

NEWSLETTER



MARCH and APRIL 2026

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT arlingtonretiredteachers.org

Happy 2026! This is the third of the four newsletters planned for this year, coming in time for you to plan to attend the **March and April in-person meetings**. [There was no program in February.] The final issue this year will arrive in April, to include the end-of-year luncheon details, not yet complete, **but mark your calendars for May 20 and take note of the details later [page 3] in this issue**, with more specific information to come in the April issue.

Announced below and on the next page are the **March 11 and April 8 second Wednesday** programs. While the aforementioned final newsletter issue (for **May**) will give you more details for our luncheon plans and other updates, **it will not be sent** to any of you who have **not** paid your dues for **2025-26**. **If that's you, take note of the "Membership Dues Reminder" at the bottom of page 2, accompanied by a handwritten note directed by name only to those who have been notified of non-payment.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MARCH 11, 2026: RICHARD DERBYSHIRE, MASTER GARDENER
In person at 1 p.m., gather for snacks and chatter at 12:30 p.m. at the
Unitarian Universalist Church in Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. 22204



Richard Derbyshire, Extension Master Gardener [EMG] will help us usher in spring! A master gardener is a volunteer educator who loves gardening and wants to protect our environment sharing what they have learned with our community – and that's ARTA on **March 11!** Plan to join us then for tips on making your plot, large or small, a beauty.

Richard Derbyshire began gardening by helping his mother, Elizabeth, turn soil each spring in her vegetable garden in Swansea, MA. Although his main career was heading the Washington office of a New York-based technology firm, throughout his life he has committed many hours to planning, digging, planting, weeding the soil to transform his lawn into multiple garden beds for flowers, shrubs and some vegetables. Once retired in 2021, he earned his Master Gardener certificate the following spring and has since committed his time furthering garden projects in a variety of schools, education facilities, and public lands. He leads gardening programs at Williamsburg MS, Arlington Traditional ES and The Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center, while supporting garden club programs at Carlin Springs ES, Barcroft ES, Drew ES, and occasionally Fleet ES. He is a team leader with MGNV's Youth Education Program (YEP) which received the Governors' Award for Community and Volunteer Service in 2024. He is currently on the MGNV Board serving as Treasurer and this spring is pursuing certification as a Master Naturalist. Come hear him!!

APRIL 8, 2026: DECLUTTERING & DOWNSIZING: You Can't Take It with You!

Having too much stuff can impede relocation or getting home health care!

12:30 p.m. gather, 1 p.m. program

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard



AARP Virginia volunteer **Lynn Ray** will join us to share a fun interactive AARP program that will explore why stuff is so important for some people and will provide practical, easy-to-follow tips on downsizing and decluttering. Cleaning our houses while we can is a gift to us and our families! Plan to attend this informational workshop to receive motivation to begin making needed changes in your home and life! Feel free to invite your friends and family to this informative and useful program.

Like us, our guest speaker is a retiree. Lynn retired with broad experience in the medical device, biopharmaceutical, and financial technology industries. During her career, she led teams in identifying marketing initiatives, innovation, and new product development. She began her career as a research consultant in the healthcare industry and as an academic research scientist studying hormones and reproduction. She holds a degree in Biology and an MBA from the University of Delaware. She and her husband reside in Arlington. She is excited to volunteer for AARP Virginia, Arlington Cemetery, and the Arlington 2050 Initiative.

With the later email reminder for this program, Ellen will include a link to a 70-page PDF of AARP's *Downsizing the Family Home: A Workbook* by Marni Jameson. You will be able to download it to your computer or iPad and use it to guide your downsizing. It is an addition to the presentation, not integral to it. New and used spiral-bound and paperback copies can be found online for a range of prices. Securing one this way might be a good option!

I look forward to seeing you on April 8,
Nancy King, ARTA Vice President

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER



Sadly, this will be the **last** newsletter for those ARTA members who haven't paid their **2025-26 dues**, which were due December 31, 2025. Late members were contacted before the December deadline and mid-January, 2026, with a reminder email and a payment form for late dues of \$25. Some responded immediately, leaving **only 29** as of this date who have not paid, **identified by a handwritten personal note* in the space below this message**. We thank all of you who paid promptly and hope those remaining will now do so..

