



ACREA News

Celebrating 47 Years of Service Since 1973

RACE: Realizing Arlington’s Commitment to Equity

With several initiatives underway focusing on equity in health (Destination 2027), technology (Digital Equity), and housing (Housing Arlington) -- and discussions about defining equity for Arlington in 2018 --

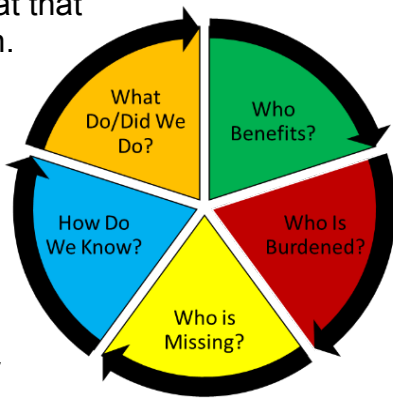
staff work by an Arlington racial equity learning cohort initiated the process of implementing the County Board’s adopted **Equity Resolution** and our journey toward racial equity in September of 2019. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) defines racial equity as closing the gaps such that **one’s success is not predicated on their race** while improving outcomes for everyone. Here is what that looks like for Arlington.

Vision: An equitable Arlington is one where all are valued, educated, healthy and safe regardless of race.

Mission: As an employee, resident or business in Arlington, advance racial equity as a county-wide priority to eliminate, reduce, and prevent disparities in our policies, procedures practices, engagement, and interaction with and service to the community.

Goals:

- 1. Normalize.** A shared understanding, knowledge and terminology around racial equity within the organization and among the community.



[cont’d; see “RACE” page 4]

Farewell ACREA? Final Warning

Citing a lack of new volunteers and Board Members, the ACREA organization is in danger of folding. “If members do not volunteer for Board and officer positions, the remaining Board members will be forced to shut it down,” explained member Carl Newby. “I hope people will step up and keep this great organization going.”

Do you enjoy the luncheons? Miss the Cardiac Potatoes and the friendships? Like how ACREA advocates for you? Get ready to say “good-bye” unless we get some volunteers. This is our last call for volunteers for these positions:

- **Chair:** presides over meetings and coordinates the work of the Board. The Chair represents the Association as needed. Coordinates agenda and speakers for twice-yearly luncheons. (1-year term)
- **Vice Chair:** presides in the Chair’s absence and shares the Chair’s work with the twice-yearly luncheons. (1-year term)
- **Secretary:** performs secretarial duties relative to the Association. (2-year term)
- **Treasurer:** receives, accounts for and disburses all Association funds and maintains records for all transactions. (2-year term)
- **Newsletter Editor:** produces annual fall newsletter for members. (2-year term)

Over the years, ACREA has worked on behalf of all Arlington County retirees – to represent our interests and ensure that we have a voice in County policies. To volunteer or ask questions, contact: acreainc@gmail.com. ❖

**Arlington County Retired
Employees Association, Inc.**
P.O. Box 5122, Arlington, VA 22205

acreainc@gmail.com
www.ACRAINC.com

2020 Board of Directors

- **Carl Newby**, Acting Chair and Retiree Retirement Board Representative Alternate
- **Laura Chalkley**, Secretary
- **Mary Stephenson**, Treasurer
- **Jane Eboch**, Newsletter Editor
- **Melodee Melin**, Membership
- **Gregory Kurasz**, Luncheon Coordinator
- **Judy Robinson**, General Member
- **Nancy Hart**, Employee Council Liaison
- **Richard Alt**, Retiree Retirement Board Representative

ACREA announcements, newsletters, and forms are available on our website and our FaceBook page – look for “Arlington County Retired Employees Association.”

If you have a computer and received a hard copy of this newsletter, please consider letting ACREA communicate with you by email. You will help us save postage.

****Save the Date!****

Next ACREA Luncheon

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

2020 Luncheons were cancelled due to COVID-19. Watch our Facebook page and website for announcements.

Want County News?

Read the latest news on the County’s online Newsroom, and sign up for a variety of informative updates.

www.newsroom.arlingtonva.us.

