

Arlington Family Connection

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



Volume III, Issue 7 • September 2004
www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



Letting Go Is Hard to Do

by Bettina Velona

“In its most basic function, **transition** helps you come to terms with **change**.”

--William Bridges

“Mama, when I go to school, I will have lots of fun with my friends and you will sit at home alone crying,” my five-year-old daughter, Nina, said a while ago as she picked up my sadness about her kindergarten entry. On September 8, I am sending my “baby” off to school. *Gone are the carefree days of snuggling in bed after getting up. Gone are the days of living into the day with no plans. I am giving her away to other adults for six hours a day and we’ll lose our closeness. Life is about to become more serious and I’m scared of that!* Despite these apprehensions, I have slowly but surely become more ready to let her go.

How? First of all, I am still digesting Nina’s previous giant steps toward her growing independence that has come on with frightening velocity: riding a bike without training wheels, learning how to swim, and telling me, “Mama, you and Papa can come visit me when I have my own house.”

Then I had to remember that as a stay-at-home mom, I’ve been scrambling for every free minute I could get for the last five years. We both have enjoyed our experiences apart from each other on her three preschool mornings each week. I think I can get used to the idea of roaming the art museum for hours!

When I look back, I find that I have embraced many changes I had dreaded as they were unfolding. For example, when Nina first en-

tered preschool two years ago, I missed reading stories to her in bed upon awakening on those mornings. But then I realized we still had four mornings *and* I enjoyed my freedom.

I have come to the conclusion that Nina and I will have as much quality time together as we did in the past. All the cooking, cleaning, exercising, and working, previously done when she was around, will now be done during the six hours she is gone. There’s even an advantage to this: I will be less distracted and not feel guilty about doing chores while she’s with me. In my sadness I had also forgotten that after subtracting weekends and vacations, she’ll only be in school about 180 days a year!

I’m convinced now that her attachment to a teacher will not mean less of an attachment to me. I understand that Nina and I will always have a special bond. A bond that will get tighter by allowing her this independence, not by fighting it. After all, my husband and I created this independence. We’re part of it. By respecting and supporting her individuality, we made her strong enough to want to go out into the world and try new things. I’m glad that by giving up a little control I can give her the opportunity to benefit from another adult’s wisdom.

As she shyly clung to my legs at her friend’s birthday party, I realized that under this independent surface lies a tender little human craving security and assurance. She needs my strength and support during this transition time, when possible fears might lurk behind the confident facade.

To help Nina transition, we’ve talked a lot about the new experiences and changes that are about to happen. We read about her favorite book characters entering school. She selected her backpack and pencil case. We made sure she knows her first and last name, address,

(Continued on page 5)



Roar! The Jungle Jam, a family event sponsored by AFC, is coming Saturday, October 16 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Gibbs Gym. Featuring “Animal Adventures” and their lively animal friends. Face painting and activities for all ages! Light snacks and beverages available, plus a

bake sale. Please contact Heather Canny for volunteer opportunities at hmcanny@comcast.net.

What’s Inside this Issue

AFC Steering Committee	2
Beating Boredom, Heat & Rain	3
Nanny Reflections	4
Arlington Jewish Circle.....	4
Arlington Gift Store.....	5
Working Moms Resource List	6
Where Do I Find Childcare?	6
Arlington Schools & Allergies	7
Calendar.....	8
Save the Dates	12

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO...

...Staff AFC Booth at Town Day

Join other AFC members and meet other families in town by spending an hour or two at the AFC booth at this year's Town Day on Saturday, Sept. 11. We'll have a crown craft for kids and AFC literature to hand out.

To sign up, please email:

info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org
or call Ruth at 781-643-2362. See you there!



...Help at AFC's Jungle Jam

Saturday, Oct. 16. We will need people to help with set up, clean up, and to run the event; also donations of baked goods for the bake sale. Please contact Heather Canny at events@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or 781-648-5583.

...Organize Group Outings

We need one or more members to fill a vacant position in the organization: volunteers are needed to arrange and lead outings both with and without children. Any commitment, from one outing to many, would be greatly appreciated so that this fun service can continue! For more information please contact Ruth at 781-643-2362 or outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

...Contribute Content for the AFC Website

We need one or more members to help web director Karen Donovan collect materials for and update the website. It's a great opportunity to pull together interesting information that can be shared with the entire AFC community. In addition, it would be helpful to have some volunteer with some basic graphics design/editing experience. HTML experience is not a requirement but could be helpful. Contact Karen at 781-777-1011 or e-mail her at webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

Thanks to This Month's Newsletter Team!

Jenny Brown, articles; Lisa Cunniff, layout
Amy Speare & Lillian Johnson, calendar

Join the 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, September 8 at 7 p.m. Contact anyone below for the meeting's location. All Steering 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, please come to a meeting!

