



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER December 2015 VOL. 6 NO. 12

AHA Puts On a Night of La Dolce Vita, With Fine Food, Drink, Conviviality



Mayor-elect Allison Silberberg, Amber Nightingale Sultane and Amber's nephew, Ronan Bhattacharya—Heather Reitze Photo

“Hooray,” AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld exulted to the Board of Directors. “Another successful benefit.” Executive Director Cele Garrett echoed her thoughts: “The benefit was a success on many levels,” she said, reporting 146 attendees and net revenues of over \$22,000.

The lively party in Laporta’s restaurant Nov. 8 filled the space with “the buzz, the ambience (and) the fact that people seemed to be having a wonderful time,” Rosenfeld said.

Part of that buzz was that two people signed on as members as a result of the gala event. That brought AHA membership to 147 and made very attainable the 2015 goal of 150 members.

AHA presented the 2015 Community Spirit Award to Amber Nightingale Sultane for her work as a volunteer and as associate director for community outreach for AARP Virginia, in which job, among other efforts, she trains AARP members as community volunteers. She also helps several charities.

AHA’s wine raffle was a big success its first time out, thanks to the efforts of Pam and Steve Nelson and donors of two cases worth of wine. The raffle of several groups of wines drew well over \$1,200 in ticket sales. Two young volunteers had worked the crowd, selling raffle tickets. A rare single bottle fetched \$240 at the separate auction...

After the event, Gala Chair Linda Langley praised the teamwork of many people, starting with her co-chair, Ginny Parry, and including Office Co-Managers Diane Atchinson and Monica Estabrooke for check-in and the difficult listing and management of 56 auction items; Maggie Stauffer and Leonardo Contardo for decorations; Penny Roberts and her crew for the check-out; and Pete Crouch, outstanding volunteer who was honorary chair and announced the raffle winners.

Full disclosure: One wine raffle number Crouch called was Langley’s.

Langley said about the event’s success, “Couldn’t have done it without all the volunteers who threw themselves into getting things done.” One of those volunteers was Ann Stat, who recruited her husband, Bill, to persuade the Christoph Ludet combo, of which Bill is the drummer, to play for the event.

SEE PAGE 2 FOR MANY ADDITIONAL PHOTOS OF THE GALA/BENEFIT/AUCTION

Kudos to AHA Gala Co-Chairs

Ginny Parry (L), shown amid Gala decorations, filled the role for the first time and worked with tenacity and precision to help plan and put on the affair. Co-Chair Linda Langley worked hard to make the Gala a success, knowing that a short time later she was scheduled for a knee replacement. The photo at right shows Langley in a surprise visit to the Nov. 17 Board meeting, four days after surgery. (More on page 4.)



REMEMBER THE CHRISTMAS WALK

Saturday, Dec. 5, Arrive 10:45 a.m. Wilkes and S. Pitt. Wear dark jacket and pants OR the red AHA fleece jacket. We will supply white AHA hats and red scarves. BEFORE the parade, stop by the Liddles’ for refreshments, 526 S. Pitt.

RSVP: Maggie Stauffer 703-549-8680 or Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net

Photos from the Gala—By Heather Reitze



AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Former State Senator Patsy Ticer, and AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett



Waiter brings munchies to auction shoppers



Christoph Ludet Trio sets toes tappin’



Ernie Lehmann pays an emotional tribute to Dick Moose, AHA Co-Founder, who died this year.



Penny Roberts and Mercedes Kremenetzky at check-out



Office Co-Managers Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson prepare programs, name tags



Emcee Julie Carey interviews Member Pat Clopper and Treasurer Chriss Nielsen



Cedar Dvorin explains changes in Medicare

Speaker Unravels the Medicare Tangles

Cedar Dvorin, interim coordinator of the program called Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), explained the changes in the Medicare program for an AHA audience Nov. 11.

Dvorin answered numerous questions from the audience of 18, but also provided many materials on the subject, helped by AHA volunteer Susan Pettey and volunteer Marcelle Habibion.

Brochures were available from VICAP, the Virginia Senior Medicare Patrol, the city's Division of Aging and Adult Services, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and others.

