

# The Arlington Connection

Drawing on the sidewalk before the Easter egg hunt at the opening of the Cherrydale Farm Market.

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 14 ♦ SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 15

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/ARLINGTON CONNECTION

## Sure Sign of Spring

PAGE 3

### Voting Yes or No?

PAGE 11

APRIL 15-28, 2026

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

# Interview on Recruitment Efforts With ACPD Chief Andy Penn

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

**A**rlington Police Chief Andy Penn was appointed as the 8th Police Chief of the Arlington County Police Department on June 4, 2021 following a nine-month appointment as the Acting Chief of Police. Penn is a 33+ year veteran of the ACPD, beginning his career as a patrol officer in 1992. He rose through the ranks and was promoted to Deputy Chief of Police in July 2015.

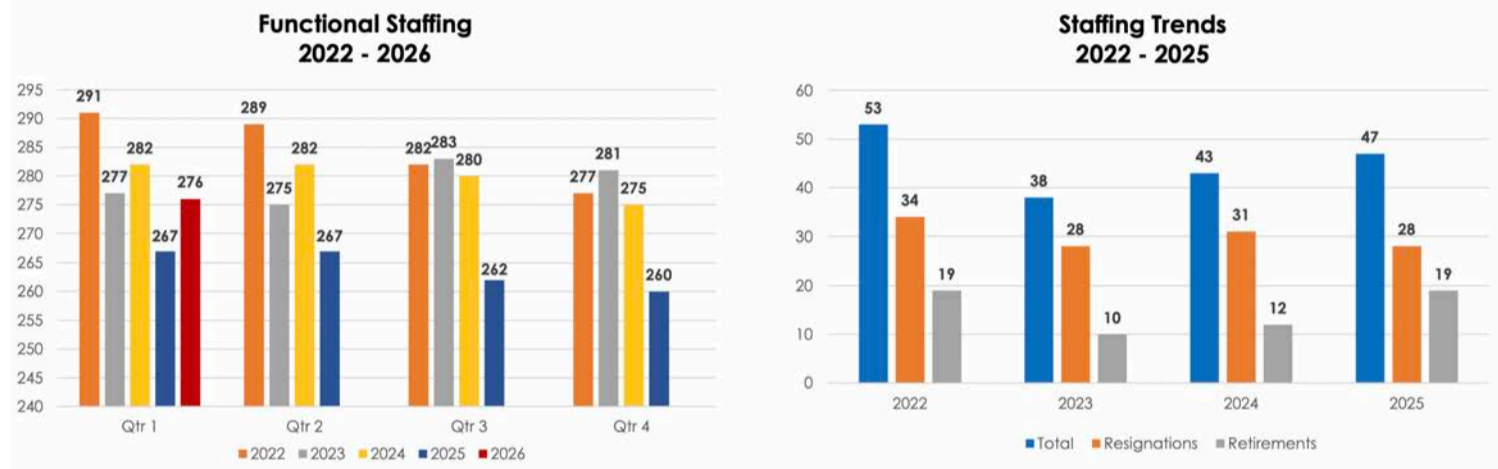
Arlington Connection: In today's climate as the nation struggles with recruitment and retention of police officers, can you tell me about Arlington's approach to this challenge?

Chief Penn: We have a multi-prong approach to recruitment which has been developed with the assistance of a company that helps us define who we are as an agency and to develop our website to get the word out.

**Q: Have your efforts been successful?**

**Chief Penn:** While the numbers have gone up and down, we currently have 269 functional staff that can go out and provide police services. This doesn't count the pre-academy staff or the post-academy staff who aren't yet finished with training which would bring us to 305. We saw an increase of 40 percent in applicants after the County Board announced in November 2025 an increase in ACPD salaries to the highest in the region effective July 2026. Applicants in 2025 totaled 3,169 compared to 974 in 2021. It takes nearly a year

## Police Officer Staffing and Retention



**While the number of sworn officer departures (47) outpaced the department's hiring (38) during CY 2025, recent investments in officer recruitment and salary have resulted in positive hiring trends during the first quarter of CY 2026**

once an applicant is selected to complete the training and become a functional staff member. So I expect to see a big bump up in numbers in November-December when the training has been completed.

**Q: Where do you find your candidates for the ACPD?**

**Chief Penn:** We use social media, advertising, as well as job fairs and the Hand Shake program which is



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
THE CONNECTION  
ACPD Chief Andy Penn chats with community members during Culpepper Garden First Responder event.

an ambassador effort with about 25 colleges. We develop a more in depth relationship with the college criminal justice programs extending beyond the job fair one-time interaction. Some officers transfer laterally. Our teen academy and community police academy help share what the police department does. We only accept 2 percent of the applicants. We want to be sure we have the right people here in Arlington who want to work with the community instead of acting as outside enforcers.

**Q: What will the new officers allow the department to accomplish that they aren't currently able to do?**

**Chief Penn:** The truth is we have survived a staff crisis, redirected some units, and the patrol staff has worked a lot of overtime. We couldn't have done it without the staff we have. It is important to me that they know they are appreciated. Overtime hours in 2025 totaled 125,668 hours with over 25,000 by the patrol officers, over 11,000 for special events and almost 11,000 for criminal investigations.

I have a host of ideas but I'll wait for the net plus of new officers minus retirements and departures. We have to start rebuilding; we'll work on the patrol units and look at other sections like the motorcycles and special investigative units.

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RENEWAL  
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# Bunnies, Bubbles, Tarragon, Rosemary and Thyme

Cherrydale farmer's market opens for the 2026 season.



Georgia counts her eggs one by one as she fills her basket.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The opening of the Cherrydale Farmer's Market at Dorothy Hamm Middle School on Vacation Lane April 4 is a sure sign of spring. Today the market features an Easter egg hunt at 10 am, along with sidewalk chalk to satisfy your inner artist and plenty of bubbles floating through the market.

Stephen Cunningham, the manager of the market, says although there is a lot of competition with other Easter Egg Hunts scattered at locations nearby, "We have the advantage of bubbles. Even adults like the bubbles. You should see their faces; where else can they

SEE BUNNIES, BUBBLES, PAGE 9



Ready, set, go!



Stephen Cunningham, manager of the Cherrydale Farmer's Market.



Who needs an Easter egg hunt when you have a field of dandelions to pick?



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Think I'll just draw on the sidewalk while I wait for the Easter egg hunt.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

# Student-Led Rally for Free Afterschool in Arlington Brings Community Together

Against the backdrop of heightened stress for students, community issues a call to action.

**A**s vitally needed local funding for afterschool programming winds down, nearly 500 students and parents from afterschool programs across Arlington joined elected officials and community leaders at Kenmore Middle School to celebrate afterschool programs. They rallied for a call to action for continued and dedicated funding to provide high-quality afterschool programming for Arlington's most vulnerable young people.

"Afterschool programs have always been important as places where children can reinforce classroom instruction, learn new skills, and make friends," said Rev. Alice Tewell, a mother of two and pastor of Clarendon Presbyterian Church. "Today, they are more important than ever as safe spaces in communities traumatized by detentions and growing inequality and as places where kids connect with trusted adults who can support them."

After the tragic deaths of two young students in 2023 from opioid drug overdoses, a coalition of Arlington afterschool programs secured \$2 million in one-time funding from the Arlington County Board, which helped expand afterschool programming for Arlington middle and high schoolers. That grant will come to a close at the end of FY27, and afterschool students and leaders are seeking new ways to build upon the success of that pilot program.

