

The Arlington Connection

Arlington Memorial Bridge over the Potomac River. Potomac Conservancy recently gave the Potomac a grade of B.

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

PHOTO BY POTOMAC CONSERVANCY

Providing Food for Thanksgiving

PAGE 3

10 Books Written by 10 Year Old

PAGE 4

Grading Health Of the Potomac

PAGE 2

DECEMBER 3-16, 2025

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Potomac River, Stuck at a B Grade

A grade of B sounds OK, but the details are daunting.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The Potomac Conservancy gave the Potomac River a B grade in its recent report card, the fifth B in ten years. And while a B is better than the D the river got in 2011 or the C in 2013, the river is “showing no overall improvement in a decade,” the Conservancy announced. “The Potomac’s overall health has stopped improving.” The river is still not safe for swimming or fishing, concludes the analysis.

Dubbed “the nation’s river,” at least the Potomac is not an “open sewer,” as the Washington Post denounced in 1951 or “a national disgrace,” as President Lyndon B. Johnson lamented in 1965.

The Potomac River watershed drains 14,670 square miles in four states, a watershed with a population of around seven million people. It supplies drinking water to five million people. Of the total population in the watershed, 81 percent live in urban areas. In Northern Virginia, it forms the eastern border of the city of Alexandria and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties.

In a separate, recent Conservancy report, Belin wrote, “Extreme droughts and flooding are becoming the new norm, degrading stream health and community safety. And powerful interests are moving fast: rolling back federal protections, slashing conservation funding and allowing for unchecked data center sprawl.”

The report card uses six indicators: pollution, fish, habitat, land, people and climate.

The Good News

Labeled as “good news,” the report card shows a steady decline in nitrogen, phos-



The Potomac River viewed from Collingwood Park.



Several groups collect trash like this along the river’s shoreline multiple times a year.

phorus and sediment and an increase in river-related recreation, up ten percent since 2020.

Over one-fifth of the land in the watershed is protected from development.

The River’s History

In “The Potomac River, A History and Guide,” published in 2012 book, author Garrett Peck traces the river’s natural and human history, from its origin as a trickle at the foot of West Virginia’s Backbone Mountain 3,140 feet above sea level to its mouth at the Chesapeake Bay.

Here are a few facts from the book.

The Potomac River:

- ❖ is 383 miles long and flows “through some of the oldest land in the world”;
- ❖ is “spared from channelization that permanently scarred so many of our nation’s rivers”;
- ❖ in the Alexandria-Mount Vernon area is tidal;
- ❖ has five remaining lighthouses, including Jones Point on the southern end of Alexandria.



PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

SEE THE POTOMAC RIVER, PAGE 5

The report card indicates that river-related recreation is on the rise.



PHOTO BY JENN LOVING

A volunteer collects trash at one of Potomac Conservancy’s Potomac River Clean Ups



Many people find sitting by the river relaxing.

Thanksgiving Week at AFAC Distributes 5,000 Chickens

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It's almost Turkey Time but this year it's chickens at Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). That hasn't stopped a line of families with bags and rolling carts from lining up down the block to get their weekly supplemental groceries.

This week the choices will include a variety of holiday food including sweet potatoes, green beans, and cans of pumpkin and cranberry sauce.

Charles Meng, CEO of AFAC, says they have much more selection due to the recent Scouting for Food Drive that donated 32 tons of food to AFAC that had been collected the weekend of Nov. 8.

He adds, "In addition there are a surprising number of culturally important items that have been donated like seaweed, for instance, or enchilada sauce." He says this provides variety for the client to choose from and AFAC buys the high cost items to supplement the choices.

Meng says they ordered 5,000 chickens this year. He explains that typically they would order turkeys that weighed 12-24 pounds. "At \$2.39 a pound it would cost us \$165,000 but the chickens were



Needy families line up at AFAC for the supplemental groceries and Thanksgiving chicken on Nov. 19.

\$75,000. It was just too much, and many of the people who come to AFAC really prefer chickens."

Back inside the warehouse the workers are busy. Alcy Montalto, a warehouse assistant, is moving crates of bread and rolls while Tyee Speight, Assistant Director

of Operations, is putting together emergency kits for the needy who don't have the necessary referral from the Department of Human Services making them eligible for weekly groceries.

A group from Hyundai, a sponsor of AFAC, are bagging beans

between meetings at their regional conference. They have come from North Carolina, Pittsburgh and one from Baltimore who got caught in a traffic backup and felt like she'd driven from Pittsburgh. As part of their community service, they volunteer to help at AFAC when they

are in town.

Meng says the number of families served last week at AFAC was 4,315 — very high — and expected to grow during the holidays and remain high due to the recent government shutdown and pause in SNAP benefits.



Alcy Montalto works in the warehouse moving crates of bread and rolls.



Tyee Speight puts together emergency kits of non-perishable items for those who don't qualify for the regular supplemental grocery distribution.



Volunteers from Hyundai, in town for a district convention, bag beans at AFAC.



Final step is taking home one of the 5,000 Thanksgiving chickens ordered for this year's holiday.



Ten-year-old Zoey Robinson with the books she has written.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Zoey Robinson speaking at a conference in London in 2023 where she was a speaker and received a Global Influencer Award.

An Author Already at Ten

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Zoey Robinson is ten-years-old and has already written ten books. Zoey says she wrote her first book when she was five. She recalls the first one was about manners, “You know, like thank you.” Since then she has covered a number of different topics such as bedtime, places she would want to go, like Antarctica, Christmas, and Zoey’s book of adventures. “Sometimes I think about the topic, and sometimes it just pops into my

head.”

Zoey says it takes several months to write a book which she does in her spare time on the weekends and during the week when her homework is done. “I write long-hand and use an Auto App where I talk about what I want to say.”

Her mother says when Zoey gets an idea they talk about it and what she visualizes. “I record her. It types what she is saying, and I can export it to a document. I do assist her with the mechanics.” She adds, “I help with formatting.”

Then Zoey visualizes how she sees the pictures. “I see myself in

a red shirt with a pair of overalls and a shovel.” Then her mother says she works with an illustrator to make it happen. Her mother outsources options to turn it into a book, then have it printed. “I do book publishing myself. I know the process.”

Zoey’s books get wide distribution to bookstores, schools and are available online from Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Books A Million. In addition, she says sometimes schools request her books to use in the classroom.

In addition, Zoey is often requested as a speaker. “I was invited

to speak in London in 2023 where I received the Global Influencer Award.” She remembers she was the only child speaker, and everyone who spoke before her was an adult. “I was kind of nervous but I had been a speaker before.”

Then in 2024 she headed to Paris, France to speak again. “I talk about empowering yourself to do your best,” she explains. “I like to inspire people, uplift them. I get that from my mom.”

