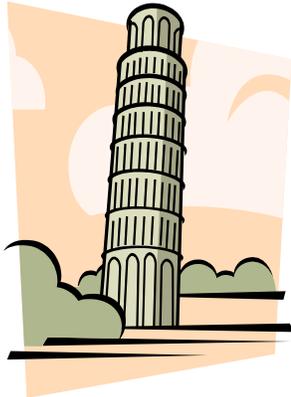




Helping Alexandria's seniors who prefer to remain
—independently—in their own homes

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Don't Miss Out on the Fun Come to Bella Italia Nov. 9

Laporta's Restaurant will become a festive corner of Italy Nov. 9 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the "Bella Italia" Benefit and Award Night of At Home in Alexandria.

Peter Di Giovanni will stroll around with his accordion, entertaining Italian style, and later the Christophe Ludet jazz combo will strike up its gig. The trio includes bassist Russell Byron and drummer Bill Stat, husband of AHA stalwart Ann Stat.

Dozens of hospitality and service gift certificates, from meals to elegant lodging to auto care, have been donated to the Silent Auction. Another table will hold dozens of Mystery Gifts, objects wrapped to disguise them and offered at \$25 each, whether the content is a set of paperbacks or a \$50 bill or a crystal bowl or any of several categories.

With pride, AHA is honoring one of its own with the annual Community Service Award. MaryAnn Griffin, who serves on AHA's Advisory Council and is retiring this year as head of the city's Division of Aging and Adult Services, will receive the award at the Benefit. Another well-known figure, television personality Julie Carey, will be mistress of ceremonies.

There is still time to get on board for the benefit. For members it is \$75 and for the public \$125. There is ample parking next to the restaurant and greeters will direct you. **Call the AHA office: 703-231-0824.**



Attendees get a first drink free. Waiters will circulate with hors d'oeuvres and there will be two "pasta stations" to provide food that carries out the Bella Italia theme.

The annual benefit is AHA's major fundraising event of the year. AHA is a dues-paying organization, yes, but dues cover less than half its costs. So practice your "Buona sera" and "Ciao" and come to the Benefit.

Photo at left shows Benefit planners at the site, clockwise from left foreground: Ann Stat, Penny Roberts, Diane Atchinson, Cele Garrett, Maggie Stauffer, Leonardo Contardo, Linda Langley.

Several from AHA Participate in Village Conference

At Home in Alexandria had a sizable contingent at the annual Village to Village National Conference Sept. 29-Oct. 1 in Crystal City. AHA was represented by Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Vice Chair Jane King, Executive Director Cele Garrett and Board Members L Liddle, Helen Desfosses, Alan Dinsmore, Dan Kulund and Chriss Nielsen.

Discussions in the main and breakaway sessions brought up several ideas for AHA to consider and explore, Advisory Council Member Carol Downs reported, among them:

- Emphasizing AHA priorities by building influence through stronger contacts with government—for example, for grants and other support.
- Increasing villages' voice among the community, by spreading the word on what villages do for senior citizens' health, well-being, social ties and independence.
- Creating diversity, for instance, attracting various income levels by offering reduced fees.
- Training volunteers to help members by taking notes at hospital or doctor visits.
- Explore ways to be able to cover all requests for transportation when those prove overwhelming.



Spectacular Sand Portrait

An AHA group visited the top of the Washington Monument to see the spectacular “sand portrait” by Cuban-American artist Jorge Rodriguez Gerada. (At left, the view from a monument window.)

The work, “Out of Many, One” (English translation of the national motto *e pluribus unum*) is a composite of American faces, a portrait of dirt and sand spread over six acres of the National Mall between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial.

AHA visitors were Bill Landis, Betty Wanamaker, Mary Nefedov, Nancy Kincaid and Bill Clayton, who took the photos. The portrait attracted crowds to the top of the monument to see the art that could only be seen clearly from high above, as from the monument or space or passing aircraft.



Photo at left shows the AHA visitors looking through a window at the top of the Washington Monument. Landis waits his turn while Wanamaker, Nefedov and Kincaid peer out.

At right, the group sits in the entrance line. Groups of around 20 visitors were allowed on the elevator each half-hour for the minute-long ride to the top. The room at the peak afforded grand views in every direction.



Making a Home Aging-Friendly

Mary Jayne Swanson, an AHA associate member, will be hosting an open house in her historic Del Ray home to display the many ways a home can be made aging-friendly.

The many adaptations enabled her late husband to live as independently as possible in spite of serious limitations in mobility and vision.

Mary Jayne had found ways to seamlessly blend in the changes without altering the basic structure of the home. She will display and explain these on Saturday, Nov. 15, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the home, at 16 East Del Ray Avenue.

