

The Arlington Connection

The Golden Radish award is displayed in the yard outside of Rock Spring United Church of Christ on Little Falls Road in Arlington, where church space was donated through the spring and summer for volunteers to bag vegetables to be distributed to food insecure neighbors.

HOMELIFESTYLE

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FLOURISHING AFTER 55

55+ Programs are virtual or outdoors, following the Governor's Forward Virginia guidelines. You must have a 55+ Membership to attend (\$20 annual fee). Learn more at parks.arlingtonva.us search 55+ member.

To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747, option 3.

Outdoor

WiFi hotspots are available at a number of County locations. For a list, go to

<http://topics.arlingtonva.us/wireless>. Users can then connect to the County's free wireless network by choosing "Arlington Wireless."

55+ Launches YouTube Channel

The Office of 55+ Programs has launched a YouTube Channel offering exercise videos, stories from Arlington Spellbinders, cooking demonstrations, technology tips, general presentations and more. Get to know the 55+ fitness instructors as they teach a diverse mix of exercise classes for all skill levels. In addition, 55+ staff members host a bi-monthly talk show called "55+ Live" with up-to-date 55+ programs and previews of

entertainment, demonstrations, seminars, and other programs usually found in 55+ centers. In YouTube, enter in the search box, "55+ Virtual Programs, Arlington VA". Or go to parks.arlingtonva.us, find 55+ and Older programs and click on the YouTube icon. Questions or suggestions for videos and programs are welcome, email osap@arlingtonva.us.

Outdoor Program

Fast forwards, fast paced walking group, Friday, Dec. 11, 9-10:30 a.m. Registration #912201-01.

Virtual Programs

Art that resonates, "The Migration Series" by renowned black artist Jacob Lawrence, discussion led by Dr. LaNitra Berger, Senior Director of Fellowships, George Mason University, Wednesday, Dec. 9, noon-1 p.m. Registration # 912302-01.

Energy Master's Bingo with Eco-Action Arlington, Thursday, Dec. 10, 10-11 a.m. Registration # 912601-04.

Paint and sip with community arts programmer Jim Halloran, Thursday, Dec. 10, 10-11 a.m. More information with registration #912301-02.

Movie discussion, "The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society," Thursday, Dec. 10, 3-4 p.m. Registration # 912402-01.

Elder abuse, understanding and responding, Thursday, Dec. 10, 11 a.m. - noon. Hear Sydney Palinkas, ElderSAFE Center describe types of elder abuse. Registration # 912400-07.

A tribute to John Lewis, speaker Dr. Alfred O. Taylor, Jr., former president of Arlington's NAACP, Thursday, Dec. 10, 1:30 - 3 p.m. Registration # 912400-05.

History discussion led by Dwight

Rodgers, Encore Learning, Thursday, Dec. 10, 1-2:30 p.m. Registration # 912402-07.

Holiday Jeopardy, Friday, Dec. 11, 2-3 p.m. Registration # 912601-03.

Favorite holiday recipes, share tips and advice, Friday, Dec. 11, 4 - 5:30 p.m. Registration # 912803-04.

Basic drawing class to learn various techniques, Friday, Dec. 11, 1-2:30 p.m. Registration # 912301-01.

Virtual Programs: 12/13-18/20

Holiday Concert featuring the Quarantine Music Busters, a non-profit group of young musicians and vocalists, live performance, Sunday, Dec. 13, 3-4 p.m. Registration # 912802-3.

Diabetes peer support group, discuss daily management, social and emotional support, Monday, Dec. 14, 11- noon. Registration # 912500-4.

55+ Talk Show hosted by Office of 55+ Programs staff, Tuesday, Dec. 15, noon - 1 p.m. Preview upcoming virtual programs, demonstrations, seminars. Registration # 912801-2.

Open Mic online, watch and listen to talented 55+ members, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Registration # 912802-2.

History of Arlington's Hall's Hill, told by life-long resident Sandra Greene, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2-3 p.m. Registration # 912400-8.

Selling items online, Tech Guru Nick Englund demonstrates options and discusses safety and etiquette of final exchange, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 3-4 p.m. Registration #912403-1.

Healthy holiday recipes provided by dieticians from Virginia Cooperative Extension, Thursday, Dec. 17, 11 a.m.-noon. Registration #912501-1.

Coping with chronic pain, presented by Jeanne Meyer, LCSW, Virginia Hospital Center, Thursday, Dec. 17, 1-2 p.m. Registration # 912500-2.

Knee surgery information offered by Dr. John Hall, Thursday, Dec. 17, 2-3 p.m. Learn when a total joint replacement is needed. Registration # 912500-6.

Holiday Concert online by Encore Chorales, Thursday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m. Contact www.encorecreativity.org for access.

Genealogy Part 2, using census records, Thursday, Dec. 17, 3-4:30 p.m. Presented by Ashley Ramey, outreach specialist, Library of Virginia. Registration # 912400-3.

Holiday Variety Show featuring comedy entertainment, holiday treats, prizes and more, Friday, Dec. 18, 2-3 p.m. Registration # 912803-1.

Holiday Scavenger Hunt, follow seasonal clues and gather holiday themed items. Work with a team, Friday, Dec. 18, 6-8 p.m. Registration # 912601-2.

Arrest in 1991 Cold Case Rape Series

The Arlington County Police Department's Cold Case Unit is announced the arrest of a suspect in a cold case rape series. Michael F. Thomson, 63, of Montross, Va., was arrested and charged with two counts of the following charges: Rape, Abduction with the Intent to Defile, Forcible Sodomy and Use/Display of a Firearm during the Commission of a Felony. Additional charges are anticipated. He is being held in the Arlington County Detention Facility without bond.