Zoey has been attending school at Virginia Virtual Academy since kindergarten. “It is amazing,” Zoey explains. “I have my own schedule

with extra time to do my projects.”

Zoey’s mother says she was looking for an online school to reduce peer pressure and find a wholesome educational path. “The kids are well behaved; this was a perfect fit. I’m a business owner and work from home so it works for my schedule, too.”

Looking ahead Zoey says her next book will be about gardening. “Me and my grandma do yard work. She lives close by in D.C., and I have a garden with cauliflower, tomatoes and watermelon. Maybe in a few days, I’ll start putting it together.”

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

PLANNED ROAD CLOSURES FOR DECEMBER 6, 2025

The Arlington County Police Department will conduct road closures to accommodate three upcoming events taking place on Saturday, December 6, 2025.

The Lodge 2025

The Lodge at National Landing will take place in Metropolitan Park on Saturday, December 6, and will run from 1:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. The following roadways will be closed in order to accommodate the event:

From approximately 7:00 p.m. on December 5 until 5:00 a.m. on December 7:
S. Elm Street from 13th Street S. to 14th Street S.
From approximately 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. on December 6:
S. Fair Street from 13th Street S. to 14th Street S.

2025 Jingle Bell 5K

The Arthritis Foundation Jingle Bell 5k Run will be held Saturday, December 6, beginning at 9:00 a.m. The Arlington County Police Department will conduct the following road closures in order to accommodate the event:
From approximately 6:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

❖ Northbound lanes of S. Joyce Street, between 15th Street S. and Army Navy Drive
From approximately 7:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.
❖ Army Navy Drive, between S. Joyce Street and 25th Street S.

❖ Southbound lanes of S. Joyce Street, between 15th Street S. and Army Navy Drive
Traffic in the area is expected to be impacted, and motorists are reminded to anticipate extended travel times and seek alternate routes to reduce road congestion. Race attendees and spectators are encouraged to use the Metro (the Pentagon City station, on the Blue and Yellow Lines, is located near the racecourse) or other forms of

multimodal transportation, as street parking around the event will be limited. Paid parking is available at the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City garage for those choosing to drive.

A Very Village Holiday

A Very Village Holiday at The Village at Shirlington will be held on Saturday, December 6, from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. The Arlington County Police Department will conduct the following road closure to

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

The Potomac River, Stuck at a B Grade

FROM PAGE 2

Runoff Is Rising

As for bad news, polluted stormwater runoff is increasing and is the only source of pollution that is on the rise. When runoff flows over paved and hardened surfaces, it carries pollutants like oils, fertilizers and trash. Urban and agricultural environments are major contributors to polluted runoff.

Pollution is exacerbated by continuing forest loss and extreme weather, like droughts and downpours. Pollution is “driven by policies that tolerate industrial agriculture, unchecked development and reckless deforestation,” the report contends.

At a Nov. 12 press conference, Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, attributed polluted stormwater to dense development’s widespread impervious surfaces. Hedrick Belin, president of Potomac Conservancy, stressed the goal of having rainwater naturally infiltrate into soils instead of washing off hard surfaces.

Some Fish Are Struggling

Populations of striped bass, white perch and small mouth bass have steadily dropped over the past 20 years. Striped bass got a D-grade and both white perch and smallmouth bass got a grade of D+. Shad populations are unstable.

Invasive fish like blue catfish are pushing native species out of their traditional habitats. Chesapeake Channa, invasive northern snakeheads, “have established a firm foothold in the watershed,” the report asserts.

“Consuming fish remains illegal for communities who live in and around Washington, D. C.,” says the report.

Habitats

Land use and river quality are inextricably linked. “Our forests and wetlands are not decorative — they are defenders,” the report maintains. “They filter pollutants, protect against flooding and offer sanctuary to people and wildlife alike. ... Restoring and protecting our land is not just about beautification — it’s about repair, reconnection, and power.”

Forested buffers garnered an A grade. There’s been “an uptick in installed forested buffers over the past three years,” but all states lag behind in their watershed implementation plan goals for forest buffers, falling 132,645 acres short.

In implementing best management practices for land, the report concludes that Maryland and Washington, D.C. “have made strides, while Virginia lags far behind,” calling these disparities “political” and the choices communities have made. Best management practices are measures set by the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership to protect and restore water quality.

The river’s wetlands, forests and shorelines are at risk by development and poor planning. “The Potomac’s habitats — its wetlands, forests and shorelines — are being pushed aside by unchecked development and fragmented planning. When ecosystems are broken, so is our ability to breathe, cool down, grow food and find peace. True res-



PHOTO BY JOHN BRIGHENTI

Fall colors reflect on the Potomac on a calm morning Autumn morning



PHOTO BY POTOMAC CONSERVANCY

Memorial Bridge over the Potomac River.

toration goes beyond conservation — it requires reinvestment in places where both ecosystems and communities have been neglected,” the report argues.

The report gives stream water quality a grade of C+, tidal water quality a C- and underwater grasses a C- grade.

Warnings

Global warming is changing the climate, leading to warmer air and water tempera-

tures, longer droughts and more severe rain storms that stress the river’s ecosystems.

Rising sea levels mean more local flooding. By 2080, Washington, D.C., could have water levels 1.3 to 4.3 feet higher than today. Among the suggested solutions are restoring wetlands, reestablishing stream connectivity and upgrading stormwater systems. Other solutions include holding polluters accountable, implementing “nature-based solutions” and reclaiming public spaces for community

use.

Belin is hopeful. He said via email, “We’re not just protecting forests or pulling trash. We’re safeguarding a river that over five million people depend on for drinking water and outdoor enjoyment.

We’re building trust that community-led conservation can solve big problems. We’re restoring hope.”

The report: <https://potomacreportcard.org/>

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/GAZETTE PACKET



Lisa Pregent welcomes Aladdin to Mount Vernon every Christmas.



With his long neck, Aladdin can hold his head high.



Aladdin has his own quarters, a shed on the estate.



Pregent and Aladdin bond.



Aladdin has distinctive facial features.



Holiday Outings with a Different Twist

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

Christmas may typically mean tinsel and toys, Santa and stockings, but for a different twist your family could try a 1,500-pound camel and a Civil War encampment.

Aladdin, the Camel, at Mount Vernon

Aladdin, a dromedary camel with golf-ball-size brown eyes, welcomes between 500 to 1,000 fans a day at Mount Vernon Estate, there until Jan. 7.

"Mount Vernon is beautiful during the holidays," said Lisa Pregent in a Nov. 26 interview. "There's a magical feel about the place and Aladdin adds to it." Pregent, Senior Livestock Manager, noted that Aladdin's been coming to Mount Vernon for 17 years and said, "He recognizes us, the same pen, the same faces, the same smells."