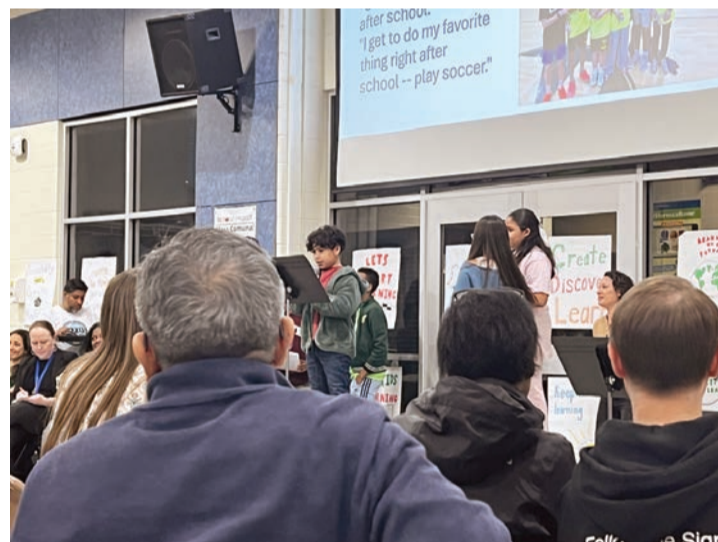
This event, hosted by Aspire Afterschool Learning, ASHPA – Arlington Schools Hispanic Parents Association, Arlington Bridge Building-Bridge Kids, Camp Sarraka, CARE, CYFA- Center for Youth & Family Advocacy, Edu-Futuro and VOICE, highlighted the positive impact that expanded services are having in the community. From 2023-2024 drug overdoses declined by 27% and fatal overdoses decreased by 55%, according to the Arlington Addiction Recovery Initiative.



Almost 500 people gather to advocate for afterschool programs at a rally at Kenmore Middle School on March 27.



Jhosep (6th grade) and Neismith (4th grade) bond over a game while waiting for the rally to start at Kenmore Middle School.



Juan (5th grade) tells the crowd how afterschool programs helped him discover new interests.



April (5th grade) shares how afterschool programs have made a difference to her.



Mia (4th grade) and Elizabeth (5th grade) share their excitement about the rally at Kenmore Middle School on March 27.



Ambar (5th grade), Elizabeth (5th grade), and Mia (4th grade) share their excitement about the rally.

# Rally for Free Afterschool in Arlington

FROM PAGE 4

A WTOP analysis shows that overdose decline continues through 2025.

“This programming is saving lives and securing futures,” said Aspire Afterschool Learning’s CEO Paula Fynboh, a 2026 Afterschool Ambassador. “Afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind.”

Youth leaders from Arlington afterschool programs helped to organize and run the event themselves, with numerous students speaking out in support of the programs, including one of the presenters, a seventh grader at Aspire named El Hadji.

“Every student who wants to participate in afterschool programs should have the opportunity. In my afterschool program I have a safe and supportive place to go where I get homework help, tutoring, and exposure to fun STEM activities and art projects,” said El Hadji. “It’s sad to think that other students like me may not have access to these programs because there just isn’t a space available for them.”

The Afterschool Alliance’s recent America After 3pm report found that parents of 745,577 children in Virginia want afterschool programs, but 4 in 5 children in the

state are missing out. Crucial factors preventing them from enrolling are program cost, lack of transportation, and programs not being available in their communities.

A large and powerful body of evidence demonstrates improvements in grades, school attendance, behavior, and more among children who participate in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that students in afterschool programs are more engaged in school and excited about learning, and they develop work and life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and communications. But unmet demand for afterschool programs is at an all-time high, particularly among both Latino and Black children, with 65% of Black and 60% of Hispanic children needing a spot according to the America After 3pm report.

Participants in this event included Virginia Delegate Adele McClure, all five Arlington County Board members (Takis Karantonis, JD Spain, Matt de Ferranti, Maureen Coffey, and Susan Cunningham) as well as Arlington Public School Board members Zuraya Tapia-Hadley, Monique Bryant and Kathleen Clark. The Aspire student rock band kept people entertained, and the REC soccer team winners also joined in the rally.



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## Public Notice

### Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
SCOTT	16861	696N	MCMURRY HOLLOW ROAD	BRANCH	3/31/2026
FRANKLIN	8031	1605	WHSPRNG CK ROAD 1605	MAGGODEE CREEK	3/19/2026
FRANKLIN	7914	703	AYERS ROAD 703	POPLAR CAMP CREEK	3/18/2026
TAZEWELL	18583	631E	INDIAN CREEK ROAD	INDIAN CREEK #2	3/5/2026
BLAND	2950	42N	WEST BLUEGRASS TRAIL	SPRING BRANCH	3/3/2026

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit [vdot.virginia.gov](http://vdot.virginia.gov) and navigate to Travel and traffic/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact [haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov) or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota at 804-786-4064.

*The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730 or [corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov).*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON AWLA.ORG

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAILSHIGH.ORG

Animal Welfare League of Arlington has staff and volunteers with special training to care for neonatal kittens.

Clara Bow was rescued from glove compartment in an abandoned car.

# Making a Difference During Kitten Season

Special training lets humans help when neonatal kittens are rescued without their mama cats.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It was a warm March afternoon when Amy Schindler, COO of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington, received an all-too-familiar call from an Animal Control Officer: what to do with a days-old kitten found in a car engine?

Without hesitation, Schindler brought the kitten home as a foster. She and her roommate aptly named him Otto and provided him with the round-the-clock care he required with his fragile age and profound respiratory issues.

"This happens more than you'd think," Schindler said. "A lot of times, cats or kittens will crawl into spaces of a car because they are warm. They tuck into car engines, hoods of cars, and wheel wells. People find them in various places around parking lots, in storm drains, you name it. In this case, thankfully, somebody heard him meowing, and our animal officers rescued him."

For animal control and rescue organizations, calls like this as the temperature rises and the days get longer mark the start of "kitten season." It's that time of year when unsprayed female cats most often go into heat and give birth, leading to a massive surge in the kitten population.

For Northern Virginia, "kitten season" spans multiple seasons.

"It's more than just a season now — it's an ongoing influx of litters that goes right into October," Schindler said. "These kittens come from outdoor and indoor-outdoor cats that haven't been spayed. The repopulation doesn't stop until the temperature drops. We've found that, as it gets colder, things kind of shut down. Cats tend to transition from breeding to just trying to find a place to stay warm."

Tails High Rescue, a non-profit, fully foster-based cat rescue organization, has also observed "kitten season" stretching across most of the year.

"The reality is that it truly never ends," Acacia Waller, Board President of Tails High,

said. "We see a slight reprieve from December to February because the community cat population isn't moving as much and procreating in the cold, but the focus on taking in kittens and getting cats spayed and neutered is constant. The harsh reality is that only 25% of kittens born outdoors survive without human intervention."

Working with the AWLA and Tails High, two local organizations that have special expertise in caring for neonatal kittens, is key to saving more of these young lives. Neonatal kittens, bottle babies, are aged newborn up to about four weeks old and require special nutrition. When neonatal kittens find themselves without a mother, it takes specially trained volunteers to help them thrive. The AWLA and Tails High each care for hundreds of cats every year that come from communities across Northern Virginia, and even into West Virginia.

"Our kitten program is built on a strong network of fosters and a highly knowledgeable staff, modeled after the standards of the National Kitten College," Schindler said. "Arlington doesn't face the same volume of stray cats as more rural areas, so we utilize our resources to act as a safety net for neighboring regions. We collaborate with rescuers and shelters across Virginia, West Virginia, and DC to transfer neonatal 'bottle babies' and orphaned kittens that require specialized care and socialization."

As Arlington's animal shelter, AWLA provides temporary humane shelter for lost, abandoned, surrendered, or otherwise homeless animals, including, but not limited to dogs, cats, and other small companion animals. AWLA's primary responsibility is to the animals and people of Arlington County and it will accept any animal regardless of condition from within Arlington County, as well as animals from the City of Falls Church (and other localities in some circumstances). [awla.org](http://awla.org)

Reserving neonatal care for their many experts has allowed Tails High to scale readily



Orphaned neonatal kittens need to be bottle fed, often every two hours 24/7.

across the pandemic and subsequent trying times.

"We have many neonatal experts dedicated to volunteering who understand exactly what fragile kittens need before they are weaned," Waller said. "While we reserve those super tiny kittens for our experienced fosters, we still want the community to get involved. We pair newer volunteers with weaned kittens. They are a lot of fun to nurture but don't require intense, around-the-clock care. Specialized tasks like bottle, syringe, or tube feeding require nuance and experience. We've worked hard to set high standards for kittens under four weeks old, which includes using incubators to maintain the specific body temperatures and environments they need to survive and thrive."

Tails High aims to get cats and kittens off the streets and into homes where they are safe, so the group often helps orphan kittens, mama cats with litters of kittens, friendly strays, and cats and kittens with health concerns needing urgent medical attention.

