



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2014 VOL. 5 NO. 9



“Bella Italia” Evening to Benefit At Home in Alexandria Is Shaping Up as a *Notte Festiva* With *Vino and Alimento Elegante and Musica*

AHA's big event of the year is the “Bella Italia” fundraising benefit Nov. 9.

The festive evening kicks off at 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 9 at Laporta's Restaurant, 1600 Duke St. Your Italian evening will include a strolling musician, Italian *bocconcini* (morsels) and a silent auction featuring some Mystery Gifts.

All are invited. The tickets are the same as last year—\$125 per person, with a special member ticket price of \$75. If you know people in business, sponsorships range from \$350 for the Umbria Level to \$1,500 at the Tuscany Level. Check your business acquaintances to explain these opportunities. Their sponsorship is not entirely a gift—it is supporting an event that can bring dividends in publicity and public support. And it is tax-deductible.

Now, the mystery: AHA will have the usual auction gift certificates from restaurants, hotels, destinations, sports teams and services. But this year, the auction will do without physical auction items such as housewares and jewelry. Rather, there will be a big table of “Mystery Items,” valued at least \$25 and sold for \$25 but wrapped to hide what they are.

Here's the hook: Two of the wrapped and essentially anonymous items priced at \$25 will have \$50 bills in them, and one will have a \$100 bill. We will try to stuff them in boxes so that you cannot tell which are the bills and which is the crystal or book or makeup kit or whatever. You pay your money and you may wind up paying \$25 for a \$100 bill. While people are schmoozing and visiting and wandering about trying to guess the Mystery Gifts, waiters will circulate with trays of hors d'oeuvres. A bar will attend to your every thirst—and the first drink is free with your ticket.

Meanwhile, an accordion player will be circulating with Italian melodies. Think “O Sole Mio” or “Tarantella” or even “When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie.” Or maybe not.

The thing is, sign up for this fling and expect a lively evening of fun and food worthy of “Bella Italia.”

Phone the AHA office for details or to sign up. 703-231-0824. If you have a small item worth at least \$25 that you want to be a Mystery Item for the auction, let us know.

Coming Soon: A Tour of One of Alexandria's Most Noteworthy Houses

On one of Alexandria's busiest intersections, St. Asaph and Prince Streets, sits the Fawcett-Reeder House, at which AHA will host tours Sept. 14. Photos at right show the rebuilt kitchen and a parlor, some of the changes since the house's creation in the 1770s. Another change during the varied history of the house was the addition of slave quarters in 1816.

The house is considered one of the most historically accurate and oldest homes in Old Town's historic district. Leonardo Contardo, a friend of the owner, arranged for AHA to host visits and tours, for which adult visitors will pay \$5 and children \$2. AHA volunteers will act as hosts and docents for the day.

The house features hand-hewn wood flooring, heavy timbers and handmade Dutch doors. A substantial brick wall lends some measure of quiet from the busy streets outside. The house is not the most expensive or largest, but one of the most noteworthy in town.





Recognition for AHA's Volunteers

Member Josefa Gibson hosted a festive gathering to recognize volunteers Aug. 3 in her lovely art-filled home in Alexandria House.

The gathering is getting to be a yearly thing—and one of the best-attended events AHA has had. Forty people enjoyed food, drink and conversation. In the center photo, Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts (flowered blouse) describes the many ways volunteers define what AHA is. In right photo, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld adds details of volunteers' work.

The dozens of AHA volunteers ensure that no member's request goes idle for long. Most of the requests are still for transportation – to doctors or therapists, to shopping or to AHA events. But some are unusual: reading to a member with vision loss, checkup phone calls to members recovering from a medical problem, chess lessons, landscaping advice and the like.

Advisors, Board Members Meet Informally

The Board of Directors of AHA spent an informal afternoon visit Aug. 6 with members of the Advisory Council. The two groups gathered in the spacious home of former AHA Chair Carol Downs, now an Advisory Council member. Downs said the Advisory Council is a substantial resource for AHA: "There is a lot of experience and talent in the Advisory Council and we need to tap into this."



A large group of AHA leaders and Advisory Council members attended the gathering, including Mary Ann Griffin, this year's honoree at the annual benefit. In the foreground, Executive Director Cele Garrett chats with board member Helen Desfosses.



AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld talks with one of the newest advisors, Laurie Blackburn of the Speck-Caudron Investment Group.

