

Arlington Family Connection

supporting children age six and under and those who care for them



Volume III, Issue 6 * August 2004
www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



Strategies for working moms

by Charlotte Pierce

Would you still work at an “outside” job if your family didn’t need the money? We may choose it voluntarily or a lifestyle or family situation leaves us with no choice but to go out and earn an income. The issue of two working parents can be a hot-button topic among parents with outside jobs and those who stay at home and there is often a deep philosophical divide between the two. In fact, some point out that the phrase “working mother” is an inaccurate expression, since all parents work hard at nurturing family, community, and personal growth, whether or not they engage in a career or other work life.

On the one hand, work outside the home can be fulfilling and necessary; while on the other hand, family life can be fulfilling and all-consuming. The daily balancing act between career and family requires special skills, support systems, and attitudes. Perhaps with the rare exception of those with a “calling” who achieve a perfect balance between “work” and family, one could probably say that most parents would rather spend more time with their families than at the office.

“Our system is not perfect and if I had it my way, I wouldn’t be working,” admitted Bishop parent Sue Parseghian, who substitute teaches in Arlington. “But that’s the way it is right now, so we all have to make the best of it. The good news is our daughters are becoming more self-reliant, our time together is more fun, and the extra money always helps!”

A Family Affair

The biggest change many parents find when they return to work is that their home will not be as organized as it was when they were home full time. Some parents manage to keep up laundry, shopping, and other household tasks, by doing it at night after the kids are in bed and the spouse is home. It helps when both parents are night owls and think nothing of starting laundry at 10 pm.

“Don’t get me wrong, I’m not a perfectionist by any means, but I do like things a certain way. Well, they aren’t really that way anymore! Big house projects don’t get done right now,” conceded Parseghian.

When you both work at outside jobs, sharing small household acts becomes monumental. “I also have to say it certainly helps having a husband that isn’t afraid to help out!” said Parseghian. “He does whatever I ask him to and then some. As a good example, I woke up one morning and went into the living room. All the laundry was neatly folded in piles for each of us to put away. And one week, he cleaned the whole fridge!”

“I think the things that have suffered the most are the physical condition of our house and time with spouse,” agreed AFC member Nina Fischer. We have often thought that having a regularly scheduled night out for us would be good but somehow we have yet to get it together.”

Working Moms, continued on page 3

Lost teddy searching for owner

by Bettina Velona

Hey kid, remember me? I was your favorite toy last year. And now I’m cast away on the playground buried in mud. You forgot me. Or did you? I’m wondering if you miss me as much as I miss you. I do hope so since I really appreciate your company.

I suspect that you haven’t looked for me yet. I saw it coming. After Swan Lake Barbie came along last Christmas, I was chopped liver to you. And I’ve seen you do it before: toys

carelessly left at the park and the beach, pieces of clothing left at the gym. Often you don’t even notice. There’s always something new to play with, and an abundant supply of new clothes. And if you do notice, lost items are simply replaced without much of a search.

I have a feeling I will end up in the

Teddy, continued on page 6



Inside ...

Bulletin Board, page 2
Calendar, pages- 5-7
Membership form, page 7
Crack-n-Peel — essay, page 7
Save the Dates, page 8



AFC Bulletin Board



Members Connecting with One Another

Volunteers Needed ...

... AFC Steering Committee

For more information about AFC, please contact any of the following Steering Committee members or join us at our next meeting, Wednesday, Sept. 8 at 7pm Contact anyone listed here for the meeting location.

All meetings are open and AFC members are encouraged to attend. We will be planning future events and discussing issues of interest to Arlington families. If you would like to get more involved with AFC, or if you have a special interest you would like to see us pursue, let us hear from you at info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Volunteers are needed in all areas, but especially in helping to organize **outings** and **special events**.

Wendy Clarke, Clerk, 781 648-2341
workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Karen Donovan, Webmaster, 781 777-1011
webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Betsy Lawson, Newsletter, 781 646-5812
newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Justine Lynch, Treasurer, 781 648-0006
treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Ruth Schmidt, Membership, Outings & e-Bulletin Board, 781 643-2362
membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org
bulletinboard@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

... Staff Booth at Town Day

Join other AFC members and meet other families in town by spending an hour or so at the AFC booth at this year's Town Day on Saturday, Sept. 11. We'll have a craft for kids and AFC literature to hand out. To sign up, please email: info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org. See you there!