Between January and December 1991, Arlington County Police investigated multiple reports of rapes and attempted rapes involving female victims walking from the East Falls Church Metro Station. In each reported incident, the victims were approached by an unknown male who displayed a firearm. Three cases were linked by DNA evidence with a fourth case



Michael F. Thomson, arrested.

being investigated as part of the series due to similarities with the other cases.

At approximately 6 p.m. on Jan. 17, 1991, a female victim was walking home from the East Falls Church Metro in the 4800 block of Little Falls Road when an unknown male suspect approached her,

brandished a firearm and forced her into a grassy area between two homes. The suspect raped the victim before fleeing the scene on foot.

At approximately 7:40 p.m. on Feb. 13, 1991, a female victim was walking from the East Falls Church Metro to her parked vehicle in the 2300 block of N. Tuckahoe Street when she observed the unknown male suspect walking towards her. The suspect brandished a firearm, forced the victim to the side of a residence where he raped her before fleeing the scene on foot.

At approximately 10 p.m. on March 6, 1991, a female victim was walking home from the East Falls Church Metro in the 6300 block of Lee Highway when she was approached by an unknown male who alleged to have a firearm. The suspect forced the victim to the back of a nearby residence and directed her to remove her

clothing. The suspect placed the firearm to her head and told her to be quiet. The suspect then asked the victim if she wanted him to leave and when she said yes, he fled the scene on foot.

At approximately 7:08 p.m. on December 2, 1991, a female victim was walking from the East Falls Church Metro to her parked vehicle in the 6100 block of N. 22nd Street when she was approached by an unknown male suspect brandishing a firearm. When the victim screamed, the suspect ran away and fled from the scene in a vehicle. As the suspect was fleeing, he dropped the baseball hat he was wearing. DNA from the baseball hat was later linked to DNA recovered in the Jan. 17 and Feb. 13 incidents.

In 2017, the Cold Case Unit initiated a fresh look at these unsolved cases including the review of cold case files, crime scene evidence

and laboratory results. The DNA was resubmitted for additional analysis including phenotyping and genetic genealogy. The analysis resulted in additional information that led detectives to identify Michael Francis Thomson as a possible suspect. Forensic evidence combined with thorough investigative efforts linked the suspect to the 1991 incidents.

Thomson was taken into custody without incident at his residence on the morning of Dec. 1, 2020.

This remains an active criminal investigation and anyone with information related to this series is asked to contact Detective R. Ortiz at 703-228-4702 or Rortiz@arlingtonva.us. Information may also be provided to the Arlington County Police Tip Line at ACPDTipline@arlingtonva.us or anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477).

Opera NOVA Is Back on a High Note

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Opera NOVA is back in operation after a nine-month hiatus due to the pandemic. Jose Sacin, Artistic Director, says, "It has been difficult to be away from the stage, to keep the motivation to keep doing what we love." Now they are reconnecting with their audiences. "We are targeting isolation."

Sacin and other performers spent all day Saturday, Dec. 4 at the Women's Club of Arlington on Buchanan Street recording their Christmas show to be released on Zoom as a free concert in mid-December. Sacin says the moderator is Bryan Dawson. Four vocal performers will join Tatiana Loisha on piano with Sacin playing guitar. Sacin will be performing a range of selections from vocal on "Gesu Bambino" to guitar on "Los peces en el rio" and "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." Angela Knight, Sissel Bakken, and Israel Lozano will also be performing in the program.

Sacin says Opera NOVA has a virtual concert planned monthly through April with their Senior Concert planned for January. Prior to the pandemic Opera NOVA regularly



Carlos Macher directs rehearsal of Opera NOVA's Virtual Christmas program on Saturday, December 4. Baritone Jose Sacin rehearses with Titiana Loisha on piano.

performed for seniors, who can be more isolated, with concerts in local churches and other venues.

A concert is planned for February in connection with Black History month. Last year this concert was held at the Kennedy Center Millennium Theater.

The Children's Concert, which Opera NOVA generally performs

in October, traditionally draws an in-person audience of almost 1,000 children. Miriam Anderson, the President of Opera NOVA says the Children's Concert will be offered in March, virtually this year for the first time in 42 years. Finally the April concert will feature "The Three Baritones" with Alex Albuquerque, Eduardo Castro and

Jose Sacin and will be focused on celebrating the medical workers ranging from doctors and nurses to the janitorial staff.

Sacin says that although the December concert will be free, there will be a charge for the remainder of the concerts. He says many of the performers have not had a salary since March when the pan-

demic hit and all performances were cancelled.

Anderson says, "I can assure you the personal impact of having your profession wiped out is staggering. Career opera professionals and musicians are suffering depression and identity crisis." She says each one of these concerts costs several thousand dollars to produce although she jokes the performers sometimes refer to themselves as volunteers because they love to perform and sometimes have to do it for free.

Stephanie Walsh in a letter to Opera NOVA says, "Over the past decades Opera NOVA has been a staple in the Arlington community as one of the few opera-based opportunities in the DC-Maryland-Virginia area. Singers from all over the area have flocked to audition for its operas." She credits Opera NOVA with "the opportunity to pursue our dreams and keep music as a part of our lives."

Sacin says if you donate to Opera NOVA "we can keep creating job opportunities for singers and musicians."

Opera NOVA was formed in 1962 and later restructured in 2011 as Opera NOVA. Arlington is the smallest entity in the United States to have its own opera.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Golden Radish Awarded for Urban Gleaning

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Each year Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture gives out the Golden Radish Award to a person, group or business that has made a significant contribution to advancing urban agriculture issues, policies, programs and enterprises in Arlington. The mission of the Friends of Urban Agriculture: To build a resilient, community-driven urban agriculture sector that provides a fair, healthy, sustainable food system for all Arlingtonians.