Wendy Clarke, Clerk

781-648-2341

workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Karen Donovan, Webmaster

781-777-1011

webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Justine Lynch, Treasurer

781-648-0006

treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Betsy Lawson, Newsletter

781-646-5812

newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Debra Reardon, Community Service

781-643-2362

community@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Ruth Schmidt, Membership & e-Bulletin Board

781-643-2362

membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

bulletinboard@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

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.

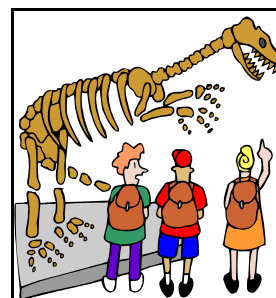
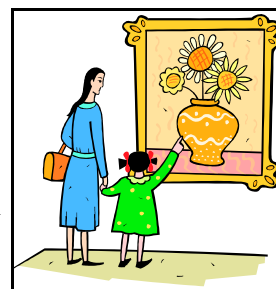
October Issue Deadlines

Articles: September 15th; Calendar: September 20th

Beating Boredom, Heat, and Rain

by Amy Speare

As a stay-at-home mom, I am constantly looking for interesting things to do. Not just interesting things for my one-year-old son, but interesting things for me, too. After all, a happy and entertained mommy is just as important as a happy and entertained baby, isn't it? When we're looking for something new to do, when it's really hot out, or when it's raining for the fifth day in a row, I try not to steer toward the mall (after all, we are on one income) or videos and television. Rather, I look for things that will be educational and cultural — and things that will get us out of the house. Though I know my young son may not yet be able to comprehend the wonders of science exhibits or appreciate the nuances of a beautiful oil painting, I do know that he is fascinated with how things work (especially if they are moving), colors, and animals. So when I found out that a number of area museums and local attractions offer occasional discounted—or even free—passes, I looked into it further.



Discounted museum passes are available through the Robbins Library for Arlington residents with Minuteman Library Network cards. Passes are very easy to obtain and can be reserved for the current month and the next month on a first-come, first-served basis either in person at the circulation desk or over the phone at 781-316-3200.

Children's Museum—admits four, with pass museum charges \$1/person. 300 Congress St., Boston. Info: 617-426-8855 or www.bostonkids.org

Discovery Museum—admits three, with pass museum charges \$1/person. 177 Main St., Acton. Info: 978-264-4200 or www.discoverymuseums.org

Gardner Museum—admits four, with pass museum charges \$2/person. Children under 18 are always free. 280 The Fenway, Boston. Info: 617-566-1401 or www.gardnermuseum.org

Museum of Fine Arts—admits two, one pass is available. Free admission with pass. 465 Huntington Ave., Boston. Info: 617-267-9300 or www.mfa.org

Museum of Science—admits four, with pass museum charges \$4/person. Science Park, Boston. Info: 617-723-2500 or www.mos.org

In addition, many local attractions offer monthly free or discounted admission days.

Children's Museum—FREE every Friday night 5–9 p.m. 300 Congress St., Boston. Info: 617-426-8855 or www.bostonkids.org

Ecotarium—FREE the first Sunday of every month 12–5 p.m. Fees may apply to special programs. 222 Harington Way, Worcester. Info: 508-929-2700 or www.ecotarium.org

Franklin Park Zoo—half price admission the first Saturday of every month 10 a.m.–12 p.m. One Franklin Park Rd., Boston. Info: 617-541-5466 or www.zoonewengland.org

Harvard Museum of Natural History—FREE every Sunday 9 a.m.–12 p.m. 26 Oxford St., Cambridge. Info: 617-495-3045 or www.hmn.harvard.edu/

Museum of Fine Arts—every Wednesday 4–9:45 p.m., general admission is "pay what you like." 465 Huntington Ave., Boston. Info: 617-267-9300 or www.mfa.org

Museum of Science—On Tuesday and Wednesday, from 7 p.m. on, you can get a \$2.50 discount per ticket to shows at the Omni Theater. Science Park, Boston. Info: 617-723-2500 or www.mos.org

Stone Zoo—half price admission the first Saturday of every month 10 a.m.–12 p.m. 149 Pond St., Stoneham. Info: 781-438-5100 or www.zoonewengland.org

MIT Museum—FREE the third Sunday of every month 12–5 p.m. 265 Mass. Ave., MIT Bldg. N52, Cambridge. Info: 617-253-4444 or web.mit.edu/museum

We are fortunate to live in an area that offers such a variety of educational and cultural opportunities for families. And with discounted and free passes, we no longer have to wait for a family member to visit as an excuse to discover something new!

Amy Speare is the mother of one and a volunteer contributor to the AFC Calendar. She welcomes your comments at amyandphil@comcast.net.

Nanny Reflections

by Laura Juitt



"It happened again," I told my husband Dave as our son and I returned from another local outing. "A complete stranger turned to us with a look of delight and said, 'Why you must be Ben's mom! I've seen him at Clap and Sing with his grandmother!'"