Unfortunately, those of you who still have not paid by February 28, 2026 will be dropped – no directory, emails, or newsletters! We do worry if we do not hear back from you. If you need another Renewal Form or do not wish to renew, please let Michele Milden, Membership Chair, know with an email to mbmilden@aol.com or call her at 703-244-5151.

***Personal Note to the 29 needing to pay:**

**May 20 ,2026: "Save the Date" for the Annual ARTA Luncheon on Wednesday, May 20, at noon at Spates Conference Center, Joint Base Ft. Myer- Henderson Hall, Arlington, VA
This year we will have a buffet, and parking should be easy in the big lot across the street!**

← LOOKING BACK: DECEMBER 10, 2025 and JANUARY 14, 2026

The **December 10 program** at UUCA featured the holiday music of **Potomac Harmony**, the Arlington chapter of Sweet Adelines. (Thanks, Michele Milden!) This fun group of women singers led by **Allison Lynskey** perform all genres of music in four-part harmony barbershop style. They re volunteers and not all are retired.

Our program featured Christmas, Chanukah, and winter wonderland classics. The group celebrates their 50th anniversary in 2026 and welcomes newcomers to their practices on Wednesday nights at Temple Rodef Shalom. *From the Potomac Harmony Facebook page: "We were honored to be invited back to perform for the Arlington Retired Teachers Association's annual holiday gathering. Performing for those dedicated to education and our youth is inspirational. And what a fun group!"* We're glad the singers had fun – we did also.



Left: ARTA Board members enjoying the bountiful snacks are **Nancy King, Mary Ann Bell, Lynne Lilly, and Cathy Eckbreth**. Right: **Director Allison Lynskey** coaxing beautiful harmony from her group of singers.



Left: Thanks to **Judy Jankowski** for capturing proof that your editor [**Ellen Bartlett**] and daughter **Melanie** do sometimes get to ARTA meetings!



Following the meeting:
ARTA Delivered Holiday Cheer to The Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residents

Pictured at left: Executive Director **Divina Alston** (L) and staff were delighted to accept ARTA's gifts from Board members **Linda Allen** and **Nancy King**.

Two trunk loads of unwrapped gifts of towel sets, sheets, and comforters December 10 holiday

were brought by attendees at our

program. With the holiday spirit instilled by the Potomac Harmony Chorus's wonderful program, **Linda Allen** and **Nancy King** drove afterwards to the **Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence** to drop off the gifts. They were met with smiles and words of appreciation as the linen donations entered the building. Executive Director Divina Alston happily accepted an envelope filled with Target and 7-11 gift cards and cash donations. Ms. Alston also accepted ARTA's yearly check for \$200 to support the residents' activity program. The residents of this wonderful organization are so appreciative, and the ARTA Board sends each donor a grateful "Thank You" for participating in our yearly holiday giving project.

The **January 14, 2026, informal luncheon at Goodwin House** was seemingly not one of the best due to various snafus but those attending said that the fellowship was great! A few attendees are pictured below.



Left: Lynn Juhl, Sue Randall, Randy McKnight; Linda Allen.

Right: a visitor, Jay Missal, Joan Mulholland, Althea Johnston.

One thing missing in this year's newsletters is a **President' Report** – **that's because we have no president!** **Nancy King** is doing double duty as vice president and providing additional leadership of meetings but it's unfair to expect one person to do so much. Last year, out-going president Lynne Lilly wrote, 'It is time to re -envision and renew the Arlington Retired Teachers Association. I ask you to consider why you join ARTA, why you come to our meetings or why you do not come. How do you see yourself contributing in the coming years? We need your involvement or our organization will not survive. . . We need new blood and new program suggestions. If you have a vision that we have not carried to reality, I ask that you, as part of a team, step up and make your vision happen.'" **Who will? At least perhaps as a trainee under Nancy King?!**



IN MEMORIAM

With Heartfelt
Sympathy

ARTA offers deepest sympathy to the families of the two members whose deaths are reported below.

Patricia Ann Ward died at home on **October 16, 2025**.