Awareness is key to saving thousands of little feline lives on the line this season. As Northern Virginia residents encounter more kittens during these warmer months, experts from both AWLA and Tails High urge community members to follow three basic principles.

Above all else, keeping kittens with their mother gives them the best chance for survival.

"If someone sees kittens somewhere, there's a decent chance that there is a mom taking care of them," Waller said. "It is all about knowing the right time to intervene. Moms have to hunt, so they may leave their litter for several hours at a time while they look for food. Unless the kittens are in an unsafe environment — like in a dumpster or the side of a busy road — we normally say to give it several hours and then check back in with us. We don't want people to 'rescue' kittens only to leave a mom behind who will never be spayed; if we do that, we're just back in the same situation over and over again."

# Making a Difference During Kitten Season

FROM PAGE 6

It is common for mother cats to stow away their kittens in warm corners as safe spots — window wells, decks, porches — while they find food to support their broods.

When a kitten is in a compromising situation — like the AWLA's Otto who was found in a car engine — that's when it is time to take action.

"We usually tell people to wait and watch for a day; oftentimes, the mother is just out searching for food," Schindler said. "However, we do see cases where kittens are truly orphaned and need immediate supportive care. We are ready for any scenario."

In either case, or if in doubt, these rescue organizations are just a call away.

Kittens need a very specific type of nutrition (not cow or goat milk). Leave care of tiny kittens to their mothers or the experts.

"The most important things for neonatal kittens are warmth and proper nutrition," Schindler said. "We have to steer clear of 'old wives' tales' like goat milk and ensure they get specific kitten formula."

Tails High has also encountered dangerous assumptions that any type of milk will do for a kitten.

"There is a misnomer that cow's milk is okay for cats, but it actually makes them really sick," Waller said. "People are well meaning, but when kittens are little, they need a mother's milk or a very specific kitten formula."

There is a critical difference between community cats, stray cats, and feral cats.

When a rescue expert is trying to determine the needs of a cat reported in the field, the process moves much faster if the caller has already deciphered whether they are looking at a feral cat, a community cat, or a stray.

Feral cats are unsocialized cats that are completely unsuitable for any kind of pet life, community cats are largely outdoor cats who are taken care of but without a documented owner, and stray cats are typically one-time pets who are lost or abandoned.

In the case of feral cats, it is even more helpful if the person reporting their presence can determine whether they have been spayed or neutered; these cats will often have a clipped ear to indicate they have already gone through a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program.

"Cats are scattered everywhere in our area, and when people call in, our first goal is to triage the situation by asking basic questions," Waller said. "We need to determine if we're looking at a stray, a feral cat, or an established community cat. In a truly feral community where cats aren't socialized



Rhubarb and Custard, neonate babies.



or ear-tipped, we are much more likely to see kittens pop up. TNR is the most critical piece of this puzzle. We want the community to know that organizations like the Animal Welfare League of Arlington or the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria offer training

"Before assuming a cat is in distress, ask around — post on Nextdoor or your local listserv to see if anyone is already caring for them," Waller said. "You might see an ear-tipped cat living in the environment and not realize that several people on the block are

already providing food and monitoring their health. Being able to tell the difference between a cat in truly dire need and a well-managed outdoor cat often starts with learning about the community that is already surrounding them."

Community cats are especially common in Arlington, where Schindler noted a specific shelter policy: cats can only be released back to their outdoor environment if there are at least two confirmed feeding sources ensuring their care.

"Because it is a transient area with a heavy rental landscape, indoor-outdoor cats often get left behind, and then new people move in and continue feeding them," Schindler said. "We work closely with rescuers and neighbors to determine the best outcome for every cat we're asked about. It's a delicate process of assessment: when a mother cat is brought in and we don't know her history, we have to put a lot of consideration into determining if she's

a candidate for adoption or if she belongs back in her outdoor community," after she has been spayed.

"Kitten season" presents Northern Virginia rescues with a daunting numbers game. A single fertile cat can produce two to three litters per season, averaging four to six kittens each, meaning one mother can bring nearly 20 new lives into the community in

just a few months. It's a staggering figure, but it's exactly why this work matters.

Unfortunately, while Otto didn't survive, he spent most of his short life in the care of someone tending to his every need, physical and emotional.

And for every Otto, there are more who go on to live beautiful lives beyond the shelter.

"We have a 97 percent live release rate," Schindler said. "It's heart breaking to lose even one, but what keeps us all going is the hundreds that we do save every year."

The Tails High team also sees overwhelming survival rates for kittens who land in their care.

"More often than not, the only cats we have who aren't adopted are those in hospice or those who are extremely shy and need extra time," Waller said. "To ensure the best outcomes, we just keep our kittens until they are at least eight weeks old so we can spay or neuter them before they go to their new homes. In that time, they get their proper deworming, vaccines, and other vet care so they can thrive."

Ultimately, if people want to be a part of this life-saving cycle, it is a great time to get in touch with the AWLA or Tails High.

The AWLA is ready and willing to train fosters for cats of any age, and can accommodate varying time commitments.

Tails High looks for fosters who can commit to at least a month.

For people who cannot foster, or for fosters who need a much-deserved break from the process, donating or contributing to these organizations in other ways can be so impactful.

"You don't have to adopt 20 cats to make a difference," Waller said. "The simple act of sharing one of our stories on Instagram can help get a cat adopted and into a brand new, happy life. We've seen that over and over again — in the rescue community, small actions can turn into big, beautiful transformations."

To get involved with the AWLA, visit [www.awla.org](http://www.awla.org) or call 703-931-9241.

To support Tails High, reach out to the team through [www.tailshigh.org](http://www.tailshigh.org) or follow their journey on social media @tailshigh.



Ophelia and Ollie after enucleation surgeries, removal of the entire eyeball. Tails High often helps cats and kittens with urgent medical needs.

and low-to-no-cost spay and neuter programs. It can be as simple as a quick training session and borrowing a trap; we just need more neighbors willing to take that step. ... The rule of thumb in the rescue world is, 'you feed it, you fix it.'"

The best way to tell the difference between a stray cat, a community cat, or a feral cat is by consulting with neighbors.

# From Salsa to the Smithsonian

Three gowns from Julie Wilson's collection will become the first ballroom dance dresses displayed at the Smithsonian.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Inside Julie Wilson's showroom, the air shimmers. Racks of ballroom gowns — more than a thousand in all — line the walls in a spectrum of color and light. Some are feather-trimmed, others drenched in crystals, all engineered to move with the precision of an athlete and the elegance of couture.

For years, dancers from across the world have come here in Annandale to buy, consign, or rent these dresses through Wilson's business, Encore Ballroom Couture.

This spring, three gowns from her collection will leave the showroom and enter the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Latino. They will appear in *iPuro Ritmo! The Musical Journey of Salsa*, opening April 18. The exhibition explores the history, cultural influence, and evolution of salsa in the United States through artifacts, fashion, and performance history, placing ballroom couture in conversation with a dance form defined by heat, rhythm, and cultural identity.

The gowns selected were designed by the late Randall Christensen, the Emmy Award-winning costume designer whose work helped shape the modern look of ballroom performance. Their inclusion, Wilson said, marks a rare moment of recognition for a craft that blends athletic engineering with fine artistry.

Wilson has long believed that ballroom attire belongs in a museum. Each gown is built by hand — crystals placed one by one, fabric panels cut to accommodate speed and lift, beads strung with the precision of jewelry making. The result is performance couture: garments meant to come alive under stage lights, responding to every turn, dip, and breath.

She sees the selected gowns as a natural fit for *iPuro Ritmo!* "They capture the energy of salsa," she said. "The color, the heat, the movement — they tell a story even before the dancer takes a step."

The honor carries deep personal meaning. Wilson spent much of her childhood wandering the Smithsonian with her mother, Brenda S. Wilson, whose memory she is honoring through the donation. For Wilson, the exhibit is both a tribute to her mother and a preservation of Christensen's artistic legacy.

"It has always been a dream to donate an artifact to the Smithsonian," she said. "See-



Julie Wilson stands among more than 1,000 ballroom gowns in her Northern Virginia showroom, where dancers from around the world come to buy, consign, and rent performance couture.

