



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER JULY 2014 VOL. 5 NO. 7



Office managers past and present: L to R: Julie Gentry, who stepped aside but remains as a volunteer; Diane Atchinson, who succeeds her; Monica Estabrooke, who remains as co-manager.

Diane Atchinson Named Office Co-Manager To Succeed Julie Gentry

Diane Atchinson is a doer of the sort who will keep the AHA office buzzing. Atchinson, who has a long résumé in management, administration and human resources, was named in June to succeed Julie Gentry as office co-manager, teaming up with Monica Estabrooke. Estabrooke remains as a co-manager.

Gentry said she wants to spend more time with grandchildren, but will still be an AHA volunteer. In her volunteer work, she got to be known as the one to seek for “decluttering,” helping members clear clutter and organize their homes and gardens. (See Gentry party photo and story below.)

Atchinson “brings extensive experience ... gained through many years of service with various government agencies including the De-

partment of Commerce, Department of Labor and Department of Transportation,” AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld said. Atchinson retired from government service in 2006 and from consulting work two years ago. She took her new post June 18.

Diane Atchinson was born Jan. 7, 1955, in Ruislip (pronounced rye'-slip), England, daughter of a British mother and a U.S. Air Force father. As an “Air Force brat,” she recalls many back-and-forth moves before her father retired in Maryland after 20 years in the service. Diane was in sixth grade at the time and went on to graduate from Potomac Senior High School in Oxon Hill, Md. The day after graduation, she was hired by the Department of Commerce, the start of a decades-long stint that saw her step up the career ladder from the Office of Management and Administrative Support to a post as deputy director of human resources with the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

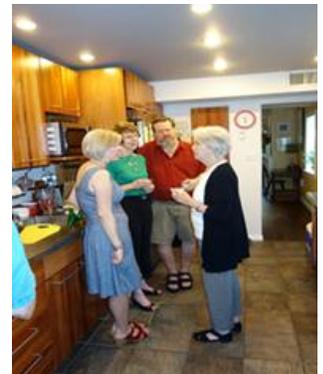
She says with pride that she was one of the few without a college degree working at those levels. Her government retirement was far from retiring from work, however. Atchinson became a consultant, working for a succession of firms offering services to corporations and government entities until 2012. In 2012 and 2013, she worked with Christ House, the shelter and food program for Catholic Charities, a job that mirrors some of her current chores with AHA, such as working the phones, helping keep inventory, meeting the public and the like.

She has talents that do not show up in the dry government résumé: She once took apart and reassembled a Volkswagen engine. She learned shorthand but never used it – except at one point, she taught it.

Once-married, with no children, Atchinson likes gardening and jigsaw puzzles. She calls herself a “cat person,” but with her background, “people person” could well apply.

Scenes from Julie's Farewell Party

Dozens of AHA activists gathered to honor and bid best wishes to Julie Gentry, who is stepping aside as an office co-manager. The party hosts were Ann and Linus Liddle in their Old Town home. At left, a general view of part of the crowd; at right, AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett, Pam and Steve Nelson and Maggie Moose chat in the kitchen.



Time to Think Seriously About the Fall Benefit Save the Date: Sunday Nov. 9 at LaPorta's



All in AHA are urged to start thinking about the coming “Bella Italia” benefit festivity coming Nov. 9 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at La Porta’s Restaurant at 1600 Duke St.

There will be music, food and a silent auction punctuated with dozens of “mystery gifts”—you bid, you pay, you unwrap ... what? Only the Shadow knows. The auction will benefit from your donation — destinations, experiences, restaurants, etc.— everything from certificates for meals at your favorite Alexandria restaurant, to bay cruises to health services.

If you are acquainted with a maître d’ or hairdresser or innkeeper you think might donate a service or meal to the



benefit, let Bill Clayton know tbclayton@verizon.net (703-548-0958) before you make the request, so there is no duplication of effort. We hope all the donors of meals, tours, rentals and services of last year will be on board again this year.

This year’s auction will not have objects, except for the mysteries, so that it can sharpen its focus on the auction offerings people find most interesting. AHA has held the price for the 2014 event to \$75 per person for members and \$125 per person for the public. Heavy-duty hors d’oeuvres will be presented by waiters and there will be pasta and dessert stations. One drink per person is included in the price. The evening’s music will carry out the “Bella Italia” theme.

Do you have suggestions for likely corporate or individual sponsors? Let Executive Director Cele Garrett know: 703-231-0824. Mark your calendar for this important yearly event. — Ciao, amici.



