

# Retirees' Chapter News

## Virginia Governmental Employees Association



### *A Message from the President...*

The 2016 General Assembly has concluded its regular session, although a veto session will occur in April. VGEA Members can take pride in the fact that the Legislature agreed to provide a 3 percent pay raise in late 2016. It also accelerated the repayment to VRS of the employer funding which was deferred by the previous administration. The House Bill patroned by Speaker Bill Howell (HB665) – subject to the Governor’s final approval – will set up a Commission to study retirement and “... additional options for employee compensation and benefits.” That Commission will include VGEA representation. Our VGEA staff worked hard to get these issues passed.

At our next meeting, Delegate Betsy Carr will give us an update. She is a member of the House Appropriations Committee. We will convene at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, April 11 at Nick’s Roman Terrace.

Our March meeting featured Ms. Julie Adams-Buchanan and Mr. Ralph Graner of the Shepherd’s Center of Richmond. They provided an overview of TSCOR’s multi-faceted services and answered questions. Faye Spruill presented the Treasurer’s report. See Janet Martino’s Minutes on page two for more details.

April 1 is the beginning of the VGEA membership year (which runs from April 1 through March 31). The retiree dues remain at \$48 and are \$24 for the second member in the same household. If you are already a member, you will likely get a renewal notice, but you may also go to vgea.org or call VGEA at 804.355.3120 for information and to renew online or over the phone. We will have membership materials at our meeting. Please renew and reach out to oth-

ers to join with us.

The Chapter Officers have been working on ways and means to engage our Members in VGEA business and to recruit new Members. If we are to be effective as the “VOICE” for state employees and retirees, then numbers and actions are essential. The interaction and conviviality of our meetings is a plus. We urge you to let us know of your suggestions. Let’s each one reach one.

Our newsletter will resume publication in August, because April will be our last meeting until September. We will have to decide if we will combine our Chapter meeting with the VGEA General membership meeting now scheduled for the Westin Hotel on W. Broad St. in Richmond on Saturday, September 17.

**“It’s the connection with others that keeps us healthy.” - Daniel Amen, M.D.**

Thanks and see you at the meeting!

**Walt  
Walt Pulliam, Jr.,  
President**

**Please note:** *This newsletter includes both the February and March Minutes, as the printer mistakenly sent the previous month’s newsletter last time. Even though this error was not the VGEA’s, of course we still extend our apologies for any inconvenience or confusion this may have caused any of our members.*

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# ***VGEA Richmond Retirees Chapter***

## **February 2016 Meeting Minutes**

**T**he 2016 February Meeting of the Retiree Chapter was held on February 8 at Nick's Roman Terrace. The meeting was conducted by Walt Pulliam, President. He asked that everyone check the listing that was being circulated to ensure that all information was correct, and to notify Janet Martino of any changes to your email or address. Walt welcomed everyone, and apologized for the fact that no Retiree Newsletter was sent out last month. Marian Wimer made a motion that the minutes be accepted as distributed. Winfree Mountcastle seconded. Motion carried.

Dee Esser, Vice President, said that the Board is still working on revising the bylaws. Our Annual Meeting on September 17 will be at the Westin Hotel on Broad Street. The board discussed whether to support the Governor's proposal to limit the publishing of State Employee names and salaries. They are trying to keep the heat on everyone to have an unconditional yearly COLA. Since next Monday is Legislative Day, we need to stress this with everyone you see.

Winfree Mountcastle stated that his calculations for this year's COLA would be .12 percent.

Vice President Dee Esser introduced our speaker: Henrico Safety Officer Steve Nurmi. He has been with Henrico Police since 1996, and in his current position as Safety Officer for 12 years.

Officer Nurmi stated that in order for a crime to occur, it takes three things: opportunity, desire and skill. We can't control desire or skill, but we can take control and limit opportunity. You can limit opportunity by being aware of your surroundings and being assertive.

### ***He gave us the following tips:***

1. If you are in an elevator, make conversation with anyone else so everyone knows that you are aware of who is in the elevator
2. Be very alert in parking lots and always park near lights
3. Always trust your instincts
4. To protect yourself, use whatever you have in your hands – your keys, purse, cell phone, a bag, etc.
5. Always keep the shrubbery around your house trimmed so windows are not covered
6. If you are leaving a building and you're scared, ask someone to walk with you
7. If you are suspicious about something, call the police (not 911). They will do field interviews and take pictures. An example would be a suspicious car in the neighborhood. Under reporting is one of the police's problem
8. Work Safety – especially if you are responsible for open-

ing or closing. If you see anything unusual, call police before you enter or leave the building

9. Home Safety – Don't advertise that you are going on vacation especially on Facebook. Make sure you do let your trusted neighbors know. Lock all windows and doors. Make sure you have lights on your garage, doors and walkways. Use prickly bushes under windows. Keep your home well maintained Don't leave ladders outside. If you can afford it, alarm systems are nice. Be active in your Neighborhood Watch Program. Be aware of crimes in your neighborhood. You can check crime statistics at [henricopolice.org](http://henricopolice.org) or your town's website
10. In your vehicle, lock your doors when driving, when pumping gas, and when you get out. Never get out and leave your car running. Don't leave valuables in your car
11. Always have a cell phone with you
12. If you are ever in a dangerous situation, quickly decide what you are going to do, and then act on it. Get somewhere safe and call 911. If you go for a walk or run, let someone know your route and always go against the flow of traffic
13. Always listen to the voice in the back of your head and avoid isolated areas.

