

The Arlington Connection

Aerial view of the Arlington County Fair from a previous year.

You'll Need to Plan Hard To Pack in The Fair

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PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Are Humans Infecting Wildlife with Covid?

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AUGUST 7-13, 2024

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FILE PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Aerial photo of the Arlington County Fair from a previous year.

So Many Choices at the Arlington Fair

Make plans early to fit it all in.

PREVIEW BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

It's time to dig out your grandmother's chocolate sour cream cake recipe, practice the all-pink flower arrangement, finish up the baby blanket art needlework and find the freshest peaches for your jam. The Arlington County Fair is just a few days away beginning Aug. 14, and running through Aug. 18. Online registration for competitor exhibits closes Aug. 12 with drop off of your entries on Aug. 14 between 4-8 pm. The date for dropping off your baked goods is Aug. 15 between 7:30-9 am.

And there are so many choices for food that you need to decide whether to start with a lemonade and then head to the seven savory

food trucks or three dessert trucks; or will you have the New Orleans oysters and jambalaya, the Greek shawarma or falafel or the good old fashioned mac and cheese, bacon-cheddar fries and corn dogs.

There is so much entertainment on the first day that you need a checklist to make sure you can see the Old Dominion Cloggers at 5:15 pm on the indoor stage, the Miraculous Magical Balloon on the indoor stage at 6:30 pm and the DC Roller Derby Team on the basketball court from 7-8 pm, Griefcar at 7:45 and Alma Boliviana at 8:30. The Night Market under the stars on the tennis courts starts Aug. 15 featuring local vendors with their handmade goods. Aug. 17 is a Children's Market run by kids on the upper field.

If you are really organized and have a strong stomach you can enter the pizza eat-a-slice contest at 12 noon, the new burrito eating contest at 12:50 pm and the pie eating contest at 1:30 pm — all on Aug. 17. Meanwhile the Calico

Cloggers are entertaining nearby starting at 2 p.m.

Each day there is a photo contest for pictures taken at the Fair that day with four tickets for rides and free Fair merch awarded to that day's winner. The popular face painting and balloon artist is on Aug. 16 from 5-8 pm.

The Arlington County Fair is one of the largest free events on the East Coast dating back to 1977. The first fair was a partnership of the Arlington Community Garden Program and 4-H focusing on exhibits, competition and games for kids with midway rides added in later.

Getting to the Fair also takes some planning ahead since public parking at the Fair is limited to patrons with a valid ADA parking tag. But there are plenty of transportation options including valet bicycle parking, several walk-about-routes ranging from .8-1.4 miles from the local starting point to the Fair and a free public shuttle from the Bozman Government Building garage at 2100 Clarendon.



Just a few of the food options offered a previous year.

SENIOR LIVING

"Flourishing After 55"

Office of 55+ Programs
Department of Parks and Recreation
300 N. Park Dr.,
Arlington, VA 22203
703-228-4747

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.

Registration is open for 2024 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics to be held Sept. 14-29.

Register online at www.nvso.us. Cost \$20 for multiple events. For more information, email nvso1982@gmail.com.

Olympic games trivia about past and present Olympics, Thursday, Aug. 8, 11 a.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Medals awarded to winning team. Registration # 914600-14.

Summer recipe exchange, Thursday, Aug. 8, 12:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Bring multiple copies of your favorite recipe to share. Registration # 914801-09.

Beginner quilting, learn to create beautiful raised images from coils of paper strips, Thursday, Aug. 8, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Fee \$18, supplies provided. Registration # 914310-05.

70th Anniversary Ice Cream Social,

Friday, Aug. 9, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of 55+ Programs with live music by PhEd-Up with Phriends and ice cream. Free admission. Registration # 914899-09.

55+ Travel group will visit the "Pattern and Paradox: The Quilts of Amish Women" exhibit at The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Monday, Aug. 12. Cost \$11, Arlington resident; \$13, non-resident. Registration # 902408-06.

Movie matinee, "Moonstruck" (1987) (PG), Monday, Aug. 12, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 914804-07.

Scale down, a weight loss support group, private weigh-ins, Monday, August 12, 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Rock music legends, Creedence, Dylan and The Band, their influences and distinctive sounds discussed and Hits played by local musicians Carl Gold and Rob Sprouse, Tuesday, Aug. 13, 1:30 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center, registration # 914400-43 or virtual, registration # 914400-44.

