

The Arlington Connection

Children's and Teens' Connection Part 2

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Artwork by Mae Sanchious,
first grade, Alexandria
Country Day School

Virginia Food Will Make Your Table Sing

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Shelters Are Full for Hypothermia Season

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JANUARY 10-16, 2024

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Understanding antisemitism, presented by Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky, director, Intergroup Relations for the Jewish Community Relations Council for Greater Washington, Thurs., Jan. 11, 3 p.m., virtual. Q&A to follow. Registration # 912400-33.

History roundtable group to discuss the impact of major weather events, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 11:15 a.m., Virtual. Registration # 912402-05.

The study of words and the English language, join a group discussion facilitated by volunteer Steve Shapiro, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 10:30 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center, registration # 912402-30 or virtual, registration # 912402-31.

Learn how your estate could be affected by long term care choices, presented by Elder Law Attorney Ed Zetlin, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 11 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912404-03.

Beginner quilling, learn how to create beautiful images from paper strips, Thursday, Jan. 11, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Materials and tools provided. Registration # 912310-02.

Trivia Night, test your knowledge of 2023, Thursday, Jan. 11, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912600-16.

Fortune in the Attic, learn about identifying authentic antiques with Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen, prior to program send a photo of an item to sashton@arlingtonva.us to be researched and discussed, Thursday, Jan. 11, 8:30 a.m., virtual. Registration # 912400-09.

Introduction to basic Spanish vocabulary, grammar and conversational phrases, Thursday, Jan. 11, 12:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center, virtual. Taught by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 912650-03.

Join the Bunco Bunch, Friday, Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center, to play this dice game of luck. Registration # 912600-10.

Explore painting with Community arts programmer Jim Halloran, Friday, Jan. 12, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. No experience needed, all materials provided. Registration # 912303-05.

Genealogy 101 with genealogist Eileen Bogdanoff, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 11:30

a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Share information and research tools. Registration # 912402-02.

55+ Travel group will visit “The Sky is the Limit” exhibit at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Wednesday, Jan. 17. Cost \$45, Arlington resident; \$52, non-resident. Registration # 902401-04.

Piano lounge and sing-along with pianist Valerie Welsh, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 4 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Folk, folk rock and soft rock featured. Registration # 912304-16.

Winter seed sowing and a chance to plant and take home seeds and containers, Wed., Jan. 17, 12:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Bring clean plastic milk jug, a plastic bag and seeds if possible. Registration # 912401-01.

Advanced care planning, presented by Kathleen Garces-Foley, Director, Coalition to Improve Advanced Care (CIAC), Wednesday, Jan. 17, 11 a.m., learn how to create an advanced directive and Wednesday, Jan. 24, 11 a.m., discuss the directive, one on one with a volunteer, Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Registration # 912404-04.

Opera appreciation group to hear musical selections from “The Consul” by Gian Carlo Menotti, Wednesday, Jan. 17, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Professional commentary by George Cecchetti. Registration # 912300-05.

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Homeless Services Center Is Full and Need Is Growing

End of eviction moratorium leaves more demand for shelter.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It is 4 p.m. on a January afternoon in the Homeless Services Center. Four o'clock is when the homeless clients are allowed to come into the shelter, "and it is very busy," according to Betsy Frantz, President and CEO of PathForward which runs the center.

When the clients check in, the first step is to get a test for Covid and the flu.

Frantz says there was an outbreak of Covid the third week in December. So they test each client who enters the facility with 55 regular beds and an additional 25 hypothermia beds in the cold or inclement temperature.

"You remember it was warm on Nov. 1 when the HSC hypothermia beds became available but then the temperature plummeted and the shelter filled up. We couldn't take anyone else and used 15 cots at New Hope Housing for a week."

This January afternoon the clients who test positive will go to the seventh floor which has been designated to house Covid clients. Some of the clients have a regular bed in the shelter and are working with a case manager toward eventual placement in permanent housing. They are housed on the third floor. Other clients are temporary hypothermia overnights who have come in to escape the bitter temperatures. And they stay on the 3rd floor. Anyone who tests positive is quarantined on floor seven. "Now the floors are separated and we have more people all the time. This increases the need for staff to work more shifts and puts pressure on both staff and homeless clients," Frantz explains.

