



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER JUNE 2014 VOL. 5 NO. 6



AHA Leaders Have Encouraging News About Budget, Membership, and Volunteers, But a Challenge Long-Term

----- Set plans for house tour, fall gala

AHA's leaders reported steady growth and "solid" finances, at the May 20 Board of Directors meeting (above). Executive Director Cele Garrett said combined members and associates reached 120, within easy striking distance of the goal of 125 for this year.

Chair Barbara Rosenfeld reported a busy schedule in the spring, with a "highly successful" celebration of AHA's anniversary and the citywide Spring2ACTION online fundraiser. Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts said an outreach effort resulted in the addition of 11 volunteers to AHA's roster. Volunteers had a social "tea" at Teatism in May.

Treasurer Chiss Nielsen said the village's finances remain solid, with expenses slightly below those that were budgeted, while reflecting modest growth over actual 2013 expenses. Revenues, too, closely matched those budgeted, allowing for some events that have yet to materialize.

The Board accepted Nielsen's proposal to establish a "memorial account" to hold donations in memory or honor of individuals. The account would be managed by the Executive Committee unless a donor specified otherwise.

Rosenfeld listed several events at which AHA was represented, to spread its story but also to learn of the experiences of other villages. A recent nationwide survey of villages showed a continuing concern about long-term sustainability of villages, Rosenfeld said—a concern AHA can meet by "unlocking the potential" of AHA people. Rosenfeld challenged AHA's "family" to identify people who are strong and willing prospects for leadership roles.

The 2014 fall benefit will be Nov. 9 at La Porta's Restaurant, the Board decided, based on a site visit and the recommendation of Rosenfeld and Garrett. The site is slightly smaller than for last year's event at Carlyle Club, but in several ways fits AHA's needs more closely, they reported. The theme will be "Bella Italia." Board members decided to include a silent auction—but concentrating on hospitality and destinations rather than objects. Last year, the most popular items were gift certificates for meals, sports memorabilia, and services.

Another event the Board approved was a house tour Sept. 14 at the "Fawcett-Reeder house," considered the oldest continuously occupied private home in the city. AHA plans to have volunteers greet guests and explain the features of the 1700s house. AHA member Leonardo Contardo, a friend of the owner, Joe Reeder, arranged to have the house available for AHA's event and to help Reeder arrange the contents to accommodate tour participants.



Julie Gentry

Office Co-Manager Julie Gentry Stepping Aside

Julie Gentry is leaving her job as AHA office co-manager to "take a deep breath," as she put it, and possibly pursue other opportunities. Her impending departure from the post set off a search for a successor to work with the other co-manager, Monica Estabrooke.

The two were an effective team at running the office, keeping up with paperwork and fulfilling members' requests for services. Gentry, with strong background in information technology and retired from a long career in management consulting, partnered well with Estabrooke, who had a long career with IBM and 17 years of fundraising for several charities.

Gentry said she has no specific plans for the time being, beyond continuing as a volunteer for AHA and being available as a consultant to the village. Oh, and yes, spending major time with her four grandchildren.



Downs Introduces Labowitz, Griffin

medical power of attorney is an important step that some are unwilling to do, a reluctance by the elderly parents as well as by their children.

The speakers distributed several helpful booklets available through Griffin's office, including how to handle advance medical directives, a "Five Wishes" form for designating the type or extent of medical treatment a person wants in a serious or life-threatening illness, and "Let's Talk," a guide to how to approach the important conversation about end-of-life issues.

One practical bit of advice is to have important documents in one place and to tell close friends and relatives where to find them. A do-not-resuscitate directive should be visible in the home, where emergency medical workers cannot miss it. Directives, kept up to date, can cover circumstances such as when a patient is being kept alive through "heroic measures."

What about family disputes? "The court system can work out that sort of thing," Labowitz, an attorney with a concentration on elder law, said. A court may have to intervene, Labowitz said, when a patient is being kept alive through heroic measures and family members differ on whether to ask for a life-sustaining machine to be turned off.

Team Comes Together To Handle Emergency

An AHA member observed what he called AHA "teamwork at its caring and involved best."

A member had a medical emergency. The office workers were already in the hubbub of a busy day, including a printing glitch that needed attention.

Executive Director **Cele Garrett** and office Co-manager **Julie Gentry** went right to work to get medical help. **Susanne Adams**, a nurse and AHA volunteer who had just finished helping with the newsletter in an adjacent room, volunteered to get the member and her wheelchair to the hospital. **Joyce Bachman** was helping with computers, but pitched in to help with the flurry of phone calls.

