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The Arlington Connection

Customers learn about wines during the grand opening of Total Wine & More on Nov. 10 at Potomac Yard.

Sip, Sip, Hooray!

WINE, PAGE 6

Legacy Supports Cats for Seniors

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Safe Holiday Entertaining

WELLBEING, PAGE 4

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AR PETS

Pets Can Provide Joy and Purpose for Seniors

Combating loneliness and transforming lives through pet ownership.

BY ASHLEY SIMPSON
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

There are few things worse than suffering through the constant pangs of loneliness — feeling like you don't belong anywhere, and as though you lack purpose.

Loneliness creeps in (and tends to stick around) when you don't have meaningful social connections. For a sense of fulfillment, all humans need deep relationships with friends and loved ones who we regularly spend time with. We need to be a part of something bigger, to contribute to lives beyond our own.

It's not just depression and anxiety that accompanies this isolation. According to multiple sources, chronic loneliness increases the chances of cognitive decline, strokes, obesity, and other life-threatening conditions and diseases.

Feeling lonely can impact people of all ages, but it is more common for seniors to struggle with ongoing loneliness.

"Older adults are at increased risk for loneliness and social isolation because they are more likely to face factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Not to mention those big life changes like retirement and children becoming independent adults who just don't need their parents like they used to.

Pets Can Provide Joy and Purpose for Seniors

In fact, one very effective antidote comes with four legs, fur and, most importantly, unconditional love.

It's true: pets are proven to reduce loneliness and depression, as well as a whole host of other issues. It's difficult to feel lonely when you have a four-legged family member who is always excited to see you, who forces you out of your bubble of isolation, and who depends on you for everything.

Recognizing the life-changing impact of pets on seniors, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) formed a relationship with Culpepper Garden, a nonprofit Arlington retirement community that provides affordable housing and other services to lower income seniors. As a result of this connection over the last five (plus) years, the AWLA has given a number of Culpepper Garden residents the

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Julia Mignosi prepares to bring home Sirena, who appears to be playing peek-a-boo from her kennel at the AWLA facility.

opportunity to own pets, and without the burden of associated costs.

"We developed this relationship with Culpepper because it's the largest local low-income retirement community in Arlington, and unlike many other senior living places, they allow pets," Jennifer Davies, AWLA's Community Care Coordinator, said. "It's been such an honor to make pet ownership possible for so many people, and to support them through the whole process of it — regardless of their income, ability, or age."

Consider Culpepper Garden resident Julia Mignosi. Her life recently changed when she adopted Sirena, an AWLA cat with whom she felt an instant connection.

Knowing that Mignosi and Sirena were a match, the AWLA facilitated their permanent union, all while waiving the standard adoption fees.

Now, Sirena is a full-time resident of Mignosi's apartment, where she has already settled in as the apple of her new owner's eye.

"We were able to work with Culpepper's director so that Julia was able to adopt this calico cat she really liked," Davies said. "It's hard to describe just how amazing it felt to be a part of that — causing meaningful change in her life just by waiving pet fees."

Mignosi is grateful to the AWLA



Longtime Arlington resident Gladys Shulaw and Brownie, adopted from AWLA. Shulaw, who was 101 when she died, bequeathed money to AWLA for the establishment of a fund to support the adoption, care, and keeping of cats.

for making it possible for her to provide a forever home for Sirena — a companion who needs Mignosi's love and support. At the same time, Mignosi is already fulfilled by having Sirena in her life.

"The AWLA is so great, placing cats with folks like me who are cat lovers," Mignosi said. "And we are doing great. Sirena was very shy at first, but she seems to feel right at home now. She is a wonderful cat



An excited Julia Mignosi taking the AWLA's transportation service back to her home at Culpepper Garden along with Sirena and a bag full of cat food and supplies.

grams, which will give Mignosi (as well as other pet owners who need a little help) practically everything she needs to keep Sirena as comfortable and healthy as possible.

These AWLA programs provide the community with a full spectrum of free and low-cost resources and services for pet owners who need them — including Culpepper Garden residents.

Services and resources include: a pet pantry that offers free pet food and supplies; training and education programs; mobile veterinarian offices; transportation services for people who need to get their animals to in-office vet appointments, and more.

"We want our community to know that we support people of all ages, at any stage of life," Chelsea Jones, AWLA Senior Communications Specialist, said. "This is especially important for senior citizens, who are more likely to be isolated from their families, and who probably have more time to spend with an animal."