Volunteers in the food bagging program met for several hours twice a week at Rock Spring United Church of Christ during the spring and summer to package donated collards, beans, potatoes, squash and other vegetables grown at area gardens around Arlington.

Becky Halbe, Program Coordinator, said the donated produce that was packaged and delivered by Rock Spring totaled 6,826.5 pounds and the gleaned produce that came to Rock Spring totaled 2,668.5 pounds. The bagging program started June 1 and ended Oct. 29. Halbe said the produce went to many area food pantries and distribution sites based on their need, distribution dates, timeframes to accept produce and their ability to refrigerate if necessary.

Halbe says many of the volunteers were seniors, some in their 80s that had been rejected by other volunteer organizations due to their age but they reported feeling safe.



Rev. Kathy Dwyer, Senior Pastor of Rock Spring United Church of Christ, and Becky Halbe, Program Coordinator, show off the award at Rock Spring. This award will be officially presented at the virtual Friends of Urban Agriculture meeting on Dec. 8.

Volunteers bag donated vegetables during the summer at Rock Spring United Church of Christ for distribution to food insecure neighbors in Arlington.

Halbe said one of her favorite gleaning memories is harvesting collards on Good Friday and learn-

ing that DC Central Kitchen cooked and served those same collards on Easter Sunday.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Police Investigate Discharge of a Firearm during Armed Robbery

The Arlington County Police Department's Homicide/Robbery Unit is investigating an Armed Robbery and Attempted Malicious Wounding in the Fairlington neighborhood that took place on the evening of Dec. 5, 2020.

At approximately 9:48 p.m., police were dispatched to the 2800 block of S. Buchanan Street for the report of an armed robbery. The investigation revealed the female victim and two unknown male suspects were meeting at the location for the pre-arranged sale of narcotics. Suspect One approached the victim and engaged her in conversation. Suspect Two then approached, knocked her to the ground, brandished a firearm and demanded cash before stealing her purse. The suspects fled the scene on foot and fired a single shot in the direction of the victim.

She was not injured. A perimeter was established by responding officers and a canvas of the area returned with negative results.

Suspect One is described as a male in his late teens, wearing all black and a blue face mask. Suspect Two is described as a male wearing all black, a black beanie hat and dark blue face mask.

This remains an active criminal investigation. Anyone with information related to this incident and/or home surveillance that may assist the investigation is asked to contact the Arlington County Police Department's Homicide/Robbery Unit at 703-228-4180 or ACPDTipline@arlingtonva.us.

Information may also be reported anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477).

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

Now thru Dec. 15

Citrus and Pecans Sale. Help support the NW Arlington Lions sale of Citrus and Pecans, which have gone contactless and directly to you. Order online at www.nwarlionscitrus.fwffb.net. Order Maple Syrup at www.purintonmaple.com. Use Maple Promo Code - "nwarlions" at Check Out with delivery by Christmas. Call 703-528-1130 or Text 703-772-3784.

Now Thru Dec. 13

Christmas trees are coming to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Arlington. The Christmas season is just around the corner, and once again St. Andrew's is ready to help you celebrate with a beautiful tree, fresh from Vermont. Sales begin on the Friday of Thanksgiving weekend and continue through the next

three weekends (while supplies last). Last year, they sold almost all the trees in the first two weekends, so don't delay. St. Andrew's is located at 4000 Lorcom Lane (at Military Road), Arlington. The sales schedule is as follows:

- *Saturday, December 12, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- *Sunday, December 13, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- *While supplies last. For more information, visit the website: <https://standrewsarlington.org/christmas-tree-sales/>.

NOW THRU DEC. 13

Warehouse Sale - Pop-Up Shoe Store Grand Opening. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Warehouse Sale - Pop-Up Shoe Store, 1201 S. Hayes St., Suite C, Arlington. They carry over 20,000 pairs of men's and women's brand name shoes. All shoes will be \$40 or less for this event. Join us for our largest selection ever. Anyone on the VIP list will get an exclusive Buy 2 Get 1 50% off coupon for the Grand Opening. Stop in early for the best selection! Sign

up for the VIP list here: <https://shoeswarehousesale.com/va-arlington/?au-ca>

THURSDAY/DEC. 10

The Kingpin Strategy. 1-2 p.m. Join the DEA Museum for a virtual lecture reflecting on the development and evolution of the Kingpin Strategy, targeting drug traffickers. Visit the website: www.deamuseum.org. Free tickets available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dea-museum-lecture-the-kingpin-strategy-tickets-130427079907>

Friday/Dec. 11

Self-Care During the Holidays. 2-3:30 p.m. Virtual Zoom event. The winter season can be a difficult and stressful time, particularly for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Join other adults in this workshop to learn tips for offering yourself care, compassion, and grace as you navigate this season. Visit the website: capitalcaring.org/grief-support

NEWS

Former CEO of Technology Company Pleads Guilty to Investment Fraud Scheme

The former chief executive officer and co-founder of Trustify, Inc., a privately-held technology company founded in 2015 and based in Arlington, pleaded guilty last week to his involvement in a fraud scheme resulting in millions of dollars of losses to investors.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Brian C. Rabbitt of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney G. Zachary Terwilliger for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Assistant Director in Charge Steven M. D'Antuono of the FBI's Washington Field Office made the announcement.

Daniel Boice, 41, of Alexandria, pleaded guilty to one count of securities fraud and one count of wire fraud before Senior United States District Judge T.S. Ellis III of the Eastern District of Virginia. Sentencing is scheduled for March 19, 2021.

