

James Beard-nominated Chef
Rahman "Rock" Harper at Queen
Mother's restaurant on Columbia
Pike in Arlington.

The Arlington Connection

Secrets of Rock Harper's Chicken

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PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

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SENIOR LIVING

Family Caregivers in Virginia Provide \$14.3 Billion in Unpaid Care

Latest AARP research attaches \$15.51 per hour value to the estimated 920 million hours of unpaid care that family caregivers provided in 2021.

In 2021 unpaid family caregivers in Virginia provided care that would otherwise cost \$14.3 billion, according to new state data available in AARP's latest report in the Valuing the Invaluable series. This is a \$3.1 billion increase in unpaid contributions since the last report was released in 2019.

The report highlights the growing scope and complexity of family caregiving and highlights actions needed to address the many challenges of caring for parents, spouses, and other loved ones.

"Family caregivers play a vital role in Virginia's health care system, whether they care for someone at home, coordinate home health care, or help care for someone who lives in a nursing home," said AARP Virginia State Director Jim Dau. "The care they provide is in-

valuable but it's also costly, in terms of their time, money and personal well-being."

Virginia's total Medicaid spending for fiscal year 2021 was about \$16 billion. Medicaid is the federal/state program that provides health care coverage for low income Virginians and pays for long-term care coverage for more than half the state's nursing home residents.

"Virginia taxpayers owe the nearly one million family caregivers a debt of gratitude for their unpaid work keeping their loved ones out of nursing homes," Dau said.

To find scheduled virtual and in-person workshops and other programs of interest to people age 50-plus and their families, visit aarp.org/virginiaevents.

Resources and information on family caregiving are available at aarp.org/caregiving.

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2023 Women of Vision in Arlington

The Arlington County Commission on the Status of Women will honor three women for their commitment and leadership in the Arlington community at the 2023 Women of Vision Awards on Monday, March 27. Join Commission on the Status of Women to celebrate at 7 p.m. at Arlington Economic Development's offices, 1100 N Glebe Road, Suite 1500. RSVP for the free event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-women-of-vision-awards-tickets-527406646477>.

❖ **NONPROFIT:** Krysta Jones uses her skills as a leader, mentor, and connector, raising and amplifying women's voices. As an Arlington County employee, she helped launch Women Work (WoW), a mentoring and networking organization for women County employees. Krysta published A Seat at the Table, an interactive guide to help women and minority group members get involved in solving community problems, and founded Vote.Lead.Impact, an or-

ganization dedicated to increasing representation of Black people in Congress. She launched and hosts a podcast for The Links, Inc., an organization dedicated to the social, cultural, and civic upliftment of Black women in Arlington and Alexandria. She also produces and hosts a radio show for the Arlington League of Women Voters, and hosted a television show on Arlington Independent Media. Krysta serves on the board of the National Women's History Alliance. She also led the establishment of the Black Women's History Committee, and her actions every day remind Arlingtonians that history is being made in the present.

❖ **BUSINESS:** Karen Rosales, President and CEO of Arlington Community Federal Credit Union, uplifts women through thoughtful lending and financial empowerment of communities in need. While exercising responsible stewardship, she supports and mentors women at the credit union and in the community. She has led the credit union in part-



nering with organizations such as a local nonprofit that provides workforce development and re-entry support to women coming out of incarceration, and led in partnering with a nonprofit STEM education program for girls. Karen serves on the board of Kitchen of Purpose (formerly La Cocina), where she is passionate about workforce development opportunities for women in the food services industry, including numer-

ous small businesses.

❖ **GOVERNMENT:** Mariflor Ventura is an Arlington Public Schools employee who has created a significant and transformational new giving community, CASA MARIFLOR, that has assisted hundreds of Arlingtonians with food and necessities. This community of donors and volunteers has aided families in need, particularly Hispanic immigrant families, by

donating food, clothing, diapers, household supplies and even furniture.

It also has helped people in finding jobs, guiding them to County resources, and hosting events. These actions are organized by Mariflor in her spare time using in person and virtual outreach, a Buckingham mutual aid group that she created, and an Amazon wishlist, among other initiatives.

Celebrate Walking in Arlington

In recognition of National Walking Day on April 5, WalkArlington will present Walking Palooza on Saturday, April 15, 2023.

