



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER July 2015 VOL. 6 NO. 7

AHA's Gala Returns to Italian Theme For "La Dolce Vita"

AHA's most festive event, the annual gala, returns to an Italian theme this year with "La Dolce Vita," echoing the classic movie starring Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni.

The gala will be Sunday, Nov. 8, at Laporta's Restaurant, 1600 Duke St., with live music by the Christophe Ludet jazz trio: Ludet piano, Russell Byron bass and Bill Stat drums. It will be a repeat visit to Laporta's, which proved a good fit for the AHA crowd and the gala's auction and buffet tables. Gala Co-Chairs Linda Langley and Ginny Parry are asking all in AHA to spread the word about this festive event.

The silent auction will feature many certificates for destinations, restaurant meals, experiences, services, timeshares and the like. The menu for buffet service will be expanded; each gala ticket-holder will get one free drink.

Prices are unchanged: for members \$75 and for the public \$125.

Langley and Parry need help planning the gala. It is a most pleasant human-contact way to work for the village's most celebratory event of the year.

Needs include helping get auction donations, helping keep track of things, soliciting advertisement for the program, finding sponsors and donors, and—on the "night of"—helping with decoration, auction setup, check-in and payment tables and general chores.

Contact the AHA office 703-231-0824 if you are interested and sign up to help. Pick a function that interests you and sign up. The sooner the better.

Be thinking of auction items from your favorite restaurant, hairdresser, auto shop, hotel, music venue, museum, carpet cleaner, laundry or resort. When donor forms are ready, you will be turned loose with a supply of them to scour for donations.



From Chilies to Petunias to Topiary, Alexandria House Residents Show off Their Balconies and Help At Home in Alexandria

On a hot but breezy June 20, the owners of eight condos in Alexandria House put their balconies on display for all comers in a benefit for At Home in Alexandria. With guidance from Greenstreet Gardens, residents showed what gardening is possible with pots and planters on a concrete "garden plot."

Alexandria House sponsored the tour and entrance fees brought \$250 to AHA. (See p. 3 for photos.)

Fran Zorn ("I cook") showed her extensive herb garden, much of it in "earth boxes" for watering.

Bill Reagan and Matt Derhammer have filled the perimeter of their wrap-around balcony, half with a large variety of chilies (from mild to Scotch Bonnet) and the other half with decorative or blooming plants.

AHA Chair **Barbara Rosenfeld** enlivened the visits to her balcony with cookies and refreshments.

Helen Desfosses arranged a stylish table and chairs on her balcony, enhancing the view with topiary and flowers.

Louise and Mike Kenny greeted visitors with a rum drink and a cluster of plants over which hung a plaque: "Celebrate Life."

Jean Sidley and Bill Zuckerman had plants, all right, but visitors were also intrigued with their musical instruments—a Gibson guitar on a wall and a pump organ and grand piano on the floor.

Lib Willey, who helped organize the tour, showed the Willeys' balcony, but also had promotional materials for Greenstreet Garden Center, whose handout had good advice for growing plants on balconies. Greenstreet supplied many of the plants and Scott Sutherland of Greenstreet was on hand for advice and orders.

Maryanne and Steve Mutty had chilies and flowers but also strawberry plants.

Things We Do



Some in AHA visited French ship Hermione, a replica of the frigate that brought Lafayette to help the American Revolution. It paid a brief call to Alexandria.



We plan: The Board of Directors discusses details of the November gala. Co-chair Linda Langley is at left.



We staff an AHA table at the Farmer's Market at City Hall, signing up prospects to volunteer or join.



We visit museums. Mercedes Kremenetzky and Bill Landis at National Geographic's exhibit.



We work at the polling places. Bill Clayton and Ken Hill accost voters heading to vote in the June primary election, at George Mason Elementary School Precinct.



We recognize outstanding students at the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria Awards Ceremony.

Above left: Tindell Locket receives the North Ridge Citizens' Association scholarship, presented by (left) AHA's Ken Hill, treasurer and former president of the NRCA, and Mike Oliver, NRCA Board member. The NRCA scholarship honors outstanding citizenship.

Above right: AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld presented two scholarships in memory of her husband, Stephen S. Rosenfeld. The recipients were (left) Emmanuella Amoako and Hannah Brockway. Stephen Rosenfeld was a journalist at the Washington Post for 40 years. The two annual scholarships go to students interested in journalism, writing or public affairs.