Bottle fed as a youngster, he is mostly docile, but when he sees a vehicle coming, he goes on the alert, "waits at the fence and gurgles at us," she said. He's likely expecting a treat. Aladdin first came to Mount Vernon in 2008 at age 11 months. Now 17, he is quieter,

calmer Pregent said. Dromedary camels have an average lifespan of 40 years.

Aladdin is about seven feet tall from his hoofs to the top of his bump, an ungulate native to North Africa and the Middle East. He has long eyelashes, heavy fur, large feet and small nostrils, adaptations for desert life, Pregent explained. He munches on hay, eats four to five pounds of grain and drinks five to ten gallons of water daily.

Why a camel at Mount Ver-

non? In 1787, George Washington brought a camel to his plantation for the holidays for 18 shillings (\$170 today) and recorded, "By the man who brot. A Camel from Alexa. For a show."

In Washington's day, entertainers traveled around with rare or specially-trained animals. A farmer, Washington was interested in animals. He wrote that he saw a tiger, a "Lyonesse" in 1766, a "Cugar" and "Sea Leopard" in Philadelphia while President.

Aladdin lives in Fairfax Station the rest of the year and travels to Mount Vernon in a horse trailer.

Pregent, who has worked at Mount Vernon for 30 years, also takes care of the estate's cows, horses, pigs, sheep and chickens.

On Nov. 26, Everett from St. Petersburg, Florida, exclaimed, "Wow! I've never seen a camel before."

This is my first camel." Aladdin was unfazed, focused on Pregent's bucket.

A Civil War Christmas at Fort Ward Park

On Dec. 13, 12 noon to 4 p.m. at Fort Ward Park in the City of Alexandria, re-enactors will celebrate Christmas as Civil War Union Army soldiers did in December 1861 when they occupied Alexandria. A red-cheeked, jolly Santa Claus in 19th century garb and an authentic beard will greet visitors.

The soldiers will cook a Christmas meal in an iron kettle over the



Aladdin attracts between 500 and 1,000 admirers a day.



Kevin Rawlings has portrayed a Civil War Santa Claus every December at Fort Ward Park for 35 years



Soldiers stacked their guns teepee style to keep them dry and decorated them for the holidays.

Holiday Outings with a Different Twist

FROM PAGE 6

campfire, perhaps turkey and potatoes or a stew. During the Civil War, the Christmas meal was likely a welcomed switch from the daily diet of eight hardtack crackers, 16 ounces of salt pork or salt beef, beans and dried vegetables.

In 1861, soldiers earned \$13 a month, according to records of that era. "The Regulars were the professional backbone of the volunteer armies," says the Third U.S. Regular Infantry Re-enactors' website, the group portraying these soldiers. Company D was formed at Fort Ward in 2000.

A Seasoned Santa

Kevin Rawlings from Frederick, Maryland, has portrayed Santa Claus every December at Fort Ward for 35 years. He wears a red-and-white-striped cap with a tassel and a suit made by his wife consisting of red-and-white-striped wool trousers, a Union blue jacket with faux white fur trim and a work coat. His jacket has 35 white stars representing the states, including those that seceded. Santa's attire is based on an 1863 Harper's Weekly magazine cover by Thomas Nast.

Rawlings has "done Santa" all these years because "Children have unconditional love for Santa," he says. They bring their wish list to him in the restored officer's hut where his tree will be decorated with acorns, pinecones and dried pork, decorations described in a soldier's letter.

In 1997, Rawlings wrote a book about Civil War-era Christmas traditions, titled *We Were Marching on Christmas Day*. Some of Americans' modern-day holiday traditions, like trees, caroling and gifts date back to that time, he says.

Fort Ward, built in 1861, was one of the defenses of Washington ordered built by President Abraham Lincoln around the nation's capital after Confederate troops defeated the Union Army in the first Battle of Bull Run in Manassas. Builders sited forts on strategic heights overlooking turnpikes, railroads, bridges and shipping routes.

Fort Ward helped guard the

Leesburg and Alexandria Turnpike, now Route 7, and Alexandria's port. Fort Willard in today's Mount Vernon Belle Haven community and Fort Scott in Arlington, now parks, are other Virginia examples.

Information:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/plan-your-visit/things-to-do/animals/aladdin/>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/FortWard>



The entry gate to Fort Ward Park.



The museum at Fort Ward Park displays some Civil War artifacts.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH/GAZETTE PACKET

Easing Your Transition from Hospital to Home.



NeuroGen
Stroke Recovery



American Heart Association
Certified Care™
Skilled Nursing Facility
Stroke Rehabilitation



Alexandria
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

AlexandriaHC.com • 571.257.1896
900 Virginia Ave, Alexandria, VA 22302

www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online

Alexandria Gazette Packet

Mount Vernon Gazette

Potomac ALMANAC

**Turn to the Connection Newspapers
digital and print advertising options to
reach customers in your community!**

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.



For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or
Email sales@connectionnewspapers.com

**DEL RAY ARTISANS
HOLIDAY MARKET**

2025

30th ANNIVERSARY

delrayartists.org/holiday-market-2025

**Del Ray Artisans' 30th Annual
Fine Art & Fine Craft
Holiday Market**

Dec 2025 weekends:

Dec 5th — Dec 7th,
Dec 12th — Dec 14th,
Dec 19th — Dec 21st

Different artists featured
each weekend!

Friday 6–9pm,
Saturday 9am–5pm,
Sunday 11am–5pm

Del Ray Artisans Gallery,
2704 Mount Vernon Avenue,
Alexandria, VA 22301

ENTERTAINMENT

HOLIDAY EVENTS

IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Fifth Annual St. Nicholas Market (Dec. 7, Alexandria) The Market is held mostly outdoors and will feature 40 local Catholic artists and makers selling their creations for the Christmas season at Saint Rita Catholic Church.

Del Ray Artisans Holiday Market (Dec. 5-21; first three weekends in December, Alexandria) The 30th annual market offers unique handmade fine arts and fine crafts from local artists.

McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival (Dec. 5-7, McLean): This three-day indoor show at the McLean Community Center features regional artisans selling a variety of handmade items, including pottery, jewelry, and holiday decor.

Old Town Alexandria Christmas Market and Holiday Craft Show (Dec. 13, Alexandria): This large holiday market at John Carlyle Square features local artisans, holiday music, and seasonal food and drinks.

Mosaic Holiday Village (Dec. 13-14, Fairfax): Enjoy shopping at the Holiday Market, which features local artisans, and participate in other festivities in the Mosaic District.