The member who observed this said, "This is an example of why AHA stalwarts are so valued."

Most of the members' calls for service involve transportation, such as to doctors or therapy, but there are many other things AHA can do for you: light home maintenance, computer help, check-in calls, shopping, reading, light yardwork, referrals, equipment setup, decluttering, and a long list of social events, from theater to restaurant outings to museum visits and much more.

When you add them up, AHA membership is a bargain.

AHA Advisors Discuss Touchy End-of-Life Issues

MaryAnn Griffin and Ken Labowitz, members of AHA's Advisory Council, covered the touchy but essential topic of planning for "when your warranty runs out," in the last program in the village's current Discussion Series.

Twenty people attended the session May 21 at the Beatley Library.

Most people realize they have to have the end-of-life discussion with family, but the conversation is "as hard as the one about the birds and the bees and just as important," Griffin, director of the Alexandria Office of Aging and Adult Services, said. Giving somebody power of attorney or



Lunch and Sightseeing at National Harbor

Almost hidden by the monumental sculpture "The Awakening," an AHA group (above photo, left to right: Tom Fitzgerald, Barbara Rosenfeld, Margaret French and Nancy Kincaid) visited National Harbor May 6 for lunch and a walkabout. (Photo by Bill Clayton)

In the background is a new 180-foot Ferris wheel built at the harbor but not yet open at the time of the group's visit. They took the water taxi from Old Town to the harbor and lunched at McCormick and Schmick's.

Members and Associates: The Board of Directors meetings are open, with rare exceptions. Feel free to attend. The next meeting is June 17 at Portner's Landing. Phone AHA at 703-231-0824 for time and directions into the secure building.

Spotlight on: Leonardo Contardo

Leonardo Contardo, who turns 90 this month, is one happy man.

“I have no worries. No wife. No children,” he said, with the air of a person completely in charge of his daily schedule.

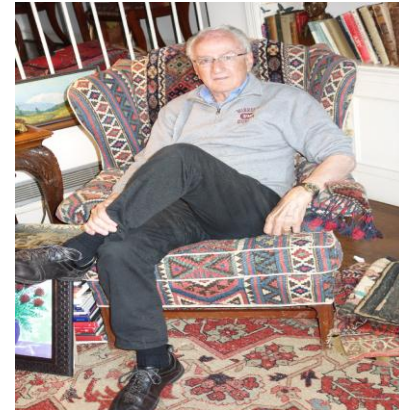
Well, not completely. Contardo, who hosted one of the first “Conversation With” programs in AHA’s infancy, is more intensely involved in the village’s plans. Thanks to Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, who persuaded him to join the Development Committee, Contardo is throwing his considerable energy into plans for AHA’s annual benefit and some other events, including a house tour of the historic “Fawcett-Reeder House” in Old Town.

He boils over with ideas. During a brief interview over lunch at his favorite spot, he scattered suggestions for AHA into snippets of his life story. Fundraising ideas. Notions for programs. Advice on membership.

Contardo was born June 4, 1924, the eighth of 10 children of struggling Italian immigrant parents. They were not highly educated, he said, “But they

had good common sense.” A graduate of the University of Minnesota at Duluth, Contardo embarked on a long career in railroading. He bought his Alexandria home in 1973, by which time he already had become a rug fancier and collector. Contardo prefers old and worn rugs, which adorn every room of his home. When the spirit moves him, he repairs some, he sells some, he buys some. He also acquired some art along the way, enough that the university has noted some pieces it wants him to bequeath.

All this on a railroader’s earnings? “The stock market has been good to me,” he said.



Leonardo Contardo
(Note a few of his smaller
rugs, folded at the side of his
favorite chair)

AHA Group Visits the Fabulous Estate, Museum and Gardens of Marjorie Merriweather Post

The museum outing for AHA on May 14 was to the fabulous Marjorie Merriweather Post estate in Northwest Washington. Below at left, Mary Nefedov examines one of the myriad cabinets holding priceless jewels and porcelain figures. The AHA group, below, included Nancy Kincaid, Sharon Ksander, Meghan Evans, Mary Nefedov, Murney Keleher and Jessi MacLeod. Photos by Bill Clayton. Marjorie Merriweather Post inherited the Post breakfast cereal fortune and became one of America’s wealthiest women. She applied her wealth to a collection of paintings and art objects and to widespread charities.



