

The Arlington Connection

Raising Funds To Serve Record Number

PAGE 4

One-hundred-and-two-year-old Betty Ochenrider chooses a colorful pottery bowl for her soup at the annual Arlington Food Assistance empty bowls fundraiser.

J.D. Spain Announces for Board

PAGE 3

Gold Level Bike Friendly

PAGE 11

OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 9 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 14-20, 2024

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Ash Wednesday Starts Early At Advent Lutheran Church

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

The sign outside Advent Lutheran Church on S. Arlington Ridge Road reads “Drive up ashes 2/14 8-10 am.” This will be the first day of Lent on which some Christians will have ashes applied to their foreheads in the form of a cross.

But Pastor Alexander Stall says, “I really start at 7:30 am but it wouldn’t fit on the sign. We’re hoping to get people driving by on their way to work. Last year the first people were five Latin men who parked on 23rd and all piled out of their truck on their way to their construction work. They walked all the way down the driveway.” He explains they stood in line just like they were getting ready to receive communion.

“This is not a frivolous thing. We’re trying to bring the appropriate mindset. This is a time to go inward, to reflect on the word, how we relate to God. A lot of people think [Lent] as a time of sacrifice and give something up. Maybe you don’t give up something. This isn’t about punishment; it’s about refreshment.” He continues, “Maybe you add something instead like more Bible reading or more praying.”

Stall says he will be there with a table and a little container of ashes. I pray with the people who come ... ‘Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.’ It is a reminder of our mortality.” Biblical reference can be found in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament where it says, “God formed



Advent Lutheran Church offers drive-up ashes for Ash Wednesday.

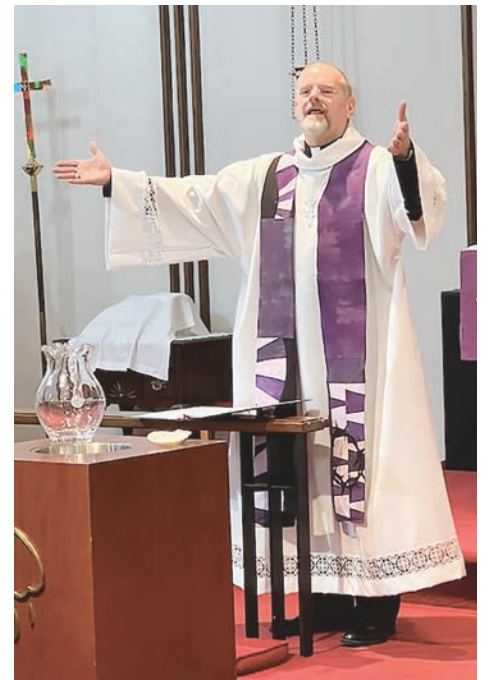
man from dust of the ground.” And Ecclesiastes where the words are found: “All go to one place. All are from the dust and to dust all return.”

This is Stall’s second year as a Lutheran pastor and his second drive up ashes ceremony. “I had to learn how to make ashes for Ash Wednesday. Everyone knows you use the palm leaves from last year’s Palm Sunday and you burn them and grind them up. But nobody tells you what to do next with adding the olive oil. My first batch was soup.”

Stall says there is a driving loop on 22nd

Street and he will have a table out in front of the church. “Some people will drive up and roll down their window, and others will choose to park and come up.” He says all people are welcome. “It is our way of reaching out into the community for a minute. Last year I got the idea at the last minute but we still had over 20 people — Methodist, Episcopal, some Catholics.” He says most of his congregation attends the 5:30 p.m. service.

“I used to be a Catholic but when I married my second wife she wasn’t Catholic and



Pastor Alexander Stall, Advent Lutheran Church

couldn’t participate in Communion. And since I was divorced I couldn’t participate either. So it just didn’t work for either of us and she finally convinced me to try her Lutheran church. At first I hated it.”

But now after 31 years in software development “and a tap on the shoulder” in 2014, he has gone to seminary and become a second career “old guy” Lutheran pastor. “I said you’ve got to be kidding but God wasn’t. I got fully engaged with Lutheran theology which is not about fearing God—I made one mistake, and it will cost me my soul,’ but instead God loves you and what do you do in response.

“I call Advent ‘the church on the hill.’ We’re located at one of the high spots in Arlington. I have never been happier; I love what I do.”

J.D. Spain Launches Campaign for Arlington County Board

15 year resident, activist and veteran wants a seat at the table.

BY EDEN BROWN
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Julius D. Spain Sr. is running for County Board again. J.D., as he is known to friends and supporters, filed his papers as a candidate on Feb. 12 and will formally launch his campaign on March 6 at a meeting of the Arlington Democrats. A retired military veteran, 15-year Arlington resident, and community leader, Spain told supporters, “I am committed to addressing the critical issues that affect us all, regardless of socioeconomic status. I believe in building a representative government where every voice matters and where the values of public health and safety, economic security, and environmental sustainability are at the forefront of our policy agenda.”

Spain, after working a full day at LMI, his day job, had then met with the Head

of Executive Education for George Mason University, met with the Board of the Dream Project, of which he is a member, went over to the Leadership Arlington Fundraiser as a co-chairman of the fundraising effort, and met with the NAACP Housing Committee from 8-9 pm before taking an hour to explain why he is running again. Supporters asked him to run, and he wants to, because he doesn’t see the commitment to community, particularly the health and safety of young people, in the current policy-making body.

