



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2015 VOL. 6 NO. 8

Dozens Watch Fireworks From Alexandria House Balconies



The tradition of AHA's hosting fireworks-viewing parties on balconies of Alexandria House had a festive, well-attended observance July 11.

Thirty AHA members and guests attended two gatherings, in the high-rise homes of Joyce and Dick Bachman and Nancy Kincaid and Doug Fleming. The groups noshed on finger foods and beverages and heard, faintly, the strains of the music program by the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra in the park below at river's edge observing Alexandria's birthday.

When Maestro Kim Kluge conducted the orchestra to the rousing conclusion of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," cannons roared in time with the last musical bars and the crowd below and in the balconies greeted with "oohs" and "ahhs" the appearance of fireworks. The colorful flashes and bursts were mirrored by the Potomac River. Held at bay by police boats, scores of spectators' boats bobbed at the edges of the fireworks zone.

The photo at left shows multiple bursts of light and sound. In the darkness below can be seen the lights of nearby buildings and the stage.

The photo at right shows one cluster of spectators in the AHA balconies.

From left, Penny Roberts, Mary Nefedov, Teddy Clayton and Ann Liddle.

Helping make it a family affair, Office Co-Manager Diane Atchinson brought her mother, Cathy Anderson, and Genevieve Knezo brought her daughter, Alexandra, and son-in-law, Corey Jones. A few members brought guests, making the event among the best-attended events on AHA's schedule, and several brought goodies.

Page 2—more photos of the fireworks gatherings

Photos by Steve Nelson and Bill Clayton



Gala Planners Name Pete Crouch Honorary Chair

In recognition of his all-around support of AHA, Pete Crouch has been named honorary chairman of the annual AHA Gala, Nov. 8 at Laporta's Restaurant, Co-Chairs Linda Langley and Ginny Parry announced. Crouch "has been a very generous donor, volunteer and committee member for AHA for several years," Langley said.

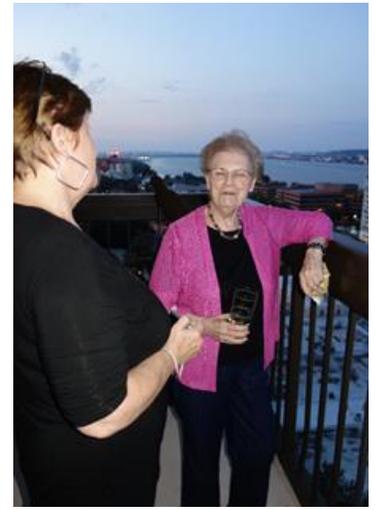
AHA teams are checking businesses and individuals for sponsors and auction donations emphasizing destinations (timeshares, beach homes, etc.), hospitality (meals, hotel rooms) and services (landscaping, auto work, beauty services and the like).

Advisor Temple Moore gave us a fine idea: raffle a set of wines. Already, several wines have been donated or pledged. There may be enough to have multiple raffles. Notify AHA or Langley or Barbara Rosenfeld if you want to donate a wine valued at \$20 or more. Call them also for raffle ticket prices or details, which are still being worked out.

Readers: Please, each time you eat out or patronize a likely donor's business, ask for a donation for the auction. The donor forms are available in the office and I will email a form to whoever wants one. We all are acquainted with our favorite merchants, and they are the reliable supporters of the auction. Check with me before you ask, so I can avoid more than one person's asking the same business.—Bill Clayton 703-548-0958



Sally Ann Greer and Jack Sulser, rear, and Shelly and Dick Schwab, foreground, relax on a balcony before the fireworks begin.



Office Co-Manager Diane Atchinson, left above, with her mother, Cathy Anderson

More Fireworks



A bright burst lights the river (above); the tiny specks in the water are the many boats that gathered to get a close view.



Expert Discusses Managing “Your Stuff”

Joel Danick outlined, for a joint AHA and Goodwin House at Home program, how to declutter and handle “stuff,” either in preparation for moving or for remaining at home. Fifty-four people heard his presentation July 15 at Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads and came away with brochures and tips, for whether they contemplated moving to a new home or staying in their homes.

Danick, co-owner of TAD Relocation, said the company, started by his wife, Susie, helps with “move management” but also with “downsizing” such as moving living quarters from a second floor to a ground floor, as some in AHA have done.

He asked the audience for a show of hands from those contemplating a move within five years, and from those who want to stay in their homes for life. The hands were nearly equal for both options.

When people have too much stuff, he said, options are “never mind,” “deal with it” or wait until it is a crisis. His advice: commit yourself to doing it, and DO IT. He said people should think about closets, drawers and cabinets stuffed with belongings, some of them unused. “Go area by area” in your home, he said, and work one at a time, bearing in mind the companies such as his that help. Keep things you need and would use, break habits that come close to hoarding, learn of recycling, auction houses and charities that can accept much of the stuff. And learn the mantra “One in, one out” to keep things from accumulating, he said.