Explore Arlington on one of three free community walks throughout the day.

Register to attend one of three free community walks. Space is limited, so be sure to register ahead of time. Once registration is closed, we will take a waitlist of participants.

<https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/>

[com/national-walking-day/](https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/)

Guided Hike on Theodore Roosevelt Island

Saturday, April 15, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

WalkArlington, in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), presents a guided hike on Theodore Roosevelt Island with a member of the NPS team. Go on a history and nature walk, covering Theodore Roosevelt's life, legacy, the overall story of the is-

land, habitats, and flora and fauna. RSVP TO ATTEND <https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/>

Walk & Learn: Engineering Safer Streets

Saturday, April 15, 10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.

If you're interested in transportation, planning, and design, join Arlington County's Vision Zero Program Manager Christine Baker on a guided walk in Ballston and

Virginia Square. She'll explain a variety of improvements the County has made to this busy corridor to increase safety for all people. RSVP TO ATTEND <https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/>

Black Heritage Walk with the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington

Saturday, April 15, 2-3:30 p.m.
Discover Black heritage in Arlington on a walk led by Dr. Scott

Taylor, president of the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. Visit and learn about important historic sites such as St. John's Baptist Church and Freedman's Village Bridge. The walk will end at the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington, which reopened at a new location in September. Participants will be able to spend time taking in many artifacts and exhibits from Arlington history. RSVP TO ATTEND <https://www.walkarlington.com/national-walking-day/>

BULLETIN BOARD

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

APAH RECEIVES \$200,000 GIFT FROM ARLINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) announced that the Arlington Presbyterian Church (APC) congregation has committed \$200,000 to help low-income residents facing eviction remain in their homes at four APAH-owned properties along Columbia Pike. This funding will help eliminate outstanding rent balances for as many

as 200 APAH residents and their families. The timing of the gift is critical, as multiple pandemic-era safety net programs that provided relief to struggling renters have ended.

The funds will be made available March 18, during a dedicated resident-only event. The goal is to eliminate outstanding rent balances at Gilliam Place, Buchanan Gardens, Columbia Hills, and Columbia Grove. APAH Resident Services staff, members of Arlington Presbyterian Church, Arlington County Government, as well as Arlington Thrive will be onsite to assist residents, determine their needs, and provide critical financial relief. The partnership underscores APAH's commitment to provide stable, affordable homes to those who need them most.

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 vege-

tables, soup, small jars of peanut butter, small jars of jelly, pasta and pasta sauce. Donations are collected during Mass each Sunday. Visit www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org for more.

ONGOING

Online Salary Negotiation Workshop. AAUW (American Association of University Women) Work Smart is free online for anyone looking to learn how to negotiate a salary increase or promotion. Why is negotiation so important? AAUW's research on the gender pay gap shows that, one year out of college, women are already paid significantly less than men.

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Local Chef Nominated for James Beard Award

Queen Mother's Restaurant in Arlington owned by chef Rock Harper, Alexandria native.



James Beard-nominated Chef Rahman "Rock" Harper at Queen Mother's restaurant on Columbia Pike in Arlington.



Heat pure canola oil with frozen duck fat.



Press breast firmly into seasoned flour, then submerge chicken breast into canola plus duck fat.



Remove golden brown chicken breast after five-to-six minutes.



Authentic brioche bun.



PHOTOS BY
SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Chef's special "the
Classic," customer
favorite.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Chef Rahman "Rock" Harper is wedged in a communal kitchen space on Columbia Pike in Arlington between a woman making tres leche cake and a Ukrainian cook making cheese and potato pierogies. This is where Harper produces the "best chicken sandwich you have ever tasted" at Queen Mother's Restaurant.

Harper recently learned that he has been nominated for a James Beard award for best chef Mid-Atlantic region. He said, "I couldn't understand at the time. I was busy."

Today Harper is making "The Classic," the customer favorite, and his as well. Harper says he starts with the best premium chicken breasts you can find.

"I brine the skinless chicken breast in salt water with some seasonings and brown sugar. You can use white sugar but I like brown because of the slight molasses taste." He explains, "Brining is all about changing the meat. White meat is dry, so by osmosis, brining can retain more moisture."