Spain has been talking about mental health as an issue for youth in Arlington since 2019. He is the father of three APS alumni. He is still shaking his head over the Forum held on Feb. 7 where stakeholders like the NAACP, VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement), ASHPA (Arlington Schools Hispanic Parents Association) - in large numbers -

asked the county to allocate \$2 million for “high-quality, stimulating, free, and accessible after-school programs for students at up to five high schools and middle schools in some of Arlington’s more underserved communities,” in the hope of keeping students away from deadly drugs and substances. What was interesting about the “ask” is that students themselves spoke up and said they want to find something productive to do in the after school hours when young people are often on their own.

Spain wants better allocation of funds, given that 48.6 percent of the \$1.5 billion-plus County budget goes to Arlington Public Schools.

And that is just one of the reasons Spain is running in the June 18 primary. The last day to register to vote in the primary is Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

For more on Spain’s campaign, see: <https://www.jdforarlington.com>



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Julius D. Spain Sr. Put in his bid for the Arlington County Board last week. The primary for the seat is on June 18th.



Tickets are sold out for two seatings at AFAC's Empty Bowls Sunday, Feb. 11 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.



Violin majors from George Mason University entertain the crowd at Empty Bowls. From left: Paige Sharkey, Annette Lee, Telah Harper and Alyssa Cabassa.

AFAC Fills Up the Empty Bowls

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Betty Ochenrider is first in line again this year with her daughter and a friend at the annual Arlington Food Assistance (AFAC) fundraiser on Feb. 11. Ochenrider is 102-years-old and says she has been coming to the fundraiser for years. She hasn't yet decided which soup to try this year.

Each of the sittings at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church sells out early, and the regulars at this event have learned to show up early. For the price of a ticket Empty Bowls offers a selection of an original bowl from a table full of pottery produced by local artists. Each bowl can be filled with a soup donated by local businesses such as Brunswick stew from Sloppy Mama's BBQ, lobster bisque from Carlisle and lentil from Lebanese Taverna.

Each round table for eight is stocked well with a basket of breads, and a choice of many desserts follows including vanilla cupcakes, raisin filled oatmeal cookies, cream cheese frosted bites, vegan pecan bars and vegan gluten-free almond flour cookies.

Several violin majors from George Mason provide entertainment on a stage in the front of the room. Paige Sharkey says, "We'll be playing a mix of classical and popular songs today."

Volunteers dot the room in their green AFAC Volunteer T-shirts. Ryan Nargadon is a high school student who is there from Maryland with his job to make sure the tables are taken care of. "My dad works for TD bank, one of the donors for the event. He said 'get



First in line again this year are Betty Ochenrider with her daughter, Lisa Purrington (left) and a friend, Valeri Brock (middle).

ready at 9:30 tomorrow; you're coming with me." Bethany Panza is there from HB Woodlawn manning two tables for water, extra cups or whatever they need. She says she already has plenty of community service points, and this is her "carefree time."

Carol Burnett stands inside the front door waiting for whatever task is assigned. She comments that she used to be a reporter on a weekly newspaper in Sacramento. "I was a news reporter, editor, layout—you know you do everything on a small weekly."

Charles Meng, CEO of AFAC, provides the context for today's event. "During our last fiscal year that ended in June 2023, a total of 140,635 families came to one of our distribution sites, 6,586

unique families —16,003 individuals — 30 percent more families than the prior year. As a result we overspent our food purchase budget of \$1.3 million by \$600,000.

He says halfway through this year they have already served 88,000 families, 40 percent more than at the same time last year. "At this rate, we will once again overspend our nearly \$1.5 million food purchase budget by another \$1.2 million to serve nearly 180,000 families."

He explains that what is driving the 50-100 new families a month coming to AFAC's doors is inflation resulting in an increase in food prices of 25 percent in two years and the expiration of the supplemental benefits which families relied on that were given during

SEE AFAC FILLS UP, PAGE 12



AFAC offers a tableful of hand crafted pottery for each bowl of soup.

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.

ARLINGTON SPINS GOLD AS A BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

The League of American Bicyclists has recognized Arlington County as a Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC).

This marks the first time Arlington has received a Gold-level BFC status, an honor that recognizes the County for a commitment to building quality biking infrastructure as part of its transportation network and implementing programs that help all riders feel welcomed and encouraged.

Arlington was a Bronze-level BFC in 2003 and moved up to Silver-level in 2007, sustaining that status until this Gold-level award.

Each year, the League of American Bicyclists evaluates applicants across five categories to assign a four-year designation. Arlington is among 480 American municipalities that are committed to creating an environment for biking that is safe, equitable, and accessible to all. This year, Arlington's standout qualities included innovative infrastructure changes, educational programs to onboard new riders, and a strong culture of biking among residents.

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/s2FuFdaYWdZm4t-Pw2.

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.ourladyqueenof-peace.org for more.

ONGOING

Create a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification program assists homeowners in restoring their home's natural habitat by providing information on sustainable gardening practices. These practices include using native plants, removing invasive species, reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers, and creating space for native flora and fauna. Visit audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1/ for more.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



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
WASHINGTON	18852	19	PORTERFIELD HWY	LITTLE MOCCASIN CREEK	1/22/2024
GREENE	8985	624	BEASLEY ROAD	BLUE RUN	1/17/2024
GREENE	8996	633	AMICUS ROAD	SWIFT RUN	1/17/2024
GREENE	8997	633	AMICUS ROAD	PARKER BRANCH	1/17/2024
GREENE	9002	634	MUTTON HOLLOW ROAD	SWIFT RUN	1/17/2024
BLAND	3057	605	ROUTE 0605	BIG WALKER CREEK #2	1/8/2024
GRAYSON	8754	58	HIGHLANDS PKWY	MILL CREEK	1/4/2024

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.