Danick gives advice for downsizing, moving

Senior Academy a Guide for Seniors

Alexandria residents 60 and over are invited to participate in the Senior Academy, four Wednesdays starting Sept. 9, from 10 a.m. to noon. The Academy will inform about Alexandria’s government functions and local organizations that provide services and programs for seniors—including tips about getting involved. Registration closes Friday, Aug.14 at 5 p.m. LIMIT 25 participants. Register at www.seniorservices.org or call Mary Lee Anderson at 703-836-4414, ext. 111.

Gadsby's Tavern a Rich Trove of George Washington Lore and Alexandria History

AHA's June museum visit was to Gadsby's tavern, whose halls echo with the rich social, political and commercial history of Alexandria from just after the Revolution.

Actually, what now is Gadsby's Tavern is two buildings built in 1785 as a tavern and in 1792 as a separate tavern and hotel. The museum features a dinner table set as for George Washington. Tour guide Jo Gohmann said elegant cuisine of the period might include oyster ice cream.

In the ballroom Gohmann showed visitors a scene depicting one of the events at the expanded complex bought and improved by Englishman John Gadsby.

Civic and government leaders, workers and visitors dined, drank and slept in Gadsby's, which became a center of social life in the 19th Century. In addition to George Washington, guests included Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and the Marquis de Lafayette.



AHA's Don Layman takes a picture of tour guide Jo Gohmann while a visitor looks on. Below, a table set for George Washington.



Indigo Landing on a Postcard Kind of Day

With a small-boat sailing race outside on the Potomac, an AHA gathering of 11 lunched at Indigo Landing. **Photo at left** shows, clockwise from left: Ashley Danison, Mary Nefedov, Penny Roberts (facing away), Frances Griffiths, Ginny Lester (right rear), Margaret French, Barbara Rosenfeld, Bill Landis, Indie Cather, Austin Danison. Photo by Bill Clayton.

Indie Cather set a record for the lunches—three generations of her family: Indie, her granddaughter Ashley Danison and great-grandson Austin Danison.



Immigration Lawyer Tells of the Horror of Unaccompanied Children

Immigration lawyer Rebecca Eichler described for an AHA audience the “dire” state of children crossing into the United States illegally. Her clients are mostly from Central America, from which tens of thousands of children are in the flood of undocumented immigrants.

On their way, the children are threatened and sometimes abused by gangs and face border crackdowns by both Mexican and U.S. authorities.

It is “very hard to get them asylum,” she said.

Why do they come? “A lot of them, out of sheer desperation,” fleeing poverty, violence, cartels and gangs,

and seeking opportunity. What to do? Help the countries of origin develop, to furnish jobs, education and the infrastructure needed to make staying at home a more attractive option, Eichler advised. Her program was one in the AHA series “Conversation With” managed by Board Member Charles Ablard.



Rebecca Eichler speaks to AHA group in “Conversation With” series

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Helen Desfosses adds a valuable phrase to the lexicon, something very familiar to the volunteers of AHA: "Oh, by the way...."

She says she is sometimes guilty of saying, when a volunteer has done two or three things and is ready to leave, "Oh, by the way...." Volunteers are usually happy to respond, or schedule another visit.

Margaret French recounts a new prescription for exercise. She says a friend's doctor prescribed the sailboard for the particular movements that exercise different muscle groups. But you have to have a river or ocean nearby.

Mary Nefedov, who attends most AHA events, added the Ladies' Night Out to her list, joining the group for the July 14 gathering.

Goings and Comings—**Genevieve Knezo** moves to Alexandria House, adding to the considerable AHA contingent there. **Doris Whitman** moves to Maryland to be nearer her daughter. **Murney Keleher** moves to Goodwin House, saying allergies in her previous Old Town home were increasingly bothersome.

Tom Fitzgerald introduced the July 17 TGIF crowd to a new caregiver – (Ms.) **Sydney McKinstry**.

Brenda Bloch-Young traveled Out West for some mountain scenery and Canada's Calgary Stampede. She also visited Lake Moraine, near Lake Louise, with a spectacular view of the Canadian Rockies.



Brenda Bloch-Young at Lake Moraine

Liz Campbell took a Viking Cruise to Russia with a friend, and pronounced it "wonderful." They went first to St. Petersburg and then down various rivers (including the Volga) and to Moscow. They kept busy all the time because they wanted to see "absolutely everything, including the Kremlin and Red Square." Liz adds that the crew and food were wonderful and recommends the whole experience highly.

