



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER April 2016 VOL. 7 NO. 4

Ready... Set... Spring2ACTion on Wednesday, April 20!

By Executive Director Cele Garrett

Alexandria's city-wide fundraiser for nonprofits is fast approaching.

It's the time when we all band together to raise funds for our respective organizations. AHA depends on this annual event as a low-cost way to raise money for our annual operations and projects.

Simply go to our fundraising page at <https://spring2action.razoo.com/us/story/Aha> and donate any amount of your choosing between now and midnight on April 20.

Matching Gifts

At various times throughout the campaign, generous AHA donors are offering matching gifts, so whatever you contribute will be doubled. Log in to see if there's a matching gift listed.

And, it's not too late to offer your own matching gift during AHA's campaign. We'd be grateful for it and you can help us encourage other supporters who love to have their gift matched dollar for dollar.

Sip at Del Ray

Our campaign culminates with an all-day celebration that day at the Del Ray Café (205 E. Howell Ave), where AHA will set up "mission control" to monitor the Spring2ACTion leaderboards. Come in that day to make your contribution and enjoy a coffee and croissant on us! And, Del Ray Café will donate 10% of your meal to AHA. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, April 20 and call us with any questions.



In photo at left, a light moment in the 2015 effort. Left to right: Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, Executive Director Cele Garrett, Board member Linda Langley, MaryJayne Swanson, Vice Chair Jane King and supporter Terri Deerr. Several visitors dropped by during the day in 2015 to lift the spirits of the At Home In Alexandria crew. Among them were AHA stalwart Brigitte Guttstadt, AHA co-founder Ernie Lehmann (see story about Lehmann, p. 3), and John Porter, chief executive officer of ACT for Alexandria (ACT stands for Alexandria Community Trust).

Chair Challenges Board

As the Fifth Anniversary of AHA approaches, Chair Barbara Rosenfeld urged villagers to “take pride in what we have built, (a) solid and growing organization” of more than 160 members and more than 60 volunteers. “But we cannot be satisfied to stand on our laurels or stop working to make AHA better and stronger,” she said. The number of people in our age group is growing and AHA must match that trend by recruiting new members and volunteers, strengthening programs, looking at the possibility of expanding our reach, and instituting a planned giving program for long-term sustainability, Rosenfeld said.

She invited Board members to send her any ideas for improving the services, reach and community awareness of At Home in Alexandria.

AHA observes its anniversary with a special event on Tuesday, May 17, from 2 to 4 p.m., at Temple Beth El. Development Committee Chair Linda Langley said her group is looking for volunteers to bring light refreshments to the event, which will feature a talk by noted author-poet-humorist Judith Viorst.

AHA Program Examines the Washington Art Scene

By Donna Fowler

(Editor's Note: This article introduces Donna Fowler as co-editor of AHA's Newsletter)

Sandy Mitchell brought her intimate knowledge of and enthusiasm for Washington's art scene to more than a dozen AHA members Sunday, March 20, at the Porto Vecchio home of Paula Tosini. Sandy was joined by her husband, Norman Mitchell, also an active arts supporter.

Sandy chose to discuss "my favorite museums and the ones I know best" in Washington—the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM), the Renwick Gallery, and the National Gallery of Art (NGA). She was a docent at SAAM for 13 years and is now a docent at the NGA. Both Mitchells hold leadership positions with the James Renwick Alliance, a nonprofit group that supports both the Renwick Gallery and the advancement of American crafts.

SAAM's collection of American fine arts and crafts represents some 7,000 American artists and includes an extensive collection of New Deal art. SAAM occupies the old Patent Office building. Sandy highlighted one of SAAM's most popular works, the lavishly named "The Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nation's Millennium General Assembly." This assemblage of 200 pieces of wood furniture and sculpture covered in gold and silver aluminum foil was the only work produced by James Hampton, a janitor by day and artist by night, creating this work in his garage, where it was found only after his death.

The Renwick Gallery is actually a department of SAAM devoted to contemporary crafts and decorative arts. Designed by James Renwick, Jr., designer of the Smithsonian Castle and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, the distinctive building was threatened with demolition in the early 1960s. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy helped save the building, which then was designated a national landmark. The Renwick's current exhibit, "Wonder," consists of nine installations created especially for its newly renovated space. "Wonder" has drawn overwhelming public response, bringing long lines of viewers and forcing cancellation of docent tours.