... Help with the newsletter note September deadlines

Many thanks go to Lillian Johnson and Amy Speare who compile the **AFC Calendar** each month. **Calendar deadline** for the September issue is **Saturday, August 14**. Email listings to: calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org. This month's newsletter was edited and designed by Betsy Lawson, proofread by Ruth Schmidt, and distributed by Justine Lynch. Newsletter volunteers are always welcome. **Editorial deadline** for the September issue is **Friday, August 13**. Email submissions to: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

... Shop at the PTO Thrift Shop

If you haven't checked it out, plan a visit to the PTO Thrift Located in the basement of the Fox Library at 175 Mass. Ave., East Arlington. The shop features gently-used clothing for all ages, toys, books, housewares and more. Hours are: Tuesdays 9:30am-1:30pm and Wednesdays, 4-8pm. Volunteers needed during store hours and for donation processing. *Please note, the Thrift Shop will be closed the week of Aug 1. Check the Web site for additional possible closings.* Contact Toni Langerman at 781-641-9969, krausman-2@rcn.co, www.ptothriftshop.com.

Editorial policy

The **Arlington Family Connection** (AFC) newsletter is published monthly and is free with membership. Published articles reflect the views of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of AFC. Childcare, healthcare and legal information is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for medical or professional advice. Always consult your own healthcare provider for any decisions relating to your child's well being. Copyright remains with the individual author for bylined articles. All other materials are copyright **Arlington Family Connection**, 2004. Permission is granted to reproduce articles for which copyright is held by AFC provided appropriate credit is given and no fee is charged. The AFC newsletter accepts submissions from AFC members on issues relevant to families with children six and under. The editorial board reserves the right to refuse submissions for any reason. Send editorial submissions to: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org; calendar listings to calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

Working moms

continued from page 1

Even if you have found excellent child care or they're at school and you're at the office. It doesn't mean your children's needs fade away: there are the calls at work about the fever at preschool, the forgotten violin on concert day, the doctors' appointments to book, the school meetings to attend, and the potluck graduation dinner to plan.

Don't be under the illusion that working from a home office will eliminate the need to juggle work and family. "It's very easy to blur the lines between baby (and then toddler) and work," noted Susan Cronin Ruderman, "until the two get so meshed together you can't do justice to either of them. For me, the solution was out-of-home care for my daughter."

I, too, have found that one of the challenges I didn't factor into part-time, home-based work is that one needs to budget transition time for changing gears and projects. Getting my daughter from preschool to a 15-minute doctor's appointment in the middle of a work day is more than a 30-minute task, but somehow I start out thinking of it that way.

Keeping Connections

Many parents who came into parenthood at an older age have friends who are child-free, and there can be a disconnect in a previously compatible relationship. Working parents find that relationships with friends, old and new, vary in durability. Often, there simply isn't time or energy to nurture relationships, or it's catch-as-catch-can.

"Life with two little ones makes them my priority," said Fischer. "I do the parent piece well but almost everything else is fair game. Most of our friends are people who also have young children, and those are the easiest folks for us to stay connected to."

At this time of her life, "only the most durable friendships are surviving," noted home-based freelance editor Jerri Newman. "With family and a few kindred spirits, I have bonded for life despite infrequent or no visits at all, with mostly telephone calls, e-mail and the perennial holiday cards to remind us of how our children have grown."

The juggling act

We asked a number of Arlington working mothers how they juggle household duties, maintain a connection with their spouse, and accomplish the responsibilities of motherhood, while working full time or even part time. We've distilled their answers here:

* **Choose the right job.** Choose a job in an environment

that's at least *somewhat* family-friendly so that you won't be censured for leaving early to pick up a sick child or attend a school function.

* **Prioritize.** Figure out what's important. Give up on perfection and being the one who does it all. Choose family time over sock-sorting.

* **Exercise.** Even just 15 to 20 minutes of exercise a day can make a huge difference in your energy level, mood, and ability to cope. The time alone and the endorphin rush will make you glad you got out.

