

The Arlington Connection

The Secret To Happiness

PAGE 5

The Greenbergs of Arlington: Josh and Jessica, Jake (14), Justine (11) with Rico and George.



Artisan, So Much Chocolate To Deliver in December

NEWS, PAGE 3

Virginia Cooperative Extension Showcase

NEWS, PAGE 4

CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

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2020



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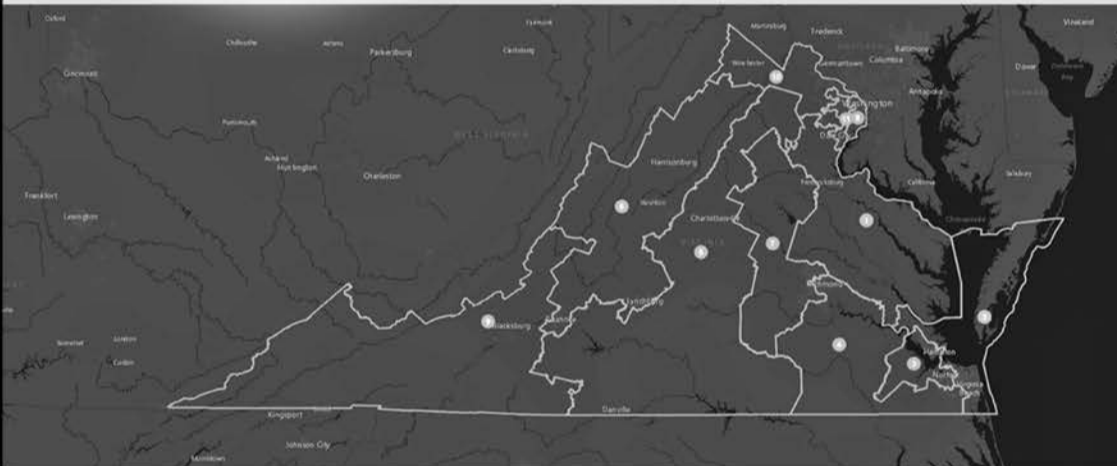
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December 18th through December 20th
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DelRayArtisans.org/holiday-market-2020



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BULLETIN BOARD

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Holiday Open House. 7 p.m. Do you like to sing? The Potomac Harmony Chorus welcomes all women ages 13 and beyond to join us for an evening of singing and fun! You'll get to sing some favorite holiday songs and learning a couple of barbershop standards. You'll learn a bit about the barbershop style, and then pick a part to try. You can attend a sectional to see what that voice part is like, before we gather back as a full group to sing "together" over Zoom. RSVP by Dec. 11 to get the welcome packet & Zoom link: openhouse@potomacharmony.org

NOW THRU DEC. 23

The Nation's 23rd Poet Laureate Joy Harjo joins Arlington Poet Laureate Holly Karapetkova and two other regional poets laureate whose poems will be projected onto large, highly-visible edifices as part of Visual Verse -- Arlington Arts installation to bring poetry into the public square. The projections take place on Wednesdays, December 16 and 23, 2020 from 6-9 p.m. at locations in Arlington. Dec. 16 (Holly Karapetkova): Lyon Village Shopping Ctr. - 3133 Lee Hwy.; Dec 23 (Joy Harjo): Shirlington Library - 4200 Campbell Ave.

RENAMING LEE HIGHWAY

After four months of discussion, public engagement, and communication with Lee Highway businesses, the Working Group On Renaming Lee Highway has selected its top choice and four alternatives for Lee Highway's new name. The Working Group's preferred name is Mildred & Richard Loving Avenue, honoring the couple who fought for marriage equality for interracial couples.

The name "Mildred & Richard Loving Avenue" not only tells the story of triumph over injustice but offers the opportunity to connect the Lee Highway corridor with other regional jurisdictions in the state of Virginia. The Lovings not only lived in the state, but the name relates to the Virginia state slogan, "Virginia is for Lovers." When travelers cross Key Bridge coming to VA from DC, they are met with the state slogan. It was the opinion of the Working Group that it made sense that the name "Loving" would be the first road traveled on in the state. The name also represents a desire of Arlington County for people to treat one another in a loving way.