Farmer John's Holiday Market (Dec. 6-7, Leesburg): Get into the spirit at this festive market with Christmas trees, wreaths, handmade crafts, and hot cider.

The largest indoor art festival in the region, the Capital Art & Craft Festival, returns to Northern Virginia Dec. 12-14, 2025, with more than 300 juried artisans at the Dulles Expo Center. www.CACFart

Holiday Lights & Parades:

54th Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Parade (Dec. 6, Old Town Alexandria): For 54 years, Campagna Center has celebrated Alexandria's Scottish heritage during the holiday season with both the Taste of Scotland and the annual Scottish Christmas Walk parade.

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run (Begins Nov. 15, Alexandria): Ice & Lights provides a fun, outdoor family experience to explore new, dazzling light displays, take family pictures or selfies with a variety of festive scenes, enjoy a hot beverage and snack, and take a spin on the ice rink under the stars.

Bull Run Festival of Lights (Begins Nov. 14, Centreville): Drive through this popular park to see a spectacular festival of lights.

Christmas Illuminations (Dec. 20-21, Mount Vernon): George Washington's Mount Vernon hosts an evening with fireworks over the Potomac, a historic winter encampment, and tours of the illuminated mansion.

Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights (Begins Nov. 7, Vienna): This popular seasonal event features a half-mile walk through decorated gardens.

Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights (Dec. 6, Alexandria): Watch decorated boats light up the waterfront in the 25th annual parade.

Greater Manassas Christmas Parade (Manassas): A long-running tradition held on the first Saturday in December, featuring floats and performers.

Santa Lights Manassas (Dec. 5, Dec. 6 Manassas): On the first Friday of December, join the annual tree lighting ceremony to welcome Santa to Historic Manassas. The 79th annual parade takes place the next day.

39th Annual Santa's Wonderland Parade and Winter Festival (Dec. 6, Colonial Beach): A winter festival kicks off with a parade of decorated floats and vehicles.

More Holiday Events:

Alexandria Jingle Bell Jam (Dec. 7, 8-11 a.m.): A Santa breakfast, DJ and holiday magic show are all part of the fun at the Heritage Ballroom at Hotel Heron! Get your tickets now. Brought to you by Alexandria Living Magazine and Thrivent.

Holidays with a Twist, Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (Dec. 20-21, Alexandria): Alexandria's favorite holiday musical tradition returns featuring stirring choruses from Handel's Messiah. Dancers from BalletNova perform the greatest moments from The Nutcracker. Plus carols, classics and other sparkling favorites of the season.

Concerts at Christ Church: Celtic Music for Christmas (Dec. 8, Alexandria): Ensemble Gut, Wind, and Wire presents a holiday program of Celtic and English early music, 'Drive



The Holiday Art Sale and Open House takes place on Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025 at The Studios at Arlington Arts.

the Cold Winter Wind Away'.
National Christmas Tree Lighting (Dec. 4, Presidents Park, DC)

A Christmas Carol (Dec. 5-20, Alexandria): at the Little Theatre of Alexandria (tickets go on sale Nov. 6)

Del Ray Holiday Season Kick-Off (Dec. 7, Alexandria): Join the Del Ray community for holiday cheer at the Del Ray Holiday Kick-Off on Sunday, Dec. 7.

The Nutcracker (Nov. 28-Dec. 23, Manassas): The Manassas Ballet presents the classic holiday ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center.

Santa Train Rides (Dec. 1, 8, 15 and 18, Alexandria): The Virginia Railway Express (VRE) runs special holiday trains perfect for families, roundtrip from Alexandria to Manassas.

Aladdin the Camel (Nov. 26-Jan. 6, Mount Vernon): Meet the Christmas camel at George Washington's Mount Vernon, a nod to a real event from 1787.

Holidays Through the Ages (Dec. 5-29, Woodbridge): Step back in time at the Rippon Lodge Historic Site to see how holidays were celebrated in different centuries.

Santa Stampede 2025 (Dec. 6, Alexandria): Get some exercise at this fun, festive run held in John Carlyle Square.

HOLIDAY LIGHT SHOWS AT NOVA PARKS Drive, Walk and Skate into the holidays with three unique holiday light show experiences.

Tickets for the 2025 holiday season are now on sale and all 3 NOVA Parks light shows will be open as of November 15.

Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights
Walk a sparkling half-mile garden trail while sipping on a hot beverage for an enchanting evening at Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights in Vienna.

Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights is an elegant garden trail aglow with countless sparkling lights, perfect for a date night or family holiday outing. The half-mile walk through the enchanting Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (Vienna, VA) features lighted nature themes and animated displays along a paved wheelchair and stroller-accessible trail. Stay warm by sipping on a hot beverage (with or without spirits) as you walk and s'mores to finish out the evening. Treat your pup to their favorite walk of the year on specific dates. The Winter Walk of Lights is illuminating the gardens for its 14th season, bringing joy to more than 100,000 visitors each year.

Open nightly November 7 through January 4. Capacity is limited; reservations are required to ensure access on a specific date. Prices range \$19-24 per person; promo codes available for specific dates. Visit winterwalkoflights.com for details.



Bull Run Festival of Lights

Drive through 2.5 miles of dazzling lights at Northern Virginia's largest drive-through light show at the Bull Run Festival of Lights in Centreville.

Experience the magic of the holidays at the Bull Run Festival of Lights, Northern Virginia's largest drive-through holiday light show! A family favorite for three decades, the Bull Run Festival of Lights dazzles with a 2.5-mile display of holiday and fairytale vignettes. Enjoy time with family while staying warm and cozy as you slowly drive through the animated displays in Bull Run Regional Park. New displays are added every year—drive through the Winter Wonderland where it's always snowing and see the tallest light display yet. Open November 14 through January 4. \$30 per vehicle online; additional discounts available for specific dates with promo code. Visit bull-runfestivaloflights.com for details.

Ice & Lights – The Winter Village at Cameron Run
Skate and explore a winter village wonderland for a playful outdoor experience at Ice & Lights – The Winter Village at Cameron Run in Alexandria.

Just minutes from Old Town Alexandria, enjoy ice skating amidst a winter wonderland at Cameron Run Regional Park (Alexandria, VA). Ice & Lights offers a fun, unstructured outdoor family experience to explore unique light displays, snap family pictures or selfies with a variety of displays, and take a spin on the outdoor ice rink.

Tickets are available for the Village Only or Village and Ice Skating. The Winter Village opens November 15 and nighttime ice skating begins November 28. Daytime ice skating begins December 6. Prices range \$9-24 per person depending on activity and date. Capacity is limited; reservations are required to ensure access on a specific date. Ice skating reservations are required. Visit cameroniceandlights.com for details.