Name That Tune Live! Local pianist Ken Schellenberg plays pop tunes from the 50s to the 80s, Tuesday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 914304-17.

The Fishing Forum, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Share fishing exploits,

exchange tackle recommendations and discuss fishing locations. Drop-in.

Medicare's prescription drug benefit explained by VICAP counselors, Wednesday, Aug. 14, 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m., virtual. Register by calling 703-228-1725 or email, Medicare-Help@arlingtonva.us.

"Cold War Virginia" authors Gary Powers Jr. and Chris Sturdevant, will discuss several top-secret intelligence bases in Virginia and their critical role in protecting our national security during the Cold War. Thursday, Aug. 15, 11:30 a.m., virtual. Registration # 914400-31.

Virtual tour of Bolivia, fourth in a series of five South American countries, Thursday, Aug. 15, 12:45 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Presented by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 914400-41.

Introduction to online payments, learn how to use Venmo, CashApp and PayPal services, Thursday, Aug. 15, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Presented by 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration # 914403-05.

55+ Travel group will visit the "Bond in Motion" exhibit at the International Spy Museum, Friday, Aug. 16. Cost \$52, Arlington resident; \$60, non-resident. Registration # 902408-08.

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.

ROAD CLOSURES FOR SUMMER BARK BASH

The Arlington County Police Department will conduct road closures on Sunday, September 29 to accommodate the Summer Bark Bash. The following roadways will be closed from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to accommodate the event:

S. Nelson Street between S. Four Mile Run Drive and S. Oakland Street

S. Oakland Street between S. Four Mile Run Drive and S. Nelson Street

Additional road closures not mentioned above may be implemented at police discretion in the interest of public safety. Street parking in these areas will be restricted. Motorists should be on the lookout for temporary "No Parking" signs and illegally parked vehicles may be ticketed or towed. If your vehicle is towed, please use the online portal to find out the status of your vehicle and where it is located. The online portal is updated in real time. If you cannot locate your vehicle or need additional support using the online portal, call the County non-emergency number at 703-558-2222.

DONATIONS NEEDED
Pet Food Bank. AWLA has es-

tablished 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.

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.

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ENTERTAINMENT

CENTERS FOR OPPORTUNITY ARLINGTON

The Centers for Opportunity Arlington is a safe, stigma-free place to spend time for those recovering from homelessness, substance use, and mental illness. It has a donation closet that needs adult clothing and shoes. Some participants at the Center are looking for jobs and need the proper attire. Located at 3219 Columbia Pike, Suite 101, Arlington. Contact Greg, Program Coordinator at 703-567-1346.

ARLINGTON ARTISTS ALLIANCE OPENS BOUTIQUE GALLERY

The Alliance Gallery is located at 2700 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 330, in The Crossing Clarendon in the breezeway between SoulCycle and Chip City. The gallery is open from Thursday-Sunday from 12 p.m.-6 p.m., with free entry.

The inaugural Alliance Gallery show runs from July 18- Aug. 18.

Entitled *Ad Astra Per Aspera*, this group show features Eleftheria Easley, Justyne Fischer, Pedro Ledesma III, Anna Nazaretz Radjou, and Nicole Tobin. Curated by Christina Papanicolaou, the show embodies themes of empowerment through textile art, collage, print, and photography. The works confront a range of social and personal challenges, such as gender and racial inequality, the fight for self-empowerment, and the struggle to connect in the digital age.

An opening reception for the Alliance Gallery will be held on Thursday, Aug. 1 from 5-7 p.m. The reception includes complimentary food and beverages, and live music. The reception is free and open to the public.

From Aug. 29 through Oct. 6, a juried show for AAA artists is planned, with local visual artist Yigit Cakar serving as jurist. This fall, from October 17-November 24th, another juried exhibition open to artists from across the region will be juried by Rosemary Feit Covey.

THURSDAYS THRU NOV. 21

Ballston Farmers Market, Thursdays from 3-7 p.m. At Welburn Square, near Ballston Metro, Arlington. More than 20 vendors in Ballston – both fan-favorites and newcomers. This year also sees the return of the Mega Markets – sponsored this season by VIDA Fitness. Mega Markets feature the addition of live music from local musicians and a Beer and Wine Garden.

THRU AUG. 23

Fridays at the Fountain. At the Water Park, National Landing, Arlington. Step into the rhythm of summer every Friday thru Aug. 23 at Water Park. This free concert series features a range of musical talent from all around the region. Feast on food and drink at one of the area's best new outdoor food halls as you groove to soul, salsa, and more!