Dave smiled. This impression was music to our ears, since the older woman in question wasn't Ben's

grandmother at all; she was his nanny. When I'd explain this to the stranger, the reaction was always the same. "I'd never have guessed! She's so loving with him, I was sure she was family."

For two years, I was confident we'd made the right choice when we hired a nanny for our son, then three months old. The plan was to keep her on until he turned three, then put him in preschool for a year of socialization before entering kindergarten. In fact, I was so sure we had it all figured out that, without realizing it, I simply stopped paying attention.

The Only Constant Is Change

Before Ben turned two, everything was a learning experience for him. Watching objects move through space, observing people interact, and getting a stranger to smile were all equally fascinating. Even walking the mall—with its bright lights, soaring ceilings, international aromas, and multicultural faces—was educational.

Before long, though, our pudgy cuddly baby "Benjalicious" had grown into a walking, talking little boy named Ben. As if overnight, he could now *make things happen*. Not only could he walk and talk—he could dance and sing! He could color and paint and tumble and spin. He could even pay attention

(sometimes)! Suddenly, an occasional story hour or sing-along bracketed by hours of running errands and doing chores seemed grossly insufficient.

To make up for this lack, we began enrolling Ben in all types of classes, but before long we realized that something more basic had to change. We were spending more and more money, yet still the empty hours outweighed the active hours by far. While we didn't need to fill his every waking moment, the cost of instruction added to the already significant cost of a nanny no longer made sense.

Preschool Bound

With mixed feelings, Dave and I let Ben's nanny go earlier than planned. We both agreed that while she *could* give him all the love and attention he needed, one person alone simply couldn't expose him to enough of the world. At age two and a half Ben started preschool and never once looked back.

Did his early experience with a nanny ease his transition to a social environment? We'd like to think so. At a young age he learned to trust another caregiver, which made him comfortable being away from Mommy and Daddy. He got endless attention, which made him confident that his opinion counted, and he was showered with love by all, which made him loving in return.

At the same time, we also observed some negative behaviors from him that may be attributed to the continuous one-on-one attention he received. The constant presence of a primary caregiver may have encouraged him to be less independent, to cling to the caregiver rather than engage with other children. Perhaps it disposed him to prefer the safety and familiarity that was always nearby rather than be enticed by the unknown.

(Continued on page 7)

A New Jewish Year, a New Jewish Group, a New Jewish Event

Join the Arlington Jewish Circle (AJC) for a Rosh Hashanah event for families, Sunday, September 19 from 10 a.m. till noon at the Fox Library Community Room.

We'll have a half hour kiddie "service" (stories and songs), blessings over challah, apples, and honey, and a special Rosh Hashanah craft project (younger kids will have the opportunity to color or just play). Paint will be involved, so you may want to bring an old shirt for your child. This event is open to anyone interested in the Jewish New Year. Suggested donation is \$5 per family to cover costs.

Please RSVP to jennybrown@gmail.com with the age(s) of your child(ren). (If you decide at the last minute and don't RSVP, please

come anyway, but RSVPing will help us plan!). This is a peanut-free event.

The AJC is a new group currently forming to establish an Arlington-based Jewish community, with an emphasis on kid-friendly holiday celebrations and Shabbat activities.

Those who attended the summer planning meeting were of varying Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds, religious convictions, and synagogue affiliations in other towns, but all were interested in creating community and connection in Arlington. Please join us and become involved in our burgeoning Jewish group!

For more information, join the Yahoo Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/arlingtonjewish>, and view the agenda and summary of the our planning meeting.

L'shanah tova!

Arlington Gift Store - - a Kid-Friendly and Ethical Place to Shop

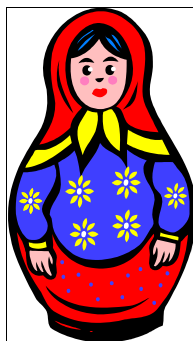
by Beth Soltzberg

A lot of my friends are having babies, and I'm always searching for unique and meaningful gifts to mark this amazing event. I was very happy, therefore, to discover Crossroads Trade, an international gift and craft shop in Arlington Center. Crossroads Trade offers several lovely handmade items for babies and kids, including Guatemalan children's clothing (such as patchwork overalls and cute baby booties), painted light-switch plates, nontoxic rattles, mobiles, wooden animals, and a variety of dolls.

What makes Crossroads Trade special is that owner Kate Harris is a member of the Fair Trade Federation (FTF). As a Fair Trade merchant, she must fulfill several requirements governing her transactions with artisans in the forty countries that she represents. Among these are:

- to pay artisans a fair wage
- to purchase products not produced by child labor
- to encourage environmentally sustainable production methods
- to promote producers' artistic talents in a way that preserves cultural identity

According to the National Labor Committee, a Haitian who sews clothing for the U.S. market may earn less than 1 percent of the retail price. By contrast, Fair Trade organizations return up to 40 percent of the retail price to producers. Sixty to seventy percent of the arti-



sans providing fair trade hand-crafted products are women. Often these women are mothers and the sole wage earners in the home (source: FTF, www.fairtradefederation.org). These days when so many items in our stores—including children's clothing and toys—are mass-produced under working conditions that are truly awful, the opportunity to buy unique crafts sold via fair trade principles is a gift in itself.