Volunteer Corner

One member called **Pete Crouch** "a volunteer *extraordinaire*," but alas, he is admittedly not perfect. He tells of the time last winter when he helped some people protect their pipes and outside hose bibs from freezing. "I forgot my own and both froze. Do as I say, not as I do."

By profession, Pete is a realtor with the eponymous Crouch Realty Group under the umbrella of McEneaney Associates. But he learned tools from his father and the "honey do" list from his mother and dedication from his early "interest in helping people."

Born in Winchester, Mass., in 1954, Crouch is an honors graduate of Princeton who did some graduate work in real estate and urban development at American University. He has become a Seniors Real Estate Specialist. He studied a little architecture and supervised some construction and has done remodeling of his own homes. He kayaks, he sails. His breadth of experience has made him a standout volunteer for AHA. But he is also a "two-fer," doing volunteer work for Mount Vernon At Home.

Because his father was in the Coast Guard, Pete's "military family" moved frequently, which gave him skills in recognizing good neighborhoods and what improvements a home needed to boost its resale value. "All things real estate have been in my blood," he says. Maybe also "all things volunteering."

Volunteer Kelly Miller brings skills and experience to AHA that are right down its alley. She is a licensed clinical social worker who has worked with a hospital's elder-life program, has volunteered with a domestic violence shelter and has worked with a hospice. Spare time? With her husband, Chris, she is raising two teen-agers.

The combination of experiences has made Kelly a most valuable addition to AHA's Membership Services Subcommittee. That group was formed to divide the substantial breadth of the Membership Committee. Member Services itself has a big job, making sure AHA keeps up with its members' needs in the evolving world of support for those "aging in place."

An Alexandrian for decades, Kelly became familiar with the village movement of volunteers helping people age in place. She saw a flier for AHA (that's music to our ears) and came on board more than a year ago. She moved quickly into the work of the newly formed Membership Services Subcommittee.

In one of those concentric circles of life, her son **Cole** mowed the lawn of a member, the same lawn once mowed by Executive Director **Cele Garrett's son, also a Cole**.

Two Coles make a team.

—Bill Clayton

Come Picnic in Fort Ward

Bring Friends to AHA's picnic Saturday, Sept. 19, from 3 to 7 p.m. in Fort Ward Park. - Sign up to bring side dishes such as salads, dessert, munchies. Please RSVP to the office at 703-231-0824 and tell AHA what you propose to bring.



Two Most Pleasant Events

In photo at left, Rick Raunswinder of Au Domaine wineshop pours samples at a tasting and sale June 24 that brought AHA \$275.

Also in June, the Balcony Tour at Alexandria House brought in \$250 to AHA from admission fees for the eight balconies on display. AHA plans to do both things again in the future.



A Visit to Wegmans

Ever the explorers: Brenda Bloch-Young, Linda Langley, Barbara Rosenfeld and a friend of Barbara's toured the newly opened Wegmans grocery in Newington. They liked it so much they forgot to take a picture. Café menu at left.



Lillian Patterson speaks to AHA group

AHA Group Tours Black History Museum

The July museum visit was to the Black History Museum on Wythe Street. The group had a prominent Alexandrian, descendant from slaves, as the guide: Lillian Patterson, a Living Legend of Alexandria long involved in too many efforts to list here. The small museum is crowded with photos and dioramas of blacks' history in the area, from the beginnings of the slave trade through the Civil War, desegregation, and to today.

Ups and Downs

The **TGIF and Ladies' Night Out** events consistently attract a good crowd, sometimes up to nine or 10 people at the cozy "Fin and Hoof Bar" of the Sheraton Suites Hotel. (See Fitzgerald item in the Page 4 What's Up column.)

The **Dine Arouds** are steadily attracting a few more participants. At the Pita House table for 11 on a recent Monday evening, guests included mother and daughter Monty Kust and Kathleen Kust, who expressed an interest in knowing more about AHA.

The **Walking Club** struggles to attract stalwarts to the riverside walk. Walkers gather at the T.C. Williams boathouse at the foot of Madison Street every Tuesday morning at 8:30 a.m. during the summer. Please join in; you can walk at your own pace and the scene along the landscaped path is beautiful, with a breeze off the Potomac.

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Training for Volunteers

The next volunteer training and orientation will be held Thursday, Sept. 10, open to all AHA members and volunteers. An Emergency Medical Technician from the Alexandria Fire Department will tell what to do in emergencies, how to prepare for a medical emergency, and what happens when EMTs come. Details to follow.

Phone Tag

In a switch of business telephone companies, AHA has **RETAINED** its number for incoming calls—703-231-0824—and those calls will be automatically forwarded to the new line. However, calls **FROM** AHA will have the caller ID 571-982-4985, the new service's line.

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