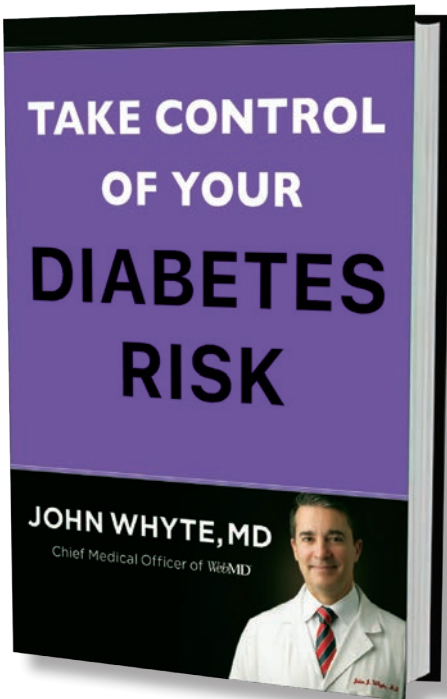
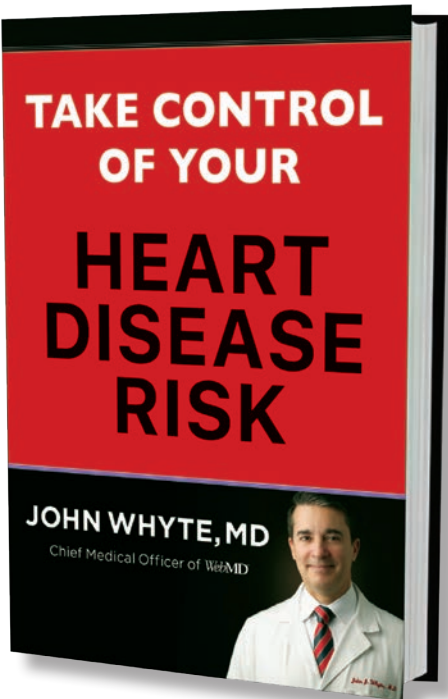
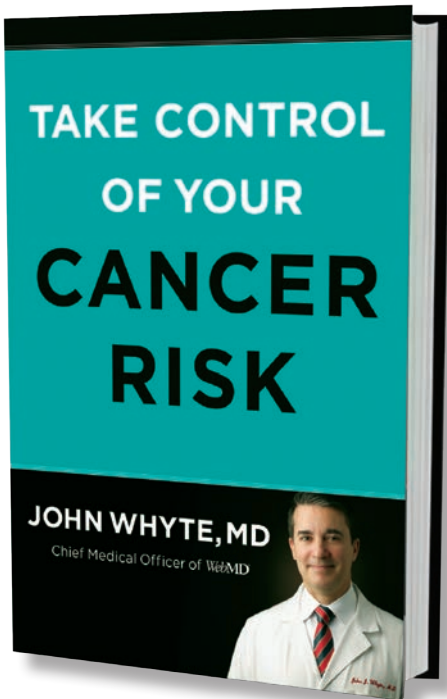
For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and 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.

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.

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Senate Version of Potomac Yard Arena Proposal Hits a Speedbump — or Roadblock?

BY SENATOR ADAM EBBIN

Last November, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced his proposal to relocate the Washington Wizards NBA team and the Washington Capitals NHL team from DC across the river to a \$2 billion arena to be built in the City of Alexandria's Potomac Yard neighborhood. There is no question that the arena and entertainment district proposal, which also includes a separate 3,000 capacity concert venue, is a unique opportunity for Alexandria to diversify its tax base.

The House of Delegates version of the bill, HB 1514, sponsored by Del. Luke Torian of Prince William was recommended on 17-3 vote by the House of Delegates Appropriations Committee for the consideration of the full House.

The Senate cognate of that bill, SB 718, sponsored by Sen. Scott Surovell of Mount Vernon was not docketed for a hearing before this Tuesday's crossover deadline for all bills to pass in their house of origin. Sen. Louise Lucas, chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee reasoned that the bill put too much risk on the Commonwealth, possibly leaving taxpayers on the hook for the bonds issued for financing. Lucas also pointed out that the project's proposed financing was not viable without the public bond issuance. She also said it would



be atypical and precedent-setting to use the Commonwealth's contingent moral obligation debt to fund a private economic development project.

Even though the bill has not yet been considered by the traditional pre-crossover deadline, the House version of the bill could advance and be considered by the Senate — and the Senate rules do allow for the governor to send

down another bill at any time. The project was also included in the governor's proposed budget.

In my opinion, it is critical we don't rush to approve a project that would impact generations of Virginians without answers to important questions. Three components must be in any bill I could consider supporting. First, the protection of the communities that would be most directly impacted — including a deep investment in affordable housing to avoid driving out families who live in nearby neighborhoods. Second, Northern Virginians need a real commitment from the Commonwealth to the long-term health of the Metro system. And third, I need confidence that the project would include meaningful and binding agreements to create good-paying jobs, in construction, service and hospitality through Project Labor and Labor Peace Agreements.

The governor's transportation report released

from the Kimley Horn firm contains a number of potential improvements — most of which have merit. Unfortunately, the report, just like the governor's introduced budget released in December, includes zero commitment to long-term funding of the Metro system. Unfortunately, the only commitment the governor has mustered is one to consider budget amendments for short-term Metro funding. The report predicts that Metro could in the future support 50% of the arena traffic to Potomac Yard. Unfortunately, this could never be achieved unless Metro receives long-term, sustainable funding from the Commonwealth.

As I said, for this proposal to win my vote, it must do three things. First, enhance the community's quality of life experience, not harm it. Second, provide good-paying jobs and careers. And third, the project must fit hand-in-glove with a long-term transportation vision for our thriving but traffic-choked region. I prefer that consideration of this proposal not be rushed because it is clear to me that adequate answers have not yet been provided to fundamental questions.

