

The Arlington Connection

SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 13 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 14

The winner of Battle of the DJs at the Teen Takeover at Amazon After Hours is Miraitowa Kawasaki. His DJ name is L1f3gard3.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

What Went into the Potomac River?

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Teens Take Over at Amazon

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Feel the Heritage Celebrates 100 Years of Black History

A fashion show spotlighted clothes through the decades at “Feel the Heritage Festival”—a celebration of the last 100 years of Black history in Arlington.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The gymnasium at Dr. Charles L. Drew Elementary School is humming with activity for the “Feel the Heritage Festival” on Feb. 21. The event is celebrating 100 years of Black history in Arlington dating back to 1926.

The stage in the gymnasium at Drew Elementary has a full afternoon program of entertainment including a Black fashion show showcasing fashion for the last 100 years, a demonstration of ballroom dancing, seniors on step and drummers. Along the side of the gym a buffet line is set up offering a half slab of ribs, pulled pork, a chicken sandwich and the most popular whitefish dinner.

On the other side of the wall the space is packed with artisans and with community organizations like Encore, AFAC, Bike Share and the National Council of Negro Women.

The Arlington Sheriff’s Office has a display of Black leaders accompanied by an 11-question quiz. “What civil rights demonstrations took place in Arlington on June 9, 1960?”

Just inside the door of the community center several children have chosen to try inventing their own video games in the tradition of Jerry Lawson, an African-American engineer who helped create the first video game system that used interchangeable cartridges.

This celebration marks the 100-year history which began as Negro History Week in 1926 and was expanded to National Black History Month in 1976. It marks the struggles and the achievements of Black Americans across many fields of science, education, entertainment and the arts.



50s church attire — conservative with hat and gloves.



60s Black Panther power — self determination and pride.



70s platform shoes and tattered jeans — a decade of change.



80s hip hop — a time of self expression that shaped style.



The afternoon program featured a ballroom dance demonstration.



Col. S. Farris (left) and Col T. Cleaton of the Arlington Sheriff’s office



The gymnasium at Drew Elementary is filled with community organizations and vendors at the Feel the Heritage Festival Feb. 21.



The buffet line is long as customers decide between ribs, chicken and the ever popular whitefish dinner.



A table of children take a turn at inventing their own video game in the tradition of Jerry Lawson who helped invent the first video game with interchangeable cartridges.

Partnership Advances Health for Seniors

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Culpepper Garden residents are excited, exercising, and out of their units as they explore the possibilities brought about through the new partnership with Goodwin Living.

“We already have about 50 residents participating in the free exercise classes now offered by Goodwin Living several times a week,” Marta Hall Gray, executive director of Culpepper Garden says. “I have never seen so many residents energized.”

She said the exercise classes also allow the Goodwin Living professionals to get to know the residents and observe their needs for the other services available like physical therapy and occupational therapy.

Andy Siegel, Goodwin Living Chief Business Development Officer says, “We have learned in the case of health how important trust is.”

This partnership offers services for the independent living residents that were previously only available to them through their outside providers. Now there is a full time PT on site at Culpepper which allows the residents to stop down and make an appointment without having to leave Culpepper. Occupational Therapy is also available through the professionals at the wider Goodwin Living services and can be called in when needed.

So far about 20 people have taken advantage of these new services.

“As with anything new, it grows over time,” Siegel says. “But this participation after three weeks is pretty fast.”

Gray says Goodwin Living gets a lot of credit for their outreach and information provided to the residents.

Gray explains providing on site services limits the seniors previous problem of coordinating their outside appointments with available transportation. “It can be a challenge for them remembering to go and keep track of when our bus is running. They may not focus.” But now Gray says this new opportunity makes everything accessible to them. She says 25 percent of the residents are Hispanic and another 25 percent follow the diverse demographics of Arlington County “and they are afraid to go out right now.”

According to Paul Timpane, Culpepper Garden Director of Property Operations, the timing was perfect since Independent Living residents no longer have the option of moving to Assisted Living when it becomes needed. “So we wanted to be sure they have PT, OT and mental health services available in a format we aren’t providing now to help keep them healthy.”

Gray says, “This is critical. “The most frequent issue is balance and falls. All studies show when a resident falls and breaks a hip they

don’t come back. For a high percent it is the last straw. “

Siegel explains, “With our wonderful rich history with Culpepper we thought it would be a good time to put a clinic in there.” This will be the first clinic of this kind established by Goodwin Living, “and we hope to replicate this model for future efforts.”

Gray adds, “Goodwin Living is mission-oriented which really suits our mission-oriented approach; it’s really about service. They are second to none. We are really proud and honored to be associated.”

The process began last January when Assisted Living was winding down at Culpepper, and negotiations took place over the summer. The contract between Culpepper Garden and Goodwin Living was signed in October.

Siegel says they identified the space for the new program that made the most sense, identified what the needs would be, and what would be the most impactful using the health system. They needed to make sure there was good access and added equipment like a PT bed and other age-appropriate equipment. Siegel said they made sure they had a team ready to go, and got to know the residents so they could be sure they put all the proper procedures in place.

The exercise program began in January 2026, and Feb. 1 they began to treat residents. Siegel says he hopes this is just the beginning. “We would like to deepen the ser-



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Culpepper Garden low-income retirement community.

vices.”

Goodwin Living is a not-for-profit faith-based senior living and health care organization. It is well known in the region for its Goodwin House senior living facilities

in Alexandria and Falls Church as well as its hospice and home health care.

Culpepper Garden is an award winning low-income retirement community in Arlington.

SENIOR LIVING

Flourishing after 55

Office of 55+ Programs
Department of Parks and Recreation
300 N. Park Dr., Arlington, VA 22203
703-228-4721

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.

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO) looking for volunteers to assist event directors at a variety of events, Sept. 19 – Oct. 10 plus person to write press releases and contact potential Patrons. Experienced volunteer Webmaster also needed. Email Judy Massabny for further details at jmassa@arlingtonva.us.

55+ Ice Skating, Mondays at the MedStar Capitals Iceplex in Ballston Quarter, parking (\$1) on roof level 8, Fee (\$1) includes skate rental, 8:40-9:50 a.m. Pre-registration required at <https://www.medstarcapitalsiceplex.com>, register for Senior Public Skate.

Retire well, live well, three-part series starting Monday, March 9, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills

55+ Center. Session 1 covers Social Security, tax planning, early retirement and IRA accounts. Presented by 55+ Center Director Emily Ingram and Wealth Advisor Brian Fyock. Registration #913404-01. Sign up separately for each session. No 55+ Pass needed.

Meet the Beatles-Part II, concert and sing-along of 22 of the best Beatles tunes, Monday, March 9, 10:30 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 913304-14; Wednesday, March 11, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center, registration # 913304-15; Thursday, March 12, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center, registration # 913304-16; Friday, March 13, 11 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center, registration # 913304-17. Led by pianist Ken Schellenberg, Singers Judy McVerry, Sherry Hickey and Cameron Fletcher.

Reader’s Theater, fun reading of vintage radio plays, everybody gets a part, music by pianist Ken Schellenberg, Tuesday, March 10, 5:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 913301-16.

Supper Club, bring your own dinner, non-alcoholic beverages and dessert provided by Arlington Mill 55+ Center, Wednesday, March 11, 6 p.m. Registration # 913801-01.

Third Act Dance Ensemble, join this weekly group of folks who love to dance and learn an original piece of choreography, Wednesdays,

March 11- May 20, 1:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Be prepared to rehearse then perform. Cost \$99, 11 sessions. Registration # 913802-01.

Bootcamp, total body workout with certified trainer Candice Kaup, Wednesdays March 11 to May 27, 1:30 p.m., Long Bridge Aquatics. All fitness levels welcome. Cost \$66, 12 sessions. Registration # 913100-01.

Paper quilling, create beautiful, raised images from paper strips using basic tools, Thursday, March 12, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Learn from instructor Joni Leonardo. Supplies provided. Cost \$20. Registration # 913310-04.