Faye Spruill gave the Treasurer's Report. She reported that our current balance is \$1,892.87.

Walt reminded everyone that VGEA Legislative Day is February 15. Call the VGEA Office and register if you want to attend.

Our next Retirees' Chapter meeting will be Monday, March 14, at 11:30 a.m. at Nick's Roman Terrace.

Our March meeting speaker will be an individual from Shepherd's Center.

***Submitted by:***  
**Janet Martino**  
***Secretary***

***This VGEA bumper sticker from the 1970s really says it all!***



# VGEA Richmond Retirees Chapter

## March 2016 Meeting Minutes

The 2016 March Meeting of the Retiree Chapter was held on the 14th at Nick's Roman Terrace. The meeting was conducted by Walt Pulliam, President. He asked that everyone check the listing that was being circulated to ensure that all information was correct, and to notify Janet Martino of any changes to your email or address. Janet asked everyone to check the listing for anyone who might be deceased or no longer living in the Richmond area, and to make a note by their name.

Due to the fact that the mail version of the Newsletter had a repeat of the January Minutes, the correct minutes were distributed to those in attendance who received the incorrect minutes. Winfree Mountcastle reported the projected COLA to be .0012 or 12 cents per \$100.

Faye Spruill, Treasurer, gave her report. The balance as of February 29 is \$1,883.27. Walt reminded everyone about the deadline for the VGEA Scholarships. Dee Esser, Vice President, also reminded everyone about the scholarships including the fact that even someone who is going back to college is also eligible. For the next Annual Meeting, the Board is considering an alternative to the usual speakers by having different tracks of discussion groups. For example, they may have a group for retirees and a separate group for active employees. They are also pursuing other high level speakers such as the Lieutenant Governor or Attorney General. The Board is still working on revising the bylaws.

Winfree Mountcastle stated that he and Walt, who both worked on the last revision of the bylaws, are emphatic that all members have access to all materials and the opportunity to vote regardless of whether the member has a computer.

Vice President, Dee Esser, introduced our speakers Ralph Graner and Julie Adams-Buchanan from The Shepherd's Center of Richmond.

Mr. Graner stated that he was a previous State employee at the Department of Economic Development so he is familiar with government employees. He was delighted that we had invited him to speak to our group and said that The Shepherd Center is one of the best kept secrets, and they work

very hard to get the word out about the Center and what they offer. Their goal is to encourage older adults to remain active and independent through enrichment programs and volunteer services. It began in Richmond in 1984. It has no religious affiliation, the heart of the organization is volunteers and they rely on dues and donations.

### There are four key areas:

- (1) **Wheels Here** – Is for seniors age 60 and over who want to live independently but do not have transportation. Shepherd's volunteers drive them to doctor appointments, pharmacies and grocery stores. The Richmond Center has provided transportation for 177 doctor appointments and 37 grocery stores. Rides were provided by more than 100 volunteer drivers.
- (2) **Wheels There** – The Center provides Bus Trips to various locations. Most of these are one-day trips, but a few are overnight. Many of these are theater trips. Once a year they have a trip to New York City.
- (3) **Calls and Hammers** – Twelve volunteers handled 203 calls, some of which resulted in minor home repairs.
- (4) **Brain Food** – "Open University" – There are three semesters that are eight weeks long for members. Membership dues are \$25 per year. Tuition is \$40 per semester or \$100 for all three semesters. They have over 100 volunteer professors who conduct the classes. Some examples of courses are: *French Conversation*, *African American Humor*, and *China Today*.



The Center always needs volunteers. You can check for more information on their website [www.TSCOR.org](http://www.TSCOR.org). To volunteer, call for an appointment to schedule an interview. If you wish to volunteer as a driver, you must have auto insurance. However, the Center carries additional insurance to cover the passengers.

Our next meeting will be Monday, April 11 at 11:30 a.m. at Nick's Roman Terrace. Our speaker will be Delegate Betsy Carr.

**Submitted by:**  
**Janet Martino**  
**Secretary**

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## Upcoming VGEA Meetings to Mark on Your Calendar!

**A**dd your **Regional VGEA Meeting** to your calendar now and plan to attend! **Northern Virginia Regional Meeting: April 11**, 6 p.m., Electric Palm Restaurant, Woodbridge; **Southwest Virginia Regional Meeting: April 21**, 6 p.m., Bone Fire SmokeHouse at the Hardware, Abingdon; **Far Southwest Virginia Regional Meeting: May 19**, 6 p.m., Park Avenue Bar & Grill, Holiday Inn, Norton; **Roanoke Regional Meeting: June 6**, 6 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, Roanoke; **Southside Virginia Regional Meeting: July 21**, 6 p.m., Mary's Diner, Danville; **Shenandoah Regional Meeting: August 18**, 6 p.m., Frontier Culture Museum, Staunton; **VGEA ANNUAL MEETING: September 17**, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Westin, 6631 W. Broad St., Richmond; **Tidewater Virginia Regional Meeting: October 20**, 6 p.m., Cutlass Grille, Chesapeake.