* **Organize.** Keep lists and establish regular times and systems for laundry, shopping, kitchen & bathroom cleanup. Pick a night to create a list of dinner menus for the week. Make meals ahead to freeze or hit Trader Joes for their excellent prepared meals.

* **Combine.** Double up on tasks and family time, within reason. Sock-sorting can be a matching game with your preschooler; cooking — a science activity with your

school-age child. And it's good training for when they can actually take over some of these tasks!

* **Meditate.** Strive for balance. You won't be able to stay on top of everything while working full time or even part time, but try to feel good about what you *are* able to do.

* **Delegate.** Whenever possible, invest in reliable sitters, cleaners, landscapers, dog walkers, and other supports. Establish clear responsibilities for each family member.

* **Talk.** Finding time to talk with other working moms about the issues and challenges you face can be a great stress-reliever and can help you discover great solutions. The AFC's Working Mothers Group [see box] is a good place to start.

* **Reward Yourself.** As you accomplish your goals, reward yourself! Take a day off from your schedule and just have some fun. It'll give you something to look forward to as you're working toward completing your tasks.

* **Give Yourself Credit.** If you can't be a hands-on volunteer for your community or school, remember that your income taxes are vital to supporting your community, and that you are doing a great job of raising your kids to be self-reliant, contributing citizens.

Having recently come blinking back into the world of work when her second child entered pre-school, Charlotte Pierce now runs Pierce Press from her home office. You may contact her at charlotte@piercepress.com.

Editor's note: Next month, look for a list of Working Mom resources in the newsletter.

Join AFC's Working Moms drop-in group — 1st Saturday of the month

10:30 am-noon, Arlington Senior Center
*(summer hiatus, resumes in Sept.
Date change due to Labor Day)*

For details, contact workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org
or call 781-648-2341

Led by Wendy Clarke and Johanna Meyer

Calendar

Special Events for Families

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

July 30 – Aug 7. Regent Theater, 7 Medford St., Arl. Arlington Children's Theater presents this classic story. (Includes fighting scenes.) \$8. Appropriate for kids ages 4 & up. Info: 781-646-4849, <http://regenttheatre.com/events>

Summer Movies for Preschoolers

Every Tues., 10:30am. Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Weekly preschool movies shown in the large mtg. room on the lower level. Free. Info: 781-862-6288, <http://www.caryllibrary.org>

Circus Smirkus

Wed. Aug. 4 & Thurs. Aug. 5, 2pm & 7pm shows. Elm Bank Horticulture Center, 900 Washington St. (Rt. 16), Wellesley. Enjoy a fabulous one-ring tent circus performed by children ages 12-18. General seating, tickets \$12 & \$14 available in advance by calling The Circus Barn at 800-532-7443. (Tickets also available at the show, but recent local shows have sold out.) Ages 2 & under free. Info: <http://www.circussmirkus.com>

Lexington Preschool PTA's

SummerFun Wednesdays

9:30-11am. LPPTA's SummerFun program is a drop-in, outdoor arts and crafts program for toddlers, preschoolers and their parents or caregivers at an LPPTA member's home. SummerFun is open to non-members and families in surrounding communities. \$1/child. Info: <http://www.lppta.org>

Aug 4 – Jackie Piscitello, 81 Spring St., Lexington. Visit Italy and decorate a placemat to take home.

Aug 11 – Mary Ellen Alessandro, 9 Cutler Farm Rd., Lexington. Bring a riding vehicle for a few laps on the racecourse. Make traffic signs too.

Lexington Summer Concerts

Fri. Aug 6, 13, 20. 6:30pm. Visitors Center Lawn, 1875 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Bring lawn chairs and refreshments and enjoy a variety of styles of music including big band, country, 50's & 60's classic rock-and-roll; and jazz. Free. Info/rain: 781-862-2480.

Beauty & The Beast Kiddie Concert

Fri. Aug. 6, 12pm, Chenery Middle School, 95 Washington St., Belmont. Performed by the Gingerbread Players & Jack. Free. Info: <http://www.ppmf.org>

In-Defense Summer Safety Program

Aug. 9-12. Summer camp format (Mon-Fri 9am-12pm). Covers safety techniques related to home, school, excursions, vehicles, stranger tricks, and abduction defense. Ages 5-7. \$110/child (reduced for multiple children in same family). Info: 781-643-7353.

