



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

# AHA! NEWSLETTER December 2014 VOL. 5 NO. 12

## Board of Directors Adds Five Members

The AHA Board of Directors voted without dissent to add five outstanding new members for two-year terms starting in January. They are Charles Ablard, Brenda Bloch-Young, Linda Langley, Penny Roberts and Mary Jayne Swanson. The additions will bring the Board up to nearly its full authorized strength of 15.

“What a talented and varied group,” AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld said in announcing the selections.

- Ablard is a lawyer and administrative law judge for the Defense Department, and is very active in civic affairs.
- Bloch-Young is a retired Certified Public Accountant with 24 years’ experience in accounting, including an executive position at PriceWaterhouseCoopers. She has assisted Treasurer Chriss Nielsen.
- Langley is an experienced events planner. She once taught adult literacy and has had experience in operating a family business in manufactured housing.
- Roberts has long been volunteer director for AHA. She has been an educator, human resources director and a volunteer in refugee education and Alzheimer’s programs.
- Swanson has had retail management experience in department stores and the American University bookstore.

Three Board members were elected for renewal of their terms: Helen Desfosses, Vice Chair Jane King and Steve Nelson. Board carryovers are Chair Rosenfeld, Secretary Linus Liddle, Treasurer Nielsen, Newsletter Editor Bill Clayton, Alan Dinsmore and Daniel Kulund.



## Benefit “A Grand Party”

The Nov. 9 “Bella Italia” AHA benefit at Laporta’s Restaurant “was a grand party,” Chair Barbara Rosenfeld reported Nov.18 to the Board of Directors.

Those who attended the festive event crowded around the silent auction and “mystery gift” tables. Accordionist Peter DiGiovanni strolled about, playing such Italian songs as “O Sole Mio” and “Santa Lucia.” The Christopher Ludet jazz trio set toes a-tapping. The bartender was kept busy. The weather favored the evening with pleasant temperatures. “Pasta stations” offered excellent tastes of Italy and waiters circulated with tasty finger-food offerings.

The Italian flag colors—red, white, green—were all about, in balloons, table centerpieces, streamers and napkins.

MaryAnn Griffin, retiring head of the city’s Division of Aging and Adult

Services, was honored with the annual Community Service Award. She said she was “truly humbled and honored” by the recognition. Mistress of Ceremonies Julie Carey recognized VIP guests and recounted the growth of AHA.

At a post-benefit “debriefing,” there was unanimous support for planning a repeat event at Laporta’s next year. Committee members said some challenges remain. The “mystery gifts” went so quickly and thoroughly that some people thought there should be more and/or at a higher price. Peter Crouch risked his life in Duke Street traffic trying to direct Benefit guests to the correct parking garage, so the committee will work on a banner or large placard to point to the entrance. A suggestion was made for the menu to include something for people with gluten sensitivity. Members praised the decoration committee —Maggie Stauffer, Leonardo Contardo and Helen Desfosses—for the beauty and variety of decorations.

A substantial list of AHA members, volunteers and associates had a hand in the major event.

“It showed what a good team can do,” Rosenfeld said.

Gross receipts from the benefit came just short of \$30,000 and the net was around \$19,000, Garrett reported.

**(See photos of the Benefit, page 2)**



Group Photo of AHA's "Clan" in an Earlier Scottish Walk.

## MARCH WITH THE CLANS

You don't need a kilt or bagpipes to enjoy flying the AHA banner at the Saturday, Dec. 6, Scottish Christmas Walk parade. Just gather at 9:30 a.m. for hot chocolate at the home of Ann and L Liddle, 526 South Pitt, before the parade sets off at 11 a.m. Dust off your jingle bells and your best parade attire to join more than 100 groups in one of Old Town's most famous events.

This year the AHA "Clan" will be decked out in red scarves and custom-made hats. The AHA group will meet at the corner of Wilkes and South Pitt Streets. Please arrive by 10:45 a.m. Questions? Ask AHA's Parade Coordinator Maggie Stauffer. Phone 703-549-8680 or email [Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net](mailto:Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net)

## Scenes from the Benefit

Photos by Steve Nelson, Heather Reitze, Bill Clayton



The Silent Auction Table



Executive Director Cele Garrett and AHA Founders Judith Jones, Ernie Lehmann and Dick Moose



Crowd at the Checkout Table



Jazz Trio: Bill Stat on Drums, Russell Byron on Bass and Pianist and Leader Christophe Ludet



Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Advisors Carol Downs and Vicki Vasques and Honoree MaryAnn Griffin