Next Harper dips the chicken breast in seasoned flour and then in a little pickle juice mixed

with water. Then press the chicken into a mixture of Sir Galahad artisanal flour, sea salt from Italy, fresh ground pepper, smoked paprika from Spain, garlic and onion powders, and a little bit of rice flour. "See how I press down on the chicken in the flour mixture to make it stick? Most people don't do that, and the mixture falls off." He adds that his grandmother used to use a paper bag.

Harper also keeps the seasoning flour cold. "I just gave you a little secret. I'm not science-y or anything. I don't know. I just think it has something to do with putting cold into hot."

Harper says he uses the rice flour to make the chicken light and crispy and so it absorbs less oil. "I don't want it greasy. No one wants that. I want it golden brown and delicious."

Today Harper is making the chicken extra special by using a cast iron skillet instead of the deep fryer he usually uses for the restaurant orders. "It's just better." Harper pours pure canola oil into the skillet, then adds two scoops of frozen duck fat to give it a rich flavor. He turns the heat up and waits a couple of minutes for the oil to warm up. Every so often he dips a food thermometer into the oil to

test the temperature. "Hmmm 235 degrees. It's got to be 350 degrees. One of the big mistakes people make is temperature."

The oil is bubbling, and Harper makes one last temperature check. He slips the seasoned chicken breast into the oil until it is submerged. "Five to six minutes." Harper will turn the chicken once even though it is covered with oil in the skillet. "Otherwise it would get a little brown on the bottom." He says no one wants medium rare chicken so he carefully monitors the internal temperature until it reaches 165 degrees, then removes the breast to a drip rack. "See, no grease." And he adds that he changes the oil often and doesn't use additives to keep the foam down or to extend the shelf life.

Harper butters each half of a Lyon brioche bun on a moving roller. "People think brioche is all the same but all brioche doesn't taste the same. This is the best. They should have a control designation like for champagne where you can only call it brioche if it meets certain high standards."

He arranges the chicken breast on the brioche and ribbons his secret sauce back and forth. "I can tell you the sauce has catsup and Japanese Kewpie mayo and some spices

that we won't talk about." Then he adds several dill pickle slices to the top. "On mine there would be 6-8; I'm a big pickle fan."

Harper says he doesn't like to use eggs with his chicken breast to make the crust. "I don't like the eggy taste; it's just personal." He says he doesn't use buttermilk either, which adds dairy.

Harper says the concept behind his chicken is community, care and culture. "A lot of chefs have their stories but one thing I noticed you don't really see it reflected. You just

hear the story; I said let's put it out front." He said he grew up in Alexandria and his mom was a big part of why he opened this restaurant, to create a space to honor his African-American culture.

But when he grew up fried chicken was a celebratory dish. The chicken he remembers from his childhood was not chicken sandwiches. "It was chicken on a budget. When you were feeding a whole family, you had to use the whole chicken. It was more efficient."

Harper is pleased to be recognized with the James Beard nomination but he says being a cook for over 25 years, recognition comes and goes. His past credentials include winning in the third season of Hell's Kitchen, serving as Celebrity Chef to the March of Dimes and nomination for the RAMMY award in 2020 and 2021 as "Hottest New Sandwich Shop."

"It always feels good to be applauded. I feel good about the work I've done. But if I can show

up as my authentic self and someone sees that, it's cool. But, he says, "Awards are not the measure. The core values are for the guests and the employees." At one point the goal was to win all the awards. Now it is to do what is in his heart. "Seventeen years ago working at Union Station no one would even think about giving a black chef an award."

The James Beard nomination list will be narrowed down to the finalists on March 29 and the award announced in June.

CALENDAR

CHECK OUT

THE PLANT CLINICS

The Arlington Central Library Plant Clinic at 1015 N Quincy St, Arlington opens on Wednesday, March 29 from 6:00 - 7:45 p.m. The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St, Alexandria opens Saturday, May 6 at 7:00 - 9:30 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N 14th and N Court-house Roads opens Saturday, April 22 at 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. The Del Ray Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria opens Saturday, May 6 from 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S Stafford St, Arlington, opens Sunday, May 7 at 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 22

Tomato Love. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Tomatoes are a popular crop in home gardens. Learn how you can grow and maintain tomatoes to make the most of your crop.