Her third husband was Joseph E. Davies, U.S. ambassador to Russia, and in their time in Moscow, Marjorie, in the words of the Hillwood brochure, “discovered the Russian imperial art that was to become a lifelong passion.” Among the Russian objects are two priceless Fabergé eggs and a crown with scores of diamonds.



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

By Nancy Berg

Maggie Stauffer, AHA member and volunteer, walked in the 39-mile Avon Walk for Breast Cancer, May 3-4 in Washington. Over 3,000 people took part and generated \$4.5 million in donations. Stauffer's team, Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, raised the largest amount for the local Walk. Stauffer, who received a knee replacement two years ago, said of the two-day walk, "If I could do it, anyone can."

(Photo at right)

Pickleball players at the Charles Houston Recreation Center missed **Steve Nelson**, who was out of action while recovering from eye surgery. The other players sent him a card with their signatures and best wishes.

Nancy Kincaid reports on the acquisition of AutoAlert help buttons by her and her husband, **Doug Fleming**. These devices, made by Philips Lifeline, communicate unusual movement or distress and can be a useful first line of defense for seniors living on their own.

Helen Desfosses was interviewed last month by Northeast Public Radio, headquartered in Albany, N.Y., on the implications of Jimmy Carter's latest book, "*A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power.*"



Ann Liddle, at right above, and visitors to her exhibit at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center: Nancy Berg, Tom Fitzgerald and Mary Nefedov

Tom Fitzgerald reports a grandson-in-law got a degree in statistics from North Carolina State.

Editor's Note to AHA Readers:

Have you had interesting travel, family milestones, honors, or any tale to share? Let us know, for the monthly column of "What's Up." Contact Nancy Berg (703-684-8517) or Bill Clayton (703-548-0958) or the AHA office (703-231-0824).



Learn the Signs, Timing of Strokes, Fourth Leading Cause of Death

Strokes are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, behind heart disease, cancer and lower respiratory disease, the American Heart Association (that *other* AHA) reports. Health professionals and hospitals are working to educate the public on the ways to recognize a stroke and are perfecting their responses to stroke emergencies.

One such hospital is Inova Alexandria Hospital, which says it is "working diligently to reduce its door-to-needle time"—the time between a patient's arrival at the emergency department and the time the first medication is administered.

But first "The F.A.S.T. Test," recommended by the National Stroke Association to recognize and respond to stroke symptoms:

F = Face: Ask the patient to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A = Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

S = Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is his or her speech slurred or strange?

T = Time: If you observe any of these signs, note the time and call 911 immediately.

The two associations recommend less than a 60-minute interval between arrival and treatment. But another critical time is between someone's noticing symptoms and calling for help.

Hospitals are working to be notified by EMS personnel about a patient's symptoms *en route* to the hospital, so that a rapid-response team can be ready to act upon the patient's arrival. The teams may include neuroradiologists, a stroke coordinator, the emergency physician, neurologist, pharmacist, registration clerk and tomography (scan) technician.

Inova wants people to know "the faster they get to the emergency room, the better their chances of a positive outcome."

“Dr. Dan’s” Fitness Crusade

Dr. Dan Kulund, an AHA board member (far right in photo at right), leads the second of three robust fitness programs in front of the Lee Center. In foreground, AHA Vice Chair Jane King works with the bicycle inner tubes Kulund uses to add resistance to walks and workouts.

The Lee Center series of programs attracted dozens of seniors interested in “robust aging” and “robust walking.”

Separately, Kulund has turned AHA’s weekly walks into vigorous affairs mixing walking with intervals using the elastics — looping them around a tree trunk, for example.



Chuckles & Chortles

- Nowadays, my wild oats are mostly enjoyed with prunes and all-bran.
- It’s not hard to meet expenses; they are everywhere.
- Have I sent this message to you before – or did I get it from you?
- I wish the buck really stops here. I could use some of them.
- Funny – I don’t remember being absentminded.
Funny – I don’t remember being absentminded.
Funny – Well, you get the picture.

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Monica Estabrooke and Julie Gentry

Discounts

Remember to ask for discounts for seniors.

The list of merchants offering discounts, from restaurants to clothing to groceries to travel, runs well over 100.

All you have to do is ask.

Some hospitality and entertainment venues offer seniors a discount of up to 30 percent, depending on age.

Some merchants offer discounts to people at the young age of 50.

Many businesses that offer discounts to seniors have restrictions.

Some suspend the offers for their busiest days and some require booking far in advance to secure a discount.

CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria
3139 Mount Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-231-0824

AHA@athomeinalexandria.org
Web www.athomeinalexandria.org