



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

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AHA Looks Back 5 Years



Left to right, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Mayor Allison Silberberg, and featured speaker Judith Viorst

With reminiscences and refreshments and Judith Viorst's tongue-in-cheek take on aging, At Home in Alexandria celebrated its fifth anniversary May 17.

An audience of around 120 attended the festive occasion at Beth El Hebrew Congregation. Led by Linda Langley, Penny Roberts and Ann Stat, teams of AHA volunteers registered guests, provided and arranged light refreshments and bouquets of flowers, greeted VIPs and gathered in the sanctuary for the program.

Ringling his hand bell and calling, "Oyez. Oyez. Oyez," Town Crier Benjamin Fiore-Walker opened proceedings by reading a scrolled proclamation marking "At Home in Alexandria Day." He led the crowd in a cheer: "AHA! AHA! AHA!"

AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld spoke with pride of AHA's history of helping Alexandria's senior citizens and of the challenges ahead with a growing aging population. She introduced Mayor Allison Silberberg, who referred to a City proclamation congratulating AHA.

AHA's five years have been characterized, the Mayor said, by "effective leadership ... wonderful volunteers ... increased independence and satisfaction of its members." She paid tribute to AHA founders Dr. Judith Jones, Ernest Lehmann and the late Richard Moose, whose widow, Maggie, attended.

Introduced by Rosenfeld, Viorst captivated the crowd with her droll insights about aging.

She has written dozens of books and poems, many of them for children and many about the vicissitudes—and blessings—of a long life and a long marriage.

Viorst said long marriage brings pleasure and aggravations. Sometimes wives find themselves moaning, "Oh, my god, I think I married my mother." People say the truth shall set you free, she said, "But first, it will really piss you off." Sharing is good but "it runs out when it comes to the spray you put in your nose." When tensions arise in marriage, "There are times when the choice may come down to homicide or laughter... It is nice to be married to someone as clueless as I am." Age is when "a good night's sleep means we only get up twice to pee."



The Town Crier

She quoted Disraeli as writing, "It destroys one's nerve to be amiable day after day to the same person." Her speech, interspersed with poetry, drew sustained applause.

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett followed with a brief look at the village movement and particularly the first five years of AHA. She said speakers at the Governor's Conference on Aging ([see story, Page 2](#)) mentioned the elderly's need for transportation, routine home repairs and social contacts. "Check. Check. Check," Garrett said: AHA's doing all those things.



Executive Director Cele Garrett and co-founders
Dr. Judith Jones and Ernie Lehmann



The 5th anniversary crowd

King, Garrett Represent AHA at Governor's Conference On Aging

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett and Vice Chair Jane King participated in the Governor's Conference on Aging on May 2, the first such meeting since 2003. The theme was "Designing Our Future," with remarks and group sessions on "expanding the ability of individuals to work and save, promoting more options for later life, and creating intergenerational communities and neighborhoods."

The Governor's office said, "Virginia's health care system, communities and public and private services can be designed to encourage people to 'age in place' safely and as independently as possible through the development of livable communities."

King, who also serves on the Alexandria Commission on Aging, was among a panel of presenters who spoke on the topic of the need to plan livable communities for all ages. She described Alexandria's Strategic Plan on Aging, which she helped to write. She also works with Just Partners, Inc., a nonprofit consultant.

AHA joined forces with a village from Locust Grove, Va., Lake of the Woods Living Independently in Community as "poster presenters" to promote awareness of the village movement.

Said Garrett, "It's apparent that there is still much work to be done to inform folks about how a village organization operates and how a village can help serve the needs of seniors in local communities across the Commonwealth. A lot of people still don't know about this idea."

The Village to Village Network counts 190 villages in operation nationwide and another 150 that are in various phases of planning or development. The conference attendance was approximately 400 – directors and staff of area agencies on aging, health care providers, social workers, volunteers, case managers: people throughout the state working to improve the quality of life for senior citizens.



In photo at left, AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett and Vice Chair Jane King, both of whom represented AHA at the conference. In right photo, Garrett explains AHA's pairing with the village at Locust Grove, Va. to display a poster telling the story of villages' "building communities of all ages."



Mayor Allison Silberberg presents the Excellence in Aging Award to AHA. Receiving it are (left right) Cele Garrett, Jane King and AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld.

AHA Receives Alexandria Excellence on Aging Award

AHA was presented with the Excellence in Aging Award for an Organization by the Alexandria Commission on Aging in ceremonies at City Hall on May 10.