Peter Di Giovanni



MC Julie Carey

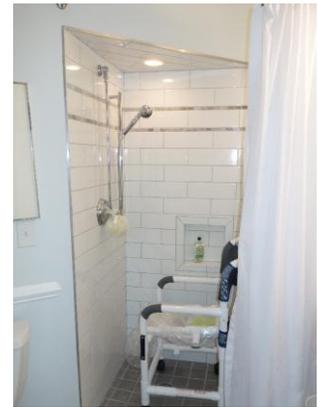


Virginia Ticer Baechler and Patsy Ticer

## Swanson Shows How to Modify Home to Accommodate Disabilities

Mary Jayne Swanson put her Del Ray house on display to explain modifications she had made to accommodate her husband's disabilities before he died. The dozens of visitors were from AHA, the Commission on Aging, the city's Long-Term Care Coordinating Committee, Goodwin House at Home, George Mason University and the Swanson neighborhood.

One redesign, shown at right, was a "roll-in bath," with handholds, a floor that slopes gently to a drain, a showerhead adjustable for angle and height, and room for a rolling chair. Other changes created a "guy corner" for her husband's desk, files and television. Folding doors made new usable space. A new sidewalk eased the path from garage to front door. Parallel bars framed an exercise space on the rear deck. Swanson and co-hostesses handed out varied materials for home modifications, some so subtle they blend in almost invisibly.



**A modified bathroom in Swanson home**



**Helen Desfosses**

## "Political Junkie" Desfosses Discusses Elections Past and Future

Predictions are tricky, turnout is woefully light, and campaigns involve a "heavy dose of fate," Those were among the points AHA Board Member Helen Desfosses made in a Conversation With program Nov. 23 at the home of AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld.

Rosenfeld introduced Desfosses as a "political junkie and politics expert." Desfosses has held elective office, has studied Russian and has been a professor of public policy in Virginia and New York. Her presentation "The 2014 Election Is Over; On To 2016" drew an audience of 16 and prompted many questions after her remarks.

The recent elections showed the perils of prediction, polls and expectations, she said. "I thought Democrats would be able to keep control of the Senate," she said, with a shrug.

Aside from predictions, "What we know is that people for whom national security was dominant voted overwhelmingly Republican," she said. Almost all issues are "interconnected now" and developments with Ebola, Iraq, Russia, the Islamic State and others dominated the news, Desfosses said. Another feature of the election just past was that people of color and young people "did not turn out," she said. A national voting percentage of just over 37 percent "was a national disgrace," she added.

For the near future, the Republican Party is teeming with potential candidates for president. More than a dozen political figures are thinking of running. In the group, "There are no blacks, no women," Desfosses said, reinforcing the impression some people have that the GOP is "a party of white men and married women." Hillary Clinton is close to an announcement, but she has a problem in "the aura of inevitability," Desfosses said. "A question for Hillary is how to distance herself from President Obama and still pick up the (party's) base."

## AHA Loses Two Prominent Supporters, Jane Morningstar and David Abshire

The At Home in Alexandria family lost two prominent villagers recently: Jane D. Morningstar and David M. Abshire.

Morningstar, 80, an AHA member, died Nov. 4 of a lung disease. Abshire, 88, husband of AHA Advisory Council member Carolyn Abshire, died Oct. 31, also of a lung disease. Both were a substantial part of the At Home in Alexandria family.



**Jane Morningstar**

Morningstar, who had a career as a nurse, was also known for her humor, storytelling and civic involvement. She volunteered at the Smithsonian's American History Museum and the National Portrait Gallery.

She had seven children and 14 grandchildren. Her husband, George, died in 1988. Her daughter Susan said she had a "joyous outlook on life."

Abshire was an aide to President Ronald Reagan and ambassador to NATO. He was a co-founder of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, considered the first modern think tank, with Adm. Arleigh Burke. He is survived by his wife, five children and 11 grandchildren.



**David Abshire**

## What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

While we shiver in Alexandria's winter, **Nancy Kincaid** and **Doug Fleming** will be toasty on a Holland America cruise to the Caribbean.

**Executive Director Cele Garrett** took part in a workshop sponsored by Synergy Home Care examining support options for seniors at home.

**Alice Cohan** is recovering from surgery that gave her a new heart.

The November TGIF gathering in the Fin & Hoof bar of Sheraton Suites turned into a family mini-reunion for **Doug Fleming**. His nephew **Greg Ahren** and lovely and lively twin nieces **Cindy Souris** and **Suzu Bednarski** came to Alexandria for the gathering.

The group was nearly a record for TGIFs: also attending were **Nancy Kincaid**, **Pam and Steve Nelson**, **Helen Desfosses**, **Murney Keleher**, **Fred Dunning** and **Bill Clayton**.