Travel group will celebrate spirit of St. Patrick’s Day early with a festive lunch at the Celtic House Restaurant, Thursday, March 12. Cost \$12, Arlington residents; \$14, non-residents. Meal not included in trip cost. Registration # 902603-02.

Celebrate National Nutrition Month, program presented by Virginia Cooperative Extension to help participants make smart food choices and build healthy habits, Thursday, March 12, 10 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 913501-05.

Digital peace of mind presentation in a two-part series by 55+ volunteer Barbara Fillup, Friday, March 13, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill

55+ Center. Session one teaches how to declutter files and protect privacy and personal data. Registration # 913403-03. Sign up separately for session 2: Friday, March 20, 1 p.m., manage your digital legacy and explore research tools, registration # 913403-04

Spring Fever, a Silent Disco outdoors on the Plaza at Arlington Mill 55+ Center, Friday, March 13, 4 p.m. Listen to Oldies and Top 40s Hits or smooth jazz through headphones while dancing, painting or sipping mocktails. Teens and 55+ friends will enjoy an evening of music, creativity and fun. Registration # 913899-02.

St. Patrick’s Day luncheon, Friday, March 13, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Enjoy traditional Irish food and music. Register by March 6. Registration # 913899-01.

First Friday Social, relaxed gathering with light refreshments, music and fun, Friday, March 13, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 913801-04.

Gyrokinesis, an original movement method which coordinates movement, breathing and mental focus, Saturdays, March 14 through May 30, 8:10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Cost \$61, 11 sessions. Registration # 913100-02.

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.

FREE ST. PATRICK'S DAY LYFT RIDES

Preparing to combat that time of the year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration figures, more than one-third (34%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metro-politan area on St. Patrick's Day. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2026 St. Patrick's Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th (St. Patrick's Day) and operate until 4:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period. During this 12-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2026 St. Patrick's Day SoberRide code will be posted at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th on www.SoberRide.com.

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.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Pet Food Bank. AWLA has established 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.

Donations Needed. Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, 2700 South 19th St., is seeking to replenish its food pantry. Particularly needed are rice (large bags appreciated, the pantry will rebag), dry beans, canned vegetables, soup, small jars of peanut butter, small jars of jelly, pasta and pasta sauce. Donations are collected during Mass each

Sunday. Visit www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org for more.

ONGOING

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.

Naloxone (Narcan) can save the life of someone who is overdosing, if given in time. Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law. Naloxone (Narcan) is available without a prescription for a fee at all pharmacies. Obtain it for free by attending a REVIVE! training. Contact Emily Siqueland at 703-228-0913 or esiqueland@arlingtonva.us or visit health.arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/ for available training sessions.

The Chris Atwood Foundation also offers training to the public. Visit www.chrisatwoodfoundation.org/naloxone for details.

Monthly Memory Café. 1-3 p.m. at 7910 Andrus Road, Suite 6, Alexandria. The Memory Café, a social gathering for individuals living with memory loss and their families, virtually. Registration is free and highly recommended to reserve spots, which are open on a first come first served basis. To reserve a spot, please call 571-210-5551 or email bdesai@seniorhelpers.com. Visit www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe or www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va for more.

Aging Matters. 2-3 p.m. Tuesdays on WERA 96.7 LP FM on Arlington's community radio station. Each week host Cheryl Beversdorf interviews individuals with expertise about a broad array of aging related topics affecting the lives of older adults and their loved ones. Visit www.facebook.com/aging-matterswera to listen to programs. <https://www.mixcloud.com/Aging-Matters/>

Volunteer Bike Repair Night. First Tuesday of the month, 6-9 p.m. at Phoenix Bikes, Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. Volunteers gather to refurbish bikes, sort parts or help with essential tasks. No experience necessary.

Public Financial Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline. Arlington County public hotline that offers a confidential and secure way to report suspected incidents of financial fraud, waste and abuse. Anyone can submit a complaint to the hotline at 1-866-565-9206 or at arlingtonva.ethicaladvocate.com. The hotline website is available in English and Spanish. Phone calls can be taken in many languages.

Created by the Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) in partnership with the Arlington Public Library, the nation's First Energy Lending Library made its debut on Earth Day. Meant to resolve energy issues in the Arlington community, efficiency tools can be borrowed, such thermal imaging cameras, energy meters and books play a vital role in achieving a "greener" home. Open Sun-Sat 10 a.m.-9 p.m. 1015 N. Quincy St. Visit library.arlingtonva.us/locations/central-library

or call 703-228-5990.

Arlington Rotary Club Lunches. Thursdays, 12 - 1:30 p.m. Club meetings are at 12:15 to 1:15 on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. On the 2nd Thursday we meet at a restaurant in Arlington (currently Texas Jacks BBQ). On the 4th Thursday we meet via Zoom (click HERE to join). Newcomers are welcome to join the Zoom meeting. Organization comes together for humanitarian services. Listen to guest speakers on various topics of interest. Visit <https://arlingtonrotaryclub.org/>

Job Seeking Help. 5-9 p.m. at Columbia Pike Branch Library, 816 S. Walter Reed Drive. Receive job-related help from the staff and volunteers with applications. Free, but requires registration. Visit www.arlingtonva.libcal.com.

Arlington PFLAG Community Group. 7:30-9 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, PFLAG promotes the equality and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and their families. Meets at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard. Contact arl.pflag@gmail.com for more or go to www.pflagdc.org

Helmetsmen Toastmasters meet Thursdays, 7:30-8:45 a.m. at Pentagon Library and Conference Center. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps everyone speak, think, lead and listen better. Most clubs are meeting online at this time. Contact Carl Sabath carl.e.sabath.civ@mail.mil or 703-695-2804 or Elizabeth Femrite elizabeth.m.femrite.civ@mail.mil or 571-256-8674.

Soil Testing. Virginia Cooperative Extension is offering soil testing services to analyze soil and determine what is needed to condition soil for plantings. The routine soil test is all one normally needs for a fertility evaluation. Pick up soil sampling box at the Virginia Cooperative Extension Arlington office, 3308 S. Stafford St., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Send filled soil sample box with form and fee to the Virginia Tech Lab for analysis. Fees vary, visit www.soiltest.vt.edu/Files.

Alzheimer's Association Support Group has meetings. They are open to people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers, family members and friends. Free. Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 703-359-4440 or 800-272-3900 before attending a group for the first time to verify meeting information, obtain directions or other information about the group. A complete list of all groups in the National Capital Area region can be found at https://www.alz.org/nca/helping_you/support_groups.

Pentagon Legacy Toastmasters meet Tuesdays 5:15-6:30 p.m. in the Pentagon Main Cafeteria/food court, left of Dunkin Donuts. Most clubs are meeting online at this time. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps people speak, think, lead and listen better. Call 703-695-2604 www.toastmasters.org.

The Friends of the Planetarium Visit www.friendsoftheplanetarium.org to find up-to-date show times, a schedule of future events, information about Friends of the Planetarium membership, astronomy news and events, the history of the David M. Brown Planetarium, a link to the Friends' store, and more.

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PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

St Peter's Episcopal Church offers "Drive Thru Ashes" on Wednesday, February 18, the first day of Lent.

The bowl of ashes burned from the palms at last year's Shrove Tuesday and used at St. Peter's Episcopal Church at this year's Ash Wednesday service.

St. Peter's Reaches Out with Drive Thru Ashes

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, signaling the beginning of the 40-days focused on mortality and renewal before Easter. It is symbolized by the imposition of a cross on the forehead using ashes from the burning of last year's palms.

A sign is posted along Glebe

Road beside the driveway to St. Peter's Episcopal Church. It offers "Drive Thru Ashes" 7:00-8:30 am." Rev. Jennifer Gamber says, "We meet people where they are." She says this morning they had 46 people drive by for imposition of the ashes and a blessing. "Many were stopping by before work but about 1/3 of them were teenagers driving themselves to school. It was really lovely." She adds, "I think they are looking for inspiration in these turbulent times, a place of stability

and love. It's a way for us to bless the community."