Frantz says the hypothermia group is the most transient. "It changes so frequently." She says, "We try to convince them to stay. Every person who comes in we are happy

to have them stay." Frantz says it is hard to understand during the cold season why some people don't even want to come inside. She explains It is mostly due to mental illness but it doesn't feel good to staff. "You can't eliminate people's hearts; they are hurting when people don't come inside."

"There are more people over 60 and more with mental illness."

— Betsy Frantz, President, PathForward

Frantz says after the homeless clients check in and are tested they may decide to take a shower or wash their clothes in the evening. There is also a clothing closet with coats and other items where they can choose what they need. Some choose to play the available games and others to read from the selection of books.

In the evening the homeless clients will get a hot meal prepared by the HSC chef. "You walk by the kitchen and it smells amazing," Franz says. "Glenn Jahnsen can take a chicken and create the most delicious dish. Then he cooks the leftover carcass and chops up the vegetables to make a fantastic soup for the next day. "And everyone loves a little something sweet so if we have that ..."

The clients leave the shelter in the morning to allow for cleaning of the premises. "Hopefully we have been able to give them a hot breakfast." Some clients with a shelter



FILE PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Hypothermia season in full swing at the Homeless Services Center.

bed will stay in the shelter if they have an appointment with their case manager who is working to help them qualify for housing, make the appropriate choices, inform them of benefits such as SNAP available to them, connect with behavioral health or look for job opportunities if they are able to work.

"It takes many steps along the way."

Frantz worries that more and more people need to use the system now that the eviction moratorium has been lifted, and many people have lost their homes. She says it took a while for the landlords to evict their tenants and now the shelter is seeing the results. In addition, the temporary extra government benefits related to Covid ended just as inflation was skyrocketing up.

"There are more people over 60 and more with mental illness."

In addition to increased need for staff, Frantz says the cost of everything is going up and up — blankets, food, "everything we buy." She adds, "We are trying to be creative. The amount of money coming in isn't changing so when we have an increase in expenses, it hits the bottom line. So how do we manage?"

Frantz says they see an increased need for medical assistance, not just at the shelter but also for the 125 clients now housed in permanent residences outside the Homeless Services Center. There is a constant need for assistance to monitor and treat the common conditions of cardiac issues, high blood pressure and diabetes that are frequently experienced by this population.

Kasia Shaw, Senior Director of Medical Respite and Nursing Services at the shelter, runs the medical department for any clients in the Day Program and Shelter. In addition the shelter is expanding the medical services to the 125 who are housed in scattered sites. Shaw also heads for the streets with the outreach team and her backpack full

of medical supplies for the Mobile Medical Program to help the homeless on the streets.

But Franz's real hope is to see funding for her vision of a "Dream Team" to supplement these efforts. The dream team would include a nurse, social worker and medical health professional that would serve those housed in the scattered sites and the Mobile Medical Program. Frantz estimates this would cost \$300,000 and that it would take five teams to really meet the current needs.

But the bottom line is that "what I think is really important is that the community stepped up here in ways that show compassion. Some communities don't understand and try the route of law enforcement. They don't know the rewards of helping. It's amazing here."

Healthy Resolutions in 2024 How to reach and keep your New Year's Resolutions.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

This is the season for New Year's Resolutions, when couch potatoes dream of running the Marine Corps Marathon by October and mothers aim to shed 50 pounds in time for their daughter's June wedding. From the latest phone app to the ideal sunscreen ingredients, health and well-being experts across Northern Virginia offer fresh perspectives for achieving realistic goals.

"When I work with clients we start with tiny steps and find a tracking system to chart their progress. Whether or not you use one of the latest apps or simply a pencil and a piece of paper, it's important to find a system that works for you," advises Health

Coach and therapist Marianna Cardozo, MSW, Healthy Living Program Coordinator for Arlington County Dept. of Human Services. "When someone wants to lose weight or improve their health with exercise, but is currently doing nothing, rather than saying 'I want to run a 5K' I start by asking them to set a goal of a 10-minute walk each day.

One way to turn those 10 minutes of movement into 30 minutes or more is immersing yourself in nature, suggests personal trainer Gerald Mason.