In 1936, Andrew Mellon, a Pittsburgh financier, donated funds and his own art collection to create the NGA. Refusing to have the museum bear his name, he insisted that a "national" gallery would be more likely to encourage other arts patrons to donate their collections as well. NGA's collection, from the Renaissance to the present, has grown largely through substantial private donations of art and funds.



The AHA audience at art scene presentation



Speaker Sandy Mitchell and her husband, Norman

Cooking Lesson Bought at AHA Auction Leads to Elegant Dinner

Chef and cooking instructor Matt Finarelli's offer of a cooking lesson was snapped up by an eager bidder in the silent auction at AHA's 2015 annual gala. He recently made good on the promised lesson with students Tim Oliver, Ginger Haskell and Mike and Louise Kenny.

They learned, cooked and served baked brie with almonds, Chardonnay and apples, beef tenderloin with fenneled fingerling potatoes, and *haricots verts almandine*.

Dessert was chocolate soufflé.

The gala was held last November at Laporta's Restaurant on Duke Street.



Cooking class: Tim Oliver, Louise Kenny, chef Matt Finarelli, Ginger Haskell

Things We Do



We Dine Around, above at RT's Restaurant, home of alligator stew and "Death By Gumbo" and crayfish, oh my. Clockwise from left: Francine Gemmill, Marianne Ginsburg, Indie Cather, Andrew Unger, Barbara Rosenfeld, Mary Nefedov, Bill Gemmill.



The ladies have their Night Out, here at Sheraton Suites' Fin & Hoof Bar March 8. The unattended martini glass at center belongs to photographer and Honorary Lady Bill Clayton. Clockwise from left: Barbara Rosenfeld, Penny Roberts, Nancy Kincaid, Pam Nelson, MaryJayne Swanson.

Happy Hour Near-Record Attendance

AHA's monthly Happy Hour (née potluck) was a triumph for planners Pam (at right) and Steve Nelson (photo below, at left background, tending the bar).

Twenty-nine people attended, including a few prospective volunteers or members.

Pam stands next to the new banner proclaiming the "AHAppy Hour" in the Drake Room of Alexandria House.

Below is a view of the crowd at the groaning board.



Prosit, Herr Lehmann

Cheers, indeed, for Ernie Lehmann, whose family successfully applied in March for German passports, having restored German citizenship in 2013 that the Nazis cancelled for all Jews in the 1930s. The process will allow German-born Ernie Lehmann and his descendants to have dual citizenship and one day to avail themselves of these things that Ernie listed: unlimited access to 27 European countries, residence, health care, work, retirement, education in all of these nations.

"On a practical level," he said, "my three granddaughters, who are all bilingual, Spanish and English, could attend a university in Spain for only hundreds of dollars, not thousands." That could shield them, he said, from the "insane" cost of U.S. higher education.



Ernie Lehmann

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen talks about having a “two-headed cat.” Well, we could not gainsay that claim, as witness the creature(s) snuggled into a bed in **Nielsen’s and Tom Crowley’s** Old Town home.



Zeke and Lulu at home in Old Town

How could you head for vacation in paradise and find it not so? **Ken Hill** found out, on a sailing vacation with friends to Guadeloupe, an island group in the southern Caribbean. Ken pronounced it a bummer: “Rained a whole lot and hotter’n (blazes),” he said. There were 30-knot winds and 15-foot seas.... NOT my kind of sail.”

Also among unusual travels: **Nancy Macklin** was off to West Palm Beach, FL. That is not rare, but the purpose was extraordinary: She went for a meeting of her Alexandria book club. A few members of the Alexandria group had acquired property in Florida and decided it would be a good occasional venue for the book club.

When **Bill and Teddye Clayton** were flying back to Washington after a visit to Arkansas, the plane approached a landing in gusty winds, got ve-e-r-y close to the ground and then accelerated with a roar and aborted the landing. The pilot came on: “This is the captain. Ah, a little wind shear there, so we are going back for another try.” The second try was a successful landing.

Murney Keleher spent some time on an archaeology-themed trip to Sri Lanka and pronounced it “fantastic,” particularly the places of worship carved out of stone promontories.