NOW THRU JAN. 21, 2021

Mah Jongg Cards. 8 to 10 p.m. To order, click on the link below (or copy and paste it into your browser), download the form. Order by January 21, 2021: <http://bit.ly/2021MahJongg>. Cost: \$9 for small cards and \$10 for large cards. Email: iva.gresko@gmail.com. These official cards will be sent directly to you from the NMJL in late March/early April 2021.

DONATIONS

The Arlington Food Assistance Center seeks local gardeners and farmers willing to grow and donate fresh

produce to the AFAC food pantry for local families in need as part of the Plot Against Hunger program. Each week, approximately 2,400 client families visit AFAC to pick up supplemental groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables are in high demand. AFAC will provide free vegetable seeds to those who pledge to donate produce from community or personal gardens. Visit <https://afac.org/plot-against-hunger> or contact puwen.lee@afac.org or 703-845-8486. Seeds are available now at AFAC, 2708 S. Nelson St., during regular business hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Saturdays 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Produce can also be donated at AFAC at the hours listed above or at:

- ❖ Arlington Courthouse Farmer's Market, Saturdays 8 a.m.-noon (look for the AFAC cooler near the Master Gardener information table).
- ❖ Rock Springs UCC Church, 5010 Little Falls Road, Sundays 9 a.m.-noon only. (Look for the donation bin on the Rock Spring Drive side of the church).

Pet Food Bank. AWLA is establishing a Pet Food Bank to serve qualifying residents of Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In consideration of the effect financial obstacles have on a pet owner's ability to afford pet care, the AWLA Pet Food Bank program's goal is to keep family pets out of shelters. If you are an Arlington County or City of Falls Church resident and are in need of assistance in feeding your pet, follow this link and fill out a pre-registration form. Visit goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaYWdZm4tPw2.

GET MORE WITH SNAP

Arlington and Alexandria Farmers' Markets accept SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cards for purchases. SNAP/EBT customers can purchase farm fresh produce at local area farmers' markets and get matching bonus tokens to add to their purchases. Virginia Cooperative will be on-site at several local farmers' markets of Alexandria and Arlington to provide more information on SNAP and offer food tastings, prizes and more at the Arlington Farmers' Market, N. 14th and Courthouse Road (second Saturday of the month) and Columbia Pike Farmers' Market, 2820 Columbia Pike (third Sunday of the month).

ONGOING

Online Salary Negotiation Workshop. AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men. Visit salary.aauw.org.

Create a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification program assists homeowners in restoring their home's natural habitat by providing information on sustainable gardening practices.

These practices include using native plants, removing invasive species, reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers, and creating space for native flora and fauna. Visit audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1/ for more.

NEWS

Pandemic is Forcing Business Changes But Life is Good

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Jason Andelman has just spent all day packaging his hundreds of boxes of chocolates for shipping. Artisan Confections is now open three days a week for in-store pick-up but since the pandemic hit, the business has shifted from mostly in-store customers to mail orders. He says shipping is a lot more work. In-store you can just hand the customer a box but shipping requires putting the chocolates in a box, addressing the package and usually there is a note.

Andelman started Artisan Confections on a shoestring back in 2005 and worked out of his parent's basement to save enough money to open his first shop on Lee Highway. Three years later he moved to his current location in Clarendon, added a satellite store at Mosaic in 2012, and then in March 2020 COVID hit.

Andelman says they had struggled at the Mosaic location for many of the 8 years they were located there. "You know I was drinking the kool aid and thought I needed to expand." But it never really worked out at that location and business went down every year from the peak in 2014. The pandemic was just the icing on the cake.

Now, he says, the burden of Mosaic is gone. He says he has come full circle and is back to where he

started. But he says he feels lucky and grateful to be able to get back to his roots.

"I live in Arlington, and your relationship with the community is important."

When the pandemic hit in March he said they closed Mosaic permanently. The Arlington store did whatever they could to sell chocolates through shipping or delivery "just to stay around." They kept making chocolates through Easter and then the shop closed down completely for the whole month of April — "no orders, nothing." Andelman was at home making food, doing puzzles and hiring someone to adapt the website for more online orders in the future.