SteveSongs Concert

Sun. Aug. 8, 4pm. Burlington Common, Burlington. Come see area native Steve Roslonek perform children's music. Mother to Mother Event. Free. Info: 866-KID-SONG, <http://www.stevesongs.com>

Costumed Interpreter at National Heritage Museum

Sat. Aug 21, 1-4pm. 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Meet a colonial barber and surgeon. Dan Grillo will talk about medicine, surgery, and other aspects of life in the 1700s. Free. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Butterfly Festival

Aug 21-22. 10am-4pm. Garden in the Woods. 180 Hemenway Rd., Framingham. The festival offers something for everyone, from butterfly walks through the Garden, to slide programs about butterfly gardening, a free-flight exhibit, family activities and crafts, and special presentations by the Mass. Butterfly Club. Info: 508-877-7630, <http://www.newfs.org>



'Meadow Musicians' at Habitat

Wed. Aug. 25, 7:30-9pm. Habitat, 10 Juniper Rd., Belmont. Cicadas, grasshoppers, crickets and other insects are making a lot of noise at this time of year. Come out into the meadow with us as we learn about the life cycles of these fascinating insects and spend time listening to their symphony. \$6 member/\$8 non-member. Registration reqd. Ages 3-12. Info: 617-489-5050, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Habitat/index.php

Magical World of Make-Believe

June 16 to August 27, Robbins and Fox Libraries Summer Reading Program with a "fantasy" theme. Sign up at any time, and read for fun anything you enjoy! All ages of readers and "listeners" are encouraged to register for the program, collect a reading chart, colorful bookmark, and take part. The goal is to read or listen for at least one hour per week for the 10 weeks of summer. Everyone who completes the chart may choose a free book plus other small prizes. As you read, mark your progress by adding wizards and fairies to the magical library land. Info: 781-316-3234.

Springstep's 2nd Annual Arts Blast

Sat. Aug 28, 11am-3pm. Springstep, 98 George P. Hassett Dr., Medford. Arts Blast is a free community festival of the arts featuring classes, demonstrations, performances, live music, children's activities and more. Ben Rudnick & Friends will perform at 1:00 pm. Ages 1 & up. Free. Info: 781-395-0402, <http://www.springstep.org>

Sing-alongs



Note: There are no sing-alongs at Robbins Library or Fox Library for the month of August.

Mondays. Finagle a Bagel in Burlington, 91 Middlesex Tpke, 5:30pm. Ed Morgan performs a selection of fun original and classic children's songs. Free. Info: 781-273-6500, <http://www.finagleabagel.com>

Second & Fourth Fridays

Sing-along with Diane Taraz. 10-10:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave, Arlington, Aug. 12. \$1. Note: There will be no performance on Aug. 27. Info: <http://www.dianetaraz.com>

Saturdays

11am. Stellabella Toys, 1360 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Children of all ages are invited to join local musicians to sing songs and play games. Free. Info: 617-491-6290.

Storytimes/Playtimes

Note: The Robbins Library will be closed on Saturdays in August.

NEW! Cary Memorial Library

1874 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Various storytimes for toddlers & infants. Info: 781-862-6288, <http://www.caryllibrary.org>
Thurs. Aug 5, 19. 10:30am. Ages 0-30 mo.
Thurs. Aug 5, 19. 2pm. Ages 3-6
Wed. Aug 25, 10:30am. Ages 2-4.

NEW! National Heritage Museum

33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>
Wed. Aug 18, 2pm. "Stories Round the Campfire," with Cindy Killavey. Stories & sing-alongs. \$6/child; \$8/adult.
Thurs. Aug. 19, 10:30am. Hear the story of "Dandelions," make mini-covered wagons, and visit new exhibition on the American West. Ages 4 & under. \$3/child.

Robbins Library Play Times
Mon. Aug. 2 & 9, 10am-12pm. Toddlers & preschool age children are invited to get together for a play time with extra toys and simple craft activities. Info: 781-316-3234.

