

Father James P Fischer conducts mass in May at the 50th jubilee celebration of his ordination. Retired, he now lives at Missionhurst in Arlington.

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Father Jim, Retired Priest, Missionhurst Gardener

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Detective John Bamford, 'Hometown Hero,' Rescues Sextortion Victims

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Bamford Receives Hometown Hero Award

“We have sextortion victims all through Northern Virginia regardless of class.”

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Arlington County Police Department Detective John Bamford received a Hometown Hero Award from the U.S. Department of Justice on May 22 for his recent efforts resulting in the identification and takedown of a notorious cybercriminal forum in South Africa. Its administrators, who were arrested, sold thousands of illicit images in the United States and elsewhere. The investigation recovered approximately 10 million images of sexually explicit material depicting minors from electronic devices.

The Hometown Hero Award is sponsored by the Department of Justice in honor of the United States of America’s 250th year of celebrating its independence.

“This award recognizes one of the law enforcement officers who best embodies the spirit upon which our Nation was founded and reflects a steadfast commitment to the enduring ideals of liberty, service and civic responsibility.” Detective Bamford’s efforts have resulted in the identification and rescue of hundreds of child and adult victims of illicit images.

Bamford says the best part of the day was when his three kids got to see it. “To see their pride means everything. They think I do something important and I’m not just a guy talking on the phone.”

Bamford now works as an ACPD detective and is concurrently serving as an FBI Task Force officer with the Washington D.C. Field Office.

“The most difficult thing about the Task Force work is the difference between my job on the ACPD with a lot of day to day interaction and the FBI work which is mostly

on the phone. “Jumping over to the Federal side, it doesn’t exist in the same way. Since a lot of my work is on the phone, I am rarely face to face so I have to keep myself grounded to keep the victim first and the bad guy second and protect the community.”

Bamford says he always knew he wanted to be in law enforcement. “My grandmother was one of three female cops in the history of Lowell, Massachusetts.” In addition, his father is in the FBI, and his two little brothers are a Boston cop and FBI.

“I was in law school in 2006 waiting tables and attending school at night. One day in 2008 I was talking to mom, and she saw that the ACPD was advertising for police. So I took the test, and they hired me and I worked for ACPD in 2008-2010 while I was finishing law school.”

Different in Northern Virginia?

“I do think we live in a cocoon in Northern Virginia. This results in some blinding. We have sextortion victims all through Northern Virginia regardless of class. It is not a geographically based problem. Every middle school and high school has these issues. Blackmail of non-consensual images or sextortion is so common because we all have cellular phones.

It doesn’t matter who you are. It’s so easy to find a message platform where there is no visibility to catch these guys.

“My kids are the same age as these victims.” Bamford says he knows it’s important for your kids to know they can come to you. “Sextortion can be psychologically and emotionally damaging.” Bamford says he gives every victim his cell phone and tells them they can call him day or night. “Sometimes they just call to tell me they got a



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left, Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Keim, Assistant U.S. Attorney April Russo, Detective John Bamford, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney Frank Bradsher, and Criminal Chief Seth Schlessinger.

pizza last night. It’s not important; they just need to know they have a contact.

“The perpetrators do this all day and have perfected the craft of manipulation. They prey on the insecurity of kids and the desire to be complimented. It can start very benign. ‘Young lady, would you be interested in modeling? I could pay you for it.’

“It goes on. ‘Would you like to model in a swimming suit?’ Then ‘in your underwear?’ As it progresses, some victims say ‘This is too far.’ But the victim couldn’t have

understood what was happening and needed help to get out.”

But then Bamford says the blackmail begins to keep the girls, or sometimes boys, providing the pictures. “We will send the pictures to your family or your boyfriend.” Bamford says the perpetrator’s threats to release the photos causes the victims to do anything in the moment. “They are afraid this will ruin their lives.”

Bamford says the motives of the suspect can range from keeping the pictures for personal pleasure, using them to trade with others for

similar content of different victims or to further victimize through subsequent extortions.

Ashley Savage, ACPD Communications Manager, says the Arlington statistics on Extortion/Blackmail which includes Sextortion have been climbing in recent years. But the number for 2025 decreased.

Extortion/Blackmail

	Number of Cases
2023	95
2024	159
2025	84

Fresh From the Arlington Farm to Your Front Door

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

If you are expecting a large field with a tractor, some hogs and a few chickens when you visit Area 2 Farms in Arlington, you are in for a surprise. Area 2 Farms is located in a large warehouse building in South Arlington. The space is filled with several growing structures, each consisting of eight rows of stacked trays that rotate slowly like a snake to simulate a 24-hour day. This system was patented by

Oren and Tyler when they set up the farm in 2021.

The bottom two rows of plants are dark. Level 3 represents early morning, still cool where the plants are exposed to their first light and where they get watered with a mixture of municipal water and pre-emergent fertilizer which is mostly molasses. The rows rotate through the tiers every three hours.

Merissa Bale, Farmer and Community Outreach, says, “The plants are weighed before they go under



Lettuces are growing in the bottom trays with a 2s sticker that represents the week they will be ready to harvest.

the irrigation for 30-60 seconds, and the sensors tell us when the plants have had enough.” Levels 4 and 5 are normal light and as the rows move up, the light intensity remains the same but the temperature rises 10-15 degrees as they get closer to the ceiling, just as heat rises naturally.

As the rows rotate you can watch Buzz Lightyear hanging onto the edge of the row as he travels “to infinity and beyond.”

SEE FRESH FROM, PAGE 11

A Priest, A Gardener — Father Jim Can be Both

On the 50th anniversary of his ordination, a return to Missionhurst.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

“In April 1946, Father Dieltiens was able to buy an eleven-acre property called Lyonhurst, for its former owner, Mr. Frank Lyons. The name was then changed to Missionhurst.”

From www.missionhurst.org/5-questions-about-missionhurst

Father James P. Fischer (Father Jim) walks around Missionhurst in Arlington pointing to the azaleas he planted when he was there decades ago. “I had to trim them back; they had grown so tall.”

The first time Father Jim was at Missionhurst was in 1968 as a



Father James P. Fischer relaxes on a garden bench outside Missionhurst in Arlington.

novitiate for his year-long introduction into the priesthood. Then back again in the early ‘80s and finally back again as a retired priest in 2023.

In May Father Jim celebrated the 50th year jubilee since his ordination in 1976. And now in his retirement at Missionhurst he has become the self appointed gardener.