## How to See the Exhibit

### *iPuro Ritmo! The Musical Journey of Salsa*

#### Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino

- ❖ Opening: April 18
- ❖ Where: Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino, Washington, D.C.
- ❖ What it explores: The history, cultural influence, and evolution of salsa music and dance in the United States, told through artifacts, fashion, and performance history
- ❖ Featured items: Three ballroom gowns from Julie Wilson's Encore Ballroom Couture
- ❖ Admission: Free
- ❖ Hours: 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. daily
- ❖ Details: Visit Website: <https://latino.si.edu> for exhibit information

ing these gowns on exhibit will be a dream realized — and a way to honor the people who shaped my life."

Wilson hopes visitors leave with a deeper understanding of ballroom attire as part of America's cultural story. Across generations, the country's preferred styles of social dance have reflected broader shifts in taste, identity, and community — from early 20th-century forms to disco to today's renewed interest in line dancing.

"Dance will always be woven through the fabric of our lives," she said. "It is relatable, it is a fantasy, it is you, it is me."

The gowns are believed to be the first ballroom dance dresses ever displayed at the Smithsonian. For Wilson, who has spent years preserving the artistry of movement, the moment is more than professional validation.

It is a place in history.

**Ken Heron, Brenda Wilson, Randall Christensen, and Julie Wilson at the Ohio Star Ball Championships. Heron was Christensen's longtime business partner and now owns Randall Designs.**



PHOTOS  
COURTESY OF  
JULIE WILSON

# Bunnies, Bubbles, Tarragon, Rosemary and Thyme

FROM PAGE 3

find this kind of joy?"

The Cherrydale market has 15 local vendors this year (within a range of 125 miles) with some returning favorites like Anna's Twist featuring a variety of empanadas, tropical drinks, unusual soups and sorbets and Baguette Republic with artisan homemade breads, muffins, baguettes and croissants.

This year there are several new vendors including LaCalderia with freeze dried beef broth; Ttu with fermented pickles, kimchi and sauerkraut; and the Cookie Bar, a micro bakery located in Arlington, with a variety of fresh cookies like citrus sugar, mini orange carrot cake and the ever favorite brown butter chocolate chip.

Cunningham says he has been running Cherrydale Farmer's Market since at least 2016. He says

the process began for this season back in December when applications came open for a spot at the market. "We got a lot of overlapping applications but, for instance, you only need one coffee vendor." He says sampling of vendors took place in February-March.

In the background you can hear the chatter of children as the Easter Egg Hunt is set to begin. Charlotte Curry, the public relations director for Farm to Table's family of markets, explains there are 200 eggs hidden around the area. "They have candy inside and stickers. And," she adds, "there are some golden eggs." A murmur goes up from the crowd. "They were donated by the vendors and inside they have a certificate for something at the vendor's stand."

The market runs April-November from 8 a.m.-noon, rain or shine.



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Even the adults love the bubbles at the market.



Dominique Lewis mans La Calderia, the new stand featuring freeze-dried bone broth.



Svetlana Hovhannisyan mans Ttú, the new fermented pickles stand.



These customers have a tough time deciding their favorite at the Cookie Bar, a new Arlington-based vendor this year at the market.

## 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.

### 2026 BUNNY HOP 5K

The Arlington County Police Department will conduct road closures to accommodate the Arlington Bunny Hop 5K Race taking place Saturday, April 18, 2026, in Lyon Park/Ashton

Heights.  
From approximately 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.  
N. Irving Street, between 7th Street N. and 5th Street N.  
From approximately 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.  
N. Irving Street, between 2nd Road N. and 5th Street N.  
N. Irving Street, between 7th Street N. and 9th Road N.  
9th Road N., between N. Highland Street and N. Irving Street.  
N. Highland Street, between N. Pershing Drive and 9th Road N.

N. Pershing Drive, between N. Oxford Street and N. Garfield Street  
2nd Road N., between N. Irving Street and the Columbia Gardens Cemetery  
N. Jackson St between Arlington Boulevard and 2nd Road N.  
A portion of the course winds through the Columbia Gardens Cemetery. The Cemetery will be closed to vehicular traffic and have a delayed opening at 9:30 a.m.

**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

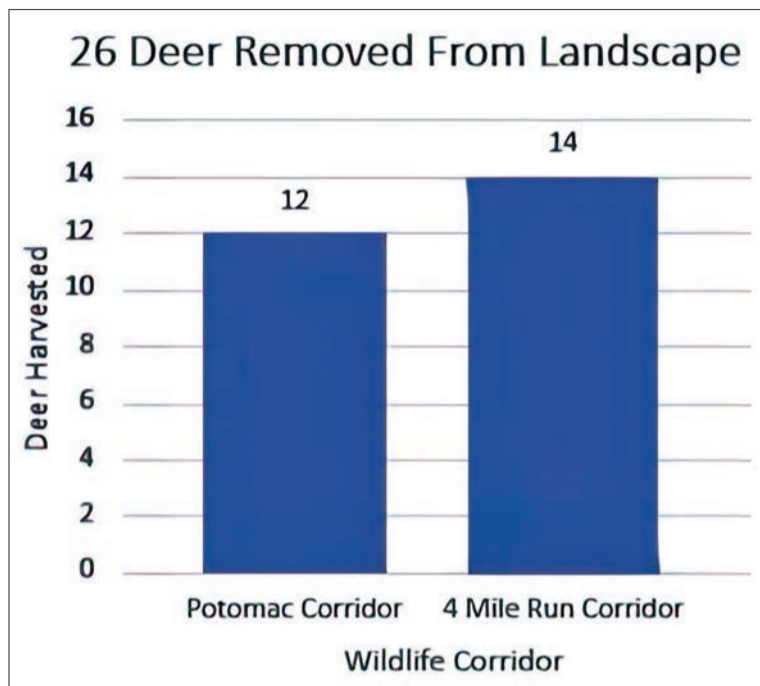
appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. To sign up, visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email [contact@scmafc.org](mailto:contact@scmafc.org) with questions.

### 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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

# Arlington Deer Management Update



ARLINGTON DEER MANAGEMENT

Number of deer killed by corridor.

**O**n Monday, April 13, Arlington County released a preliminary report on the new deer management program.

The Deer Management Program conducted contracted professional sharpshooting operations on 12 nights from Feb. 2 through March 20. Sharpshooting took place in seven parks along the Potomac and Four Mile Run wildlife corridors.