We are all about making sure that seniors can keep their pets, too. ... We know that age is just a number."

Making dreams come true specifically for cats and "cat lovers" like Julia Mignosi.

Mignosi can thank the AWLA for

SEE PETS CAN, PAGE 11

ARLINGTON CONNECTION ♦ DECEMBER 1-7, 2021 ♦ 3

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AWLA ARLINGTON



If you welcome only people who are vaccinated to the event, be sure to say so up front in the invite or general email invitation, suggests Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D.

Safe and Conflict-free Holiday Cheer

Celebrating the holidays with both vaccinated and unvaccinated friends and family.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Egg nog, yule logs and champagne cocktails are making a reappearance this year as in-person holiday parties resume and virtual gatherings go into hiatus. Joining these celebrations might be guests who have not been fully vaccinated. Asking for proof of vaccination at the door does little to create a festive mood, but celebrating safely is a priority this season.

"There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect your health, said Kurt Larrick, assistant director, Arlington County Department of Human Services. "The best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible."

From keeping a space well ventilated to holding celebrations outdoors if the weather permits, Larrick says that it is possible to maintain a semblance of safety at celebrations where there are some in attendance that have not been fully vaccinated.

Taking layered precautions provides an extra level of safety, said Lucy H. Caldwell, Director of Communications for the Fairfax County Health Department. "Including wearing a mask indoors when you're around those not in your household. ... Getting booster shots if appropriate and staying home if you're sick," added Caldwell.

Hosting smaller gatherings this year can also help minimize the risk of COVID-19.

"You might choose to wear a mask, regardless of the level of transmission, if a member of your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated," he said. "If you are gathering with a group of people from multiple households and potentially from different parts of the country, you could consider additional precautions like taking COVID-19 tests ... in advance of gathering to further reduce risk." Having conversations to discuss whether guests have been vaccinated can be fraught with apprehension

and discomfort. "Establish contact with all guests in a general way, and say you are looking forward to them joining you for a holiday party, dinner, or open house," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Marymount University. "In that general invitation, like an Evite or group email, state something like, 'Sadly, we are not out of the woods yet. Everyone in our home is expected to be vaccinated.'"

Be clear about your decision and avoid defending or debating your stance on vaccinations. "Issue the invitation as soon as possible, giving people time to respond or at least consider your requirement," said Gulyn. "In other words, no last-minute battles." "It's important to make sure unvaccinated friends or family don't feel like they have a scarlet letter on their chest," added Allyson Bohlke, LCSW, a Bethesda therapist who specializes in conflict resolution. "Show compassion. You don't want anyone to feel judged or shunned. Remember that they have the right to make their own choices and those choices should be respected."

Treating all guests as equals will help quell any dissonance between those who've been vaccinated and those who have not. "At an office party, for example, you can take everyone's temperature before they enter the venue," said Bohlke. "If it's

financially and logistically doable, you can give everyone a rapid test before they enter. Regardless of their vaccination status, asking those who are positive or have a temperature to leave is perfectly reasonable."

Include both vaccinated and unvaccinated guests in a brainstorming session to determine the best way to address the safety concerns, suggests McLean family therapist Angela Lott. "This is especially true for office parties. Ask attendees to offer suggestions on addressing the issues of those who are vaccinated and are uncomfortable around those who aren't, and vice-versa" she said. "It's easy to get a buy-in from all guests if they feel like they have some input into the decision."

"The best way to minimize COVID-19 risk and keep your family and friends safer is to get vaccinated if you're eligible."

—Kurt Larrick, assistant director,
Arlington County
Department of Human Services

December Is Puppy Mill Awareness Month

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes December as "Puppy Mill Awareness" month. Legislation, enacted unanimously in 2020, sought to call attention to continuing problems in the pet trade that often bring dogs which are sick, underdeveloped, have genetic deformities or behavioral defects, including poor socialization, to the Commonwealth's consumers through puppy stores or on-line sales.

In designating Puppy Mill Awareness Month, legislators resolved that "Virginians be encouraged to observe the month by supporting efforts to raise awareness of puppy mills, support rescue organizations, and promote responsible dog breeding and responsible pet adoption."

Del. Kaye Kory, (D- 38), co-chair of the General Assembly animal caucus, indicates that Virginia's animal laws have mostly kept puppy mills from operating in the Commonwealth. Puppy mill dogs bred in other states often find their way for sale here in puppy stores and on-line.