Father Jim said when he returned to Missionhurst in 2023, the grounds were overgrown and looked abandoned. He set out to remove the 6-8 inches of wood mulch that someone had spread all over the grounds and filled 31 96-gallon trash bags. “Now it looks lived in again.”

Mostly every day Father Jim heads out to spend a couple of



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Father Jim walks around the grounds at Missionhurst where he has become the self appointed gardener.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Father James P. Fischer conducts mass in May at the 50th jubilee celebration of his ordination.

hours in the early afternoon working in the gardens outside one of the buildings at Missionhurst.

“But I don’t do cold or rain.” Today he is doing a little weeding around the marigolds. However, he points out that the rabbits and deer have taken their toll. “I’m going to have to replace them.”

Every day Father Jim just looks around at what needs to be done. Today he grabs his bucket, which has everything he needs, and heads to survey what’s next on the 11-acre property. Easter lilies are unexpectedly poking out nearby. “Of course we had them for Easter but it’s unusual to have Easter lilies in June.”

One of the parishioners says, “He just works magic.”

Father Jim says he went to a high school just outside of Philadelphia that was sponsored by the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of

Mary (CICM). “Philadelphia was pretty provincial but I was impressed that the priests at my high school had been working all over the world, and it convinced me that’s what I wanted to do.”

His first assignment in 1972 was Hong Kong where he served as parish priest and a high school teacher after attending four years at Catholic University and then attending graduate school.

He had two years of Cantonese language training. “After a year I could speak the language but it was two years before I could read it.” Of all the places he served, he found Hong Kong to be the most challenging due to cultural differences.

In 1982 he returned back here where he was Missionhurst vocations director doing administrative work while serving as editor and

SEE A PRIEST, PAGE 14

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Fun Afternoon for a Good Cause

Culpepper Garden provides independent living for low income seniors.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Culpepper Garden held its annual fundraising BBQ and Blooms Bash on Saturday, June 6. While the event was held indoors at Rock Spring United Church of Christ, the room was scattered with oversized daffodils evoking the spacious grounds at Culpepper Garden.

It was a festive occasion with a photo booth just inside the door occupied by two ACPD officers choosing from among a variety of props offered to enhance your persona for a free take-home photo. Other Arlington first responders were scattered around the room including Chief Andy Penn.

ACPD Deputy Chief David Giroux says, "This is always one of our favorite events of the year."

The Starlight Orchestra was playing background music while the crowd decided whether to supplement their potato salad and baked beans with shredded pork or chicken, salmon or slices of tender brisket provided by Mission BBQ. Others in the crowd browsed the auction items to decide between A Luxury DC Escape, Livin' the Pie Life, fitness classes, Meadow Farms and many more offerings.

Marta Hill Gray, Culpepper president, welcomed the group. "This is the highlight of the year. All of my favorite people are here — our first responders, my Board members, the staff and those who have supported us through the year. The Board keeps us on track; they are critical to our success."

She added that Goodwin Health is now in the building. Residents come up really excited about how this has improved their life.

"We are entering a new era. We are raising the bar."

State Senator Barbara Favola, who has been on the Culpepper Board for 10 years, said, "Culpepper has resident-centered services; they know every resident, what's going on so the residents get what they need to thrive, not just survive." Favola continues that no other organization fills this role and explains how important it is to have this organization in our own backyard offering seniors independence.

Favola introduces Del. Patrick Hope who was presenting the Legacy of Grace Awards to three important philanthropic partners whose contributions have greatly



Marta Hill Gray, President of Culpepper Garden, welcomes the crowd to the BBQ & Bloom's Bash on Saturday, June 6.



Two ACPD officers stop at the photo booth to have a little fun at BBQ & Blooms Bash.



Bartlett Collins Naylor expresses his appreciation upon receiving the Legacy of Grace Award.



State Delegate Patrick Hope and President and CEO of AFAC and Culpepper Board Chair Charlie Meng share stories before the program begins at BBQ & Bash.



Legacy of Grace Award is presented to Dr. Robert Breiner. Left: Delegate Patrick Hope, Dr. Briner, Senate Senator Barbara Favola, Culpepper Garden President Marta Hill Gray.



Juana Gonzalez receives the first Culpepper Garden staff award for her 13 years of service. Gray says, "She's a sparkler."



Legacy of Grace Award is presented to Virginia Housing. From left: Del. Patrick Hope, Markus Crewes, Sen. Barbara Favola, Marta Hill Gray, Ayan Addou.

enhanced the Culpepper Garden mission: Dr. Robert Breiner and Bartlett Collins Naylor as well as Virginia Housing. "The best part is handing out the awards. And I always say we need more Culpeppers, just like this one, around Virginia."

Jane Hess Collins, Master of Cer-

emony, described the new 15-passenger bus that had travelled 450 miles providing 47 discrete residents with 166 trips since January. She explained the evening's bus appeal was to raise \$5,000 which will be matched by an anonymous donor and will allow the bus to operate for the next six months.

"They've told me I need to stand up here and talk until we raise it." But in a few minutes Collins turned instead to the Starlight Orchestra who were providing free music for the event.

"I want you to choose a song right now that will motivate people to donate." After a brief con-

sultation, the instruments started up and the lead singer belted out, "Donate. Donate. Donate on the river"

Culpepper Garden is an award winning low-income retirement independent living community in Arlington. BBQ & Blooms is their annual fundraising event.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION

A multilingual early voting sign marks the start of in-person early voting on Thursday, June 18 for the Aug. 4 dual primary election.

Arlington Voters Head Back To The Ballot Box

Early voting starts Thursday, June 18; quick guide to the Aug. 4 dual primary election.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia Department of Elections has requested a primary election to nominate Democratic and Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and local offices. Because Virginia holds open primaries, voters may choose either a Democratic or a Republican ballot, but not both.

Early in-person voting for the Aug. 4 dual primary begins Thursday, June 18, opening a day early because state offices are closed Friday, June 19, for Juneteenth. Voters must present a Virginia driver's license, U.S. passport or another acceptable form of identification, or be prepared to sign an ID confirmation statement.

Arlington County is located entirely within Virginia's 8th Congressional District.