Gamber says this is the 4th year St. Peter's has done this. "It's a way to remind people that God does not live within 4 walls and to remind people we are here for them."

She adds there is also a family Ash Wednesday service at 5:30 pm "where we have four stations for those little hands and feet. At the baptism station kids can play in

water; at the light of the world station, kids can light candles. Then at 7 pm there is a more traditional service with scripture and people sitting in pews."

She says God formed human from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. She continued, "God gives us life."

Each of us bears God's image and has inherent dignity. Every person shares the same origin (dust) and

each of us is deserving of dignity. These services are all a reminder that we are dust."

As she imposed the ashes on each person she said, "from dust you came and to dust you shall return." She says then she asked each person what she could pray for them. One person had been through the drive through ashes last year and shared an update of her life. Her prayers had been answered.

Arrest in Hit-and-Run; Pedestrian in Critical Condition

The Arlington County Police arrested the suspected driver in a critical hit-and-run crash that occurred in the early morning hours of March 1, 2026 on Arlington Boulevard. Valeria Galdo Camacho, 25, of Arlington, is charged with Felony Hit and Run.

At approximately 12:39 a.m. on March 1, police and fire personnel were dispatched to N. Irving Street at Arlington Boulevard for the report of a pedestrian-involved crash. Upon arrival, the pedestrian, an adult male, was located in the roadway suffering critical injuries. Medics treated him on scene before transporting him to an area hospital where he remains in critical but stable condition.

The preliminary investigation indicates the suspect was driving eastbound on Arlington Boulevard when she struck the pedestrian.

Following the crash, the suspect fled the scene in her vehicle. At approximately 11 a.m., the suspect turned herself into police at the Magistrate's Office.

This remains an active criminal investigation. Anyone with information that may assist the investigation is asked to contact Detective Young at 703-228-4342 or cyoung@arlingtonva.us Information may also be provided anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477)

Arrest of Suspect in Bluemont Hit and Run

The Arlington County Police Department's Homicide/Robbery Unit arrested a suspect in a December 2025 hit and run crash that injured two victims. Zai Atwater, 24, of Washington, DC is charged with Malicious Wounding, Hit & Run (x2), Assault & Battery, Reckless Driving and Driving While

Suspended. He is being held without bond in the Arlington County Detention Facility.

At approximately 7:17 p.m. on Dec. 18, 2025, police were dispatched to the 1100 block of N. Glebe Road for the report of a vehicle crash with injuries. The investigation determined the suspect and victim were each driving eastbound on I-66 when they became involved in a dispute. The suspect continued to follow the victim as he exited the highway. In the area of N. Glebe Road and N. Wakefield Street, the victim parked, exited his vehicle and began walking when the suspect accelerated, striking the victim with his vehicle.

As the suspect fled the initial crash scene, he struck a second, uninvolved pedestrian as he was crossing N. Wakefield Street in the crosswalk.

The victims, both adult males, were transported to an area hospital for treatment of serious but non-life threatening injuries and

subsequently released.

On the evening of the crash, the suspect vehicle was located and recovered in Washington, DC. During the course of the comprehensive criminal investigation, detectives obtained evidence confirming the suspect was the driver of the vehicle at the time of the crash. Warrants were obtained for his arrest and he was taken into custody in Washington, DC and extradited to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

This remains an active investigation and anyone with information related to this incident is asked to contact the Arlington County Police Department's tip line at 703-228-4180 or ACPDTipline@arlingtonva.us.

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

Potomac River Sewage Contamination Declining

Concern about pathogens in the Potomac River remain, but it is now safe for recreation, says DC Water.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The Potomac River in the Washington, D.C. area is safe for recreation, DC Water said on March 2, after over five weeks of impaired water quality warnings following the Jan. 19 spill of over 200 million gallons of raw sewage into the river from a ruptured Potomac interceptor. The interceptor is a six-foot-diameter pipe that carries 60 million gallons of raw sewage a day 54 miles, from Dulles Airport to the Blue Plains Treatment plant in southeast Washington, D.C.

Various entities are monitoring the water. DC Water representatives say there has been no leakage since Feb. 8. They built a bypass to reroute wastewater, using pumps and part of the C&O Canal, hoping to complete repairs by mid-March.

Officials insist that drinking water is not affected. Fairfax Water's intake is located several miles upstream of where the spill enters.

E. Coli, an Indicator

Several entities are conducting water quality sampling, primarily for E. coli. DC Water reports that E. coli levels are steadily decreasing.

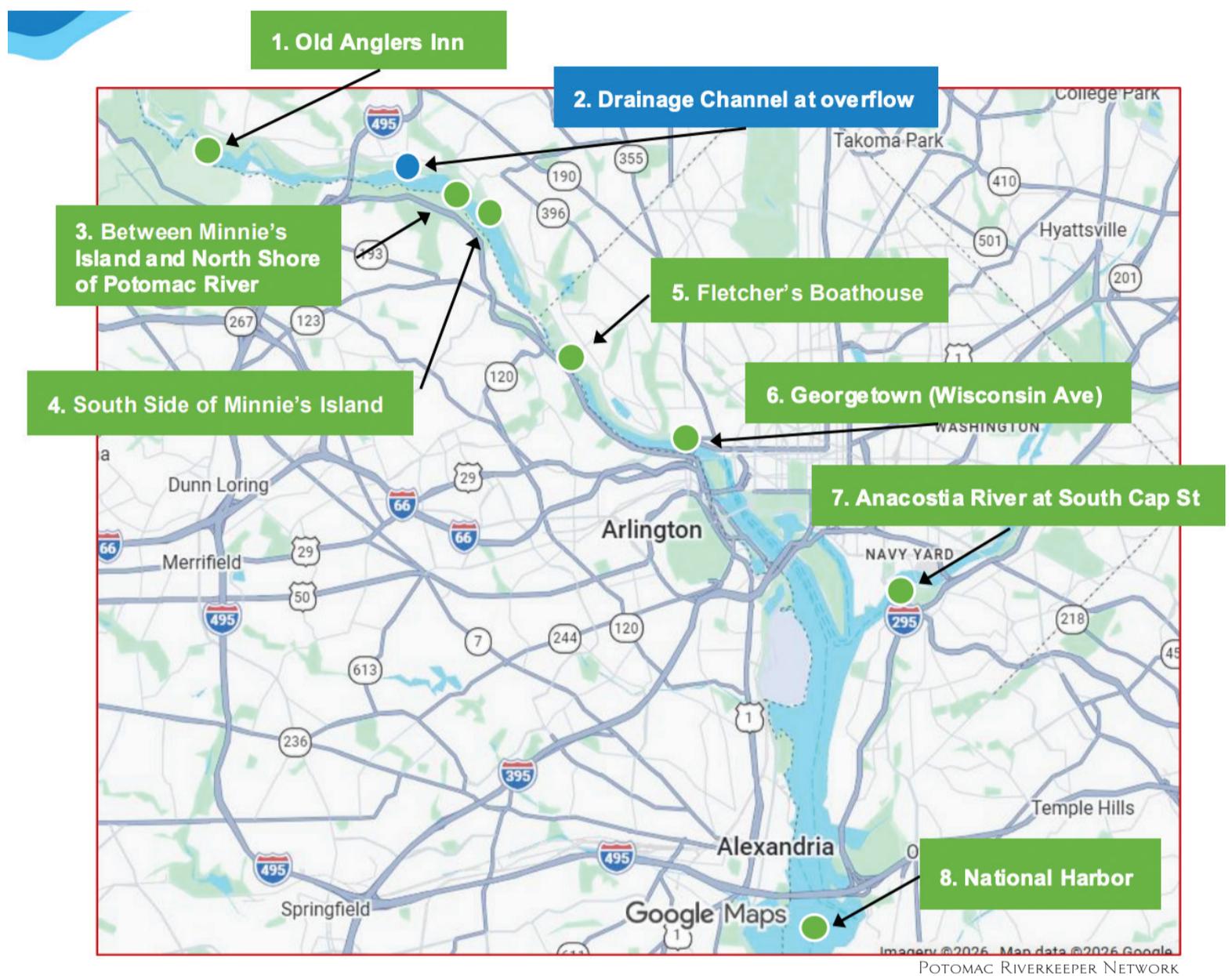
DC Water's website says that variability in E. coli results are common. "For the Potomac River, historical water quality data shows E. coli levels may vary from a range as low as 10 MPN/100mL to as much as 5,000 MPN/100mL on a given day ... Swimming is not recommended when E. coli levels exceed 410 MPN/100 mL." (MPN is an estimate of the microbial concentration in the sample, expressed as MPN per 100 mL (milliliters).