"I often take my clients to Great Falls Park, Virginia. The views are breathtaking. When they're taking in the waterfalls they sometimes forget that they are exercising. Whether you're walking by yourself or with a group of friends, the natural surroundings

are so stunning that improving your fitness won't seem like a grueling activity at all."

For those who want to improve their flexibility, Jennifer Disano, Executive Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), George Mason University suggests putting a spin on age old practice.

"Chair yoga is designed for people with mobility limitations. The class includes gentle yoga, stretching exercises, and breathing exercises."

OLLI is one stop shop for those looking for looking to improve or maintain their wellbeing through social engagement and educational enrichment.

Nutritionist and personal chef Jen Smith of Chantilly emphasizes the importance of hydration for good health. "Start your

day by adding a glass of warm lemon water to your morning routine and gradually increase your water intake throughout the day. Carry a water bottle and set reminders to sip regularly."

Don't forget about sunscreen, even during winter, warns esthetician, Valentina Alvarez. "Look for sunscreens with broad-spectrum protection against both UVA and UVB rays. Ingredients like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide provide effective protection, and antioxidants like vitamins C and E can enhance their efficacy."

"You have to be kind to yourself," adds Cardozo. "When you have a setback you have to remember that life happens. You can get back on track but should honor and celebrate your health."

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

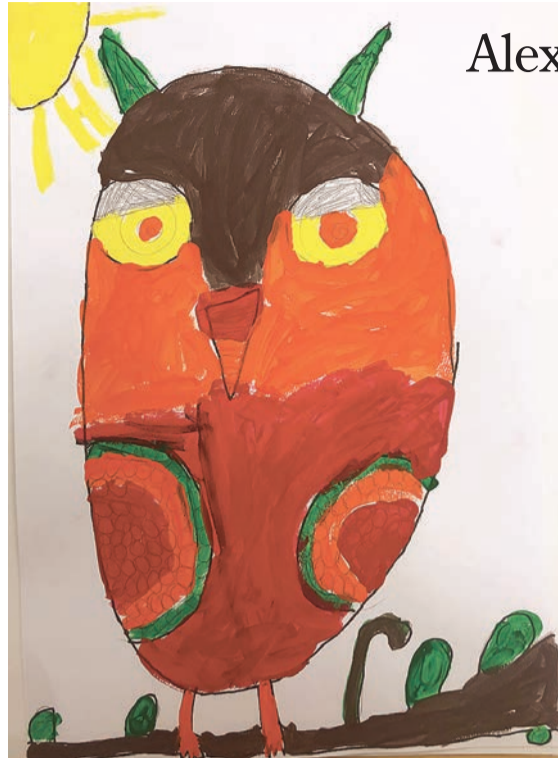
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Charlotte Burkholder, 5th grade



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Taylor Reynolds, 4th grade



Madeline Dahl, 2nd grade



Ruhi Gala, 1st Grade



Spencer Wegner, 3rd Grade

For 2024 Meals, Think Virginia

Traditional Virginia foods can brighten your table and your tales.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Shopper's bag touts Virginia products at Misty Meadow Farm Creamery at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market, December 13, 2023.



Virginia ham rolls sold by Valentine's Bakery at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market, December 13, 2023.



Route 11 Potato Chips.



Shopping for apples at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market, December 13, 2023.



Duke's mayonnaise, a favorite of many Southerners.



Smithfield ham for sale at the Belle View Safeway.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

In making your new year's resolutions, to bolster your fealty to the Old Dominion, culinary and otherwise, try to "Buy Virginia." Virginia's state legislators, convening in Richmond on Jan. 10, will likely thank you.

Hams

Virginia's Smithfield ham is "world famous," touts Smithfield Foods. These hams are cured in Smithfield in the state's tidewater, peanut-growing belt. The country hams are aged, smoked and dry cured with salt for six to 12 months. The milder-tasting "city hams" are not cured as long. Ham and red-eye gravy and ham biscuits are favorites at many Virginia tables.

A Barrel of Hams Went to France: George Washington shipped a barrel full of Virginia

hams to the Marquis de Lafayette in France in 1786. Washington wrote, "Mrs. Washington had packed and sent for Madame de la Fayette's acceptance, a barrel of Virginia Hams. I do not know that they are better, or so good as you make in France, but as they are of our own manufacture (and you know the Virginia Ladies value themselves on the goodness of their bacon), and we recollect that it is a dish of which you are fond, she prevailed on me to ask your's and Madame de la Fayette's acceptance of them."