Pat, a Barrett Elementary School retiree, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in mid-October at the age of 80. She is survived by her husband of 45 years, Steven Coon. She and Steve had no children. Pat, an only child, was an elementary school teacher in Arlington County Public Schools for 33 years before retiring in 2000. She taught at all grade levels, except 3rd grade, spending most of her career as a Physical Education teacher. She graduated from Springfield College, then went on to get two Master's degrees, one in Education from George Washington University, and the other an MBA from George Mason University. Travelling was her primary passion, exploring every corner of the globe to over 130 countries. She enjoyed hiking, swimming, skiing, tennis, and other activities. She and Steve spent lots of time at their beach house in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. No services were announced.

Julia Sullivan McKnight December 31, 1943 – December 23, 2025



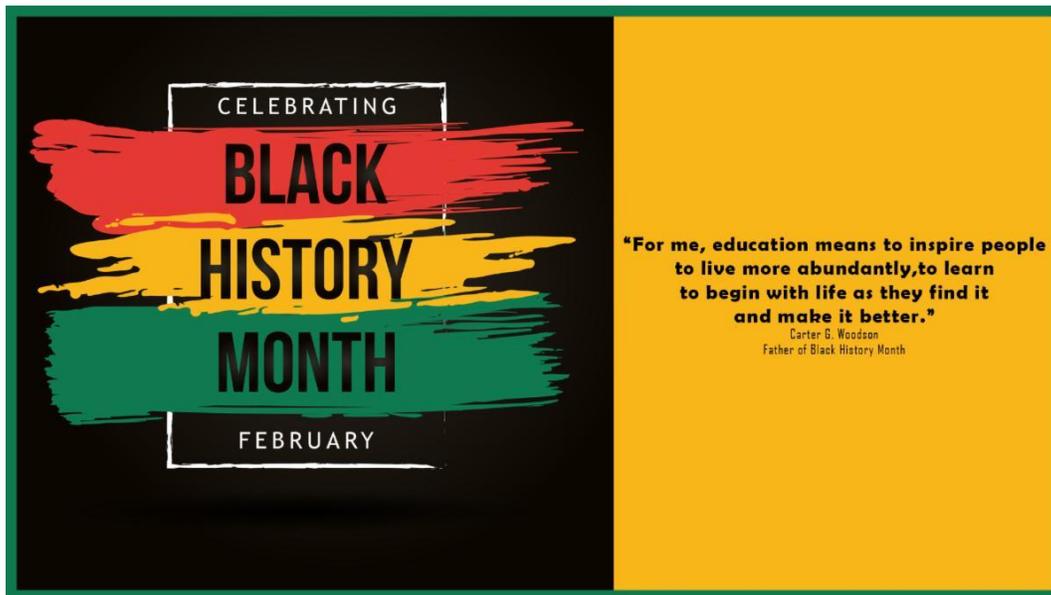
Julia Sullivan McKnight--known to colleagues, family, and friends as **Judy**--age 81, died peacefully in her sleep in McLean, Virginia, from complications associated with Alzheimer's. Her sons and husband were with her when she passed. An ARTA member herself, Judy was the wife of ARTA's treasurer, **Randy McKnight**. Judy was the daughter of Francis Michael Sullivan, business editor of the Virginian-Pilot, and Rosa Lee Saied Sullivan, social worker and middle-school teacher. Judy grew up in Norfolk, graduated from Maury High School and the College of William & Mary. She held graduate degrees from George Washington University. A political science major, she came to Washington, DC and worked for

Congressman Donald Fraser (D-MN). After a summer in France and Germany, she began a career in education that spanned six decades and encompassed pre-school through high school. She taught elementary and junior high school in DCPS schools, was the director of Capitol East Children's Center, taught at Capitol Hill Day School, was the Director of Finance & Administration and edited the newsletter for the Office for Children in Fairfax, Virginia. She was a facilitator in the National Diffusion Network, founder and president of the Education Network of Virginia, and co-founder and president of JRMCK Properties, LLC. She returned to schools as a vice-principal at Bailey's and Bucknell elementary schools in Fairfax County and was a special education teacher and middle-school principal at Arlington's H-B Woodlawn. Judy loved being with friends and family, backpacking, hiking, traveling, dancing, writing, and being creative in her pottery shed.