FRIDAY/MARCH 24

Common Native Ferns of the Mid-Atlantic. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Online. Join Extension Master Gardener Elaine Mills to discuss the unique lifecycle and distinctive physical characteristics of ferns as well as the many reasons to consider planting them in your garden. Details will be provided for 16 commonly grown native ferns, including their distinguishing features, growth habits, light and soil preferences, support for wildlife, and uses in the landscape. Free. RSVP at <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

MARCH 25 TO APRIL 8

"Singing in the Rain." At Thomas Jefferson Community Theater, 125 S. Old Glebe Road, Arlington. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 p.m. Presented by the Arlington Players; screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green; songs by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed. Based on the classic Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film.

SATURDAY/MARCH 25

Nova East Odyssey of the Mind Tournament. At Wakefield High School, Arlington. Some 86 teams of students from schools in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church and parts of Fairfax County will come together to

showcase their problem-solving skills. Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving competition that challenges students to think outside the box and use their imaginations to solve unique problems. Students form teams and work together to create solutions to the given problems, which range from building mechanical devices to creating skits and performances. The event will be held at Wakefield High School and teams will start performing at 9:00 a.m. Teams will present their solutions to a panel of judges throughout the day, with the awards ceremony taking place in the evening. The tournament is open to the public, and spectators are encouraged to attend and support the participating teams. It's an exciting and inspiring event for all ages, and the public is welcome to come and see the creative problem-solving skills of the students. Visit <https://novaeastodysseyofthemind.wordpress.com/> or contact novaeastodyssey.treasurer@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 29

Water Where It Counts. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Irrigation, rain barrels and ollas (in-ground vessels) deliver water where and when it is needed to help your vegetables survive our hot and humid summers.

SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Arlington Civitans Open Air Flea Market. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 4001 15th Street North, Arlington. And every first Saturday through November 4, 2023. The Civitan Open Air Flea Market, one of Northern Virginia's largest and oldest public flea markets, is located in the I-66 garage in North Arlington adjacent to Washington-Lee high school and the Arlington Planetarium at 15th and North Quincy Streets, in Arlington. Here you'll find over 150 vendors selling a variety of goods ranging from books, clothes, furniture, garden tools, household goods, jewelry, shoes, toys, records, and so much more.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 5

Bees & Beekeeping. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Get the latest buzz on basics about the care of bees, hives, and other basics to produce your own honey.

SATURDAY/APRIL 8

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. The Capital City Showcase, which produces some of the best events in the DC area, returns with its new one-of-a-kind blend of entertainment! Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by

dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle. Hosted by Christian Hunt, this experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for April's show is the hilarious musical comedy duo Griefcat!

FRIDAY/APRIL 14

Case Studies in Lawn Replacement. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Online. Have you been thinking about reducing the size of your lawn? Or switching it from grass to something more environmentally friendly? Join Extension Master Gardeners Alyssa Ford Morel and Carolyn Vincent to see examples of similar efforts by several Extension Master Gardeners. They will share how the process went in their own Northern Virginia yards and what lessons were learned. Free. RSVP at <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

APRIL 14-16

Spring Artful Weekend. At Fort C.F. Smith Park, 2411 24th St. N, Arlington. Show Hours: Friday, April 14, 2023, 4 p.m.-8 p.m., Opening Reception 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday, April 15, 2023, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, April 16, 2023, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The Arlington Artists Alliance is thrilled to return to the historic Hendry House at Fort C.F. Smith Park for "Spring Artful Weekend." Spring Artful Weekend features artwork by 30+ talented Arlington Artists Alliance members and has been an annual show for the Arlington-based arts collective for over 20 years! With a large variety of art genres to choose from—paintings, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, glasswork, artist's cards, and more—this show is perfect to kick-off Spring! This event is free and open to the public. Visit <http://www.arlingtonartistsalliance.org>

THURSDAY/APRIL 27

AFAC Shining a Light on Hunger. 6:30-9:30 p.m. At Army Navy Country Club, 1700 Army Navy Drive, Arlington. This is AFAC's largest annual fundraising event held on Thursday, April 27, 2023 at Army Navy Country Club. Please join them at the spring celebration for great food, drink, music, laughter and fun. Your support for this event will help AFAC provide weekly groceries to all families. If you prefer to pay by invoice or check, or have any questions, contact Jolie Smith at Jolie.Smith@afac.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 3

Visit salary.aauw.org. Create a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification program assists homeowners in restoring their home's natural habitat by providing information on sustainable gardening practices. These practices include using native plants, removing invasive species,

reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers, and creating space for native flora and fauna. Visit audubon-at-home-1.org for more.

