



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2015 VOL. 6 NO. 9



Gala Co-Chair
Linda Langley

“La Dolce Vita” Gala to Feature *Vinos Eccellentes*

Donors have filled two cases of good wines and have contributed one collector's bottle for the new and exciting feature of this year's AHA Gala and Auction: three separate raffles for wines, Gala Co-Chair Linda Langley reported.

The idea for a wine raffle came from Advisory Council member Temple Moore. Pledges of wines poured in (in a manner of speaking) and reached two cases plus one. The “plus one” is a prized 1952 **Château Haut Brion** grand cru worth hundreds of dollars, donated by Doug Fleming. That single bottle will be raffled off separately.

Other names on the wine list include **Roederer, Concha y Toro, Marqués de Riscal** and **Château Ziltner Cru St. Denis**. The gala will be Sunday, Nov. 7, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Laporta's Restaurant on Duke Street. Individual ticket price will be \$125 and special members/associates price \$75, same as last year.

Sponsorship opportunities are:

- Tuscany Level \$1,500 (\$1,000 tax-deductible) four tickets plus
- Veneto Level \$1,000 (\$500 tax-deductible) four tickets plus
- Amalfi Level \$500 (\$250 tax-deductible) two tickets plus
- Umbria Level \$350 two tickets plus

Check the AHA office at 703-231-0824 for the “pluses,” which include mention in the program and ads of various sizes. Langley and Gala Co-Chair Ginny Parry made this appeal:

Everyone: Ask your favorite restaurant, spa, hotel, beauty shop, auto service to donate gift certificates to the auction. Ask businesses to become sponsors. Donor forms have been emailed to you, but ask AHA for more.

Will It Be a Pic-Luck or Pot-Nic? Whatever, the Festive Hybrid Event Comes up Sept. 19

The September Potluck of At Home in Alexandria will be a picnic in Fort Ward Park (on West Braddock Road) Sept. 19, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Come one, come all. Bring friends or acquaintances as guests to share the pleasure of being an AHA member or volunteer.

But most important—let us know. Sign up through the AHA office (703-231-0824) by Sept. 16. The head count is really important for this one, so we can provide enough goodies.

AHA will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and refreshing beverages such as beer, wine, sodas, iced tea and water.

When you phone to sign up, let the office know what you will bring. Your guests are not expected to bring any food contribution.

The potlucks have become some of the best-attended events of At Home in Alexandria. Under the guidance of Pam and Steve Nelson, they have consistently attracted 20 to 30 people.

Directions to the park: take West Braddock Road, heading away from downtown and past the Bradlee shopping center and Minnie Howard School, to 4301 West Braddock Road. Drive into the entrance on your right and follow the slow drive around until you spot the big picnic shelter on your right, 100 feet from the roadway. There is ample parking along the road. If the weather forecast is CERTAIN for rain we will cancel, but if rain is light and intermittent, the shelter will keep us dry for the festivity.





R.I.P.: Balbir “Barry” Kochhar 1938-2015

Those who knew Barry Kochhar, an AHA member who died Aug. 21 at the age of 76, usually say one thing immediately: “He was a sweet guy.”

Kochhar had a rough time of it for several months before he died of heart trouble and cancer. He had been treated with chemotherapy and at the end was thin and without energy.

This clinical detail is mentioned here because Kochhar never whined or complained. Oh, he had strong ideas about some things, but he did not express resentful thoughts. His given name, Balbir, means “a strong man.”

Here’s one example of Barry Kochhar: Bill Clayton was visiting him at Woodbine Rehabilitation Center, two days before his death. He did not have enough strength to sit up in bed. But after a brief conversation, he told Clayton, “Bill, go home before the rush hour”—on his death bed he worried about a friend’s getting caught in rush-hour traffic.

Kochhar was taken by ambulance from Woodbine to INOVA Alexandria Hospital, where he died without regaining consciousness. He had relatives in the United States and India but was particularly close to his younger sister in India.

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett, who was perhaps closest to Kochhar in the AHA village, said, “I think we can all agree that Barry was a lovely person. He was also quite interesting and well-traveled. On several occasions, he shared with me some tips on Indian cooking.”