According to admissions made in connection with the plea agreement, beginning in 2015, Boice fraudulently solicited investments in Trustify, a privately held technology start-up company that connected customers with private investigators. Boice raised approximately \$18.5 million from over 90 investors by, among other things, falsely overstating Trustify's financial performance.

Despite representing to investors that their funds would go towards operating and growing Trustify's business, Boice diverted at least \$3.7 million for his own benefit and to fund his lifestyle. This included the purchase of a home in Alexandria, travel by private jet, and furnishing a seaside vacation home.

The FBI's Washington Field Office is investigating the case.

Trial Attorney Blake Goebel of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell Carlberg of the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting the case.

Individuals who believe they may be a victim in this case should contact the Victim Witness Services Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia at 703-299-3700 for more information.

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Besties Aiko and Tai.



Trick-or-treating Aiko-of-Courthouse, last October.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY JENNIFER ZHUGE



Why Cats Could Be Good for Your Bones

BY JOAN BRADY
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Jennifer Zhuge's parents wouldn't allow pets when she was growing up. And she really, really wanted one. So one of the first things she did when she got her own place was to go on the hunt for a furry companion. She says her cat, Aiko, has been a perfect fit for her lifestyle.

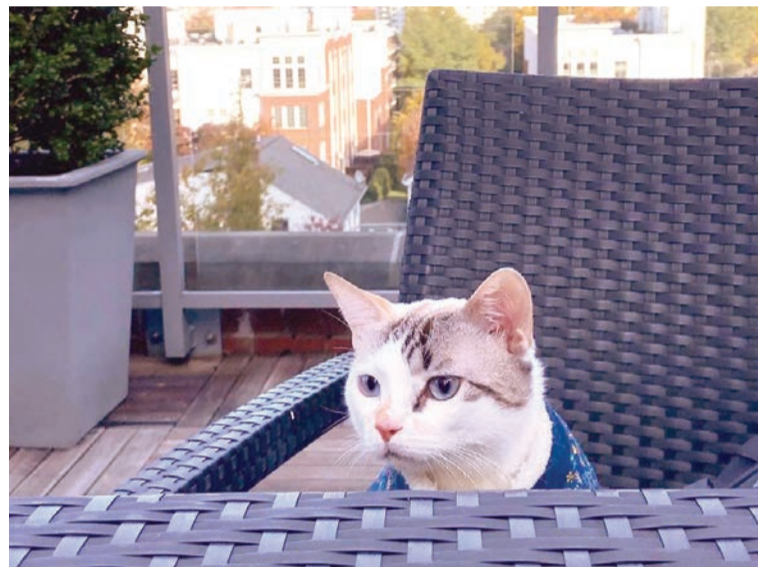
"Cats are fantastic, [they] get a bad rep for not being affectionate, but I've found that cats can be just as affectionate as dogs," she says.

Aiko walks on a leash and enjoys interacting with neighbors and strangers alike, according to Zhuge. She used to have weekly playdates with another feline named Tai. The two cat-moms would trade off hosting and the four-leggeds would spend an afternoon wrestling. Before the pandemic, the moms enjoyed a little socializing on playdate days as well. Unfortunately, Tai and his mom recently moved away and Aiko is really missing her friend.

To be honest, if I didn't know Aiko was a cat, I would have assumed she was a dog. Affectionate, social, cares about others, facilitates human friendships, those are all stereotypical dog attributes.

I've been thinking quite a bit about stereotypes and cats and dogs recently. One of my inner circle, a cat devotee, questioned why it seems ok to malign cats, even expressing hatred toward them. Yet if someone says they hate dogs, he/she is thought to be a sociopath. I haven't been able to get it out of my head. It rings both true and unfair and might even be a metaphor for other things going on in the world today.

If we were talking about bird households at just under 3 percent in the U.S., maybe it could be explained, not justified, as being a



Enjoying the beautiful, unseasonably warm weather.

minority issue. But according to the AVMA, 38 percent of households have a dog vs. 24 percent with a cat. The difference just doesn't seem significant enough.

My initial dive into the differences between cat and dog "people" revealed that despite the headlines and even the research summaries, the little exploration that has been done on this topic has yielded inconsistent results.

It appears that somewhere along the way, society has created these stereotypes and many have adopted them. And, actually, there may not be much in the way of significant differences between dog and cat lovers. When I consider my own cat-vs dog- friends, that actually tracks.

Dispensing with the pet-related people stereotypes left me with some time on my hands to look for the goodness in cats. I like cats, but I would definitely describe myself as a dog person. Googling "what's great about cats," resulted in a list of lists, most of which focused on things that I'd categorize as practical. Cats are, "not emotional," "low maintenance," "quiet," independent" and "inexpensive (com-

pared to other pets)..."

The same search for dogs got me a completely different flavor of descriptors, dogs "have your back," "are great companions," "make you feel less alone..." And, according to my search results, not only are dogs loyal companions, but they also offer awesome health benefits; Dogs are good for your heart; they decrease stress levels, they help seniors with cognitive function and they encourage their owners to get off their butts.

So the same Google search for each revealed that dogs are awesome and cats, well cats are fine, if that's what you are looking for.

Having just watched "The Social Dilemma" on Netflix, it occurred to me that my search results might be colored by Google serving up reinforcement of what "they" have determined I think, instead of feeding my desire to expand my worldview.

So I decided to be more specific and googled "health benefits of cats." Sure enough, there is a veritable treasure trove of health benefits enjoyed by cat owners. Like dogs, cats are good for your heart and can lower stress and anxiety.