For my part, as long as the Potomac Yard proposal is alive, I'll keep pushing for answers on transportation, affordable housing, and worker protections.

It is my continued honor to represent the people of the 39th Senate District. My legislative email address is SenatorEbbin@senate.virginia.gov.

NEWS BRIEFS

Arlington Police Arrest Crystal City Rape Suspect

The Arlington County Police Department's Special Victims Unit reports the arrest of an Arlington man following a sexual assault investigation in Crystal City. Vernon Koning, 40, was arrested and charged with Rape and Strangulation. He is being held without bond in the Arlington County Detention Facility.

At approximately 2:15 a.m. on Feb. 8, police were dispatched to the report of a rape. The preliminary investigation indicates the female victim was walking in the area when she became engaged in conversation with the suspect. The suspect led the victim to an outdoor area in the 200 block of 12th Street S. where he sexually and physically assaulted her. Following the assault, the victim ran from the scene and sought assistance in the 900 block of Long Bridge Drive.

A review of evidence and witness interviews led detectives to

the identity of the suspect. He was taken into custody following a traffic stop on the evening of Feb. 8.

This remains an active criminal investigation. Anyone with information that may assist the investigation is asked to contact Detective Maldonado at 703-228-4194 or mmmaldonado@arlingtonva.us.

Black History Month Around Arlington

❖ Need a road map to learn more about Black History in Arlington? The African American Heritage Sights and Experiences brochure has you covered.

❖ Do you know the story behind the transformation of the John Robinson Jr. Town Square? See the entire makeover and hear from the artist.

❖ After nearly two years, construction is almost done on Arlington's historic Fire Station 8, home of the Hall's Hill/High View Park Volunteer Fire Department.

❖ Did you know that 65 years ago this month, Arlington's Stratford Junior High School became the first Virginia public school to desegregate?

❖ Arlington Library is honoring author James Baldwin. His novel, "The Fire Next Time" is available

in unlimited access on Libby, free with your library card.

❖ A new documentary focuses on Virginia and the importance historical accuracy. Join a screening of Current: A Descendant's Journey for Truth on 2/24

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
arlington@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Shirley Ruhe
Contributing Photographer and Writer
slrbc@aol.com

Eden Brown
Contributing Writer
arlington@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Art/Design:
Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

Naloxone (Narcan) can save the life of someone who is overdosing, if given in time. Anyone who assists a person in need is protected from liability by the Good Samaritan Law. Naloxone (Narcan) is available without a prescription for a fee at all pharmacies. Obtain it for free by attending a REVIVE! training. Contact Emily Sigveland at 703-228-0913 or esigveland@arlingtonva.us or visit health.arlingtonva.us/opioid-awareness/ for available training sessions. The Chris Atwood Foundation also offers training to the public. Visit www.chrisatwoodfoundation.org/naloxone for details.

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

Arlington County, in partnership with the Human Rights Commission's Equality Task Force, has launched a web page with resources for the LGBTQ community. The new webpage compiles LGBTQ resources on a variety of topics, including homelessness and housing, domestic violence and sexual assault, and health. There are also topics specifically for teens and youth — such as scholarship opportunities and school clubs — as well as ones targeted at seniors and older adults, such as SAGE. Visit topics.arlingtonva.us/lgbtq-resources.

Aging Matters. 2-3 p.m. Tuesdays on WERA 96.7 LP FM on Arlington's community radio station. Each week host Cheryl Beversdorf interviews individuals with expertise about a broad array of aging related topics affecting the lives of older adults and their loved ones. Visit www.facebook.com/aging-matterswera to listen to programs. MICHAEL W. SMITH Returns to The Birchmere, May 19, 2022, 7:30pm, Alexandria, VA.

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

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

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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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.

Valentine's Day afternoon soiree, enjoy sweet refreshments and listen to love songs performed by pianist Valerie Welsh, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912890-10.

History roundtable participants will discuss the impact of unsuccessful rebellions, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 11:15 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912402-06.

Discussion of current events in Spanish impacting the Latino community, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Led by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 912402-17. Must have at least intermediate knowledge of Spanish.

The study of words, the history of English and languages as a whole, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 100 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912402-32 or virtual, registration # 912402-33.

Avoiding guardianship and conservatorship, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 11 a.m., virtual. Presented by Elder Law Attorney Ed Zetlin. Registration # 912404-05.

Open art studio for artists who work at their own pace in a collaborative space, Wednesday, Feb. 14 and Friday, Feb. 16, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Drop-in

Records and root beer floats, bring

favorite music on vinyls or just show up to listen, Thursday, Feb. 15, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 5+ Center. Registration # 912801-02.

Canasta, easy to learn card game, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 10 a.m. -12 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Prepare for hiking and camping, join outdoor enthusiast Carmen Shippy for important tips, Thursday, Feb. 15, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-20.

How to grow fruit trees in Arlington, presented by Urban Forest Manager Vincent Verweij, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2 p.m. virtual. Registration # 912400-29.

Tips for capturing great video, presented by Video Production Manager Jeremy Carpel, Thursday, Feb. 15, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912403-06 or virtual, registration # 912403-07.

Acoustic hour at Aurora Hills 55+ Center featuring the Rockin' Chairs Band, Friday, Feb. 16, 1 p.m. Registration # 912301-03.

Genealogy 101, led by experienced genealogist Eileen Bogdanoff, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 11:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Share information and research tools. Registration # 912402-03.

Introduction to the ukulele by instructor Sandy O'Shea, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 4 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Limited ukuleles available. Registration # 912304-06.

Manatees off the coast of Virginia, Park Naturalist Rachel Joffey will discuss manatee biology, their migration plus other information, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2 p.m., virtual. Registration # 912400-25.