Delegate Kaye Kory (D-38th) chairs the Virginia General Assembly Animal Welfare caucus and has sponsored several bills to protect animals.

What is a 'puppy mill'? Kory explains, "It's commonly understood that puppy mills are facilities that breed many dogs at the lowest expense and dogs aren't treated well; are even treated cruelly. Some conditions are such that it hurts your heart and turns your stomach. Banning puppy mills is the way this country should go."

Where do puppy stores get their dogs? Kory says, "In the past, this has been largely puppy mills ... That was the reason legislation we've worked on required certification of health; to protect dogs and owners, and detect puppy mills."

Kory advises that it's good to avoid puppy mills. She adds that as long as there is consumer demand, it will perpetuate puppy mills. She suggests "instead to adopt rescue dogs and cats, or seek out reputable small breeders ... but please visit rescues more than once before you purchase."



Dogs at a Virginia puppy store sourced from out of state puppy mills before seizure by animal control for medication violations (May 2019)

PHOTOS BY
SUSAN LAUME

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.

FILL THE CRUISER HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE EVENTS

Help spread joy this holiday season by donating new, unwrapped toys during the Arlington County Police Department's (ACPD) seventh annual Fill the Cruiser Holiday Toy Drive. This year, with families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for donations may be greater than ever and your generosity helps ensure the holidays are bright for some of our most vulnerable community members – children in need.

Contactless Donation Drop-Off Locations: Officers will collect new, unwrapped toys for children ages newborn to 17 at the following locations:

Friday, Dec. 3 at Arlington Assembly of God, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

4501 N. Pershing Drive

Those wishing to donate toys, but unable to attend the Fill the Cruiser events can drop off donations at Police Headquarters, located at 1425 N. Courthouse Road, until Friday, December 10 at the 2nd Floor Administrative Support Unit Front Counter from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

NOW THRU DEC. 14

Citrus-Pecans-Maple Products. Hosted by Lions Charities Northwest Arlington. Order online at nwarlion-citrus.fwff.net. Maple products at: purintonmaple.com. Maple

Promo Code: "nwarlions" at check out. Delivery direct to you by Christmas. Phone (703) 528-1130/ Text (703) 772-3784

DEC. 3-4

Help Plant Daffodils. At Culpepper Garden in Arlington. Looking for an opportunity to get outside and connect with nature? This fall, Culpepper Garden is hosting a variety of community planting days as they plant 3,000 daffodils in preparation for our Spring Daffodil Walk. Dates include: 12/3, and 12/4. Masks and social distancing will be required. To volunteer, contact Ashley Gomez, Volunteer Manager at agomez@culpeppergarden.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 9

Ashton's Heights Century. 7-8:30 p.m. At Reinsch Library Auditorium, Marymount University, 2807 North Glebe Road, Arlington. Ashton Heights resident, Peter Dickson, as he discusses one of Arlington's oldest neighborhoods. Mr. Dickson will discuss how Ashton heights came to be and its first 100 years. Visit the website: <https://arlington-historicalsociety.org/>

SUNDAY/DEC. 12

LWV-Arl-Alx New & Prospective Members Meeting. 4-5:30 p.m. Online. The League of Women Voters of Arlington and Alexandria City invites you to join them for a New and Prospective Members Meeting. "Come" to the virtual meeting to learn about the work of the League of Women Voters and our motto to "educate voters and protect Democracy." RSVP here: <https://lwv-arlington.org/>

varlalexnewmember.eventbrite.com

EVENTS WITH ARLINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE

* "Coffee and Conversation" speaker series. Everyone is invited to join the conversation via Zoom. Bring your own coffee, learn interesting things about the community and hear from the speakers listed below. Visit www.arlnvill.org.

Wednesdays, Dec. 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th at 10-11 a.m. Zoom Link below (except for the in-person event on 12/29, see below).

Dec. 1, 2021: Taming your financial records. Christine Dolan, principal, will explain how organizing our financial lives can help reduce stress, improve efficiency, and give us more control over our income and expenses. Christine welcomes our questions - from automatic bill payments, to organizing our records for estate planning.

Dec. 8, 2021: Welcoming asylum seekers, Special Visa holders, and refugees in our area. Laura Thompson Osuri, Executive Director, will describe how Homes Not Borders provides resettlement tools and the comforts of home for refugee families. This new nonprofit is growing quickly as it provides friendly support for Afghanistan newcomers and others.

