



The Arlington Connection

Eileen Sugameli in "Three Mercedes"

How to Give for Local Impact

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Acting Begins At Home

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



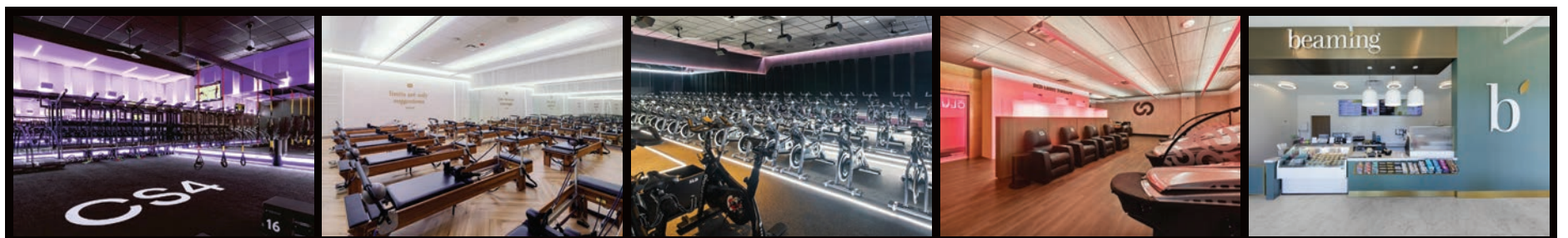
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Wild Rabbit to Used Car Salesman: Sugameli Plays It All

Returning to Arlington for premiere of 'Three Mercedes.'

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Eileen Sugameli remembers her first performance at Encore Stage & Studio was in "The Hobbit." She played an elf. Then on to 14 more Encore performances and Yorktown High School drama, and then to NYU. She has played everything from a mother to a daughter to a wild rabbit, a chicken and Cinderella which received a review predicting she was a veteran at 16 and would be on Broadway someday. Now she is living in Manhattan and has 15 credits to her name for her work in film, features, shorts and web series.

Sugameli was back in Arlington on Saturday, Nov. 16 for the screening of her new satire, "Three Mercedes." She describes it as the story of Melissa, played by Sugameli, who uses her skills as a used car salesman to convince the admissions officer to admit her to college in exchange for three Mercedes. She says the 13-minute film was shot in one day in the director's house about an hour and a half from New York City. The character gets asked all of the standard questions, check the boxes. But she says, "I'm not going to do it that way."

The screening was held in the Arlington Unitarian Church to a full house. "It was really cool to see so many people in the same room from when I was a kid and graduated from Yorktown in 2010. It was fun to see the film but it's a strange experience seeing it with everyone else for the first time."

Day to day life for Sugameli in New York City is networking, a lot of auditions, working on her performances and a couple of times a month performing a magic show. She is always looking for the next thing. She says the most difficult thing for her is when she doesn't get the audition in the first place so she can show what she can do. "It can be really lonely. But I had to audition eight times at Encore before I got my first children's role. And my mom always said you can be sad for a day and then



Eileen Sugameli in "Three Mercedes"

move on to the next thing. It taught me to be tough."

She says her biggest challenge is to accept the industry where it is, where appearance instead of talent plays such a major role. "It can be tough to be in this industry when you're told you're not attractive enough or if you'd just look a little bit dumpy you could get those roles. You say 'I hear you but I'm not going to do that.' You have to be tough to stay mentally healthy and remember who you are."

Sugameli remembers that when she was in Encore performances she always thought it was the greatest thing ever. But in high school she started to reflect. "I thought this is something I want to do but also that I wanted to do something important." When she played the daughter in the award winning "Nora's Lost," it put things in place for her and solidified that she had made the right decision to pursue acting. Nora was the story of a woman who had Alzheimer's and got lost on a cold night looking for her husband. "After the show a person came up and told me he had decided to visit his mother with Alzheimer's after 15 years. I saw what I did could make a difference."

She remembers probably the most challenging time so far has been the year she played back to back incredibly dramatic roles of people who had been through severe trauma. "I had to be able to step in and step out of the roles to be myself again."

Sugameli says her father traces her acting career back to when she was 1-1/2 years old, and he was dancing with her at a wedding. When they opened the buffet, everyone headed to the food except Sugameli who just kept dancing. "He says he looked at my face and saw me saying 'this is something I can do.'"

As they drove to the screening of "Three Mercedes" Sugameli says, "A really funny thing happened. I realized the location of the screening was close to where I'd performed so many times and we were taking the exact same route as going to Encore."



Eileen Sugameli in "Cinderella" where her performance led to a reviewer predicting she would be on Broadway someday.



Scene from "Three Mercedes" which just premiered in Arlington on Saturday, Nov. 16.



A look at the setup for "Three Mercedes," a short film with Eileen Sugameli, which just premiered in Arlington on Saturday, Nov. 16.



In high school Eileen Sugameli played the daughter in the award winning "Nora's Lost" about a woman with Alzheimer's searching for her husband on a cold night.

Voting Rights in Virginia Damaged by Supreme Court, Youngkin

BY NICOLE SULLIVAN
WIN WITH BLACK WOMEN VIRGINIA

It's crucial that we recognize the immense impact that the Supreme Court's recent decision to allow 1,600 voter registrations to be purged leading up to the 2024 Election has on our voting rights in Virginia. This isn't just a matter of law; it's about our community's ability to participate in democracy. Historically, Black Women have been at the forefront of the struggle for freedom in voting rights, showing extraordinary determination and leadership. Our role cannot be overstated, as we have shaped the democratic process in countless ways that benefit all of society.

The decision to purge voter rolls will disproportionately silence marginalized voices, setting back the progress made through decades of civil

rights activism. The Supreme Court's ruling reminds us why early voting is essential as a strategic way to reduce the risk of disenfranchisement.