❖ Four Mile Run Corridor: Glencarlyn; Bon Air; Upton Hill (NOVA Parks); Barcroft

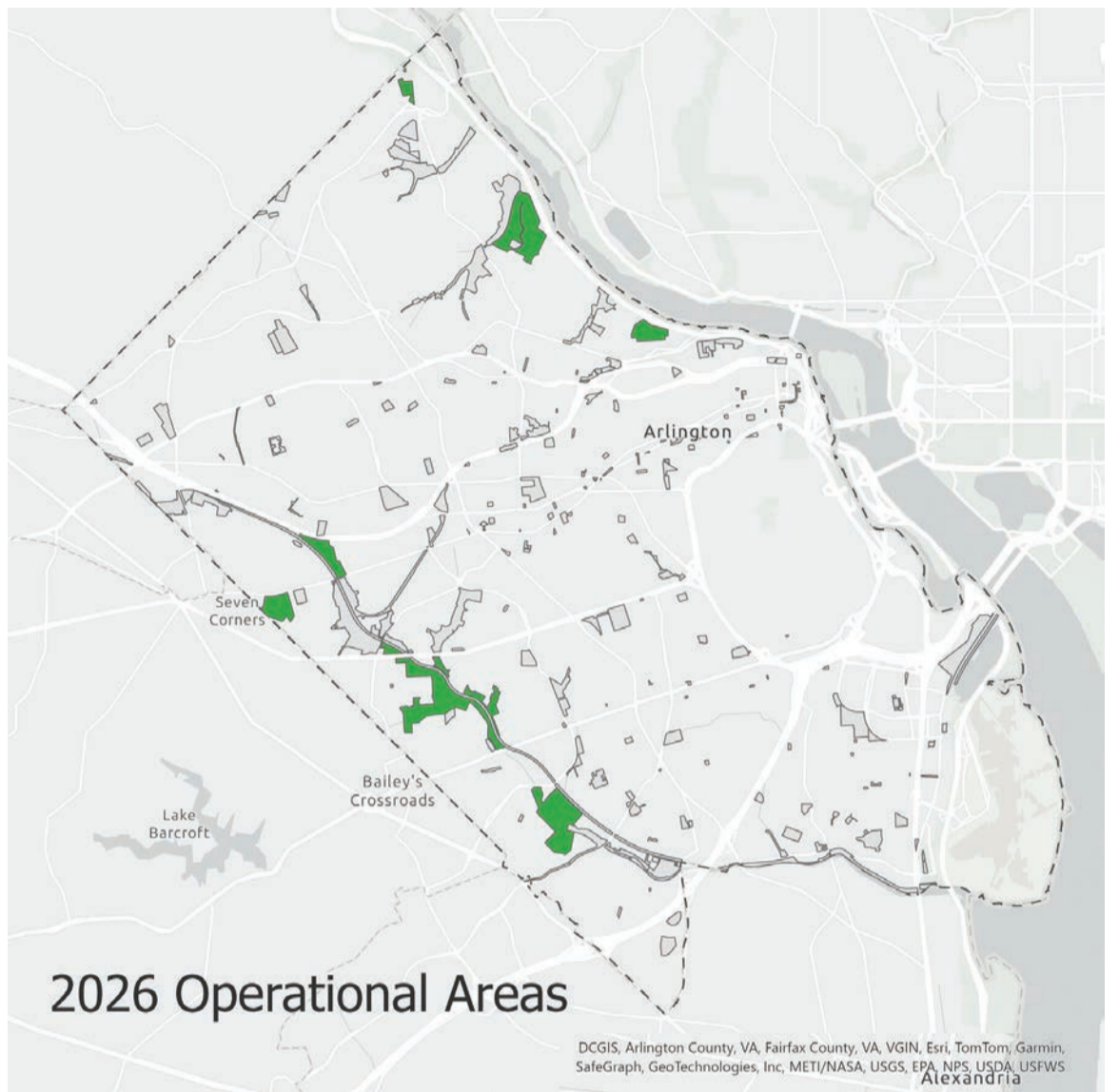
❖ Potomac Corridor: Fort C.F. Smith; Potomac Overlook (NOVA Parks); Pimmit Run

Twelve deer were “harvested” from the Potomac Corridor and 14 from the Four Mile Run corri-

dor for a total of 26 deer. All deer were tested and processed, and more than 1,500 pounds of venison were donated to the Arlington Food Assistance Center.

While this first operation likely did not reduce the deer population density in these wildlife corridors to the recommended level of 15-20 per square mile, it did significantly reduce the number of deer over-browsing the landscape. The reduction in numbers is also expected to reduce ongoing population growth.

Operations also provided insight into what strategies, locations, and weather conditions lend themselves to successfully reducing the number of deer. The effort also gave insight to opportunities for



2026 Operational Areas

DCGIS, Arlington County, VA, Fairfax County, VA, VGIN, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS, Alexandria

ARLINGTON DEER MANAGEMENT

Areas where sharpshooting of deer took place.

improvement.

For example, weather conditions, such as February’s snowstorm and subsequent freezing temperatures, significantly reduced deer activity,

while strategies, such as using bait to attract deer, proved less effective than anticipated.

Program staff are incorporating lessons learned and consider-

ing adjustments to factors such as sharpshooting locations, operating hours, and the weather conditions in which they operate to improve outcomes in future operations.

## Arlington Environmental Progress, By the Numbers

**A**rlington is celebrating environmental progress and community action this April through a “By the Numbers” showcase of the measurable impact residents, businesses, and partners have made toward a more sustainable future.

The County made significant strides last year in reducing emissions, expanding green programs and improving environmental health.

### By the Numbers

❖ 1.3 million electric miles logged by County electric vehi-

cles (nearly 150 tons of CO2-equivalent emissions avoided)

❖ 58,000 pounds of CO2 emissions avoided through GetGreen app actions

❖ 7,700 average daily ART bus riders (fewer cars on the road)

❖ 1,020 trees planted by the County and 732 trees distributed to residents

❖ 300+ residential installations through the solar co-op program

❖ 244 e-bike vouchers, 67 for income qualifying residents

❖ 138 tons of food waste diverted through composting and waste reduction programs

❖ 116 total LEED certified build-

ings

❖ 51 public EV chargers available to support cleaner transportation options

❖ 49.5% recycling rate

“These numbers represent real action from and for our community,” said Arlington County Board Chair Matt De Ferranti. “It all adds up. When individuals, organizations, and the County work together, we can create meaningful climate impact. And there’s no lack of opportunities for more involvement.”

The By-the-Numbers campaign features highlights of key sustain-

ability metrics alongside simple actions to choose, from reducing energy use to composting and choosing cleaner transportation options.

### Shaping the Climate Action Plan

This Earth Month also celebrates the kick off of Arlington’s Climate Action Plan engagement process, inviting the range of community partners to help shape the County’s climate future. Longtime participants and newcomers are encouraged to sign up for news of upcoming engagement opportunities and other ways to get involved. <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Climate-Action-Plan>

As part of Earth Month activities, Arlington is accepting submissions for its Climate Action Art Contest through April 30. The contest invites students K-12 to share their vision for a more sustainable future through creative expression. Winning artwork will be featured in the Climate Action Plan.

**Upcoming Events**  
Join us in celebrating the Earth this month and every month. <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Climate-Action-Plan>

### Upcoming Events

Join us in celebrating the Earth this month and every month. [SEE ARLINGTON, PAGE 11](https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Climate-Action-Plan)

## YES OR NO?



Ads bombard voters' mailboxes, doorsteps, and media, urging turn-out for the Special Election on Redistricting. The consequences could have national implications.



Political organizer Elizabeth Ferrara of Alexandria provides voting information at a pick-up point in Lorton for door-knocking campaigns to get out the YES vote.

# Redistricting Vote Looms

Last call -  
April 21

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

In the special election, voters must cast their vote by April 21st. Many report confusion and conflicting political messaging and advertisements. The question: "Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow the General Assembly to temporarily adopt new congressional districts to restore fairness in the upcoming elections, while ensuring Virginia's standard redistricting process resumes for all future redistricting after the 2040 census?"

At present, Virginia's eleven congressional districts are drawn once every ten years by the Vir-

ginia Redistricting Commission, a legislative body made up of eight legislators, and eight citizens, with an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. Virginia's congressional districts were last redrawn in 2021 and would next be redrawn in 2031. However, this year the General Assembly approved a new proposed district map which would take effect only if the constitutional amendment is approved by voters.

### Voting Yes

A "yes" vote would allow the General Assembly to redraw Virginia's congressional districts before the next ten-year cycle, since other states have done so. The proposed re-drawn district map would be used in the 2026 midterm Congressional elections. Then the responsibility of drawing the con-

gressional districts in 2031 would return to the Virginia Redistricting Commission.

### Who Is Urging "Yes" Votes?

Democrats Governor Abigail Spanberger and former President Barack Obama are appearing in TV ads and other messaging urging the need to counter the GOP-led redistricting in other states. The information campaign is well funded, including by Virginians for Fair Elections, and several other democratic political and social action pacts, with approximately \$21 million donated.

### Voting No

A "no" vote would leave the authority to draw congressional districts with the Virginia Redistricting Commission process at once a decade and Virginia's current districts would remain in place

until possible readjustment in 2031, based on 2030 census data. In its first and only use following the 2020 census, the Commission failed to pass a plan, so the state supreme court justices took over, in accordance with the statute.

Who is urging "no" votes? Republicans former Governor Glen Youngkin and former Attorney General Jason Miyares, along with the Virginians for Fair Maps, a political action group directed by former Republican Congressional Representative Eric Cantor. Cantor served from 2001 until his resignation in 2014 and has donated \$250,000 to the Redistricting vote campaign.

Also, an information campaign by a former Virginia state GOP delegate, used an image and July 2020 statement of former President Obama critical of gerryman-

dering. The use of Obama's image suggests he is opposed to the redistricting, when in fact he supports it, leading to confusion for some voters. The ads drew criticism from the NAACP.

Other endorsements typically fall along party lines.

### How many have voted so far?

Fairfax County's Office of Elections reported that as of April 9, of the county's 812,705 registered voters, 78,971 had cast early and absentee votes. That represents a turnout of 9.7 percent. The report suggests that mail-in voting continues to be popular with a fairly even split of 53 percent of early ballots returned by mail, versus 47 percent by early in-person voting.