Visit novaparkslights.com for more information and to purchase tickets.

CENTERS FOR OPPORTUNITY ARLINGTON

The Centers for Opportunity Arlington is a safe, stigma-free place to spend time for those recovering from homelessness, substance use, and mental illness. It has a donation closet that needs adult clothing and shoes. Some participants at the Center are looking for jobs and need the proper attire. Located at 3219 Columbia Pike, Suite 101, Arlington. Contact Greg, Program Coordinator at 703-567-1346.

VOLUNTEER FOR ARLINGTON'S COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Arlington Neighborhood Village, in partnership

with Arlington County and Marymount University, has started the Community Ambassador Program (CAP). CAP is a volunteer fueled system that identifies "Ambassadors" connected with civic associations, faith communities, senior centers, apartment buildings, etc. These individuals will be trained to be a reliable source of information about the many opportunities available to older adults in Arlington.

Ambassadors will spread the word about programs and support services, opportunities for social and civic engagement, and educational and enrichment activities for older adults in their own neighborhoods. They are actively recruiting ambassadors to act as a bridge between their community and the Arlington safety net, providing information and soliciting feedback to improve offerings that help older adults remain safe, independent, engaged, and connected to their community.

Contact cap@anvarlington.org if this is something you are interested in or want to learn more. Let's work together to create a supported and connected community for all ages!

Receive Support Services: Are you a senior in Arlington? Do you need support services but don't know where to look? Are you looking for fun and enriching activities in Arlington? Email or call 703-509-8057 and they will connect you with an Ambassador.

THE MARJORIE

HUGHES FUND FOR CHILDREN

The Marjorie Hughes Fund for Children (MHF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving Arlington Public Schools (APS) students, helps underinsured and uninsured students obtain medical and dental services and other necessary medical care. Established in 1992 to honor the work of public health physician Marjorie F. Hughes, who dedicated her career to public school students in Arlington, MHF is made up of Public Health School Nurses, School Health Aides, APS staff, and community stakeholders. In collaboration with pediatric office staff and dental providers, MHF pays for school entry and sports physical exams, dental treatments, assists with the purchase of medications or medical equipment, and provides transportation via UberHealth rides to doctor and dentist appointments. MHF services are supported entirely by generous donations and grants, and they have helped students throughout Arlington schools, from kindergarten to high school, to be happy, healthy, and ready to learn. To learn more about MHF, its mission, its work, and to make a contribution, visit <https://www.marjoriehughesfund.com/>.

YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 3

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. 10-11 a.m. Via Zoom. George Marshall True American Hero. Soldier, statesman, and humanitarian, Marshall spearheaded the Allied Victory in World War II, created the Marshall Plan for the recovery of Europe, and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953. The George Marshall Foundation is a fully private non-profit that offers a world-class research library, public programs, educational initiatives, and a host of digital offerings documenting George Marshall's visionary ideas and achievements. In this presentation, Melissa Davis, the Marshall Foundation's Director of Library and Archives, will explain how the Foundation is promoting and preserving Marshall's legacy. Zoom link for Coffee and Conversation: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=eW0rN1RTTU5lTmJ5NnF2QXZlInmdUQT09>

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

HANDCRAFTED HOLIDAYS @ INNOVATION STUDIO, 525 14TH ST. S, ARLINGTON.

❖ Thursday/Dec. 4 / 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Drop in at the Innovation Studio for holiday crafting fun! Take home your creations. Paint a Festive Ornament; led by Michelle Otters. Get some painting instruction and make an ornament all your own.

Thursday/Dec. 11/ 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Craft a Holiday Card- collage, draw, and design your own stationary for the holidays.

Thursday/Dec. 18/ 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Super Size Snowflakes -transform a few simple pieces of paper into a gorgeous, super size snowflake!

FRIDAY/DEC. 5

December Family Night Wreath Making. 6 to 9 p.m. at Carver Community Center, Arlington. Craft your own winter wreath along with the other usual free family fun - bingo, inflatables, music, open game room, crafts, and more!

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Holiday Art Sale and Open House. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At The Studios at Arlington Arts, 3700 South Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. Consolidating a broad range of cultural offerings under one roof, the newly built studios are in Arlington Cultural Affairs Division's headquarters building which also contains the black box Theatre on the Run, two dance studios, rehearsal rooms, and gallery space. For information on the Annual Holiday Sale & Open House at The Studios at Arlington Arts, call 703-228-0560 or visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Family Art Lab: Holiday Ornament Decorating. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Arlington Mill Community Center, Arlington. Get in the spirit by creating ornaments using paint, decorative paper, and other supplies!

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Police Escort Santa to "A Very Village Holiday." Santa is on his way to make sure the last 2025 Fill the Cruiser Toy Drive collection on Saturday, December 6 at The Village at Shirlington's "A Very Village Holiday" event is joyful and merry! Led by Rudolph, and with a little help from elves from the Arlington County Police Department and Arlington County Fire Department, Santa's sleigh will be slowly cruising throughout Arlington County to spread holiday cheer before arriving at the event.

Check the below recommended viewing areas and Rudolph's Route map to make sure you catch a glimpse of this extra special escort!

Viewing Areas and Estimated Arrival Times
Lacey Woods Park, 1200 N. George Mason Drive, 2:32 p.m.

Lubber Run Community Center, 300 N. Park Drive, 2:38 p.m.

Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy Street, 2:45 p.m.
Rocky Run Park, 1109 N. Barton Street, 2:52 p.m.

Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2nd Street S., 2:59 p.m.

Fire Station 1, 500 S. Glebe Road, 3:02 p.m.

Penrose Square, 2400 block of Columbia Pike, 3:06 p.m.

Virginia Highlands Park, 15th Street S. and S. Hayes Street, 3:14 p.m.

John Robinson Jr. Town Square, 2406 Shirlington Road, 3:24 p.m.

"A Very Village Holiday", 4280 Campbell Avenue, 3:30 p.m.

The escort begins at 2:00 p.m. All estimated arrival times are approximate and may vary slightly due to traffic and safety conditions.