One final reason to buy your baby gifts (or adult gifts) at Crossroads Trade is that Kate Harris makes it easy to shop with your children along. The warm summer day I wandered in for the first time, I had my two sticky, tired children with me. With the baby in one arm and my bulging diaper bag slung over the other, I was afraid we would be the bull family in the proverbial china shop. But Harris welcomed us and immediately engaged my four year old in playing with the toy kitchen she has set up and also encouraged him to explore other toys and sturdy crafts that are displayed at kid-level. He had a great time, and so did I.

Crossroads Trade also sells hats, gloves, scarves, shawls, and alpaca sweaters for adults, as well as a wide variety of decorative items for the home.

Crossroads Trade, 669 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington Center. Phone: 781-646-3939. Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. (Call first because occasionally the store is closed for out-of-town shows.)

Beth Soltzberg is a stay-at-home mom with two kids, ages one and four.

Letting Go Is Hard To Do

(Continued from page 1)

and phone number. We've familiarized her with the walk to school. Nina has visited her new school many times: when we pick up or drop off paperwork, for the ice cream social, and for a classroom visit during which she met her teacher and classmates. On one occasion she met her classmate Lori, and she is excited to see her again in September. To help her digest all the changes that lie ahead, I will only schedule one extracurricular activity for the fall.

September 8th will be a special day. Nina is excited to start school. I'm excited for her, too, and have told her so many times. To celebrate the occasion, Nina will get her ears pierced and I will surprise her with a German tradition: a handcrafted cone-shaped bag filled with little gifts and decorated with princesses.

"Are you doing your back-to-school shopping?" the girl behind the cash register at Gap asked me last week. I hesitated and said, "Well, no, because my daughter has not been to school yet." Maybe next year I will be ready for that. And maybe next year I won't cry on the first day of school. I am glad that letting go happens in stages.

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

To help your child make the transition to elementary school, select a book from the Arlington School's "Starting School" reading list, which can be found at:
<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/Summer%20Reading/K-5readinglist.pdf>

WORKING MOMS RESOURCE LIST

by Charlotte Pierce

Working Moms Group

The Arlington Family Connection's Working Moms Group provides an opportunity for new moms who are also working with a place to meet and talk. There is no charge for this drop-in group. We meet the first Saturday of every month, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. for a casual discussion forum at the Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple St. Note: Because of the Labor Day Holiday, our September meeting will be on September 18th, not the first Saturday.

Contact workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call 781-648-2341. The leaders are Wendy Clarke and Johanna Meyer.

Internet Resources:

www.clubmom.com

www.momsrefuge.com

www.workingmother.com

www.bluesuitmom.com

www.workingmom.com

www.jobsandmoms.com

www.workoptions.com

Recommended Books

- *Survival Tips for Working Moms: 297 Real Tips from Real Moms* by Linda Goodman Pillsbury, Barry Wetmore
- *Nursing Mother, Working Mother: The Essential Guide for Breastfeeding and Staying Close to Your Baby After You Return to Work* by Gale Pryor (paperback)
- *The Working Mother's Guide to Life: Strategies, Secrets, and Solutions* by Linda Mason (paperback)
- *Working Mothers 101: How to Organize Your Life, Your Children, and Your Career to Stop Feeling Guilty and Start Enjoying It All* by Katherine Wyse Goldman
- *When Mothers Work: Loving Our Children Without Sacrificing Ourselves* by Joan K. Peters
- *Getting It Right: How Working Mothers Successfully Take Up the Challenge of Life, Family, and Career* by Laraine T. Zappert, Ph.D.
- *The Working Mother COOKBOOK: Fast, Easy Recipes* by Susan Lilly Ott, Working Mother Magazine
- *Balancing Acts: An Inspirational Guide for Working Mothers* by Danielle Kennedy

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

Where Do I Find Childcare?

Monday, October 4, 7–9 p.m.

Arlington Family Connection is sponsoring "Childcare and Preschool Options in Arlington," an information session for parents of very young children. This event will take place on Monday, October 4 from 7–9 p.m. at the Senior Center, 27 Maple Street, behind Town Hall.

Representatives from all of Arlington's preschools and from many family childcare providers will be available to provide information and answer questions.

Take this opportunity to evaluate the diverse preschool options in our community and choose the best fit for your child. This evening is a must for parents seeking childcare or preschool for the 2005–2006 school year. Admission is free; light refreshments will be served.

For further information, contact Judy Petrie at 781-643-1753 or options@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org. For those unable to attend but still needing information, please visit the AFC website at www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org after October 4th for more information on how to obtain the new edition of the *Childcare and Preschool Options* booklet.