WEDNESDAY/AUG. 7

Coffee and Conversation with Arlington Neighborhood Village. 10-11 a.m. Featuring GMU cultural historian Michael O'Malley who explores the history of racial classification. His most recent book, *The Color of Family: History, Race and the Politics of Ancestry*, uses an incident in his family history to examine how authority over iden-



The U.S. Air Force Band's Airmen of Note will perform Friday, Aug. 23, 2024 at the free summer concert series at the Air Force Memorial in Arlington.

tity has shifted from community, to state and federal administrative records, to commercial genealogical companies, like Ancestry.com. He discusses whether this a benign development or a threat.

SATURDAY/AUG. 10

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show.

7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. Sponsored by the Capital City Showcase. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle! The headliner for August's show is the hilarious musical comedy duo B.U.S.S.I.!

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION WITH ARLINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE

"Coffee and Conversation" speaker series. 10-11 a.m. Everyone is invited to join the conversation via Zoom. Bring your own coffee, learn interesting things about our community and hear from the speakers listed below.

August 14th: Estate Planning. Explore the ins and outs of estate planning from an expert perspective. Jennifer Schiffer of Bean, Kinney & Korman will discuss how to take stock of your estate, define and organize your objectives, and develop appropriate strategies that best suit your desires. She will also review recent changes in the law that you should be aware of, and ways to avoid being scammed. Jennifer is a shareholder of Bean, Kinney & Korman. She has been hailed as a "Go-To Lawyer" by Virginia Lawyers Weekly, and a Top Attorney by Arlington Magazine.

August 21st: Never Stop Learning: Invest for the Future and Protect Your Nest Egg. Tom Manganello from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Office of Investor Education and Advocacy will guest lecture on the importance for older Americans to "Never Stop Learning" when it comes to protecting their hard-earned money and investing for their future. Tom will discuss free tools and resources on the SEC's web-

site, Investor.gov, where you can learn about investing in retirement, spotting fraud, doing background checks on investment professionals, and more.

August 28th: Ask the Pharmacist!

Recommendations for Safe Medication Use as We Age. Chad Worz is a board-certified geriatric pharmacist and leads a professional association of pharmacists and pharmacies that specialize in older adults. The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) has been in Alexandria, Virginia for over 50 years and Chad can share the latest insights on safety, effectiveness and costs of modern medicines and vaccines. He will share some tips for managing medications in everyday life and answer your questions.

Zoom link for Coffee and Conversation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88948577106?pwd=eW0rN1RTTU5lTmJ5NnF2QXZlbnmdUQT09>

You also have the option to dial in by phone at 929-205-6099. The meeting ID is 889 4857 7106 and the Passcode: 872327

THRU AUG. 23

Mason Exhibitions Presents A

Closer Look: Conflicted Art from Ukraine. At Mason Exhibitions Arlington, 3601 Fairfax Drive, Arlington. Curated by Sophie Bae with Conflicted Art's Yevgen Nemchenko, the exhibition offers a nuanced exploration of the impact of war through the lens of contemporary Ukrainian artists. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and detached from the deeper questions surrounding the persistence of war in the 21st century. A Closer Look: Conflicted Art from Ukraine seeks to bridge that gap by showcasing the work of 13 Ukrainian artists who confront head-on the experiences of direct conflict. Through photography, video, painting, sculpture, literature, and installation, these artists offer a multifaceted perspective from the fringes of this conflict. Their works invite viewers to engage



The seventh Arlington Visual Art Studio Tour takes place Sept. 21-22, 2024 at 59 art studios in Arlington.

in dialogue beyond statistics and headlines and to examine core issues of existence distorted by violence and uncertainty.

FRIDAY/AUG. 23

Summer Concert Series. The U.S. Air Force Band returns to the Air Force Memorial in Arlington. Free and open to the public.

Friday, Aug. 23 at 7:30 p.m. - Airmen of Note

Friday, Sept. 13 at 7:30 p.m. Air Force Birthday Concert.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 7

Rosslyn Jazz Fest 2024.

1-7 p.m. At Gateway Park in Rosslyn. Jazz is back for the 32nd Annual Jazz Fest! Rosslyn Jazz Fest is free and registration is not required, but strongly encouraged, as there are capacity limits at Gateway Park. Join up at Gateway Park for an afternoon of music, food trucks, yard games, community table experiences, and tons of fun!