Mary Page Hickey and Bill Clayton

Hickey’s Work on Display In Botanic Garden

In the photo at left, artist and AHA member Mary Page Hickey and volunteer Bill Clayton examine one of Hickey’s works on display at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington.

Hickey is holding a book she helped illustrate, *Native Plants of the Mid-Atlantic*.

The Botanic Garden presented a series of lectures on botanic art, with a tour of the display of 60 works by Hickey and dozens of other artists, most of them working in watercolors. Lecturer Karen Coleman said botanic art goes back 4,000 years.



AHA Group Attends Arts Club Luncheon, Recital

AHA visitors enjoyed a concert by the Excelsa string quartet (left) and lunch at the Arts Club of D.C. June 6.

Clockwise in photo at right, from left: Margaret French, Jessi MacLeod, Barbara Rosenfeld, Karen Proffitt, Nancy Kincaid and Mary Jayne Swanson. Club President June Hajjar, a friend of Kincaid’s, gave the AHA group a tour.





The Fawcett-Reeder House on Prince Street is one of the oldest homes in Old Town.

Historic House Visit on Tap For AHA This Fall

AHA will host a visit and tour of the historic Fawcett-Reeder House in Old Town Sunday, Sept. 14. Tickets are \$5 per person and AHA leaders and volunteers will be the docents for the visit.

Will you volunteer? It will be fun! Will you attend and bring a friend? Phone AHA: 703-231-0824.

The house, at 517 Prince St., is considered one of the oldest and most historically accurate homes in Old Town. Since its construction, variously given as the 1750s or 1770s, it has been enlarged and remodeled several times, once with a slave quarters added. One visitor called it “a time capsule.”

Leonardo Contardo of AHA knows the owner and will be helping show off the house on the tour. Contardo persuaded the owner to host a visit sponsored by AHA.



Pot Luck Gathering on an Ideal Day

Twenty-two members and friends of AHA gathered at the home of Dodo and Charles Ablard on a sunny Saturday, June 14, for a pot luck get-together. The bring-a-dish events have proven among the biggest draws for the village and have added some names to the prospect list for membership.

In left photo above, Maggie Stauffer (in white) introduces her guest, Gary Poehlein, to Office Co-Manager Monica Estabrooke. In right photo, Stauffer is hidden behind outgoing Co-Manager Julie Gentry in background, chatting with the folks at the table, from left: David Butler, Nancy Berg, Nancy Macklin, hostess Dodo Ablard and Alan Dinsmore. Poehlein is hidden behind Dinsmore at right. (Poehlein applied for membership the next day.)

The group enjoyed springlike weather and noshed on chips, dips, veggies, chicken bits, hummus, ham biscuits, little sausages, *dolmadakia* and more.

New Voter ID Law

July 1 was the date for a new voter identification requirement in Virginia. In all future elections, voters must present one of the following forms of photo ID: valid Virginia driver’s license, U.S. passport, military ID, other government ID, or a photo ID from a federal, state or local entity, employer, or college or university.

The key word is “photo.” If you do not have one of the forms of ID listed above, you can get a free photo ID card from the Alexandria Voter Registration Office, 132 N. Royal St., #100, Alexandria 22314; phone 703-746-4050. **YOUR OLD VOTER INFORMATION CARD WILL NOT WORK.**

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

By Nancy Berg

Pam Nelson reports it has been quite an experience with **Steve's** eye infection. He is doing better after three eye surgeries, but it will be many months before healing and scar tissue settle and they will be able to know to what extent his vision will be restored in that eye. The only thing they can determine as the source was a routine dental checkup. He is truly one in a million, apparently. The Nelsons appreciate all the good wishes – and Steve says no one should hesitate to get dental checkups.

Nancy Kincaid is offering a demonstration of the Philips LifeLine AutoAlert devices she and **Doug Fleming** bought. She said the retailer offers a discount for AHA members. She asks that villagers phone at 703-836-4794 for a demonstration. The devices automatically phone when they sense a fall or when the owner presses a button for help.

Julia and Vance Hall have a second grandson, **Anders John Hall**. The news reached them in Venice five days before returning from an anniversary trip to Italy. (They were married in Rome.) They immediately headed to New Jersey to welcome Anders and congratulate his brother, **Lleyton** (2-1/2 years) and parents, **Denise** and son **John**. Anders weighed in at 7 pounds, 10 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long at birth. They say their next job is to try to keep up.