"We didn't know if it would be fine in the summer which is not so busy anyway." He says, they just went one month at a time.

Andelman explained that they lost a lot of business from corporations who used to give out hundreds of boxes of chocolates to customers with their company logos as well as businesses who used to give out chocolates to coworkers. About 95 percent of their business is gifts purchased for someone else. Andelman says he won't know how much business has suffered due to COVID until the end of the year since they generally do 35 percent of their business for the year in December.

His own favorite of the current flavors is the caramelized dark chocolate ganache or maybe the

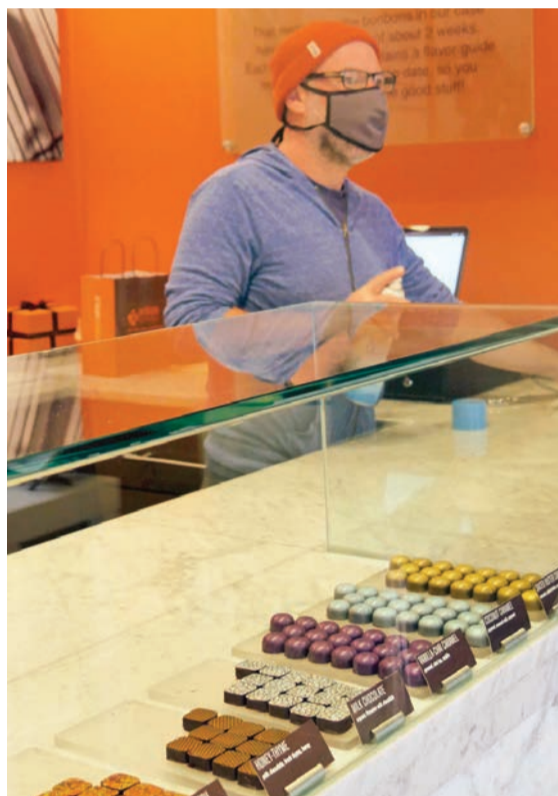
cashew toffee. The all time customer favorite remains the salted caramel. The chocolates are made in small batches with specialized ingredients such as the organic mint grown on a Maryland farm to the French Valrhona chocolate. Since the ingredients are fresh, the chocolates have a shelf life of just three weeks.

Although Artisan Confections won't have the normal large variety of special holiday selections

this year, they will offer gift packages in different sizes with an assortment of their specially created flavors. Emily Aranda, the head chocolatier, is placing the pattern mat of Christmas trees on the chocolates which will cool for half an hour. When Aranda carefully peels back the mat, each gingerbread chocolate will have a tiny green tree design on the top.

"I used to do the flavor development myself but now I have Emily

and her assistant, Rachel Green, who make the artful and flavorful confections." He says his job has shifted to running the business—paying the bills, fixing the sink, sending the packages and marketing. Andelman says, "Although we're making less money, we're at the best place ever. The vibes are good, the quality is the best it's ever been and I'm more of a quality of life kind of guy. I think we can do alright going into the new year."



Jason Andelman, owner of Artisan Confections, waits on an in-store customer at Artisan Confection on Fillmore Street in Arlington. He says since the pandemic the business has shifted dramatically to mail order deliveries.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Emily Aranda, head chocolatier at Artisan Confections, is pressing small Christmas tree designs into the gingerbread holiday candies. She says they expect to make 11 batches of 265 different chocolates today. Her assistant, Rachel Green, is working the other end of the candy line.



Aranda lines up trays of holiday chocolates including the dark chocolate ganache topped with peppermint marshmallow and the gingerbread cookie chocolate.

Arlington's Letters To Santa Are On Their Way

Rachael Toman, Conservation and Interpretation Manager for the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation reports the mailbox located in at Gulf Branch Nature Center is stuffed with letters from Arlington children for Santa.

She reports some of the letters include a long list of desired presents while a couple of other letters included only one item. Another writer declared she would be happy with whatever Santa brings. Some of the letters assure Santa they have been "very good" this year while others comment they have been "sort of" good.

One letter told Santa he was sure to remember the family from last year and included a photo. These letters are on their way, sent special delivery to the North Pole on Dec. 14.