As Black women, we must prioritize our efforts to educate and mobilize around early voting. As the State Coordinator for Win With Black Women Virginia, I am calling on each of you to take three immediate steps:

❖ First, vote early and disseminate this letter widely to friends, colleagues, and contacts from faith based and civic organizations, encouraging them to vote in person before early voting polls close on Nov. 2, 2024.

❖ Second, connect with WWBW Virginia via social media or email

❖ Third, join an ongoing in-person or virtual GOTV initiative now through Election Day, Tuesday Nov. 5, 2024. You can contact Win With Black Women Virginia or check out MOBI-

LIZE for opportunities to get involved, including in nearby swing states. Please note the voter protection hotline at the bottom of this letter, and remember, anyone, purged incorrectly, can register in person at the polls on Election Day.

Incredible strength in numbers and unity of purpose can bring about significant change. This moment calls for action. Drawing inspiration from the tireless efforts of those who fought for our rights in the past, we can face today's challenges with determination and hope. Let's keep pushing forward to ensure that every eligible voice is heard at the polls. Together, we can overcome obstacles and uphold the rights so fiercely fought for by generations before us.

Editor's note:

This letter was written before Election Day but if anything is more important now.

Arlington Nonprofits Need Your Help

Where to give for local impact in Arlington.

❖ **Arlington Free Clinic** provides free, high-quality health care to low-income, uninsured Arlington County adults through the generosity of donors and volunteers. www.arlingtonfreeclinic.org 2921 11th St. South, Arlington, VA 22204, 703-979-1425

❖ **The Arlington Food Assistance Center** provides supplemental food assistance to Arlington County residents, distributes groceries to over 3,700 families every week. More than 35 percent are children. 2708 South Nelson Street, Arlington, VA 22206, www.afac.org/, 703-845-8486.

❖ **The Arlington Historical Society** mission is to build community through a better understanding of our shared past. We maintain two free museums, conduct research about local history, and share history free with civic organizations, schools, and businesses. We receive no financial support from any level government. <https://arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org/>

❖ **Edu-Futuro** was founded in 1998 by immigrant parents in partnership with Arlington Public Schools to provide educational services for low-income under-resourced immigrant youth and families. They offer education, leadership development and after-school enrichment initiatives. 110 Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22204 info@edu-futuro.org (571) 309-5455

❖ **The Clothesline for Arlington Kids**, 2704 N. Pershing Drive,

Arlington, VA 22201 (703) 243-2615 Collects new and clean, gently used quality clothing from the community, and distributes it free of charge to low-income school-aged children in a welcoming space. www.clotheslinearlington.org/

❖ **PathForward** Empowering people from streets to stability with the PathForward Continuum of Care, 703-820-4357, pathforwardva.org

❖ **Arlington Thrive** provides one-time, same-day emergency financial assistance to Arlington residents facing a financial crisis, and also has programs to help prevent homelessness. 703-558-0035, www.arlingtonthrive.org

❖ **Bridges to Independence** leads individuals and families out of homelessness and into stable, independent futures. They offer a continuum of aid and support for all family members, helping them attain financial security and move forward into self-sufficiency. www.Bridges2.org

❖ **Animal Welfare League of Arlington** - Since 1944 the Animal Welfare League of Arlington has worked to improve the lives of animals. Help them create a world where all companion animals find homes; enjoy their lively social media presence. 703-931-9241, www.awla.org

❖ **OAR (Offender Aid and Restoration)** community based nonprofit working with individuals returning to the community from

incarceration and offering alternative sentencing options through community service. 1400 N. Uhle Street, Suite 704. 703-228-7030 www.oaronline.org

❖ **Doorways for Women and Families** provides services to help women out of domestic violence and homelessness toward safe and stable lives, Arlington, www.doorwaysva.org, 703-504-9400.

❖ **Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia**, Arlington, 703-521-9890.

❖ **Food for Neighbors** is a local nonprofit partnering with Arlington County Public Schools, Amazon and many others to address student hunger. contact@foodforneighbors.org www.FoodForNeighbors.org

❖ **Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH)**. As of last year, nearly 4,600 people, including 1,600 children, lived in an APAH property. Donations help APAH create new affordable

homes and provide services and opportunities for low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities <https://apah.org/>

❖ **Culpepper Garden** is an award-winning, nonprofit retirement community specifically designed to provide security, comfort and affordable, quality living for people age 62 and older. Includes both independent-living and assisted-living apartments.

❖ **Arlington Community Foundation**, As a grantmaker, convener, and leader of programmatic initiatives, the Community Foundation strives to strengthen local nonprofits, encourage better understanding of the needs of Arlingtonians, and address the most critical issues of our time to ensure that our community provides opportunity for everyone <https://www.arlcf.org/>

❖ **Encore Stage & Studio** used the transformative power of theater to help today's kids become tomorrow's leaders. In order for as many young people as possible

SEE GIVE LOCALLY, PAGE 6

Submit a Letter to the Editor

To submit a letter to the editor, email editors@connectionnewspapers.com or via the following form <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/>

Ideally, letters will be original, about local issues and less than 300 words. Please submit letters by noon Friday before publication week, although letters received on Mondays can be considered. Letters must include your first and last name, home address and a phone number. Letters are routinely edited for libel, length, grammar, good taste and accuracy. Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

The
Arlington
Connection

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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.

Movie matinee at Arlington Mill 55+ Center, “The Bucket List” (2007) (PG-13), Thursday, Nov. 21, 1 p.m. Registration # 911804-09.

History discussion led by Dwight Rodgers, Encore Learning, Thurs., Nov. 21, 1 p.m., virtual. Discussion topics emailed to participants prior to meeting. Registration # 911402-11.

Retirement: More than the Numbers, presented by Sallie Wiley, career counselor, Thursday, Nov. 21, 6 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Explore issues including a new identity, roles and expectations, finances, relocation and more. Registration # 911404-08.

