

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



**Part of the Gala crowd in the Carlyle Club. In the distant background: The Christophe Ludet Trio. (See p. 2 for more photos.)**

## Annual Gala and Auction A Resounding Success

A crowd filled the new Carlyle Club with glitz and glamor for the annual AHA Gala and Auction, Dec.13.

“Puttin’ on the Glitz” was the theme and in the crowd of 139, there were tiaras and top hats, boas and shimmying sheathes, tuxes and pinstripes. And “heavy-duty” hors d’oeuvres.

“I had a blast,” emcee Peter Crouch said. Nancy Kincaid proclaimed it “fantastic ... totally organized ... went off without a hitch.”

Mayor Allison Silberberg said, “What a fabulous organization and party. You make a huge difference.”

Advisor Carol Downs, herself gussied-up for the occasion, said the idea of “fancy duds” was a festive note.

Executive Director Cele Garrett reported to the Board of Directors afterward that the major components of the receipts were ahead of last year’s gala, and the net was approximately \$23,000, comfortably ahead of last year’s but a bit shy of the ambitious goal.

“Universally, we have had positive feedback about the venue, the program, the music and the theme,” she said.

Sponsorships were the major fund source, she reported, with the silent auction in second place. The wine raffle once again proved very popular and the featured wine of the separate silent auction, a collector’s-quality 1952 Haut-Brion, fetched a successful bid from Tom Crowley, husband of AHA Treasurer Chriss Nielsen. Sponsorships, which ranged from “Spats and Cane” to “Diamond,” brought more than \$20,000.

As expected, the wine raffle, of baskets of wines valued at many, many times the raffle ticket price, prompted a discussion of ways to expand and enhance it in the future. Coordinator Steve Nelson drew praise for the raffle.

Special guest, television personality Julie Carey, tried to stump the crowd with trivia questions about AHA—the number of World War II veterans in the village, who taught ukulele and chess, etc.—which for the most part brought accurate answers shouted from the crowd.

Chair Barbara Rosenfeld handed out well-deserved praise to the office mainstays, Cele Garrett and Operations Managers Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson, as well as the dozens of AHA members, volunteers and committee members who had a hand (and/or a wallet) in the success of the benefit, gala and auction.

Emcee Pete Crouch recognized outstanding volunteers of the past year, who handled hundreds of service requests from members: Stan Maciak, Nancy Kincaid, Steve Ramey, Ken Hill. “Many more were right behind them,” Crouch said.



**Josefa Gibson, Mayor Allison Silberberg, special guest Julie Carey, AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett**

## Gala Snapshots—By Heather Reitze



Gala Co-Chair Linda Langley and Joyce Shields



Mary Jayne Swanson, Liz Campbell and Gala Co-Chair Pam Nelson



Some of the Silent Auction Items



Blinged-up AHA Operations Managers Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson



Maggie Moose, Al Boyer, AHA Secretary L Liddle



A thorn among three roses: Emcee Pete Crouch with (l to r) daughter Katie, wife Lori and daughter Micki



Advisor Carol Downs, Councilman Tim Lovain, wine auction coordinator Steve Nelson



### Glitz Winners

At left, women's Gitziest Annie Stat and Honorable Mention Tescia Yonkers.

At right, men's Glitziest Bill Clayton.

Other honorable mentions among the ladies were Julie Gentry, "Frisky" Hickey, Sherry Schiller and Stephanie Frederick. The ladies favored tiaras and fine fabrics and bling. Clayton dusted off his collapsible top hat and an inherited gold-topped cane. Note the martini.



Christophe Ludet Trio: bassist Russell Byron, pianist Ludet and AHA's Bill Stat on drums. (Not in their Gala garb.)



The Wines Displayed for Raffle

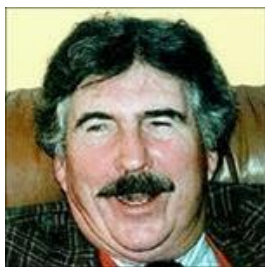


Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, left, introduced Helen Desfosses for a postmortem on the 2016 presidential election.

## Desfosses Dissects Election

AHA Board Member and lecturer Helen Desfosses told a Conversation With... crowd that the 2016 election year had so many unexpected twists and turns that preparing a lecture the night before an event was often futile. "You'd read the morning paper and just have to start writing all over again." Consider the big GOP field and all the predictions that Hillary Clinton would win handily.