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ABC LICENSE

Glass House Coffee Four, LLC trading as Slipstream, 4300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 110, Arlington, Arlington VA 22203-4168. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Beer and Wine On Premise/Mixed Beverage On Premise license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Ryan Fleming, Managing Member. Date notice posted at establishment: March 13, 2023. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

Legals

ABC LICENSE

Haly Group Inc trading as BBQ Chicken & Beer, 3503 Fairfax Dr., Arlington, Arlington VA 22201-2305. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Beer & Wine and Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Hoil Om, President and Treasurer. Date notice posted at establishment: 03/16/2023. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

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55+ Programs are in person at 55+ Centers, unless otherwise noted. A 55+ Pass is required to participate (starting at a \$20 annual fee). To join or register, go to registration.arlingtonva.us or call 703-228-4747.

Presentation on "The Life and Legacy of Enslaved Virginian Emily Winfree" with author Dr. Jan Meck, Thursday, March 23, 1:30 p.m., virtual. Registration # 913400-19.

Current events impacting the Latino community, discussion in Spanish, Thursday, March 23, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 913402-17.

Columbia Pike Nature and Pie Walk led by an Arlington Regional Master Naturalist, one mile urban nature walk finishing at a local pie shop, Friday, March 24, 2 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 913106-19.

Social Ballroom Dance at Arlington Mill 55+ Center, Friday, March 24, 1 p.m. Dances include tango, waltz, foxtrot and swing. No instruction, just dance for fun. Drop-in.

Introduction to line dancing, newcomers welcome, learn basic steps in a fun environment, Friday, March 24, 10:15 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Ukulele Recital, Tuesday, March 28, 5 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Performed by students in the 55+ Program's ukulele class taught by Sandy O'Shea. Registration # 913304-07.

Samba card game teams forming at Walter Reed 55+ Center, fun variation of canasta, beginners welcome, Tuesday, March 28, 1 p.m. Drop-in.

55+ Travel group will attend a matinee performance of "Ragtime" at the Riverside Center for Performing Arts in Fredericksburg, Wednesday, March 29. Cost is \$87, Arlington resident; \$100, non-resident. Meal included. Registration # 902303-10.

Learn about amphibians, harbingers of spring, Wednesday, March 29, 11 a.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Program provided by a Gulf Branch Nature Center naturalist. Registration # 913400-09.

Update on the Arlington Neighborhood Village movement and how to get involved by executive director Wendy Zenker, Wednesday, March 29, 11:30 a.m., virtual. Registration # 913303-03.

Final event recognizing Women's History Month, "Hello Girls," virtual program presented by a historian from the National Museum of the Army, Thursday, March 30, 1:30 p.m. Registration # 913400-20.

Library of Virginia's genealogy series features Women in WWI and WWII, Thursday, March 30, 2 p.m., virtual. Presented by Community Outreach Specialist Ashley Craig. Registration # 913400-32.

Affordable Connectivity Program Fair, a government program to help low income households pay for internet services, Thursday, March 30, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Vendors will be onsite to assist with enrollment. Registration # 913899-01.

Name that Tune, a fun event with musician Carl Gold, guess the title of songs from the 50s -70s era, Friday, March 31, 2 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 913304-11.

Spring Fling fashion show presented by Blossom Boutique and modeled by 55+ participants, plus a silent auction, Friday, March 31, 1 - 3 p.m., Lubber Run C55+ Center. Cost \$5 (cash only). Registration # 913899-02.

Classic and modern movies at Aurora Hills 55+ Center. See "Mrs. Harris goes to Paris" (2022) (PG), Friday, March 31, 12:30 p.m. Registration # 913804-01.

Telling Time with professional astronomer Jennifer Lynn Bartlett, Friday, March 31, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Explore www.connectionnewspapers.com

factors that produced current conventions for telling time. Registration # 913400-12.