One major source of information is the Medicare website, www.Medicare.gov, where

beneficiaries can find answers to their questions about changes in their coverage; information is also available by phone at 1-800-633-4227.

Dvorin said that the website allows you to compare the providers who accept Medicare and provides information on drug costs. Some drugs are added and some are deleted from the yearly drug formularies, the listings of drugs that are included in various plans. There is so much bookkeeping, she said, that individuals should check closely the monthly report of their drug costs and coverages, to be sure the list of costs "does not have things you did not get."

The Senior Medicare Patrol (1-800-938-8885) brochure invited everyone to "join the fight against healthcare fraud by phoning the SMP to report fraud. Common frauds against Medicare and healthcare in general are these:

- A caller offers free services or supplies that you have to verify with your Medicare number;
- You find your pharmacy fills your prescriptions a few pills short but bills Medicare for the full amount;
- Someone calls you to verify eligibility for Medicare and asks for your Medicare number;
- A doctor's office bills Medicare for a service or product you did not receive.



(Temporary) New Venue for Potluck

AHA tried out a new venue Nov. 14 for one of its most popular gatherings, the potluck reception, and it was a success. The chat-and-munch was held in Portner's Landing, usually the site for AHA Board of Directors meetings, and it attracted 13 people.

Planners Pam and Steve Nelson managed the event at Portner's, an alternate venue to the Drake Room of Alexandria House.

The photo above shows most of the crowd, with their attention temporarily away from the food table.

Villages Get High Grades in National Survey

AHA's demographic profile is "very similar to most of the villages" that took part in a national survey done by University of California/Berkeley, Board Member Brenda Bloch-Young reported. She managed AHA's participation.

Most of the responses nationwide indicated that villages improved the quality of life, gave a sense of belonging and made members feel more connected. Nearly all the AHA respondents were satisfied with their membership in AHA.

December Dates of Note

Dec. 5 – Scottish Walk parade pre-walk gathering at Liddles'. See Page 1.

Dec. 10 – Nielsen-Crowley party.

Dec. 14 – A La Lucia holiday dinner.

RSVP to the AHA office--and let the AHA office know if you are interested in a Christmas Day gathering.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Daiva Balkus, a new AHA member and a ceramist, helped plan the annual December Art League ceramics sale Dec. 4-6 at the ceramics studio at 305 Madison Street. Dozens of ceramics students at the Art League participate in the event. Hours are: Friday Dec. 4, Noon - 9 p.m.; Saturday Dec. 5, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m.; Sunday Dec. 6, noon - 5 p.m. Annually, the artists display their sculptures and vessels of all sorts.

Leonardo Contardo is the Iron Man of AHA. Spry and active in his 90s, he continues to be involved in many AHA endeavors, but recently he was struck by a car that was driven carelessly into a turn. He was getting over that when he fell, aggravating his shoulder injury. He was understandably sore, but soldiered on by helping with the décor of the Gala.

Members at the Nov. 17 Board meeting burst into cheers upon the entrance of **Gala Chair Linda Langley**, recovering from a knee replacement and temporarily using a walker. She said a "tag team" of daughters helped her recover.

Jane Coughran is having physical therapy for her shoulder and was feeling woozy enough to miss the November Dine Around.

Teddy and Bill Clayton had a series of unexpected "guests" when police and detectives investigating a murder in the park adjoining their rear fence stopped by to see if they had seen or heard anything out of the ordinary. The Claytons had not.

Nancy Kincaid was recognized among other finalists for the annual award, "Volunteers Are The Heart of Alexandria," sponsored by Volunteer Alexandria.

Carol Downs, chair of the Commission on Aging and a member of AHA's Advisory Council, took an archaeological tour of Jordan and Israel. She waded in the Sea of Galilee, floated in the Dead Sea, saw modern Amman and ancient Petra and Jericho.

May Adams had an adventurous visit to Cuba. She visited Hemingway's house, sat in front of a big billboard marking the chilly meeting 50 years ago of Hemingway and Fidel Castro, and witnessed a dance school (see below) and choir performances.