Key Dates, Locations and Deadlines

Early in-person voting runs from June 18 through Aug. 1 at any Arlington County early voting site. Voting schedules and hours vary by location:

- ❖ Courthouse Plaza (2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 320): Open June 18 through July 31 on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed June 19 and July 3).
- ❖ Courthouse Plaza Weekend Hours: Sun-

day, July 19, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Saturday, Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- ❖ Walter Reed Community Center (2909 16th St. S.) & Langston-Brown Community Center (2121 N. Culpeper St.): These satellite locations are open for select dates only: Sunday, July 19, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, July 25, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, July 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday, July 31, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, Aug. 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The deadline to register to vote or request a mail ballot is July 24 at 5 p.m. Same-day provisional registration is available after this date.

- ❖ Location on Election Day, Aug. 4: Voters must vote at their assigned precinct polling place, which will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

What Is on the Ballot?

Only offices with more than one candidate will appear on the primary ballot. Voters can verify their registration status and find their assigned polling place online at elections.virginia.gov.

- ❖ U.S. House of Representatives (8th District): The Democratic primary features a

SEE ARLINGTON VOTERS, PAGE 15

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Let us know about an upcoming event

Summer Reading Challenge Kicks Off



"Plant A Seed, Read" kicks off at the Central Library Saturday, June 6.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The Arlington Public Library Summer Reading Challenge began at the library branches on Saturday, June 6.

Although most of the kids did say they were there because of something to do with reading, honestly the attractions were Abe from the Washington Nationals and the "Plant A Seed, Read" activity. Plant a Seed was a chocolate pudding cup representing dirt topped with gummy worms present in any rich garden soil.

Roun Erikson and Reese Tsang are lined up to get their pudding cups. Erikson says she has already started reading. Louise Sfregola stands nearby. She already has a library card.

It is a hot, muggy day, and the teenage volunteers at the Plant A Seed table are fanning themselves in between dishing out gummy worms. Jordan Ebikwi, a graduating Yorktown High School senior, is volunteering as part of his three week senior experience at the library. "I just thought it would be a fun place to have my internship."

Meanwhile mascot Abe, a member of the famed Nats President's racing team, is circling the area outside the library fanning the volunteers and anyone else who looks like they could use it.

The way the reading challenge works is that a person reads for 30 days during the time between June 1-Sept. 1. There is no minimum or maximum that you are required to read on any day, and the days don't have to be sequential. Just mark reading activity on a calendar and after reading for 30 days, fill out a form which you can find either online or which you pick up from the library. Bring it to any library location.



Roun Erikson (left) and Reese Tsang line up to fill their pudding cups with gummy bears at the Plant A Seed table.



Abe fans in the crowd during the hot, humid Saturday morning include Library employee Victoria Dale.



Teenage volunteers man the Plant a Seed table. Jordan Ebikwi, (right) is volunteering as part of his library senior experience at York-

Your prizes for completion of the reading challenge are a free book, two free Washington Nationals baseball tickets and a \$1 donation to help support the partnership with Friends of Arlington Public Library.

For those super achievers or those who may just like to read there is also an incentive to read an extra 30 days and achieve the status of a Super Reader. This allows you to receive a plantable

flower or herb pot, a Super Reader certificate and to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$100 Visa gift card or free tickets from the Washington Mystics or Washington Spirit.

The library brochure explains, "Summer reading helps kids and teens avoid the educational 'summer slide.' It gives parents, caregivers and kids an extra incentive to read or listen to books together."



The chocolate pudding and gummy bears table is a popular attraction at the Plant A Seed event.



Louise Sfregola already has her own library card.



Who wants a gummy worm when you can have Taylor Swift?

SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO COURTESY OF VESNA GJAJA

Born on what is now Croatia's Dalmatian coast, Vesna Gjaja has built a life marked by family, hard work and courage.

A Life of Reinvention

From the Adriatic Coast to Arlington, Vesna Gjaja embraces life with curiosity and optimism.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

The first thing she remembers about America is the snow.

Not just snow, but an abundance of it.

Raised in Split on Croatia's Dalmatian coast, where the climate is Mediterranean and the city rises from the Adriatic with centuries of history behind it, Vesna Gjaja arrived in upstate New York at 19 as a newlywed and found herself staring at a landscape that felt entirely foreign.

"There was so much snow," she recalled with a laugh. "And everything seemed like a village."

Back home, Gjaja had grown up in a bustling city where women routinely pursued careers as doctors, scientists and professionals. In America, she was surprised to meet many young wives who stayed home while their husbands worked.

"I always thought I should work," she said.

She had hoped to become a journalist, but life had other plans.

After marrying her husband, a Bosnian scientist who worked for General Electric, Gjaja left her homeland and eventually enrolled at the State University of New York at Albany.

With no journalism major available, she earned a degree in Italian and comparative literature.

Those years were anything but easy.

While she and her husband pursued their studies, they were also raising two small boys. With no family nearby and no childcare to rely on, she remembers the challenge vividly.

Looking back now, she said simply, "I was very young and I didn't know any better."

That determination would define much of her life as she weathered both successes and setbacks.

Over decades, she built a career that took unexpected turns. After years of volunteer work, she spent eight years in public relations at Macy's before opening her own clothing store. The business closed during the Great Recession.

SEE A LIFE, PAGE 14

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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
Loudoun	11235	663	DOWNEY MILL ROAD	TRIB. CATOCTIN CREEK	5/27/2026
Smyth	17619	639N	SULPHUR SPRINGS ROAD	BRANCH	5/13/2026
Grayson	8733	58	HIGHLANDS PARKWAY	CABIN CREEK	5/6/2026

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 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 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.

Pride with the Police at Freddie's Beach Bar

Arlington tradition in its 6th year.

The Arlington County Police Department including members of the Community Engagement Division (CED) and the LGBTQ+ Liaison Team, are proud to host the 6th annual Pride with the Police event at Freddie's Beach Bar and Restaurant.

In honor of Pride Month, join Arlington County police officers, firefighters, sheriff's deputies and emergency management personnel at this informal opportunity to celebrate the vibrant LGBTQ+ community that makes Arlington shine! Friends and neighbors are all welcome to enjoy light refreshments, participate in LGBTQ+ bingo, discuss public safety concerns and connect in a welcoming and inclusive space—no speeches or agendas!

Members of the Arlington LGBTQ+ community and beyond are invited to attend Pride with



the Police to celebrate the progression of trust and understanding between law enforcement and the LGBTQ+ community. The goal is for police to work in partnership with the community to enhance safety, mutual respect and equality. Through the development of strong partnerships, Arlington County police officers work each day to reduce incidence of crime

and improve the overall quality of life in Arlington by making it a place where all people can live safely and without fear.