Arlington Public Schools Protect Children with Life Threatening Allergies

by Gillian Epstein

Some Arlington parents may have noticed an article in *The Arlington Advocate* published on July 8 announcing that the Arlington Public Schools will implement a new life-threatening allergy (LTA) policy at the start of this school year.

This policy is the exciting result of a wonderful and dedicated collaboration amongst concerned Arlington parents, school nurses, school administrators, and school committee members. We began work on developing the policy in September 2003, and we are proud that it will be in place to protect Arlington's school children when school opens this year.

In the words of the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee, the goal of the Arlington Public Schools regarding LTAs is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- prevent any occurrence of life-threatening allergic reactions
- prepare for any allergic reactions
- respond appropriately to any allergy emergencies that arise

The Arlington Public School's implementation of the LTA policy will achieve these goals by minimizing the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to students, educating the community, and maintaining and regularly updating a system-wide protocol for responding to student needs.

The LTA policy is very detailed and hence difficult to summarize briefly. I have, however, included some highlights of the LTA policy below. Please note that these highlights are careful and educated paraphrases of the policy, not necessarily direct quotes. Also, please note that the comments in parentheses are strictly my own.

That said, some of the highlights are as follows:

- Annual in-service training and education for teachers on reducing food-allergy risks, recognizing food allergy symptoms, and following emergency procedures—including how to administer an Epi-Pen.
(This will ease the current disparity in our elementary schools, where some schools have many teachers who understand food allergy symptoms and emergency procedures, and other schools have comparatively few).
- LTA-free tables in each elementary school cafeteria as needed. These tables will be designated by a universal symbol, cleaned, and sanitized.
(This will help ensure that LTA-free tables are recognizable to all, and that staff keep them allergen-free).
- A contingency plan will be in place and understood by all staff and students in the event of an emergency when the nurse is not in the office or in the building. *(Nurses are not on site full-time in any of Arlington's schools, so this contingency plan is critical for medical emergencies).*
- On a need-to-know basis, familiarize teachers and any other staff member with specifics of a student's Allergy Action Plan/ Individual Health Care Plan.
(This section of the policy helps fill in the safety gaps that currently exist for so many at-risk students. It would help ensure, for example, that a gym teacher, bus driver, substitute teacher, cafeteria worker, after-school teacher, etc. would be made aware of a student's food allergies and of preventive and emergency protocol).

I think it is wonderful that so many people in our Arlington community have worked together to prevent a potential tragedy in our public schools, and I would like to publicly thank the school nurses and the members of the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee (chaired in 2003–04 by Jeff Thielman) for their leadership.

Have a safe and wonderful school year!

Editor's note: The complete text of the Arlington School District's guidelines for students with life-threatening allergies is now published on their web site at [/www.arlington.k12.ma.us/AllergyPolicy.pdf](http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/AllergyPolicy.pdf).

Nanny Reflections

(Continued from page 4)

Like all new parents, Dave and I had no idea what we were doing when Ben was born. In the absence of experience, we made decisions based on ideals and preconceptions. Sometimes we got lucky. Sometimes we had to shift gears. What I learned is the importance of remaining observant and staying flexible, whatever the path you choose.

Laura Juitt is a software designer living in Arlington with her husband, Dave, and their son, Ben.

Calendar

Refer to www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org for even more resources!

Special Events for Families

Arlington Town Day Festivities

Fri. Sept. 10, 5pm, Spy Pond Field – BBQ & kid activities, followed by Fireworks at dusk.

Sat. Sept. 11, 10am-3pm – Street Fair in Arl. town center with booths, vendors, live entertainment & kid activities. See *Save the Dates* for more details.

Bowman Fall Festival

Sat. Sept. 11, 11am-3pm (rain or shine). Bowman School, 9 Philip Rd., Lexington. Live entertainment with Ben Rudnick & Friends (Arl. native), Fiddlers, dancers and more! Pony rides, moon bounce, dunk tank, crafts, egg toss, sack races, face painting, slush, crazy candy, hotdogs, cotton candy, popcorn and more!

National Heritage Museum Family Day

Sun. Sept. 12, 12-5pm. 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Dance to the sounds of Western Swing with the Coachmen, make arts & crafts, eat BBQ and more. All ages. \$5/car. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Melrose Victorian Fair & CHIP Program

Sun. Sept. 12, 11:30am-5pm. Main St., Melrose. Visit over 150 booths, giant slide, moonwalk, pony rides, parade. CHIP Child Identification program will be at the Melrose Masonic Bldg., 326 Main St. Fair info: 781-665-3033. CHIP info: 781-665-2113, <http://www.mychip.org>.

Codman House Arts & Crafts Festival

Sun. Sept. 12 (rain or shine), 10am-4pm. Codman Rd., Lincoln. The 22nd annual arts festival features entertainment, children's activities, food and more. Ages 2 & up. \$5/adult, free/ages 12 & under. Info: 781-259-8843.