Dec. 15, 2021: Roving Naturalist for NOVA Parks, Matt Felperin, finds inspiration for public programs and service across the wide variety of parks in the three-county regional park system. He'll tell us about this nonprofit group established in the 1950s and let us know what's waiting for us just outside our doors.

Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting

Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 7 p.m.

<https://www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting>

You are invited to participate in a virtual joint public meeting held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE). According to Virginia Code, these organizations shall conduct a joint public meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving public comments on, the transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

The virtual meeting will begin with a brief presentation followed by a public comment period. During the presentation you can learn about various transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia's Multimodal Project Pipeline Program
- NVTA's updates to TransAction and the FY2022-2027 Six Year Program; the NVTA Transportation Technology Strategic Plan; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC's Commuter Choice program
- DRPT's funding opportunities, Six-Year Improvement Program and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPR) Program
- VRE project updates

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the meeting will be posted at <https://www.virginiadot.org/novatransportationmeeting>. The team of VDOT, DRPT, OIPI, NVTA, NVTC and VRE representatives will make a presentation beginning at 7 p.m. highlighting their transportation programs, regional collaboration and receive public comments about Virginia's transportation network.

Give your comments during the joint meeting after the presentation concludes or submit your written comments by **January 7, 2022** by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or email meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Northern Virginia Joint Transportation Meeting" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775



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Chief Stores Officer Robert Hammack, left, watches store manager John West cut the ribbon to officially open the Total Wine & More at Potomac Yard Nov. 10. Also in attendance are Mayor Justin Wilson, Total Wine District Manager Michael Whatley, vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, and council members Canek Aguirre and Amy Jackson.

Sip, Sip, Hooray!

Total Wine opens in Potomac Yard.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

The long-awaited Total Wine & More opened its doors at Potomac Yard Nov. 10 with a grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting that also served as a fundraiser for local nonprofit Together We Bake.

Located at 3901 Richmond Highway, the Potomac Yard location is the second in Alexandria for the wine and beverage superstore following the West End location on Little River Turnpike.

"This is our 227th store and second here in Alexandria," said Matt Indre, senior manager of public affairs for Total Wine & More. "We are in 27 states and last year alone we partnered with over 13,000 local charities."

Founded in 2012, Together We Bake is a workforce training and personal development program for underserved and underrepresented women. The program uses the food service industry to teach women marketable job skills, provide hands-on experience and help them gain self-confidence to achieve self-sufficiency.

During its opening weekend, Total Wine & More donated 10 percent of its wine sales to Together We Bake.

"Total Wine is very active in supporting the communities where they are located," said Together We Bake founder Stephanie Wright. "They had heard about Together We Bake and what we were doing and wanted to give us some support. We are very grateful to them for reaching out to us."

The 18,000 square-foot property is the former home of Pier 1 Imports, which closed in early 2020. The grand opening event featured



A beer vendor pours a sample for a customer at the Nov. 10 grand opening of the Potomac Yard Total Wine & More.



Customers learn about wines during the grand opening of Total Wine & More Nov. 10 at Potomac Yard.

wine and beer tastings, live music, gift bags and local food.

Total Wine & More carries wine, beer, cigars and accessories. Wine samplings are conducted Thursdays-Saturdays.

Typical locations carry more than 8,000 different wines from around the world as well as more than 2,500 beers. The Potomac Yard location includes specialty beers from Alexandria's Port City

Brewing.

"Together We Bake is an integral part of the Alexandria community," Indre said. "They do special work in providing an education and jobs to less fortunate women. We believe in their mission of empowering women and are glad they accepted our offer to partner during our opening weekend."

www.totalwine.com
Togetherwebake.org



Jane Hughes and Total Wine & More Senior Manager of Public Affairs Matt Indre Nov. 10 at the Potomac Yard Total Wine & More grand opening.



Peter Goldman, Maggie Stauffer, Sarah Goldman and Jon Miller at the Nov. 10 grand opening of Total Wine & More at Potomac Yard.



Port City Brewing Company founder Bill Butcher, right, talks with customer Jon Miller at the grand opening of Total Wine & More Nov. 10 at Potomac Yard.