Henry Bear's Park
11am Thursdays at Arl. & Cambridge locations. Free. 685 Mass. Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-9400. 361 Huron Ave., Cambridge. Info: 617-547-8424.

Barefoot Books
10:30am Fri. & Sat. Ages 2 & up.
2pm Sun. Ages 5 & up.
1771 Mass. Ave., Cambridge A fun hour of age-appropriate stories. Coloring and refreshments too! Free. Info: 617-349-1610.

Harvard Coop
11am every Tues. & Sat. 1400 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Join us for our preschool story hour with snack or craft on the Lower Level. Free. Info: 617-499-2000.

Pottery Barn
Daily, times vary. Check store for details (there should be a time posted out front). Free. Pottery Barn, Burlington Mall, Burlington. Info: 781-221-5833.

Other Fun Stuff

Arlington Reservoir Beach
Lowell St. Open until Aug. 29. 10am-7pm. The beach provides: lifeguards on duty, a clean sandy beach area, filtered, chlorinated, and aerated water, daily water quality testing, bathrooms, changing area, and outdoor showers. Also vending machines and picnic tables. Enjoy a stroll along the walking trails, bird watching, or fishing. Free parking. Daily passes for non-season pass holders: \$4/day (Mon-Fri), \$6/day (weekends & holidays). Info: 781-316-3880.

Spray Pool at Thompson School,
North Union St., Arl. Open until Aug. 29, daily 10am-7pm, weather permitting. Free. NO bathroom facilities. Adjacent to fun playground. Info: 781-316-3880.

Art Beat Weekend Workshops
Every Sat. Drop-in from 3-5pm to do a different themed craft each week. Ages 4 & up, prices \$10 & up. 212-A Mass Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-2200, <http://www.artbeatonline.com>

Capitol Theater Movies for caregivers with babies. Mondays, new movie chosen weekly starting between 1-2pm, \$4.50/adult. Nursing, bottle feeding, fussing, and changing diapers is strongly encouraged

and never frowned upon! 204 Mass Ave., Arl. To join the email list send an email to BabyFriendlyMovies-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; info visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BabyFriendlyMovies>

Puddlestompers Monday Playgroup has moved outside and will be at various local playgrounds and planning field trips for the summer. Mondays, 10:30am-12:30pm. Drop-in pre-school playgroup. In the case of extreme weather, meets in the Fox Library Community Room, Arl. (\$1/family donation requested). To join the group's email list, contact 781-641-0944 or [http://JulieLucey@comcast.net](mailto:JulieLucey@comcast.net)

Puddlestompers Nature Classes
Outdoor nature program for ages 2 to 5. 5-wk summer session will be held on Thursday mornings at various locations in Arlington, July 27-Aug. 26. A portion of the tuition is donated to Arlington's conservation and open space organizations. Registration/info: 781-449-0776, <http://www.puddlestompers.com>

Beyond Arlington

NEW! Beaver Brook Reservation
Spray Park open daily 10am-6pm. Trapelo Rd., Belmont. Beat the heat and bring a picnic to this fun spray park with shaded picnic area, playground and bathrooms. Parking is available on Trapelo Rd., or around the corner on Rt. 60 at the free Beaver Brook Reservation parking lot. Info (DCR): 617-727-1199.

Insect Invasion at Garden in the Woods
Thru Oct. 17. Open Tues.-Sun., 9am-5pm. 180 Hemenway Rd., Framingham. Examine 12 dinosaur-sized wooden bug sculptures including a 20-foot dragonfly. Also, Bug-Mobile with hands-on activities every Sat. & Sun., 12-3pm. All ages. Gen. Admission: \$7/adult, \$5/ages 6-18. Info: 508-877-7630, <http://www.newfs.org/garden.htm>

Babes in the Woods
Middlesex Fells every Tues., 10-11:30am. Strolls and hikes through the park. Free. Info: 781-396-8994, <http://www.fells.org/babes.html>

Memorial Drive Sundays
Every Sun. through Nov. 14, Memorial Drive in Cambridge is closed to traffic 11am-6pm. Bring your bike (tricycle, trail-a-bike...), stroller, rollerskates, scooter, running shoes or walking feet to take advantage of this magnificent parkway along the Charles River.