Kochhar was born and raised in New Delhi. His father served in the diplomatic corps. For a time, Barry Kochhar was an adjunct professor at George Mason University.

In a message to AHA, Garrett said, “I can say most assuredly that he was so very grateful for everything that each of you did to assist him. Each time we sent a volunteer to his home, he would call the AHA office the following day to tell us how much he appreciated what we did for him. And, he really enjoyed the social interactions he had with each of you on those occasions. Thank you for all you did to make Barry’s life easier these last six months.”

Kochhar was active in the Catholic San Martin de Porres Senior Center, where Director Kathryn Toohey said, “He was well known—and well liked—in the Center.”

Volunteer Training This Month

Mark your calendars and save the date, Thursday, Sept. 10, for an informative and interesting session: the next volunteer training and orientation.

The session, which is open to all AHA members and of course volunteers, will feature remarks from an Emergency Medical Technician from the Alexandria Fire Department, Shawn Gore.

Space is limited, so sign up through the AHA office by Sept. 8.

The training will be at Portner’s Landing, 1-3 p.m. Sept. 10. Board Chair Barbara Rosenfeld will talk about what will be going on in the fall (picnic, gala, recruitment drive). Cele Garrett will discuss AHA operations.

Gore will talk about what EMTs do in the Fire Department: how they handle emergencies, when to call and when not to call 911, what to do if you are with someone with an emergency and what we can expect when EMTs come. His remarks will cover ways to prepare for emergencies and he will take questions.

An AHA volunteer is donating wallet cards that describe signs of stroke. We will also have health information cards that you can fill out and keep in your wallet.

After the presentation and Q&A, we will have an opportunity for new volunteers to direct questions to the office staff and AHA people working on membership services.



**Volunteer Chair
Penny Roberts**

Walkers Add Tai Chi

The AHA Walking Club (too formal a name for an informal gathering Tuesday mornings) tried out the idea of a tai chi session during the walk. In **photo at right**: Mary Nefedov, tai chi leader May Adams and Shelly Schwab.

The first try, Aug. 18, was to check out best spots for the exercise and try to have accompanying music via laptop. Adams led the ladies and Bill Clayton in a preliminary session *a cappella*.



SSA's Groceries to Go



The Groceries to Go Program, a service of Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), enables Alexandria residents 60 and over to order and receive groceries every two weeks if they cannot get to the store themselves. In a partnership between SSA and Giant and its Peapod online shopping service, SSA volunteers take orders from recipients every other week on the Tuesday before groceries are delivered on Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon. Participants are not required to order a minimum amount, but must have a debit or credit card to pay for the groceries. The delivery, however, is free. SSA's volunteers, who are screened, will unpack the groceries and loosen lids if that assistance is needed.

To contact Senior Services about this program, call Sarah Drexler at 703-836-4414, ext. 120, or enroll online at groceries@seniorservicesalex.org.

Health Happenings

A Harvard Medical School report says an analysis based on nearly 70,000 individuals found “absolutely no connection” between omega-3 supplements and heart health.”

Natural omega-3 “good fats found in nuts and fish,” on the other hand, were beneficial.

Harvard's *Health Letter* reported that “one of the simplest, cheapest, safest ways to prevent a clot-induced heart attack or stroke is low-dose aspirin.”

Have your blood pressure taken in both arms. A substantial difference in the pressure could be a sign of cardiovascular problems.



Sleeplessness and blood pressure?

The *Mayo Clinic Health Letter* reports on recent research that “suggests that sleeping five hours or less a night can over time increase your risk of developing—or worsening—high blood pressure.” Sleep duration between five and six hours also may increase the risk.

“This can occur with or without obstructive sleep apnea,” the *Health Letter* said. Apnea is a disorder in which a person repeatedly stops and starts breathing during sleep.

Sleep-deprived people often did not get the “usual blood pressure dip” that occurs at night.

Researchers don't fully understand, the *Health Letter* said, but it is thought “that sleep helps regulate stress hormones and helps your nervous system to remain healthy.”

When the body's ability to regulate the stress hormones lessens, higher blood pressure can occur.

Fountain of Youth?