The 6th annual Pride with the Police event will take place on: Thursday, June 25, 2026, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

-Freddie's Beach Bar and Restaurant, 555 23rd Street S.

- Participating
- ❖ The Arlington County Police Department
 - ❖ The Arlington County Fire Department
 - ❖ The Arlington County Sheriff's Office
 - ❖ Department of Public Safety Communications and Emergency Management
 - ❖ Arlington Addiction Recovery Initiative
 - ❖ Doorways
 - ❖ Path Forward

Celebrating 20 Years

This year marks 20 years of ACPD's LGBTQ+ Liaison Team serving as a bridge between law enforcement and the LGBTQ+ community and beyond. Since its creation in 2006, the team has worked to foster trust, promote inclusivity and strengthen relationships through advocacy, outreach, education and support.

ACPD LGBTQ+ Liaison Team officers and allies want to ensure all community members feel seen, heard and supported.

Reach the LGBTQ+ Liaison Team at ACPDLGBTQ@arlingtonva.us.

Arlington Recognized for LGBTQ+ Protections

Arlington received national recognition again from the Human Rights Campaign for its high standards of inclusiveness and protections of LGBTQ+ community members in 2025. Arlington scored 100 points out of 100 on the 14th annual Municipal Equality Index (MEI) for its laws barring discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on sexual orientation, for providing LGBTQ+ protections and transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits for County employees and for its leadership on equality and commitment to ensuring LGBTQ+ constituents are included in service programs. Arlington earned top scores for its law enforcement efforts, including the reporting of hate crimes and engaging with LGBTQ+ communities in a thoughtful and respectful way. ACPD also earned high remarks for including a LGBTQ+ Liaison Team as part of our ongoing commitment to community policing, a philosophy and practice that seeks to involve everyone in the safety and welfare of our community.

Fatal Hit and Run Crash on Columbia Pike

The Arlington County Police Department is seeking the public's assistance identifying the vehicle involved in a fatal hit-and-run crash along Columbia Pike during the early morning hours of June 8, 2026. The vehicle is believed to be a 2016-2019 model Honda CRV, Obsidian Blue Pearl (dark blue) in color and missing the vehicle's front grill.

At approximately 1:22 a.m., police were dispatched to Columbia Pike at S. Thomas Street for the report of a crash involving a pedestrian. Upon arrival, the pedestrian was located unresponsive in the roadway suffering serious injuries. She was pronounced deceased on scene. The driver of the striking

vehicle, a dark colored SUV, fled the scene following the crash.

Police identified what woman killed as Stephanie Coulter, 55, of Arlington. The investigation into the crash is ongoing.

Anyone with information about the suspect vehicle is asked to contact Detective D. Gilmore at 703-228-4049 or dgilmore@arlingtonva.us.

You can report tips anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477).

The Arlington County Police Department is investigating a fatal hit-and-run crash that occurred during the early morning hours of June 8, 2026.

Arlington police say the vehicle in the fatal hit and run on June 8 is believed to be a 2016-2019 model Honda CRV, Obsidian Blue Pearl (dark blue) in color and missing the vehicle's front grill.



Manufacturer photo (NOT actual vehicle)

Arlington Launches New Parking Ticket Payment System

Arlington County is partnering with Passport Labs, Inc. to launch a new parking ticket payment and processing system, which began June 10, 2026. The upgraded system includes a new online portal, making it easier for community members and visitors to view, pay and resolve their parking tickets in one place.

New Features

New Web Design: The parking ticket payment portal has a new look. You can scan the QR code on your ticket to launch the RMC Parking Ticket Payment and Processing Portal or view all available payment options on the ACPD website.

Beginning Wednesday, June 10, 2026, all parking tickets issued by Arlington County,

including those received prior to the launch of the new system, will be available in the new RMC Parking Ticket Payment and Processing Portal to view, pay or appeal through court.

Updated Online Experience: We've introduced a more user-friendly online portal, making it easier and faster to view, pay and appeal parking tickets. Our upgraded platform makes online services for parking tickets more accessible on any device, whether you're using a phone, tablet, or computer. Parking tickets can also be paid for over the phone, or by mailing a check. Information on payment methods is available on the ticket payment webpage.

Residential Permit Parking Program Upgrades Coming

Electronic Permits: Beginning in July 2026, the County's Residential Permit Parking program, including visitor passes, will shift to an all-electronic pass system from Passport Labs, Inc. This year's renewal for the RPP program will be staggered by zone groups rather than one date for all customers. For more information on how electronic permits work, benefits of the upgrade, and the schedule for implementation, please visit the program page.

Additional Resources

The Arlington County Police Department is committed to the fair and equitable enforcement of parking regulations and the facilitation of adequate parking availability for community members and businesses on

public property in Arlington County. For additional parking enforcement and parking ticket payment information, visit our website, read answers to frequently asked questions and review information on parking ticket payment and dispute options.

Program Contacts

Contact Customer Service at 571-200-9782.

For general transportation safety questions, contact the Arlington County Police Department's Special Operations Section at 703-228-4141.

For program information regarding Residential Permit Parking, contact the Department of Environmental Services at 703-228-3344 or park@arlingtonva.us

Fresh From the Arlington Farm to Your Front Door

FROM PAGE 3

“It’s fun to watch him fly up. Once we discovered this, we labeled all the others with Toy Story characters. It’s fun; we just say ‘it’s time to harvest Buzz.’”

Bale points to the 2s sticker labels on the bottom row of lettuce containers. “This means they will be ready the second week of summer. We are now in the 13th week of spring.”

Area 2 Farms is a CSA which means that customers pay in advance for a subscription box of produce. Area 2 Farms offers four packages at different prices: 4-week, 10-week or year-long. Each week’s delivery will contain an herb, a lettuce, a micro green and a root vegetable.

Bale says one of the customer favorites, and hers as well, is the purple shamrock. She picks it up. “You can eat the whole thing including the stem which has most of the flavor. You could never buy this in the grocery store. Most of the fresh produce people buy comes from a long way and isn’t very tasty once it arrives in the store.” She says, “I like to crush the purple shamrock and put it on ice cream.” But her very favorite of everything they grow at the farm is the wasabi arugula or maybe the rainbow chard. “Hard to choose.”

In any one week the CSA is growing 180 different varieties of plants at one time. This week’s harvest included rainbow chard mix, pea shoots, chives, cucumbers and garlic scapes along with recipes for pea shoots including potato salad.