— SHIRLEY RUHE



Extension Programs Pivot, Operate Better Than Ever

By SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

“Sit back, find a comfy seat and get ready for some excitement.” Reggie Morris, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Agent for 4-H Youth Development for the City of Alexandria opens the yearly review of accomplishments for public officials and the community in Arlington and Alexandria on Dec. 11. In the virtual presentation he “challenges you to find a way to come together to continue to improve the lives of Alexandrians, to engage and be involved.”

Morris explains 4-H, one of the Extension programs, had never experienced anything like 2020 in 100 years. They had to find new ways to network with friends and make the best better. Morris said “talent is everywhere but opportunity is not” with unequal access to technology or healthy food. So this the 4-H counselors turned their traditional summer camp into a virtual experience for 71 campers with a campfire, cooking “so we didn’t have to just survive. We could thrive.”

The theme running throughout the review of the Virginia Cooperative Extension programs was learning how to pivot and the resulting success in agriculture and natural resources, energy, financial management, nutrition and gardening.

Extension Agent for Alexandria and Arlington, Kirsten Ann Conrad, explained the Virginia Cooperative Extension metamorphosis in 2020 with no office, no phone, or microscope, but a 30 percent increase in services with help desk contacts. She said in 2019 there had been 244 active volunteers, service hours of 18,853 and community service hours of 4,769.

In 2020 the logistics changed as classes moved to virtual. The Master Gardeners program held 45 classes on 40 topics with 25 volunteers and 3,871 attendees.

Social media was explosive with 190,000 visitors, 550,000 views, virtual classes and a YouTube channel.

Conrad reviewed the goals in several important areas including native and

sustainable landscape practices, invasive species management, tree canopy health and maintenance. She says they have 19 online programs and six community gardens. There is an online seed request form with free vegetables, herbs, and flower seeds with three neighborhood pick up forms. “There is a new batch of seeds in the office now for distribution in February.”

Stephanie Tsao, manager of the Energy Masters Program said they train about 30 volunteers each year on lighting conservation and how to get air and water leaks out of apartments including demonstrations on how to caulk the leaks. She says, “adjusting to COVID was especially hard on programs like ours. We set up caulk stations outside and showed how to use thermal cameras.” She says the program trains volunteers to go out and train others in Arlington and Alexandria.

Milena Montoya, family nutrition assistant, says the Family Nutrition program adjusted their classes to teach nutrition by Zoom. “People created meals at home along with the instructor.”

Aisha Salazar, extension agent, family and consumer science, said before this started they did food demonstrations at ALIVE, AFAC and



Mark Jinks, Alexandria City Manager, chats with Arlington County Board Chair, Libby Garvey before the 2019 Virginia Cooperative Extension breakfast where Jinks showed off his 4-H T-shirt. Kids in his family started 4-H at seven-years-old where he and his brother got cows, ponies and had a Christmas tree farm. Jinks’ father went on to become 4-H Director of the State of Pennsylvania.



Participants in this year’s 2020 Extension Showcase for Alexandria and Arlington are reminded to remember the past healthy and delicious breakfasts traditionally prepared by the Master Food Volunteers.

Arlington-55 Programs. Now they have transitioned to creating videos. “You can’t taste right now but you can see carrots.”

In addition, they have focused on recipes for gardeners to feed the community.

This year 50 gardens donated over five months to feed their neighbors in Arlington and Alexandria. Seven thousand pounds of fresh produce was collected from local gardens with over 18,000 pounds gleaned for the effort.

Kirsten Kelley, extension agent for FCS, SNAP

and Education, talked about the SNAP programs for low-income families at work in response to the pandemic which transitioned to virtual. Likewise the LEAP program took its program to Head Start teachers virtually and produced information on how to stretch your budget.

The Financial Masters Program followed the theme of learning how to pivot with the 1x1 on-site coaching, credit counseling, and financial simulations for youth.

Aisha Salazar said over 40 participated in the virtual financial coaching. In

addition, one of the most popular programs is the Money Smart Reality Store to introduce students to finance and budgets including debt management and financial budgets. Four hundred students participated in April. She said in 2021 they plan to have a virtual help desk.