That does seem logical. But, I had no idea that medical experts think that cats purring may have a positive effect on joint mobility and bone healing, due to its frequency. So the joyful noise made cats may have actual physical healing powers. How completely awesome is that?

More searching and I learned that cats love their human families and are very affectionate. Yes, just like dogs. But, even cooler, cats can also be taught to use a toilet and even to flush! I'd like to see my beagle try that.

Personally, I climbed out of this week's rabbit hole with a much greater appreciation of our feline friends. But, more importantly, it was a good reminder not to believe the hype.

If you want to weigh in on the cat people vs. dog people debate, email Joan at joan@joanbrady-photography.com.

If you are interested in adding a cat, dog or small animal pet to your household, here's a few local rescue organizations who might be able to help you find your perfect match:

- Animal Welfare League of Alexandria
- Animal Welfare League of Arlington
- Homeward Trails
- Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation
- PetConnect Rescue
- Wolf Trap Animal Rescue

ArPets is a weekly feature for highlighting the well-loved pets of Arlington as well as animals who are available for adoption. If you or your dog, cat, iguana, bunny, rat or any other pet, has an interesting pet story to tell, send email to: joan@joanbradyphotography.com.

Joan is an award-winning Connection Newspapers columnist and local photographer specializing in pets, children and families and contemporary business portraits.

Vietnam Veterans Share Holiday Cheer

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227 of Northern Virginia fulfilled their founding principle, "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another," by providing Holiday Cheer to military veterans, active duty personnel, and homeless families in several ways.

For the eleventh consecutive year, the Chapter provided gift cards in value from \$75 for a single veteran to \$225 for a married veteran with children for the Holidays. This year's amount of \$6,675 benefited 56 veterans and their families, an increase of 13 recipients from last year. Despite the higher number, a \$25 increase for each assistance category was approved. The recipients are in the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing program for veterans and their families to assist in their transition from homelessness.

The Chapter's Santa List added Holiday Cheer to two military families for the ninth consecutive year. The family spouse is being treated at a local military hospital. Chuck and Glenda Harris shopped for a veteran mother with one child, while his neighbor, Charlie and Jill Puma, fulfilled the list for the second family with three children. The Puma's family donation of \$588 augmented the Chapter's grant of \$500 for a total amount of \$1,088. The Puma family agreed to be permanent program patrons although they are not military veterans.

The Chapter and MITRE Corp. employee's 2020 CARE package partnership continues into the Holiday Season. The twelve-year project has shipped 2,895 plus packages to service members with an APO or FPO mailing address. Each package provides personal care items and other assorted useful items from snacks to books to make the Holidays a little bit more enjoyable for our national heroes.

The final Holiday outreach is the Bridges to Independence, a homeless family service in Arlington County. The children's toys and winter clothing were collected despite the cancellation of the Chapter's Holiday Party. Bill and Leslie Lynch agreed to serve as the collection center and to deliver the gifts. In addition, over \$370 has been collected for the shelter's Holiday needs. This community outreach started with the Chapter's Holiday Party in 1987. The gifts were given to recently arrived and needy immigrant families from war-torn Central America and the Middle East. Chapter 227 offers veteran camaraderie and opportunities to assist veterans, active military personnel, and the community. Vietnam and Vietnam Era-veterans, and non-veterans can call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 for additional information or visit the chapter webpage at www.vva227.org or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/VVA227>. Cash donations can be mailed to VVA Chapter 227, P.O. Box Arlington, Va. 22205.



Jasmine O. Wilson, the Northern Virginia VASH Case Manager, accepts the Chapter's Holiday Gift Cards for needy VASH veterans and families.



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Barbie doll? The newest Wimpy Kid book? Magnetic animal puzzle? Dig-it-up dinosaur eggs? Smelly cotton candy putty? Make your list, check it twice and head for the red Santa mailbox outside of the Robert Walker log house at Gulf Branch Nature Center on Military Road. This mailbox will be emptied on Dec. 14, and the letters will be packaged and sent "special delivery" to the North Pole to the attention of Santa's gift center.

If you include your home address, Santa will send you a postcard in return.

Just next to the mailbox is a box for Arlington Food Assistance Center donations. AFAC regularly provides supplemental groceries for needy Arlington families. Canned soups and beans, tuna, pasta and peanut butter are especially appreciated.

Route 1 Multimodal Improvements Feasibility Study Arlington County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Wednesday, December 16, 2020, 6:30-8 p.m.
www.virginiadot.org/route1multimodalstudy

Find out about a study to identify enhanced multimodal connectivity and accommodations along and across Route 1 from approximately 12th Street to 23rd Street South in Crystal City, to meet the changing transportation needs of this growing urban activity center. In coordination with Arlington County, the study will explore an at-grade urban boulevard, review and compare potential improvements to the current elevated conditions, and the elevated urban boulevard described in the Crystal City Sector Plan. Ultimately, the study aims to provide sufficient information to make the best decision on a future project on Route 1 in Crystal City.

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at www.virginiadot.org/route1multimodalstudy. The study team will make a short presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review study information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2599 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **December 28, 2020** via the comment form on the study website, by mail to Mr. Dan Reinhard, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to route1multimodalstudy@VDOT.virginia.gov.

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Christmas Casual or Go All Out?

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

As with many traditions, the pandemic is altering celebrations. Whether extravagant and lavish, minimalist and understated or somewhere in between, inspiration for holiday décor abounds. A group of tastemakers are offering an array of design ideas to make any home merry and bright this season.

Ease and Simplicity

“You can go casual and let yourself off the hook this year,” said Amy Rutherford, owner of Red Barn Mercantile in Old Town Alexandria. “Just iron your tablecloth and linen napkins, forage for greenery to put in a vase and call it a day.”