Turkeys

Judd and Cari Culver renovated an 1870s farmhouse and became turkey farmers in Crozet, Virginia, raising Kelly bronze turkeys. These birds are named for British farmer, Derek Kelly, who started raising and marketing them in 1984 in Essex, England. "Bronze" comes from their glossy brown color.

Antibiotic-free, the turkeys roam Albemarle County's fields and woods. "Supermarket turkeys" are typically slaughtered at age 12 to 14 weeks, despite the turkey's age or maturity, says Judd. The Kelly bronzes are harvested at 21 to 24 weeks old which gives them a layer of fat over their muscles, more marbling. Because they walk around a lot, "there's more hemoglobin, more flavor," he maintains.

Brunswick Stew

There are long-standing debates about whether Brunswick stew originated in Virginia or Georgia and about the ingredients that make it genuine. Originally, the central ingredient was wild game like rabbits and squirrels. Today, some gourmards would consider Brunswick stew with chicken or pork "adulterated." A true stew is simmered in a cast-iron cauldron over a fire with vegetables, like potatoes and lima beans.

Virginia Senate clerk Susan Schaar has a five-foot-long, wooden paddle in her state capitol office, uniquely designed to stir Brunswick stew. There's no question in her mind: the critical ingredient of a true Brunswick stew is squirrels – not rabbits, chickens or heaven forbid, beef. She likes to tell the new General Assembly pages that the squirrels scampering around Capitol Square end up in a Brunswick stew. End of debate.

Apples

From Winchester to Nelson County, Virginia is apple country. At least 16 varieties are grown in the state, from pink ladies to Granny Smiths, reports the Virginia Apple Growers Association.

True Virginians never waste an apple. These prized fruits become sauce, "butter," dumplings, fritters, cobblers, cakes, juice and cider. In a long-established, fall tradi-

SEE FOR 2024 MEAL, PAGE 8

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ENTERTAINMENT

JAN. 3-26

Arlington Artists Alliance Board: Above & Beyond. At Gallery Underground, Arlington. Gallery Underground presents Arlington Artists Alliance Board: Above & Beyond, a group show in appreciation of our hard-working Board members. The Alliance Board members will include their favorite artworks and/or pieces that best exemplify their varied styles and medium. They often work tirelessly behind the scenes, so this group show will highlight their efforts and showcase their artistic talents. The opening reception and awards ceremony will be on Friday, January 5th from 5-7 p.m.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

Selecting Native Plants for the Home Garden. 10 - 11:30 a.m., Online. In this introductory overview of native plants, Extension Master Gardener Elaine Mills introduces species for the Mid-Atlantic region (from trees to ground covers) that attract and support our local pollinators, butterflies, moths, and birds. She explains how to choose beautiful native plants appropriate for the conditions of your yard, describing their use in layered forest settings; in lawns, hedgerows, and foundations; and garden beds for wildlife. She also discusses how "straight species" of native plants differ from cultivars and provides you with tips and best practices for planting and seasonal management. Free. RSVP at <http://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

MONDAY/JAN. 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day W&OD Trail Cleanup. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. On the morning of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, join BikeArlington and WalkArlington in Arlington to clean up litter and debris on the Washington & Old Dominion Trail, a trail that's enjoyed by cyclists and walkers alike. They'll start on the Washington & Old Dominion Trail where it intersects with Columbia Pike. Look for the orange and blue Bike/WalkArlington tent on the trail near the intersection of Columbia Pike and South Four Mile Run Drive! They'll work down the W&OD toward South George Mason Drive. They'll focus on picking up the litter and trash that gathers in the vegetation near the side of the trail. Refreshments and some fun giveaways will be provided as a thank-you to all who come out for the cleanup. To learn more and register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/martin-luther-king-jr-day-wod-trail-cleanup-tickets-761395162427>



The Empty Bowls fundraising event will be held on Sunday, Feb. 11, 2024 in Arlington.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

Tips, Tricks, and Tools. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Online. Ever wonder what Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) know that you don't? In this talk, you'll learn some of what EMGs have learned either through training or hard experience. EMG Alyssa Ford Morel has gathered helpful tidbits from her colleagues with the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia and compiled them in this presentation. Free. RSVP at <http://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington, 1669 - 1865. 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Lubber Run Community Center, 300 N. Park Drive, Arlington. Presented by Arlington AAUW. Speaker is Jessica Kaplan, Arlington Historical Society, Member Board of Directors and Editor, Arlington Historical Magazine.