Verrill Farm BBQ

Sat. Sept. 18, 8:30am-6pm. 11 Wheeler Rd., Concord. BBQ, live bluegrass and

old time country music, pony rides, hayrides. All ages. Free; pony rides \$3/person, hayride \$1/person. Info: 978-369-4494, <http://www.verrillfarm.com>

Salem Pirate Faire



Sat. & Sun. Sept. 18-19, 10am-5pm. Winter Island Park, Salem. Family-friendly interactive theater event where guests sit in on secret meeting of pirate captains, hunt for buried treasure, sing sea shanties, and learn how to act and talk like a pirate. All ages. \$10/adult; \$5/child. Info: 781-853-0583, <http://www.geocities.com/piratefaire>

Happy Birthday, Tomie dePaola

Wed. Sept. 22, 7pm. Fox Library, Arl. Party with stories and treats. Ages 3 & up. Please sign up in advance by calling 781-316-3198.

Wreath Craft at Robbins Library

Sat. Sept. 25, 10am-2pm (drop-in). Robbins Library Children's Room, Arl. Make a fall leaf wreath. Free. All ages. Info: 781-316-3234.

Bolton Fair

Sat. & Sun. Sept. 25-26, 9am-6pm. Fairgrounds, Route 117, Bolton. Barnyard animals, crafts show, food, balloon artist, hay bale maze, rides and games and more. All ages. \$7/adult; \$2/ages 7-12; free/ages 6 & under. Info: 978-779-6253, <http://www.boltonfair.org>

Chinese Moon Festival

Sun. Sept. 26, 11am-4pm. Peabody Essex Museum, E. India Square, Salem. The festival celebrates the harvest season and is a time for families to reunite for celebrations. Activities include lantern-making demonstration with Jian and Gongjia Xing (featured works at Boston's First Night Parade), art studio for children, storytelling and more. Made possible by the Freeman Foundation. Ages 4 & up. Free with admission to museum. Admission: \$16/adult; Free/ages 16 & under. Info: 978-745-9500, <http://www.pem.org>

Topsfield Fair

Oct. 2-11. 10am-10pm. Rt. 1, Topsfield. Blacksmith, milking, and wood carving demonstrations; chick hatching and miniature train exhibits; giant pumpkin contest winner; petting farm; racing pigs; sand sculpture and more! Info:

978-887-5000, <http://www.topsfieldfair.org>

Sing-alongs

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>

Tuesdays

10am. Fox Library, Arl. For infants and toddlers. Space is limited. Pick up tickets at Fox beginning at 9am on the day of the performance. *Note: In Oct., these sing-alongs will return to Robbins Library and the Fox Library will resume its first Thursday of the month sing-alongs.* Info: 781-316-3198.

Second & fourth Friday of the month.

Sing-along with Diane Taraz. 10-10:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave, Arlington. \$1. 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.

Library Storytimes

Mondays, Sept. 13, 20, 27

10:30am. Robbins Library, Arl. Drop-in for ages 18 mo. to 3 yrs. with an adult. Stories, rhymes and fingerplays for first 15 min., followed by play, simple craft, and socializing. Info: 781-316-3234 or 3235.

Wednesdays, Sept. 15, 22, 29

10:30am. Robbins Library, Arl. Drop-in for ages 3-5 with an adult or alone, but adult must remain close by in library. Longer stories, rhymes, games and fingerplays followed by a simple craft and book checkout. Info: 781-316-3234 or 3235.

Thursdays, Sept. 9, 16, 23, 30

Fox Library, Arl. Stories and a simple craft. Please sign up in person or by phone. Info: 781-316-3198. 10am - Ages 2-3; 10:30am - Ages 4-5.

(continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Calendar

Other Storytimes

NEW! National Heritage Museum Story Hour. Thurs. Sept. 16, 10:30am. 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Hear *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, make sunbonnets or broad-brimmed hats. Ages 4 & under. \$3/child. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Barefoot Books

Fri. & Sat. 10:30am, ages 2 & up.
Sun. 2pm, 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.

Henry Bear's Park

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

Pottery Barn Kids

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

Other Fun Stuff

RESUMED! Toddlers and Twos

Starting Sept. 22, Wed. & Fri. 9:30-11am. Indoor gym time for ages 15 mos. - 3 yrs., sponsored by the Arlington Rec. Dept. Drop-in for \$5/visit or purchase a punch ticket at Arl. Rec Office (Summer St.) for \$45/10 visits. Info: 781-316-3880.

RESUMED! Parent and Tot Connection

Drop-in playgroup for toddlers and preschoolers with caregiver will start back up in October. Consists of age-appropriate play activities, crafts, stories and music. Hosted by the Arl. Boys

& Girls Club. Free, supported by a grant to Community Partnerships for Children. Info: 781-648-1617.

RESUMED! Public Skating

The season starts back up on Sept. 24 and runs thru April 15 at the public skating rink, 422 Summer St., Arl. \$5/adult, \$2.50/child, discount punch ticket also available. Fridays: 11am-1pm, 2:30-4:45pm, 7-9pm. Sundays: 9:30-11:30am, 2-4 pm.