Early voting ends April 18. Special Election voting day, the last day to vote, is April 21.

## Arlington Environmental Progress, By the Numbers

FROM PAGE 10

month. Examples include Invasive Plant Removal at nearby parks or pre-ordering native plants for pollinator gardens through the Long Branch Nature Center's annual Spring Plant Sale.

Ready to make the switch to solar? To help residents increase home comfort and savings while

improving energy efficiency, Arlington County is once again partnering with Switch Together, a group-buying initiative that allows residents to go solar or buy a heat pump at a significant discount.

Attend the Climate Week Coffee Kickoff, in collaboration with EcoAction Arlington, on April 20 at Lubber Run to connect with fellow

sustainability advocates over coffee and a light breakfast.

The Langston Boulevard Earth Day Every Day Event is April 26, 2026, with live music, kids' activities, the Arlington Public Library Truck, community exhibits, food and drink vendors and an art market featuring over 30 local artisans.

April also is Arlington Prepared-

ness Month — an opportunity to recognize that being ready for emergencies is a key part of building a resilient community in the face of climate change. Visit Arlington's preparedness webpage to learn how you can build an emergency kit, create an emergency plan, stay informed during emergencies, and more.

Extra credit: Download the Get-Green Arlington app on the App Store or Google Play. Join the Earth Month: Arlington By the Numbers Contest and record all your eco-actions to win prizes.

Explore resources, programs and many more ways to take action year-round by visiting the Earth Month calendar.

# 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](mailto: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



The Inaugural Clarendon FitFest takes place on Saturday, April 18, 2026 at Mason Square Plaza in Arlington.

Ballston Metro, the market operates Thursdays 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](https://freshfarm.org/markets/ballston).

## THURSDAY/APRIL 16

**The Two Peas. 8:30-10:30 p.m.** At Three Whistles, 2719 Wilson Blvd., Arlington.

## APRIL 17-19

**Spring Artful Weekend 2026.** At Fort C.F. Smith Park in Woodmont, Arlington. The annual spring art fair showcases 40 artists from the Arlington Artists Alliance and is perfect for Mother's Day shopping and revitalizing your home for springtime. Find original artworks for every budget and occasion. The opening reception on Friday at 6 p.m. will include wine and light fare.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 18

**Inaugural Clarendon FitFest. 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** At Mason Square Plaza, 3351 Fairfax Drive, Arlington. The Clarendon Alliance, University Life Mason Square, and Pacers Running will host the inaugural Clarendon FitFest which is designed as a community-wide celebration of wellness in its broadest sense — encompassing physical fitness and emotional well-being. The event will bring together the George Mason University community, Arlington residents, local businesses and organizations for a morning of movement, education, and community connection. The event opens at 8:00 a.m. with a Pacers Running 5K fun run and 2-mile walk, open to participants of all ages and fitness levels. At 9:00 a.m., a fitness fair begins on the plaza,

featuring live class demonstrations on the half hour from local studios and fitness professionals, interactive wellness activities, vendor tabling, a DJ, and giveaways. Visit <https://ulmasonsquare.gmu.edu/plaza/fitfest/>

## SATURDAY/APRIL 18

**Ball-Sellers House Spring Celebration with Glencarlyn Community Garden. 10 a.m.** At Ball-Sellers House 5620 3rd Street, South, Arlington. At 1:00 p.m., find out what the residents of this 276-year-old home planted in their kitchen garden over the years. Sandy Newton, Lead Gardener at Arlington House and re-enactor at Mt. Vernon will discuss Colonial and early American gardens, the Civil War and Depression era gardening, Victory Gardens of WWII, and more! She'll show you the plants and historic plots within the Ball-Sellers House kitchen garden.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 18

**Flourish: A Spring Market Event. 12-4 p.m.** MoCA Arlington at Virginia Square, Arlington. Join the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington and Made in Arlington for a market to celebrate spring! Music, local vendors, and art making. Fun friendly vibes!

### Event Highlights:

#### Outdoors

"Made in Arlington" Market -- 20+ vendors selling local handmade goods!

Food and drink: Rossana Mobile Espresso Experience and King of Pops

Wild Clay Pigments Craft led by artist Andrew Barco

#### Indoors

Yoga in the Tiffany Gallery 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Sound Bath in the Tiffany Gallery 2 p.m.-3 p.m.

Artist Talk: James Stephen Terrell 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

## APRIL 18-19

**Spring 2026 Open Studios Event.** At Columbia Pike Artist Studios, 932 S. Walter Reed Drive,

Arlington. Columbia Pike Artist Studios will open its doors for a behind-the-scenes showcase and sale of recent works. The 21 participating artists approach a wide range of subject matter and employ highly individualized styles. Many are well known in the region, exhibiting their work in galleries in the DMV and beyond. The artists will be available to discuss their processes and answer questions. Dates: Saturday, April 18, 2026, 2:00-5:00 p.m.; Sunday, April 19, 2026, 2:00-5:00 p.m. Participating artists are: Karen Bland, Laura Bollettino, Rhys Conlon, Jaqui Falkenheim, Helen Ginberg, Anne Hancock, Carl Lennartson, Sharon Malley, Joanne Mazarella, Susan McElhinney, Nan Morrison, Kimberley Murphy-Lyons, Bridget Murphy, Robbie Namy, Margaret Panas, Ursula Seckel, Marta Sewell, Margaret Stewart, Monica Stroik, Alice Whealin, and Ghada Zaytoun.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 18

**Columbia Pike Culture Fest. 12:00-6:00 p.m.** At Arlington Mill Community Center, Arlington. This vibrant celebration will feature live cultural performances, local food vendors, art, music, and interactive experiences highlighting the diverse communities that make up the Pike. Bring your friends and family for an afternoon of culture, connection, and fun.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 19

**Live Band Student Concert. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** At Busboys & Poets in Shirlington. Piano & More, a Northern Virginia nonprofit providing in-home music lessons, will celebrate its 10-year anniversary with a Live Band Student Concert. This is a private school event for Piano & More students and families, featuring student performers playing alongside a live band in a full concert setting, complete with stage lighting, a live audience, and a dinner experience. The event is designed as a special milestone for students and families, with a

# ENTERTAINMENT

limited capacity of 80 seated guests and 15 student performers. Each performer registration includes the student and three guest tickets with a 3-course meal.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 19

**History of Slavery on Roosevelt Island Walking Tour. 10 a.m.** See Theodore Roosevelt Island with a new lens. Walk the places where enslaved people lived and worked on "Mason's Island" plantation from 1792-1860s. This guided walking tour is sponsored by The Memorializing the Enslaved (MEA) Project, a joint effort of the Arlington Historical Society and the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. The tour will educate visitors about the history of slavery on, what is now known as, Theodore Roosevelt Island. The tour will focus on the island as a plantation and summer home of John Mason and his family. Learn about the people enslaved by John Mason who built, planted, and tended to the land including the gardens and buildings. They will cover approximately 1.5 miles over sometimes-uneven terrain. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear, bring water, and dress for the weather. There are bathrooms on the island and we will walk by them at the conclusion of the tour. There is a parking lot on Roosevelt Island. This tour is limited to 25 people. The event is free but you must reserve your spot.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 19

**Songs & Stories of Immigration. 5 p.m.** At The Filling Station in Ballston, Arlington. Avant Bard Theatre presents Songs & Stories of Immigration with Elena La Fulana and an exclusive encore performance of La Pluma Theatre's The Lady Bird of Saint John. Elena La Fulana is a Latin Grammy-nominated instrumentalist, singer-songwriter, and leader of the DC-based bilingual Latin-folk band Elena & Los Fulanos. Inspired by the political climate surrounding immigration policies in the United States, The Lady Bird of Saint John is an intimate story about separation, survival, and the consequences of systems that divide families.

## SUNDAY/APRIL 19

**Communities of Arlington Chamber Music Festival: Celebrating African American Heritage and Culture in Arlington. 5 p.m.** At Bennett Park Arts Atrium in Rosslyn, Arlington. Enjoy a special evening of music and history as part of the Communities of Arlington Chamber Music Festival, presented by the Arlington Philharmonic with support from the Arlington Arts Commission. This performance highlights a string ensemble playing works by African-American composers, paired with storytelling that celebrates Arlington's rich African-American history. In partnership with the Arlington Black History Museum and the Arlington Historical Society, this event combines world-class chamber music with powerful stories of community, culture, and heritage.