FRIDAY/JAN. 26

Art of the Garden Journal. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Online. Reading this, you might be saying to yourself, "I am not an artist. I can't even draw a stick figure." If that's the case, you're not alone. You might also be wondering why being able to make art of any sort would be an important skill for a gardener to employ. Join Mary Jennings, professional artist, instructor, and, certified Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist, to learn about the value behind creating a Garden Journal filled with

citizen science, data, field notes and yes, notable artwork created with your own unique mark making skills. In this presentation, you will understand the basics of color theory and how to compose your journal to serve you best. Your work might even result in the a right plant in the right place! Free. RSVP at <http://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

SATURDAY/FEB. 10

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 D.C. area's finest comics. The headliner for February's show is the hilarious Shelley Kim. Visit capitalcityshowcase.com

SUNDAY/FEB. 11

Empty Bowls. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; and 12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. At St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Lane, Arlington. Empty Bowls is a community fundraising event and luncheon featuring hot soups donated by local restaurants and served in hand-thrown bowls created by local artists. Each \$55 ticket will include a hand-made bowl as a gift to take home. Also your choice of delicious soups, bread, dessert and more.

A First



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It happened just the other day. While visiting close friends in Berlin, Md. (Ocean City) to celebrate the New Year, friends who are well aware of my brother's death and the nature of our relationship (his and mine that is) and who likewise knew Richard very well - and even had their own stories to share, I began to tell a Richard story, as I have a million times in my life. However, on this New Year's Eve, for the first time since Richard died on Dec. 3rd, 2022, I was able to tell the story without choking up or getting teary-eyed. It has taken me more than a year to reach that point.

I can remember very well this past summer, mid-July to be exact while on vacation with my step-father-in-law, Lee and his wife Judy, being unable to complete a Richard story because I got watery eyes and a thickish throat. I tried to speak, even formed the words in my mouth, shaped my lips to pronounce them and couldn't, well; not exactly. But you know what I mean. There was no sound. Then I gathered myself and my thoughts and rebounded enough on the second effort - after a few deep breaths and was able to complete the story. Though the story was supposed to be funny, it became something else. It became emotional and nearly as difficult as it had been telling Richard stories closer to his death. Here it was, almost eight months later, and I still couldn't get through a story about my brother without getting emotional. I choked up so much and so unexpectedly that it left a mark, you might say, on my brain, for future reference.

And this future reference became the presence on New Year's Eve. Dina and I were with our closest friends, friends who had independent relationships with my brother, and who thought the world of him. In fact, I think the Hagans are our only friends who had such a relationship with Richard (he being five years older than us) and his wife, Vanessa, so it was only natural that we would have spent considerable time talking about Richard; it was a safe space for me. And as I began talking about Richard - in the context of the ebb and flow of the conversation, I hesitated almost, anticipating that I'd have to stop, for a time-out of sorts, to gather my thoughts and so forth, and then I just continued, without stopping and completed the story. I took note of it. Here, more than a year later, I'm now able to finish what I start when talking/remiscing about Richard.

It was odd, palpable almost, then when I got to the point of the story that I was sharing about my brother, a point typically when I'd had to stop mid-sentence to take a breath and rub the tears out of my eyes, I didn't have to. I had finally reached the point where the mention of my brother's death didn't weaken my resolve/ability to share a recollection. I simply told the tale, spoke normally-ish about him and smiled at the accomplishment, if you could even call it that, of being able to talk about my brother without crying, et cetera.