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU DEC. 26

"Cinderella." At Syntetic Theater, 1800 South Bell Street, Arlington. World premiere production of Maria Simpkins' "Cinderella," with choreography by Janine Baumgardner* and compositions by Konstantine Lortkipanidze. A creative team of all women brings the magical tale of a striking clock, a glass slipper, and a brave young woman who dares to pursue her wildest dreams. A modern re-telling of the classic story of family feuds, class rifts, and finding the courage to discover who you truly are. Special Event: Princess Tea Party on Saturday, Dec. 11 at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$15-\$30 and are available at https://syntetictheater.org/event_pages/cinderella/.

DEC. 1-31

Small Works of Great Importance. At Gallery Underground's Focus Gallery, 2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington. An all-member show of little pieces that pack a powerful punch. Members were asked to create works measuring no larger than 8 x 10 inches; smaller in size but proving that good things come in small packages. The exhibition features works by a variety of artists working in a range of mediums including both 2-d and 3-d works. Visit: <https://www.arlingtonartistsalliance.org/gallery-underground>

HOLIDAY POP UP

Enjoy special "Pop-Up" holiday shopping featuring gifts by "Made in Arlington" at George Mason University Arlington Campus. Discover



Encore Stage & Studio presents "Enchanted Bookshop Christmas" on Dec. 3-5 in Arlington.

unique items by local artisans and makers for your holiday shopping. Wed., Dec. 1 and Thurs., Dec. 2 from 4 - 7 p.m. Tues, Dec. 7, Wed. Dec. 8 and Thurs., Dec. 9 from 4 - 7 p.m. Van Metre Lobby, Arlington Campus

Street, Arlington.

DEC. 3-5

Alliance Artful Weekend Show. At Fort C.F. Smith Park, Hendry House, 2411 24th Street, N, Arlington. Friday, December 3, 3-8 p.m.; Opening Reception 6-8 p.m.; Saturday, December 4, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, December 5, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The 19th annual "Artful Weekend" Art Show and Sale is coming

to the historic Hendry House at Fort C.F. Smith Park in Arlington. Artwork by over 35 top Arlington-based artists features paintings of many genres, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, glasswork, artist's cards, unframed works and more.

DEC. 3-5

"Enchanted Bookshop Christmas." At Encore Stage & Studio, Gunston Arts Center - Theatre One, 2700

S. Lang St., Arlington. When an important holiday present disappears at the bookshop, it's up to our come-to-life book characters to solve the mystery of the missing bookmark and save the day — all without giving away their magical existence. Characters include the Nutcracker Prince, Amy March, the Velveteen Rabbit, the Little Match Girl, and even Ebenezer Scrooge himself. Tickets \$15 for Adults, \$12 for Children, Students, Military and Seniors. Concessions are available for pre-order. Tickets are available online at www.encore-stage.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 9

Rosslyn Cheer. 5 p.m. At Central Place Plaza, 1800 North Lynn Street, Arlington. Light the Christmas tree then visit the holiday market at Central Place Plaza. HB Woodlawn Secondary School's choir and a live mariachi band will fill the air with festive music.

FRIDAY/DEC. 10

Holiday Market. 5-8 p.m. At Central Place Plaza, 1800 North Lynn Street, Arlington. Featuring artisan goods and gifts from 12 unique local vendors. Open Road Grill will operate a bar serving beer, wine and holiday cocktails. Bring your furry friends for special dog giveaways! Santa Claus will fly in from the North Pole for pictures!

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Rosslyn Cheer. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. At Central Place Plaza, 1800 North Lynn Street. SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

Street, Arlington. Bring the kids for this Family Edition of the Holiday Market. Santa Claus will still be around for pictures. Syntetic Theater will perform a special holiday version of "The Miraculous Magic Balloon" show at 3 p.m. And stick around for a raffle to win Cheerio penguin plushies! Free hot chocolate will keep your warm throughout the day.

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Jane Franklin Dance. 7:30-8:30 p.m. At Theatre on the Run, 3700 S Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. Jane Franklin Dance returns to in-person performances at Arlington's Theatre on the Run with exciting new works by award-winning choreographers. This mixed-bill performance promises an exciting evening of dance by some of the DMV's finest movement artists. Visit the website: <https://janefranklin.com/in-place>

DEC. 17-18

Ballston Holiday Wreath Market. Outside Ballston Exchange, Corner of Wilson Boulevard and N. Stuart Street outside of Ballston Exchange, 4201 Wilson Blvd, Arlington. The event will take place Friday, December 17 from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. and Saturday, December 18 from 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. to include a pop-up outdoor bar with warm winter drinks and fresh holiday wreaths for purchase outside Ballston Exchange, or pick-up through online ordering in advance. Wreaths \$20/\$45 decorated.

