

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

## Annual Gala Will Have Something for Everybody

The annual AHA Benefit and Gala will have something old, something new, something mysterious with its own clue.

There will be a (modest) prize for the best outfit in the spirit of “Puttin’ on the Gritz,” this year’s theme. It could be a boa, an old tiara, a top hat, fancy walking stick, white gloves, shimmery gown, spats—let your imagination roam.



The festivity will come alive on Nov. 13, from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the new Carlyle Club, 2050 Ballenger Avenue.

Adding mystery to the mix of music and food and auction, guests will be challenged to guess some little-known things about At Home in Alexandria.

For example, two AHA members have been members of the “founding village,” Beacon Hill in Boston, as well as AHA. And guess what stalwart in AHA was once a school cheerleader.

Wines are, pardon the expression, *pouring* in for the popular raffle of sets of three and four wines. Donations are gratefully accepted—each wine should have a value of \$20 or more. Notify Steve Nelson (703-549-4778) if you have wine(s) to donate.

**See raffle logo and more detail, page 2.**

The silent auction this year is emphasizing experiences rather than objects: restaurant meals, hotel stays, cruises, beauty services, tours, and the like. If you have a favorite business, ask the proprietor for a donated certificate. Let Bill Clayton (703-548-0958) know, to avoid duplication. Donations should be in hand by the end of October, to prepare the bid sheets.

AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld and Gala Co-Chairs Linda Langley and Pam Nelson are asking all to think of corporate sponsors for the event. Sponsorship levels start at “Spats and Cane Level” for \$400 up to “Diamond Level” of \$2,500. Sponsors get tickets and recognition proportionate to their level. Check the AHA office for details (703-231-0824).

## Interest Groups



**WE WANT YOU!**

The AHA Interest Groups are always looking for new participants. Check out the things they are doing—and join in by contacting the leaders or AHA.

“**The Divas**” of the Metropolitan Opera Live in theaters will see Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde* Oct. 8 at the Regal in Potomac Yard. Next up: *Don Giovanni* Oct. 22. Leader is **Penny Roberts** [psroberts@msn.com](mailto:psroberts@msn.com)

The **AHA Walking Club** amused itself on hot days by gauging the spread of a Potomac River algae bloom so thick that birds sat on it and found nutrients. Join and walk at your own pace Tuesdays. **Bill Clayton**. [tbclayton@comcast.net](mailto:tbclayton@comcast.net) 703-548-0958

Bridge players are encouraged to contact **Susan Twitchell** to join the combined **AHA/Alexandria House bridge group**. She is at 703-548-0391 and the next bridge afternoon is Oct. 14.

“**Blazing Saddles**” biking group leaders **Maggie and Barry Stauffer**, having taken a bike tour in Italy, led their stateside group Sept. 22 over the Wilson Bridge to National Harbor. Next outing: Thursday, Oct. 20 to the Georgetown Waterfront. Meet 11 a.m. on Madison Street near the boathouse. Stauffers: 703-629-5476 [Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net](mailto:Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net)

**Brenda Bloch-Young**, the **History Group** organizer, ever searching for topics, took a two-week tour in the United Kingdom. She enclosed a photo of the “Jane Austen tea at the Pump Room in Bath,” a scene replete with what looked like cupcakes, clotted cream and scones. For History Group plans, check with Brenda [bblochyoung@gmail.com](mailto:bblochyoung@gmail.com)

The **Movie Group’s** next film will be Oct. 24, to be determined. Contact is **Nancy Kincaid**, who will be out of town until Oct.16. Phone 703-836-4794.

**Theater buffs:** email **Margaret French** at [maggiem321@aol.com](mailto:maggiem321@aol.com) or **Megan Evans** at [meganevans@verizon.net](mailto:meganevans@verizon.net)

## AHA Board Encouraged to Recruit New Members

AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld challenged the Board at its Sept. 20 to work diligently to recruit new AHA members.

While Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reports “a strong financial position” for AHA, thanks in part by a number of generous gifts this year, “Our long-range sustainability depends on continuing to sustain and grow our membership rolls,” Rosenfeld reported.