Artist Cookbook, recipes for art materials that can be made from household items, Thursday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m., virtual. Presented by Community Arts Programmer Jennifer Droblyen. Registration # 911302-05.

Aurora Hills 55+ Center Book Club will read and discuss “Brooklyn” by Colm Toibin, Monday, Nov. 25, 11:30 a.m. Drop-in.

55+ (senior) ice skating at the MedStar Capitals Iceplex, Ballston Common Mall, roof level 8, pre-registration required at www.medstarcapitalsiceplex.com, register for Senior Public Skate. Parking fee \$1; skate rental, \$1.

Award winning Yarn Crafters of Aurora Hills 55+ Center knit and crochet items for Arlington charity organizations, Monday, Nov. 25, 10 a.m. Drop-in.

Partner dance practice, grab a partner and practice your ballroom dances moves, Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2:15 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Need a partner, email jweber1@arlingtonva.us. Bring your own music.

Movie matinee “Wonka” (2023) (PG), Tuesday, Nov. 26, 1 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 911804-03.

55+ crafters invite fellow crafters to socialize and create the perfect gift, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 10:30 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Bring your own supplies; no instruction provided. Drop-in.

Coffee or Tea and Thee, drop in and meet new folks while sipping coffee and tea, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 9 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center.

Open art studio to accommodate artists who work at their own pace, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. No instruction; bring your own materials. Drop-in.

als. Drop-in.

Movie matinee, Dynamic Duo: “Being the Ricardos” (2021) (R), Wednesday, Nov. 27, 12:30 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 911804-06.

Sing-along, dance or just come to listen to an open rehearsal of rock and roll band, Off our Rockers, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Madison Community Center. Drop-in.

Local history discussion, have fun recollecting and learning about Arlington’s rich past, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 911402-09.

Women’s drop-in basketball, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 7 p.m., Langston-Brown 55+ Center. Langston-Brown 55+ Center.

Canasta, easy to learn card game, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Drop-in.

Thanksgiving dinner at Dutch’s Daughter buffet, Frederick, MD, Thursday, Nov. 28. Cost \$99, Arlington resident; \$114, non-resident. Registration # 902411-16.

The Alliance for Arlington Senior Programs (AASP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of older adults in Arlington.. AASP works closely with the Office of 55+ Programs. For more information, check the website, www.friendsofthealliance.org.

55+ Travel group to attend an afternoon performance by GRAMMY award winning male chorus, “A Chanticleer Christmas” at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, Sunday, Dec. 1. Cost \$47, Arlington resident; \$54, non-resident. Registration # 902412-01.

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) offers free services such as life skills training and technology support. Hear more Monday, Dec. 2, 11 a.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center from Gary Moore, member of the NFB Board, Potomac VA Chapter. Register # 912500-01.


Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL), exercise programs to improve strength, balance and fitness and reduce fall risks, Mondays beginning Monday, Dec. 2, 1 p.m. through Feb. 20, Lubber Run 55+ Center. No cost. Registration # 912502-01.

Step-by-step painting demonstration by a Community Arts Programmer, Monday, Dec. 2, 10:30 a.m., virtual. Picture and supply list will be sent prior to class. Registration # 912303-01.

Let’s play easy piano duets, music supplied, Mondays beginning Dec. 2, 4 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Must have at least beginners knowledge of the piano to participate. Registration # 912304-13.

Jeopardy! Play America’s favorite quiz game, monthly themes, Mondays, Nov. 25, 10 a.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Drop-in.

SEE FLOURISHING, PAGE 7



ICE! A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS


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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
STAFFORD	18062	1	ROUTE 0001	RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER	11/1/2024
LUNENBURG	11672	688	OWL CREEK ROAD	OWL CREEK	10/11/2024
PETERSBURG	21087	0	FORT LEE ROAD	INTERSTATE-85	10/8/2024
LOUDOUN	11300	709	SANDS ROAD	TRIBUTARY OF CROOKED RUN	9/30/2024

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 vdot.virginia.gov and navigate to Traffic and Travel/For freight operators/Truck restrictions. 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 or the Load Rating Program Manager, Manjil Devkota 804-786-4064.

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 or corina.herrera@vdot.virginia.gov.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Section 4(f) de minimis Impact Thomas Jefferson Community & Fitness Center

Arlington Boulevard Safety Improvements

Arlington County

Pursuant to the requirements of 23 CFR 774.5, notice is hereby given that the Virginia Department of Transportation is accepting written comments regarding Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation (ACDPR) preliminary concurrence with the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Section 4(f) applicability criteria for de minimis impacts on ACDPR parkland (i.e. Thomas Jefferson Community & Fitness Center) as a result of the captioned project.

Review the Section 4(f) de minimis documentation by appointment only during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call 703-259-2424 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel. Information about the project is at <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/ArlingtonBlvd>.

Submit your written comments to Mr. Steven Varner at the above address by **December 9, 2024**. You may also email meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov. Please reference "De Minimis Impact Thomas Jefferson Community & Fitness Center" 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: 0050-000-923, C501, P101, R201 UPC: 119086
Federal: NHPP-5B01 (265)

Give Locally

FROM PAGE 4

to participate, Encore keeps ticket prices affordable for families, frequently offer discounted and complimentary tickets to families who wouldn't otherwise have access to theater, offer need-based scholarships to all of its education programs, and ensure that no child has to pay to participate in its productions. <https://encorestage.org/> Encore Stage & Studio, Encore at Cherrydale, 3701 Lorcom Lane, Arlington VA 22207 Phone: (703) 548-1154 Email: info@encorestage.org

❖ **The Lost Dog & Cat Rescue Foundation** helps homeless pets find their way into loving homes through rescue and adoption. www.lostdogrescue.org/ P.O. Box 50037, Arlington, VA 22205; To donate www.lostdogrescue.org/donate-now/ or email giving@lostdogrescue.org 703-295-DOGS

❖ **Ronda A. Gilliam Clothing Bank** provides free clothing, shoes and linens to individuals of all ages. Located in Arlington Presbyterian Church, 716 S. Glebe. 703-920-5660.