Understated décor is one of the themes that Sustainable Designer, Zelda Elisco of Abigail-Elise Design Studio is encouraging this season. “Decorate your mantle with a garland of greenery and wooden beads for the perfect minimalist look,” she said. “Arrange the perfect holly bouquet in a large glass vase.”

“If there’s one thing we’ve learned from the pandemic, it’s to simplify,” added Anne Walker of Anne Walker Design and Farm & Feast in Potomac, Maryland. “Focus on what’s really important. This principle applies to design as much as it does to life.”

A stunning tablescape doesn’t have to mean lavish and fussy, says Walker whose designs often incorporate reindeer antler candle holders and laser-cut wood Christmas trees in soft shades of beige. “The lack of embellishment allows each element to have a huge impact. A beautiful dining table is so restful in its simplicity [and] invites you to linger in peaceful, elegant spaces she said.

Find inspiration in nature

While a daylong shopping spree in search of the most festive dining accessories might not be feasible this year, creating a tablescape with natural elements allows for simplicity while maintaining elegance.

“Grab a magnolia leaf and write a name on it for a place card and attach it to your napkins with twine. Simple twine is always a fun way to wrap napkins,” said Rutherford. “When you get your Christmas tree they have extra branches lying around. Pick up some of those and line them down the table. Sprinkle in candles, and fresh fruit like pomegranates, apples or oranges with cloves, which smell nice and are really pretty.”

“Evergreen is a beautiful smelling green and lasts a long time,” added designer Tina Yaraghi of The Enchanted Home. “I love mixing it in with fresh cut boxwood and eucalyptus. Keep a spray bottle with tap water on hand to spray every few days.”

Natural elements can also be used to add color. “Try adding a vase filled with cranberries or hurricane candle holders to a tablescape, suggests Yaraghi. “You can place it in the center of a festive wreath. I also add fresh greenery in a little mint julep next to each place setting, which is such a beautiful



PHOTO BY COURTNEY THOMAS, THE PICKET FENCE
Tiny Christmas trees made from bottle brushes add a splash of color to holiday décor.



PHOTO BY ANNE WALKER
Create an understated tablescape with reindeer antler candle holders and laser-cut wood. Christmas trees in neutral shades



THE ENCHANTED HOME
Try decorating with unexpected patterns color combinations, like blue and white chinoiserie, this year.

“You can go casual and let yourself off the hook this year, but just because it’s your immediate family and not the 30 people you usually host doesn’t mean that you can’t go all out.”

— Amy Rutherford,
owner of Red Barn Mercantile in Old Town Alexandria

and elegant touch.”

“Votive candles add understated elegance and are a must have for any holiday table,” she continued. “There nothing like the glow of candlelight [mixed] with greenery is always a beautiful look and I will often add faux white berries for a little something extra.”

A Twist on Traditional Accessories

Dining tables aren’t the only spots to add Christmas cheer. “Fill your mantle with different styles of bottle brush trees in varying heights and put a wreath above it” said Courtney Thomas of The Picket Fence in Burke, Virginia. “Bottle brush trees, which, as the name suggests, are made of the brush-



PHOTO BY THE ENCHANTED HOME
Etched hurricanes mixed with greenery and pinecones create an elegant tablescape.



COURTNEY THOMAS, THE PICKET FENCE
Christmas villages are popular this year.

es that you use to clean bottles. They’re popular this year. They were big in the 1950s, so they’re kind of retro. You can also display them in groups of three or five and make a forest.”

“Christmas villages have been really popular this year,” continued Thomas. “Those are fun but for a side table, console or on a shelf.”

There’s Nothing Wrong with Extravagance

Even using decorations that you already own, simple doesn’t mean lackluster. “Even if you normally go full tilt with glitter and glamour during the holidays, try something new this year,” said Walker.

“For table settings, I say go big or go home,” said Yaraghi. “I love bringing out all my silver, china, crystal. The more the merrier and if not for the holidays, then when?”

“Get a beautiful centerpiece and line the table with pretty candles,” said Rutherford. “Embrace the moment, embrace it even though it might be your immediate family and not the 30 people you usually host. Go all out. Just because it’s the four or six of you doesn’t mean you can go all out.”

IN THE KITCHEN

Small Business Changes Course in Middle of Pandemic

Mindy's delivery dinners spread like wildfire in Del Ray.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
GAZETTE PACKET

Erin White has just returned from delivering 50 boxed chicken kabobs, couscous salad and cornbread lunches to hospital workers at Inova Alexandria Hospital on Nov. 17. She says the hospitals are suddenly busy again with COVID patients, and the workers are so glad to be recognized and to have a good meal.

Erin and her husband Bobby White, who live in Del Ray, own Mindy's, a catering company based SEE SMALL, PAGE 11



Mindy's has reinvented their catering business and now delivers seventy five percent of their home dinners to Alexandria and N. Arlington.

Arlington County and Schools Partner on Stormwater Detention Vault at New Elementary School

In December, the Arlington County Board and Arlington School Board will be considering a funding agreement to build the first phase of a stormwater detention vault under the athletic fields at the new elementary school at the Reed site. The purpose of the stormwater detention vault is to alleviate flooding concerns in the Westover area following devastating impacts from recent storms.

The proposed stormwater vault at the new elementary school at the Reed site is a community-driven project following the devastating losses and impacts to surrounding businesses and homes from the July 2019 storm event. The School Board received an update on the proposed project changes to make these stormwater improvements at the Dec. 3 School Board meeting.