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 22

**Shining a Light on Hunger. 6-9:30 p.m.** At Army Navy Country Club. Shining a Light on Hunger is AFAC's largest annual fundraising event and will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. at Army Navy Country Club. Come celebrate AFAC's Spring Fiesta! This year they're featuring a live band, a margarita bar along with lots of laughter and fun as they commemorate 37 years of fulfilling our mission and fighting food insecurity! Your support for this event will help AFAC provide groceries to the 4,200+ families that come to our doors weekly. For more event information and sponsorship details, contact Jolie Smith, Chief Development Officer, at [jolie.smith@afac.org](mailto:jolie.smith@afac.org) or (571) 384-1443

## APRIL 25-26

**Arlington Festival of the Arts. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** At 1051 N. Highland Street, Arlington. Some 125 local and national artists present a stunning showcase of original paintings,

mixed media, life-sized sculpture, one-of-a-kind jewelry, photography, fiber art, leatherwork and more during the springtime 12th Annual Arlington Festival of the Arts. This year's event includes a craft market with practical art, including original home décor, soaps, artisanal breads and more original works of functional beauty. Visit [www.artfestival.com](http://www.artfestival.com) or call 561-746-6615.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 25

**2026 Arlington Housing Fair. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** At Walter Reed Recreation Center, Arlington. Attend the 2026 Arlington Housing Fair whose primary goal is to provide attendees with valuable information, education, and referrals related to home buying, home maintenance, post-purchase education, renting, and various housing services. Attend a Fair Housing Ceremony, celebrating Fair Housing Month at 10:30 a.m. Visit <https://bit.ly/ARLHousingFair>

## SATURDAY/MAY 2

**Mount Olivet United Methodist Church Re-opening Ceremony. 2-5 p.m.** Mount Olivet United Methodist Church, founded in 1854 and located on Arlington's oldest continuously used church site, will celebrate the full reopening of its restored building. The open house, "In Full Bloom: A Community Celebration of Renewal", marks the first time since the 2022 fire that the entire church is open to the public. Guests may tour restored spaces, learn more about Mount Olivet ministries, get their picture taken in a photo booth, plus take time to pause and reflect in the meditation room. Fun activities for children will be offered. A light lunch will also be served throughout the afternoon. Visit [www.mountolivetumc.com](http://www.mountolivetumc.com).

## SATURDAY/MAY 2

**The Studios Spring Show and Sale. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.** At The Studios at Arlington Arts in Green Valley, Arlington. This annual spring show and sale includes handmade pottery and prints by member artists at The Studios. Visit the pottery and printmaking studios and talk directly with the artists about their art-making practices. The annual spring and holiday shows and sales are festive, all-day events featuring 20+ artists selling their artwork at individual tables inside the studio building where the artwork was made.

## SUNDAY/MAY 3

**Farmers Market Kickoff. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** At Pike Park (Columbia Pike & S. Walter Reed Dr), Arlington. Join in the kickoff of the Columbia Pike Farmers Market summer season featuring live music, new vendors, and fresh local goods. The market runs every Sunday.

## SUNDAY/MAY 3

**SPARK! At 2700 Art Space, Green Valley, Arlington. SPARK! Not Your Usual Art Market launches on Sunday, May 3, 2026, and continues every First Sunday of the month (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) through November. It's the kickoff activity for the new outdoor venue 2700 Art Space, located at 2700 South Nelson Street, Arlington. Every month will offer something new and unusual. Sunday, May 3 will feature handpicked art and food vendors, including a mobile bookstore, artists David Amoroso and Kate Rosendale, plush animals made from reclaimed textiles, Rossana Coffee, Thai-inspired desserts, and so much more! Plus you can listen to tropical sounds from the DJ's of Leon City Sounds and enjoy a free interactive art project about visible mending by artist Roxana Geffen.**

## THURSDAY/MAY 7

**Leadership Summit and Reception. 1-6:30 p.m.** At Westin Arlington. Leaders in the greater Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C. area are invited to connect with one another and learn from some of the nation's guiding voices. This afternoon of leadership development is meant to inspire and empower individuals with reimagined perspectives and tools for enriching personal growth and

influence. The Leadership Summit also serves as the culmination of the Leadership Center of Arlington's Lead and Ignite Classes of 2026, as well as Leadership Alexandria. Visit [leadercenter.org/summit](http://leadercenter.org/summit).

## THURSDAY/MAY 7

**Cinco de Mayo Trivia Night. 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.** At Los Chamacos, Arlington. Test your knowledge at our Cinco de Mayo-themed Pike Trivia Night with prizes. Free appetizers provided while supplies last.

## 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://arhist.org/arlington-va250/>

## SATURDAY/MAY 9

**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 May's show is the hilarious Danny Rouhier from 106.7 The Fan! Tickets: \$10/\$15 at [capitalcityshowcase.com](http://capitalcityshowcase.com). Call 202-235-4311

## SATURDAY/MAY 9

**Arlington Chorale Live Performance. 5 p.m.** At Westover Baptist Church, 1125 Patrick Henry Drive, Arlington. Inspired by Leonard Bernstein's words, "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before," this moving concert explores how composers across history have responded to pain and uncertainty with beauty, courage, and hope. Featuring music by Palestrina, J.S. Bach, Brahms, Sarah Quartel, Reena Esmail, and Ysaye Barnwell, Reply offers an evening of powerful choral music that speaks to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of art.

## FRIDAY/MAY 15

**Bike to Work Day - Penrose Square Pit Stop. 7:00 - 9:00 a.m.** At Penrose Square, Arlington. Stop by on your morning ride for free refreshments, giveaways, and community vibes in partnership with BikeArlington.



April 3, Tiny Cabin House Concert, Madison, VA | Email us for address and info

April 16, 8:30-10:30 pm Three Whistles Café 2719 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA

April 25, 3-6:00 pm Backyard House Concert Fredericksburg, VA (Rain date April 26)  
Email us for address and info

April 28, 5-7:00 pm Tiny Stage Concert  
George Mason University's Mason Square 3351 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA

May 2, 2-4:00 pm Walker Nature Center Spring Festival 11450 Glade Dr, Reston, VA

May 3, 9:30am-1:00pm Fairlington Farmers Market 3308 S Stafford St, Arlington, VA

May 12, 5-7:00pm Tiny Stage Concert  
George Mason University's Mason Square 3351 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA

May 21, 5-8:00pm Upstairs Bar at Harris Teeter 6248 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA

May 29, 10:45pm 1:30am "Voices From Virginia" Showcase  
Southeast Regional Folk Alliance, Owensboro, KY

<http://www.thetwopeasmusic.com> [twopeasharmony@gmail.com](mailto:twopeasharmony@gmail.com)

The Two Peas invite you to a venue in Arlington, Three Whistles. The Two Peas say: "We played there once last year when it was a coffee shop, but they've since expanded the kitchen, hired a chef and added a dinner menu. The word is that it's delicious." Three Whistles is a cozy spot where you can have breakfast, lunch, dinner, or drinks and listen to live music. On this Thursday it's us, The Two Peas from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. No cover charge.

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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**

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# 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. 9 – Oct. 4 plus a person to write press releases and contact potential Patrons. Experienced volunteer Webmaster also needed. Email Judy Massabny for further details at [jmassa@arlingtonva.us](mailto:jmassa@arlingtonva.us).

The dates for 2026 are Sept. 9 – Oct. 4. The official opening is Saturday, Sept. 19 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in Arlington.

The registration fee remains the same at \$20 which covers an unlimited number of events. Registration is online only at [www.nvso.org](http://www.nvso.org).

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.medstarcapitalisceplex.com>, register for Senior Public Skate.

Memory Café is a comfortable environment where people with dementia and their family caregivers can socialize and enjoy meaningful dementia-friendly activities together, Thursday, April 16, 1:30 – 3 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Led by Arlington Adult Day Care and Library staff. For more information and to let us know you're coming, call Adult Services Librarian Zoe Mann at 703-228-5193.