❖ **Shirlington Employment and Education Center (SEEC)** established to link employers with temporary day laborers; serves mainly low-income immigrants. At the Arlington Mill Community Center at 909 S. Dinwiddie Street, Suite 422, Arlington, VA 22204 703-933-1101 or seecjobs.org

❖ **Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington**, 200 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22203 (703) 841-3895 www.ccda.net

❖ **Homeward Trails Animal Rescue**, PO Box 100968 Arlington, VA 22210 (703) 249-5066 We find homes for dogs and cats rescued from low-income, rural animal shelters or whose owners can no longer care for them. www.homewardtrails.org

❖ **Alliance for Housing Solutions** 3100 Clarendon Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201 703-859-0452, working to increase the supply of affordable housing in Arlington County and Northern Virginia through public education, policy development, advocacy and innovation. <https://www.allianceforhousingolutions.org/>

❖ **TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors**, 3033 Wilson Blvd., Third Floor, Arlington, VA 22201, Call 24/7 800-959-TAPS (8277) The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors offers compassionate care and resources to all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Make a donation to support surviving military families and loved ones. You can also make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one. www.taps.org/donate



Teenagers shop for clothes at Closeline located on Pershing Drive which provides clothes to over 1,000 eligible low-income Arlington school children K-12 each year who can demonstrate need through eligibility for free or reduced price lunches or a letter of referral from a church or social service agency.



In May Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) commemorated serving two million families since they began in 1988. AFAC is a non-profit organization distributing free nutritious supplemental groceries to people in need weekly in Arlington. The population served has continued to grow now reaching 3,700 families each week.



Culpepper residents line up waiting their turn to have fun painting the wall with fingerprints. Culpepper Garden is an affordable senior community for people age 62 and older and the first low-income senior community in the U.S. to provide assisted living. It was established in the mid 70's and now includes two renovated independent living facilities with 267 apartments and an assisted living facility with 73 apartments. It is owned by the non-profit Arlington Retirement Housing Corporation.

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Be Part of the Children's And Teens' Edition

Our annual Children's Connection and Children's Gazette have been a long-standing tradition. We are once again welcoming contributions from children, youth, and teens in public and private schools, as well as homeschool, after-school care, and other programs, art and writing classes, and from individuals.

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more. We welcome written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

Visit <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and scroll down to the Children's Edition to see last year's editions. Our plan is for the Children's Connection/Gazette to publish as part of the edition for the week of Dec. 18, 2024.

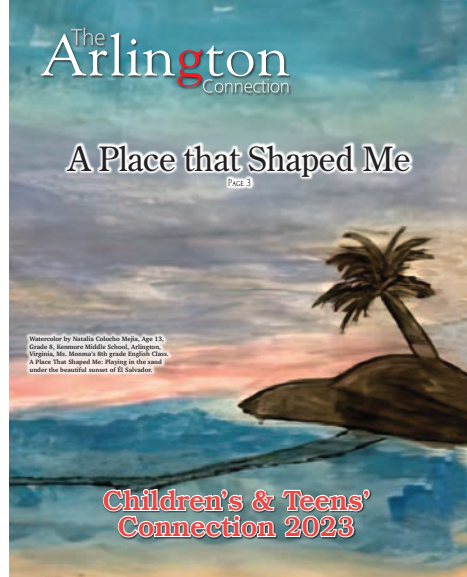
Submission Directions

1. Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format. These can be submitted via Google Drive. Writing should be submitted in text format (docx or Google Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

2. Identify each submission as follows:

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Springfield, Summer Morning, watercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS



The cover of last year's Arlington Children's Connection.

Writing example

Martina Alvarez, 17, Junior, Alexandria, I'm Not Just a Teen, essay | Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, VA, Gratia Rodriguez, English Teacher, HS

3. Please email your submissions by 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2023, [Earlier is Better] to Editor Mary Kimm at kimm.mary@gmail.com and fill in the Subject Line as Children's Connection 2024. If you are sharing via Google Drive, please share to kimm.mary@gmail.com

"FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

FROM PAGE 5

day, Dec. 2, 2 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Registration # 912600-13.

Learn the American style of Mah Jongg with instructor Judy Wall, 4-part series of classes, Mondays and Thursdays beginning Monday, Dec. 2, 10:45 a.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. No experience needed; supplies provided. Registration # 912600-16.

The GardenFest of Lights at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, VA is on the agenda for the 55+ Travel group, Monday, Dec. 2. Cost \$96, Arlington resident; \$110 non-resident. Registration #902412-02.

Join Marissa Bale, Area 2 Farms community outreach and program manager to learn about urban farms, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 1 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Registration # 912501-07.

Wildlife in Arlington presentation by Carolyn Wilder, volunteer for the Wildlife Rescue League, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Registration # 912400-22.

Introduction to the ukulele, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 4 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. No experience required; limited ukuleles available. Taught by Sandy O'Shea. Registration # 912304-01. Intermediate class follows at 4:30 p.m., registration # 912304-07.

Workshop to make holiday fabric stars, enhance folding skills, no sewing involved,

Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1 p.m., Aurora Hills 55+ Center. Materials supplied; instruction provided by Anya Gan from the Aurora Hills Advisory. Registration # 912310-01.

Holiday tunes with pianist Ken Schellenberg and friends, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 4 p.m., Arlington Mill 55+ Center. Come to listen and join in a sing-along. Registration # 912304-14.

Opera appreciation, view complete operas from the NYC Met on Demand with professional commentary by George Cecchetti, begins with "Elektra" by Richard Strauss, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run 55+ Center. Registration # 912300-01.

Introduction to basic Spanish begins Thursday, Dec. 5, 1 p.m., virtual. Class meets first and third Thursdays through Feb 20. Taught by Lubber Run 55+ Center Director Ashley Gomez. Registration #912650-06.