At right, two of the "founding fathers" of AHA, Ernie Lehmann in foreground and Dick Moose in background, talk with hostess Carol Downs and (back to camera) Treasurer Chriss Nielsen. Another founder, Judith Jones, also attended. Downs said that with AHA's growth, "It is essential that the Advisory Council play a more active role in incorporating their ideas, energies and contacts into the fabric of AHA."



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Office Co-Manager Monica Estabrooke spent a weekend at the University of Dayton, helping her uncle celebrate his 60th year in the Marianist priesthood. **Fr. Jansen** spent 43 years in Zambia, where he established a secondary school for boys and a church.

Teddy and Bill Clayton had an outing to Rehoboth Beach and got caught on their return in the 10-mile traffic backup caused by an auto smashup on the Bay Bridge. The trip home took 7½ hours.

Christena Nielsen and Tom Crowley spent a scenic week on that OTHER Long Island, in Maine. They described it as “a treasure—only about 100 cars on the island and only 300 year-round residents.” They hosted Tom’s sister’s birthday party, “joined by immediate family, cousins from near and far and many friends” and took beach walks, “chilly dives under the waves” and tours.

Carol and Stuart Downs celebrated the birth of their eighth grandchild Aug. 8. Carol reports that Richard Maxwell Plunkett “arrived with a very full head of black hair and a set of lusty lungs that got the attention of everyone.” The child, Carol assures us, “is precious.”

Margaret French tells us of her family trip to Greece: Athens; Aegean cruise; Palmos Island, where St. John wrote the Book of Revelations; then to Knossos and the ruins of King Minos’s palace. The palace is “a Bronze Age wonder,” she reports—built in 1900 BC with 128 rooms, running water and sewage. Some murals have been restored. The visit was “ten days in blazing hot sun, but worth every minute,” Margaret says.

Barbara Rosenfeld tried the Metro Silver Line service from Dulles Airport. A bus goes from Dulles to Reston Metro’s Silver Line stop. It is difficult to shlep luggage onto the bus and onto the places for luggage. Much cheaper than a taxi round trip, but a challenge to a senior traveler with a suitcase, Rosenfeld said. She tried out the Metro on her way back from a trip to the Dalmatian coast.



Out and About With AHA

Visit to the Museum of Crime and Punishment. Above, Nancy Kincaid and David Butler play Bonnie and Clyde beside the outlaw pair’s car, during an AHA visit Aug. 20. Fittingly, the group dined in Clyde’s Restaurant (no relation) beforehand. In picture below, from left, Elizabeth Malcolm, Barbara Ballentine, Kincaid and Alan Dinsmore confront a poor prisoner undergoing punishment in a dungeon. Others in the group (NO, not the prisoner group, silly—the AHA group) were Murney Keleher and photographer Bill Clayton.



Dine Around at RT’s Restaurant. An AHA group dined Aug. 18 on Cajun fare at RT’s Restaurant in Arlandria. RT’s prides itself on a varied menu that includes alligator stew, oysters fixed several ways, and gumbo. The bar serves the regular drinks, but also Sazerac and specialties such as the “Vieux Carré Cocktail.” The visual highlight is a series of dioramas of street scenes around RT’s in the Arlandria neighborhood, a couple of which are shown at right: busy traffic and busy at the bar.



Dr. Dan to Lead Walkathon

Dr. Dan Kulund, long the fitness leader of the Air Force and now a member of the AHA Board of Directors, will lead a “robust walkathon” Sept. 24 from 10 am. to noon in Ben Brenman Park, at 400 Ben Brenman Park Drive.

Champion of the “robust walking” exercise, which incorporates light calisthenics into walking, Kulund will lead groups through stations of emphasis on balance, agility, flexibility, strength and endurance, all as part of walking.

Participants will be seeking sponsorships at \$25 each, and some groups will be challenging each other to attract the most sponsors.

The proceeds will support three events sponsored by Alexandria's Successful Aging Committee. They are the Dance for All Ages at T.C. Williams High School, the Senior Health and Fitness Day and the annual Senior Holiday Party. For more information, go to www.seniorservicesalex.org. You will find a box on the right of the home page that provides more detail about the Walkathon.



Village-to-Village Conference Comes to Our Area Late This Month



Village leaders from around the country will meet in Crystal City for the National Village Gathering, a conference taking place Sept. 29- Oct. 1.

Taking advantage of the nearby location, many members of the board of AHA and the staff will attend.