Congressman Don Beyer (D-8) said this is a time when food, energy and natural gardens create lifelines for the community, especially now. “We must have an agricultural ethos.” He added one of his favorite authors is Wendell Berry, the grandfather of the slow food movement who believed in sustainable agriculture and the interconnectedness of life. “Americans must respect the agricultural ethic.”

Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station researchers and specialists work in

Blacksburg and at the state’s Agricultural Research and Extension Centers to create the knowledge that they share with VCE agents. The information is passed down through the research-based education programs to help the people of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria improve their lives.



Congressman Donald Beyer speaks about the importance of the agricultural ethic at the Virginia Cooperative Extension 2020 Showcase on Dec. 11.

The
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Connection

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ARPEETS: THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS

Want to be happy? Do Something For Someone Else

BY JOAN BRADY
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else."

Up against my deadline, I was slogging through multiple scientific studies that show the correlation between doing good for others and happiness, when I came across that Chinese proverb. And I was delighted to find it. It does a good job of characterizing the studies' results and all that technical jargon was, quite frankly, making my eyes glaze over.

Apparently doing good gives way to doing more good. Which is pretty much how things went for the Greenbergs during the pandemic.

Yael Greenberg has a very full and active life. She is involved with her temple, Congregation Beth El in Bethesda, she has a few close friends, she writes and she teaches Hebrew to adults. And, before the pandemic she joined her son, Josh Greenberg, and his wife Jessica for dinner every Friday night. These



George Greenberg: Healed inside and out.

weekly dinners at the Greenberg's were always lively with the adults, two kids, three cats and their rescue dog, Rico.

When the lockdown happened back in March, the Friday night dinners went on hiatus and many of Yael's other activities moved to Zoom. Jessica and Josh worried that she might get a little lonely and weren't quite sure what they could do.

For years, when the family has gone on vacation, Rico has gotten his own brand of get-away, staying with Yael. The two have always had a special bond. And so, with Yael's approval, Jessica and Josh sent Rico across the river for an extended stay.

Yael says that Rico is a great companion; He loves to walk with

SEE ARPETS TO, PAGE 7

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.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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.

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.

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Announcements

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Announcements

Announcements

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Legals

ABC LICENSE
Episcopa Rosslyn 1, LLC trading as Assembly, 1700 N. Moore Street, Rosslyn Center, M1 & M2, Arlington County, Arlington, Virginia 22209. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on and off Premises/Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Scott K. Gidwitz, Member authorizing advertisement. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Legals

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Legals

ABC LICENSE
Tacos El Cristal LLC trading as Tacombi, 1550 Crystal Drive, Suite E, Arlington County, Arlington, Virginia 22202. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on and off Premises/Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Dieter Wiechmann, Member authorizing advertisement. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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AR PETS: THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS



George is truly living his best life. Running with Jake.

Want to be happy? Do Something for Someone Else

FROM PAGE 5

her, he is a bridge to interacting with neighbors and is very gentlemanly, making sure she turns for home when he smells rain coming.

The Greenbergs felt great about the arrangement, knowing they did the right thing for Yael. But they didn't realize how much they were going to miss Rico and miss just having a dog, period. According to Jessica they encouraged the cats to entertain the family the way Rico always had, but all three "politely declined."

Rico had come from Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation, so they were on the mailing list when the notification went out that 60 dogs were coming in from a high kill shelter in Georgia. Jessica thought that fostering would be perfect. Josh was a bit more skeptical, knowing that Jessica has a tendency to "fall in love with every animal she sees." But Jessica reminded him that they had fostered a clowder of kittens who had all been adopted out. And they both agreed that it would be nice to help a dog as well as to have one around full-time.

They didn't know a lot about George when they went to pick him up and were a bit shocked. At 70 pounds, Jessica described him as "massive." The volunteer referred to him as a "chonk." And they were apprehensive as they read his story through his calloused paws, very raw nose and, worst of all, cigarette burns on his body.

"George was definitely on his best behavior for the first few weeks. No barking, no accidents, no counter surfing and no destroying toys," according to Jessica.

And within days, she started receiving applications to adopt him. But his good behavior, along with his loving nature had paid off. Let someone else adopt George? Well, the kids were having none of that. Eleven and fourteen, they wrote letters to their parents, explaining that "no other family could take as good care of George."