Info: 781-316-3880.

NEW! Puddlestompers Nature Exploration

8 week session for ages 2-6 on Thursdays, Sept. 23 thru Nov. 18 (split into 3 classes for 3 different age groups). Classes will be held outdoors, in different green spaces in Arlington each week. A portion of the proceeds from this class goes to the Arl. Conservation Commission. \$140/8 wk session. For class times, info and registration: 781-449-0776, <http://www.puddlestompers.com>

RESUMED! Regent Theatre Family Fun Saturdays

The Regent (7 Medford St.) resumes its weekly series of great family programs on Sat. Oct. 16 at 10:30am with Bob Bloom's "Drumming About You," a hands-on, participatory event with over 250 drums and percussion instruments. \$7/adult, \$5/child & senior. Info: 781-646-4849, <http://www.regenttheatre.com>

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; for more info visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BabyFriendlyMovies>; for this week's movie visit <http://www.somervilletheatreonline.com>

Puddlestompers Play Group

Mondays, 10:30am-12:30pm. Playgroup will be at various local playgrounds and planning field trips until the weather drives us inside. Drop-in preschool playgroup. In the case of extreme weather, meets in the Fox Library Community Rm. Arl. (\$1/family donation requested when inside). To join the group's email list, contact 781-641-0944 or JulieLucey@comcast.net

Beyond Arlington

NEW! Davis' Farmland & Mega Maze

Thru Oct. 31. 145 Redstone Hill, Sterling. About an hour from Arlington, but worth the trip. Davis Farmland has a lot to offer: farm animals & petting



zoo, pony & safari rides, water & sand play, construction play, and the famous Mega Maze corn maze. *Tip: call*

ahead, they do not open in bad weather.

Farmland hours: Thurs-Sun 9:30am-5pm. \$11.95/person, free/under 2. Mega Maze hours: Sat & Sun 10am-5pm. \$11.95/adult, \$9.95/child, free/ages 4 & under. Combo tickets available. Info: 978-422-MOOO (6666), <http://www.davisfarmland.com>

NEW! Preschool movies

Tuesdays. 10:30am. Cary Mem. Library, 1874 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Movies for preschoolers, ages 2-6, in the Cary Library Mtg. Rm. Info: 781-862-6288, <http://www.carylrary.org>

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>

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>

Memorial Drive Sundays

Every Sun. through Nov. 14, Memorial

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

Calendar

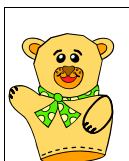
Dr. in Cambridge is closed to traffic 11am-6pm. Bring your bike (tricycle, trail-a-bike...), stroller, rollerskates, scooter, running shoes or walking feet to take advantage of this magnificent parkway along the Charles River.

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

Weekend shows will return on Sept. 18. 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

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. Gen. admission: \$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 farm-

yard. 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. Monthly family preschool programs. Gen. admission: 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>

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

Harvard Museum of Natural History

26 Oxford St, Cambridge. Sat. programs for kids age preschool to 1st grade. Gen. admission \$7.50/adult, \$5 children 3-18. Info: 617-495-3045, <http://www.hmn.harvard.edu/education/kids.html>

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), Free/under 2. Info: 617-541-5466, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

Swan Boats in the Boston Public Garden

Through Sept. 19. Hours: (weather-permitting only) Mon-Fri 12-4pm, Sat-Sun 10am-4pm. \$2.50/adult, \$1/child (2-15). Info: 617-522-1966, <http://www.swanboats.com>

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

Discovery Museums Benefit Dinner

Sat. Sept. 25, 8pm. Grown-ups who are still kids at heart will gather at the home of Bill and Ellen Reed for *Supper and Science* -- a benefit dinner for the Discovery Museums. Be entertained by a roving mad scientist and enjoy cuisine prepared by the resident zoologist. Guaranteed to be a great time for the child within. \$25/person. Info and reservations: 987-264-4200.

Kans for Kids

Sat. Oct. 2, 10am-1pm. Gibbs School on Tufts St., Arl. Donate clean returnable bottles and cans to benefit Arlington Recreation's Youth Activities. Info: 781-316-3880.

PTO Thrift Shop for the Arlington Public Schools.

Reopens Sept. 14. Open Tues. 9:30am-1:30pm & Wed. 4-8pm. Located in the basement of the Fox Library at 175 Mass. Ave., E. Arl. Gently used clothing for all ages, toys, books, housewares and more. Volunteers needed during store hours and for donation processing. Contact Toni Langerman at krausman-2@rcn.com or 781-641-9969. <http://www.ptothriftshop.com>

Seminars, Open Houses & Discussions

Instrument Petting Zoo & Open House

Thurs. Sept. 9, 2-6pm; Sat. Sept. 11, 9am-1pm. Powers Music School, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. The perfect opportunity to experience a musical demonstration, sit in on a Keys for Kids class or just try your hand at an instru-

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Calendar

ment. Info: 617-484-4696, <http://www.powersmusic.org>

Infant/Child CPR & First Aid Class

Wed. Sept. 29, 6:30-9:30pm. A one-night class sponsored by the Winchester Rec. Dept. \$35. Info and registration: 781-721-7125, <http://www.winrec.com>

Founding Mothers Book Discussion

Wed. Sept. 29, 9:30-11am or 7-8:30pm. Robbins Library, 4th Fl. Conf. Rm., Arl. The League of Women Voters of Arl. invites you to a book discussion of *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised our Nation*, by Cokie Roberts. Info: Judy Petrie at 781-643-1753.