Along with the familiar varieties there are a number of unusual plants that are fun to try, and in the front of the warehouse is a research area. “This plant is the buzz button which originated in Brazil. It is crazy; they call it the toothache plant because it numbs your mouth.” Sure enough—chew it, swirl it around your mouth. You begin to salivate, and your mouth goes numb.

Connor Stevenson is snipping a tray of dill plants. Stevenson says he is a college student spending his third year as a summer intern. “I am a horticulture major, and I’ve learned more here than in some of my classes.” He says it takes him 5-10 minutes to cut an entire tray of plants. “These are pretty easy.”

After the plants have been harvested, the soil is sifted and the large particles come out. Then it is composted into large bags and used again.

Renee is a local customer who says “to have a farm close to my

SEE FRESH FROM, PAGE 13

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE
Area 2 Farms is a local Arlington farm located in a warehouse on S. Oxford Street.



Jackie Stanton, a farmer at Area 2 Farms.



Area 2 Farms uses a patented process using rotating trays for indoor plants to simulate a 24-hour cycle.



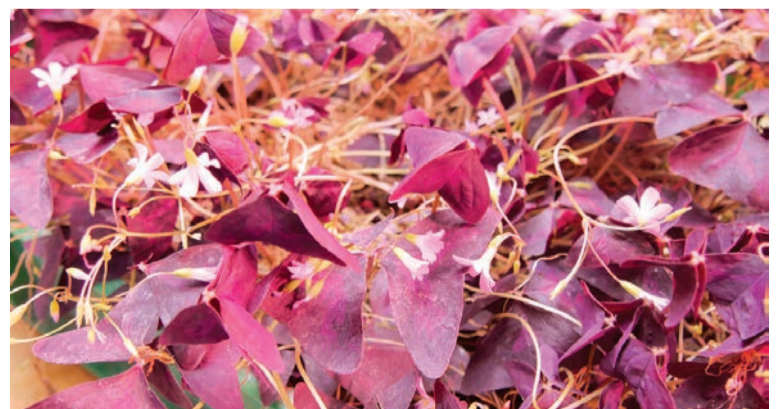
Structures are identified by Toy Story characters “which makes it fun.”



Connor Stevenson, a summer intern, snips dill plants from the trays at the farm.



Merissa Bale composts the soil after plants have been harvested for weekly customers.



The unusual purple shamrock plant is a customer and staff favorite.

Opposition to Construction of ‘Triumphal Arch’

To the National Park Service:

We, the undersigned members of the Virginia General Assembly, write to register our firm opposition to the proposed construction of a 250-foot “Triumphal Arch” at Memorial Circle, at the western terminus of the Arlington Memorial Bridge within the George Washington Memorial Parkway. We submit these comments during the public comment period for the Assessment of Effects prepared under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 54 U.S.C. § 306108. We respectfully urge the National Park Service (“NPS”) to find that the undertaking would have an adverse effect on historic properties and to decline to approve it.

Our districts encompass the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, Manassas, and Manassas Park, and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William — the Northern Virginia communities most directly affected by this project.

The arch would be erected on Virginia soil, at the gateway between the Commonwealth and the District of Columbia, on land that our constituents traverse daily and that frames the approach to Arlington National Cemetery. We have a direct and substantial interest in this undertaking, and our constituents deserve to have their voices heard.

The Commonwealth’s interest in this decision is not abstract. The proposed structure sits within Virginia, within the viewshed of Arlington House and Arlington National Cemetery, and astride one of the most heavily used commuter corridors connecting our region to the federal capital. For the reasons set forth below, the proposal is incompatible with the historic character of this landscape, with sound transportation and public-safety planning, and with the deliberative process the National Historic Preservation Act requires.

Grounds for Opposition

1. The arch would destroy the historic axis the Memorial Bridge was built to create. The Arlington Memorial Bridge, completed in 1932 and conceived under the McMillan Plan, was deliberately designed with a low, horizontal profile to preserve an uninterrupted ceremonial sightline from the Lincoln Memorial across the Potomac to Arlington House and Arlington National Cemetery. That

axis, symbolizing national reunification after the Civil War, is among the most significant designed vistas in the United States. A 250-foot monument placed at Memorial Circle would sever this protected viewshed and permanently alter a landscape composition that has been carefully safeguarded for nearly a century.

2. The scale of the structure is incompatible with its surroundings. At 250 feet, the proposed arch would stand more than two and a half times the height of the Lincoln Memorial, which rises 99 feet, and would dominate every historic property in the Area of Potential Effects, including the Memorial Avenue Corridor and the National Mall. A structure of this magnitude does not complement the commemorative landscape; it overwhelms and diminishes its significance.

3. The proposal disrespects the solemn gateway to Arlington National Cemetery. Memorial Avenue and Memorial Circle form the dignified, contemplative approach to our nation’s preeminent military cemetery, where service members and their families come to mourn and to honor the fallen. It erases the perpetual reminder as viewed from our nation’s capital of those who sacrificed to achieve and preserve its greatness. Imposing a monumental arch at this threshold intrudes upon ground that should remain reserved for solemn remembrance, and it does so over the documented objections of veterans and Gold Star families.

4. The project threatens an already strained regional transportation corridor.

Memorial Circle and the George Washington Memorial Parkway carry an enormous volume of daily commuter and commercial traffic between Northern Virginia and the District. The associated plaza development, utility work, circulation changes, and construction staging identified in the planning materials would degrade mobility on this critical corridor during construction and, through permanent changes to traffic circulation, for years to come. The effects would fall disproportionately on our constituents.

5. The location raises serious aviation-safety questions. The site lies beneath the complex and heavily trafficked approach and departure paths serving Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. The introduction of a 250-foot structure into this airspace warrants

rigorous, independent review of its impact on aviation safety before any approval is contemplated. These concerns should be fully resolved, not deferred.

6. The Section 106 process here has been truncated and inadequate. A public comment window of roughly ten days is plainly insufficient for a federal undertaking of this magnitude and sensitivity. Meaningful consultation under Section 106 requires good-faith engagement with the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer (the Department of Historic Resources), with affected local governments, and with the public. We urge NPS to extend the comment period, to formally invite the affected Virginia localities and the Commonwealth as consulting parties, and to ensure that the Assessment of Effects fully evaluates the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on all historic properties within the Area of Potential Effects.