Not yet, but maybe someday.

The *Mayo Clinic Health Letter* says healthy cells in the body divide to create new cells and then, at some point, they die and are disposed of. “But not every cell follows this path,” the report said. “Cells can be damaged, causing them to become zombie-like senescent cells that neither die nor divide, but float around releasing damaging secretions.” Increasing numbers of these cells “appear to be involved in the development and progression of numerous chronic diseases, including heart and lung disease, dementias, diabetes and cancers,” the report said.

A drug and a compound found in plant foods may someday deal with the cells' effects on humans, but much more research is needed.

Clayton Celebrates 80th at TGIF

A large group of AHA members turned out to mark Bill Clayton's 80th birthday at the TGIF Aug. 21. Clayton had foolishly said he would buy a round of drinks. (After all, the TGIF gatherings usually draw eight or so people.) In secret, AHA leaders (chief conspirator: Cele Garrett) spread the word far and wide, and 26 people showed up. The planners set out platters of hors d'oeuvres and cookies in addition to cupcakes with trick candles. They let Clayton off the hook for most of the tab.



As Bill Clayton repeatedly tries to blow out the trick candles on his birthday cupcakes, co-conspirators chuckle at his discomfiture: from left, Penny Roberts, Pam Nelson (the provider of the cupcakes and candles), Nancy Berg and Teddye Clayton.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

What a coincidence! Two AHA couples are celebrating their 54th wedding anniversaries on the same date—Sept. 16. **Teddy and Bill Clayton** will be taking a trip to Cuernavaca, Mexico, a place Bill describes as “paradise.” And, he laughs, where they “will drink and joke.” **Shelly and Dick Schwab** will also celebrate that day, with a much shorter trip: to see “The Fix” at Signature Theatre. It’s a big day for **Penny Roberts**, too, who has scheduled a knee replacement on the 16th. After canceling travel because of knee pain, Penny is looking forward to being in shape for future trips.

Sept. 16 is Mexico’s Independence Day and Clayton, who lived in Mexico through World War II, says, “The Mexicans won theirs and I lost mine.”

Monica Estabrooke, AHA office co-manager and volunteer, serves on the board of United Way Worldwide Retirees Association. She returned recently from green Valley Ranch in Las Vegas, where she conducted a seminar on Planned Giving and Endowment Development for 150 local United Ways from 18 western states. She has had 13 years’ experience in the field and mentors staff and Board in development, planning and implementation.



**Monica Estabrooke
in Las Vegas**

An AHA Swarm descended to spiffy up the gardens of an AHA Member recently. **Monica Estabrooke, Pete Crouch, Cele and Cole Garrett, Stan Maciak and Bill Clayton** cut grass, cleared vine tangles from fence lines and trees and freed rosebushes from encroaching vines and grass.

The group bundled woody brush and bagged the soft stuff and marked it “Yard Waste Only.” A phone call to the City arranged a pickup for the yard waste.

Temperatures hovered around 90 degrees the day the group picked to swarm, requiring copious amounts of cool water.



**Cole Garrett
clears vines from
around several
rosebushes.**

Volunteer Corner

Maggie Stauffer was born a coal miner's daughter. Not in the Appalachian Mountains but in the industrial and coal fields of Northeast Pennsylvania. After high school, she eventually earned a master’s degree in career counseling and later became assistant director of Georgetown University Law Center.

Retirement became the commencement of other pursuits: teacher of English as a Second Language, and Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in the legal system. She and her husband, Barry, tour on bicycles here and in Europe and traveled around the world on a cruise ship in the Semester At Sea program. The younger travelers tagged them “The Life-Long Learners.”

Maggie first crossed paths with At Home in Alexandria at the Scottish Christmas Walk in 2010. Seeing Chriss Nielsen and a handful of fellow marchers in the parade led to a conversation that explained what AHA was about. Maggie, ever the seeker of new horizons, went to an AHA organizing meeting as a curious observer and left as co-chair, with Chriss, of the Membership Committee. The next April, AHA began operations. In that nascent AHA organization, if one was on board at all, one might do anything, and Maggie did anything. As she says, “There weren't a lot of people then and there were a lot of things to do.” Printing forms, mailings, follow-up phone calls, home visits. She recently completed her 85th home visit with new members.