Michaels Imagination Saturdays
Every Sat., 10am-12pm. Michaels Arts & Crafts Store, 34 Cambridge St., Burlington. Different craft each week. Ages 5-10. \$2/child. Info: 781-229-7592, <http://www.michaels.com>

Puppet Showplace Theatre
Weekly Wed. & Thurs. shows at 10:30am & 1pm. 32 Station St., Brookline. Age appropriateness varies. \$7/members, \$8.50/non-members. Info: 617-731-6400, <http://www.puppetshowplace.org>

Rattle at the Brattle, baby-friendly film series. Wednesday afternoons 1-3pm, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Sq., Cambridge. Free. Film schedule only available at box office or by joining the email list. For more info or to join the list: parents@brattlefilm.org

Toys R Us Fun Day
Saturdays. Each week features a new fun activity for kids! Ages 3 & up. Free. Visit <http://www3.toysrus.com/our/tru/prom/funday/> for a calendar of events and the store nearest you.

Local Attractions

NEW! The Stone Zoo
149 Pond St., Stoneham. Small local zoo, minutes from Arlington, with a petting barnyard, playground, and lots of animal exhibits. Great for young children! \$7/Adults, \$4.50/children (2-15), under 2 free. Info: 617-541-5466, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

The Discovery Museums
177 Main St., Acton. Two separate but complementary buildings filled with exciting, interactive exhibits for children of all ages. Check their calendar for many special programs. \$8/one museum, \$12/two museums. Info: 978-264-4200, <http://www.discoverymuseums.org>

Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
208 South Great Rd, Lincoln. Explore the fields and forest and visit the farmyard. Weekly programs for kids. Gen. admission: members free, \$6/non-member adult, \$4/non-member child (ages 3-12). Info: 781-259-2200, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Drumlin_Farm

Ecotarium
222 Harrington Way, Worcester. Nurture young children's curiosity and wonder with hands-on exploration of real things. Members free; \$8/non-member adult; \$6/non-member child (ages 3-18). Explorer Express Train ride, \$2.50/person. Info: 508-929-2700, <http://www.ecotarium.org>

Remember me, Teddy?

continued from page 1

garbage. I don't blame you. You're used to going to the store and replacing missing items. So why even look? I understand. Surrounded by your mountain of toys you probably don't even notice that I am gone. Note to parents: Do you see how my value is drastically decreased in this pool of never-ending consumption?

I know that those animated eye-catching ads convince you that you continually HAVE to have more new toys. They convince your parents that you get bored with the old stuff and NEED new stimulation. Also, people around you are not respectful of the things they own: Uncle Bill uses throwaway cameras; your parents buy many cheaply made products that break easily and have to be tossed out merely to be replaced by new ones; and nearly every week Auntie Susan shows off her new in-style clothes she HAD to have, while complaining that the old clothes were not good enough. But let me tell you: by replacing me with another toy, you are wasteful and not gentle to the environment. Because, you see, the Earth's precious materials have to be used to make that new toy.

You know what, kid? I wish you could experience what it means to appreciate what you've got without wanting what you don't have. I'd like you to get lots of enjoyment out of everything you own. It is very satisfying to pick up a toy and treat it like a treasure. Try it. Grab one of your toys and think about what you like about it. How it feels when you touch it? They way it looks? The way it makes you feel inside? How it sparks your imagination? Just remember how much you liked me in the beginning and see if you can continue to feel like that with all your toys. I promise that appreciating what you've got will make you a happier kid. Also, it might convince your parents that they don't have to keep buying masses of new toys. As a result you'll be less wasteful and gentler to Mother Earth.

Please think about it and come back to save my life! I will always treasure your friendship!

Bettina Velona has one daughter and is a freelance writer living in East Arlington. Please send any feedback you have to jebena69@aol.com.

Calendar, cont.