7. The proposal circumvents the longstanding planning process that governs National Park Service land in the capital. Since 1986, the Commemorative Works Act has required that any memorial placed on federal land in the District of Columbia and its environs proceed through a deliberate, multi-step framework, beginning with specific authorization by Congress and proceeding through site and design review by the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, in consultation with the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission. The National Park Service and NCPC have long administered this review as a structured, multi-stage process, with heightened scrutiny for sites in the most sensitive areas of the monumental core. That framework exists precisely to prevent ad hoc, individually driven projects from being imposed on the nation’s ceremonial landscape. Here, the undertaking has been advanced on an extraordinarily compressed schedule — without the congressional authorization the Act requires and ahead of the completed environmental, historic-preservation, and design reviews the law contemplates. Substituting executive expediency for this established process disregards both the governing law and the careful, century-long planning tradition, rooted in the L’Enfant and McMillan Plans, that has shaped this landscape.

8. The undertaking is an im-

proper use of protected public parkland. This land is held in trust by NPS for the benefit of the public and for the preservation of nationally significant resources. Permanently encumbering it with a monument of this scale — along with the attendant maintenance, security, and infrastructure obligations borne by taxpayers — is contrary to the stewardship responsibilities that govern these grounds.

For the foregoing reasons, the undersigned respectfully request that the National Park Service: (1) find that the proposed undertaking would have an adverse effect on historic properties; (2) decline to approve construction of the Triumphal Arch at Memorial Circle; (3) extend the public comment period and conduct full and meaningful Section 106 consultation that includes the Commonwealth of Virginia and the affected Northern Virginia localities as consulting parties; and (4) give genuine consideration to a no-build alternative and to less intrusive means of commemorating the nation’s 250th anniversary that do not compromise this irreplaceable historic landscape.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and ask that this letter be made part of the administrative record for this undertaking.

Respectfully submitted,

Sen. Scott A. Surovell,
Majority Leader Senate
of Virginia, 34th District

Sen. Barbara A. Favola
Senate of Virginia, 40th District

Del. Adele Y. McClure
Virginia House of
Delegates, 2nd District

Sen. Jeremy S. McPike,
Sen. Danica Roem,

Sen. Russet W. Perry,
Sen. Kannan Srinivasan,

Sen. Jennifer D. Carroll Foy,
Sen. David W. Marsden,

Sen. Stella G. Pekarsky,
Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim,

Sen. Jennifer B. Boysko
Sen. Elizabeth

B. Bennett-Parker,
Del. Patrick A. Hope,

Del. Kirk McPike,
Del. Rip C. Sullivan,

Del. Gretchen M. Bulova,
Del. Holly M. Seibold,

Del. Marcus B. Simon,
Del. Vivian E. Watts,

Del. Paul E. Krizek,
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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 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.

FRIDAY/JUNE 19 Juneteenth Celebration. 4-7 p.m.



Pride with the Police will be held Thursday, June 25, 2026 at Freddie's Beach Bar and Restaurant in Arlington.

At Wakefield High School, 1325 Dinwiddie Street, Arlington. This free, family-friendly event honors Juneteenth and celebrates freedom, resilience, culture, and community. Attendees can enjoy live music, food trucks, cultural performances, local artisans, family activities, and more.

SATURDAY/JUNE 20 Pack 275,000 Meals for Children.

At Kenmore Middle School, 200 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington. Grace Community Church is inviting the Arlington community to join a large-scale volunteer effort to help pack 275,000 shelf-stable meals for children and families in the Dominican Republic. The event, hosted in partnership with Kids Around the World, will take place at Kenmore Middle School and is open to volunteers of all ages. The meal pack is part of Grace Community Church's ongoing commitment to serving local and global communities through its annual "Do Good" initiative.

Shifts Available:
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Registration: trygrace.org/DoGood-Global

TUESDAY/JUNE 23 Arlington County Board Candidate

Forum. 5:30-7 p.m. At VHC Health - John T. Hazel Center - Auditorium, 1701 N George Mason Drive, Arlington. This engaging, business-focused event will bring together all declared candidates running for the Arlington County Board seat up for election this November for a moderated discussion on issues impacting Arlington's business community and economic future.

THURSDAY/JUNE 25

Pride with the Police Event. 5-7 p.m. At Freddie's Beach Bar and Restaurant, 555 23rd Street, South, Arlington. Members of the Arlington LGBTQ+ community are invited to attend Pride with the Police to celebrate the progression of trust and understanding between law enforcement and the LGBTQ+ community while reaffirming our commitment to working in partnership with the community to enhance safety, mutual respect and equality.

TUESDAY/JUNE 30

1776 Movie Night. 7 p.m. At Ballston Regal Theater, Arlington. As part of Arlington's VA250 commemoration activities, the Arlington Historical Society is partnering with the Ballston Quarter to offer Arlingtonians the opportunity to see the movie 1776 in a theater. The one-time-

only event was made possible by a generous donation from the Michel family and by support from the Silver Diner.

The event will take place at the Ballston Regal Theater on Tuesday evening, June 30, at 7 PM. The theater only holds 200 seats, so space will be limited. Tickets will cost \$10. Purchase your tickets now by ordering online. Visit <https://arllhist.org/1776-movie/>

SATURDAY/JULY 11

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 July's show is the hilarious Jenny Cavallero. Visit capitalcityshowcase.com.

TUESDAY/AUG. 4

National Night Out. 5 to 8 p.m. The Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) invites Arlington neighborhoods, businesses and organizations to join communities across the country in celebrating National Night Out (NNO) by hosting events on Tuesday, August 4, 2026 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. NNO, held annually on the first Tuesday in August, is a nationwide event dedicated to strengthening police-community partnerships and fostering neighborhood connections. Join law enforcement, public safety personnel and local government officials at cookouts, block parties, ice cream socials and other gatherings across the County for an evening focused on community engagement, positive relationship-building and fun for all ages!

SATURDAY/AUG. 8

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 August's show is the hilarious Dom Grayer. Visit capitalcityshowcase.com.

Fresh From the Arlington Farm to Your Front Door

FROM PAGE 11

urban home aligns with my personal mission of eating what's in season and eating from food that's grown closer to me." But she adds they are good neighbors because they think of our community. "As lead of the Highlands Urban Garden at Virginia Highlands Park, we have a farm to farm relationship with Area2. Last year we spoke with Area2 about improving the soil health in our raised beds. In November we started using Area2 soil, a byproduct of their farm. All the produce grown in our demonstration garden is given to our local food pantries. In May, we have delivered over 60 pounds of

fresh locally grown produce to our neighbors in need thanks to our volunteers and the great soil from Area 2."