We do civic duties, as here (left), City Councilman Tim Lovain, a member of AHA's Advisory Council, helps dedicate a music-themed play area in memory of Ruthanne Lodato, a beloved music teacher who was murdered in 2013 at her home. The playground, with chimes children can play and a piano keyboard design, is behind the Lee Center.

AHA, Goodwin House Program on Improving Difficult Conversations

“Have you had a conversation that you would like to take back?”

That question, from AHA Advisory Council member Carol Downs, set the stage for a program, cosponsored by AHA and Goodwin House at Home, to advise people how to steer sensitive conversations in a positive direction. Downs and AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett spoke briefly about AHA and then Downs introduced the speakers, mediator Jeannette Twomey (right in photo) and Cheryl Beversdorf (in wheelchair for the skit). Approximately 30 attended.

Twomey played “Marge” and Beversdorf “Andy,” in a vignette of how people with complaints turn sometimes to anger and insult. Andy complained about how Marge’s plants interfered with his sunlight in his favorite spot to look outside. The scene was in a care facility, but could be extrapolated into other scenarios where two people speak at cross-purposes, such as discussions of an estate or telling a company you feel you have been overcharged.

Andy speaks of “your weeds,” and Marge says, “You could sit somewhere else, you know.”

People talk over people and interrupt in a heavy conversation,

Twomey said. It is called “kitchen-sinking it,” meaning bringing up things that are tangential to the real question. Anger, accusations, sometimes insults follow.

The two characters could benefit from the tips for civil discourse. Twomey and Beversdorf gave these tips:

- Expect resistance, so seek communication, not victory. Expect a solution to take many conversations.
- In the second conversation, “Help me understand...Let’s work together” is a good approach.
- Listen, and “Tell me more,” to reduce tension and build trust.
- Use “I statements” rather than “you statements” as in, “I am concerned” about the same things, rather than “You have brought the problem...” “Maybe we can speak in a few days,” rather than “Well, I see we cannot agree on anything.”

Another in the AHA-Goodwin series will be held July 15, on easing transition to a new residence. Note that it will be in the Goodwin House at Bailey’s Crossroads, 3440 South Jefferson, Falls Church.



Cheryl Beversdorf and Jeannette Twomey

Wegmans

AHA villagers will visit the new Wegmans store Thursday July 16, at 11:30 a.m. There will be a car pool, based on RSVPs and friends are welcome. RSVP by July 10 in order for us to plan appropriately.

Scenes From the Balcony Tour



Topiary with a view



Petunia-like blooms



Host, visitor



Above: Chilies from jalapeños to Scotch Bonnet. Below, the The Kennys’ herbs and greeting.



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Hi, I'm Shelly Schwab. I'm starting to write the What's Up column, so please send me any newsy tidbits. Call 703-836-8964 or send an email to me at rochelleschwab@comcast.net Shelly is a nickname I got working on a newsletter in high school. The editor told me my name, Rochelle Hollander, was one letter too long for the masthead box. He said, "How would you like to be called "Shelly?" And so I was.

Shirley Cherkasky didn't buy any antique buckets, but she did cross one off her bucket list: a visit to the Greater York Antiques Show. Shirley has been nurturing a desire to visit the show for several years, while working as a "behind the scenes" volunteer at the National Museum of American History, and on May 1 she finally did. She and a friend drove to York, PA for a day spent happily browsing hooked rugs, samplers, and many other things. Shirley eschewed shopping and was there just to look, and it was "just fun," she says.

It was a different itinerary for **Barbara Rosenfeld**—not art museums but a gondola ride. Those are the concessions she made taking her grandchildren, Sasha, 10, and Lazlo, 7, to Italy in April. They visited Rome, Venice and Lake Como, and had "great fun."

"Wow," I said admiringly. "You took two little kids to Italy."

"Well," she said, smiling, "their parents were along."



Also traveling was **Ruth Arnold**, AHA's "Happy Birthday" voice. Ruth visited England in May for a reunion of her classmates at St. Paul's boarding school. Years have passed since she last saw her school friends and so everyone was older but "still the same" people inside.

Elisabeth Malcolm helped sell tickets for the balcony tour (**see story, p. 1**) and that was a chance to learn what a friend of hers meant by saying "she flew" in her career. Elisabeth flew not as a pilot, but as a flight attendant, then called stewardess, for Pan American World Airways, since acquired by Delta. She is looking forward to the convention of former Pan Am stewardesses, the World Wings International. What do stewardesses do at a convention? Stay tuned.