Light up the holidays with a painted wine bottle filled with fairy lights, Thursday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Walter Reed 55+ Center. Supplies provided. Registration # 912310-02.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), blessing or curse, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2:30 p.m., virtual. Hear the latest developments, challenges and opportunities from Steve Ruth, retired GMU professor of Public Policy. Registration # 912403-01.

NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2024, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2025, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,800 to \$4,930*.
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$22,910 to \$24,290.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,830 to \$1,840*.
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$47 to \$48.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$15.60 to \$16.55*.
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.84 to \$4.03 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$4.10 to \$4.15.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$57 to \$58.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge Inspection Fee from \$46 to \$47.

*Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$240 million budget for calendar year 2025¹. Water sales are expected to provide \$209 million and the remaining \$31 million is expected from connection charges, investment income and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2024	2025
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 66,956	\$ 74,371
Power and Utilities	14,667	14,630
Chemicals	15,970	16,910
Purchased Water	7,713	9,013
Supplies and Materials	6,871	7,401
Insurance	1,507	1,558
Fuel	776	890
Postage	620	642
Contractual Services	12,667	14,194
Professional Services	1,191	1,940
Other	2,605	3,168
Sub-Total	131,543	144,717
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(11,014)	(12,005)
Total	\$ 120,529	\$ 132,712

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$49,871,656
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$43,885,000

¹ Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

A copy of the proposed changes can be viewed on our website at fairfaxwater.org/rates.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Jessica Love at 703-289-6029. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on **Wednesday, December 11, 2024** to be included in the record of the public hearing.

ENTERTAINMENT



The Human Appeal USA's Comedy Takeover Tour takes place on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2024 at Cooperative Plaza Conference Center in Arlington.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS VACANCIES

The Friends of Arlington's Planetarium seeks to fill three vacancies on its 2025 Board of Directors. Interested candidates seeking information and an application can find details on the FOAP Elections web page. The deadline for submission is Dec. 31, 2024.

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.

VOLUNTEER FOR ARLINGTON'S COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Arlington Neighborhood Village, in partnership with Arlington County and Marymount University, has started the Community Ambassador Program (CAP). CAP is a volunteer fueled system that identifies "Ambassadors" connected with civic associations, faith communities, senior centers, apartment buildings, etc. These individuals will be trained to be a reliable source of information about the many opportunities available to older adults in Arlington.

Ambassadors will spread the word about programs and support services, opportunities for social and civic engagement, and educational and enrichment activities for older adults in their own neighborhoods. They are actively recruiting ambassadors to act as a bridge between their community and the Arlington safety net, providing information and soliciting feedback to improve offerings that help older adults remain safe, independent, engaged, and connected to their community. Contact cap@anvarlington.org if this is something you are interested in or want to learn more. Let's work

together to create a supported and connected community for all ages! Receive Support Services Are you a senior in Arlington? Do you need support services but don't know where to look? Are you looking for fun and enriching activities in Arlington? Email or call 703-509-8057 and they will connect you with an Ambassador.

UNTIL JAN. 26, 2025

Assembly 2024: Horizon Scanning Exhibit. At the Museum of Contemporary Art, Arlington. The exhibition is organized by MoCA Arlington Curator of Exhibitions Blair Murphy and guest curator Jared Packard. Launched in 2019, Assembly highlights current material and conceptual trends among contemporary artists. Since 2022, the exhibition has had a national focus, showcasing work by some of the country's rising stars and giving them a platform on the doorstep of the nation's capital. Assembly 2024: Horizon Scanning opens on the eve of the presidential election, four miles from the center of Washington, DC. In this time of multiple, overlapping, and seemingly perpetual crises, and with that proximity in mind, the exhibition brings together artists whose work can help us grapple with our tumultuous present by offering strategies to navigate and reimagine the future.

OCT. 29 TO JAN. 12

"A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." At Signature Theatre, Shirlington, Arlington. It's a comedy night in Sondheim's zany, hysterical, Tony Award-winning musical romp. In one of the greatest musical comedies of all time, three households reside next to each other in ancient Rome. Just outside their doors, the exploits of a quick-thinking Roman slave, a braggart soldier, a beautiful courtesan, a lovesick young man and others devolve into uproarious chaos in a fast-paced, witty and monumental escapade. With mistaken identities, wily ruses, madcap chases, a love story, and a happy ending of course, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum's" audacious and irreverent

spectacle has something for everyone.

NOV. 8-24

"Disney's The Lion King Jr." At Thomas Jefferson Community Theatre, 125 S. Old Glebe Road, Arlington. Presented by Encore Studio. Dates: Friday, November 8, 2024 at 7 p.m.; Saturdays, Nov. 9, 16 and 23, 2024 at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.; Sundays, November 10, 17 and 24 at 3 p.m. The young and carefree lion cub Simba faces serious consequences that force him to flee his kingdom of the Pride Lands, leaving his cruel uncle Scar to rule in his place. With the help of his new friends Timon and Pumbaa, Simba learns the joys of "Hakuna Matata," or "no worries," until his past catches up with him. Will responsibility and honor win out? Discover the answer for yourself as you sing along to the classic songs of Elton John and Tim Rice, including "I Just Can't Wait to Be King" and "Can You Feel the Love Tonight." We recommend this production for ages 4 and older.

Preshow Experiences: Join Encore for Simba's Scavenger Hunt—where every step brings you closer to the magic of the pride lands! Enjoy this fun family-friendly activity with roaring challenges and fun surprises as you interact with the cast before the show! Ticket Add-On to the Saturday, November 16, 3 p.m. Performance, Event begins at 2 p.m. Get ready for a wild and wiggly treat in Timon & Pumbaa's Pudding Party! Join them for a delightful "Build Your Own Treat" experience. Treat yourself and create your pudding parfait "grub" just the way you like it—layer it high with all the "slimey, yet satisfying" gummy bugs! Ticket Add-On to the Saturday, November 23, 3 p.m. Performance, Event begins at 2 p.m. Visit www.encorestage.org to purchase tickets online or call (703) 548-1154. For additional questions, email boxoffice@encorestage.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 23
Human Appeal USA's Comedy Takeover Tour. 6 p.m. At Cooperative



"Disney's The Lion King Jr." will be featured Nov. 8-24, 2024 At Thomas Jefferson Community Theatre in Arlington.

