



Helping Alexandria's seniors who prefer to remain
—independently—in their own homes

AHA! NEWSLETTER APRIL 2014 VOL. 5 NO. 4

Our Village Joins the Crowd For a Critical Day of Giving

Cele Garrett, Executive Director

On Wednesday, April 9, AHA will be one of 116 nonprofit organizations in Alexandria taking part in the 24-hour online giving campaign called Spring2ACTion.

For AHA, this is a critical day. Membership fees make up almost half of our annual operating budget, but we must raise funds for the rest.

Spring2ACTion is one of AHA's three fundraisers throughout the year. (The other two are our October gala and our year-end giving campaign.)

These nonprofits all come together for a little friendly competition on Spring2ACTion Day. Last year, AHA came in 8th place for the highest number of donors and 12th place for the most dollars raised. It was an incredible feat for a small, two-year-old nonprofit group—and our success got a lot of notice.

AHA volunteers and members work hard to help us spread the word about the Spring2ACTion campaign. The Alexandria Community Trust (ACT) provides real incentives for this "competition," with monetary rewards for highest dollars raised and highest number of donors during certain periods of the day.

In addition to the competition among nonprofits, AHA will again have a little internal competition: AHA's "Team George" (Board, Advisory Council and staff) will challenge "Team Martha" (AHA members and volunteers) to see who can bring in the most dollars and donors. Team George got trounced by Team Martha last year but, in the end, it was great fun and all the funds raised help us to serve our members.



There is no limit to the number of nonprofit organizations you can support on Spring2ACTion Day. AHA will even have a visible presence that day by setting up shop at the Del Ray Café, 205 E. Howell Ave. All day, our AHA banner will hang from the front porch and we'll be in the "kitchen room" of the restaurant, so come by to participate in the campaign and to cheer us on.

The Del Ray Café will be donating 5% of its day's proceeds to AHA.

To make a contribution, go to:

<http://spring2action.razoo.com/story/aha-s-team-martha-2>

As always, AHA thanks you for all your support.



The Del Ray Cafe



Yeti? Abominable Snowman? No, Bill Clayton, chopping ice and snow during one of winter's frequent storms.



Dining Around

From Overwood, left photo, to Zento, on the right.

Music to Our Ears

Some words of praise for some of the things AHA does for members:

Caroline Maness of Greensboro, N.C., writes that she had talked with her mother, who is 95 and unable to read.

AHA had assigned a volunteer to read a book written by the member's niece "and she found it so interesting.... Thank you for being there."

Another volunteer, Heather Knight, was reading for another member.

Several AHA volunteers helped members with snow-shoveling and ice-chopping duties during the harsh winter.

Downs, Griffin Charm Old Town Civic Audience

Carol Downs and MaryAnn Griffin told an Old Town Civic Association gathering about the broad range of services available to Alexandria seniors.

Downs, former AHA chair and now on its Advisory Council, described the good collaborative way AHA works with Senior Services of Alexandria and other groups helping seniors. Griffin, also on the Advisory Council, is director of the Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services. She outlined the programs geared to "foster the dignity, independence and security for seniors."

As Downs spoke, a man in the audience remarked to his companion, "She is really good." Afterward, he said he was going to sign up as a member on the spot. Another man asked about volunteering with AHA.



Board Orientation

Helen Desfosses, co-chair of the Governance Committee (photo above), shows board members a guide to some of the AHA procedures, at an orientation March 4.

Committee Co-Chair "L" Liddle (whose computer shows in the left foreground) outlined the history of AHA and discussed the evolution of its database.

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen (right background) talked about AHA money matters.

Bill Clayton (the photographer), explained how Robert's Rules of Order apply to small groups like the AHA Board.

Shown are, clockwise from left, Alan Dinsmore, Don Ford, Desfosses, Nielsen, Dan Kulund, Steve Nelson.

Sad Losses for the AHA Family

At Home in Alexandria suffered two sad losses in March with the deaths of **Bill R. Mason**, the son of former Chair Carol Downs, and **Maryann “Molly” Ellsworth**, an AHA member.

Mason, of Bethesda, died March 16, two days before his 50th birthday. He is survived by his widow, Sonha, and two sons, John and Brian; as well as his mother and stepfather, Stuart Downs; his father, Robert G. Mason; sister, Peggy Smith; stepsister, Taylor Plunkett; and stepbrother, Steve Downs.