She is survived by the greatest joys of her life, her sons, Sullivan (Sully) Randolph McKnight (Shawna) of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and Shawn Harrison McKnight (Julie) of Crozet, Virginia, and her husband of 55 years, Randy McKnight of Arlington. She is also survived by five grandchildren, Tyler Saied, Geneva Allison, and Rysen Charles McKnight of Crozet, and Maylia Elizabeth and Taylin Memphis McKnight of Ottawa, and her sisters Pat Sullivan of Norfolk and Bridget Hampson (Harry) of Fort Myers. She is also survived by her nieces Michelle McNair (Chris) of Cary, North Carolina, and Stephanie Azar (Ramzy) of Washington, DC, and her nephew Glen McKnight (Jules) of Vallejo, California. In addition, she leaves a wide circle of friends who cherish the warmth and love that she shared with them.

A family gathering this July in Northville, Michigan will celebrate Judy's life. A celebration in Arlington will be announced at a later date. She will be inurned in the Columbarium at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please donate to a charity of your choosing.

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH



This year is our second not to have a February meeting and program. In recent years, the February program always related to **Black History Month**. Last year, we ordered stamps commemorative of Black History for this late winter issue, but the larger commemorative stamps proved harder for my daughter Melanie’s fingers to handle, so she asked me to use easier to affix ones this year; thus, you have the new winter stamp instead. But it seems that any mention of Black History brings mention of our member **Joan Mulholland again!**

Congressman Beyer Proposes a Congressional Gold Medal for Local Civil-Rights Icon

From ARLnow.com:

<https://www.arlnow.com/2026/01/07/beyer-bill-giving-congressional-gold-medal-to-civil-rights-icon-mulholland-stalls/>

“Rep. Don Beyer’s efforts to secure a Congressional Gold Medal for a local civil-rights icon remain in limbo. A piece of legislation, introduced last May, would make **Joan Trumpauer Mulholland** the newest recipient of Congress’s highest honor. But it is unlikely to win passage while Republicans control Congress, a staff member said. Beyer (D-8) “continues to work on building support for the measure, but we don’t expect major advancements until political conditions in the House are more favorable,” Beyer spokesperson Izzie Taveras told ARLnow. The measure was referred to the House Committee on Financial Services, where it remains. If no action is taken by the end of 2026, it will need to be reintroduced for the 2027-29 session.

“Mulholland, 84, was active in the 1960s with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and took part in integration efforts in the D.C. area. In 1961, she joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) Freedom Rides, working to integrate interstate travel facilities throughout the South. Her efforts landed her in jail multiple times, once for over 60 days in Mississippi.

“The resolution notes Mulholland is deserving of a Gold Medal ‘in recognition of her unique and substantial contributions to American life through her life-long commitment to social justice and equality for all citizens, exhibited both through direct action, at great personal risk, and through ongoing educational activities.’

“The presentation of Congressional Gold Medals can be traced back to the award bestowed on George Washington in 1776 by the Continental Congress. Fewer than 200 have been authorized since. Both individuals and groups are eligible to receive the honor. Each medal, once approved, is uniquely designed.

“Beyer’s resolution has picked up a few cosponsors, but Congress’s operating procedures require that two-thirds of both houses sign on before consideration in committee, which is unlikely to happen this year.”

2026 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Jeanne Trabulsi



General Assembly Schedule: The 2026 GA Session began on January 14, and Crossover Day will have occurred on February 12, before this newsletter arrives! That's when all proposed bills that were passed in one chamber are sent to the other chamber to go through the same procedure, before adjournment of the session on **March 14**. The GA will reconvene on **April 22** to act on the Governor's amendments or vetoes.

Four Constitutional Amendments (Amendments are harder to change than a law.)

- To redraw (gerrymander) Congressional districts in Virginia to accommodate more Democrats than Republicans. Goal is to send more Democrats to Congress. (Vote on referendum is scheduled April 21, 2026.)
- To restore felons' right to vote after sentence is served. Virginia has a ban on voting by felons. (November 2026 ballot)
- To approve amendment in Virginia's Constitution to provide abortion access. (November 2026 ballot)
- To approve amendment in Virginia's Constitution to ensure same-sex marriage is valid and not susceptible to partisan shifts. (November 2026 ballot)

Education Legislation Introduced/Pending:

- Focus of session is to create 2026-2028 Budget to determine what legislation may be passed.
 - Federal economic impact on state budget means that there is no extra money.
 - K-12 schools will need \$1.2 billion over next two years.
 - Money needed consists of the following categories:
 - 6% teacher pay raises
 - Increasing number of Special Ed Students
 - Operating expenses that represent 42% of budget
 - Inflation

Education Bills Introduced—Lots of repeats from last year

There are 119 bills advocating the following issues:

Free school breakfasts; limiting class sizes; adding cricket as a sport; safe storage of prescription drugs and firearms in the home; special teacher licensure to teach career and tech education; mental health screening of students in grades 6-12; use of public funds for private schools; prohibition of selling coffee to high school students; AI use in instructional settings.

Arlington County Public Schools

VDOE Region 4 (19 counties) Snapshot/School Performance and Support Framework **for Arlington County Public Schools**

- 12 Schools categorized as "Distinguished"
- 12 Schools categorized as "On Track"
- 3 Schools categorized as "Off Track"
- 8 Schools categorized as "Needs Intensive Support"
- Tuckahoe Elementary, with 99 points, falls in Top 5 Elementary Schools by Total Points
- Tuckahoe Elementary falls in Top 5 Mastery-Science
- Jamestown Elementary falls in Top 5 Readiness-Chronic Absenteeism
- Williamsburg Middle falls in Top 5 Middle Schools by Total Points
- Williamsburg Middle falls in Top 5 Mastery-Reading
- Williamsburg Middle falls in Top 5 Mastery-Math
- Gunston Middle falls in Top 5 Growth-Reading
- Gunston Middle falls in Top 5-Advanced Coursework
- Yorktown High falls in Top 5 Mastery-Reading

For more information on which Arlington schools re included in the “off track” and “needs intensive support” categories, see <https://www.arlnow.com/2025/12/19/results-of-new-rating-system-for-virginia-schools-create-confusion-for-aps-leaders/>
<https://www.apsva.us/school-performance-and-support-framework-spsf/>

New Virginia Laws—Effective January 1, 2026

- Minimum wage increase—to \$12.77, up 36 cents
- Social media limits for minors—Requires social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and X to enforce time limits through default settings. Parents will have the option to adjust those limits.
- Breast cancer testing—Prohibits health insurance companies from charging patients co-pays, deductibles, or any other fees for breast cancer testing, such as mammograms, etc.
- Baby Food Protection—Manufacturers will be required to test toxic heavy metals in baby food. Metals must be disclosed on website and on product.
- Consumer Telephone Solicitation Protections —Will allow anyone receiving a telephone solicitation via text messages to ask not to receive such messages. Simply reply with “Unsubscribe” or “STOP” and the solicitors must STOP for at least 10 years.



Linda Knight and doggy Gigi moved to Illinois this past October and recently moved into her villa home there as Asbury Village, near Alton, Illinois, and about five minutes from her niece’s home. Good luck in your new life, Linda!! Note her new address under Changes; email and phone remain the same.

By the time you get this newsletter, I hope our spell of Arctic weather will be in the past. After the snow/sleet mix of January 25, leaving nine inches or so of “snowcrete” on the ground [which is still there], schools were closed into the second week – six days closed and two days were two hours late – for the first time in my memory – dating back to the 1950’s!!.

When I asked for weather stories from the really bad winter storms across the US, only one person replied! From Anne Dilworth in Austin, Texas:

“Hello Ellen from warmer Austin! 😊 We endured 4 days of frigid cold temperatures a week or more ago...Mother nature gave us 24 hours of sleet ...very cold, very unusual for this part of Texas...I don’t ever remember this kind of weather when I lived in Alexandria. [Note to Anne: We’re still living here but have had even worse this winter!] Austin said they treated the roads 24 hours before the weather changed to very cold but it didn’t seem to matter. The roads were still very slippery. Luckily, the first two days of weather were a Saturday and Sunday [January 24-25, 2026]. Many people stayed home. 18 wheelers moved very slowly on I 35. And luckily “flyovers” were closed. Some people still thought the speed limit was safe to go even though it was definitely clear not true. The kids were sad because the storm occurred on the weekend... my neighborhood was very quiet ...no morning or evening dog walking, no people doing their 20 or 40-minute AM walk with cell phone in their hand, and no usual daily runners... temps were in the teens! News reports on Sunday evening made it clear that schools would be closed on Monday and people should not venture out because it still was not safe to drive anywhere unless it was an emergency!!! We had temperatures in the 20s, so nothing melted unless you put salt on it... I’ve never seen salt for sale here in the grocery stores or Home Depot/Lowes ..few people had ventured out to clean ice off their cars or trucks!!! Still too cold for any outside activity unless you had ski attire!!! News announcers reminded us to remember ‘The 4 P’s. People, Pets, plants and Pipes.’” In Texas people wrap their outside faucets with old kitchen towels and then place a protective Styrofoam cover over them

