



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

AHA!
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After the Snows of Winter, A Busy Spring for At Home in Alexandria Judith Viorst To Speak at Anniversary



Judith Viorst

As the snows of winter yield to spring, AHA has a busy 2016 schedule of events and projects:

- **Spring2ACTion**, citywide online fundraising effort, April 20, at which AHA competes for attention with dozens of other nonprofits.
- **Fifth Anniversary celebration 2 p.m.-4 p.m.**, May 17, at which Judith Viorst (photo at left) will speak, at Beth El Hebrew Congregation on Seminary Road.
- **AHA's annual Benefit and Auction** Nov. 13, details still to be set.

Poet-author-journalist Viorst is an entertaining speaker, as witness her quote in an online biography: "Strength is the capacity to break a chocolate bar into four pieces with your bare hands—and then eat just one of the pieces." She was the featured speaker at AHA's first anniversary celebration.

Linda Langley and Ginny Parry will once again co-chair the planning and details for the annual benefit. The Nov. 13 date walks a tightrope between the Nov. 8 election and Thanksgiving on November 24.

The Board of Directors recently launched a new effort for AHA—expanding the list of affinity groups. These are to be informal events managed by those who suggest them. The two first new groups will be on Alexandria history (organizer Brenda Bloch-Young) and gardening (organizers Jane King and Carol Downs). Existing groups are theater, bridge and walking. Villagers interested in forming a group should contact AHA.

The Board approved spending \$2,500 for a professional redesign of AHA's logo and is studying a proposal for an overhaul of the Website. A consensus agreed the logo should be colorful and more emblematic of what AHA does. One budget decision was a modest pay increase for the executive director and office co-managers, whose new title is "Operations Co-Managers."

AHA welcomed Ruth Morduch as new coordinator of programs. She will be the "umbrella" over AHA events such as lunches, dining-arounds, outings, tours and such. **(Read more about Board decisions on Page 3.)**

Frost Discusses "Congress In Crisis" at AHA Conversation With . . .



AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld hosted the Martin Frost event.

Former U.S. Rep. Martin Frost (D-Tex.) held the attention of an AHA audience of 25 with a program Feb. 21 on "The Partisan Divide—Congress In Crisis," his book co-authored with former Rep. Tom Davis (R-Va.), and Richard Cohen.

Frost, who spent 26 years in Congress and is now a law partner and teacher, said a Casey Stengel quote could be applied to Congress these days: "Can't anyone here play this game?"

Frost said of Donald Trump, "As outrageous as he is, I don't think he could ever be elected." Congress "is dysfunctional," he said. Redistricting has protected so many incumbents that there is "no incentive to compromise." Frost said one solution is reining in the "totally out of control" campaign finance system.

He once worked for the *Congressional Quarterly*. He told the AHA audience, "I saw many congressmen (and) figured out they were not so smart and decided I could do that job." Years later, he did, winning election to the House.



A view of the crowd of 25 who attended.

“Cheers” Party Brings Together AHA, Mount Vernon At Home

Virginia Martin, who has been in both villages, planned and hosted a festive “Cheers” party Feb. 17 at her home in Porto Vecchio so that members of AHA and Mount Vernon at Home could visit and exchange ideas.

Photos below show the crowd, numbering around 50, who attended and enjoyed wines, soft drinks and a wide array of food, from paté to empanadas to guacamole to a variety of cheeses.

L Liddle, AHA’s secretary, who has had various roles in both villages, attended as did about a dozen other AHA members and volunteers. AHA and MVAH workers helped Virginia Martin spread the word and get acceptances for the event. Pam Nelson brought name tags, and Ruth Morduch (AHA’s new program coordinator) helped hand them out at the door and also helped with clean-up later.

Martin said she did most of the work. She pooh-pooed the chore of getting the party together and cleaning up.

“These happy hours are SO easy to give because everybody brings their own drink and a nibble to share. I really didn’t need any help. Getting together plates, glasses, and napkins and setting up drink area beforehand and picking up and putting things away afterward were the most time-consuming parts,” she said.

The gathering was so pleasant that immediately afterward, some AHA people were discussing having more joint get-togethers in the future. The conversations were often about comparing successes and challenges for both villages—a valuable crosscurrent for both.



Happy Hour hosted by Virginia Martin for villagers in both At Home in Alexandria and Mount Vernon At Home was a big success as seen in the above photos of the large crowd.