Retirement Fund Update

**From Rich Alt, Trustee and
Carl Newby, Alternate Trustee**

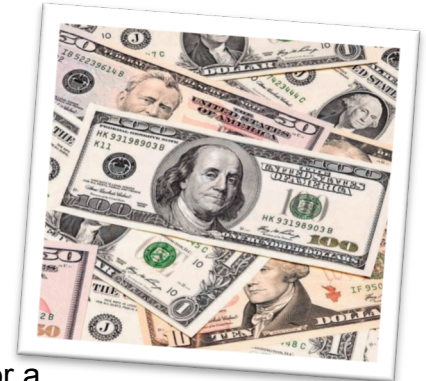
Despite the many difficulties of 2020, the retirement system news is positive. The funding level remains essentially at 100 percent. March 2020 was the low point for the stock market this year, and that tumble came fast and sharp. Fortunately, the System is diversified and can absorb such hits without any risk that our next check may not arrive. We take every opportunity to question, consider, and vote to ensure the System remains diverse and earning income over the long term. The System has made up almost all the initial drop and **remains one of the best public-funded retirement programs in the country.**

Danny Zito, our Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer, has announced his pending retirement next year. The Board of Trustees has started the search for a

new Executive Director. Mr. Zito has agreed to stay on until his replacement is hired, to make sure there is a smooth transition. Hiring a new Executive Director is a difficult task. We must balance the need for a highly technical financial expert, with the need for someone who can manage an office, work well with other County agencies, and work with a 10-person Board of Trustees who actively participate in every financial investment decision.

Additionally, the Trustee Board is taking the opportunity presented by a change in director to review the Retirement System’s governance practices and policies to ensure that the System incorporates the best practices of the industry.

As we roll into this unique upcoming holiday season, we wish each of you good health and happiness! ❖



County News

Amazon HQ2 Update

After the 14 month-long public site selection search, the eyes of the nation remain on the progress of Amazon HQ2, which we are pleased to report is progressing on schedule. **Construction began in early 2020** on the 2.1-million square-foot (SF) mixed-use project in Pentagon City, which includes two 22-story towers that will house Amazon's Arlington headquarters, along with 65,000 SF of ground floor retail. This project is expected to be completed by early 2023.

The company now leases nearly 900,000 SF of existing office space in Arlington's Crystal City neighborhood.

In June, Amazon welcomed its **1,000th employee at HQ2**. These early employees are tackling projects across Amazon's business lines including Alexa, Amazon Web Services, Fire TV and Prime Video.

Also interesting to note is the company's commitment to the local neighborhood, especially during some of the shutdowns of the pandemic. Amazon has donated \$3.9 million to CodeVA to help expand computer science education for students and teachers at high needs schools across Virginia, especially in rural areas. It also provided **financial assistance to Arlington Public Schools** to purchase hundreds of WiFi hot spots to help students access virtual learning coursework, delivering WiFi hot spots directly to Arlington students in need, and donating tablet devices to the Child and Family Networks Center.

Amazon also donated **\$155,000 to Arlington and DC food banks** and provided 10,000 meals through a "Meals in May" program, which paid local restaurants to prepare and deliver lunches and dinners to first responders, frontline healthcare workers, and vulnerable neighbors throughout the month. This initiative not only ensured the HQ2 community received hearty meals, it also helped local restaurants bring more employees back to work. ❖

News-You-Can-Use from Human Resources

ACERS Access Security Enhancements Coming Soon!

Watch for more information in your Arlington County Retiree Newsletter coming later this year. Don't worry, we have not had any breaches of security, we are simply implementing more security measures to ensure your retiree data is secure.

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) Changes for 2020

In December 2019, Congress passed the "Secure Act". Among other things, the Act changed the age that you need to take your RMD from 70½ to 72. Now, you must take your first RMD from your Voya accounts by April 1 the calendar year following when you turn age 72. and by December 31st each year after. If you wait until the April 1 deadline the first year, you will need to take out two RMDs the first year: one by April 1 and one by December 31.

In March 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). This act allows anyone with an RMD due in 2020 from a defined-contribution retirement plan, including a 401(a) or 403(b) plan, or an IRA, to skip those RMDs this year.

If you would like to stop the RMD from coming out of your Voya accounts this year, or if you would like an RMD you already withdrew from your Voya accounts this year refunded, call Voya's Customer Service Team at 1-800-584-6001 or the Arlington County Government Voya Office Manager, Jean Marshall, at 703-228-3493.