Volunteer Corner

Maggie Stauffer, the AHA gala's decorations maven, has decided to step down from the Membership Committee. The Board adopted a resolution Nov. 17 praising her for her involvement with member recruitment, planning AHA's contingent for the annual Scottish Walk and generally being a cheerleader for AHA's efforts. Most dramatically, Maggie oversaw decorations, with substantial help from **Leonardo Contardo**, for the annual Gala and Auction. Maggie has given "five years of outstanding service on the Membership Committee," **Chair Barbara Rosenfeld** said,

Carol Downs, former AHA chair, was honored with the AARP's Gordon Morton Award for Volunteer Service. "Through her dedicated work in the community, Carol Downs has improved the quality of life for many older residents in the City of Alexandria and beyond," said AARP Virginia Community Outreach Director **Amber Nightingale Sultane**. "She was born with the social worker gene implanted in her soul—and a sense of humor that adds some lighter moments to even the toughest situation."

Nancy Kincaid, a standout AHA volunteer and chair of the Program Committee, went off on another cruise with her husband, **Doug Fleming**. Fleming, you recall, is famous for donating a VERY valuable bottle of wine to the Gala's auction. Anyway, the two, who are experts at the ocean cruise, took this one to the Caribbean with a stop in Martinique, where they once owned a home.

Ed Pingley is one of those go-getter volunteers who wants to help, but under the radar. He asked not to have the Newsletter make a fuss over his volunteering, so we cut it down to the essentials: One week recently, there were 14 requests for volunteers to drive members to medical or physical therapy appointments. Pingley looked over the first four errands and said, in effect, "I'll take 'em." And he did.

Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts reviewed the informal roster of volunteers at the Gala. Some were members and volunteers, some were officers and volunteers, some were . . . well, you get the picture: Hard to keep a full list. But Penny estimated that **two dozen volunteers** helped that night, setting up, decorating, greeting, schmoozing, re-arranging furniture, handling sales and payments and the whole to-do involved with an evening's festivity.

American Political System “Not Working” —Desfosses

Twenty-eight people gathered in Virginia Martin's apartment in Porto Vecchio in a "Conversation With" on Nov. 22 to hear Helen Desfosses discuss the presidential campaign.

In a spirited talk and question period, Desfosses said Americans are anxious and nostalgic about a political system that is “not working any more.” They are suspicious of people who have been in government and trust neither the media nor other traditional authorities, she said.

She described the demise of the old political party system and said we are “pushing the boundaries of the American political system” in this campaign. The importance of money and the way it is raised changed the way campaigns are run, she said, and enabled candidates to stay in the race far longer than they would have in prior elections.

Desfosses predicted that despite their current leads, neither Donald Trump nor Ben Carson would end up as the eventual Republican candidate, and that it is likely to be either Marco Rubio or Ted Cruz who faces Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Desfosses, a member of AHA's Board of Directors, is a retired professor of public administration and policy who served for eight years as the elected City Council president in Albany, N.Y. She currently teaches courses on politics and policy at OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) and will be teaching a four-lecture course there on the 2016 Presidential Elections in January and February.

Kids Interviewing Grandparents

StoryCorps, carried on NPR, is touting an effort to get kids to interview grandparents. They can keep the interviews or upload them to the digital repository in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

StoryCorps is a way share and preserve stories for future generations. Recording a story is easy—just download an Apple or Android app at StoryCorps.me.

Volunteers Needed for AHA Lunches

We are looking for folks who like to join our lunches to help with arranging them: finding restaurants and contacting them, then coordinating with those who want to attend.

It is an easy effort—you can do it each month or occasionally.

Interested? Contact the AHA office.

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
Mitch Opalski	George Pera
Patsy Ticer	Vicki Vasques
Marian Van Landingham	

Office Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

Tidbits From the Board Meeting

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reported that through October, AHA built a cash reserve to cover more than 9 months, which Chair Barbara Rosenfeld said raises the prospect of expanding services or creating a fund for some subsidized memberships.

“We are on a good curve, financially,” Nielsen said.

Rosenfeld urged all board members and volunteers to work at member recruitment.

“Think of who you know who might join as an associate member and make it your business to encourage them personally to join,” she said.

CONTACT US

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

AHA@athomeinalexandria.org
Web www.athomeinalexandria.org