Navigating Medicare, presented by Dr.Salama Freed, assistant professor of health policy and management, GWU, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Discussion includes enrollment options and the latest changes. Registration # 912503-01.

Opera appreciation group to hear musical selections from "Macbeth" by Giuseppe Verdi, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Professional commentary by George Cecchetti. Registration # 912300-07.

Piano lounge and sing-along with pianist Valerie Welsh focusing on love songs, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 4 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912304-17.

Cornhole practice, keep your skills sharp for 2024 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics or just come and game, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 9:30 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Reg-

istration # 912205-02.

Paint and sip from your home while you recreate artworks on display at area museums with Community Arts Programmers Jim Halloran and Jennifer Droblyen, Thursday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912303-15.

Introduction to basic Spanish vocabulary, grammar and conversational phrases, Thursday, Feb. 22, 12:30 p.m., virtual. Taught by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 912650-06.

Navigating the 55+ Guide efficiently, sign up for one-on-one advice and questions answered Wednesday, Feb. 21, 1:30-3 p.m., registration # 912400-37 or 3-4:30 p.m., registration # 912400-38. Both at Langston-Brown 55+ Center.

55+ Travel group to visit D.C.'s Textile Museum and its "Fights for Freedom" exhibit showcasing D.C. figures and historical moments from anti-slavery campaigns to the Civil Rights movement, Friday, Feb. 23. Cost \$10, Arlington resident; \$12, non-resident. Registration # 902402-07.

Get moving with Dance Bingo, fun game that combines cardio dancing with luck of the draw bingo, Friday, Feb. 23, 11:15 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 912600-06.

Movie matinee, "A Love Song" (2023) (PG), Friday, Feb. 23, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912804-07.

Just beneath the surface of three artists, learn their history and techniques, Friday, Feb. 23, 10 a.m., virtual. Presented by Community Arts Programmer Jim Halloran. Registration # 912302-06.

Mood disorders and physical health, program provided by Emma Stapp from George Washington Institute for Brain Health and dementia, Monday, Feb. 26, 10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration #912500-07.

Scale down, a weight loss support group, Monday, Feb. 26, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Short story reading and discussion of "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" by Richard Wright, Monday, Feb. 26, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center, registration # 912402-26 or virtual, 912402-27.

Aurora Hills 55+ Center book club participants will discuss "The Color of Water" by James McBride, Monday, Feb. 26, 11:30 a.m. Drop-in.

Secrets revealed of famous artists including secretive techniques, presented by Community Arts Programmer, Jennifer Droblyen, Monday, Feb. 26, virtual. Registration # 912392-09.

Getting a good night's sleep strat-

egies for developing better sleep habits, presented by Kate Chutuape, Virginia Hospital Center, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 11 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912500-08.

It takes a village, hear Arlington Neighborhood Village's director Wendy Zenker describe the village concept and ways to get involved, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 11:30 a.m., via Zoom at Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912400-01 or virtual, # 912400-02.

Escape Room, a team activity to solve a series of clues and puzzles in order to "escape", Tuesday, Feb. 27, 7:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center, registration # 912600-02 or virtual, #912600-03.

55+ Travel group will visit the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir which encompasses the Regular Army, the Army Reserves and the Army National Guard, Wednesday, Feb. 28. Cost \$11, Arlington resident; \$13, non-resident. Registration # 902402-08.

Give line dancing a try, learn the basics prior to joining a beginners class, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 10:15 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

How snakes and humans can co-exist, presented by Rachel Joffey, Park Naturalist at Gulf Branch Nature Center, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-26.

Local history discussion, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration #912402-08.

Current events discussion in Spanish which are impacting the Latino community, Wednesday, Feb. 28, 11 a.m., Lubber Run +55 Center. Facilitated by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 912402-18.

Bilingual Trivia in English and Spanish, Thursday, Feb. 29, 3 p.m., virtual, registration # 912600-18.

Arlington's Halls Hill, presented by lifelong resident Sandra Green who will recap the history of the neighborhood and her experiences, Thursday, Feb. 29, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-30.

Fortunes in the attic, find out by sending a photo of an item to sash-ton@arlingtonva.us prior to program, Thursday, Feb. 29, 8:30 a.m., virtual, registration # 912400-10. Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen will research the item plus explain how to identify authentic antiques.

Traveling with grandchildren, tips from Jacque Fallert, Road Scholar Ambassador Program, Thursday, Feb. 29, 11:30 a.m. via Zoom at Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-17 or virtual, # 912400-18.

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ENTERTAINMENT



The Arlington Choral presents "The Stranger" on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at Westover Baptist Church in Arlington.

ONGOING

MoCA Arlington's Innovation Studio + Store is now Open. At 525 14th Street South, Arlington. MoCA Arlington's Innovation Studio + Store is the museum's second location and is designed to connect visitors with contemporary art and artists! At this 1,500 sq. ft. retail space, you can shop, attend special programs and drop-in sessions, meet the artist-in-residence working within the studio, and make art of your own! The space complements the work of the flagship museum and will inspire you, while you experience contemporary art in an interactive setting. Visit anytime Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

JAN. 30 TO FEB. 23

Wish You Were Here: A Solo Show by Medina Roberts. At Gallery Underground, Arlington. In a series of large-scale paintings depicting D.C.'s City Center, are included the words "Wish You Were Here" — painted in dedication to Syd Barrett, the original front man of Pink Floyd, who, in 1968, left the group after his mental and physical health struggles due to heavy drug use. The artist will donate a portion of her sales from this show to the Addiction Policy and Practice Program at the Georgetown University Master of Science department.