after connecting to the handle on the faucet with a little stretch loop. All inside the house faucets that are on an outside wall are dripped slowly all day until the outside temperature gets up to 32* plus....”

That’s where Anne’s report stopped, but here in Arlington on February 9, I’m still dripping my faucets!



REQUESTS/REMINDERS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remember that if you want to make a donation to the Scholarship Fund, please write that as a separate check to the **Arlington Community Foundation** – **do not** write the check to ARTA!! As usual, Cathy Eckbreth will send her annual “scholarship letter” in late February which will include an envelope in which to mail contributions directly to the Arlington Community Foundation.

We like to inform members as soon as possible of the death of an ARTA member, when you learn of the death of a member, please send full information to **Ellen Bartlett** to send the info by email list – see contact info below.

Remember to send any interesting newsletter items to **me, your editor**, by **April 12, 2026**, to go into the next issue (for **May**). **Email me at ellenbartlett@verizon.net; mail to me at 908 North Daniel Street, Arlington, VA 22201; or call 703-524-3312.**

Our new "Concerns" chair, **Judy Jankowski**, reminds us that she would like you to call or text her at **571-236-4058** or email to yentaruchL2@gmail.com about any occasion(s) for which she should send a card. This is especially true for illness or death, but also for happy occasions such as special birthdays or anniversaries



TO OUR THREE NEW MEMBERS

ALDERMAN, Laurie B
16125 Ed Warfield Road,
Woodbine, MD, 21797-
laurie.alderman6@gmail.com
(C) 202-549-9555
Special Education/Student Services

KUEHN, Valerie J
1164 Glebe Road,
Lottsburg, VA, 22511-2405
richvalkuehn@gmail.com
(C) 703-300-6811
Jamestown Elementary, Kindergarten Assistant

MYERS, Andrea (Ms.)
5119 Celtic Dr.,
North Charleston, SC, 29405-4072
aymyers@yahoo.com
(C) 703-282-3711
Jefferson Middle School

Take Note: Are you a member of the Arlington Community Federal Credit Union [ACFCU]? If so, are you aware of their proposed merger with **Commonwealth One Federal Credit Union**? See the ACFCU website for information: <https://www.arlingtoncu.org/better-together/>

REMINDER: LIFE CHANGES REMINDERS AND IMPORTANT CONTACTS

- **When you move**, remember to notify **APS Human Resources** of your new address. They tell ARTA they get many items returned when they do a mailing. They would also like everyone's email address since email contact is more direct. Is your APS info up to date? Contact by phone **703-228-2726** or email hr.support@apsva.us [Notify ARTA, too!]
- **Virginia Retirement System (VRS)** - Call 1-888-827-3847 or visit www.varetire.org. You can also use this site to check the value of your VRS life insurance policy. This policy is held with **Securian Financial**, Phone: 1-800-441-2258.
- Visit www.varetire.org/publications for a copy of the VRS inventory guide for members and retirees, *Get Organized* and *Losing a Loved One, Guide for Families, Help with your next steps to claim VRS benefits*.
- **VRS Defined Contribution Plans**- Call 1-877-327-5261 and ask to speak with an Investor Services Representative, or visit www.varetire.org/dcp.
- **Arlington County Retirement Office** - (Supplementary benefit for pre-1981 hires) Phone: 703-228-3500 or 1-800-818-4910. [These numbers replace previous ones.] There is no survivor benefit.
- **Social Security Administration** – Phone: 1-800-772-1213, contact your local Social Security Administration office or visit www.socialsecurity.gov. If you are reporting on a death, have the Social Security number of the deceased ready to report. Note that often the funeral home has already reported this information.