Shirley Cherkasky invites all to visit Hooray for Books (1555 King Street) on April 7, between 6 and 8 p.m., to meet her daughter, food professional Lisa Cherkasky, as she presents her new cookbook, *You're the Chef*. Suitable for a new cook or anyone needing a little help in the kitchen, the book has 36 recipes, useful tips and photos.

Volunteer Corner



Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts (center at rear in picture above) hosted the first of a series of regular informal gatherings of volunteers and members. The first was at the Del Ray Café, which also will be AHA’s command post for the donation day called Spring2ACTion on April 20. The gatherings are a good informal way for AHA leaders, other members and volunteers to visit and exchange ideas. The May 28 event was at Teatism.

New volunteer Lee Coughlin brings skills that will be a valuable asset to AHA. Lee was a visiting nurse for Inova Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) for 21 years, and she plans to join AHA’s effort to provide greater assistance to frail elderly members. One thing Lee liked best about her VNA experience, she says, was “being able to spend time with patients and get to know them.” Her work involved “anyone who needed skilled nursing at home,” but most of her patients were elderly.

Lee also worked as a public health nurse in Alexandria in the mid-1970s. She volunteers at a homeless shelter medical clinic staffed entirely by volunteers and enjoys tennis and biking in her free time. **Lee and husband Tom**, parents of four daughters, moved to Alexandria House in June, 2015. She says, “We love being near the river and Old Town.”

Welcome back, Susanne Adams—from an extended stay in Switzerland for surgery. She is recovering in her home in Alexandria.



At left, AHA walkers on a chilly March 22 resumption of their weekly outing: Mary Nefedov, Shelly Schwab, Ona Ziegler and Barbara Rosenfeld.

Affinity Groups Taking Off

AHA's newest initiative has grown apace. Affinity groups started as informal gatherings of AHA folks wanting to explore their interests. The groups for history and gardening were the newest additions. Previous affinity groups were bridge players and theater-goers. Another in the early planning: a bicycle group.

Stay tuned. Tell AHA of any interest of yours that may be an idea for an AHA affinity group.

Vice Chair Jane King says of the gardening group, "It's a perfect time for us gardening enthusiasts to get together and share our success stories and our failures. Diseases, insects or animals can destroy our most valiant efforts. So let's get together. We can talk about the best plants and shrubs for our yards, balconies or containers, how to plan a garden that is easy to maintain, and where we find great plants and what they cost.

"Whether you know a great deal or very little about gardening, please call or email AHA and we can schedule our first get-together." AHA is at 703-231-0824.

The history group organized by Brenda Bloch-Young had its first event, a talk by "department store historian" Michael Lisicky, who has written several books on department stores—Filene's, Gimbel's, John Wanamaker's, and now Woodward & Lothrop. He described Woodies as a Buick or an Oldsmobile (aspirational) while Garfinkel's was a Cadillac and Hecht Company was a Chevy. Alexandria had a suburban branch of Woodies that opened in November 1952 in the 600 block of North Washington. The store closed in 1968.

Coming Dates of Note

Wed., April 27, 1-3 p.m. – First of three programs arranged by Carol Downs and Alan Dinsmore, jointly with Goodwin

House/Bailey's Crossroads, on nutrition. RSVP to AHA by April 25.

Wed. April 13, 9:30 a.m.-noon at Beatley Library. Senior Services of Alexandria on improving the lives of senior citizens. Register:

SSA 703-836-1414 ext. 110 or go to www.seniorservicesalex.org

Tues., May 10, at 11 a.m.-Tour C-Span, 400 N.Capitol, D.C.

Space limited. Paid parking, Walking tour. Photo I.D. required.

Lunch afterward if you notify AHA.



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JoAn Tackett: 1926-2016

AHA member JoAn Tackett died March 15 of pulmonary failure, six months shy of her 90th birthday.

Kentucky-born and proud of her Scottish heritage, Tackett had a long career at the Pentagon, retiring as a general's assistant. She loved dogs, spoke fluent French and punctuated frequent political discussions with her wry, dry sense of humor.

She sang in the choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where a service is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, April 16. In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to the Alexandria Animal Rescue League.

Tackett did not like her name, Betty Joan. She dropped "Betty" and made it JoAn.

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