The award recognizes an organization that has made outstanding contributions to elevating the quality of life of older Alexandrians. A plaque accompanying the award said AHA was honored for "making Alexandria a more livable city for all ages."

AHA standout Nancy Kincaid submitted the nomination to the Commission.



AHA Board Member Bob Eiffert (with plaque) also serves on the Commission on Aging.



Anniversary Planners

Development Committee Chair Linda Langley presides over a session to plan AHA's anniversary. Left to right: Langley, Penny Roberts, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Executive Director Cele Garrett and Pete Crouch.



AHA Tours C-SPAN

Photo by Steve Nelson

AHA members taking the C-SPAN tour on May 10 were (left to right) Mike Curry, Bob Eiffert, Alan Dinsmore, Mercedes Kremenetzky (hugging C-Span employee Zelda Wallace), Barbara Rosenfeld, Brenda Bloch-Young, Maggie Stauffer, Pam Nelson and David Butler. C-SPAN Co-CEO Susan Swain spent nearly two hours with the AHA visitors, showing off the facilities of C-SPAN, the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network. C-SPAN was created in 1979 by the cable television industry as a public service.

"Hollywood on the Potomac"

The **June 12 Conversation With** program will look at how Washington is portrayed in movies. Lecturer Michael Canning will accompany his remarks with film clips. The program is **4-6 p.m.** (NOTE: new time) **Sunday, June 12, in the Community Room of Portner House, 621 N. St. Asaph.**

Nutritionist: Cooking for One or Two

Amanda Barnes, a nutritionist with Giant Foods, gave a long list of tips for cooking for one or two people. Her talk was the second of three programs on nutrition, planned by AHA's Carol Downs and Alan Dinsmore and co-sponsored by AHA and Goodwin House At Home.

The third will be June 22, also at Goodwin House at Bailey's Crossroads. Chefs will demonstrate cooking techniques. Attendees are invited to bring favorite recipes.

Barnes said that, with a little bit of olive oil and spices, for example, many leftovers can be transformed into a tasty salad or pasta dish. Salmon leftover? Make a salad for the next day, or a salmon risotto. Black beans and canned corn leftovers? Make quesadillas. Make smoothies of bananas, berries and yogurt. She urged people to plan each week ahead for potential leftovers. And she showed products that come in small sizes or new forms, like powdered peanuts.

Burn Up Miles and Calories

The **Blazing Saddles Biking Group** pedals off promptly at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 14, and Thursday, July 14. Note: Please arrive early, for safety check. Assembly point:

T.C. Williams boathouse at the foot of Madison St. Easy pace.

Contact Maggie or Barry Stauffer at 703-629-5476 or Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net.



Informal Coffee at St. Elmo's

From left, Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts, Tescia Yonkers, Steve and Pam Nelson and Maggie Stauffer.



Lunch at Hank's Pasta Bar

A waiter serves a two-table overflow AHA group at a recent Lunch Around. This table, left to right, Sally Ann Greer, Jack Sulser and Joyce and Dick Bachman.

What's Up with AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Vice Chair Jane King got a nice mention in the latest AARP Bulletin, where **author Susan Milligan** wrote that King “is working with community and business leaders to make Alexandria more age-friendly by expanding affordable housing and raising awareness of existing transportation services.” King, we all can recall, won a 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Commission on Aging for her work in advancing social justice.

Doug Fleming was laid to rest May 26 with military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. Fleming, husband of **Nancy Kincaid**, died Jan. 21. Bill Clayton and Doug joked about being the Curmudgeon Caucus of AHA. But Fleming was far from a curmudgeon. He was a world traveler, raconteur and gourmet chef with a rich store of tales to tell. Some of them involved affecting a deep British accent and assuming the persona of Lord Cholmondeley (pronounced “Chumley”).

We know Tex-Mex food is sometimes hot, but this is ridiculous: As an **AHA group gathered at Dos Amigos** restaurant for a Dine Around, the street outside filled with fire trucks and ambulances. Turns out there was a fire in an apartment building behind the restaurant. Soon the emergency folks went away without interrupting the meal. No jokes, please, about “Muy Caliente.”

AHA's 5th Anniversary was a coming-out of sorts for **Susanne Adams**, who was attending a festive AHA event for the first time since her return from Switzerland for repeated and tricky surgery for a hip replacement. Susanne was moving about the reception and ceremony with the help of two forearm crutches, but she was lively and involved. It is a long story that included a re-do of her surgery because the first replacement failed.