Her home includes a wheelchair-accessible, graduated pathway from the home to the garage and to the sidewalk, which made it possible for her husband to visit Del Ray’s many attractions. There is a doorway into the home accessible by wheelchair. The roll-in shower enables a person using a wheelchair to enter and use it. A stacked washer and dryer on the first floor made use of those appliances a bit easier. In many other ways, the Swansons had the house improved for the aging.

Visitors to the open house can talk with Mary Jayne about the changes she made. Several AHA members familiar with home design for aging in place will be available to answer questions and provide additional resources. The changes in the home are very attractive and are a good example of ways to make a home aging-friendly.

To RSVP, please call the AHA office at 703-231-0824 or email AHA at aha@athomeinalexandria.org



Save the Date for the Scottish Walk

Dust off your marching shoes and join Clan AHA as we participate in Alexandria’s Annual Scottish Christmas Walk Parade on Saturday, Dec. 6.

The walk is a festive Old Town parade and for the AHA group, it is preceded by a visit to the home of Ann and L Liddle for refreshments and conversation. Details later.



You Are Invited To Sell Some Valuables And Get Decluttered

Once again, At Home in Alexandria is invited to take part in an afternoon of selling gold, silver, antiques, coins, memorabilia, currency and jewelry – all on the spot. Last year, one AHA member sold thousands of dollars of gold coins, another sold memorabilia dating to the Civil War – that sort of thing. A team of appraisers checked out each item, phoning other experts when necessary, and made offers on the spot. The people who attended sipped wine and munched appetizers while checking the value of their items.

Contact Lib Willey for details: 703-362-7206



After the Election Dust is Cleared, AHA's Desfosses Will Look At Results and the Future

Helen Desfosses, an AHA Board member, will look at the election results and the road ahead, Nov. 23, in a special program.

Whether “What Happened?” about the mid-term elections, or “The 2016 Presidential Election: Now It Begins,” she will give her perspective and prediction.

Desfosses, a longtime professor of public policy, and a seasoned media commentator, former elected official and political junkie, is on the AHA Board of Directors and is a student of campaign strategy and politics.

For her program Desfosses has chosen a time fraught with political meaning: just after the hotly contested midterm elections, including a few important ones in Virginia, and while speculation is hot for the 2016 presidential campaign.

Kulund, Noble Give Advice on Fitness and Falls

Occupational therapist Laura Noble and AHA's “fitness guru” Dan Kulund gave a large group of AHA people some good advice Oct. 14 about falls, fitness and the occasional challenges of getting in and out of an automobile.

The “Handle With Care” program started indoors at Portner's Landing and finished outside in a parking area whose wall became a prop for the discussion. The purpose was twofold—to show members and volunteers how to keep fit and maintain balance, but also to train them in helping elderly persons. The audience totaled 24.

Kulund, AHA Board member and retired orthopedist, is known for spreading his “robust walking” gospel throughout Alexandria. For the Oct. 23 program, he described proper walking techniques, but also used a wall outside to demonstrate how to bring one's hands up in front of the face to break a fall. He had the group bouncing on their feet, a technique to stave off bone loss, and demonstrated a squat that helps avoid weak hip muscles, which he said were the top cause of older people's going into a nursing home.

Noble, an occupational therapist and AHA volunteer, showed how to get up from a fall (roll on the unhurt side, crawl to a chair, and use it to pull back up to a standing position). Using various types of wheelchairs and walkers, she demonstrated their use and challenges for volunteers. To help older persons with poor eyesight on their walks, Noble said, a volunteer should stand on the side with weaker vision, and offer an arm for steadying a person's walk and warning of barriers. She showed good techniques and some clever devices for getting in and out of a car.

Occupational therapist Laura Noble and “fitness guru” Dan Kulund demonstrate how to avoid falls and injuries.



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

The **Oct. 17 Thank God It's Friday** gathering proved a festive Happy Birthday event for several of the AHA sippers at the Fin & Hoof bar of Sheraton Suites Hotel. The dozen revelers knew that **Tom Fitzgerald** was going to be there, roughly a year after he bought a round of drinks for his 90th birthday. He was there, all right, but **Pam and Steve Nelson** disclosed their birthdays had been a few days before (and had drawn a song at a Pot Luck gathering). **Nancy Kincaid** said her birthday was the same as Fitzgerald's, the 18th. The announcements prompted much jocular talk about age and the importance of TGIF.

Fitzgerald was recovering from a fall that hurt his wrist, but not enough to prevent his lifting a glass. He brought with him his son **Tim**, from Austin, Tex.

Jane Coughran reported a "very comfortable" round trip on the Queen Mary to Southampton, England, and back. Asked about the ship, she said, "Big." And the ocean? For some days "like glass."

Speaking of **Coughran**, she said a sinkhole has been growing in her backyard, so much so that "archaeologists are interested."