This is an important step towards the goal of building a Flood Resilient Arlington, a strategy to use public land for multi-purpose goals to overcome significant space constraints and conflicts that frequently hinder the County's ability to expand the capacity of the stormwater management system. This project will not impact the opening of the school, scheduled for August 2021.

The school will open on schedule with full access to the playground and courts. While the field project is completed, students will also have access to the County's outdoor space located at the Reed site. The fields will be available after the stormwater facility has been completed.

"This project represents a first of its kind partnership between the County and Arlington Public Schools. It maximizes the use of public land and will benefit the entire community, especially the Westover area," said Libby Garvey, Arlington County Board Chair.

About the Project

A smaller stormwater detention tank scaled for on-site impacts was already included in the approved plans for the school project for temporary storage of stormwater for post-event, managed release. In response to community appeals, the County collaborated with Arlington Public Schools to design and build a much larger detention vault under the athletic fields that will form a cornerstone to a watershed-scale solution in the Torreyson Run watershed. The construction of the stormwater vault is being planned in two phases to ensure the construction of the improvements does not impact the timely completion of the school construction for the start of the school in 2021, and to prevent excavation of newly-placed asphalt and concrete adjacent to the school along 18th street.

In November 2020, Arlington County voters approved a \$50.4 million stormwater bond referendum to help fund watershed-scale projects and local capacity improvements such as this project to mitigate high risk flood areas, as part of a path toward a Flood Resilient Arlington. The smaller phase 1 will be funded primarily with existing program revenue and Phase 2 will likely be completed using bond proceeds.

The preliminary cost estimate for both phases is between \$14.1M – \$16.0M for design and construction. The length of construction will be determined during the design process. Communication about the proposed stormwater facility has been ongoing with representatives from the nearby civic associations, the Westover commercial district, and the Arlington County Civic Federation. As the design for the phase 2 stormwater vault is developed early in 2021, the County will conduct a thorough public engagement process with the impacted communities.

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IN RE: ESTATE OF CHARLES ROBERT PARNELL, DECEASED

ORDER UP PUBLICATION

The object of this suit is to have the Estate of Charles Robert Parnell, Deceased, settled and paid out to all heirs.

It is ORDERED that Christine Royer appear at the above named Court and protect her interest she may have in this matter on or before December 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

It is hereby ORDERED that this Order be published once a week for four successive weeks in the Arlington Connection as her last known address was in Arlington, VA.

It is ORDERED that the Arlington Connection publish this Order for the time specified and send the Certificate of Publication and bill to Carl J. Witmeyer, II, Esquire at 9562 Kings Charter Drive, Suite 200, Ashland, VA 23005, to be paid by Peggy George, Administrator of the Estate.

It is ORDERED that the Clerk of this Court send a certified copy of this Order to Carl J. Witmeyer, II and to the Arlington Connection upon entry by this Court.

ENTER: 11/10/2020

R. Witmeyer, II
Judge

I ASK FOR THIS:

Carl J. Witmeyer, II
Carl J. Witmeyer, II
VSB # 15700
THE WITMEYER LAW FIRM, LLC
9562 Kings Charter Drive, Suite 200
Ashland, VA 23005
(804) 752-0130

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IN THE KITCHEN

Small Business Changes Course

FROM PAGE 9

in D.C. in the Palisades. They have dramatically switched gears since the pandemic hit in March. She says, "It was as if someone turned off the faucet. All of the offices who ordered lunch, all the events were suddenly gone." They had just bought out their partners in the business six months before COVID hit. "After 19 years we were ready to start a new era."

The Whites shut down the business until May 1 while they decided how to move forward. All of the employees were furloughed to unemployment. When Mindy's reopened it offered delivery dinners for 2, 4 or more guests on three days a week so they could still do some catering on the weekends.

She explains that they couldn't afford to offer dinners for more than three days because they had to keep the staff at a basic level with a chef and three cooks. "My husband and I do everything else. He makes all of the deliveries. We do the bookkeeping, ordering, and there is still some event planning."

Erin says there have been a few micro weddings. "That's the lingo in the business these days." This kind of wedding will be for 10-20 guests with each dinner plated and served — no buffets. When they arranged a Cherry Blossom riverboat wedding in Alexandria this summer each guest received an appetizer box with three-to-four nibbles or tastes. When they did an Arlington backyard wedding on Vacation Lane in July, they had a buffet but the host had arranged one way in and one way out with groups related to each other entering together.

She says the business they are doing right now allows them to do 30-38 percent of their previous business, "just enough to keep us open." When they started the new home delivery model, they promoted it to their neighbors in the D.C. Palisades neighborhood who knew them.

"Just on a whim we let our friends and neighbors know in Del Ray where we live, and it just spread like wildfire. We mentioned it to some of our friends and boom." Now she says 75 percent of their customers are in Alexandria and N. Arlington." Although the business is based in D.C., she says they pay taxes to the localities where the exchange takes place like Alexandria and Arlington.

Erin continues, "Almost everyone is a repeat customer. We have a woman who has ordered every week for 28 weeks since we started. She says Friday is her favorite day of the week. It is Mindy's day."

Some folks who live out of town order for customers who live locally. One person from Colorado sends a meal to Alexandria so her mother gets good food every week. "We do a lot of gift certificates, someone who just had a baby, to thank a teacher, to cheer up a sick neighbor."

Mindy's delivers about 100 dinners a week and has the capacity to almost double it. They were preparing to deliver about 100 Thanksgiving dinners in one day. "We have never catered Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners in 20 years because that three weeks was always so huge for us with holiday parties."

Now this year those holiday parties are not taking place, and Mindy's is overwhelmed by Thanksgiving orders. Erin says she thinks things have changed with people not traveling this year due to the pandemic. "They are staying home instead of going to mom's where she cooked the dinner so they are ordering a Thanksgiving dinner this year."