Groups

RESUMED! Baby Talk Drop-In Group

Will start back up in October. For parents/caregivers and their babies, birth to 18 mos. Come socialize while your infant or toddler plays with age appropriate toys. Sponsored by the Arl. Boys & Girls Club. Info: 781-648-1617.

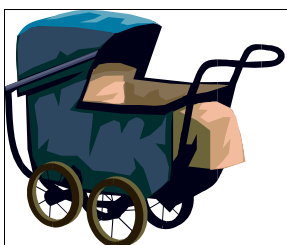
La Leche League

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. (9/7, 9/21) 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 30s & 40s 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 moms 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. For location & information, call 800-882-1250.

NEW! Belmont Food Allergy and Asthma Support Group

Next monthly meeting Tues. Sept. 14. We are a group of parents from the area who meet monthly to discuss and advocate for the issues that arise when you have children living with food allergies and asthma. We are always open to new members and would love to have you join us. For more information, please contact Theresa Normille at Tnormille@foodallergyfacts.com or 617-489-6668.

Monday, Oct. 4

AFC sponsors "Childcare & Preschool Options in Arlington" 7-9 pm, Arl. Senior Ctr., 27 Maple St. (behind Town Hall). Representatives from Arlington's preschools, daycare centers and many family childcare providers will be available to provide information and answer questions. Our updated 2004 *Childcare & Preschool Options* resource booklet will be available for purchase. Free, light refreshments will be served. For more info contact Judy at options@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or 781-643-1753.

Save the Dates!

(continued from page 12)

Thursday, Oct. 7

AFC Book Club

Note: There will be no book club meeting in September. Meets first Thurs. of every month. For more info contact Gail Zyla at gail@zyla.com. October's book will be *Dance of the Dissident Daughter* by Sue Monk Kidd.

Saturday, Oct. 16

AFC's "Jungle Jam" family event 11am-1pm, Gibbs Gym, 41 Foster St., East Arl. Featuring "Animal Adventures" and their lively animal friends. Also face painting, safari wagon rides, and a stuffed animal petting zoo for young children! Bake sale and other light snacks will be available for purchase.

Volunteers needed to set up and run the event. Please contact Heather Canny at events@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or 781-648-5583.

Renewed Your Membership?

All AFC memberships renew in September. Please mail in the enclosed form ASAP! *Thanks!*



Save the Dates!

Wednesday, Sept. 8

AFC Steering Committee Meeting

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

Friday, Sept. 10

Arlington Town Day BBQ & Fireworks

5pm. Spy Pond Field and the Boys & Girls Club, Arl. Pony rides, moon walk, face painting and other family entertainment, plus food available to purchase. Fireworks display at Spy Pond at dusk; visible from many places in Arlington.

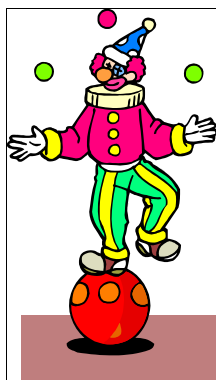
Saturday, Sept. 11

Arlington Town Day Street Fair

10am-3pm. Over 200 booths for organizations, schools & vendors will be set up on Mass. Ave. from Pleasant St. to Mill St. Come enjoy live entertainment, demonstrations, pony rides, kiddie rides, moon walk and more! Also, a huge book sale behind the Robbins Library. All ages.

Saturday, Sept. 11

AFC Booth at Town Day



Be sure to drop by the AFC booth and help your children decorate a colorful crown (free). Guess the number of jelly beans in the jar to win a FREE 1 yr. membership! Renew your memberships here.

Please consider volunteering at the AFC booth for an hour or two. It's a great way to meet other members and encourage

others to join. To sign up, email info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call Ruth at 781-643-2362.

Saturday, Sept. 18

Working Moms Group

10:30am-12pm, for a casual discussion forum. Arl. Senior Ctr., 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. *Please note that we will return to our usual meeting date of the first Sat. of the month in October.*

Monday, Sept. 20

AFC Mom's Movie Night

Movie night returns! Join us for a movie at the Capitol Theater, East Arl. (7pm-ish), followed by a casual gathering for ice cream in the theater's parlor. An email will be sent several days prior announcing the movie title, time, and other details. For more info contact Ruth at 781-643-2362 or info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org