Doug Fleming, Surrounded by Relatives

## Tour of Masonic Memorial

That "other Washington monument," Alexandria's Masonic Washington Memorial, was the scene for an outing of AHA folks Nov. 19.

Attendees were **Mercedes Kremenetzky**, **Betty Wanamaker**, **Mary Nefedov**, **Bill Landis** and **Bill Clayton**. The guided tour took them through a few levels of exhibits, including artifacts from George Washington's time and costumes and banners of the various orders related to Freemasonry.

When Washington was inaugurated first president of the United States, he was master of the Masons' Alexandria Lodge. Fire destroyed the lodge and the Masons built the Memorial on Shuter's Hill. The design was based on the lighthouse of Alexandria, Egypt, one of the world's wonders.



## We Dine Around

The November Dine Around was at T.H.A.I. Shirlington, which drew (L to R) Gretchen Bogenrief, Mary Nefedov, Barbara Ballentine, Teddye Clayton, and Gretchen's daughter, Abby. Bill Clayton took the picture.



## AHA Benefits from Members' Sale of Treasures

Realtor Lib Willey sponsored a "We Buy Treasure" event to benefit AHA Nov. 15 in Alexandria House's Drake Room.

The photo above shows AHA's Josefa Gibson (in black) checking some of her valuables with an appraiser.

The photo also shows, at left, appraisers Dalton Kelly and Heather Patsel and, far right, partly out of the picture, Deidre Schexnayder. Several AHA members sold their gold or other valuables on the spot for cash payments.

The event brought AHA \$800 from the dealers.

The "treasure" event has become a yearly occasion and AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld praised Willey, who provided refreshments for the people offering their valuables for appraisal or sale.

Rosenfeld said Willey has been "a true friend of AHA" for sponsoring the event as a benefit for AHA.

## Notes From the Board of Directors

- The membership count (as of the November Board meeting) is 131 with the addition of Marie France Bunting.
- The Board plans a “mini-retreat” Jan. 20, 2015, to assess the year past and look to 2015 plans..
- In addition to a paid website developer, AHA now has a volunteer available to help with content, Executive Director Cele Garrett said.
- The monthly Newsletter will be sent to a greatly expanded list of recipients.

## All About Grandparents

From AARP, these **grandparent statistics**:

Forty-three percent of grandparents travel more than 200 miles to see a grandchild.

Forty-seven is the average age of the first-time grandparent.

Fifty-three percent help with educational expenses.

Sixty-two percent are still working.

Grandparents spend \$57 billion on their grandchildren each year.

### Board of Directors

Barbara Rosenfeld, Chair	Helen Desfosses
Jane King, Vice Chair	Alan Dinsmore
Chriss Nielsen, Treasurer	Daniel Kulund
Linus Liddle, Secretary	Steve Nelson
Bill Clayton, Editor	

### Executive Director

Cecile (Cele) Garrett

### Advisory Council

Carolyn Abshire	Laurie Blackburn
Carol Downs	Stewart Dunn
MaryAnn Griffin	Richard Hobson
Judith Jones, MD	Ken Labowitz
Ernie Lehmann	Tim Lovain
Temple C. Moore	Richard Moose
Mitch Opalski	George Pera
Patsy Ticer	Vicki Vasques

Marian Van Landingham

### Office Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

## A Handy Home-Safety Checklist To Prevent Falls

Some questions to ask:

### OUTSIDE:

Are steps non-slip?

Are step edges marked to avoid tripping?

Are handrails firm and well-positioned?

Are walkways free of hazards?

Is lighting adequate?

### INSIDE:

Are lights bright enough?

Are light switches handy?

Are handrails firm on both sides of stairs?

Do throw rugs have non-slip backing?

Are carpet edges taped or tacked down?

Are rooms uncluttered enough for safe passage? (Particularly for nighttime pathways.)

### KITCHEN:

Are things reachable without a stepstool?

Are tables secure for support if leaned on?

Is the floor free of tripping or slipping hazards?

### BATH:

Is the floor slippery, especially when wet?

Are necessary grab bars installed?

Do tub and shower have non-skid strips?

## Puns

Puns are rightly called the lowest form of humor. They more often provoke groans rather than laughter.

Here are a few:

- Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
- A man’s house is a castle, in a manor of speaking.
- Dijon vu—the same mustard as before.
- Practice safe eating—always use condiments.
- It is feudal to lay siege to a castle.
- A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
- Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?
- Two egotists meet. It’s an I for an I.
- A bicycle cannot stand on its own because it is two-tired.
- Definition of a will? It is a dead giveaway. (Hey, don’t blame me. These were sent to me.—Editor)

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