As AHA approaches its fifth year of operations, Maggie is as active as ever, still has creative ideas, and as Scottish Walk organizer, is proud that the last Walk had over 40 marchers from AHA.

—Steve Nelson

Volunteer Coffee. Volunteers and AHA stalwarts met at Emma’s in Del Ray for coffee, crullers and chat. Thirteen attended and it was a good time for veterans and newcomers among the volunteers to kick around ideas with AHA officers and board members. About half of those attending were volunteers only; others were members and committee members as well as volunteers.

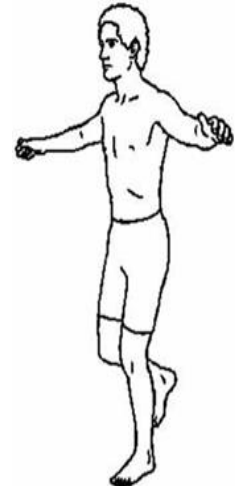


In foreground at left, AHA Director Cele Garrett speaks with Mercedes Kremenetzky (back to camera) who is in charge of museum visits. Barely in the picture at right is Steve Nelson, who with his wife, Pam, plans potlucks.

Balance Exercises

As we age, preserving good balance becomes more and more important to prevent falls. Here are some exercises:

- First, work on good posture, sitting and standing. Straighten your back and pull in your stomach. Good posture distributes weight evenly and improves balance.
- Standing with feet hip-width apart, slowly bend one knee so your foot lifts up behind you. Alternate feet. Repeat a few times. VARIATIONS: Raise each foot in turn straight out; lower foot to floor; alternate. Extend foot behind you; alternate.
- Stand and shift weight by sliding the hip and shoulder over one leg. Slowly lift the other leg to the side, hold for one second, lower leg and repeat with other leg.
- (What AHA's Walking Club calls the "PerpWalk," similar to a sobriety test) Start from standing position, move one foot directly ahead of the other and then alternate, walking slowly as though "walking the line." If in restricted space, just bring one foot directly ahead of the other, hold for a few seconds, then move that foot back to the starting position and alternate with the other foot.



Chuckles and Chortles

Some questions and teen-age students' answers on a GED examination:

- Name the four seasons. A—Salt, pepper, mustard, vinegar.
- Name a terminal illness. A—When you get sick at the airport.
- Define "Caesarean section." A—A district in Rome.
- What is the fibula? A—A small lie.
- What does "varicose" mean? A—Nearby.
- Steroids are what? A—Things that keep the carpet on the stair.
- When a boy reaches puberty? A—He says goodbye to boyhood and hello to adultery.

Author Schwab to Discuss Her Novel-With-A-Twist

In the next ConversationWith program, Sunday, Sept. 27, AHA member and author Shelly Schwab will discuss her book *Departure from the Script*, a lighthearted look at a mother's helping a daughter plan a same-sex wedding but falling in love with another woman herself. The program will be in Schwab's home, with limited seating; RSVP to the office by Sept. 24.

Treasurer: Net A\$\$ets Encouraging

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reported that through July, AHA maintained net assets (cash) of about 8.8 months of reserve. That means "AHA continues to maintain a positive financial position," Nielsen said. "The cumulative annual cash flow through July of 2015 ... is well above the budgeted cash flow (for that period)," she reported.

Board of Directors

Barbara Rosenfeld, Chair	Helen Desfosses
Jane King, Vice Chair	Alan Dinsmore
Chriss Nielsen, Treasurer	Linda Langley
Linus Liddle, Secretary	Steve Nelson
Bill Clayton, Editor	Penny Roberts
Charles Ablard	Mary Jayne Swanson
Brenda Bloch-Young	

Executive Director

Cecile (Cele) Garrett

Advisory Council

Carolyn Abshire	Laurie Blackburn
Carol Downs	Stewart Dunn
MaryAnn Griffin	Richard Hobson
Judith Jones, MD	Louise Kenny
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

CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria
3139 Mount Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-231-0824

AHA@athomeinalexandria.org
Web www.athomeinalexandria.org