THURSDAY/FEB. 15

Rock Spring Garden Club Meeting: Beyond Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme: Learn to Grow and Use a Dozen Unusual Culinary Herbs with Peg Riccio. At Little Falls Presbyterian Church, Lower Level Friendship Hall, 6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington. Learn how to grow a dozen unusual culinary herbs. For each herb, discover the best time and method to start, cultural requirements, harvesting and preserving techniques, and methods for using them in the kitchen. Visit <https://rockspringgardenclub.com/>

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FEB. 18

Free Pop Up Shop. 2-5 p.m. At Washington-Liberty High School cafeteria. Help your closet and the climate by getting free, gently used clothes. Arlington Students for Climate Action and other community organizations will host a Free Pop Up Shop of lightly used clothing. All are welcome. The event is designed to make clothing more sustainable by recycling clothing that is no longer needed. To contribute clothes, drop off washed, clean, gently used clothes of any size at Wakefield, H-B Woodlawn, Yorktown, Arlington Career Center, and Washington-Liberty, Central Library, or Casual Adventure before Feb. 17.

FEB. 16 TO MARCH 24

"Romeo & Juliet." At Synetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Set amidst the whirling gears of a giant clock, Shakespeare's timeless tale of star-crossed lovers unfolds as a bitter family feud sends the pair on a race against an ill-fated destiny. With masterful physicality and choreography, Synetic Theater's Romeo and Juliet presents a unique and stunningly visual interpretation of a classic story, capturing emotion with every movement. Visit www.synetictheater.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 24

Genealogy – Why and How. 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. At Lubber Run Community Center, 300 N. Park Drive, Arlington. Presented by Arlington AAUW. Speaker is Eileen Bogdanoff, genealogist and Ancestry.com expert.

MONDAY/FEB. 26

Black History Month Documentary. 6:30-7:45 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy Street, Arlington. An abbreviated screening of the documentary, *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* (1912-1987). This documentary illuminates the life and work of Rustin, a visionary activist and strategist called "the unknown hero" of the

civil rights movement.

SATURDAY/MARCH 9

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle. Hosted by Christian Hunt, this amazing experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for March's show is the hilarious Jay Agbon. Visit capitalcityshowcase.com

FRIDAY/MARCH 15

Beyond The Table: A Holistic Look at Healthy Eating. 2 p.m. At Arlington Central Library, Arlington. Healthy eating starts with identifying safe and nutritious sources of food, creating balanced menus, practicing sound food safety and storage practices, as well as connecting with others at mealtime to nourish our souls. Join Alison Neov and Alex Freiman, Registered Dietitians with Goodwin Living, who will talk through a holistic approach to planning, eating & enjoying healthful meals. They will be providing a cooking demonstration of easy to prepare foods and recipes for the audience. Register: 703-558-6859 or seniorhealth@vhchealth.org

SATURDAY/MARCH 16

Arlington Choral's "The Stranger." 5 p.m. At Westover Baptist Church, 1125 Patrick Henry Drive, Arlington. The Stranger: This musical journey was crafted to raise awareness for the plight of refugees worldwide and commissioned by the Together in Hope project, whose mission is changing lives through music with a purpose. Negin Khwalpak, an Afghan conductor, will be featured in this concert. The performance is presented in partnership with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, and will also include musicians from the refugee community.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Section 4(f) *de minimis* Impact Four Mile Run Park

Arlington Ridge Road/Mount Vernon Avenue Bridge Reconstruction Project

Arlington County and City of Alexandria

Pursuant to the requirements of 23 CFR 774.5, notice is hereby given that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is accepting written comments regarding Arlington County's preliminary concurrence with the Federal Highway Administration's Section 4(f) applicability criteria for *de minimis* impact for a 0.08-acre temporary easement on Four Mile Run Park for the captioned project.

Review the Section 4(f) *de minimis* documentation online at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Project-Types/Transportation-Projects/Arlington-Ridge-Road-Mount-Vernon-Avenue-Bridge> or by appointment only during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call 703-259-1729 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Submit your written comments to Mr. Arun So at the above address by **March 1, 2024**. You may also email Arun.So@vdot.virginia.gov. Please reference "Mt Vernon Ave Bridge *de minimis*" 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 as amended. If you need special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

State Project: U000-M10-R21, C501, P101, R201
UPC: 118306
Federal: BFP-5B01 (442)

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FROM PAGE 7

St. Visit library.arlingtonva.us/locations/central-library or call 703-228-5990.

Arlington Rotary Club Lunches.

Thursdays, 12 - 1:30 p.m. now on Zoom. Organization brings together political and business leaders for humanitarian services. Listen to guest speakers on various topics of interest. Visit <https://arlingtonrotaryclub.org/>

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

Arlington PFLAG Community Group. 7:30-9 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, PFLAG promotes the equality and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people and their families. Meets at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard. Contact arl.pflag@gmail.com for more or go to www.pflagdc.org. Helmsmen Toastmasters meet Thursdays, 7:30-8:45 a.m. at Pentagon Library and Conference Center. Toastmasters is an international organization that helps everyone speak, think, lead and listen better. Most clubs are meeting online at this time. Contact Carl Sabath carl.e.sabath.civ@mail.mil or 703-695-2804 or Elizabeth Femrite elizabeth.m.femrite.civ@mail.mil or 571-256-8674.

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

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

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

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. Visit salary.aauw.org.

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Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH APRIL 12, 2024

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the General Assembly to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia between 1954 and 1964 due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance. Beginning in 2024, the scholarship program is extended to their descendants. The program is now open to eligible applicants for the 2024-2025 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV

The ribbon cutting at Velocity Bike Coop in Arlington, one of many bike-friendly businesses here.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Arlington Named Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community

The League of American Bicyclists has recognized Arlington County as a Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community.