SUNDAY/DEC. 7

Advent Mart. 9 a.m. to 12 noon. At St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington. Each year, the Advent Mart transforms the church into a lively marketplace where fellowship, community partnerships, and holiday spirit come together. Local organizations are invited to set up tables before our worship services to

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Bull Run Festival of Lights runs now through Jan. 4, 2026.

offer unique items for sale while sharing their mission with parishioners. For many groups, it is both a fundraiser and a joyful way to connect with the wider community.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 10

Cookie Swap Party (55+). At Lubber Run Community Center. Join the Lubber Run 55+ Advisory Committee for a delightful Cookie Swap Party! Bring any amount of your favorite homemade cookies to share.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 10

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. 10-11 a.m. Via Zoom. World War One Living History Journey of Naval Engineer Michael Bosworth. Mike will highlight his living history journey for the WWI Centennial. He will focus on the U.S. involvement late in the war and the U.S. Marine Corps. 5th Regiment. Mike is a living history volunteer who does historical lectures and reenactments. He founded the very popular Ship's Company Chanteymen sea & tavern music performing troupe, a naval architect and marine engineer with degrees from the U.S. Naval Academy and MIT, Mike spent his career as a U.S. Navy civil service engineer. Zoom link for Coffee and Conversation: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=eW0rN1RTTU5lTmJ5NnF2QXZlbnmdUQT09>

DEC. 12-14

The Capital Art & Craft Festival (www.CACF.art) will feature handcrafted, one-of-a-kind art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. This winter show is known for being a treasure trove for holiday shipping with artists from throughout the country selling items that cannot be found in department stores. Free parking. Dates: Friday, Dec. 12 and Saturday, Dec. 13: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 14: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACF.art

SATURDAY/DEC. 13

Second Saturday Afternoon Workshop. 1:30-3:30 p.m. At Fairlington Community Center, Arlington. Free drop-in art fun at Fairlington Art Studio! Make 3D snowflakes in this month's staff-guided session.

SATURDAY/DEC. 13

Teen Takeover: Winter FUNderland. 7-10 p.m.

At Lubber Run Community Center, Arlington. Join in a night of games, activities, and winter-themed fun as teens "take over" the community center. Teen Takeovers are planned by teens, for teens.

SATURDAY/DEC. 13

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle! Hosted by Christian Hunt, this experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for December's show is the hilarious D.Lo!

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 17

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. 10-11 a.m. Via Zoom. Smart Supplement Use for Healthy Aging. Smart Supplement Use for Healthy Aging. Many older adults turn to vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements to support their health-but not all supplements are safe or effective. Kathy Cameron is a retired Senior Director of Health Promotion at the National Council on Aging. Her presentation explores the role of dietary supplements in promoting health and wellness among older adults, including easy-to-understand guidance on questions to ask doctors and pharmacists, choosing common supplements wisely, avoiding harmful interactions, and recognizing when supplements may or may not be needed. Zoom link for Coffee and Conversation: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=eW0rN1RTTU5lTmJ5NnF2QXZlbnmdUQT09>

THURSDAY/DEC. 18

Holiday Social at Langston Brown (55+). 2 - 4 p.m. Enjoy a sing-along of seasonal music, treats, games and friends at an afternoon of holiday cheer. Sponsored by the Langston-Brown 55+ Advisory Committee.

FRIDAY/DEC. 19

Walter Reed Holiday Lunch (55+), 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Gather with friends and celebrate the season with holiday cheer and a tasty catered lunch! Sponsored by the Walter Reed 55+ Advisory Committee and the Alli-

ance for Arlington Senior Programs.

FRIDAY/DEC. 19

Aurora Hills Holiday Party (55+). 1-2:30 p.m. Celebrate the season with music, delicious food and plenty of holiday cheer.

SATURDAY/DEC. 20

Free Outdoor Brass Quintet Holiday Music Program. 2 p.m. At Virginia Square, Arlington. Join the Trinity Brass for a Holiday Celebration of Carols and Traditional Music at the outdoor stage directly across the street from the Virginia Square Metro station, in front of the giant screen at The Latitude at Virginia Square, 3601 Fairfax Drive, Arlington.

SATURDAY/DEC. 20

Holiday Cheer. 7:30 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington. Presented by the National Chamber Ensemble, this year's program features a dazzling selection of classics that have become synonymous with the holiday season, including Leroy Anderson's iconic Sleigh Ride, selections from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker, and works by Vivaldi, Strauss, Saint-Saëns, and more. Audiences can expect a vibrant blend of ensemble favorites, sparkling chamber works, and familiar melodies that capture the warmth and magic of the season. A highlight of the event is the participation of rising young stars, including the winners of the 2025 Nancy Peery Marriott Young Artist Piano Competition and gifted student string performers from the local community. Their appearances reflect NCE's ongoing commitment to mentorship, education, and celebrating the next generation of musical talent. Tickets and more info is available through the National Chamber Ensemble's website: www.NationalChamberEnsemble.org

SUNDAY/JAN. 18

Arlington's MLK Tribute 2026. 5-6:30 p.m. At Wakefield High School Auditorium, Arlington. Arlington County Parks and Recreation invites you to come together to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's MLK Tribute will continue the theme "Dreams, Faith, and Justice in Action," carrying forward the spirit and vision of last year's planned tribute. Through powerful performances, reflection, and community voices, the evening will highlight Dr. King's enduring message of hope, equality, and service in action.

Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.

FREE TOILET + \$1,500 OFF*

For your FREE information
kit and our Senior Discounts,
Call Today Toll-Free

1-877-591-9950



*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13VH11096000

The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted IN AS LITTLE AS 1 DAY



\$1000 OFF*

OR **\$1500 OFF** when financing
with remodelingloans.com* OR **0% Interest**
For 18 Months*

OFFER EXPIRES 12/30/2025

Military & Senior Discounts Available



CALL NOW!

(844) 945-1631

*Includes labor and product, bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 12/30/2025. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. Participating dealers only. See your dealer for details. ©2025 Bath Concepts Industries.

Be prepared before the next power outage.



It's not just a generator. It's a power move.™

Receive a free 5-year warranty
with qualifying purchase*
- valued at \$535.

Call 844-947-1479
to schedule your free quote!

GENERAC

*Terms and Conditions apply.

CLASSIFIED

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM
TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

Trust the Nation's #1 Roofing Contractor
Award-Winning Roofing and Customer Service

Erie Roofing Since 1976

LIMITED TIME OFFER
50% OFF
Installation

FREE ESTIMATE
SCHEDULE TODAY!
Call 1.844.902.4611

CALL TODAY! 1.844.902.4611

New orders only. Does not include material costs. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Minimum purchase required. Other restrictions may apply. This is an advertisement placed on behalf of Erie Construction Mid-West, Inc. ("Erie"). Offer terms and conditions may apply and the offer may not be available in your area. If you call the number provided, you consent to being contacted by telephone, SMS text message, email, pre-recorded messages by Erie or its affiliates and service providers using automated technologies notwithstanding if you are on a DO NOT CALL list or register. Please review our Privacy Policy and Terms of Use on homeservicescompliance.com. All rights reserved. License numbers available at eriehome.com/erielicenses/