SATURDAY/DEC. 18

NCE Holiday Cheer Concert. 7:30 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd, Arlington. National Chamber Ensemble Concert highlights the finest classical and contemporary masterpieces and holiday favorites together for the family. The festivities include Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride", "Chanukkah Festival" and "Rejoice" from Handel's "Messiah", Strauss Waltzes, the gorgeous music from Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" and more. Young Artist Piano Competition

winners will join the ensemble to perform following the competition finals on Dec 4. A Carols Sing-Along concludes the program to get everyone in the holiday spirit. Holiday Cheer features Sharon Christman (soprano), artistic director/violinist Leo Sushansky, Natasha Dukan (piano), Jorge Orozco (violin), Uri Wassertzug (viola) Vasily Popov (cello), 2021 Piano Competition winners, outstanding young guest string players. Visit <https://www.nationalchamberensemble.org/tickets.htm>.



Jane Franklin Dance will perform Saturday, Dec. 11 at Theatre on the Run in Arlington.

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Children's & Teens' Connection 2021

During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

HOLIDAYS IN

THE MOSAIC DISTRICT

At 2910 District Ave., Fairfax.
Santa at Mosaic -- Now Thru Dec. 23
Holiday Toy Drive -- Now Thru Dec. 13
Menorah Lighting -- Dec. 5 at 5 p.m.
Santa's Motorcade -- Dec. 17 at 5 p.m.

NOW THRU DEC. 19.

Holiday Lights on the Farm. Fridays thru Sundays 5:30 to 8 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. What is "Holiday Lights on the Farm"? It's where you tour Frying Pan Farm Park in the safety and warmth of your car and see an amazing display of holiday decorations lighting up the 135-acre park. The cost is \$20 per private vehicle. Or you can take the tour on a tractor-drawn wagon ride with up to 20 of your family or friends for \$150 per group. Last year this event sold out, so get your tickets early at <https://bit.ly/FPLights>.

NOW THRU JAN. 2

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Open nightly 5 to 10 p.m.; January 8 to February 27, 2022 (ice skating only), open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring an ice rink, multiple new holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, a retail area, food, music and more. Admission: \$9 for general admission to Village; \$22 for village admission and skating; beginning January 8, \$14 for ice skating; free ages 2 and under. Visit novaparks.com/events/ice-lights

THURSDAY/DEC. 2

Chanukah on Ice. 6-8 p.m. At Pentagon Row (Outdoor Rink), 1201 South Joyce Street, Arlington. Lighting of a Giant 6-foot Menorah. Eat Dinner: Hot Latkes, Kosher Hot Dogs and Refreshments. Admission: Prepay by November 25th: \$10; After the 25th: \$13 Includes skate rental.

DEC. 3-5

"Enchanted Bookshop Christmas." At Encore Stage & Studio, Gunston Arts Center - Theatre One, 2700 S. Lang St., Arlington. When an important holiday present disappears at the bookshop, it's up to our come-to-life book characters to solve the mystery of the missing bookmark and save the day — all without giving away their magical existence. Characters include the Nutcracker Prince, Amy March, the Velveteen Rabbit, the Little Match Girl, and even Ebenezer Scrooge himself. Tickets \$15 for Adults, \$12 for Children, Students, Military and Seniors. Concessions are available for pre-order. Tickets are available online at www.encore-stage.org.

DEC. 3, 4, 10, 11, 19

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Take a candlelit guided tour and learn about holiday traditions in 18th-century Virginia. Visit with Mrs. Washington and other 18th-century residents of Mount Vernon in a 45-minute candlelit tour of the Mount Vernon estate, followed by a

reception. Hear stories of Christmases past from costumed character actors portraying Washington's family, friends, and enslaved or hired staff. Admission: \$36 for adults (ages 12 and up); \$28 for youth (ages 6-11); for members, \$26 for adults; \$18 for youth. Visit the website: mountvernon.org/candlelight

DEC. 3-19

"A Child's Christmas in Wales." Presented by the Vienna Department of Parks and Recreation and Vienna Theatre Company. From a story by Dylan Thomas and adapted to the stage by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell. Dates: Fridays and Saturdays, Dec. 3, 4, 17, 18 at 7 p.m.; Sundays, Dec. 5 and 19 at 2 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 18 at 10 a.m. Visit the website: www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