“There are many people who could benefit from AHA or who are willing to support us in our mission—and we need to find and enroll them as full or associate members,” she said.

Membership Chair Jane King said several members need extra attention beyond the routine transportation and help errands that the volunteers do. The extra needs range from just a phone call, to check how the member is doing (and a brief follow-up report to AHA), to more serious steps involving visits.

AHA is sending a contingent to the Village to Village conference in Columbus, Ohio, in mid-October. These gatherings furnish rich material for villages, comparing them to others. giving them tips on what works and what doesn't.

### Keeping the Tax Man Away

Houses appreciate in value—and Uncle Sam wants part of the profit (“gain”), just as on other investments.

However, the tax code has a very generous treatment of gain on the sale of your principal residence: Each taxpayer is allowed to “exclude” from taxable gain \$250,000 in profit; \$500,000 for a couple. Anything above those amounts is taxable capital gain. But anyone who has owned a home for years can greatly cut the gain.

The key is to KEEP GOOD RECORDS of money you put into the house over time. “Capital improvements” can reduce the gain: If you put a new roof on 20 years ago for \$10,000, that reduces your gain by \$10,000; say you bought a furnace for \$7,000, carpet \$5,000; kitchen remodel \$40,000; bathroom \$10,000 -- now gain is \$72,000 less. Add the patio, landscape stones, fence, addition, new windows and you can exceed \$100,000 in *reductions* to gain.

Example of a single owner selling a house bought 30 years ago for \$250,000: The net sale price, after expenses of sale, we'll say is \$600,000, less original purchase of \$250,000. That would make the approximate gain \$350,000. Subtract the exclusion of \$250,000 and that leaves a possible taxable gain of \$100,000. But if the owner had kept records of the improvements above, those would wipe out that taxable gain by demonstrating the capital improvements. Tax could be zero. Also keep records of settlement papers from the purchase and any refinance – closing costs are deductible from the gain as well.

— Peter Crouch

See IRS Publication 523 online at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

Or contact Peter Crouch at 703-244-4024 or

[Pete@crouchrealtygroup.com](mailto:Pete@crouchrealtygroup.com).



This year's AHA Benefit will include our Second Annual Wine Raffle. Donate either a favorite bottle worth at least \$20, or give \$20 to subsidize one bottle of our choosing. Multiples of bottles of \$20 are most welcome, too. Then attend the AHA Benefit in November and buy tickets to win one of our lots of wines worth at least \$60.



Margaret Portner

### Portner's, Storied Name in Brewing

“Beer heiress” —that has a good ring to it. Margaret Portner, one of the heiresses of the Portner brewing tradition, outlined for an AHA audience how she and her sister plan to rejuvenate the brand in Alexandria.

The audience of 24 people were, metaphorically, licking

their chops at the prospect of the revival of a storied brewery, in the form of a beer-plus-food spot in West Alexandria. The Brewhouse will open in December, Margaret said, if plans by her and her sister Catherine hold up.

“She's the beer person and I am the food person,” Margaret said. Catherine was not able to be at the AHA event.

Portner's story began in the 1800s, when the Portner beer complex grew to several buildings in Alexandria with a railroad spur running through the complex on a branch line on St. Asaph Street.

The Portners called themselves “Alexandria's First Family of Beer.” Robert Portner, born in Westphalia in northwestern Germany, was Margaret's and Catherine's great-great-grandfather. He moved to New York City and then to Alexandria, where he was a grocer at King Street and St. Asaph. He sold so much beer that he decided to get into the brewery business, opening the brewery in 1869. At one point, the brewery was Alexandria's biggest employer.

Portner died in 1906 and the brewery continued until Prohibition shut it down.

Now, sisters Margaret and Catherine will revive the business—at a new location at Pickett Street and Van Dorn. They plan to offer “brats (bratwursts), burgers and beers,” Margaret said.

## Senior Law Day Examines The Importance of Planning

Senior Services of Alexandria holds its sixth annual Senior Law Day Saturday, Oct. 15, at the First Baptist Church, 2932 King St.

The theme is “Determining Your Destiny: Understanding the Need to Plan.”