SATURDAY/SEPT. 14

Girls Try Hockey for Free Day. Registration is now open for the NHL's Washington Capitals DMV Girls Try Hockey For Free Day, taking place at 18 rinks across Virginia and Maryland on Saturday, Sept. 14.: Participating clubs in Virginia include: Arlington, Va. - Caps Academy (at MedStar Capitals Iceplex in Arlington, VA)

Haymarket, Va. - the Piedmont Predators (at Haymarket IcePlex in Haymarket, VA),
Leesburg, Va. - the Loudoun Knights (at Ion ITC in Leesburg, VA)
Reston, Va. - the Reston Raiders (at Skatequest in Reston, VA)
Richmond, Va. - the Richmond Generals (at Richmond Ice Zone in North Chesterfield, VA)
Springfield, Va. - The St. James (at The St. James in Springfield, VA).
Virginia Beach, Va. - the Hampton Roads Junior Admirals (at Iceland in Virginia Beach, VA)
Woodbridge, Va. - the Potomac Lady Patriots (at Prince William Ice Center in Woodbridge, VA)

About the Initiative:

DMV Girls Try Hockey for Free is a program that provides local girls ages 4-9 the chance to try hockey during a one-to-two-hour ice session at no cost.

Required equipment is loaned to participants through the local youth hockey organization.

Interested families can register at capsyouthhockey.com/girlsthff

Try Hockey for Free days also provide local youth hockey associations with a platform and opportunity to acquire new players locally and engage interested families into youth hockey programs across the region.

Last year, more than 300 girls ages 4-9 tried hockey for the first time through the event, and more than 30% of girls registered to continue to play.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 14

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show.

7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. The Capital City Showcase, which produces some of the best events in the D.C. area, returns with its new one-of-a-kind blend of entertainment. Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle. Hosted by Christian Hunt, this experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for September's show is the hilarious Jenny Questell.

SEPT. 21-22

STUDIO TOUR, 59 Arlington Art Studios to Open to Public.

This year will mark the seventh Arlington Visual Art Studio Tour, which is a joint effort of independent artists and volunteers, supported by contributors including Schneider Investment Group and Dominion Lighting, and in cooperation with Arlington's visual art organizations. The Tour is a community-building event that allows visitors to discover the artists who are also their neighbors. The Tour will publish names, locations and opening hours of participating artists, so that anyone can create their own itinerary to meet the artists in their maker spaces and see their work. Studios in South Arlington will open Saturday Sept. 21, and those in North Arlington, on Sunday Sept. 22. This year, the assortment of artwork includes painting, assemblage, collage, printmaking, photography, ceramics, sculpture, weaving and fiber, drawing, paper-cutting, glass, metalwork, calligraphy and jewelry. Visit <https://www.arlingtonartstudiotour.org>.

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Flight Wine Company trading as Flight Wine Shop, 269 19th CT S STE 90, Arlington, VA 22202-3664. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for an Internet Retailer Application - Wine, Beer, Consumed license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Swati Bose, President. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Legals

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Flight Wine Company trading as Flight Wine Shop, 269 19th CT S STE 90, Arlington, VA 22202-3664. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Retail Specialty Establishment Application - Gourmet Shop, Wine, Beer, Consumed Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Swati Bose, President. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

CALENDAR

			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31		

Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Legals

ABC LICENSE

Taqueria Xochi AMZ, LLC trading as Taqueria Xochi, 510 14th St S, Arlington, VA 22202-2900. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beer, Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Brett Burka, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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Get in Line and Choose Your Favorite

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Call Your Mother has transferred the long waiting line from the bright pink food truck known as Lil' Deli that sat in Chesterbrook Shopping Center in McLean for months to their indoor restaurant located in the same place. The indoor restaurant opened a month ago and loyal customers have traveled a few hundred feet away to its new spot in the Mall shops.

Christine Ayers, waiting for her everything bagel with cream cheese on Sunday, Aug. 4 says, "I used to go to the food truck until it got so hot waiting outside a long time for my bagel. This is much better."

The bagel choices range from plain to cheddar to sriracha and everything in between. Fatima Rahim, the store manager, says Sunday is most busy, as you can see from the crowd sitting at the few tables and waiting along the walls for their carryout order. She says the favorite bagel is probably the Royal Palm which is plain cream cheese, smoked salmon, tomato, cucumber, red onion, capers on an everything bagel. Another favorite is the unusual Del Ray Club with peach cream cheese, bacon, jalapeno, nectarines and potato chips.