The only acceptable level of E. coli in drinking water is zero MPN/100 mL, according to EPA and other sources.

Alexandria, Fairfax County Impacts

At the request of Virginia Senators Scott Surovell and Richard

SEE POTOMAC RIVER, PAGE 8
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Raw sewage spill in the Potomac River



Dean Naujoks of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network is taking many water samples to assess the Potomac River's water quality.

POTOMAC RIVERKEEPER NETWORK



DC WATER



DC WATER

This photo shows the expanded excavation around the damaged section of pipe. As part of that process we install what are called trench boxes for shoring around the excavated section. This was done to reach additional sections of the pipe where a rock and debris dam were located.

Workers inside the damaged section of the 72-inch sewer pipe known as the Potomac Interceptor removing the large rocks and debris inside the initial collapse area.

Potomac River Sewage Contamination Declining

FROM PAGE 7

Stuart and Delegate Paul Krizek, whose districts border the river, on Feb. 17, Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) collected water samples at 25 locations along approximately 49 miles of the Potomac from the Chain Bridge to the mouth of Potomac Creek in King George and Stafford Counties.

DEQ reported these E. coli levels from those samples at these Northern Virginia stations:

Hunting Creek/Potomac River, 313; Jones Point, 31; Belle Haven Marina, 158; Across from Fort Washington, 10; Little Hunting Creek/Potomac River, 85; Gunston Hall, 20. On Feb. 25, at National Harbor E. coli levels were 105 MPN/100 mL.

On Feb. 13, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) issued a recreational advisory for 72.5 miles from the American Legion Memorial Bridge (I-495) in Fairfax County to the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge in King George County, urging people and pets to avoid recreational water activities, such

as swimming, wading, canoeing or kayaking.

With D.C. Water's March 2 lifting of the advisory that paused recreation use, activities like rowing teams' practice may resume.

Fairfax County's Deputy County Executive Jennifer Miller said that the county is monitoring the situation, that "Fecal indicator bacterial monitoring show no ongoing downstream impacts from the sewage release, and no long-term impacts are anticipated now that the spill is contained."

What Went into the River?

The Choose Clean Water Coalition reports that University of Maryland found the following:

- ❖ E. coli bacteria levels at the spill site were literally thousands of times above the water safety limit, 410 MPN, on Jan. 21, 28 and Feb. 3.

- ❖ Bacteria levels were over 100 times the contact limit on Feb. 12 and on Jan. 28, E. coli levels were over the safety limit at a site 10 miles downstream from the sewage overflow.

- ❖ On Jan. 21 and Jan. 28, Staphylococcus aureus was detected at the spill site and nine miles downstream. Overall, 33 percent of the sampled sites were positive for the pathogen.

- ❖ MRSA, an antibiotic-resistant strain of the S. aureus bacteria that causes infections, was identified at the spill site.

Impacts on People, the Environment

In a Feb. 27 interview, Dr. Joan Rose, an international water microbiology expert at Michigan State University, explained that up to 100 different kinds of pathogens can be found in untreated wastewater at varying concentrations. Levels can peak if many people are sick, for example, during the 2020 COVID pandemic.

"It only takes a few pathogens for us to get sick. For example, if we have one million viruses discharged, even if 99 percent die off, we still have 10,000 viruses. You only need five to ten viruses for us to get sick," she explained.

Known as "the poop bacteria," E. coli is a

group of bacteria that normally live in the intestines of people and animals. "Everyone has it in their feces. From one to three percent of E. coli are pathogenic," she said. Other pathogens commonly found in sewage include salmonella, hepatitis A and the norovirus. Pathogens in fecal waste can be "quite persistent," Rose said, adding, "They can persist in sediments and some can colonize, grow in sediments and last for months."

Nutrients from sewage, like nitrogen and phosphorus, "can exacerbate hazardous algal blooms, some of which have a toxin that can cause respiratory distress," she said.

Dr. Rose cited a study by Sam Dorevitch at the University of Illinois of the impacts water contaminated with wastewater on "limited-contact water recreation" like boating, canoeing and fishing. Over three years, he studied 11,297 people and the incidence and severity of illness, associations between water exposure and risk of illness.

He found that limited-contact recreation,

Potomac River Sewage Contamination Declining

FROM PAGE 8

both on effluent dominated waters and on waters designated for general use, was associated with an elevated risk of gastrointestinal illness.

Ecological Impacts

How these pathogens affect natural resources “depends on how much and whether they accumulate along the shoreline or an island,” Dr. Rose said. “If water pools, you can get a high organic loading and anaerobic conditions which adversely affect benthic and other aquatic organisms that need air to survive. A single sewage spill can have a temporary effect, but consistent inputs of nutrients, from sewage for example, can disrupt ecosystems. A spill is like icing on the cake.”

D. C.’s Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) reports, “Solids in sewage can smother aquatic habitats. Plants and animals can suffer infections from the bacteria, viruses and other pathogens; they can also suffer from acute toxicity in sewage chemicals. ... DOEE is planning fish and wildlife surveys beginning in the spring (some planned as early as late February) that will help indicate if the sewage spill has larger impacts.”

Longer Term Prospects

A Potomac Riverkeeper Network team led by Dean Naujoks has collected water samples at multiple sites. Naujoks urges officials to “look south beyond the Woodrow Wilson Bridge,” and especially to support watermen who make their living from the Potomac. He worries that people will “lose confidence in the river.”

“Blue catfish season starts in March,” he noted in an interview. “Around 3.4 million tons are fished out of the Potomac each year. Will anyone buy and eat it?” Perception is a big concern so his group advocates for daily monitoring. They’ll also work to focus federal dollars on communities impacted for those who make living on the water.

Electeds Call for Funding

Virginia’s Eighth District Congressman, Don Beyer, whose district abuts the river, is highlighting the over-60-year-old sewage system’s vulnerabilities. He led ten other Washington-area members of Congress to seek funds to repair and modernize the Potomac interceptor and urged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) to identify a backup water supply for the Washington region, which currently lacks a secondary water source.

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The process of clearing rocks from the collapsed area includes workers manually shoveling out dirt, muck and debris that was inside.

The Canal Bypass

D.C. Water constructed a new access point upstream of the collapse where they added more high-capacity pumps - capable of pumping at a flow rate of 13 million gallons a day - that are pumping the wastewater from the Potomac Interceptor into the isolated section of the C&O Canal, where it is diverted around the damaged section and goes back into the Potomac Interceptor downstream of the collapse. The additional pumps and enhanced bypass allowed for the installation of a steel bulkhead gate to block the flow of wastewater downstream, so that workers could safely remove that rock and debris dam. The last release to the Potomac occurred on Feb. 8, according to D.C. Water.



This shows the enhanced bypass pumping system.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Teen Planning Team for Takeover Events: L to R - Naomi, Aidan, Mostapha, Aria and Sean, and Rula Minawi (DPR Staff)

Teens Take Over Amazon HQ

Friday night Teen Takeover at Amazon's HQ2 in Arlington.