New Year's Eve, 2023, now becomes - for me, like one of those dates, "9/11," Nov. 22, 1963, Oct. 27, 2004 when the Red Sox broke the curse and won the World Series (against the St Louis Cardinals) for the first time in 86 years, or "Game 6," Oct. 21st 1975, the World Series against the "Big Red Machine", (Cincinnati Reds) where you know exactly where you were and what you were doing on the date. They are all dates that will stick with me for the remainder of my life. None of them however compare to the loss of my brother, Richard to cancer on Dec. 3, 2022. At least now, I can talk about it. Finish whatever story I start. And even laugh about it without being sad, but grateful in a way. Grateful that I had a brother who meant so much to me and who will be a part of my future as well since I can now embrace his memory - and his loss. He was one of the good guys. Solid as a rock and dependable. If you needed him to be somewhere (like my cancer appointments), he was there. And knowing that he will never "be-there" again in person is unsettling. But at least when I remember him, I can smile. It only took me a year to get here. It was a year I never thought I'd have to endure. In 2009, when I was diagnosed with cancer, I never thought, despite our five-year age difference (Richard was the older brother), he would predecease me. And then he did, at age 73. It has thrown off my whole unwritten plan. And unfortunately, without Richard, there's no plan "B," unwritten or otherwise. Certainly not one that will last anyway.

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

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Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

COFFEY AND CUNNINGHAM SWORN IN TO BE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Maureen Coffey and Susan Cunningham were sworn in as incoming Arlington County Board members on Friday, December 15, 2023. They were elected in the 2023 November County Board General Election and will officially begin their terms on January 1, 2024. They will fill the seats of Board Chair Christian Dorsey and Interim Board Member Tannia Talento after their terms conclude at the end of this year.

NEW OFFICERS GRADUATE FROM SESSION 149 OF TRAINING ACADEMY

The Arlington County Police Department proudly welcomes its newest officers as Session 149 graduated from the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy on December 11, 2023. Family, friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate their achievements and watch as the new officers took their solemn oath to

serve and protect the Arlington community and safeguard the Constitutional rights of all. Graduation from the Academy is part of the new officers' journey to becoming solo police officers in Arlington County, a process that spans approximately one year. As part of their ongoing training cycle, the newly graduated officers will now complete the Department's local and field training programs.

The new officers were recognized with the following achievements at graduation:

Officer E. Patel was awarded Academic Excellence - 3rd Place

Officer M. Monzingo was awarded Excellence in Physical Fitness, 1st Place - Males

Following an initial four-way tie for 1st place in Excellence in Firearms among the graduates, the Academy held a marksmanship tiebreaker resulting in the following awards:

Officer M. Mozingo was awarded Excellence in Firearms, 2nd Place

Officer M. Landicho was awarded Excellence in Firearms, 3rd Place

DONATIONS NEEDED

Pet Food Bank. AWLA has established a Pet Food Bank to serve qualifying residents of Arlington County and the City of Falls Church. In consideration of the effect financial obstacles have on a pet owner's ability to afford pet care, the AWLA Pet Food Bank program's goal is to keep family pets out of shelters. If you are an Arlington County or City of Falls Church resident and are in need of assistance in feeding your pet, follow this link and fill out a pre-registration form. Visit goo.gl/forms/s2FuFdaYWdZm4tPw2.

Donations Needed. Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church, 2700 South 19th St., is seeking to replenish its food pantry. Particularly needed are rice (large bags appreciated, the pantry will rebag), dry beans, canned vegetables, soup, small jars of peanut butter, small jars of jelly, pasta and pasta sauce. Donations are collected during Mass each Sunday. Visit www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org for more.

For 2024 Meals, Think Virginia

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

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tion, people stand around an iron or copper kettle over a wood fire and stir apples until they become a mahogany-colored, edible slurry, called apple butter.

Another Virginia specialty is the fried apple “pie,” a mixture of cooked apples, sugar and cinnamon between two pieces of dough pressed together and skillet fried.

Peanuts

“The Virginia peanut stands out from the other peanut varieties in both size and taste, they are the largest peanut ... and they have a characteristic crunch when eaten,” says the state’s tourism website. The Virginia Diner in Wakefield serves peanut pie, a caramelized, peanutty filling in a flaky crust. Mount Vernon Inn’s restaurant offers peanut soup.

Oysters

Oysters helped the Jamestown colonists survive in 1607 and these bivalves have many devotees today who love to slurp the fleshy blobs of meat pricked from two bumpy, gray shells. Virginia oysters are so popular that former Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe launched the Virginia Oyster Trail and declared the state the “Oyster Capital of the East Coast” in 2015.