Celebrate Earth Month with earth-friendly cooking demonstrated by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Eco Ambassadors, Thursday, April 16, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Learn energy-saving methods like eco-friendly recipes and simple ways to reduce your kitchen footprint. Registration # 913501-09.

Generative AI - Beyond Basics, improve prompting skills and become a more advanced user through simple techniques, presented by 55+ volunteer Barbara Phillip, Friday, April 17, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Some Generative AI knowledge required. Registration # 913403-10.

Annual Trash and Treasure Sale at Aurora Hills 55+ Center, open to the public, Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Sale includes household goods, decorative items, small appliances, games, toys, jewelry, craft materials

and more. Items for the sale can be dropped off on Wednesday, April 15 and Friday, April 17, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. For additional information, call 703-228-5722.

Retire well, live well, presented by Brian Fyock, Wealth Advisor, Evermay Wealth Management, Monday, April 20, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Presentation will cover elder scam prevention, long-term care insurance and estate planning. No 55+ Pass required. Registration # 913404-02.

Retirement: Before and After, interactive class led by Sallie Wiley, certified federal coach, Monday, April 20, 1 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Learn tips and tools to use when deciding to retire. Registration # 913404-04.

Flappers and Speakeasies, pianist Ken Schellenberg and friends will perform iconic music from the roaring 20s, Monday, April 20, 10:30 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 913301-05; Wednesday, April 22, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center, registration # 913301-06; Thursday, April 23, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center, registration # 913301-07; Friday, April 24, 11 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center, registration # 913301-08.

Arlington Mill 55+ Center book club will discuss "A Well Behaved Woman: A Novel of the Vanderbilts" by Therese Fowler, Tuesday, April 21, 1 p.m. Drop-in.

Acoustic Café featuring local musicians Erin Aminah McDonald and Justin Trawick, Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Open to all ages; no 55+ Pass required. Registration # 913301-02.

Exploring book arts, guided by book artist Sushmita Mazumdar, create a Japanese stab-bound book, Tuesday, April 21, 3 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Cost \$20. Registration # 913310-09.

Introduction to the ukulele, no experience necessary, Tuesday, April 21, 4 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Taught by volunteer Sandy O'Shea. Limited ukuleles available. Registration # 913304-04.

Piano Lounge and Sing-Along with pianist Valerie Welsh, selected songs by Richard Rodgers and partners, Tuesday, April 21, 2:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Lyrics provided. Registration # 913304-22.

The Library of Virginia's history presented by Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt, education and outreach manager at the Library, Thursday, April 23, 3 p.m., virtual. Program to commemorate America's 250th anniversary and share insights into the Library's rich history. Registration # 913400-20.

Tea and a movie, "The Old Man and the Sea" (1958) (NR) Friday, April 24, 12:30 p.m.

Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 913804-08.

Just beneath the surface, explore the context, history and techniques of paintings by three artists, presented by Community Arts Programmer Jim Halloran, Friday, April 24, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 913302-03.

Flappers and Speakeasies' music from the roaring 20s performed by pianist Ken Schellenberg and friends, Monday, April 27, 11:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 913301-09.

Secrets revealed of famous artists and their distinctive techniques revealed, Monday, April 27, 10:30 a.m., virtual. Presented by Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen. Registration # 913302-06.

Welcome to 55+! Roundtable discussion led by Jennifer Weber, Director, Walter Reed 55+ Center. Explore what the 55+ program has to offer and suggest new activities, Tuesday, April 28, 6 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 913801-08.

Intergenerational rock painting for the new rock garden at Lubber Run Community Center, Wednesday, April 29, 2-3 p.m. No experience necessary; supplies provided. Open to all ages; 55+ Pass not required. Registration # 913310-11.

Create a hyper-realistic pink stemmed rose using colored pencils, three session class, Thursdays, April 30, May 7 and May 14, 2:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Cost \$60. Taught by artist Sandra Phillips. Colored pencil experience encouraged but not required. Materials not provided; check registration receipt for complete supply list. Registration # 913303-05.

Paint along with community arts programmers and recreate artworks on display at area museums, Thursday, April 30, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 913303-09.

Jeopardy, a lively, social trivia game, no pressure, just plenty of laughs, Friday, May 1, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 913600-11.

First Friday social at Arlington Mill 55+ Center, May 1, 1 p.m. Relaxed gathering with light refreshments. Start the month on a cheerful note. Registration # 913801-06.

Social ballroom dance, spacious dance floor, Friday, May 1, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. All will have an opportunity to dance and have fun; no partner needed. Drop-in.

Monthly meeting of the Arlington Spellbinders, a group of folks who love telling stories, Friday, May 1, 9:30 -11:30 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Newcomers welcome; learn more about the art of oral storytelling. Drop-in.

## You Really Want My Opinion?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I am so over it, under it and/or around it and any other unflattering way you can characterize it; 'it' being asked my opinion regarding the customer service I've just received. Spare me. Nowadays, one can't make an inquiry/purchase/service - via the phone or even in person without being asked for a verbal response or barcode scan (post office comes to mind) or touching tones on your phone, all relating to the exchange with the person/process you've just endured before you can be properly excused. That is if you're being polite.

The cost of doing business/making an inquiry is as much about getting feedback from the paying customer as it is about selling the customer a product or a service, et cetera. Occurring on the figurative backs of former customers who were "always right," now those customers have an opinion, good, bad or indifferent that payees want to know about - and their rightness is now being compared to other payors to determine who is actually right. And as you might imagine, the customer is much less right than he/she ever was. As Major Frank Burns sort of said on a long-ago M\*A\*S\*H episode: You can't swing a dead rat without hitting a North Korean, so does it follow that you can't buy or inquire about anything without your opinion being solicited. Usually, you can politely back out of the exchange, but it doesn't totally minimize the occurrence. And at least for me, the request for my opinion leaves a mental mark - almost akin to when I see a driver backing into a parking space. Even if I say no, or look away, the damage is done. I can't unwring the bell as it were.

Moreover, I can't imagine my two-cents worth, even when added onto all the other opinions ever adds up to a dollar's worth of value. And though I understand that customer opinion/feedback is part of the engine that keeps the world turning; nevertheless, the current outreach is too much of a bad thing. I am asked my opinion of whatever the previous experience was so often, and in so many ways often beginning with: "How can I give you excellent customer service?" and ending with an "On a scale of 1 - 5, how would you rate your experience?" or a reasonable facsimile thereof, and on and on and on, I've pretty nearly exceeded my threshold. As my late mother read back to me, while living in Florida her favorite bumper sticker of full-time Floridians: "Welcome to Florida. Now go home." It's simply too much, even of a good thing. It's exactly how I feel about the octopus-type outreach of all these opinion solicitors. And yes, it's okay/I understand that this conversation will be recorded - for training purposes.

Quite frankly, that last bit about training is the only thing that helps me endure this never-ending need for my opinion. I can't help laughing and pitying the poor person who has to listen to all these customer-service phone calls. That has to be torture, a type of torture I would wish on my worst enemy. Listening to callers/reading customer surveys only to occasionally find a kernel of relevance mixed in with all that pabulum. How many hours must staff be subjected to the general public before management takes pity on them and rotates in another poor sap?

Unfortunately, opinions are the lifeblood of any entity that wants to remain in business. The general public must be considered, generally. Running a business, providing a service, et cetera, presumably has a specific purpose. And unless there's a match between customer server and customer servee, the only purpose served is losing money quickly. You want my opinion? No, you don't. I don't know anything relevant to your endeavor. I only know what I want and what I want can't possibly suite your inquiries. After all, I'm just one of millions not lost at sea but drowning, nonetheless. Stop asking me what I think. Ask me what I know. It will be a much shorter conversation. And that suits me just fine.

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

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

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](http://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](http://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/](http://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 Siqveland at 703-228-0913

or [esiqveland@arlingtonva.us](mailto:esiqveland@arlingtonva.us) or visit [health.arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/](http://health.arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/) for available training sessions. The Chris Atwood Foundation also offers training to the public. Visit [www.chrisatwoodfoundation.org/naloxone](http://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](mailto:bdesai@seniorhelpers.com). Visit [www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe](http://www.dementiacareconnections.com/memory-cafe) or [www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va](http://www.seniorhelpers.com/arlington-alexandria-va) for more.

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