Stop cleaning-out
your gutters
this season

LeafFilter
GUTTER
PROTECTION

EXPIRES: 11/30/2025

AN ADDITIONAL

15% OFF + 10%

LeafFilter

Discount For
Seniors + Military

Get a FREE full gutter inspection and
estimate: **1-877-614-6667** Promo: 285

*See Representative for full warranty details. *Promotional offer includes 15% off plus an additional 10% off for qualified veterans and/or seniors. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. †Subject to credit approval. Call for details. AR 366920923, AZ ROC 344027, CA 1035795, CT HIC 0671520, FL CBC056678, IA C127230, ID RCE-51604, LA 559544, MA 176447, MD MHC111225, MI 262300173, 262300318, 262300328, 262300329, 262300330, 262300331, MN 18731804, MT 226192, ND 47304, NE 50145-22, 50145-23, NJ 13VH09953900, NM 408693, NV 86990, NY H-19114, H-52229, OR 218294, PA 179643, 069383, RI GC-41354, TN 10981, UT 10783658-5501, VA 2705169445, WA LEAFFNW822JZ, WV W056912.



Sign up for

FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

to any or all of our 15 papers

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE



The Arlington Connection

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Twitter @ArlConnection

An independent, locally owned weekly
newspaper delivered
to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to
your email box. Go to
connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
arlington@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm

Editor and Publisher

mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe

Contributing Photographer and Writer
slrbca@aol.com

Eden Brown

Contributing Writer

arlington@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444

debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant

703-778-9431

dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

**Classified & Employment
Advertising**
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm

mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher

Jerry Vernon

703-549-0004

jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong

Production Manager:

Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION

circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



SENIOR LIVING

Flourishing After 55

*Office of 55+ Programs
Department of Parks and Recreation
300 N. Park Dr., Arlington, VA 22203*

55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate (starting at a \$30 annual fee). To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747.

55+ New Year's Eve luncheon, Wednesday, Dec. 31. Register by Wednesday, Dec. 17. Cost \$35 (non-refundable). Once registered, visit friends of the alliance.org to pay or see the 55+ Guide for in-person options. Lunch will be held at the Lyon Park Community Center from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and catered by McNamara's Pub. There will be music, dancing, a photobooth and a champagne toast. Registration # 912899-04.

Coffee or Tea and Thee, Mondays and Thursdays from 9 to 10 a.m., socialize with other 55+ friends at Lubber Run 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Volleyball, all skill levels welcome, Tuesdays, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center; and Thursdays, 2 – 4 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Both are drop-in.

Introduction to beginners line dancing class with 55+ volunteer Suzie Pratts, Fridays, Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Learn box step, quarter turn and grapevine. Drop-in.

Cribbage, a challenging card game yet easy to learn and play, Fridays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Water walking and lap swimming to strengthen muscles at Long Bridge Aquatics Center, Mondays, 8-10 a.m., Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. No instruction provided. Long Bridge Aquatics Center membership required or pay daily admission fee. Located at 333 Long Bridge Drive. Drop-in.

Tai Chi practice with experienced volunteers, no instruction provided, Mondays, 2-2:45 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center; Tuesdays, 1-2:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center; Fridays, 1-2:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. All are drop-ins.

55+ Ice Skating, Mondays, 8:40 – 9:40 a.m., MedStar Capitals Iceplex, roof level parking at Ballston Quarter. \$1 skate rental fee. Pre-registration required at www.medstarcapitalsiceplex.com, click on Senior Public Skate.

Play pickleball, 55+ Pass required at the following 55+ centers: Walter Reed, Mondays, 8:15 a.m.- 4 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 – 4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2:15 – 4 p.m.; and Fridays, 8:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Arlington Mill, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 – 3 p.m. Drop-ins.

Women's drop-in basketball, Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m.-8:45 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Introduction to colored pencils, three sessions presented by artist Sandra Philips, Mondays, Dec. 1, 8 and 15, 12 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Materials provided. Registration # 912303-01.

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), reduce known risk factors for falls using aerobics, balance exercises and more beginning Mondays & Thursdays, Dec. 1 – Feb. 26, 1 p.m., 22 sessions, Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912502-01; Tuesdays & Thursdays, Dec. 2 – Feb. 26, 10:30 a.m., 23 sessions, Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 912502-02.

Opera appreciation group to listen and discuss "The Marriage of Figaro" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Professional

commentary by George Cecchetti. Registration # 912300-01.

Flourishing your work, learn to create ornate flourishes and scrollwork on your cards and art projects, Thursday, Dec. 4, 12 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Bring a mechanical pencil with an eraser and a black 01 or 05 Micron pen. Registration # 912310-01.

First Friday Social at Arlington Mill 55+ Center, Friday, Dec. 5, 1 p.m. Kick off the month with a relaxed social gathering and light refreshments. December's theme is an ugly sweater party. Registration # 912801-02.

Movie matinee, "A Christmas Story" (1983) (PG), Friday, Dec. 5, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912804-01.

The history of the Model T Ford and the Ford Motor Company, presented in three sessions by Volunteer Dick Sullivan, Friday, Dec. 5, registration # 912400-15; Friday, Dec. 12, registration #912400-16; Friday, Dec. 19, registration # 912400-17. Programs take place at Lubber Run 55+ Center, each at 9 a.m. Open to all ages; no 55+ Pass required.

Arlington Spellbinders, a group of folks who love to tell stories to intergenerational listeners at schools, senior centers and more. Meet Friday, Dec. 5, 9:30 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Learn more at meeting or check out Spellbinders stories on the 55+ YouTube channel. Drop-in.

Let's play easy piano duets, music supplied, Monday, Dec. 5, 4 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Must have at least beginner's knowledge of the piano; no instruction provided. Drop-in.

First Friday of the month ballroom dance, Dec. 5, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. No instruction provided; no partners are needed. Drop-in.

55+ Travel group will attend the U.S. Army Band's "Pershing Own" Holiday show at the DAR Constitution Hall, D.C., Saturday, Dec. 6, 1 p.m., registration # 902512-01 or Sunday, Dec. 7, registration # 902512-02. Cost \$12, Arlington resident; \$14, non-resident.

Holiday sing-along, Monday, Dec. 15, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912304-21 and Tuesday, Dec. 16, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center, registration # 912304-22. Enjoy festive sing-alongs led by local musicians Ken Schellenberg and Chris Bosch.

Cooking demonstration of healthy international holiday desserts by Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Food Volunteers, Monday, Dec. 15, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 912501-01.

Step-by-step painting demonstration with a Community Arts Programmer, Monday, Dec. 15, 10:30 a.m., virtual. Picture and supply list will be sent prior to class. Registration # 912303-10.