Board of Directors: Decisions and New Directions

AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld signaled a new direction for AHA: — a more bottom-up structure, as she described it. One example is the formation of affinity groups, informal gatherings reflecting the interests of AHA members. They want the services AHA offers, she said, but also want to participate in programs and discussion groups.

Executive Director Cele Garrett reported a sharp increase in member requests for services such as transportation last year—approximately 1,000, which was up 35% from the previous year.

Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts urged members to recruit volunteers. She plans regular monthly coffees for volunteers and members to exchange

The Board approved spending for professional Website improvements, with the caveat that there be, in writing, a list of AHA's requirements:

The budget projects a modest deficit, because of unusual and onetime expenses. AHA's cash reserve is a healthy 10 months of operating expenses, a "solid foundation."

Nielsen reminded volunteers who drive AHA members to meetings and events annually that their automobile insurance is current. AHA's policy, she said, is an addendum to a driver's own insurance, and the village needs to know the drivers are continuing their own coverage.

Vice Chair Jane King said the Member Services Committee will assemble a list of volunteers who are interested in giving special attention to the frailest members of AHA. Within the confidentiality AHA is pledged to preserve, there is room for volunteers to be aware of members needing special attention.



Chair Barbara Rosenfeld presides at recent board meeting.

Program Alert:

Conversation With: Sandy Mitchell will talk on "Art Museums in Washington, D.C.: the National Gallery and the Renwick Gallery," Sunday March 20, 3 p.m.-5 p.m., at the Porto Vecchio home of Virginia Martin. .Mitchell is a docent at the National Gallery and the Smithsonian.

Good Cooking and Good Eating: Your Input Is Important

AHA is pleased to team up with Goodwin House at Home once again to offer an entertaining and interactive series of workshops around the topic of Food and Nutrition. We've got some great ideas in the works but we'd love your input. Consider the two questions below, then send your thoughts to Alan Dinsmore at wingsofthemorning@comcast.net. Executive Director Cele Garrett and Advisory Council Member Carol Downs are planning the events, along with Dinsmore.

1. What are the challenges you have with nutrition and cooking?
2. What are topics you would like to learn more about related to nutrition and cooking?

New Name for Potlucks

Speaking of food and drink, AHA's Potluck events have a new name:

Happy Hour

The usual venue is the same—the Drake Room on the top floor of Alexandria House.

The first event under the new name will be Saturday, March 12, from 5 to 7 p.m. The idea behind the name change is to make it more of an hors d'oeuvres event than a dinner.



Teaming Up for Discounts

At Home in Alexandria has teamed up with Senior Services of Alexandria and the City of Alexandria to start a new program to connect seniors with local businesses. The Silver Service Card, when presented at participating locations, offers discounts to Alexandria seniors 60 years and older.

AHA members will receive their new card inside this newsletter mailing. For a listing of the businesses that are participating, go to the AHA website (www.athomeinalexandria.org), click the Resources tab and go to "Great Stuff!"

What's Up with AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Not something you would expect to happen to your oxygen supply. **Indie Cather** reports that, soon after **husband Ed** came home with a backpack oxygen supply for his lung problems, their Siamese cat developed a taste for the oxygen hose. The cat chewed through the hose and enjoyed a free oxygen high before the Cathers devised a strategy to make the hose less tasty.

The lengths to which people go to avoid Alexandria's snows of winter: **Dodo and Charles Ablard** fled to the California desert for the month of February. **Brenda Bloch-Young** also escaped to California, to the "glorious sunshine" of Palm Springs.

Board Member Alan Dinsmore has around 300 cars. No, not the full-sized ones; small replicas of cars going back nearly a century. He has cars of three different scales—1/43 (3-5 in. long), 1/24 (5-8 in.), and 1/18 (8-11 in.). General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, Studebaker, Hudson, and Nash of course, but also exotics such as Bugatti, Horch, Maybach, Daimler, Rolls-Royce and the last Duesenberg produced.

At right, one-60th of Dinsmore's collection of 300 small replicas. In the photo are vehicles of different scales. The white fire engine, for example, is of a different scale from the blue convertible next to it. The collection is mostly in a basement, but dozens are in special cases or on tabletops and shelves in the living room of Dinsmore's and David Butler's house.