The Alexandria Bar Association is cosponsoring the event, which will run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is free and refreshments will be served.

As a *lagniappe*, AARP is operating a shredding truck in the parking lot during the event and attendees are encouraged to bring their unwanted materials suitable for shredding. (See Page 2 article about house records you should keep.)



Geriatric care managers, estate and financial planners and legal experts from the Alexandria Bar Association will discuss the importance of planning for the future. They will explain what legal instruments and documents people should have at hand, and talk about the consequences of the lack of preparation. Robert Blancato, national coordinator for the Elder Justice Coalition, will give the keynote speech.

To register for this free event, phone 703-836-4414 ext. 110, or go online to [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org)

## Things We Do



We staff a table at the City Hall Farmers Market a few Saturdays each year. Here, Barbara Rosenfeld and Penny Roberts tell passersby about AHA and hand out brochures. They got several people to sign up for volunteering or donating or as prospective members. Nancy Kincaid and Bill Clayton circulated among market shoppers, spreading the word.



We plan, as here the Board of Directors discusses the Gala and challenges of membership-building and attention for members who need a bit more care. Clockwise from center foreground: Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, Alan Dinsmore, Gala Co-Chair Linda Langley, Bob Eiffert, Secretary L Liddle, Advisory Council Chair Charles Ablard, Steve Nelson, AHA Vice Chair Jane King, Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts, Executive Director Cele Garrett.



We Dine Around, here at Tempo. Clockwise: Jessi MacLeod, Linda Langley, Mary Nefedov, Nancy Kincaid, Howard Johnson, Jeanie McGillen, Indie Cather, Shelly Schwab. Out of the photo: Dick Schwab.



We socialize, here at a recent Ladies' Night Out. Clockwise from left front: Helen Desfosses, Kit Leider, Mary Nefedov, Nancy Kincaid, Penny Roberts, Shelli Ross. Empty place at left is for “Honorary Lady” Bill Clayton, photographer.

## What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

It seems appropriate that **Chair Barbara Rosenfeld**, as she left a volunteer effort, found Good Samaritans nearby. She had helped staff the AHA table at the City Hall farmer's market and when she got to her auto, found the battery was dead.

"Lucky for me there was a nice family that pulled up in an SUV next to me," she reported. Though they had no jumper cables, a market vendor appeared and brought his cables and the "SUV guy" used them to start Barbara's car.

Remembrances of the Olympics? The Rio Olympics caused **Executive Director Cele Garrett** to recall the time when she and some friends were frolicking in a swimming pool. An onlooker asked if they were the Synchronized Swimming Team practicing for competition. No, they said, but thanks for the thought. It turns out that a few of them really DID swim on a synchronized team.

**Helen Desfosses**, one of the political experts in AHA, presented a "brown bag lunch dialogue" Sept. 20, sponsored by Immanuel Church On The Hill's Senior Ministry. The topic was "The 2016 Presidential Election: The Most Unique and Unsettling in Recent Memory."

**Pam and Steve Nelson** are back from their fine weeklong visit to Nantucket. Steve said they and a friend rented a house, walked, biked and checked out the local combination brewery/winery/distillery.

**Nancy Kincaid** has two new housemates: Apollo and Merlin. They are cats, so don't you have racy thoughts. Nancy reports all getting along well, except that "Apollo can get out on the balcony even when the opening is only two inches."

**Alan Dinsmore** recovered so quickly from hernia surgery that he reported being "pretty much up and around and driving" within a couple of days.

## Spotlight on Sherry Schiller

Schiller, a recent member of AHA, was born in Detroit and holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the University of Michigan. She is president of the eponymous Schiller Center.

The nonprofit helps organization leaders "envision and realize better futures." Researcher, lecturer, author and world traveler, Schiller is considering how best to help AHA with organizational challenges. Through her Center, she has worked with leaders of government, education and nonprofit groups understand, anticipate and create change.

Her services have been used by such diverse groups as the U.S. Forest Service, Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Bangkok Patana School.