"I don't think many of us realized how much anger was out there in the wind," Desfosses said. "Donald Trump is a genius in many ways," in his use of social media and his ability to label people. He senses trends and uses them, such as the blurred line between entertainment and politics. Desfosses said. "He was willing to say about anything that would help him get elected." Trump won, but "the politics of fear and anger is still out there." Clinton recognized late his message of total change. Desfosses said our civic culture "is pretty much broken and we all have to work hard to rebuild our civic dialogue."



Howard Tucker

## Sadness in AHA

The AHA family lost two of its own in recent weeks: Virginia (Ginny) Lester and Howard Tucker.

Lester, an educator of note but also an avid sailor and skier and a lover of travel, died Nov. 10 at age 85. She held a Ph.D. from Union Graduate School and was president of Mary Baldwin College in Staunton Va. She is credited with turning around its fortunes by expanding enrollment, its campus and its degree program. She obtained a law degree from Stanford University and

was for a time president of Friends World College.

Tucker, husband of AHA member Megan Evans, died Nov. 17 at age 86. A District of Columbia native, he was an investment banker, financial analyst and consultant. His wide interests included the National Cathedral, Historic Alexandria Foundation, Old Dominion Boat Club, Saints and Sinners Club and American Horticultural Society. He once served on a Treasury Task Force on the United States balance of payments.

## Interest Group News

The "opera divas" interest group, whose members go to Live At The Met programs at a theater, "are soldiering on," coordinator Penny Roberts reports. They will take in *L'amour de Loïn* by Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho on Dec. 10.

For those interested in the **History Group**, coordinator **Brenda Bloch-Young** asks that they contact her (telephone 571-319-0222 or email [bblochyoung@gmail.com](mailto:bblochyoung@gmail.com)) She will convene a planning session in December, in the Junction Bakery in Del Ray.

The **Walking Group** had its last outing before suspending until warmer weather. **Barbara Rosenfeld, Bill Clayton and Shelly Schwab** were on the last walk of the season—pictured below in an autumnal setting.



**Nancy Kincaid** has signed a partner for the **Movie Group**: **Jane Starkey** has agreed to co-chair and help with transportation.

The movie group is one of AHA's longest-standing groups. As Kincaid envisioned: "There would not be a set date for the movies. Those interested could phone me and we could try to set it up."

Next movie is to be Dec. 8. Phone Kincaid (703-836-4794) or email ([nancyk764@verizon.net](mailto:nancyk764@verizon.net)) to sign up or ask questions. She plans to be able, with a discount card, to purchase tickets online ahead of time.



Ginny Lester

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

**Board Member Helen Desfosses** knows how to make a dramatic entrance: she fell at the door of her church and broke a foot. She is recovered now.

**Advisor Carol Downs** gives more than advice: She donated a Keurig coffee maker for the AHA office. "I thought it might be nice to have over the winter in the office," she said.

**Pete Crouch, emcee at the Gala**, spoke of the essential **work AHA does for members**. "The members appreciate support" such as transportation for shopping or to a medical appointment. "And an ill member appreciates it more." Much of the help is getting through "a life-changing transition," Couch said, such as moving from home to a care facility. One extended project was to help a relative from out of town deal with the home and belongings of a member who died.

Speaking of services to members: AHA has a "**member needs closet**" containing some items free for the lending: crutches, bathtub benches, canes and the like. If you are recovering from surgery or in any other way need a short-term loan of these objects, contact AHA.

**Jessi MacLeod** toured France and—surprise—found it "Wonderful—the colors, the greens, the ocean, the rivers." Included in her visit were Normandy and Paris; Chartres cathedral with its stone carvings, stained glass windows, and black Madonna; Mont-Saint Michel; the tapestry in Bayeaux; Omaha and Utah beaches.

**Susan Kellom** will be the author of this year's annual fundraising letter for AHA. Susan is a perfect choice. She knows everyone who is important in Alexandria, from politics to military to government. The appeal she writes will go out in early December.

**Executive Director Cele Garrett** said in her November report that three people have joined as associate members: **Herb and Paula Berg and Constance Santorelli. Janet Gale, a friend of Linda Langley's**, was the high bidder for an associate membership at auction.