Donna Fowler

Donna Fowler has taken on the job of co-editor of the AHA Newsletter, working with longtime editor Bill Clayton. Her role is of a piece with the AHA desire to have major jobs shared by two people. That, it is felt, makes the functions more efficient and relieves the work burden. Fowler has a substantial résumé in writing, public affairs and communications.

Volunteer Corner

Let me see ...three million five hundred twelve thousand four hundred ninety-one ... four hundred ninety-two. That's it: the total steps **Brenda Bloch-Young** recorded on her Fitbit in 2015. Her 2016 goal: 3.650,000 steps, 10,000 a day.

Brenda is the sort who lands on an assignment "with both feet," Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts says. Not long after she joined AHA she was named to the Board of Directors. She compiled AHA's data for a survey of villages. She helps AHA with events, finances and membership.

Bloch-Young was born in 1948 in Detroit, holds bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration and is a CPA. After a career in the garment industry and raising two children, she lost her husband to a heart attack and went back to college for her degrees. She had a second career in accounting and tax work, including a stint with Price Waterhouse Coopers, and she retired in 2013. Aside from AHA activities, **Bloch-Young** enjoys classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and events at Brookings and the Smithsonian. She is helping form one of AHA's initial affinity groups, on history.

Look! There, through the snow. It's...it's **Snow Buddies**, AHA's cadre of snow-removal volunteers. Through one huge snow and one medium-sized, volunteers helped members clear off their cars and walks.

One such was **Pete Crouch**, who reports: "In the big snow, I did four or five driveways or walks." The work included freeing some fragile bushes of their burden of snow.

He and snow buddy **Bill Clayton** had a similar story: In several cases, no help was needed: Clayton said one member moved in with a son and another reported that neighbors had cleared her entire block's sidewalk.

Vice Chair Jane King exults at the variety of chores volunteers do for AHA members. Before leaving for Florida, King had to arrange for her dog, Paddy, to have three different prescriptions of eye drops in each eye twice a day, allowing five minutes between each kind of drop.

Much to Jane's delight, **Laura Noble**, an occupational therapist and AHA volunteer, took on this arduous task. Laura was "amazingly quick to acquire the expertise," King reported.

Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts asks that villagers, when they talk with volunteer prospects, look particularly for those with backgrounds in the health care field.

Bylaws Made Clearer

Governance Committee co-chairs Helen Desfosses (left) and L Liddle (far right) explained a revision of the AHA bylaws, at an orientation session. The changes focused mostly on the terms of office. The Board had approved the changes without dissent. In photo at right, clockwise from Desfosses were Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Pam Nelson, Treasurer L Liddle, Board Member Bob Eiffert. Previous bylaws created some confusion about terms of office that overlapped.



Programs to Help With Memory Loss

Individuals with early-stage Alzheimer's or dementia and their caregivers can find resources, support and companionship through "Memory Cafés," once- or twice-monthly informal gatherings to celebrate birthdays, holidays, and other activities such as games, a movie or a meal.

The "cafes" can be at a library, a community room, a theater, a restaurant or other convenient place. Attendees are usually one person in the early stage of dementia along with a caregiver or spouse. There are currently three in the area: one in DC and one each in Vienna and Fairfax. For more information, visit www.alzheimersspeaks.com/memory-cafes. The Alzheimer's Association of the National Capitol Area can provide resources, at www.alz.org/nca or call 1-800-272-3900.

The Feb. 10 program by Senior Services of Alexandria also focused on memory loss. Titled "Maintaining Memory and Coping With Its Loss," it brought together caregivers and experts on the subject. More than 100 attended the program, held in the Beatley Library. The speakers reported that current drugs do not cure dementia, but can help lessen the loss of memory. They described techniques that can help loved ones who suffer from dementia..

Board of Directors

Barbara Rosenfeld, Chair	Helen Desfosses
Jane King, Vice Chair	Alan Dinsmore
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Linus Liddle, Secretary	Linda Langley
Bill Clayton, Editor	Steve Nelson
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Operations Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

Chuckles

- I have been in many places, but I've never been in Kahoots with someone.
- I have never been in Cognito; nobody recognizes you there.
- I have been in Sane, but someone had to drive me.
- I was interested in Conclusions, but you have to jump and I am not good at that.
- I have, however been often in Doubt, but I don't get in there very often, because people don't listen.
- Will you join me in Capable? I make more frequent visits there as I grow older.
- Why don't we spend some time in Suspense? I'm told it quickens the heart.

CONTACT US

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