Nearly 600 Arlington teens filled Amazon's Corporate Headquarters in Pentagon City in Arlington for a one-night-only event planned by teens for teens and host-

ed through a partnership between Arlington County and Amazon.

Arlington County Parks and Recreation partnered with Amazon to host Teen Takeover at HQ2.

Amazon After Hours transformed the campus into a teen-only space featuring a red-carpet entrance, dance party atmosphere, interactive art wall, upscale food, and the return of the award-winning Battle

of the DJs competition.

The Battle of the DJs was recipient of the Virginia Parks and Recreation Society's Best New Special Event, spotlighting the Coun-

SEE FRIDAY NIGHT TEEN, PAGE 11



The Battle of the DJs was recipient of the Virginia Parks and Recreation Society's Best New Special Event, spotlighting the County's innovative DJ & Music Projection Classes.



The winner of Battle of the DJs is Miraitowa Kawasaki. His DJ name is L1f3gard3.

Friday Night Teen Takeover At Amazon's HQ2 in Arlington

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

FROM PAGE 10

ty's innovative DJ & Music Projection Classes.

Teen Takeovers are part of Arlington County's broader teen programming efforts, which focus on creating safe "third spaces" where young people can connect outside of school while building leadership and creative skills. Many of the events are shaped by teens themselves, reinforcing youth voice and leadership.

Hosting the event at Amazon HQ2 marked one of the program's largest turnouts to date. The attendance of nearly 600 teens highlights the continued growth of Arlington's teen initiatives as well as the role of public-private partnerships in expanding opportunities for local youth.

On the partnership, Patrick Phillippi, Head of Community Engagement for the National Capital Region at Amazon, said: "Ensuring that Arlington youth have safe spaces to connect and express themselves is central to how we show up as a community partner in the National Capital Region. It was great to open our doors and support a program that's already such a strong tradition in Arlington."

Arlington County has been building spaces where teens feel welcome and safe for years, not for school, not for a requirement, just to be together.

Arlington County Parks & Recreation Director Jane Rudolph said the event reflects the County's continued investment in teen programming. "When we invest in our teens, we invest in the future of our community. Amazon After



Boba station at Amazon After Hours.

Hours demonstrates our commitment to creating spaces like this ... where Arlington's young people feel welcomed, energized and inspired."



Interactive art.



The Rainforest Sensory Lounge.

Redistricting Special Election April 21?

Special election preparations begin amid conflicting court rulings.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

An April vote on Virginia congressional redistricting? Maybe; or maybe not. Fairfax County's Office of Elections, reached for comment on Feb. 23, indicated the office was preparing to conduct a Special Election on April 21 and early voting could begin at three sites on March 6.

The office would make "no comment" on pending appeals in the court systems related to the Special Election. With much time and work needed to prepare, the Office of Elections can not wait for a final decision to begin its preparations.

The final decision on holding voting will be made by the courts. But which court? On Feb. 13, the Virginia Supreme Court overruled a Tazewell County District Court stay on the special election. The Supreme Court ruled that the April 21 referendum could proceed in advance of its April 23 scheduled hearing of briefs from the parties. Just six days later, the Republican National Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee and Virginia Republican Representatives Ben Cline and Morgan Griffith sued the Virginia Department of Elections, in the Tazewell County District Court. That court imposed an emergency injunction blocking the special election for 90 days. Virginia Attorney General Jay Jones has petitioned the court to allow him to submit briefs challenging the injunction, saying the matter is already properly before the Virginia Supreme Court.

So Virginian voters might have an opportunity to weigh in on whether to allow an out-of-cycle redrawing of Congressional Districts. The final outcome depends upon the results of those countering appeals made to the courts. Even if the stay is removed and the Special Election vote is held, the Virginia Supreme Court could ultimately decide if the resulting vote can be considered.

Redistricting Background

Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution establishes that the Representatives of each State will be apportioned based on the population. Forming the voting districts which elect those representatives is left up to the states. Traditionally, after each ten year census, the number of each state's representatives is adjusted as necessary to

align with any population growth or shifts between states. There are now eleven Congressional Districts in Virginia.

It is also typical to adjust voting districts within the states after a census; done in a manner determined by each state. Those districts have often been set to favor the political party in power. In 2020, in what was considered a reform action, Virginia passed a constitutional amendment to stipulate use of a non-partisan, 16 member commission to draw congressional and state legislative district lines. In that first 2020 census cycle, the commission failed to pass a plan, so the state supreme court took over, in accordance with the statute. The seven justices are selected by majority vote of both houses of the General Assembly for a period of 12 years.

Recent Redistricting Action

On Jan. 16, 2026, the General Assembly passed a proposed constitutional amendment (HJ 4) which would allow the legislature to redraw congressional districts, temporarily, mid-decade, if approved by voters. The amendment stipulated that the off-cycle redistricting could only be adopted if any other state adopted a redistricting outside of the 10 year cycle. It further stipulated that use of the out-of-cycle partisan method would be temporary. The method used would again return to the non-partisan commission led effort following the 2030 census.

The redistricting amendment, sponsored by Del. Rodney Willett (D-58), was moved forward through the General Assembly by its Democratic majority, with voting along party lines, and was signed by Gov. Abigail Spanberger (D). The special session and redrawing proposal was in response to the White House calling for heavily Republican states to engage in redistricting to increase the number of GOP seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The latest round, in a long history of gerrymandering efforts to gain broader political control, was begun by Texas in July 2025, at the request of President Donald Trump. California voters approved a November 2025 ballot question on redistricting, to offset the Texas action. Missouri's state house voted for a change likely to add one additional GOP seat, but faces an appeal and voter approval. Some states, including Indiana, Maine,



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Virginians might be able to vote as early as next week on whether to go forward with a redistricting plan.

New Hampshire, and Washington indicated they do not intend to pursue redistricting. Maryland began an attempt but it has not moved forward in the legislature. New York's redistricting, with the potential of four to five Democratic seats, is in the court system. Florida is expected to hold a special session in April with the potential to add four or five Republican seats.

Voting Yes

The group Virginians For Fair Elections, urges voters to vote "yes" by April 21. They argue, "Across the country, Trump and MAGA-controlled legislatures, like Texas, Ohio, and Florida, are taking unprecedented steps to redraw congressional maps, without voter approval; to rig upcoming elections, putting fair representation at risk and threatening to dilute Virginians' voices in Washington." They say that by putting this temporary safeguard in place, the referendum helps restore balance and ensure fairness. The group is affiliated with the Democratic Party.

For more information on this side of the argument, see www.Virginiansforfairelections.com.

Senator Louise Lucas (D-18), the Commonwealth's most senior senator has stated, "The plan is for us to go back to the nonpartisan commission because that's what Virginians voted for," Lucas said. "The only reason we're in this place right now is because of the power grab that started with Trump."

Voting No

The group Virginia Fair Elections, welcomed the Tazewell County Circuit Court decision that the redistricting cannot proceed due to procedural irregularities. The group's chair, Lynn Taylor, said, "Gerrymandered maps are not fair maps. They would push hundreds of thousands more Virginians into seats where their views will be unrepresented by their representatives. This whole amendment screams of political game-playing and a blatant disregard for the principle of self-determination. Whether in the legis-

lature, the courts, or at the ballot box, Virginians must reject this revenge gerrymandering." The group is affiliated with the Republican Party. For more information on this side of the argument, see www.vafairelections.org.

Under Attack

Whether holding the "yes" or "no" vote position, there is agreement between the groups that free and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy — and right now, they're under attack.

All Representatives seats in Congress are up for reelection this November 2026, and every two years, including those Districts currently serving Fairfax County, held by: Donald Beyer Jr. - 8th District; Suhas Subramanyam - 10th District; and James Walkinshaw - 11th District.

The date for Primary Elections has been changed for 2026, from the typical date of June 16, to Aug. 4. This change will allow additional time for court decisions candidate preparations.