The gathering will be a great opportunity for attendees to network and to exchange ideas and report about innovations that have been successful. It will feature sessions

on the kinds of programs and services that have been especially important to village members.

Attendees will have the chance to hear a presentation by former AHA Chair Carol Downs and board member Alan Dinsmore about their AHA series, “Out of the Blue.”

Downs and Dinsmore recognized that only 25 percent of us have ever discussed emergency plans with family, friends or others. Recognizing that planning is the best strategy for maintaining control over one’s life, the discussion series was developed and presented last year to assist AHA members when faced with the unexpected events that change their lives.

Downs and Dinsmore will share information with many villages on how to develop the discussion series for their members.

For the first time, villages will get significant attention from Congress. Participants in the gathering will fan out on Capitol Hill to meet with the representatives and senators who represent their districts, to describe the role of villages and emphasize two or three federal policy issues that significantly affect the lives of their members.

The Washington area villages chose to talk to their legislators about funding for the Older Americans Act, which funds the country’s area agencies on aging. They will also discuss the problems associated with Medicare’s hospital “observation status,” which can be a barrier to payment for some aspects of a short hospital stay and subsequent nursing home care.

District of Columbia Mayor Vincent Gray will speak to the opening session Sept. 29. Breakout sessions will examine care of frail members, working with local government and striving for diversity.

The Sept. 30 session will feature regional discussions for village members to discuss what works and what doesn’t. Separate sessions will explore health care issues and the challenge of member retention.

During the Capitol Hill visits, village supporters will become “aging advocates” in conversations with their representatives and senators.

Chuckles and Chortles

- If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her some friends?
- Why do psychics have to ask you your name?
- The harder the butter, the softer the bread.
- Everyone has a photographic memory; some just don’t have film.
- If your car could travel at the speed of light, would the headlights work?
- You’ve heard “The hurrieder I go, the behinder I get.” But just think: the sooner you fall behind, the more time you will have to catch up.
- If at first you don’t succeed, destroy every evidence that you tried.

Early Memory Loss: A Dialogue

Attention AHA volunteers and members: Join us for an important discussion about how to recognize the early signs of memory loss on Tuesday, Sept. 23, 3-4:30 p.m., at Portner's Landing conference room, 621 N. St. Asaph St.

We'll discuss ways to cope with and adjust to changes you may be seeing with your spouse or friend. Leading this workshop will be Rhonda Williams, LCSW, the supervisor for the Geriatric Mental Health team at the City of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services. She will offer guidance and practical advice to support the person affected with memory loss.

RSVP to the AHA office, 703-231-0824.

A Training Session for All Who Want to Handle With Care

This is AHA's newest volunteer training session. We will discuss proper techniques for assisting a person who may temporarily or permanently need help—getting in and out of the car, going up or down stairs, getting in or out of a wheelchair, and other common scenarios. We'll also cover such topics as fall prevention, fall recovery, the proper ways to assist a visually impaired person and more. Leading this discussion is occupational therapist (and AHA standout volunteer) Laura Noble, along with retired orthopedist (and AHA board member) Daniel Kulund.

Join us to gain practical advice that everyone should know on Tuesday, Oct. 14, 3-4:30 p.m. at Portner's Landing conference room, 621 N. St. Asaph St. RSVP to the AHA office, 703-231-0824.

What is the Value of Volunteer Work?

Studies of nonprofit organizations and voluntary work estimate the value of one hour of a volunteer at \$22 and change.

The Corporation for National and Community Service says 26.8 percent of adults give some sort of volunteer service. Estimated value: \$171 billion.

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Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

Seniors: Remember to Ask for Discounts

Myriad businesses offer discounts for people “of a certain age.” The age eligibility varies from over-55 to over-65, so be sure to ask.

An informal survey showed these discounts: Restaurants from Applebee's to Wendy's, retailers from Banana Republic to Ross, grocers from Albertson's to Kroger, airlines from Alaska to United, surface travel from Amtrak to Trailways, auto rentals from Alamo to National, hospitality from Best Western to Sleep Inn, entertainment from AMC to SeaWorld, and many more—haircuts, styling, cell phone service, etc. etc.

But you have to ask each merchant each time you shop.

Are You Lonely?

Sounds like a Lonely Hearts ad, but: check the AHA calendar each month for events that may lift your spirits, provide companionship, liven your day, bring you to a meal gathering or otherwise entice you to be out and about.

CONTACT US

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