Jackie Stanton, also a Farmer at Area 2 Farms, says she also likes the purple shamrock which she muddles to make lemonade with lemon juice and a little honey. "But I grew up eating turnips and my all time favorite is the special hakirei turnip we grow; it's sweet, crunchy and has a little kick. It's wonderful."

She said, "We just grow food here by neighbors for neighbors. It is because food is normally so far away from you which is a disadvantage for healthy food, fla-

vor and variety available. We are currently so disconnected from our food. Here food is just hours away." She says the current customer base for Area 2 Farms is 225 customers who subscribe to one of the three packages.

Stanton says they are nearing capacity, and a second farm is planned to start up in Fairfax by the end of summer. Area 2 Farms offers public tours for school groups, community organizations or interested individuals on specified Sundays from 1-2 pm. The schedule and sign up are available on the website. <https://www.area2farms.com/farm>



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

The plants are irrigated as they rotate through tier 3.

Employment

Employment

Legacy Investing Management LLC - Capital Markets Associate - Specialized Deployments Legacy Investing Management LLC has F/T Capital Markets Associate - Specialized Deployments position in Arlington, VA. Duties: Guide analysts to build financial models for specialized tech real estate developments; Translate specialized tech data into investment metrics including technical information related to data centers; Track deal progress against milestones; Evaluate and compare term sheet economics; Maintain financial models that reflect recent diligence findings & current capital plan; Coordinate responses to diligence requests from debt & equity partners; Work closely with debt/equity counterparts to understand investment process & underwriting methodologies; Provide fundraising support with specialized knowledge of data centers & automated warehouses. Requires: Bachelor's degree in Economics, Finance, Mathematics or related + 2 yrs exp. Email resume to resumes@legacyinvesting.com, Incl Job Code LLP-CMASD

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NEWS

A Priest, A Gardener — Father Jim Can be Both

FROM PAGE 4

photographer for the Missionhurst Magazine. “It was 8 publications a year with a circulation of 85,000 so I went to Syracuse to get a masters degree in journalism.”

He later served as secretary general of the congregation in Rome which is the world headquarters. “But I wanted to do parish work. Most of us want to do mission work.” He got his wish when he was assigned to the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, a predominantly Spanish speaking area.

Now Father Jim is a retired priest and rotates offering daily mass to a small group of parishioners and the resident staff at Missionhurst. He also serves local parishes who need interim assistance.

Missionhurst CICM was founded in 1862 by a Belgian priest for the evangelization of China. Today it has grown to almost a thousand priests who serve the poorest and most neglected in the United States, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Missionhurst in Arlington is the US headquarters and a retirement home for priests.

PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Father Jim’s green thumb has Easter lilies unexpectedly blooming around the garden in June.



A Life of Reinvention

FROM PAGE 9

“I had to lick my wounds and get up,” she said.

A lower-paying position with a sports marketing firm which introduced her to work with companies including Coca-Cola, Campbell Soup and Kellogg’s. Later came positions in higher education, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Washington National Opera, and eventually the Smithsonian, where she helped lead the transition of Smithsonian Associates programs to online audiences

Through every reinvention, she said, curiosity and optimism carried her forward.

“I believe in people until they disappoint me,” she said.

Travel became another passion. She has explored much of the world and counts Botswana

among her favorite destinations.

Antarctica remains on her bucket list. Lately, she has become fascinated by artificial intelligence and enjoys learning about emerging technologies.

At The Jefferson in Arlington, where she lives, she stays active through the politics and issues group, an Italian conversation club, trivia competitions, gardening and service on the residents’ marketing committee.

Retirement, she discovered, did not bring endless free time.

“I thought I would have more,” she said. “But somehow I don’t.”

Perhaps the biggest adjustment came five months ago, when her husband of 59 years passed away.

Now 79, she finds herself learning how to think not for two people, but for one.

“It’s an adjustment,” she said

quietly.

Still, she remains grateful for her two sons, her three grandchildren and a daughter-in-law she describes as being like a daughter.

Asked what she hopes younger generations understand, her answer comes without hesitation.

“Don’t wait for things to come to you,” she said. “Go after what you want. Work hard. Earn it. That’s where the satisfaction comes.”

And perhaps that spirit, the willingness to say yes to opportunity, to begin again, and to remain curious about the world is what carried a young bride from the Adriatic coast to a life rich with family, friendship and new chapters still waiting to be written.

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

55+ (senior adults) weight room hours, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Langston-Brown Community Center, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m. – 11 a.m., Madison Community Center. For more information, call 703-228-4771. A 55+ Gold Pass is required.

Line dance practice led by volunteers, open to intermediate level dancers, Mondays, 10 a.m. and Thursdays, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Walk Fit, a free, weekly walking program hosted by VHC Health offers a 45-minute walk on the indoor track at Lubber Run 55+ Center plus a 15-minute guided stretch, Thursdays, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Open to all ages; no 55+ Pass required. Drop-in.

55+ Travel group will enjoy a 45-minute guided tour of the U.S. Capitol with a 13-minute orientation film, dine at the Capitol Visitor Center, Thursday, June 18. Cost \$14, Arlington resident; \$17, non-resident. Registration # 902606-04.

Her Badge, Her Story; join Pamela Chisholm to hear her powerful journey as a Black woman in law enforcement, Thursday, June 18, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-21.

Fireflies of Virginia, join Arlington Park Naturalist Gabby Hrycyshyn to learn about 20 species of fireflies and how to protect them, Thursday, June 18, 3 p.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-26.

The Land of the Pharaohs, join 55+ volunteer Jim Mason as he discusses his 14 day trip to Egypt, Thursday, June 18, 11 a.m., virtually. Includes an eight-day cruise on the Nile River. Registration # 914400-31.

55+ Travel group will attend a matinee performance of "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" at The Kennedy Center, Saturday, June 20. Cost \$141, Arlington resident; \$162, non-resident. Registration # 902606-05.

Normal aging versus dementia, presented by Nina Davis, Insight Memory Care Center, Monday, June 22, 1 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914500-03.

AI and Fraud: is it a scam? Protect yourself from scams and frauds, Monday, June 22, 10 a.m., virtual and Walter Reed 55+ Center. Presented by representatives from Arlington County Government, Virginia Senior Medicare Patrol and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Register by calling 703-228-1725 or email MedicareHelp@arlingtonva.us.