ENTERTAINMENT

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.

FRESHFARM OPEN YEAR-ROUND

FRESHFARM Ballston Market will now operate year-round, providing residents and visitors with continued access to locally grown produce and goods even through the winter months. Located at Welburn Square (901 N Taylor St., Arlington) just steps from the Ballston Metro, the market operates Thurs-
www.connectionnewspapers.com



Synetic Theater presents *Antony & Cleopatra* now through March 8, 2026 at Thomas Jefferson Theatre in Arlington.

days from 3-6 p.m. The market features a lineup of 20 regular and rotating farmers and producers, and shoppers can enjoy nearly everything needed for a complete grocery shop, from hearty winter squash and leafy greens to eggs, meats, pantry staples, and prepared foods, while supporting regional farmers and producers year-round. Visit freshfarm.org/markets/ballston.

FEB. 20 TO MARCH 8

Look: An Unexpected Arts Experience. Fri./Sat./Sun. At 3130 Langston Blvd. | Lyon Village. Art builds community...help us transform a vacant commercial building into a fun, inventive, and interactive POP-UP art space. Over three weekends, the reinvented space will host art exhibits, performances, and hands-on workshops and classes. Funded in part through a grant from an Arlington Arts Creative Placemaking Grant, the gallery is a bold new platform for showcasing the diverse talents of artists from across the DMV area, while also creating space for neighborhood-level engagement and cultural exploration. Look Arlington will host a variety of emerging and established local artists, along with live performances, local food offerings and dining incentives and artist-led workshops.

FEB. 21 TO MARCH 8

Synetic Theater: Antony & Cleopatra. At Thomas Jefferson Theatre, Arlington Heights, Arlington. Synetic returns triumphantly to Arlington after a bombastic run at the Shakespeare Theatre with its epic wordless adaptation of Antony & Cleopatra. Featuring the unparalleled skills of the Synetic ensemble, this passionate love story is a collision of empires, as the ascension and assassination of Julius Caesar gives way to the sweeping love story of the Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra, and Caesar's mighty captain, Antony. Vato Tsikurishvili and Irina Kavsadze star as the pair whose love shakes the foundations of empires.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Learn to Sing the Music You Love: Pop, K-pop & More! 4:30-5:30 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, Virginia Square, Arlington. Join voice instructor Tessa Marr for a fun, hands-on vocal workshop! Learn how to warm up your voice, use good breathing techniques, and sing with confidence. Practice your new skills with a few favorite pop hits, from Somewhere Over the Rainbow to K-pop's Golden and Pharrell Williams' Happy. For grades 4-8.

MARCH 6 AND 13

Free Chamber Concerts. 12 noon. At St.

George's Church, 915 N. Oakland Street, Arlington. The Friday Morning Music club will perform two free chamber concerts in March at St. George's Church. The March 6 concert will feature works by Scarlatti, Muczinski and Brahms; the March 13, music by Scarlatti, Debussy and Reinecke. The one-hour concerts continue every first and second Friday of the month through May. All concerts start at noon.

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

Grow Your Own: A Beginner's Guide to Vegetable Gardening, Part II. 10:00-11:30 a.m., ONLINE. In Part II of this two-part class, Extension Master Gardener Faatimah Muhammad explains how to care for your crops throughout the season, manage common challenges, and harvest at peak flavor and nutrition. This session includes tips on watering, pest management, and succession planting to keep your garden thriving. FREE. RSVP online at <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive the link to participate.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Fig Tree Pruning & Hands-on Rooting Opportunity. 1:30 3:00 p.m. at a location near the East Falls Church metro station. Is your fig tree overgrown? Is it so messy and bulky you can no longer harvest the fruit? Or would you like to start a new fig tree? Fig trees require special pruning techniques to help them thrive and fruit abundantly. As Master Gardeners who have a passion for figs we can help you explore strategic pruning for size, shape, productivity, or all three. Best timing for initial pruning and specific follow-up strategies will be demonstrated and discussed. In addition, following the pruning we will have a rooting demonstration. Attendees will have the opportunity to take home a cutting to create their own Fig Tree. Dress for the weather, bring your hand tools, gloves and your enthusiasm. FREE Register for this in-person class at <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to learn the precise location to meet (if walking from the metro, plan for an approximately 15 minute walk).

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Rock Spring Recital Series: Chuck Redd Quartet. 3 p.m., Sanctuary, Free. Chuck Redd is well known internationally as a performer on drums and vibraphone. Chuck began recording and touring the globe when he joined the Charlie Byrd Trio at the age of 21. The concert is free thanks to generous donors who underwrite the costs of the recital series. All freewill donations will benefit Prosthetics for Palestine, an organization that is working

to source and build sustainable prosthetics to help address the exponentially growing demand of amputees in Palestine, specifically in Gaza.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Winter Pruning Hands-on Class. 1:30-3:30 p.m. Duncan Branch Library, 2501 Commonwealth Ave, Alexandria. Winter is an excellent time to prune many trees and shrubs. Learn why and how to prune to remove crossing and rubbing branches, suckers, water sprouts, and damaged wood. Discover the best practices for reducing shrub size, trimming hedges, and carefully removing larger limbs. The results will be trees and shrubs with healthier and fuller growth, better flowers and fruit, and a more attractive home landscape. Join Extension Master Gardeners for a hands-on class in basic pruning techniques. Dress for the weather, bring your tools. FREE. Sign up at: <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/>

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 11

Coffee and Conversation: Arlington Public Health Director Dr. Deidra D. Parrish was named Arlington County's Public Health Director in the Department of Human Services (DHS) in late 2025. In this role, Dr. Parrish provides overall leadership and direction for public health programs and serves as the official health advisor for Arlington County. Dr. Parrish is a board-certified infectious diseases and preventive medicine physician with over two decades of public health experience at the local, state, national and international levels. Prior to joining Arlington Public Health, she served at the U.S. Agency for International Development as a Senior Advisor in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for HIV testing and treatment and co-led the interagency Global-Domestic HIV Bidirectional Learning Forum. This ANV Speaker Series is held each Wednesday from 10-11 a.m. Join weekly conversations via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=eW0rN1RTTU5lTmJ5NnF2QXZlbnM0UQT09>. You also have the option to dial in by phone to participate without video. For that, dial: 929-205-6099. The meeting ID is 889 4857 7106 and the passcode is 872327.

MARCH 12-28

Avant Bard Opens The Two Gentlemen of Killarney: A Celebration of Immigration. At Gunston Arts Center Theatre Two, Arlington. Adapted from Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the story follows friends-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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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

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

turned-rivals from Ireland to America during the Great Famine, blending Shakespeare's wit with traditional Irish tunes and delivering a dynamic celebration of love, immigration, and humanity. Run time: 120 minutes including intermission.

The Two Gentlemen of Killarney runs:

Thu, March 12, 7:30 pm
Fri, March 13, 7:30 pm
Sat, March 14, 2:00 pm
Sat, March 14, 7:30 pm
Sun, March 15, 2:00 pm
Thu, March 19, 7:30 pm
Fri, March 20, 7:30 pm
Sat, March 21, 2:00 pm
Sat, March 21, 7:30 pm
Sun, March 22, 2:00 pm
Thu, March 26, 7:30 pm
Fri, March 27, 7:30 pm
Sat, March 28, 2:00 pm
Sat, March 28, 7:30 pm

Learn more here: www.avantbard.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 13

Winter Bike to Work Day. 4-6 p.m. At Gravelly Point Park. Rescheduled from the original event date of Friday, February 13. Join Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, BikeArlington, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, and the National Landing Business Improvement District on March 13 for a fun trailside event at Gravelly Point from 4-6 p.m. to mark Winter Bike to Work Day. Enjoy hot chocolate and learn about the ongoing Long Bridge Project and Mount Vernon Trail impacts. You can also enter a raffle to win two free round-trip Amtrak tickets!