If you have any questions, you may schedule appointments with one of Arlington County dedicated advisors from Voya Financial Advisors. They will be happy to assist you and do a complete financial account review. To schedule online: www.meetme.so/voya ❖

RACE, cont'd from page 1

- 2. Organize.** Build the capacity of the organization and within the community and commit and dedicate resources to support identified areas of need.
- 3. Operationalize.** Use the racial equity lens, tools and disaggregated data to identify where systemic and institutional racism presents itself and make the changes needed to dismantle it.
- 4. Assess.** Evaluate who we are, where we are, what we have done and how we are doing; what things do we need to change or adjust and how we do evolve over time to respond to changes in the workplace, culture and community.

The County took the first steps toward achieving these goals by hiring the first-ever **Chief Race and Equity Officer, Samia Byrd**, in July and in October, launching **Dialogues on Race and Equity** (DRE). In partnership with Challenging Racism, DRE includes a series of facilitated conversations among community members on race.

It also includes a series of facilitated conversations in partnership with the business, faith-based, and nonprofit communities. And later this year, DRE in neighborhoods will introduce a **self-guided toolkit** to enable individuals to have conversations on race with neighbors, family and friends. In addition, there is an opportunity for people to share with the County personally their thoughts, issues, concerns and experiences on race and racism through a brief and **anonymous questionnaire**.

You may also follow the County's efforts around racial and social justice as it considers **Restorative Practices** in Arlington's legal system, schools and community contexts, as well as **Police Practices**, the County Manager's work to consider policing best practices while building trust between police and our community. Lastly, at the direction of the County Board in September 2020, the County Manager committed to present in December, a process for how the Board will consider naming and

renaming County owned facilities and replacing the County's logo and seal.

Racial equity is not a project or an initiative but a process to value as a matter of practice, principle and standard operating procedure, optimal outcomes for everyone. This is a journey and we want to be thoughtful about the work ahead to achieve sustainable, culture change – behavioral and learned – in terms of how we treat people, understand people and their experiences, and become tolerant and respectful as we interact and serve. Altogether we will move from systemic racism to systemic equity as a County and community with a patient sense of persistent urgency. ❖

Slow the Spread of COVID-19!

Older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19. Seek care early.

Arlington Public Health Division provides instructions and updates at health.arlingtonva.us

COVID-19 Impacts Employees

Arlington County employees have shown great commitment and dedication throughout this pandemic. The creativity they have demonstrated over the past eight months has allowed the County to serve the community in new and innovative ways. Below are just a few examples of the new ways employees are working:

- Department of Human Services:** "Assistance from a Distance"- DHS reconfigured its services for maximum tele-health and virtual client connections, except

for those where more direct client contact is needed, to ensure client safety and increase face-to-face contact when clients are at risk.

- **Libraries:** The library hosts [virtual book talks, online courses](#), as well as operates a hold pick-up program for books.
- **Parks & Recreation:** DPR offers free Programs in the Park, as well as virtual programming. Virtual programs provide entertaining, educational, and inspiring resources to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.
- **Pages with the Police –** ACPD's School Resource Officers launched a virtual read-aloud series to stay connected with students while schools are not in session. Past videos are archived on the Department's Facebook page. Recent videos:
 - [Detective Brooks reads "It's Not My Fault"](#)
 - [Detective Adams reads "He Came With the Couch"](#)
 - ["Detective McGuire reads "The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes"](#)
 - [Detective Blow reads "The Thank You Book"](#)
- **Human Resources:** HRD has increased access to online training for employees, as well as providing personal appointments for benefits or retirement by phone and video. The HealthSmart program also offers a wide variety of virtual exercise, mental health and mindfulness class opportunities.
- **Permit Office:** All [services are now managed virtually](#) -- including submission of permits and payments.

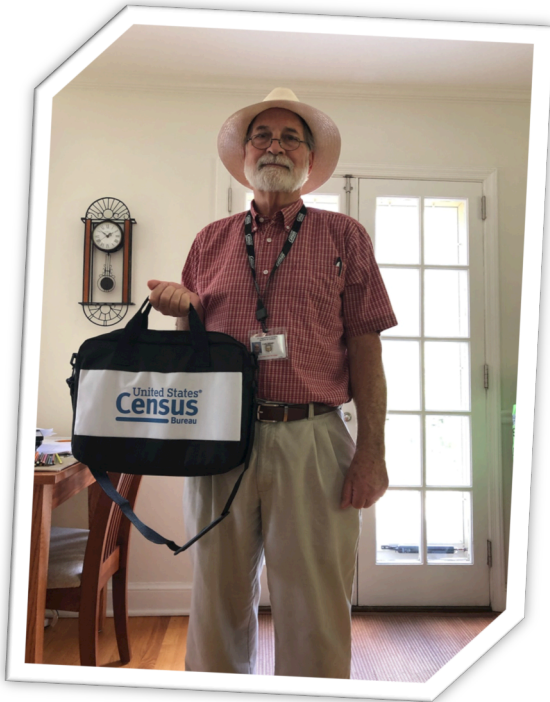
These are just a few examples of the ways that employees have been able to pivot and provide excellent service for the community and their fellow employees. It is inspiring to see the creativity and resilience of our workforce through this time. ❖