This marks the first time Arlington has received a Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community status, an honor that recognizes the County for a commitment to building quality biking infrastructure as part of its transportation network and implementing programs that help all riders feel welcomed and encouraged.

Arlington was a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2003 and moved up to Silver-level in 2007, sustaining that status until this Gold-level award.

Each year, the League of American Bicyclists evaluates applicants across five categories to assign a four-year designation. Arlington is among 480 American municipalities that are committed to creating an environment for biking that is safe, equitable, and accessible to all. This year, Arlington's standout qualities included innovative infrastructure changes, educational programs to onboard new riders, and a strong culture of biking among residents.

Infrastructure and Planning for Safer Bike Travel

Since the Silver-level designation in 2019, the County has made steady biking advancements in the program's Engineering and Planning categories, bolstered by the County Board's 2021 adoption of the first Vision Zero Action Plan, aimed at preventing transportation injuries no matter the means of travel. New pieces of the Crystal City Bike Network continue to take shape along with multimodal planning for major corridors that will improve upon bike infrastructure.

The County prioritizes bikeway and trail projects that equitably connect neighbor-

hoods separated by physical barriers and support environmental resilience, mixed-use development while reducing potential physical dangers.

Additionally, School Slow Zones launched in 2022, which designate areas within 600 feet of a school for reduced speed limits and infrastructure to help foster safe travel by students and families. After piloting School Slow Zones, speed limits were permanently reduced to 20 MPH on 58 local street segments within 28 school zones. The next phase will reduce speeds around the remaining 18 schools by summer 2024.

Another Arlington innovation: Key and Campbell elementary school families established "bike buses," in which students bicycle to school as a group, adding fun, exercise and visibility. Biking has also grown post-pandemic among Arlington's older students, with several schools reporting the "good" problem of bike racks at full capacity by first bell.

Creating Resources to Include More Riders

As a co-founder of the region's bikeshare network, Arlington County participates in Capital Bikeshare's Community Partners Program, giving low-income adults heading to work, school, and elsewhere discounted access to easy-to-find, easy-to-borrow rides.

Bike Arlington, the bicycling education arm of Arlington County Commuter Services, takes outreach further by partnering with organizations like the Arlington Food Assistance Center and Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing to educate clients on the many benefits of biking, even hosting bike tours to help with comfort levels.

The Bike Arlington's team – accredited by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association – offers multiple adult bike classes each year

as it continues to expand equitable access to the local bike movement. Just last fall, 158 adults took part — from beginners to the "it's been-a-while" crowd. Women made up 97 of the total, and 92 described themselves as people of color.

Fostering a Community of Biking in Arlington

The award-winning efforts of County biking planning staff are only possible with the contributions of dedicated community members. The Bicycle Advisory Committee and Transportation Commission members meet regularly with County planners and engineers to advise on issues that affect the feasibility and accessibility of biking in Arlington. Additionally, community groups like Sustainable Mobility for Arlington County and South Arlington Slow Riders contribute to a culture that prioritizes biking as practical transportation.

Businesses in Arlington also contribute to a two-wheel culture in Arlington as destinations that are reachable by bike or facilitate bike commuting by their employees. Of the 63 Bike Friendly Businesses in Virginia recognized by the League, 49 are in Arlington County.

Serving Up the Car-Free Diet

Arlington's new Gold-level status as a Bicycle Friendly Community follows the County being named in 2022 one of only five "Walk Friendly" Platinum communities in the nation, the highest such honor from the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center. Biking and walking, along with public transportation, have long been the key components of Arlington's Car-Free Diet, which for more than two decades has encouraged residents to enjoy a sustainable lifestyle of getting around.

Accommodate This



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Cancer hasn't changed the way most people greet me. Typically, it's the standard "Hello. How are you doing?" Occasionally, the look on their faces or even their body language will give them, and their concern/fear for me, away. Usually, I will respond; accordingly, not too many details though, but something of substance. How do you address a person who's not fine? Most of the time however, people treat me "normally," or at least treat my like other non-cancer/non-terminal types in their social circle. Rarely do I take their questions as encouragement to drone on about my latest cancer blip. For most people who know me and my diagnosis, I must be prodded a bit to speak about it. It's way too heavy a subject (my likely premature death) for introductory-type conversation.

The other day, I saw a good friend who's aware of my condition/challenges and to whom I've uttered some of my usual responses to innocent queries: "Glad to be here. Glad to be anywhere. I'd be crazy to complain," et cetera, as but a few examples. He responded respectfully/sincerely saying I should really be graded on a curve (allowing for my miscellaneous but likely adverse consequences). Immediately, I said "Absolutely! I couldn't agree more."

Let's be honest. Fifteen-year cancer survivors don't exactly grow on trees. And if that survivor, hasn't stopped treatment during this entire decade plus (since Feb. 2009), which I haven't, there's going to be some damage; mentally, physically, spiritually, and/or emotionally. Moreover, as the old joke says: the experience is going to leave a mark. It certainly has. To invoke my friend Frank's self-assessment: "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in." Nevertheless, I am hardly 'normal. After nearly 15 years of cancer treatment, I'm not exactly a shell of my former self, but neither am I fit as a fiddle. As such, I'm always grasping at anything that can lighten the emotional load of being a cancer patient in treatment. And Jim's suggestion about grading my health on a curve resonated. Compared to non-cancer/non-serious health survivors? "Damn straight" I should.

A "terminal" diagnosis. A "13 month to two years" prognosis. An apparent mistake/misdiagnosis which caused my oncologist to treat me for non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV (non-curable) when the revisionist culprit was slow-moving papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV (curable). But that's a reality, a what-if scenario that given my life now, I can't (to quote the late Don Imus) get "torqued" off about. I must leave it in the past and be grateful for the present/future. A 'present/future' that was not at all guaranteed to me when Team Lourie first met my oncologist and heard my original diagnosis.