<https://www.bikearlington.com/bike/events/winter-bike-to-work-day/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

The Four Courts Four Miler. Runners are preparing to "run for the hill of it". DC Road Runners (DCRR) and Ireland's Four Courts are thrilled to announce the return of the Four Courts Four Miler on Saturday, March 14, 2026. This beloved St. Patrick's Day tradition invites runners of all levels to celebrate the holiday with fitness, community, and a bit of Irish spirit-all while celebrating the 30th anniversary of Ireland's Four Courts.

The race kicks off at 9:00 AM, starting and ending at the iconic Ireland's Four Courts on Wilson Blvd in the heart of the Courthouse neighborhood.

Event Details

What: A festive Out-and-back 4-mile run in Arlington.

When: Saturday, March 14, 2026, at 9:00 AM.

Where: Ireland's Four Courts, 2051 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA.

To promote health, fitness, and community spirit in the DMV.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Reflect Chorale Concert by the Arlington Chorale. 5 p.m. At Westover Baptist Church in Arlington. As America turns 250, what does it mean to be a citizen? Two powerful world premieres challenge us to examine our past, claim our present, and shape our future through the power of song. "Redeem the Dream" by Brandon A. Boyd sets Langston Hughes' stirring poem "Let America Be America Again" - a call to bridge the gap between our democratic ideals and lived reality. "US" by Michael Bussewitz-Quarm explores the ten obligations of good citizenship, weaving together voices from across American history to create a roadmap for renewing democracy. Deepen your connection to democracy and discover your voice in America's ongoing story. Tickets start at \$25, and all audience members are invited to a complimentary post-concert reception with refreshments. Tickets can be found: <https://givebutter.com/rlHc2R>

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

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 amazing experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for March's show is the hilarious Patrice DeVeaux! Tickets: \$10/\$15 at capitalcityshowcase.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Teen Takeover at Thomas Jefferson. 7-10 p.m.

At Thomas Jefferson Community Center for a teen-led takeover full of glow sticks, open skating and more! More information on activities during this event coming soon. This is a free event open to middle and high school teens. <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Programs/Teens/Teen-Night-Events/Thomas-Jefferson-Teen-Takeover>

MONDAY/MARCH 16

The Irish Volunteers of Arlington. 7-8 p.m. Join the Park Historian on Mon., March 16 for an evening deep dive into the Irish volunteer soldiers who encamped, built forts and roads, and trained in Arlington County during the Civil War. Who were they? Why did they fight? What was their impact on the county? And what glory did they win on the battlefield? Teens age 16+ welcome with a registered adult. Event requires registration, event price \$7. Learn more: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-Events/2026/The-Irish-Volunteers-of-Arlington>

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 18

FOUA Garden Talk: Principles Of Soil Health. 6:30 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy Street, Arlington. Get ready for Principles of Soil Health: Learn the basic soil health principles and how a gardener/farmer can utilize these principles to conserve and improve their soil. Learn more about the principles behind potting soil, the components they are made of, and tips for plant care in potting soil. 2026 Garden Talks are sponsored by Friends of Urban Agriculture and Extension Master Gardeners with support from Arlington Public Library. Garden Talks are free, no registration required.

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

Memorializing the Enslaved of Arlington Fund-raiser. 7 p.m. At the Arlington Historical Museum, 1805 S. Arlington Ridge Road, Arlington. Join in an evening of art, poetry, music, and history to support the Stumbling Stone program and ensure the full history of Arlington is told. Performances by poets Holly Karapetkova & Teri Cross Davis, learn about project updates and future plans, artwork raffle for a local artist; Emcee: Monique Bryant, Arlington Executive Director of Challenging Racism, Community conversation; small bites and beverages (Lyon Park Community Center, 414 N. Fillmore St. <https://arlist.org/mea-fundraiser/>)

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

Seasonal Walk: Carlin Springs Park. 11 a.m. ANV's seasonal strolls are a good way to enjoy nature in company with neighbors, family, and friends. The next stroll will be on Thursday, March 19, at 11 a.m. at Carlin Springs Park in South Arlington. ANV is taking a brief vacation from the usual walks at Teddy Roosevelt Island due to expected traffic delays there while the nearby highway bridge is being repaired.

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

Dig a Little Deeper: Houseplants Care Guide. 10:00-11:30 a.m., ONLINE. Ready to take your indoor jungle to the next level? You've got the basics of your houseplant care covered, but what's next? Join Extension Master Gardener Evin Morrison to dig a little deeper into the world of houseplants. We're moving past plant survival and diving into propagation, hard-to-care-for plants, and what to do when your larger plants start to outgrow your space. Whether you're looking to multiply your favorite Monstera or finally conquer a finicky Calathea, this presentation provides the technical "know-how" to help your collection truly thrive. FREE. RSVP online at <https://mgvnv.org/>

[rsvp-for-public-education-classes/](https://mgvnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/) to receive the link to participate.

SATURDAY/MARCH 21

Red Cross Babysitting Class. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Learn the necessary skills to safely and responsibly care for children and infants at Arlington Mill Community Center. Participants ages 11-17 will learn how to create a babysitting business, keep themselves and others safe, develop leadership skills and more! The class is \$85 and registration can be found here: <https://vaarlingtonweb.myvs-cloud.com/webtrac/web/iteminfo.html?Module=AR&FMID=330652497>

THURSDAY/MARCH 26

Film and Discussion: Pearls of Peace. 6:30-8 p.m.

At Arlington Central Library, Arlington. In partnership with Arlington Central Library, BikeArlington is hosting a screening of Pearls of Peace, a documentary that follows Northern Virginian Lynn Salvo's extraordinary journey as she cycles through breathtaking landscapes, encounters wildlife and human companions, navigates mechanical and physical challenges, and meets inspiring people along the way. With a mission to promote peace while honoring her brother, an Air Force pilot killed in the Vietnam War, Lynn rides 4,330 miles through 12 countries over 95 days, setting a Guinness World Record as the oldest woman (at age 75) to bicycle across Europe from north to south. The documentary will be followed by a Q&A with the film's producer/subject, Lynn Salvo.

SATURDAY/MARCH 28

Spring 2026 E-CARE. 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Arlington's spring 2026 Environmental Collection and Recycling Event (E-CARE) will be held at Wakefield High School (1325 S Dinwiddie St.) on Saturday, March 28, from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., rain or shine. Bring your old electronics, household hazardous materials (HHM) and small metal items for safe and proper disposal.

SATURDAY/MARCH 28

History Hike: Local Stories of the American Revolution. 3-4 p.m. As American commemorates its 250th birthday, dive into the little-known local chapters of our founding history in this 1-mile round trip hike. Learn why American revolutionaries rebelled against their own leaders and see evidence of when Arlington was at the center of American democracy. Registration is required, event price \$9. <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Parks-Events/2026/History-Hike-Stories-of-the-American-Revolution>

SATURDAY/MARCH 28

Friends of Urban Agriculture Plot Against Hunger Spring Garden Kickoff. 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m. Marymount University-Ballston, 1000 Glebe Rd, Arlington. Join the Friends of Urban Agriculture (FOUA) Plot Against Hunger Spring Kickoff! Extension Master Gardeners will be on site. For all those interested in providing fresh food for their hungry neighbors, join FOUA and Extension Master Gardeners to learn about good gardening practices through hands-on workshops and educational garden classes. Pick up free seeds and seedlings as well as knowledge. For more information go to: <https://arlingtonurbanag.org/2026-spring-garden-kickoff/>

SATURDAY/MAY 9

Arlington HistoryFest 250. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Kenmore Middle School, 200 S Carlin Springs Road, Arlington. The Arlington VA250 Committee has announced plans for Arlington HistoryFest 250, a free, one-day outdoor festival commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Programming will feature live reenactments, musical performances, and historical storytelling, hands-on demonstrations, children's activities and crafts, and local food vendors. Thousands of attendees from across the Washington, D.C., area are expected, along with dozens of historical reenactors and over 40 exhibitors. For more information: <https://arlist.org/arlington-va250/>

Welcome to the Club, Joan



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(And I say that with all sincerity.) The 'club' to which I refer to is the cancer club (and neither am I talking about astrological signs). Unfortunately, you may not have a choice but to join - whether you like it or not. To invoke the legendary Groucho Marx: he wouldn't want to belong to a club that would have him as a member. He wasn't talking about cancer (it was a snooty country club that would have him as a member), but the sentiment is certainly similar. Cancer - the disease, would have you as a member - so to speak, regardless of your race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whether you're a democrat or a republican. If you live and breathe, you could be diagnosed with cancer. It is an equal opportunity life impactor.