Erin says their food is meant to satisfy a variety of tastes. "We try Italian, Mediterranean, Asian so you can order week after week and not get tired of it." She says they have done 28 weeks of dinners so they will do some rotating. She has enjoyed experimenting, like with the beet and feta salad. And people ask for repeats. "A 13-year-old neighbor walked by our home the other day and said 'I miss your meatloaf' so meatloaf is on the menu of choices this week."

"The dips such as pimento cheese or hot mushroom and caramelized dip have been ridiculously popular." She says beef bourguignon is always one of the top picks the week when they have it, and fish has been a big seller. "I think people are intimidated by cooking fish so we always have choices like scallops, salmon, cod, halibut."

Each week offers several appetizer choices such as interesting and inventive mixed salads, dips and soups; main courses including a beef, a fish as well as vegetarian main course and a choice of two side dishes. A dessert such as s'more bars, magic bars or chocolate covered macaroons from Maribeth's Bakery in Alexandria are also included.

"Maribeth's is in the same shape we are and continues to do wholesale for people who need it. Vendor partners are super important." She said that it's been amazing the community support for local restaurants in Alexandria and Arlington.

On a delivery day Bobby pops out of the lobster truck wearing his apron and his large Irish smile. Erin says Bobby immigrated from Ireland to America in 1988 and became a citizen on St. Patrick's Day in 1996. Erin credits Bobby's Irish gregariousness for much of their success. She says they have two sons, one at William and Mary and the other at George Washington Middle School who have promoted the business through their social media friends.

Erin says that catered food is meant to be transported and then reheated. Also the portions are generous which is how caterers think, 10 percent overage rather than a plated meal. "I think people like this. This means you might have leftovers and things like the curry couscous will keep for the next day. People order the soup which is an appetizer choice but save it for lunch the next day."

Mindy's can't operate long term on its current home delivery model base. "My optimistic hope is that when things go back to normal that we are building a new customer base, that the customers who have been getting home delivery will mention us to their office for lunch or remember us for the 50th anniversary party."

Erin concludes, "making a small business work in this atmosphere is hard but I feel like Alexandria and Arlington embrace the small business owners more than others, and for that we have been very lucky."

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"Medican't" Take It Anymore



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The non-stop - or so it seems, television advertising letting all of us viewers know that the 2020 Medicare Open Enrollment window is about to slam shut is nearly over. For those of us age 65 or older, this is not an opportunity to ignore. And given the frequency and repetition (the commercials are repeated, rarely ever different), at least on the channels that I watch (maybe that's the problem?), I feel like Bill Murray reliving his previous 24 hours endlessly in the movie, "Groundhog Day." However, unlike the movie, I can't do anything to undo what is constantly bombarding me on television. Switching channels during the commercials wouldn't really help because usually I'm watching a specific program - in between the commercials, and switching back and forth seems like too much effort. Besides, I might lose the continuity of the program I'm watching if I were to mis-time my switch. I suppose I could mute the commercial but I've heard Joe Namath - and others talk about the "give back benefit," the "zero dollar premiums in your area," and the possible additional benefits: "vision including contacts, hearing aids and batteries, home-delivered meals, dental and rides to your doctor's appointment" so often that even if I couldn't hear Joe actually promoting, I would still hear what he's saying in my head since I've probably heard it already a hundred times since the enrollment period began.

As I sit and write this on Tuesday, Dec. 1, the end is near however: Dec. 7, 2020. On that day the senior-centric advertising party (solicitation) will be over. Then the commercials will cease and desist - for now, only to return next year in November when the 2021 Open Enrollment period begins anew. Perhaps I'll be more inclined to act then. After all, I am their target audience. However, my being a senior with a pre-existing condition: cancer, limits and complicates my options. In addition, changing plans means changing doctors and though change can often be a good thing, for me, considering my life occasionally hangs in the balance, change might not be a good thing. In fact, it could be a downright bad thing. I mean, my oncologist has kept me alive for almost 12 years since my Feb. 27, 2009 non small cell lung cancer stage IV diagnosis. Granted, there may have been a slight revision of my diagnosis since three surgical biopsies performed earlier this year confirmed that what I actually have is papillary thyroid cancer. Nevertheless, changing now seems counterproductive, sort of. The damage is already done. I'm not sure there's much to gain now that a second opinion has similarly confirmed my updated diagnosis and has agreed with my current oncologist's treatment plan: Lenvima for me. But I do feel there's much to lose: nearly 12 years of treatment/experience with my present provider. And even though I understand that medical records can get transferred, I still feel I'd be putting myself at risk by forfeiting the knowledge that has been accumulated by the doctors who have been treating me/managing my care.

I imagine it's typical that a patient's survival depends in part on their emotional and psychological make-up. And of course on the doctors and staff that have been responsible for their care. And though I am not unaware of the possible mistake/blip on my medical radar with respect to my actual diagnosis, I still feel that I should stay on the horse on which I rode in on, if you know what I mean? Switching plans would mean switching doctors, staffs, procedures, et cetera. And I'm just not sure if I'm emotionally (there's that word again) equipped to deal with such upheaval in my life/care.

All of this being said - and sort of anticipated, listening to all those Medicare Open Enrollment commercials has made Kenny a very dull boy, and an aggravated one at that. I'm not sure I can take much more of it. Thankfully, mercifully, the commercials will stop after Monday, Dec. 7. Although I think Joe did an excellent job promoting his cause, I'm afraid it's fallen on deaf ears. Now that I mention that, I wonder if my current provider offers hearing benefits.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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