DEC. 3-4

Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend and Parade. Taste of Scotland: Friday, December 3 at 6:30 p.m. Parade: Saturday, December 4, at 11 a.m. Campagna Center is thrilled to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Scottish Walk Weekend in Alexandria. In 1749, the City of Alexandria was established by Scottish merchants. Dozens of Scottish clans dressed in colorful tartans parade through the streets of Old Town, joined by pipe and drum bands from around the region, as well as terriers and hounds. The weekend kicks off with the Taste of Scotland Scotch Tasting on Friday evening in the

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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THE CONNECTION
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Pets Can Provide Joy And Purpose for Seniors

FROM PAGE 3

her new family member, but she can also thank the late Gladys Shulaw — a cat lover herself who died in 2018 at the age of 101.

A long-time Arlington resident, Shulaw was so passionate about saving cats that, in her will, she bequeathed money to the AWLA for the establishment of a fund to support the adoption, care, and keeping of cats.

“The bequest arrived with a note from her friend, Dr. Karin Pettit, and a photo of Mrs. Shulaw with her beloved cat, Brownie, who she adopted from the AWLA,” according to the AWLA’s 2019 Annual Report.

The note went on to say that “Mrs. Shulaw was fond of telling Brownie’s story — that when she brought him home, he walked around the house and decided he would stay.”

If only Gladys Shulaw could see today how many lives she’s helped change, including — but definitely not limited to — those of Sirena and Julia Mignosi.

As a result of this particular fund, the AWLA has made it possible for hundreds of people — and not just seniors — to adopt much desired cats that they otherwise would not have been able to own.

“The Gladys Shulaw Fund was created by the donor to get cats adopted, but she gave us free rein for the money,” Davies said.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Atrium Building. The parade will depart from St. Asaph St. heading north, head east from Queen St., head south from Fairfax St., and head west from King Street, ending right in front of City Hall. Admission: Free to view; \$75 registration fee to march in parade; \$200 and above for Taste of Scotland Scotch Tasting. Visit the website: Campagnacenter.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Holiday Festival at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 2 to 8 p.m. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. Torpedo Factory Art Center joins the fun on Alexandria’s most festive weekend of the year. Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive by fire boat around 3:30 p.m. on the Waterfront. Music fills the halls and the waterfront, beckoning people to browse three floors of open artists’ studios. Visit the website: torpedofactory.org

SATURDAY/DEC. 4

Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights. Old Town’s historic waterfront will shine for the 21st annual Alexandria Holiday Boat Parade of Lights sponsored by Amazon. Parade begins at 5:30 p.m.; Dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m. at Waterfront Park (1A Prince St.). Parade viewing areas along one mile of the Old Town Alexandria waterfront stretching from Founders Park (351 N. Union St.) to Ford’s Landing Park (99 Franklin St.) Boat parade dockside festivities will entertain parade-goers from 2 to 8 p.m. in Waterfront Park at the foot of King Street. Festivities include a pop-up beer garden from Port City Brewing Company. At 3:30 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive by fireboat at the Alexandria City Marina before attending the annual Torpedo Factory Art Center Holiday Festival. Admission: Free; \$ for food/drink and some activities Visit AlexandriaVA.com/boatparade.

“What we’ve done with Culpepper Garden is the first senior-specific initiative that we’ve done with the Gladys Shulaw Fund, and hopefully it will lead to more similar opportunities.

But, we’ve also used the money to offer free cat adoptions, supplies, and services to so many people in general.”

Keeping joy alive and loneliness at bay across the entire community

While the AWLA team uses the Gladys Shulaw fund expressly for all things cats, they facilitate the adoption and support for all kinds of animals.

The local non-profit also offers plenty of programs for anyone who needs them — whether they own cats, dogs, lizards, hamsters, birds, etc.

And, although it’s not in the AWLA’s official mission statement, their team cannot possibly count how much loneliness they’ve reduced and prevented — among seniors and others.

“The Culpeper Garden initiative is a great example of how all of our programs, services, and relationships come together to change lives with pets,” Jones said. “Everything we do is always about the pets and the people.”

SATURDAYS, DEC. 4, 11, 18

Holiday Market and Winter Village at The Parc in Tysons. At 8508 Leesburg Pike, Tysons. Save the date to purchase your holiday gifts from local artisans and small businesses.