Mayonnaise

Duke’s mayonnaise, made by Sauer Brands, founded in Richmond in 1887, has held together many potato salads for generations. Unlike other brands, Duke’s has only egg yolks, not the whole egg, and zero sugar. “Duke’s has that indescribably Southern-something that elevates food from merely good to downright transcendent,” boasts the website. Its rich, creamy consistency has generated an almost cult-like following.

Ketchup

When Fairfax County resident Abe Karmarek got fed up with watching his children dump and gobble up ketchup, he studied the ingredients and learned that most American ketchup brands are loaded with sugar. One 20-ounce bottle of a leading ketchup brand has over half a pound of sugar, more than most vanilla ice cream brands with six grams of sugar per ounce, he contends.

So he launched True Made Foods and made a ketchup with no added sugar and only two grams of natural sugars. His ketchup has over one-half pound of vegetables in

every bottle, providing the natural sugars of carrots, butternut squash and spinach. He went on to also make no- and low-sugar barbecue sauces and srirachas. The company motto: “We turn junk food into superfoods.”

Salsas

Tommy Aquaro, “the salsa man,” combines tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers and more into 16 enticing salsas with names like Hell’s Bells, Devil’s Breath, Kick in the Pants and Sucker Punch Peach. His products have no salt, sugar or chemicals and he specializes in smoked salsas. “I smoke everything,” he says. “Smoking is a kiss,” he believes. He encourages adding his salsas to meatloaf, chicken, steak, fish, baked potatoes, stews, casseroles and eggs.

Syrups

Joyce and Travis Miller make around 30,000 bottles or 3,000 gallons of hickory syrup in seven flavors a year in their Berryville kitchen. They clean, toast and cook the bark in water to create a liquor-like substance, age it a few days, add raw sugar and reheat it. They age some batches in Catoclin Creek Distilling Company whiskey barrels for 100 days so the syrup picks up the whiskey flavor. Adventure beyond pancakes and French toast, they urge. Check out their website’s recipes. <https://fallingbarkfarm.com/>

In “Little Switzerland,” Virginia’s Highland County, the Maple Syrup Trail links seven sugar camps that make pure maple syrup. Here, for generations, maplers have drained sap from trees and boiled it down into pure syrup. At the annual March Maple Festival, veteran maplers share tidbits like one tablespoon of maple syrup has 40 calories and maple syrup comes in shades, from light to dark amber. Locals make maple donuts, candy, popcorn, ice cream, mustard, sugar, butter, bread, pecans, lollipops, cream, fudge and tea.

Potato Chips

Route 11 entrepreneurs in Mt. Jackson say they are “traditionalists” because for over 25 years they have kettle cooked potatoes in small batches to make an exceptional potato chip. “A nice golden color and a body with plenty of curl are a must,” says the website. “With every crunch, potato flavor bursts forth.”

How about a potato chip omelet for breakfast? Check out chef José Andrés’ creation on their website.



Virginia peanuts on sale at the Old Town Shop, Alexandria.



Maple-sugar-coated almonds from Highland County.



Apple butter in the making at the Graves Mountain Lodge Apple Butter Festival and jars for sale.



Tommy Aquaro and his wicked salsa.



More on Virginia Foods

Smithfield Hams, <https://smithfield.sfdbrands.com/en-us/products/>
 Kelly Bronze Turkeys, <https://kellybronze.com/>
 Apples, <https://www.virginiaapples.net/>
 True Made Foods, <https://www.truemadefoods.com/>
 Hickory syrup, <https://fallingbarkfarm.com/>
 Maple syrup, <https://members.highlandcounty.org/member-directory/Search/maple-196831?cid=189889>
 Salsa, <https://crumssauce.com/>
 Potato chips, <https://www.rt11.com/>

Virginia Products Sold Here:

Shops at Mount Vernon, <https://shops.mountvernon.org/>
 Alexandria Visitor Center, <https://visitalexandria.com/listings/alexandria-visitor-center-5/>
 Made in ALX, <https://www.madeinalx.com/>
 Shop Made in VA, <https://www.shopmadeinva.com/>
 Old Town Shop, <https://www.theoldtownshop.com/>
 Village Hardware, <https://www.hardwarestore.com/village-hardware>