Plaza Conference Center, Arlington. Featuring a star-studded lineup including Omar Regan, Jeremy Mclellan, Yasmin Elhady, Preacher Moss and Sabeen Saddiq. The goal is to raise money in support of Human Appeal's emergency appeals to deliver life-saving food, clean water and medical care to families in crisis around the world, including Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.

THURSDAY/NOV. 28

Arlington Turkey Trot 2024, Official Start Time 8 a.m. Thanksgiving, Nov. 28

Start Line directly in front of Lyon Park Community Center, <https://arlingtonvaturkeytrot.org/>

TUESDAY/DEC. 3

Sip & Jingle. 5-7 p.m. At The Commentary, Westin Arlington Gateway, 801 N. Glebe Road, Arlington. Presented by the Ballston BID. Join in food, drinks, games and networking. Come dressed to impress for our Ugly Sweater Contest with incredible prizes, and don't forget to bring a toy for the Fill the Cruiser toy drive with Arlington County Police Department.

DEC. 5-8

Brighten Your Season. At Central Place Plaza, Rosslyn. Celebrate the holidays with Rosslyn Cheer! A fun lineup of events and more holiday happenings to get you into the holiday spirit. 1800 N Lynn St, Arlington, VA 22209

Light the Plaza: Thursday, Dec. 5, 5-8 p.m.
Santa Paws Yappy Hour: Friday, Dec. 6, 5-7 p.m.
Holiday Market: Saturday, Dec. 7 and Sunday, Dec 8, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

DEC. 6 AND 13

Free Classical Music. The Friday Morning Music Club invites everyone to classical music concerts the first and second Fridays of the month at Saint George's Church, 915 N. Oakland St., one block from Virginia Square Metro Station. The program for December 6 features Karg-Elert's Suite Pointillistique for solo flute and Shostakovich's Piano Trio in E minor. The program December 13 includes a cello solo performance of Boccherini's Concerto in G Major; Schubert's piano Impromptu in B-flat Major, and the virtuoso Fantaisie brillante sur 'Carmen' for solo flute. The one-hour concerts start at noon. Free, no ticket required. Visit fmmc.org

DEC. 7-8

Holiday Gift Nook. At Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington. Shopping Hours Saturday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

How it works: Pick up a coupon before entering the shop and exchange it for one item. You may return for additional tickets, while supplies and inventory last. Visit the gift-wrapping station to personalize and wrap your gift(s). Check

www.connectionnewspapers.com

ENTERTAINMENT



"A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" can be seen Oct. 29 to Jan. 12, 2025 at Signature Theatre in Arlington.

out other Library gift-making and wrapping programs.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14
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 December's show is the hilarious Lucas Craig.

DEC. 14-15
Jane Franklin Dance. 7 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. At Theatre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington. Jane Franklin Dance will close 2024 at the intimate black box venue Theatre on the Run, with commissioned works by six choreographers. Tickets: \$23 through Dec 13. (\$25 on Dec 14, 15 and at the door). Visit the website: <https://janefranklin.com/performance>.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14
Holiday Cheer. 7:30 p.m. At Unitarian

Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington. The National Chamber Ensemble returns with their beloved 'Holiday Cheer' concert. This event has become a holiday tradition enjoyed by all faiths and anyone who loves the finest classical and holiday favorites of the season. Star soprano Sharon Christman and the winners of NCE's Outstanding Young Artist Award string competition will captivate the audience with their performances. The concert concludes with a Carols-Sing-Along inviting everyone to join the spirit of music and song.

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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
Coworking Solutions LLC trading as Three Whistles, 2719 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Retail Restaurant or Caterer Application - Restaurant, Wine, Beer, Mixed Beverages, Consumed On and Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Ramzy Azar, Owner & Managing 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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News

Police Investigate Green Valley Shooting

The Arlington County Police Department's Homicide/Robbery Unit is investigating a shooting that took place in Green Valley on the evening of Nov. 16, 2024.

At approximately 9:55 p.m., police were dispatched to Virginia Hospital Center for the report of a juvenile male victim in his teens who self-reported to the hospital suffering from a gunshot wound, considered serious but non-life-threatening. It was subsequently determined a shooting occurred in the 3200 block of 24th Street S.

The preliminary investigation indicates the victim was outside when he was approached by two suspects and a physical altercation ensued. During the course of the incident, one suspect discharged a firearm, striking the victim, before both suspects fled the scene.

This remains an active investigation and anyone with information related to this incident is asked to contact the Arlington County Police Department's Homicide/Robbery Unit at 703-228-4180 or ACPDTipline@arlingtonva.us or anonymously through the Arlington County Crime Solvers hotline at 1-866-411-TIPS (8477).

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.

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.

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 Siqveland at 703-228-0913 or esiqveland@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.

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Arlington Knights of Columbus Serving on Thanksgiving

Donations and help needed for Knights of Columbus Thanksgiving Day Dinner for the Needy

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, let us reflect on all of the blessings which God has given us and how we might share those blessings with others in our community. This year Arl2473 Knights of Columbus will once again be serving the greater Arlington community and its surrounding areas.

How Can You Help?

Donate your time: As always, we need help preparing, delivering and serving Thanksgiving meals between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day. please contact us at kates9er@gmail.com or call Kate McMorrow at 571-358-5728

Donate money: We always need money to purchase some of the food and supplies for this event. If you wish to make a donation, complete the secure donation form; toward the bottom, choose a donation amount and then select "Thanksgiving Meals" under "preferred charity".