And to live in the present, I can't revisit the past. I must accept my circumstances which also means, I must accept the fact that I'll never be normal again – compared to my fellow man, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's sort of like some sports (ski racing, horse racing and/or track and field) where adjustments are made to the starting point or time or weight to make the competition fair for all the participants. Not that I feel as if I'm in a race/constant competition with my fellow man, but I do feel, I am due some accommodations: "This is as fast as I can walk." "Give me a sec., I can't get up that quickly." "Sorry. I'm tired. I need to go lie down." And so many more. Despite this reality, I want to be treated as normally as possible. However, practically speaking, I can't be treated like everyone else. I need to be treated like me: a 15-year cancer survivor still undergoing treatment." In summary, who am I kidding? I haven't been normal for years. 'Normal' left the building in early 2009.

Not that I'm ever meant to feel bad because of my deficits or lack of mobility (bending over/tying my shoelaces is torture) but when you're slowing the group down, it's obvious who's the culprit. Not that I can do much about what ails me, I can live with it. I've been living with it/them for almost 15 years. It seems more difficult for other people though. I must modify expectations for myself, and others must do the same. I'm happy to be involved and I promise I won't play the cancer card (the ultimate Get-out-of-jail-free card/excuse for not doing a million things). Nevertheless, just because I don't talk too much about what it's like having cancer, possibly being misdiagnosed, and likely dying before my time doesn't mean I'm not preoccupied with it. It just means I'm comfortable with it. And the sooner others are as comfortable with it as I am, the sooner the positive vibrations I'll receive in kind will help get me to the finish line with an attitude with which I can be proud.

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



One-hundred-and-two-year-old Betty Ochenrider chooses a colorful pottery bowl for her soup. "I like it because it's different. It's happy."



Lobster bisque seems to be a favorite at Empty Bowls although Alana Rafiee, AFAC Marketing and Communications Associate says, "I couldn't wait to get another bowl of the Brunswick stew this year. I've been looking forward to it all day."



Charles Meng, CEO of Arlington Food Assistance Center, describes the need for financial assistance with a record high number of low-income families coming to AFAC this year.

AFAC Fills Up the Empty Bowls

FROM PAGE 4

the pandemic. "Many are further behind than before the pandemic. Unfortunately it will be years before they can claw their way back."

Meng thanked the generous community in Arlington that helps

support the AFAC mission and the 2,200 volunteers who last year gave 44,000 hours of service as well as the AFAC staff who receive and purchase the 5 million pounds of food—store, inventory, package and distribute it.

AFAC is a non-profit organization distributing free nutritious supplemental groceries to people in need weekly in Arlington. Currently they serve over 3,700 families a week including one-third children and 12 percent elderly.

AFAC distributed 5 million pounds of food to their families last year with the purchase of 3.5 million pounds of food and donated food of 1.5 million pounds from around the country. AFAC receives no Federal or state funding, and

92.7 percent of the budget is raised from donations and contributions; food drives held by faith groups, businesses, families, Scouts; and fundraisers such as Empty Bowls held throughout the year.

For more information: afac.org

Another Global Headquarters for Arlington

CoStar Group will move its global headquarters to Rosslyn. CoStar Group, a leading global provider of online real estate marketplaces, information, and analytics in the property markets, has purchased 1201 Wilson Boulevard, a 560,000-square-foot office building known as Central Place Tower, and will move into the location in late 2024. CoStar Group will occupy 150,000 square feet of commercial office space and employ 650 workers in Arlington. Included in the S&P 500 Index and the NASDAQ 100, CoStar Group employs over 6,200 people globally and is comprised of notable industry products and online marketplaces covering all aspects of real estate, including CoStar, LoopNet, Apartments.com, Homes.com and STR.

Earlier this week, Gov. Glenn Youngkin approved a \$1.25 million grant from the

Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund to assist Arlington County with this project. The Governor also approved \$3.5 million in funds from the Virginia Economic Development Incentive Grant.

"Virginia's a great choice for a new corporate headquarters location, and we are excited that CoStar Group ... sees the economic advantage in moving to the Commonwealth," said Youngkin.

"The financially strategic acquisition of this building will provide the perfect home for the more than 500 employees at our current headquarter," said Andy Florance, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of CoStar Group.

"CoStar Group's outright purchase of the building signifies confidence in our commercial real estate market, which is key to our ongoing efforts to reduce office vacancies," said Ryan Touhill, Director, Arlington Economic Development.

Expediting Improvements to Rosslyn's Gateway Park

CoStar Group will pay \$13,951,900 to Arlington County to obtain sole use of the Observation Deck at 1201 Wilson Boulevard. With this payment, the County Manager will ask that the County Board act on CoStar's land use applications and allow them exclusive use of the Observation Deck. In addition, the County Manager will propose that these funds be allocated towards the reconstruction of Rosslyn's Gateway Park as part of the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan. The extra funding will allow for the entire Rosslyn neighborhood's prized public space to be completed nearly a decade soon-

er than planned. The almost \$14 million in funding from CoStar Group will pay a significant portion of the design and construction of the park's west end — a benefit for Arlington County and its residents. Once approved, Gateway Park's east and west sides will be designed and constructed as one project informed by an upcoming community engagement process. Once the company submits the required land use applications and works through the public process, the County will take the necessary actions to vacate the Observation Deck easement.

CoStar Group joins businesses with headquarters of note in Arlington, including AES, Amazon, Boeing, Nestlé and RTX. Given CoStar Group's real estate industry expertise, the decision to purchase 1201 Wilson Boulevard and remain in the region is a significant indicator of Arlington's premier location.