Music to our ears: Member **Betty Kirchner** called the AHA office to pass along her appreciation to **Jane Starkey** for the shopping assistance Jane gave her. The office said, "Kudos to you, Jane. It isn't often we get personal feedback."

Montsie Lehmann reports that **Ernie** has come through major surgery in fine form. Ernie had an operation June 16 to remove a cancerous kidney. But get this: The operation was done by "DaVinci," a robot that performed laparoscopic surgery—relatively tiny incisions. Ernie was in the hospital only 48 hours and is "mending very well," Montsie reports. They thank everyone for the good wishes. No word about whether the nurses were also robotic.

AHA's fitness guru, **Dr. Dan Kulund**, has been surveying parks on how they accommodate and serve the older public.

Francine and Bill Gemmill celebrated their 50th anniversary June 27.

AHA To Explore Pilot Program For Discounted Memberships

AHA's Board of Directors voted without dissent June 17 to set up a pilot program for offering two discounted memberships for those who cannot afford the full membership fee. Those who qualify would pay \$100 a year. Revenue for the program would come from donations earmarked "Discounted Membership Fund."

More details will be available soon. .

In addition to financial diversity of membership, AHA will explore ways to widen its appeal to a more ethnically diverse population.

Also at the monthly Board meeting, Treasurer **Chriss Nielsen** reported the past month had light expenses and the financial reserve was strong.

Governance Committee Co-Chair **Helen Desfosses** announced three new members of her group: **Ernie Lehmann**, AHA Vice Chair **Jane King** and **Steve Nelson**. All are heavily involved in AHA activities and will greatly strengthen the Governance Committee.

The Board urged members, volunteers and others involved with the village to host small gatherings designed to interest friends and neighbors either in joining or supporting AHA.

Rosenfeld reminded members about the Village to Village Network national conference Sept. 29-Oct. 1. The conference will feature panels on all aspects of villages. **Dan Kulund**, **Jane King** and **L Liddle** of AHA will appear on panels. More information is on the Internet under "Village to Village Network."

Alan Dinsmore, **Don Ford** and **Dan Kulund** are teaming up to explore ideas for a project informing "people who want to use transit and are giving up driving," apart from the transportation AHA provides. The idea would be a "safe routes to transit" pamphlet or source including maps, written guidance and the like to make it easy for seniors to learn about transit options.



Photo Show and Tutorial

Several members of AHA gathered at the home of **Sally Ann Greer** and **Jack Sulser** on June 22 to show their favorite art and photos. The hosts' son, **Christopher Robin**, gave a tutorial on taking photos with smartphones.

What AHA Can Do for You – And Why It Is A Bargain

Transportation is the most frequently requested service. Door to door.

Home maintenance – Light housekeeping, changing bulbs and batteries, decluttering, mulching, etc.

Clearinghouse for recommended service providers.

Technology help – Computers, cellphones, thermostat, small appliances, Internet, light timers, etc.

Social events -- Lectures, classes, eating out, community events, outings to museums, galleries, movies.

Check-in calls, friendly visitors, reading.

Errands – Shopping, prescription drop-off and pickup.

Compare your dues with some of these cost estimates for commercial services:

Average taxi round trip within Alexandria \$12 (wait time is an added charge).

On-call computer work \$129 - \$229 per visit.

Light plumbing \$90 an hour.

Simple electric repairs \$65 an hour.

Personal errands and home upkeep such as groceries, dry cleaning, drugstore \$16.50 an hour.

Handyman on average \$35 per hour.

Gardening and landscaping \$15 to \$35 per hour.

Private chess lessons \$50 to \$75 for 1-1/2 hr. session.

Wheelchair \$175 average purchase cost.

Walker \$75 average purchase price.

Crutches \$40 to \$139 purchase price.

Do you know somebody who might want or need what we do? Tell us and we will follow up discreetly.

--At Home in Alexandria 703-231-0824

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Office Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

A Valuable Resource; Note the Number

A good resource for AHA villagers is Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons. Contact the center at 703-352-9055 or online at www.nvrc.org

New Village in Northern Virginia

A new village has formed just up the road in Arlington. Arlington Neighborhood Villages (ANV) announced last month it was open for business — “the business of serving residents of Arlington County who are 55 or over ... (and) want to remain in their homes as they age.”

CONTACT US

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AHA

ALEXANDRIANS HELPING ALEXANDRIANS

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