Bill Mason “was a joyful father, kindhearted and loving husband, thoughtful son, loyal friend – just a great guy,” the family said in a statement. “He brightened our lives with his wonderful humor, decency, authenticity and generous spirit.”

A graduate of the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia, Mason worked in the Treasury Department before beginning a long career in the Department of Homeland Security.

A memorial service will be held Sunday, April 13, at 11:30 a.m. in the Atrium, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, 9750 Meadowlark Court, Vienna, Va. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to <http://montgomeryhospice.org> or to Bill’s son, Brian’s education account at www.gradsave.com/brianmason

Ellsworth, 77, died March 19. A native of the District of Columbia, she settled in Alexandria with her husband, Sam, in 1963. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan, Ellsworth obtained a Master’s Degree in social work from Catholic University and became a child and family therapist and a strong advocate for causes helping disadvantaged and disabled youth. Her efforts included helping impoverished families and children in Haiti.

Ellsworth also became active in politics, and worked in the City Council campaigns of Patsy Ticer and Nora Lamborne. She is survived by her husband and daughters, Deborah, Kelley and Katherine; her sister, Ursula Jaeger; and 10 grandchildren.

A memorial service for Molly Ellsworth will be held at 11 a.m. April 12 in the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Old Town.



Auctioneer Advises AHA Members on Downsizing

New AHA member Sandra Blake (above, right) gets advice from Matt Quinn of Quinn’s Auction Galleries on how to go about downsizing.

Quinn advises not to throw anything out before you consider sentimental value and what you care about.

In the same March 23 session, Quinn examined Ann Mazor’s book to determine its value, and examined a musical instrument from Joyce and Dick Bachman.

Significant Change in Medicare Coverage Almost a Secret

The *New York Times* reported an important change in Medicare coverage that may have escaped the notice of those who need it.

The Times said that as a result of settlement of a class action lawsuit filed against the Department of Health and Human Services, Medicare will now pay for physical therapy, nursing care, and other services for beneficiaries with chronic diseases like multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s, in order to maintain their condition and prevent deterioration if they otherwise qualify for coverage.

In the past, payment ended when the patient was no longer “making progress.”

Until the disclosure, many beneficiaries were in the dark because, the *Times* reported, there is no requirement that HHS or the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services notify beneficiaries of this change.

AHA Lines Up Expert for Long-Term Care Discussion

Patricia O’Neill, an expert in long-term care plans, will be the speaker at the Wednesday, April 16 Discussion Series program entitled “So You Think You’re Covered: Evaluating Your Long-term Care Plans.” The event will be from 1 pm. to 3 p.m. at the Beatley Library, 5005 Duke St., and is free and open to the public. O’Neill is associate partner with Long-Term Financial Partners in Falls Church and was recommended by the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. Attendees who already have plans are encouraged to bring them to the discussion.

What's Up With AHA Members, Friends and Volunteers?

By Nancy Berg

Alan Dinsmore was confirmed March 11 as a new member of the Commission on Aging and was sworn in a few days later. The first item on his agenda is to learn more about how Alexandria serves the needs of seniors, with an emphasis on implementation of Alexandria's Aging Services strategic plan. He'd also like to bring this information home to AHA to enhance our programs and help outreach and advocacy efforts.

Intrepid travelers **Barbara Rosenfeld and Marianne Ginsburg** visited Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador in February. Traveling by boat, train and plane, under the auspices of the Harvard Museum of Natural History, they went down rivers, up volcanoes and into the twisted history of U.S. involvement in Central America. Their Costa Rican guide pointed out 40 species of birds and they did water aerobics at an eco-lodge with white-faced monkeys in the trees overhead.

Volunteer **Ann Stat** has joined the crew who put out the newsletter. She joined **Bill Clayton** in the AHA office to help fold, stamp and address the March newsletter.

Nancy Berg followed the footsteps of Barbara Rosenfeld and Nancy Kincaid and spent a week in Cuba in mid-March with a group from the Women's National Democratic Club. The group saw art and enjoyed music, visited a clinic, walked the cobblestones of Trinidad, and generally found the cities and the people welcoming and hospitable.