Susanne Adams

Volunteer Corner

Although officially retired in 2012, **Newsletter Co-Editor Donna Fowler** is still working, now and then. She's a freelance editor, working on materials on such diverse topics as food processing in Qatar, plans for youth programs in Africa, the Human Genome project, and prison education. Recently she's been editing a report for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid on an eight-state pilot project on health care reform. After a recent stint at her “day job,” she bopped off to Croatia for two weeks.

Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts gives a “shout out” this month to **new volunteers Lee Coughlin, Susan Bray and Beth Wrightson**. Roberts also reminds the village that **Josefa Gibson** plans to host her festive Volunteer Appreciation gathering Aug. 20. More about that later. Stay tuned.



Left to right, **Spring for Alexandria Volunteers Penny Roberts, Barbara Rosenfeld, Brenda Bloch-Young, Nancy Kincaid and Mary Jayne Swanson**. **Bill Clayton, who took the picture, was also a volunteer.**

The AHA team of volunteers for Spring for Alexandria gave a good name to Friday the 13th, when they helped tag and sort hundreds of books for schoolkids, grade by grade. The team helped move the books to the Ramsay Recreation Center and the adjacent elementary school, where a class of kids in the library set up a “Books! Books!” chant when they arrived. Spring for Alexandria is an annual day of giving and volunteerism sponsored by Volunteer Alexandria.

Affinity for the Met?

Opera buffs: Penny Roberts would like to know who might be interested in attending performances of the Metropolitan Opera Live! program next season as a small group. It would be the newest of AHA's growing number of affinity groups.

Please give Penny a call at 703-836-9644 if you are interested. Tickets are around \$22 per performance and sell out quickly. The operas range from longtime favorites like “Don Giovanni” and “La Traviata” to lesser known such as “L'amour de Loin.” Performances are held at AMC Eisenhower Avenue on Saturdays, usually starting at 1 p.m. Tickets go on sale in July and they sell out fast.

A New Way to Support AHA

By Cele Garrett, Executive Director

In an effort to better secure its long-term sustainability, At Home in Alexandria has launched a major gifts and planned giving program.

The organization has spent the past year laying the groundwork for the program.

The board has approved the plan and committees have been formed to finalize AHA's gift acceptance policy and explore options for financial oversight.

This doesn't alter our traditional fundraising events; rather, it provides an enhanced opportunity for those supporters who would like to invest in AHA's future in a significant way.

At present, AHA receives 45 percent of its funding from member dues and the remaining money from three annual fundraising events: The Spring2ACTion online fundraiser, the fall benefit, and the year-end mail campaign.

As we announced at AHA's 5th Anniversary event May 20, two generous donors each have made a leadership gift to AHA recently that will greatly boost the launch of this new effort.

NOTE: If you have questions about this program, please contact Cele Garrett at AHA 703-231-0824 or online at cele@athomeinalexandria.org.

You and Amazon Can Bring Some \$mile\$ to AHA

Amazon has made it easy to donate to AHA. Instead of accessing the amazon.com webpage, open a window and point to smile.amazon.com. Shop as usual. At check out, Amazon asks which charity to donate to. Type in At Home in Alexandria and Amazon will remember that whenever you use smile.amazon.com. It will give AHA half of one percent of qualifying purchases—purchases not from a third-party vendor. It's not a lot of money, but if a lot of people do this then it is worth it to AHA, and it's so simple. Try it! Questions? Google AmazonSmile.

Second Opinion Can Thwart Scams

Realtor and AHA volunteer Peter Crouch reports he found out the City can give a second opinion when a resident gets an estimate from a contractor for work on the house. The situation is ripe for scams, Crouch said. "The Department of Code Administration will provide free double-checks on the necessity of work being done on seniors'

homes," Crouch said. Ray Dietzel, the department's new-construction manager, pointed out that the City has become aware of "a number of contractor scams affecting seniors in Alexandria." The City, he said, is determined to take a role in prevention of the scams. Dietzel can be reached at 703-746-4238. Or email him at raymond.dietzel@alexandriava.gov.

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BOOKS TO DONATE?

Take them to Four Mile Run Farmers and Artisans Market, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Sunday, June 5, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Book Sale June 12, same hours, same place.

CONTACT US

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

AHA@athomeinalexandria.org
Web www.athomeinalexandria.org