Mark your calendar for the next **Conversation With program**. It will be Jan. 22 at the Alexandria House home of **Josefa Gibson**. The lecturer will be **Richard C. Hart**, who has used his doctorate in advising NASA on space science programs.

Dr. Hart, president of **Mount Vernon At Home**, will discuss a topic that seems daunting but is really fascinating: "The recent discovery of gravity waves by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory not only confirms the prediction of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity but also allows us a new way to explore the universe—by listening."

A shorter title: "Gravity—A law we can live with."

## VOLUNTEER CORNER



### Friendly Witch Visits Volunteers

When **Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts** (left above) convened one of her series of coffees for volunteers, she did not make special plans for the gathering at Alexandria Pastry Shop. But it happened to be Halloween and a Halloween witch stopped by the AHA table to visit: left to right, **Roberts, Pam Nelson, Jessi MacLeod and Mercedes Kremenetzky**. At rear, the guest witch.



### Meet New Volunteer Catha Pavloff

Piano player, yoga instructor, Catha Pavloff says she became a volunteer with AHA for some compelling reasons.

First, her mother was in her 90s and too far away for Catha to give her full-time attention. And second, Catha lives in Portner's

Landing, near two stalwarts of AHA—Linda Langley and co-founder Ernie Lehmann. As usual, those two are tenacious recruiters.

Born in the suburbs of Philadelphia and holder of a degree in English and American literature, Catha also has achieved an advanced teaching certification for all levels of yoga. She "left the corporate world (insurance and risk management) behind" to devote her life to teaching yoga and meditation. She wants to interest AHA folks in yoga.

"When time permits," she indulges her hobbies: tennis, reading, walking, and playing the piano.

She says she had one of her happiest moments when playing piano for residents of an Alzheimer's facility in Brooklyn.

She played a varied program, she said, and the residents were attentive but not really grooving to the music—at least until she played Broadway show tunes. Then: "Many were able to recall and sing the lyrics.... Magical. The power of music."

## Wreaths in Memory

AHA will participate in the annual Wreaths Across America campaign Dec. 17 that places wreaths on the graves of veterans in our national cemeteries, including the Alexandria National Cemetery.

Details are being firmed up, so this article will be fleshed out in an AHA Eblast and on the web site.

AHA's plan is to invite any of AHA's World War II veterans and spouses to attend the event, with transportation furnished by AHA. And any other AHA villager who wants to go, and does not have a ride can ask AHA for transportation.

Donors and volunteers furnish the wreaths, transport them, and put them at the graves at noon Dec. 17. Alexandria National Cemetery is at 1450 Wilkes St. Barry Stauffer, who lives near the cemetery, is coordinating the AHA effort. (phone 703-629-5476 or email [bcstauffer@comcast.net](mailto:bcstauffer@comcast.net))



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Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

## News From the Board of Directors

Chair Barbara Rosenfeld reports it is time for a new strategic plan for AHA, most likely at a staff retreat to be planned for early in 2017.

"We have come a long way since we opened our doors," Rosenfeld's Nov. 15 report to the Board said. "But we need to continually reassess what we are doing and how well we are doing it—and how we can improve."

One challenge is building membership. Executive Director Cele Garrett said membership as of Nov. 15, stood at 162. Rosenfeld asked directors to concentrate on recruiting new members, hoping to reach a goal of 175 as soon as possible.

**(Note to Members: You know why you joined AHA. Think of friends, neighbors and associates who you think are good prospects and encourage them to join AHA.)**

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen said keeping up renewals and finding new members are the biggest challenges for the budget. Secretary L Liddle said AHA needs to concentrate its membership recruitment in areas other than Old Town, which was the source of many original members.

Nielsen said revenue has lagged because of membership attrition. Underlining Rosenfeld's remarks about a push for new members, Nielsen said that membership revenue contributes only about 40 percent of total revenue. AHA hopes to make that over 50 percent.

In her report to the Board, Garrett said the work is ongoing to perfect the web site.

She is in continuing discussions with the firm Six Half Dozen about improving the site and correcting some glitches.

AHA is having some committee turnover, Rosenfeld said, which means there are opportunities for villagers to step up and help chair or co-chair the Conversation With programs and the volunteer effort.

The other responsibilities before the end of 2016, Rosenfeld said, include the annual elections and approval of a new budget.

### CONTACT US

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