at the Vienna American Legion this month. The Legion is located at 303 Center St., Vienna, VA 22180.
2. Tuesday Morning Group--Coordinator is **Sandy Smith**. Meets the 2nd Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. in homes.
3. Third Monday Evening Group--Coordinators are **Claudette Coffey and Joey Graves**. Meets in homes at 7:00 p.m.
4. 1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday Bridge Group--Meets at David R. Pinn Community Center on Zion Road in at 9:45 to 12:00
Note: this group will be back at the Pinn Center beginning September 17. The contact people for this group are now Bunny Monroe (MissBunnyM@aol.com) and Emily Krisko (kriskodt@aol.com)
5. The Bridge Review Group with **Dave Meadows** meets at 1:00pm on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at the American Legion in Vienna, Va. See address above in 2nd and 4th Monday Group.



If ice, snow, or other inclement weather occurs on the days of our luncheons or activities, please listen to your radio or television. If Fairfax County Public Schools are closed, our activities are cancelled as well. If FCPS opens late, our activities will operate on time. One exception, Lobby Day, usually in January, the GRT Director makes the call.

ARE YOU IN THE PINK? IF SO, IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!!!

1. Check the expiration date above your name on your mailing label. If it reads, "Expires June 30, 2016" and is marked in pink, it is time to **RENEW!**
2. It is easy to renew; here is what you do:
3. Write your check (payable to FCRE) for **\$75.00 for a 3 year renewal, or \$30.00 for a 1 (one) year renewal.**
4. Please write your **membership number** (it is on the line above your name on your mailing label) and the word, **Renewal**, on the memo line of your check.
5. Mail your check to:
FCRE
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
P.O. BOX 0682
SPRINGFIELD, VA.22150-0682

REMEMBER:

FCRE Recommendation: Do NOT under any circumstances withdraw from your Fairfax County Public Schools-sponsored health insurance plan. If you do, you cannot rejoin!

THANK YOU, APPLE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION!

FCRE would like to take this opportunity to thank the **Apple Federal Credit Union** for their continued support in our activities. We really appreciate you!

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**LUNCHEONS AND
 RESERVATION DATES:**

2018 LUNCHEONS:

- 1. APRIL 19, 2018—make your reservation by APRIL 13, 2018**
- 2. JUNE 14, 2018—make your reservation by JUNE 8, 2018**

CLIP AND KEEP!

**ARE YOU IN THE PINK?
 SEE PAGE 5 TO SEE
 WHAT TO DO!!!!!!**



MARCH, 2018

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 EMAIL US AT: fcree@fcree.org and
luncheon@fcree.org
 WEBSITE: www.fcree.org**