Daniela Moreira, chef and one of the owners of this small chain of restaurants, brings her inspiration from campside meals in Argentina to the bagel menu with a variety of breakfast and lunch choices. Chief Doughboi, Andrew Dana brings his nostalgia of Jewish family tradition. The favorite schmear according to Rahim, is probably the plain or the garlic-herb. You can also order latkes on the side.

Call Your Mother is open from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. every day.

Call Your Mother began at a farmer's market in D.C. and opened their flagship store in 2018 in Parkview on Georgia Avenue. They have since expanded in D.C. and added restaurants in Virginia and Maryland with their newest addition in Denver, Colorado.



Fatima Rahim, manager of Call Your Mother at Chesterbrook Plaza in McLean.



From left: Call Your Mother store manager Fatima Rahim, Katherine, Claire Ferra.



Call Your Mother just recently opened at Chesterbrook Shopping Center, 6212 Old Dominion.



Lil' Deli food truck replaced with brick-and-mortar restaurant at Chesterbrook Shopping Center.

Addressing An Unimaginable Reality



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Yet again, not a cancer column.) Within the next month or so, I will have affixed all the self-address labels that I have received/accumulated over the years. And over those same years, the numbers and frequency of these self-address-label-senders has diminished greatly. So much so that I have reached my last sheet of labels (bottom of a previous stack). I can remember back in the heyday of receiving/accumulating these unsolicited labels and due to their numbers - and my interest in keeping them, I had to organize a place for them in my home office as their arrivals continued. And though I used the labels regularly, their supply nevertheless overwhelmed my demand.

In the recurring process of handling these various sheets of self-address labels (and adding new to old), I remember thinking that I would never get to the bottom of this newly organized pile. But here I sit, one measly sheet remains. If I don't receive new self-address labels soon, I'll have to actually, write, write, write my own name and address on my outgoing mail.

Perhaps you don't remember a time when you'd receive in the mail correspondence from a charity, a hospital, a 501c3-type organization, et cetera, presumptively quid-pro-"quoing" your return cash contribution to pay for their "gift" to you. "Gifts" almost always included sheets of self-address labels. In addition, there might be note pads (often personalized with your name on it) pocket calendars, appointment organizers, and let's not forget the light bulbs, the donation pins, the medallions, refrigerator magnets and my personal favorite: holiday/greeting cards - with envelopes. Over these many years of receiving these "gifts," I had accumulated quite an inventory of stuff. As for the underlying business of these mailed solicitations, a return envelope - self-addressed of course and an easy-to-understand reply card with denomination choices. I have to admit I didn't always pay my way, but neither did I ask to be solicited so regularly in this way. Occasionally phone calls followed to as we call it in the sales world: "pre approach," to confirm receipt and make the pitch in person, so to speak.

And being that longtime salesperson, I had no problem being courteous and appreciative of their outreach while turning down their solicitation. As many "nos" as any of us salespeople have heard, I found it not particularly difficult to say "No" myself. I thanked them for their initiative and wished them well with their next call. Oddly enough, as I write this column/share this memory, I can't recall now when it was that I last received labels in the mail or a phone call to confirm their receipt. Thanks to, or because of the Internet, mail is not quite what it used to be; either as a method of communication or as a method of soliciting/meeting prospects. And because of all this evolution and technology, it seems I'm running out of self-address labels.

Perhaps it's time, probably past time, that I join the ranks of those people who have embraced technology and assimilated it into their daily lives. Specifically, I'm referring to people who "online-bank" their way through life and/or who might not even have a checking account - where for us old-schoolers, actual paper checks are used to pay bills by mailing the check in the self-addressed envelope provided, back to the addressee. If I can click the keys on my keyboard or press the numbers on my phone, I can eliminate, almost, the need for ever needing a self-address label, and dare I say, standing in line at the Post Office. Perhaps when I've used up my current stack of blank checks? Presently, I'm at check number 1804. When I get to the end of checks, number 1941, I'll likely make the change. But until then, I could sure use some more self-address labels. Imagine that.

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PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Are Humans Transmitting Covid to Wildlife?