Jessica and Josh had also fallen for the sweet American Bulldog/Lab mix and they decided the kids were right, they were a perfect fit. They have no regrets. "George



Dogs really do make the best walking companions. Yael Greenberg with Rico.

has been a bright light during difficult and stressful times. His goofy personality and his ability to love are remarkable... We are so blessed to have him."

As for Rico, who goes back and forth now between Bethesda and Arlington these days, he loves George, too. The cats did not respond to requests for comment.

And how does George feel about his new home? According to Jessica, "He loves every aspect of his life and is grateful to have been rescued." And that makes everyone feel just great.

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.

PHOTO BY JOAN BRADY

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Three Strikes ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... and now I'm out - of the Handel's Messiah sweepstakes. The sweepstakes being to write in 50 words or less "Why do you love Handel's Messiah?" All I can answer is one word: Hallelujah, and I don't mean the chorus either. 'Three strikes' refers to the number of times I have now been subjected to this "holiday tradition." The first time I was an attendee - with thousands of other Washingtonians. in a jam-packed National Cathedral one Christmas season. The second time, while visiting my father-in-law in Manhattan during Christmas, he suggested going to Carnegie Hall to listen to Christmas music (not specified). I jumped at the chance to go to Carnegie Hall. Little did I know until I was handed the program that the Christmas music that night was Handel's Messiah. And most recently, I was sitting on my couch at home channel-surfing when I came across a "Handel's Messiah" rebroadcast from some famous venue in Salzburg, Austria featuring a lead singer, a mestro, an orchestra and choir, all of whom shall remain nameless to protect their stature. Whatever criticism/less than glowing reaction to hearing "Handel's Messiah" a third time should be a reflection on me, not the performers.

I freely admit my cultural deficiencies. I am not inclined to tolerate - too well, these intrusions into my rather mundane world. I have never been to the ballet, rarely have seen a play/musical, never attended a concert

featuring the Four Italian Seniors (as but one example) and am not so inclined to listen to the classics on WETA 90.9 FM in Washington, DC either, especially since Dennis Owens retired in 2005. In my defense, I am a card-carrying (Three Stooges Fan Club) member of the hoi polloi. And to be perfectly honest, I don't feel as if I'm any the worse for the wear of it - or the why. However, you all might disagree.

I am not a complete dunce though. I can appreciate the talent and discipline it takes to master the skills necessary to sing, dance, play an instrument, memorize pages of dialogue, et cetera. The closest I've ever got to enjoying this kind of entertainment occurred at Wolf Trap during the summer concert season. Twice, if I'm not mistaken, I attended the yearly July 4th concert when the National Symphony orchestra performed Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with 105mm cannons. It's not exactly equivalent to the old Quaker Oats puffed wheat commercials of my youth but it was entertaining nonetheless. However, having now attended a few times, I'm not so inclined to attend again. And believe it or not, I don't feel at all diminished having said so.

I wouldn't say that the three experiences I've had listening to "Handel's Messiah" has thoroughly convinced me that such cultural forays never be considered again. On the contrary, there is a part of me, a small part, that feels as if I'm missing something. Still, I don't feel incomplete, uneducated or clueless somehow. Instead, I feel like one of the bad guys Clint Eastwood gave an advisory to in one of his "Dirty Harry" movies: "punk. A man has got to know his limitations." And I feel as if I know mine. Perhaps there are cultural areas where I could co-exist but I cannot co-exist with "Handel's Messiah." As I titled an earlier column I wrote for Connection Newspapers while actually attending/hearing "Handel's Messiah" - for the first time, at the National Cathedral one holiday season: "Can't Handel It Anymore."

Two more listens since the original, and I can say with certainty, I still can't "Handel" it. I thought that when I realized what I was listening to at home: "Handel's Messiah," having the freedom to get up, move around et cetera, might possibly enhance the experience. Well, it worked. I didn't feel the least bit trapped so after listening for 10 minutes or so, I got up, turned off the television, left the room, came into my home-office and wrote this column. Apparently, I found a way to "Handel" it after all: stop listening and start writing. I feel better already.

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

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