Just beneath the surface of works by three artists, presented by Community Arts Programmer Jim Halloran, Friday, March 31, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 913302-02.

Morning art activity including painting and drawing with Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen, Monday, April 3, 9 a.m., virtual. Materials needed can be found around the house. Registration # 913303-15.

Yarn Crafters at Aurora Hills 55+ Center hand knit and crochet items for Arlington charities, Monday, April 3, 10 a.m. - noon. Some instruction and materials available. Drop-in.

Folk music sing-along, Monday, April 3, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Inspired by Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell. Drop-in.

Jeopardy games, Monday, April 3, 2 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Win a prize. Registration # 913600-10.

Langston-Brown 55+ Center book club members will discuss "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig, Tuesday, April 4, 1:30 p.m. Drop-in.

55+ Travel group will spend the day in Harrisburg, PA and tour the Capitol, believed to be one of the most beautiful in the nation, Tuesday, April 4. Cost \$59, Arlington resident; \$68, non-resident. Registration # 902304-01.

Chinese brush painting with art enthusiast Suong (Sunny) Thomas, Wed., April 5, 1:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Learn how to paint four primary Chinese characters using watercolor. Supplies provided. Registration # 913303-06.

Karaoke enthusiasts welcome Wed., April 5, 5-6:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Drop-in.

What does Medicare cover? Hear Dr. Salama Freed, assistant professor of Health Policy and Management at George Washington University, break it down, Wednesday, April 5, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 913500-08.

Fun filled challenges for Trivia buffs, Thursday, April 6, 11 a.m., virtual. Registration # 913600-07.

Social ballroom dance, spacious dance floor, Thursday, April 6, 1:45 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Drop-in.

What is a Podcast? Lubber Run 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez walk you through how to listen and what topics are available, Thursday, April 6, 6 p.m. Registration # 91340310.

Open discussion on the pursuit of happiness in today's complex and unstable world, Thurs., April 6, 11 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Presented by Dr. Chuck Toftoy, author and professor emeritus, George Washington University. Registration # 913500-09.

Virtual tour of the Library of Virginia with Community Outreach Specialist Ashley Craig, Thursday, April 6, 2 p.m. Registration # 913400-36.

Just Play'n Country, sing along or enjoy listening, Friday, April 7, 1 p.m., Madison Community Center. Drop-in.

Explore painting with Community Arts Programmer Jim Halloran by learning various techniques using acrylic paints, Friday, April 7, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. No experience necessary, materials provided. Registration # 913303-01.

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Publishing Since 1784

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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It Seemed Innocent Enough, At First



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

My wife, Dina opened our upstairs' bathroom vanity and saw the eight-count bars of soap I had purchased earlier that day. Not that she would ever use the soap that I do. Nevertheless, she felt compelled to ask me a quantity-really question which was: "Why did you get so many bars of soap? You don't shower that much."

Let me deviate for a second and briefly explain my consuming ways: non-perishables in bulk, especially when said items are on sale, is how I manage cash outflow. Occasionally, over the years, I may have over-purchased an item or two only to see its expiration date come and go and in effect, waste money. As such, I've learned a lesson or two along the way. And I've even considered not buying in bulk and/or only buying said products when there's an actual need, regardless of whether the product is on sale or not. Moreover, I might even buy smaller sizes to spend money more judiciously and risk future financial loss by not padding our inventory when the opportunity presents itself just to keep the peace and minimize the wise cracks..

Now that you understand the context, let me explain how this simple exchange between a husband and a wife might lead to unintended consequences. As you regular readers know, I'm a cancer patient/survivor. A patient who 14-plus years ago was given a single-digit percentage chance of living beyond two years. When we originally asked the oncologist about the possibility I could survive beyond two years, he replied: "Could you be the one? Sure." He was not particularly enthusiastic, nor did he use the number one lightly. Though I've survived way beyond any expectations, I am nowhere near to being out of the woods. I am always grateful, perhaps even a bit surprised when I wake up every morning. I understand none of this was promised, and I may in fact be living on borrowed time.