## VOLUNTEER CORNER

Praise for volunteers is music to our ears. **Shirley Cherkasky** writes, "**L Liddle** came as promised ... and quickly determined what I had done to prevent my TV from operating as it should. And then he fixed it. For which I am very grateful. It was not a crucial need for me but greatly relieved my frustration." **Shirley** had gone without television and was anxious to find out what she missed.

**Courtney West** has been teaching member **Jan Hussey** to play the ukulele. Not for any professional gig, he says, but for the benefits of learning a stringed instrument: Aside from the music, the learning has advantages in memory, dexterity for fingers, help fighting boredom and a new challenge. Finding practice time? **Courtney** says he suggests **Jan**, a big baseball fan, practice while watching the Nats games.

**Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts** reported the final guest count for **Josefa Gibson's** hugely popular party to recognize volunteers: 48 people attended.

In August, AHA fielded 98 **service requests from members**—155.75 hours' work by 35 volunteers.

The next Volunteer Coffee, **Penny Roberts** says, will be on Halloween, Oct. 31, in Bradlee Center.

**Carol Downs and Alan Dinsmore**, who have scheduled several past programs in collaboration with Goodwin House at Home, are at it again. Some ideas for the winter programs, still undecided:

- Forming a small focus group to discuss issues of interest to Alexandria's seniors;
- A presentation on how to select a continuing-care facility from the many varieties in the Alexandria area;
- How to have the "awkward conversations" with relatives about continuing care needs and choices.

Earlier in her career, Sherry conducted international research for the American Center for Quality Work Life. At one time, she served as national director of a juvenile delinquency prevention program, which she proudly says is "cited for its innovative partnerships in building community through service learning."

The groups for which she has worked report she has helped them form more collaborative leadership, define clear goals, and align systems and structures in a stronger way. For those clients, that means "a stronger bottom line," she says.

Schiller got interested in At Home in Alexandria as a neighbor of Ann and Linus ("L") Liddle on South Pitt Street in Old Town. The Liddles were involved in AHA from the start and "L" was twice executive director. He is currently AHA secretary.

## Staving Off Telephone Sales Calls

Verizon says: “Telemarketers are prohibited from making unsolicited sales calls to residential subscribers between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. Unwanted calls could be reduced by placing home and personal mobile numbers on the federal do-not-call registry, at 1-888-388-1222 from the phone you want listed. Or, visit the web site donotcall.org

As you would expect—and may already know from experience—there are ways around the system and there are exceptions to the calls that can be barred.

### Your Flu I.Q.

Writing in Parade magazine, Catherine Winters suggests tips for the “flu season”:

Get your flu shot.

Drying your hands is as important as frequent washing, because moist hands can transmit microbes to surfaces others may touch.

Stop touching your face.

Stay away from sick people. Flu sufferers can be contagious for several days after getting sick.

Wipe down surfaces used by a number of people.

### Board of Directors

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Linus Liddle, Secretary	Linda Langley
Bill Clayton, Editor	Steve Nelson
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Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

## Fall Prevention Training and Programs

Marymount University and a group of cosponsors presented the first session Sept. 21 of a grant-supported series of programs on falls prevention for older adults.

The introductory session at Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads attracted dozens of health and fitness workers, caregivers and volunteers interested in becoming “fall prevention trainers” in their communities.

Cosponsors of the programs include Inova Health Systems and Goodwin House. At Home in Alexandria will promote the initiative and may cosponsor some of the workshops.

Physical therapist Laurie Swan presiding over the introductory session, with an audience of potential SAIL leaders (Stay Active and Independent for Life).

Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths in the nation, Swan said. They cause moderate to severe injury in 20 to 30 percent of the cases and add considerably to the cost of Medicare. Just exercising, with emphasis on muscle strength and balance, will prevent many falls.



Therapist Laurie Swan at the introductory session

### Chuckles and Chortles

English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburgers, nor apple in pineapples—nor pine.

Quicksand works slowly. A boxing ring is a square. A guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor a pig.

If a teacher taught, why did not the preacher “praught.”?

A grocer doesn’t “groce,” a hammer does not “ham,” and alas, while writers write, fingers do not “fing.”

#### CONTACT US

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