How did the Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinners Begin?

Brother Knight and Richard Duff, For-



Thanksgiving 2012.

mer enlisted Marine, was at the Council on Thursday, Nov 17, 2017 and it was there that the answer was revealed: "It was 1984 and there was a committee of five Brothers who had an idea and five turkeys, yes, just 5 turkeys to make turkey dinners. FACT says Richard" Truth be told, it was "The Duff," who was also a chef in the Marines where he served up to 4,000 Marines at once, who wrote the playbook for the existing Knights Thanksgiving Day Dinners as it became what it is today.

However, it is Thom Galvin (the Brother with the white beard below) and his wife Marijo who have been the CO-Chairs (or Co-Coaches) of this event since 2008.

They have taken the playbook from "The Duff" and have made it into the "Super Bowl of Thanksgiving Day Dinners" for our community and for EDW - one of our proudest accomplishments and achievements.

Thank you, Richard, Thom, and Marijo!

NOTE: In 2020, Thom and Marijo passed the baton to Myles and Kate McMorrow who are now leading the Thanksgiving Day Dinner program.

FOOTNOTE: These two Brothers never met until that famous Thursday, Nov 17, 2017, in the Council Home when one Brother introduced the two to each other with "Oh, by the way, do you two know each other and about Thanksgiving Dinners?"...the rest is history.

Caroline Haynes Wins Park Volunteer Award

Caroline Haynes has been named winner of the prestigious 2023 Bill Thomas Park Volunteer Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to local parks and natural resources in Arlington and surrounding communities. Since 2008, Haynes has been a driving force behind the Arlington Regional Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists (ARMN), serving as president for six years and guiding the organization through its formative stages.

"Caroline has a remarkable ability to inspire others through her deep knowledge, understanding, and passion for our environment," said Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey.

Under Haynes' leadership, ARMN has seen significant growth, with her efforts focused on recruiting new members, redesigning the basic training class, and identifying opportunities to meet the community's natural resource needs. Her dedication is further exemplified by her accumulation of over 6,100 volunteer hours, earning her the distinction of a Golden Circle volunteer from the Virginia Master Naturalist Program Office.

Caroline's volunteer efforts span a wide array of projects, including invasive species removal, habitat restoration, and support

for local organizations such as the Earth Sangha native plant nursery and Long Branch Nature Center. A key achievement includes her role in helping to develop the "Native Plants for Northern Virginia" guide as part of the Plant NOVA Natives campaign, which significantly promotes the use of native plants in the region's urban and suburban landscapes.

Beyond her contributions to ARMN, Haynes has been instrumental in shaping Arlington County's natural resource programs and policies. She has actively participated in citizen advisory groups and County planning efforts, serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) for nine years, including four years as Chair. In these roles, she has championed the preservation of parks and open spaces while advocating for biophilic design principles, influencing both private and public space planning processes.

The Bill Thomas Outstanding Park Service Volunteer Award was established to pay trib-



ute to lifelong parks volunteer Bill Thomas, and to honor and encourage those residents who demonstrate a passionate dedication and support for Arlington's dynamic programs, natural resources and public open spaces.

Bar Mitzvah Boy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

On Wednesday Nov. 20th, my former puppy/how adolescent golden retriever Burton will become a dog (meaning no longer a puppy). What I mean to say is on that day, two years, and three months after his mid-August 2022 birth – and subsequent early October arrival in my arms (given to me as a surprise birthday gift from my wife, Dina), Burton will be neutered. It is advised that larger breeds have this procedure later in their lives to allow for their normal and complete growth. Having waited, we will now be dropping him off at the spay clinic between 7:00 and 7:30 Wednesday morning and picking him up between 2:00 and 3:00 pm later that same day. If my previous experience as an owner of a golden being who was neutered is any indication, when I see Burton at the clinic, after his procedure, he will be his old/new self. Dogs' resilience is amazing. When I picked-up my last male dog, Bailey, after his being neutered, he came running over to me like nothing had happened to him. And of course, something most definitely had happened to him.

If I am to be honest, Burton's procedure seems more of a problem for me, than it does/will be for him. And so, I've taken to calling this procedure Burton's Bar Mitzvah, the day when Jewish boys, me included, become men. And even though there was no surgery with that occasion, I will admit that singing my Bar Mitzvah part (a section of the Torah) in front of a congregation of hundreds of attendees (I shared the stage with two other boys) can be painful, especially if you never sing – which I never did, and then while singing your 'part,' your voice cracks. Then you overcorrect by repeating the crack (which you were advised not to do) until you "baritone" it down to a more singable tone. Such was my life on October 20, 1967. Not exactly a day in infamy, but a day to remember for sure.

And though singing in front of a congregation was incredibly stressful for me, it was/is nonetheless, a rite of passage of sorts. "Today, you are a man" is the refrain of the day, uttered by your rabbi and is a summary of the event. There won't be much I can say to Burton on his big day since he won't understand any of it. But I will follow doctors' orders and keep him calm for two weeks and make sure he takes his medicine and wears his "e-collar" ("E" for Elizabethan) to prevent his licking at the incision. But I won't be having a party for Burton back at the house as my parents did for me. I will be happy to get him home though so he can curl up on his bed and start to recuperate.

Once Burton's recovery period is over, he'll likely lead a healthier and less complicated life. Much less wandering, less territorial, no more being attracted to females in heat, and less aggressive in general, which for a golden translates to less excitement/exuberance in all things of interests to a dog, especially greeting people. As I often joke about goldens, the only risk to someone breaking into your home, a home protected by a golden retriever, is if the thief is allergic to dog saliva. But they're loud, almost ferocious barkers so with Burton in the house, we feel safe and secure. (However, once the intruder is in the house, it might be a different story.)