Identifying Elder Abuse, learn how to recognize signs of elder abuse and how screening works, presented by RAFT outreach coordinator Sydney Palinkas, Tuesday, June 23, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914500-04.

Summer picnic ideas presented by Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteers, Tuesday, June 23, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914501-05.

Safety in the neighborhood discussed by Corporal Skelton from the Arlington County Police Department, Tuesday, June 23, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Learn how to avoid being a victim of crimes and scams and how to keep yourself safe. Registration # 914400-11.

The Legacy of Pride, join Ashley Blowe with Project PEACE for an interactive Pride Month program exploring LGBTQ+ history, Tuesday, June 23, 2 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-17.

Musical Bingo, Wednesday, June 24, 4 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. A fun twist on the classic game led by 55+ Center Director Monah Farah. Registration # 914600-13.

Open office hours with Lubber Run 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez, Wednesday, June 24, 1:30 p.m. Share ideas, ask questions, discuss programs. Registration # 914801-09.

Elder Law services available discussed by Benjamin L. Apt, attorney with Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Thursday, June 25, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914400-12.

Parasitic and epiphytic plants, program presented by Arlington Park Naturalist Nayelai Arrellano, Thursday, June 25, 3 p.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-27.

Armchair travel with 55+ Travel Assistant Brittany Martin as she describes the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, Thursday, June 25, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-32.

Vigilance against cybercrimes, join AARP volunteer John Caskey to learn how to stay safe in public and at home when using social media, shopping and banking online, Thursday, June 25, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 914403-02.

Summer party at Walter Reed 55+ Center, Friday, June 26, 1 p.m. Enjoy ice cream sundaes, games and fun, Registration # 914899-03.

Movie matinee, "I'm Still Here" (2024) (PG-13), Friday, June 26, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 914804-08.

Burton Won't Be "Worsen"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three and a half years since his birth, Burton is finally learnin'. After two-plus months of misbehavior we finally hired a dog trainer to get us and Burton back on track. Certainly, after three dogs, we knew not just the basics, but the intermediates, maybe even some of the advanced. Nevertheless, his obstinate behavior made it quite clear that Burton was in control. However, since he would "Sit," usually "Stay," sometimes "Come," once-in-a-while "Shake" non-stop with alternating front paws, and walk on a leash (but rarely "Heal,"), we thought we were in control. We weren't. He was. Although we didn't realize until it manifested in the following behaviors: he did struggle with "Down," regularly jumped and growled at moving cars and always was a "nosy parker," needing to check out everything he saw or heard in our neighborhood; it all seemed relatively normal/familiar - to us; growing pains you might say. But worst of all, and what precipitated our call/need for help; while returning home from any and all walks, Burton would stop and fall/lay down (it's called the "pancake flop" - as seen on the internet) and refuse to get up until he was good and ready. It was not good and he was never ready. Despite our coaxing and/or pulling on his leash/collar - while encouraging (I use that term loosely, yelling actually), Burton would just give me the side eye while continuing to lay on his side, barely moving a muscle. Walking our way home, Burton would flop at least a half-a-dozen times with each flop causing a 5 - 15-minute delay. And what was his absolute worst behavior, once we finally made it back to our house, Burton would refuse to go inside leading to an inevitable tug-of-war which we would lose and resulted in yet another delay. As such, walks with Burton became increasingly frustrating and terribly unpleasant. We were at a loss as to how to survive the ordeal.

As it happened, I needed to pick up some syringes at the vet's office for one of our cats, Andrew, who needs daily steroid injections. After a 10-minute or so drive, I arrived, parked my car and walked inside. As I was standing against their front counter, waiting my turn, I noticed a business card holder in plain sight to my left. I picked up one of the cards. It was for a dog trainer - "35 years' experience." That's a coincidence, I thought, we need a dog trainer, desperately, so I put a card in my wallet to take home and discuss with Dina.

Having already considered changing Burton's dog collar and leash, getting him a full exam, visiting a dog behaviorist and even consulting a pet psychic - which we did over the phone, we decided it made sense to call this dog trainer and hear what he had to say. When we spoke, he sounded very reasonable as he laid out his methodology/philosophy: "Dogs are a pack animal and need a leader." And from what dog misbehavior I was describing, Burton, he said, was "definitely disrespecting me/my authority and treating me like just another member of the pack." Not the kind of relationship I should be having with me dog, apparently. Since we agreed with most of what he was saying, we decided to hire him/give him a chance to change our pack dynamic.

It's been five weeks since the training visits began. Burton's behavior has done an about face. Our joke has been: "who stole our dog and what happened to Burton?" With the help of an "e-collar," and transmitter, Burton has not only turned the corner, he's on the straight and narrow to leash-less living. He is a completely different - and now responsive/obedient, dog. It's amazing. His behavior has evolved from recalcitrant to compliant almost. No more "pancake flops," no more stick eating, no more rock swallowing, no more grass grazing and no more battles to get him in the house. He has become an amazing and wonderful dog. And he comes running when we call his name. Unbelievable. From our perspective, he looks happy. Smiling almost. He has been transformed and per his training, so have we.

Now if I can only find an e-collar for my wife.

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

Arlington Voters Head Back To The Ballot Box

FROM PAGE 7

five-way race among Mo Seifeldin, Michael Christian Duffin, incumbent Donald S. Beyer Jr., Adam M. Dunigan and Lorena Thorne Bruner. The Republican Party is not holding a primary for this seat.

❖ U.S. Senate (Statewide): The Republican ballot features a three-way statewide race among Bert Mizusawa, Kim Farington and David E. Williams. The Democratic Party is not holding a primary for this seat.

❖ Arlington County Board (Local At-Large): The Democratic ballot features an at-large primary race among James A. DeVita, incumbent Matthew D. "Matt" de Ferranti and Julie E. Farnam. Arlington County will use ranked-choice voting for this local seat.

Voting by Mail

Any registered voter can request a mail ballot without an excuse, but the application must specify a chosen party ballot for processing. The deadline to request a mail bal-

lot for the Aug. 4 primary is 5 p.m. July 24.

Mail returns must be postmarked by Aug. 4 and received by noon on Aug. 7. Drop boxes are available at any early voting site during voting hours or at polling places on Election Day before 7 p.m.

Voters can learn more about requesting a mail ballot, tracking its status, or viewing a full list of community drop boxes by visiting the official Arlington County voting website at <https://vote.arlingtonva.gov>.

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.

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.

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