Against that backdrop of yours truly not anticipating living too long back then ("13 month to two years" prognosis in 2009), I'm still trying (and have always tried) to live a relatively normal life and not to consider too much my rather tenuous hold on that normalcy. After all, I am not in remission. I'm still undergoing treatment and are scanned regularly. I take a daily bill - with very manageable side effects. However, the pill's predicted effectiveness window, of two to three years, is fast approaching. As of Oct. I will really be living on borrowed time by continuing a medicine past its presumed effective date. Actually, the window may have closed already as I'm two and a half years into this medicine. But does this effect my consuming ways? If I did buy bananas, the old advisory not to buy green bananas might be prudent; and to relate it to this column, who am I kidding by buying eight bars of soap. As my wife so lovingly said, I don't shower that much. Somehow, some way, I must muddle through this roller-coaster of time left.

But I want to think that I'm going to live for a while yet. When my wife asks me if my purchase of multiples of a particular product is really necessary; I hear, are you sure you're going to live long enough to use it? And in my head, I elaborate: does it make sense/cents for someone in my rather precarious position to buy so much of anything? Dina may mean well when she questions the numbers of what I buy. It may be as much a budget question as any, actually. Regardless I hear life expectancy and you (meaning me) doesn't have a normal one. And the last thing a cancer patient ever needs to hear is negativity - in any shape or form. Negativity/toxicity is a killer.

Any patient who has received similar life-changing/heart-stopping/mind-blowing diagnosis as I have will forever be changed by it. Your perspective on so many things, from "A" to "Z" changes without your permission and you become super-sensitive and hyper alert to any mention directly or indirectly of the future, a future that you might not have. And what's worse? You have no control over any of it. Cancer has a mind of its own and it's not listening to you.

I've found that having cancer is a 24/7 test. It's difficult enough knowing most of the answers to the test - euphemistically speaking. Survival can be a learning experience for sure. But sometimes, it's the questions that upset you the most.

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

AFAC Serves Record Number of Families

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The tagline for Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) reads “Serving 2,900 hundred families in need every week.” Just recently it had read “Serving 2,700 hundred families every week.” Now their most recent statistics indicate AFAC provided groceries to a historic number of families in a single week serving 3,055 families the week ending March 12, 2023.

AFAC’s Chief Executive Officer Charlie Meng says they were a little surprised but they had been watching the number of families served increase by about 100 families a month since January 2022 when inflation began to hurt their families. But he says they did not run out of anything and will not.

Meng says AFAC has seen a steady increase in the number of families since inflation took over as the dominant reason forcing families into food insecurity. When you couple the rising cost of essentials with the loss of the extra pandemic SNAP benefits, you find families are struggling despite an increase in the minimum wage.

Meng says the double whammy of increase in the number of families served by AFAC plus the impact of inflation is putting a huge strain on their budget. For instance a case of eggs that cost \$16.95 last year was



Stamp Out Hunger Day sponsored by letter carriers on the second Saturday in May donates food to AFAC.

recently \$66.70 a case. “We budgeted \$1.5 million for food purchases in FY2023 which ends June 30. We have already overspent the food line by \$300,000. By the end of the



Arlington Food Assistance truck loaded up for delivery.

fiscal year I expect that to be a \$500,000 overage.”

There are a number of different ways the community can support AFAC which can be seen by the tall cardboard food collection boxes located at schools, libraries, businesses and sometimes yards all across the county. A number of groups sponsor food drives, sometimes with a special theme like Easter baskets or baking supplies for the holidays. The most commonly requested items include canned tuna, beans, rice, cooking oil and non-sugar cereal.

“The goal is 1.5 million pounds of donated food. However, food donations are down since inflation has hit even our generous donors.” In addition to donations Meng says that AFAC purchases food from local and national wholesale food suppliers and this means they can buy three times as much with a dollar as a person could buy at a grocery store.

In addition to a number of special fundraisers like the annual golf tournament and the spring gala fundraiser, each year the Boy Scouts collect food door-to-door and contribute it to AFAC.

In addition, the Stamp Out Hunger Day sponsored by the letter carriers generally yields about 30,000 pounds of food. It is held the second Saturday of May and will fall on May 13 this year. “Hopefully it will be as good this year because we can really use the donations,” Meng says.

Cash contributions are also encouraged, and can be made online. <https://afac.org/donate/>

AFAC is an independent, community-based non-profit food pantry that provides dignified access to nutritious supplemental groceries to Arlington neighbors in need. AFAC has recently expanded its services by opening a site in Falls Church and another in the City of Alexandria.