Volunteer Corner

Ann Stat is a natural-born volunteer. She feels fulfilled volunteering, and has all her adult life. She likes to volunteer at more than one organization, and AHA is lucky to be one of her choices.

Annie was raised on her family's New Jersey dairy farm. After high school, she went to the University of Delaware and received a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She discovered the freedom of volunteer teaching in the non-profit world, which led to gainful employment: She taught and developed programs for 12 years in Delaware, Philadelphia, Chevy Chase, and the Fairfax County Park Authority. Her programs and other events for kids increasingly emphasized nature.

She retired after 26 years at FCPA as program director and volunteer coordinator, primarily at Huntley Meadows Park, where she now volunteers. She substitute teaches at preschools and Grace Episcopal School; volunteers at AHA and a park and tutors at George Mason.

She is a skilled birder. She loves Morris Dancing. She has a gift for design. Annie heard of AHA from friends and started helping at AHA for our third anniversary party. Since then, she loves helping to plan parties like our annual fundraiser. Penny Roberts says, "Annie's not just a planner but a doer. She can be counted on when she takes on a task. She is a real asset."

—Steve Nelson



You might say Stan Maciak got his interest in machinery and working with his hands by inheritance.

His mother was a "Rosie the Riveter," working in wartime industry. His father also liked working with his hands. So it was only natural that Stan Maciak embarked out of community college into a long career in machinery maintenance and construction, with General Motors and GM-related industry.

Born in 1951 in "Motor City" Detroit, Maciak studied at Catholic schools through the elementary grades. After a time at a community college, a GM apprentice program appealed to him, and that led to a career, on an assembly line, then to an axle plant. He says he did "maintenance, construction—whatever the machinery needed."

After retirement, Stan became a caregiver for his asthmatic mother. She died in 2013 at age 91.

Maciak and his wife, Deborah, moved to Alexandria this year. They met Linda Langley, an AHA Board member, and she told Maciak about volunteering. He has done "maintenance stuff, things you cannot reach, a hose that needs hooking up, lights to replace ... snow shoveling," he said.

Board member Helen Desfosses said, "You get the impression he can do anything."

—Bill Clayton

Notes From the Board

AHA “continues to perform well financially,” Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reported to the Board. In May, “member revenue rebounded” and expenses were lower than budgeted.

The results were encouraging, but Chair Barbara Roenfeld emphasized the need for all in AHA to recruit new associates and members, to keep membership and revenues strong. “We should all tell friends -- including those who say they aren't ready yet -- that this is a great group to have fun, volunteer, benefit and enjoy AHA.”

SURVEY REMINDER

A reminder that we need to complete all the village surveys by the end of July. If anyone needs assistance, please call the office to let us know.

AHA is proud to have been chosen to participate in the survey, commissioned by University of California/Berkeley. The results will be a valuable guide on activities and programs that work. The survey is easily done, online or on paper. Call us.

Check the Venue – There Are Two Goodwin Houses

The 1 p.m.-3 p.m. July 15 program “Planning ahead,” a joint effort by AHA and Goodwin House, takes place in the Bailey’s Crossroads Goodwin House, 3440 South Jefferson in Falls Church. (Some in AHA may have thought it was the other Goodwin site, off Beauregard.)

So please come and hear professional “move managers” Susie and Joel Danick discuss how to ease transition to a new residence.

Au Domaine Pops Some Corks for AHA

The Au Domaine wine shop shared its profits and held a tasting for At Home in Alexandria on June 24.

The shop offered sips of several French wines, offered discounts for sales, and gave AHA a percentage of its profit. The large group of AHA people who attended could recognize the distinctive crackers and cheeses offered as accompaniments, because Pam and Steve Nelson, who arranged the tasting, have brought some of the goodies to AHA pot-luck gatherings.

The shop concentrates on smaller and lesser-known vineyards that produce excellent wines. The tastings featured white, rosé and red wines from across France. Nearby shelves displayed wines from other countries, chiefly Italy and Spain. Hosts for the event were owner Rick Raunswinder, his wife, Barbara, and sister, Sharon.

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Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

CORRECTION: The June newsletter identified the Legacy Foundation as an anti-smoking organization. That is the American Legacy Foundation. The group mentioned in the story is the Legacy Foundation, helping nonprofits with donor development and legacy planning.

Coffee Get-Together

The next Volunteer Coffee will be July 29, 9:30-10:30 a.m., at Emma’s coffee and wine bar, 106 Hume Ave.

Volunteers are urged to be part of it and members are also invited.



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