VA Tech study documents cases in six species.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Despite several concerted efforts, investigators have yet to conclusively determine whether the virus that causes Covid (SARS-CoV-2) had a zoonotic origin or was a leak from the bio-laboratory in Wuhan China. The virus became the disease COVID-19 which infected humans, and continues, in pandemic proportions. Here in Virginia, following a 2022-2023 study, several Virginia Tech researchers published their findings documenting transmission of the virus from humans to wildlife, after sampling sites across Virginia and D.C. The study appears in the July 29th issue of Nature Communications, part of the Nature portfolio. (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-49891-w>)

Of particular interest in our urban area, is their finding that “areas with more human activity may serve as potential hotspots for cross-species transmission [from humans to wildlife].” And wildlife living in recreation areas and highly urbanized areas “likely have higher risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2.” The study further summarized that “Humans and wildlife rarely come into direct contact, but numerous indirect links likely exist.” Potential sources of exposure include trash receptacles and discarded food. Wildlife in urban areas “are regularly exposed to human refuse which could serve as a bridge for transmission between humans, companion animals, and wild species.”

During the study researchers trapped and sampled 23 species; a variety of common backyard species. They detected the SARS-CoV2 virus in six species: deer mice, opossums, raccoons, groundhogs, cottontail rabbits, and red bats. The highest incidence of the virus was found in creatures near hiking trails and high-traffic public areas. Further the study found a close match to virus variants which were circulating in humans at the time. This suggests that humans are passing the virus to wildlife.

Health researchers were already aware of human to animal transmission. In the Spring of 2020, several animals in zoos tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, including tigers and other big cats, and gorillas. The first cases were reported in the Bronx Zoo after animals were exposed to a caretaker with COVID-19. Several well documented cases in captive animals followed. Research also shows within-species transmission in the wild and in laboratories. Various studies show “a broad diversity of mammal species have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in the wild. ... White-tailed Deer had the most documented infections of non-captive animals.” (www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-16071-z?)

Virginia’s Department of Wildlife Resources includes a warning to those hunting deer. “While deer do not appear to become sick or



PHOTO BY OSULAK, USFWS

One opossum sampled in 2022 “revealed a novel mutation which might suggest animal-to-animal transmission or possible adaptation within the opossum”



PHOTO BY USGS

Eastern Red Bats are among bats found to carry coronavirus



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Eastern Cottontail rabbits sampled positive for the virus in VA Tech’s study.

show clinical signs of disease when infected, SARS-CoV-2 may be transmitted from deer to deer. There are currently no documented cases of humans becoming infected after contact with infected white-tailed deer and there is no evidence that humans can get COVID-19 by eating wild hunted game meat. While the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from deer to humans is unknown at this time, it is believed to be low.” The DWR site advises hunters to “continue to take standard precautions when field-dressing and processing harvested deer, regardless of concern over COVID-19 transmission.”

Olivia LoBalbo, a state and federally permitted wildlife rehabilitator with Animal Education and Rescue Organization, indicates DWR has required rehabilitators to use masks and gloves for any work with mammals for the past couple of years. The precaution prevents human to animal transmission, and potential animal to human transmission as well.

LoBalbo says that in 2020, DWR required testing any bats in rehab for Covid before



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Transmission of SARS-CoV-2, likely from humans to free-range White-tailed Deer, have resulted in subsequent deer-to-deer transmission across the United States.

release. She shares, “It was quite amusing trying to swab these tiny creatures. I had to poke them in the face enough times to make them angry and hiss at me, which is when I would quickly swab them. I rehabilitated a good number of bats, and none of them ever tested positive for COVID.”

She also says she has not had any other animals diagnosed with Covid under her care. Although “Covid symptoms are similar to those of many other common conditions, making it difficult to pinpoint one specific cause.”

Bats have been shown to carry at least three coronaviruses, however, they have not been tied to the emergence of Covid-19 despite early speculation about their role. David Lawlor, a Fairfax County Park Authority ecologist with its Natural Resources Branch, is conducting bat surveys in area parks, including Laurel Hill Park in Lorton, “to inventory bat species and confirm rare species

in parks with high quality habitat.” He says his surveys do not sample bats for viruses or other diseases. He further shares, “In 2020 and 2021, DWR did not permit mist netting bats in the state due to the coronavirus and possible transmission from humans to bats. In 2022, they began issuing permits to mist net bats again. As a precaution, Park Authority staff use leather gloves covered with disposable plastic gloves when handling bats for data collection to prevent spreading [any] virus from bat to bat [and from human handlers] as they are being handled each night. The plastic disposable gloves are changed between handling each individual bat.”

As the Virginia Tech study extract concludes, “Continued broad surveillance and more detailed ecological research will be needed to fully determine the role of wildlife communities in SARS-CoV-2 transmission and evolution.”