For those of us worldwide millions who have already been diagnosed, cancer becomes unrelenting baggage - just so you know. And depending upon your attitude - about your new diagnosis, you will be either pleasant to be around or not (not that any of this is easy). Maintaining an emotional balance about this life-affecting circumstance can, anecdotally speaking, enhance your life, what there is of it (to quote the late Larry Fine from the 1938 Three Stooges short, "Healthy, Wealthy and Dumb"). You can be positive and exude hope, or you can be negative, and suffer the consequences. It's always my intention when I talk to a newly diagnosed cancer patient to listen attentively to their answers and their understanding of how their life will be changing. Cancer will become the first thing they think of when they get up in the morning, the last thing they think about when they try ('try' being the operative word) to go to sleep in the evening, and pretty much most of what will preoccupy their life during the day. How they anticipate and work this reality into their lives is what I'm most interested in learning.

Being diagnosed with cancer is as large an obstacle and impediment to realizing your hopes and dreams as one could possibly imagine/realize. How you deal with it matters. If you deal with your diagnosis with confidence and a can-do approach; I want you on my team. And I want you on my team (part of the club) because I gain your strength and wherewithal from your attitude. We all live with uncertainty and when you express a willingness to walk the walk/talk the talk, it helps me to endure my cancer-related/caused demons. The best help I can get is from my fellow cancer patients. When they're still seeing the world/circumstances as a glass half full - figuratively speaking, I want them in my life. Being selfish now; I can feed off their attitude and that will help me to endure the "slings and arrows" that cancer shoots every day and especially in bed at night when they're alone with their thoughts. To update an old Bette Davis quote: cancer ain't for cissies.

Joan is at the beginning of her cancer experience/indoctrination (into this not-exclusive club) and so far, she's exhibiting all the signs of being a welcome addition. When I talk to her, I come away feeling empowered by her spirit and willingness to face facts and proactively live forward in spite of this potentially devastating predicament. Managing the many appointments, labs, scans, medical appointments, treatment, et cetera, is not easy. In fact, the profession has created a new position: nurse navigator, to help patients stay on track for the best possible outcome as they deal with this treacherous and demanding road, unlike any road they've ever been on, driving or not.

Having been there and done that is never more meaningful than when talking with a new member. Compassion, empathy - and understanding are most helpful when talking to a recent "diagnosee." And more often than not, when talking with Joan, I come away feeling so much better than when it began. Diagnosis to date, she's been a great addition. I look forward to speaking to her again. It will be my pleasure. I only hope she feels the same.

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



Event logo.

Women's Storytelling Festival Returns to Fairfax

Live performers, March 19-22, at the Sherwood Center.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Hosted by Better Said Than Done, the annual Women's Storytelling Festival returns Friday-Sunday, March 20-22, to Fairfax City. It's the first and only storytelling festival in the country exclusively devoted to women performers.

Stories will be presented live at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd. in Fairfax. A special, online-only showcase will premiere Thursday, March 19, and the festival will also be live-streamed. And all ticket holders will be able to watch the festival videos for one month after the festival concludes.

Featuring a wide range of storytelling styles, the festival will spotlight 20 performers of spoken-word stories and is intended for mature audiences. In addition, the emcees include two locals, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read and Del. Holly Seibold (D-12th).

The storytellers will share personal stories, folktales, stories of adventure and magic, plus historical stories – some, marking the United States' 250th anniversary. Performers are coming here from across the nation, from California to Connecticut, Georgia to Ohio –



Jessica Robinson

and even from as far as Ireland – and represent some of today's best-known storytellers.

Among them are authors, content creators, TV stars, podcasters, theater performers and contributors to Risk!, Stories from the Stage, the National Storytelling Festival and the Moth storytelling shows. This festival not only showcases women storytellers – often underrepresented in other national festivals – but also features a variety of stories centering around women's lives and highlighting diverse experiences, cultures and points of view.

Festival founder and producer Jessica Robinson of Fairfax launched Better Said Than Done Inc. in May 2011 to bring the art of storytelling to Northern Virginia, and 2026 is its seventh year hosting this event. "I don't want to say that each year it gets better, because 2020 was fabulous, as was each year since," she said. "But the festival has grown a following of both audience members and storytellers, including this year's lineup."

"Something special happens when storytellers and listeners



Bonnie Gardner

truly connect," continued Robinson. "Because the performers have also had the chance to absorb the previous six years of storytelling, they have a stronger sense of the types of stories that work well with our audience. As a national festival, we've developed a voice of our own."

Some of those voices belong to area residents such as returning storyteller Bonnie Gardner of Vienna. "A festival that centers women's stories, women's perspectives, and women's lived experiences promotes empathy and understanding," she said. "It's a much-needed balm in these fractured times. Listening changes us. When women tell their stories fully, honestly and from their own perspective, audiences leave understanding the world differently."

Besides that, she added, "The sheer diversity of storytelling styles and content you'll find at the festival sets it apart from other performance-based events. Prepare to be surprised, moved and a little awestruck. The storytellers will present their works crafted over months and performed live without scripts. You'll hear from

investigative reporters, business founders, policy experts, immigrants, artists and award-winning storytellers. These history shapers span [the realms of] journalism, entrepreneurship, public service and the arts."

As the U.S. marks 250 years, said Gardner, "This festival asks a simple but powerful question, 'What would our understanding of history look like if we listened to it through women's voices?' For centuries, the nation's story has centered on battlefield victories and political power. But history also unfolds in hospitals, classrooms, communities, churches and factories."

"Mothers give birth to every generation yet rarely hold ownership over how that generation's history is told. In this milestone year, the Women's Storytelling Festival expands that lens through a special showcase that reexamines the United States at 250."

For example, storyteller Denise Page will share her solo show, "Legacy of a Wealthy Slave," about the 2024 discovery by Yale University archivists of her ancestors and their places in history.

"When women tell history, something shifts," explained Robinson. "We begin to see greatness not only in victory, but in resilience. Not only in power, but in empathy. Not only in dominance, but in survival. That shift is tangible. Men often approach storytellers afterward to say, 'I had no idea.' Women leave feeling seen, having finally heard parts of their own lives spoken aloud in a powerful, artful form."

"The festival provides a space where female artists can tell the stories that other venues are frequently too timid to host, and it does so in an atmosphere of celebration and appreciation," said veteran storyteller Jennifer Munro. "It's refreshing to see women take center stage and own it."

"More magic happens in live performance without that fourth wall of theater," added storyteller Kristin Pedemonti. "There's a deep connection between the teller and listener which is palpable and long lasting. When we hear each other's stories, we hear each other's humanity."

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The Women's Storytelling Festival kicks off Thursday, March 19, at 8 p.m., with its virtual showcase. The in-person and live-streaming performances begin Friday, March 20, at 7 p.m. Ticket prices are \$50 for virtual performances and \$70 for in-person. One-day, in-person passes will be available at the door for \$35/day. People of all gender identities are welcome to attend.

For more information, schedules and to purchase tickets, go to <https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/>.

*To learn more about the festival's storytellers, visit <https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/2026-festival-storytellers/>

*For more information about the emcees, go to

<https://bettersaidthandone.org/womens-festival/emcees-and-volunteers/>.

– BONNIE GARDNER

CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

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