DEC. 4-5

“The Nutcracker.” 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. At The Rachel M. Schlesinger Center for Performing Arts NOVA Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. Enjoy this exciting Metropolitan School of the Arts production as Clara fights the evil Mouse Queen and her army of fierce mice to save the handsome and kind Nutcracker doll. On this great adventure, Clara will be transported to a fantastical land where she will meet the dazzling Snow Queen, dancing snowflakes, the Sugar Plum Fairy and many more wonderful characters. Visit the website: metropolitantarts.org

SUNDAY/DEC. 5

Living Nativity. 4-6 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. The Clifton Presbyterian Church and Clifton Betterment Association invites the community to its Living Nativity. Park in town and walk to the church. CBA kids holiday gathering. Stop by the barn, after the live nativity scene at CPC, to see Santa and have some hot chocolate by the fire.

BEGINNING DEC. 5

Old Town Boutique District’s Holiday Week. At various boutiques throughout Old Town Alexandria.

Head into December with the first-ever OTBD holiday week, kicking off Sunday, December 5. Look out for a kick-off event at Hummingbird, tastings, trunk shows and doorbuster deals, and spend the holidays in the most magical place on earth. Visit oldtownboutiquedistrict.com

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Not Getting Ahead of Myself



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the moment, I’m going to roll with the punch and not slip on any slope, real or imagined. The slope, metaphorically referred to, is my calcium level. A measure in my monthly lab work which needs to be normal-ish for me to continue receiving a bone-strengthening injection (Denosumab), a parallel treatment to my daily thyroid cancer medication. The reason I even have to get this shot is, you guessed it, it’s a side effect of my thyroid cancer drug. In early Nov., and the following week’s re-test, the calcium level remained abnormally low. As of this result, my monthly treatment has been delayed until early Dec. That means, I will have skipped a month of treatment; in my mind never a good thing. Whether skipping one dose like this could actually cause irreparable damage, I certainly don’t know. But I have to admit, it worries the hell out of me, and at this late stage of my stage-IV cancer life; with a re-diagnosis to consider, I don’t need anything else to worry about.

I mean, for all I know, the shot is actually working, and not receiving my every-four-week injection might put me at some kind of risk. The most significant risk being that if the calcium level does not improve, I might have to stop the treatment, or possibly, reduce the dosage of the pill I take for the thyroid cancer, a dosage which has been reduced twice already. This has always been a concern of my oncologist: the side effects of the treatment for side effects derailing the treatment for the underlying cancer. And generally speaking, untreated cancer doesn’t usually resolve itself in the patient’s favor. A side effect, in and of itself, is a problem, but more so the problem, its potential impact on your primary cancer treatment/protocol. I can’t help but wonder if I’m, after nearly 13 years, finally heading down that dusty trail. However, I’m not going to go there yet, right?

Where I hope I’m going, as I’ve gone before, is the sweet spot, so to speak. The spot being where the dosage is high enough to combat the cancer but low enough to sustain one’s quality of life. This has been a guiding tenet of my oncologist’s treatment plan for me. He’s always been sensitive to the demands of this patient on chemotherapy, and even on occasion, was not uncomfortable suggesting that I take a break from treatment and try to enjoy life while I felt good enough. I never took him up on the offer as I remained hopeful (and tried not to think too deeply about what he was inferring; that my life was going to be getting worse/more demanding and that ultimately, I would have to stop my treatment and eventually succumb to the disease. Instead, I just chose to continue the treatment and not think about the unpleasant possibilities).

Though this ‘sweet-spot issue has only occurred recently, my concern of it happening has existed since my original diagnosis. I remember asking the oncologist about this medication-having-to-be-stopped issue at our original Team Lourie meeting in late Feb., 2009, he acknowledged the possibility. (As did I; remembering the circumstances surrounding my late mother-in-law’s death from cancer.) I wouldn’t say I’ve anticipated it, exactly, but I have been fearful of its inevitability. Nonetheless, until recently, it was hardly a blip on my radar; more like it was tucked away in a filing cabinet. Well, it’s here now. And so are you regular readers.

No worries, really. This is life in the cancer whirl. Up and down and all around. Between office appointments, referrals, lab work, various scans, X-Rays, medicine/side effects, the sleepless nights and agonizing waits for results, unless you find a way, emotionally, to balance all the news, good or bad, the actual cancer is the least of your problems. Coping becomes the most of it.

I can’t say any of it has been fun, but occasionally there’s been a wry smile. Cancer is a very serious business. Contributing to its seriousness seems counter-productive. I’ve never been one to make a bad situation worse. And I’m certainly not going to start now.

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



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