Member Corner

MY 2020 Monthly Journey

by Carl Newby

- **January:** Amazing two-week trip to Egypt and Jordan. Planned 4 more big trips this year. 2020 is starting out great!!
- **February:** Signed up to maybe work with 2020 Census in April and May. Was selected. This will work great between trips.
- **March:** COVID-19. Watched world change from home on TV. Canceled first trip, then all trips. Struggling with airlines and cruise ship credits and refunds.
- **April:** Started digging up plants and bulbs from empty houses about to be torn down. Re-landscaped large parts of my yard. Lots of flowering plants.
- **May:** Really attacked home projects that I had been procrastinating on for many years. Felt thankful that Home Depot was open.
- **June:** Finished projects and started long walk and bike rides every day. Saw lots of people taking outdoor conference calls and just being out. Deer eat all the lily blossoms from new plantings in yard and attack garden.
- **July:** I fenced garden, applied deer repellent, and used a sonic deterrent in a vain attempt to drive my new deer herd away. The new landscaped plants are irresistible to them. Got call from 2020 Census. Online training convinces me I could work Census and be Covid-19 safe (I wanted to believe).
- **August:** I am now a Federal Employee, a Census Enumerator, sweating gallons knocking on doors in Arlington. People were almost uniformly super nice and helpful. Some were very lonely, others sadly frightened.
- **September:** The Census transfers me to the Northern Neck of Virginia, lots of driving in countryside and seeing rural Virginia. Mild days driving with the windows down listening to recorded books while knocking on doors for what were often vacant vacation homes or abandoned farmhouses.



ACREA Snapshots



- **October:** Courts extend Census to October 15; I keep working until last day and was laid-off for the first time since 1983, when I had worked in a failing textile mill. On October 16, I started training for and then working early voting for Arlington County.
- **October 30, 2020:** Two months to go. For a year so different and difficult, I am surprised to find I am okay. The national news has been hard to watch, but my completing long-deferred projects and re-landscaping the yard was satisfying. One neighbor tells me how pleasant it is seeing the deer all the time. I have worked public service jobs that I enjoy and feel good about it. My wife helps with homeschooling two of the grandchildren about 10 days a month. We missed all the things we used to do and the trips, but retirement is still good. ❖

Share Your Updates

We're sure you have your own COVID tales. Share them with all of us on the ACREA Facebook page!



In Memoriam

*Remembering ACREA members who died this year
(listed with hometown and date of death)*

Name	Hometown	Department	Date of Death
Lucius G. Latham	Philippi, WV	Equipment	Oct. 28, 2019
Mellie T. McDonough	Pineville, NC	Data Processing	Nov. 30, 2019
Peggy H. Wilkinson	Moneta, VA	Voter Registration	Oct. 31, 2019
Elsie M. Payne	Warrenton, VA	Property Management	Jan. 20, 2020
John L. Sidell	Winchester, VA	Police	Jan. 29, 2020
Percy Smith, Jr.	Washington, DC	DHS	Feb. 21, 2020
Carl R. Anderson	Arlington, VA	Police	March 22, 2020
Charles B. Emmons	Elkton, VA	Fire	March 22, 2020
William K. Stover	Arlington, VA	Police	April 16, 2020
John B. Kaparakis	Arlington, VA	Fire	April 30, 2020
Ervin Davenport	Woodbridge, VA	DPW	June 14, 2020
Lynn B. Davis	Jonesborough, TN	Police	June 17, 2020
Barbara A. Blistein	Ashburn, VA	DHS	Sept. 5, 2020



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Inside this issue:

- Could this be the end of ACREA? Is this your last ACREA newsletter?
- How are Arlington employees pivoting during COVID?
- What's the scoop on Amazon's HQ2?