Iceland welcomed **L and Ann Liddle** in March. They wanted to see the aurora borealis, but L reports, "It snowed, was cold, cloudy, misty, foggy, rainy." No confirmed sighting of the northern lights. But they enjoyed Iceland's "glorious mountains, volcanos, glaciers, hot springs, geysers and friendly English-speaking populace."

AHA's office co-manager, **Julie Gentry**, is busting her buttons with pride. Her 10-year-old grandson, Bennett Logan, was invited to the 2014 YMCA Chesapeake and Potomac District invitational swim meet. He came in fourth in his heat in the 10-and-under 50-yard backstroke. What's more, he shaved one whole second off his fastest time. Way to go, Bennett.

Teddy and Bill Clayton visited the Pacific paradise of Easter Island as part of a vacation trip to Chile. The island is home to the mysterious and spectacular *moai* – multi-ton statues carved from volcanic rock -- and *ahu* – the rock platforms that are the underpinnings for most of the *moai*. In mainland Chile, they visited the world's highest (12,000-plus feet) geyser field, a wonderland of lazy fumaroles and gushing geysers.

This is dedication: Somebody had questions for **Jane King**, AHA vice chair and chair of the Membership Committee. The rather plaintive reply came back: "I am in Zurich and able to receive messages and respond via email." She referred the questions to the AHA office workers "who have the advantage of being in Alexandria."

Come Celebrate Our 3rd Anniversary

At Home in Alexandria invites you to its 3rd Anniversary Event.

Come celebrate with us **Thursday, April 24, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road.**

This event will honor our dozens of volunteers and will present "A National Overview of Villages" by co-authors Joan K. Davitt and Amanda Lehning of the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Please RSVP to AHA at 703-231-0824.

Light refreshments will be served.

Chuckles and Chortles

- I intend to live forever. So far, so good.
- Eagles may soar, but weasels don't ever get sucked into jet engines.
- My mechanic said to me, "I could not fix your brakes, so I made your horn a lot louder."
- When you steal ideas from one person, it is called plagiarism; when you steal ideas from many, it's research.
- If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- I don't get any respect. Never have. When I was born, the doctor spanked my mother.
- The colder the x-ray table, it seems the more of your body is required to be on it.

Shoppers: Don't Let Thieves Shop From Your Shopping Cart

Alexandria Police warn of a disturbing increase in reports of items stolen from purses while victims were shopping at grocery stores. They advise shoppers:

1. Do not leave a purse or wallet unattended in the shopping cart;
2. Keep purses closed;
3. Carry with you only items that are needed;
4. Take with you only the credit cards or cash you plan to use.

AHA "Friends" Change Their Name, But Not Their Role

AHA supporters formerly described as "Friends of AHA" will in the future be designated as "Associate Members."

These are folks who support the mission of AHA and want to help the organization grow as a resource for the community, but don't feel they need the services that AHA offers to full members.

They are welcome to participate in all social, cultural and educational activities of the organization. Many are volunteers or members of committees and a few even serve on the Board of Directors or Advisory Council.

The fee for Associate Membership remains unchanged -- \$250, of which \$200 is a tax-deductible contribution.

There Are Steps, Some of Them Easy, to Prevent Macular Degeneration

The *Mayo Clinic Health Letter* lists several steps people can take that may prevent macular degeneration.

Age-related macular degeneration is a leading cause of vision loss among people age 50 and older, Mayo says. The condition causes damage to the macula, a small spot near the center of the retina and the part of the eye needed for sharp, central vision, which lets us see objects that are straight ahead.

The *Health Letter* lists these possibilities for prevention:

- Have routine eye exams; ask your doctor how frequently.
- Check your vision at home with an Amsler grid or simply gaze at a door frame to detect waviness in vision.
- Don't smoke. Smoking is the biggest preventable risk factor for macular degeneration.
- Maintain healthy weight, exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy diet with many fruits and vegetables, lean protein sources and whole-grain products.
- Include fish in your diet once or twice a week. Oily fish may confer the biggest benefit.

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Monica Estabrooke and Julie Gentry

AHA Growth Spurt

At Home in Alexandria had an encouraging burst of growth in the first quarter of the year. Nearing the end of March, AHA counted 117 members and "Friends of AHA." (Friends are now "Associate Members"; see article at top of this page.)

The database of contacts also showed several people interested in finding out more about full membership or associate membership. Some had "upgraded" their status from Friends to full membership.

CONTACT US

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