AHA's Bridge Club is regularly filling two tables at the monthly sessions, hosted by **Nancy Kincaid** and bolstered of late by the attendance of two Bills, **Bill Landis** and **Bill Gemmill**. The bridge group meets the second Thursday of the month and encourages other players to join.

Margaret French and **Mary Nefedov** are going to separate Thanksgiving gatherings in New York.

Music to our ears: New member **Chet Avery** had high praise for volunteer **Rachel Spehler** for helping him download some iPhone applications for the blind. And **Helen Desfosses** had kind words for the "extraordinary, valuable" help an AHA "techie," **Steve Nelson**, gave her, installing a new printer.

Lu Judge, Alan Dinsmore and **David Butler** found common ground at one Dine Around at Case Felipe: They had all been tour guides in the past, in the District of Columbia. The conversation of coincidence became a lively exchange of reminiscences.



Birthday Night at TGIF: Tom Fitzgerald in white shirt, flanked by Nancy Kincaid and Pam Nelson, with Steve Nelson at left looking on. The event attracted 12 people from AHA.

A WAVE of Villages

The Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE) reported at its Oct. 20 meeting that there are now 48 villages in the region. The District of Columbia has 14, Maryland 21, Virginia 12 and West Virginia 1.

Presenters of a program on technology and aging outlined the new law giving incentives to doctors and hospitals to improve use of technology in records and access by patients to information. They urged consumers to ask their doctors if they can contact the doctors or hospitals by email. Shannon Koss of Connected Health Resources described the emerging "gateway" that brings health care, social services and community supports together in one place so that families can more easily understand and use resources.

Left to right: WAVE President Miriam Kelty and Bill Clayton and Barbara Rosenfeld of AHA, who attended the WAVE meeting. Liddle of AHA serves on the WAVE Board.



Notes from AHA's Oct. 21 Board Meeting

Chair Barbara Rosenfeld reported that AHA reached its 2014 membership goal and is "on track" on its major plans.

Members totaled 130 as of the meeting, she said, including a new member, Brenda Bloch-Young, who helps Treasurer Chriss Nielsen. Nielsen reported cash on hand represents more than nine months' expected costs, "well above" the desired six-month cushion.

L Liddle opened a continuing discussion about how best to dispatch volunteers. The consensus was to remind members to give at least two days' notice of the need for transportation.

Nielsen reported the AHA survey replies showed a high level of satisfaction with the village's programs and services. Ninety percent of the respondents had been to at least one AHA event, she said. All said they would recommend AHA to a neighbor.

Several said they were interested in serving on a program committee, an encouraging sign because of Program Chair Nancy Kincaid's desire to have one person as coordinator for each program area—evening dining, lunches, movies and the like.

Members discussed ways to broaden the reach of the newsletter to an audience wider than AHA.

Executive Director Cele Garrett reported on the improvements to the website, which underwent changes and was ready for new content in mid-October.

The Story of the Marshmallow

Shirley Cherkasky entertained a “Conversation With ...” AHA group Oct. 26 with an illustrated history of the marshmallow, “From medicinal to ‘M.m.m.m.’” Fourteen AHA people were amused and fascinated by marshmallows’ globe-girdling spread (photo at left).

First, in ancient times, a medicine made from the root of the mallow, the marshmallow has evolved into a confection essential to s’mores around the campfire and the main ingredient in competitive “Peeps” dioramas submitted to the *Washington Post*. Cherkasky has collected a room-corner-full of marshmallow artifacts, from old packages to Peeps to Greek multi-colored and miniature ‘mallows.

Cherkasky illustrated her lecture with slides. One showed various stages in manufacturers’ attempts to safely package the sticky goody. Another showed a previous mass-production technique involving pouring a warm marshmallow mixture into molds lined with cornstarch. The latest procedure, worked out in the 1950s, involved extruding a long rope of marshmallow and cutting it into the proper length. This greatly shortened process time.

Many countries have marshmallows, Cherkasky said, showing a slide of a Mexican “megamallow.” The Russians came up with a marshmallow-flavored vodka, she said, eliciting groans from the group. The Greek marshmallows, in various colors, were displayed on Cherkasky’s table and proved popular with the AHA group.

One widespread version of marshmallows is their use in s’mores, spongy sandwiches involving graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows. Less well known is the “fluffernutter” sandwich, a concoction of bread, peanut butter and marshmallow.

You think Cherkasky is obsessed? Just Google “marshmallow” and you will get more than 3 million hits on the word, from history to production to fantasy to recipes.



Above, Dan Kulund’s “robust aging” group of dozens prepares to walk through Ben Brenman Park. AHA collaborated with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to present the walk.

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Dine Around Oct. 20 at Aroma Indian restaurant: (left to right) Jane Coughran, Bill Clayton, Mary Nefedov, Margaret French.

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