Hardly a problem if you're a golden retriever owner. You don't get a golden retriever as a guard dog. You get a golden retriever as the perfect family dog: loving, affectionate and playful. And as a member of the family, he is entitled to all the benefits forthwith. One of which is to maintain his health. (As an example, I just spent \$170 yesterday on an emergency veterinary appointment because he had a loose stool two nights in a row.) And the prevailing opinion about neutering dogs is, unless you're using them to stud/breed, it's better, all things considered, to neuter/spay the animal – and that's not just Bob Barker speaking.

Nevertheless, though this procedure is a net positive, it's still surgery. I'm sure I'll have to sign some sort of waiver. But I have been down the road before, not literally (I'm using a spay specialist-type veterinarian that's a referral) so I'm not worried, exactly. I'm more anxious, as I would be about any family member having any a medical procedure, no matter how minor. Stranger things have happened on an operator table, maybe even in an examining room. I'll be glad when it's over. Identical to how I felt on the days leading up to my Bar Mitzvah. I survived that. I'm sure I'll survive this.

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

Rethinking Autumn's Leaves

So many reasons to 'leave the leaves.'

BY GLENDA BOOTH
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

Autumn's leaf showers are well under way and many suburbanites are blowing, raking, bagging, vacuuming, cursing and sending the leaves away. Bulging bags of leaves and piles awaiting vacuuming line many streets.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website indicates that leaves and "yard trimmings" account for 12 percent of the nation's solid waste, 34 million tons a year. In 2023, in areas served by Fairfax County, yard waste collected totaled 1,591 truckloads or 17 percent of total waste generated. But the county provides leaf collection services only to 45,000 customers out of 426,400 housing units. Private haulers collect the remaining 90 percent.

Leaves are not trash, say entomologists and others. Fall leaves are assets. They should stay on the ground as nature intended.

"Composting is nature's way of recycling," says Fairfax County's website. Leaves and other plants, fruit and vegetable peels and other organic materials are biodegradable, which means that organisms break them down over time.

Healthy Soil

Leaf mulch provides nutrients that enrich the soil and help suppress unwanted plants. Some gardeners call decomposed leaves "black gold."

Leaf mulch can improve soil's porosity, can retain moisture and reduce the need to water, which is especially important during the dry spells Virginia has experienced recently.

Another benefit: By making your own mulch, you don't have to buy it and lug it home.

Curb Global Warming

A Sept. 22 Better Homes and Gardens article reports that leaving the leaves can help combat global warming because when leaves go to the landfill, they decompose without oxygen and produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas that is warming the planet.

By not using a gas-powered leaf blower, you can also cut other air and noise pollution. Reducing truck traffic can curb vehicular pol-



Leaves line many streets ready to be vacuumed.



Bagged leaves await pickup.

lution. Transportation accounts for around 43 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the county.

Home to Critters

Leaves provide habitat for many critters. Turtles, toads, birds, mammals and invertebrates depend on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material.

There's a busy ecosystem in and under those leaves. Worms, snails, spiders, beetles, millipedes and microscopic organisms like bacteria and fungi find a home in dead organic material. Leaves insulate animals that hide in or beneath the soil from the cold.

Many insects overwinter in leaves and animals like chipmunks, turtles, birds and amphibians rely on insects for food. Most butterflies and moths overwinter

as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis or adult. The National Wildlife Federation reports that 94 percent of moths rely on the leaf layer to complete their life cycle. Their caterpillars shelter under the leaves and emerge as adults in the spring. Caterpillars are a staple for many birds feeding their young in the spring. Removing leaves can mean reducing the number of beneficial insects and birds.

Margaret Fisher, Outreach Coordinator for Plant NOVA Natives/Plant NOVA Trees, offers, "We need native plants in our yards to support the insects that support the birds and the rest of the ecosystem. Many of those insects overwinter in the fallen leaves, but if we blow or haul them away, we don't allow those insects to complete their life cycles."

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Leaves on the ground at the Sherwood Regional Library.

Did You Know?

You can compost leaves in your yard, creating nutrient-rich mulch for spring flower beds and trees. Leaves collected by Arlington County are turned into mulch available for free pick-up or delivery at a nominal cost.

About Arlington Leaf Collection

Schedule Information

- ❖ Sign up for leaf schedule Listserv email updates.
- ❖ Look for neighborhood signs posted three to seven days before each pass by civic association. The first pass is in November (bright yellow); the second pass is in December (orange). Note: The date on the sign marks the beginning of the leaf collection window. Leaves may not actually be collected on that date, but should be left at the curb from that date until they are collected.
- ❖ Missed a collection? Bag leaves for the next weekly collection or wait for the second vacuum pass.

Why Care About Insects?

The late biologist Edward O. Wilson said that insects are "the little things that run the world." In "The Diversity of Life," he wrote the following:

"So important are insects and other land-dwelling arthropods that if all were to disappear, humanity probably could not last more than a few months. Most of the amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals would crash to ex-

inction about the same time. Next would go the bulk of the flowering plants and with them the physical structure of most forests and other terrestrial habitats of the world. The land surface would literally rot. As dead vegetation piled up and dried out, closing the channels of the nutrient cycles, other complex forms of vegetation would die off, and with them all but a few remnants of the land vertebrates."

How to Prepare for Vacuuming

- ❖ Rake leaves to curb the week-end before the posted start of zone collection (residents with contract lawn services should plan ahead).
- ❖ Don't block roadways with leaves more than seven days in advance of a scheduled vacuum leaf collection as it can interfere with traction, blocks traffic, limits street parking and is a potential fire hazard.
- ❖ Pile leaves away from storm drains, water meter covers, low wires and parked cars.

- ❖ Remove stones, litter, branches and other debris from leaves to prevent equipment damage and worker injuries.
- ❖ Don't place leaves in plastic bags or trash carts.
- ❖ Never park your car on leaf piles — it's a fire hazard.
- ❖ Drive slowly around leaf trucks, especially when passing.
- ❖ Always look out for children playing in and around curbside leaf piles.