Acoustic Café, enjoy performances local musicians Michelle Swan and Caleb Hacker, Tues-

day, Dec. 16, 7 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Open to all ages; no 55+ Pass required. Registration # 912301-01.

Exploring book art, make an accordion book with hard covers guided by book artist Sushmita Mazumdar, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 3 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 912310-08.

Piano Lounge and sing-along with Valerie Welsh on the piano, enjoy holiday favorites, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912304-23.

55+ Travel group will enjoy a performance of the "Nutcracker" at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, performed by the Manassas Ballet Theatre, Wednesday, Dec. 17. Cost \$97, Arlington resident; \$111, non-resident. Registration # 902512-08.

Unknown Christmas songs to be performed by pianist Ken Schellenberg and friends, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 1:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center, registration # 912301-02 and Friday, Dec. 19, 10 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 912301-03.

Holiday Social at Langston-Brown 55+ Center, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2 p.m., sing-along, treats and games. Registration # 912899-01.

How do birds get their names? Learn the history and science behind some of the names from Park Naturalist Aide Leeanna Pletcher, Thursday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912400-32.

Old-Time and String Band Jam, Thursday, Dec. 18, 5 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Bring your instruments for an open jam of Appalachian old-time (pre-blue grass) and string band music. Registration # 912304-14.

Holiday lunch at Walter Reed 55+ Center, Friday, Dec. 19, 11:30 a.m., catered lunch and music, \$15. Registration # 912899-02. Once registered, visit friendsofthealliance.org to pay the admission fee.

Aurora Hills 55+ Center to host holiday party, Friday, Dec. 19, 1 p.m. with music, food and an ugly sweater contest. Registration # 912899-03.

December Bingo Bash, teens and adults come together to celebrate the holiday season with classic Bingo, Friday, Dec. 19, 4 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Prizes, holiday treats and great company. Registration #912600-02.

55+ Travel group will attend the International Gem and Jewelry Show in Chantilly, Friday, Dec. 19. Cost \$21, Arlington resident; \$24, non-resident. Price includes admission ticket. Registration # 902512-49.

55+ Travel group to enjoy a 45-minute tour of the U.S. Capitol including the Rotunda and National Statuary Hall, Saturday, Dec. 20. (Tour does not include access to the Senate and House Galleries.) Cost \$14, Arlington resident; \$17, non-resident. Registration # 902512-10.

A Key Moment



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So, this is what it feels like to be self-sufficient. I've rarely experienced a moment of pride like this. Why? Because if this "it" had to do with yours truly using his hands to solve a problem, the problem usually remained unsolved. As an adolescent, I remember my father having a toolbox in the house, but its purpose escaped me. As a result, I, nor my brother, Richard was groomed for home/car/computer repair. Typically, then and now, if I had a problem that involved using my hands, it pretty much meant using my fingers to make a call to a person or a service to do what I couldn't. But not last Sunday. I faced my problem with a can-do approach rarely seen in my problem-solving history. What was it I fixed? I replaced the battery in the key fob of my 2022 Audi Q3. A first in my 20-plus years of Audi ownership.

As with these many tasks (car, computer, household), I am unhelpful, shall we say. In addition, not only am I incompetent, but mostly I'm just not that interested. As the second son of Barry and Celia Lourie, renters until my father retired at age 70, I was not really exposed to any household/honey-do-type chores. My sole job was taking out the rubbish from under the kitchen sink and depositing it in the "rubbish pale" buried in the ground downstairs/outside near the side entrance to our second-floor home. Occasionally I had to take out the trash "canned up" behind the garage and drag it out to the front of the house for the weekly trash pick-up. That was pretty much it. If anything needed to be fixed, a call was made and arrangements were soon to follow. My primary pursuits were sports and chocolate. (Not lawn care either as we were renters and as such, it was not our responsibility.)

It wasn't until I was married at age 24 that my deficiencies really became apparent. It wasn't so much a problem for me as I had spent my entire life birth to wedding, not having and/or not being able to do anything constructive around the home, car and nowadays, the computer. However, it was much harder on my wife Dina. Her expectation was that as a man I had some intrinsic God-given abilities to be useful. It was a disappointment (I'm moderating her reaction) when she realized that I had no such abilities.

Having spent years showcasing how little I could do, this particular key-fob problem presented an opportunity. Moreover, on the face of it, changing a battery didn't seem insurmountable. In fact, when this key-fob issue arose previously (batteries do run out), I took the key-fob to the dealer, and they happily obliged my incompetence and changed the battery for me. However, not being a complete dunce, I did pay attention as the service person swapped out the battery on my key fob. I have to admit; even by my standards, the battery replacement didn't seem all that complicated. After all, I'm not a complete idiot, despite what some of you regular readers may feel, so I decided I'd give "it" a try.

First, I looked at the key fob to see what I could see. I saw nothing, as in any clues as to how I might solve this problem. I poked and prodded and nothing. Moreover, there was no indication that there was any hope for a future with my changing this battery without some kind of help. Vowing to move on, I asked myself: where might there be information about my car's key fob; And it hit me, just like I was a character on one of those old "Firesign Theatre" albums: the owner's manual. Ta da. Success. Not so fast. I couldn't follow the diagrams (though I could follow the table of contents). As has occurred many times before with me, following written how-to directions like this is next to impossible. Let me clarify, following directions/diagrams presented in this two-dimensional way is not next to impossible, it is absolutely/unequivocally impossible - for me. And as soon as I realized, what I was up against, I closed the owner's manual in disgust. Down but not yet out, I sat back in my driver's side seat and thought. Then it came to me: the internet. There are sites to show people how to do almost anything. Replacing a key-fob battery is child's play (except this child couldn't play). I got out of my car and walked into my house and turned right toward my home office. The one with the computer/internet. I sat down and cautiously typed in "How to change the battery in the key fob on a 2022 Audi Q3?" And there the headline popped up on my computer screen: "Changing the battery in a key fob" I clicked on the top entry and viola, a video began. The simple words of wisdom I heard from the host, while he actually, in front of my eyes, changed the battery gave me hope. Hope that one day I could change/replace the battery. And as it turned out, this was that day.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4
accommodate the event:
From approximately 12:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m.
Campbell Avenue, from 28th Street S. to S. Randolph Street

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is NO MINIMUM driving requirement. Not only do you

help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. To sign up, visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/> volunteer, or email contact@scmafc.org with questions.



Inova Schar Heart and Vascular



Comprehensive heart care in Ballston



Inova Cardiology's Ballston team offers quick access to appointments, comprehensive screenings, and personalized care for every patient—new and returning—right where you live or work. **Book your appointment today.**

571-229-7926

3833 N. Fairfax Dr #201 | Arlington, VA 22203

Inova.org/HeartAC