Franklin Park Zoo Dinosaur Kingdom

One Franklin Park Rd., Dorchester. Interactive and educational family exhibit features twelve dinosaurs, including animatronic replicas. Through Sept. 6. \$3 in addition to gen. admission. Info: 617-541-5466, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary

10 Juniper Rd, Belmont. Trails wind through forests, across meadows, around 2 ponds, and wetlands. Also fun programs for kids. Gen. Admission: members free, \$4/non-member adult, \$3/non-member child. Info: 617-489-5050, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Habitat

Take a Walk at Gore Place

52 Gore St., Waltham. This program provides young visitors and accompanying adults with an activities backpack designed to help them explore the open spaces and hidden places on the 45-acre estate. Visitors will explore the brook, visit farm animals, and discover the gardens while drawing from the materials (magnifying glass, binoculars and activities booklet) provided in a backpack. Materials are designed for children 3-9 years old; just ring the bell at the Mansion to rent your backpack for \$5 and begin your exploration. Hours: Daily 11am-3pm. Free parking. Info: 781-894-2798, <http://www.goreplace.org>

Benefits

Kans for Kids

Sat. Aug. 7, 10am-1pm. Donate clean returnable bottles and cans to benefit Arlington Recreation's Youth Activities. Gibbs School on Tufts St., Arl. Info: 781-316-3880.

Groups

La Leche League

La Leche League is an international, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization dedicated to providing education, information, support, and encouragement to women who want to breastfeed. Free. The Arlington league has monthly meetings on Tuesdays at 7:30pm. Info: Heather (781) 648-2988, <http://home.comcast.net/~jrsladkey/lll/index.html> Neighboring towns also have leagues with monthly meetings. Refer to <http://www.llusa.org/MARIVT/Massachusetts.html> for a listing of Mass. Leagues.

New Mothers' Drop-in Group

Every other Tues. (8/10, 8/24) 9:30-10:30am, Henry Bear's Park, 685 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, informal drop-in group for new mothers with infants. Info: 781-646-9400.

New Mothers' Group

Tuesdays, 10-11:30am, Beth Israel Deaconess & Children's Hospital Medical Care Center, 482 Bedford St., Lexington. Free, group meets for eight weeks. To register or for more info, call Kristin Hicks at 617-667-2229.

Older First-time Moms' Group

Third Wed. of every month, 7-8:30pm. Social and support discussion group for first-time moms in their late 30's & 40's in the Boston area. Free. \$1 donation suggested. Info: 781-674-2029.

New Mothers' Drop-in Group

Thursdays, 10-11:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, nonsectarian, facilitated group. All new parents are welcome with their babies. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Children's Services. Info: 617-558-1278.

Grandparents' Support Group

Second Tues. of the month, 12-1:30pm. For grandparents who are primary caretakers of their grandchildren. Free, sponsored by the Town of Arlington. Info: 781-316-3410.

Arlington Fathers' Group

Tuesdays 7:30-9pm. Sponsored by Parents Helping Parents. Free support group for fathers who are feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or concerned about their anger toward their children. Info: 800-882-1250.



AFC Membership/Renewal Form



New Member Renewal

Date:

School District (circle for geographic location):

Bishop Brackett Dallin Hardy
Peirce Stratton Thompson Out of town

Name(s):

Address, Zip:

E-mail:

Phone:

Areas of Interest:

Events/Parties New Parent Outreach Seminars
Newsletter Outings with kids Web site
Playgroups Outings without kids Other

Please list your children:

Name Gender Date of Birth

Membership Dues All memberships renew in September

One-year membership \$20 (joining July-January)

Mid-year discounted membership \$10 (joining Feb-June)

Send a gift membership (\$10 or \$20) to the following:

Please circle all that apply:

I am a: Parent Child Care Provider Educator
Grandparent Health Care Provider Other

I am: Employed full-time Stay at home parent
Employed part-time Other

Please make check payable to **Arlington Family Connection**

and mail with this form to: Arlington Family Connection

PO Box 150

Arlington, MA 02476

Newsletter delivery preferences:

US Mail Email Both

For information or questions, contact Ruth Schmidt at

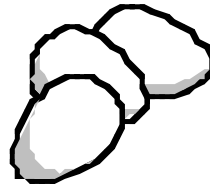
(781) 643-2362 or membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Crack-n-Peel:

Keeping a Two-Year-Old Busy in the Kitchen

by Grace Carpenter

My two-year-old son Avery hates it when I cook dinner. Although I can't know the exact reasons for his passionate protests when I start to cook, my guess is that there are two main reasons: he can't bear to have me turn my attention to anyone or anything but him (only child that he is), and he desperately wants to participate in the cooking, which has that powerful allure of being a slightly mysterious adult activity. Sometimes he hurls himself at my legs, other times he clings so closely to my legs that he steps repeatedly on my toes, and other times he just whines until I give in, put everything down, and pick him up to show him what's on the stove. But for better or for worse, I'm almost as committed to cooking dinner as he is to trying to distract me from it. As a result I'm always racking my brains for dishes in which he can play at least a small part in the preparation, so that cooking stops being a battle and becomes a shared pleasure. I'm proud to report that the other night we had a dinner which consisted entirely of food he helped me prepare:



Hard-boiled eggs. Cracking eggs and peeling the shells are Avery's great passion at the moment. Although he can't say "crack" yet, when I mention eggs he excitedly knocks his fist against a hard surface to show me how it's done. I give him a metal bowl to use to crack the eggs and then put the eggshells in, and he happily peels away several eggs. He then likes to bite into the white of the egg and eat until he reaches the yolk, at which point he makes a face and hands me the egg. So our deviled eggs are a little

funny-shaped. At this point my husband and I are so brainwashed by parenthood that we think the slightly gnawed bits of food that find their way to our plates are sweet signs of love.

Corn on the cob. Who doesn't enjoy ripping things, right? Shucking corn is almost as much fun as unwrapping presents.

Fresh peas. Avery enjoys shelling these, although he doesn't see the point of putting them in a bowl, and instead just pops them in his mouth right away. Delayed gratification isn't his strongpoint. But he gets a healthy snack and I get a little time.

Salad. Ripping, washing, and spinning salad is one of our old stand-bys. Before having Avery I used to think that making salad took too much time. Now it takes even longer, but fixing it together seems like time well spent.

A book with several useful ideas of things to do in the kitchen is *The Toddler's Busy Book* by Trish Kuffner. One of the activities that Avery has particularly enjoyed is smashing a graham cracker in a baggie (with his plastic pound-a-peg hammer), and then shaking a banana in the bag to coat it. Happy cooking!

Grace Carpenter has a two-year-old son and works part-time as a software developer. Please send feedback to her at gm_carpenter@yahoo.com

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

It's Membership
Renewal Time!

Save the Dates!

Thursday, August 5

AFC Book Club

Meets first Thurs. of every month. For more info contact Gail Zyla at gail@zyla.com. This month's book is *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

Friday, August 6

AFC'S 3rd Annual

"Pizza at the Playground"

5:30-7:30 pm, bring your family and friends to Spy Pond Playground for free pizza, playground fun, and to meet other AFC members. This is also a good opportunity to renew your AFC membership and to introduce non-member friends to AFC. (All memberships renew in Sept. for \$20/year.) Please RSVP with # kids and adults attending to Ruth at outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or 781-643-2362 so that we know how much pizza to order. (Rain date: Fri., Aug. 13.)



Friday, August 6 & 20

Robbins Farm Park Friday Night Flicks

Bring a blanket and watch a movie. Movies and times to be announced. Free. In the event of rain, movie will be shown the following night (Sat.). Check www.robbsfarmpark.org for details.



Thursday, August 12

Robbins Library Family Picnic Concert Series with Ben Rudnick & Friends

6-7:30pm. Bring a blanket and a picnic and enjoy music under the trees. Concert is on Robbins House Lawn behind the library or in the Robbins Library Community room in the event of rain. Free, provided by the Russell Fund. Info: 781-316-3234.

Wednesday, Sept. 8

AFC Steering Committee Meeting

7 pm. Open to all members. For the meeting's location, contact Ruth Schmidt at 781-643-2362 or info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

September: TBA

Working Moms Group

Please note: NO AUGUST MEETING!

10:30am-12pm, for a casual discussion forum. Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple St. There will be occasional additional social outings. For questions or to join the mailing list, please contact workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call Wendy at 781-648-2341.