ARLINGTON/ALEXANDRIA ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFS

E-CARE

E-CARE, Arlington’s twice annual environmentally friendly drop-off event, returns on Saturday, April 15, at Wakefield High School, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Residents can safely and quickly dispose of household hazardous materials and old electronics. For more details and a list of what is accepted, visit the County website at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Recycling-and-Trash/Household-Hazardous-Materials-HHM/E-CARE>.

The event is for Arlington residents only and no commercial waste will be accepted. Materials accepted include: Automotive fluids, Batteries, Car care products, Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), Corrosives (acids/caustics), Fire extinguishers, Flammable solvents, Fluorescent tubes, Fuels/petroleum products, Household cleaners, Lawn and garden chemicals, Mercury, Paint products (25-can limit), Photographic chemicals, Poisons (pesticides), Printer ink/toner cartridges, Propane gas cylinders (small hand-held or larger) and Swimming pool chemicals.

Show hours: Sunday, April 16, 2023, 10am-4pm

The Arlington Artists Alliance returns to the historic Hendry House at Fort C.F. Smith Park for “Spring Artful Weekend.” This show is a perennial favorite in the Arlington community, drawing hundreds of visitors annually. Spring Artful Weekend features artwork by 30+ Arlington Artists Alliance members and has been an annual show for the Arlington-based arts collective for over 20 years. With a large variety of art genres to choose from—paintings, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, glasswork, artist’s cards, and more—this show is perfect to kick-off Spring. This event is free and open to the public.

The Arlington Artists Alliance and Gallery Underground are supported in part by Arlington County through Arlington Cultural Affairs, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Amazon, the National Landing BID, JBG Smith, and Sotheby’s. Visit <http://www.arlingtonartistsalliance.org>

NORTHERN ALEXANDRIA NATIVE PLANT SALE

Saturday, April 29, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of The Church of St. Clement at 1701 N. Quaker Lane. (Masks are no longer required, but free masks will be available if you want one.) Come find native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade. Nine or more vendors from Virginia, Mary-

land, and Pennsylvania will be at this event, the largest native plant sale in the D.C. metro region.

Vendors are listed on the sale website at www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org. The sale is organized and run by volunteers. Questions? Contact Scott Knudsen at 571-232-0375 or cscottknudsen@gmail.com.

MASTER GARDENERS OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA APRIL 2023 PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

VCE-MGNV Virtual Classroom public education events for April 2023 are online and open to all. RSVP online at <https://mgmv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive the link to participate. Click on the event titles to RSVP for each event. If you can’t join a live online presentation, video recordings of the sessions will be posted to <https://mgmv.org/mg-virtual-classroom/>.

April is the month to plant and celebrate TREES! No need to wait for Earth Day (April 22nd) or Arbor Day (April 28th) to select and plant a tree to enrich your home landscape. The fact sheets on native trees within the MGNV Tried and True Native Plant Selections for the Mid-Atlantic are a rich online resource. After you have planted your tree, watch “Best Bets: Native Plants for Shade” on April 21 for ground covers that will protect your tree’s roots as well as providing their own beauty.

UPCOMING ELECTION

Democratic Primary Is June 20; Early Voting Begins May 5 2023

The list of candidates and their filing status will be updated as more information becomes available. Ballot order will be determined once the candidate has qualified.

<https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Elections>

First day of In-Person Early Voting: May 5, 2023

Last day to register to vote or update existing registration: May 30, 2023

Last day to apply for a mail ballot: 5pm, June 9, 2023

CANDIDATES AND OFFICES

State Senate - 40th District

Barbara A. Favola
James A. DeVita

Virginia House of Delegates - 2nd District

Adele Y. McClure
Kevin S. Saucedo Broach

Commonwealth’s Attorney

Joshua D. Katcher
Parisa Dehghani-Tafti

County Board

Maureen E. Coffey
Jonathan Dromgoole
Natalie U. Roy
Julius D. “JD” Spain, Sr.
G. O. “Tony” Weaver
Susan R. Cunningham

Sheriff

James A. M. Herring
Jose R. Quiroz, Jr.
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