

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

## National Survey Shows Villages Growing and Confident of Future

AHA cosponsored, with Mount Vernon at Home, a Watch Party Feb. 13 to view a summary of the 2016 national survey of villages.

It was supposed to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the village movement and the highlight was supposed to be a speech by Atul Gawande, renowned author of books on aging in America. But a Boston blizzard cancelled his appearance and the host of the celebration, village movement founder Beacon Hill Village in Boston, will reschedule Gawande later.

Meanwhile, around 40 members of AHA and MVAH and guests gathered to view a livestream of researchers' summaries of the survey. The 2016 survey was an effort by UC/Berkeley with the Center for Advanced Study of Aging Services and the Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging.

The survey showed AHA is about typical among villages.

Ninety percent have dues, three-fourths have discounted memberships and work for more diversity. All but a few have paid staff: the average ratio one staff member per 80 village members. And most villages expressed confidence in sustainability. The average age

of villages is five years and nearly all offer transportation, social events, classes and technology help.

**At left, AHA's Cele Garrett and MVAH's Barbara Sullivan introduce the livestream on the screen behind them, at the Feb. 13 joint Watch Party.**



## At Home in Alexandria Fills Staff Vacancies, Looks Ahead to New Projects

Meet two new staff members, filling important niches to support AHA's members and its many activities.

- **Bernice Courtenay, a new operations co-manager,** comes to AHA after a long career with CSX, retiring after 20 years as a Senior Sales Representative. AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett calls her “a true people person.” She is a Community Ambassador and volunteer lobbyist for AARP and makes presentations to various groups. “She’s dedicated to improving the quality of life for older adults,” Garrett said.

Courtenay succeeds Diane Atchinson, who resigned to be a caregiver for her mother. Peter Crouch’s daughter Katie filled in when Atchinson resigned, and AHA thanked Katie for being available on short notice.

- **Jennifer (Jen) Heinz** has joined AHA as **Marketing and Membership Manager.** Garrett said AHA should “expect to see an uptick in website updates and Facebook posts as she works to expand our internet and social media presence.” Heinz was office administrator for Encore Creativity for Older Adults, which sponsors choral programs for older adults throughout the Washington area. She has worked for nonprofits and trade associations. Her role will free Garrett to concentrate more on AHA support.

Heinz quickly became busy posting on AHA’s Facebook page and the website. During March, the website designer and Garrett will assemble a team of volunteers interested in social media “to help us procure AHA-related images and news,” Garrett said.

Heinz has been on a new-member visit with Garrett and will coordinate those and other membership initiatives. She will be working with the Membership Committee to boost membership and help coordinate support for the frailer members. She will explore starting a Twitter feed and manage a Facebook page.

## Hills' Tag Team Reports On Survey of Continuing Care

Winnie and Ken Hill shared their findings on a tour of Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), a topic that drew a capacity audience.

The Feb. 6 Conversation With program in the meeting room of Portner's Landing covered in detail—but without naming names—the factors to consider when planning for continuing care beyond AHA. Thirty-six people signed up for the program.

Winnie, a former AHA treasurer, and Ken, an AHA volunteer with a long résumé of Peace Corps work, were introduced to the crowd by Board Member Alan Dinsmore, who helped plan the program. The Hills were celebrating their 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary the day of the program (and the marriage is “still on track,” Ken joked).

The Hills started their fact-finding “adventure” a couple of years ago, Ken said, and concentrated on not-for-profit facilities. The idea was, Dinsmore said, to help AHA folks in the phases of transition to a continuing care facility: “considering, informing, preparing.” The dozen sites the Hills visited, in the greater metropolitan area around Alexandria, were state-licensed and board-managed and accredited by a national association.

The Hills said a personal visit to the CCRCs of interest—and many host open houses or tours—is the best way to learn what they offer. But there are other ways to check them out. One is to get brochures and copies of financial statements of those of interest.

Check with friends who already are in a continuing-care facility, Ken said. Decide first whether a high-rise would be acceptable or something lower such as a townhome cluster or cottage design. That should narrow the search.

Even though typical nonprofits are affiliated with a church, “They don't proselytize,” he said, and do not require church membership.

In addition to finding out what the costs will be of residence and care, a prospective customer should check the financial condition of the facility, Winnie (who is a CPA) said. “That's where my talents came in” during the Hills' tour, Winnie said.

When the time nears to sign a contract, “Have your lawyer go through it,” Ken said. “And sit down with a sharp pencil” and total the costs and additional monthly fees. There are many books available on continuing care and retirement planning, the Hills said.

### CORRECTION

In the February edition cutline for the March on Washington photo, the woman on the left was Sarah Stott. We regret the error.



Above, Alan Dinsmore on right, introducing Ken and Winnie Hill for their program on choosing a care community. Bottom, the audience for the Hills' presentation at Portner's Landing



### Coming Dates of Note

- **Two Met Live operas in March: Verdi's “La Traviata” Saturday, March 11, and Mozart's “Idomeneo” Saturday, March 25. Both at Regal Cinema in Potomac Yard. Check the calendar in this newsletter.**
- **Ken Hill (see column at left) is ba-a-a-ck, with a Conversation With program Sunday, March 26, in the Alexandria House apartment of Marianne Ginsburg. The topic: Hill's monitoring of an election in Uzbekistan. Check calendar for details.**
- **And something not to be missed: April 5 is the annual Spring2ACTION fundraising all-day effort. Once again, AHA's headquarters for the event will be Del Ray Café. Watch for repeated reminders.**
- **AHA matinee at Metrostage Sunday, March 12. Special pricing for the acclaimed “The Gin Game.” Phone box office 703-548-9044, tell them you're with AHA.**



The Lunch Around at Northside 10 (née Chez Andrée), Clockwise from left: Steve Nelson, Jessi MacLeod, Linda Langley, Brigitte Guttstadt, Penny Roberts, Indie Cather, David Butler, Nancy Kincaid, Alan Dinsmore, Jane Cohen.



Ladies' Night Out (above, left to right) Kit Leider, Nancy Berg, Shelly Schwab, Sandra Sterne. Photo by Penny Roberts



A near-record Dine Around crowd of 14 is served at Royal Restaurant, whose "back room" accommodated the group. The waitress is serving Ann Liddle. In the background: Shelly and Dick Schwab, who brought their grandson Ben Thong. At left, partly hidden, is a newcomer to Dine Around, Gretchen Klimoski, who attended with her husband, psychology professor Richard Klimoski. Nancy Kincaid attended with a sister, Katie Guske.

## Tom Fitzgerald 1923-2017

When AHA folks gathered monthly for a TGIF early evening of sipping and chatting, Tom Fitzgerald would almost always be there, sharing stories of his remarkable career and his opinions of current affairs.

Fitzgerald, an AHA member from its earliest days, died Feb. 13 at the age of 93. He was one of the oldest members of At Home in Alexandria.

Thomas Allen Fitzgerald was born Oct. 18, 1923, in Torrance, CA. Shortly after graduating from high school in Los Angeles, he enlisted in the Army Air Force, was commissioned a second lieutenant and was shipped to Europe as part of the 447<sup>th</sup> Heavy Bomb Group. As a bombardier on a B-17 Flying Fortress, he had 30 missions over Nazi Germany. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Fitzgerald declined the offer of a Purple Heart when he was injured on one of the Germany missions. His grandson, Shawn Gremminger of Falls Church, tells the story: German fire tore into Fitzgerald's aircraft on one mission and ripped loose a rivet in the "bubble" of bullet-resistant material at the front of the B-17, where the bombardier sat. The rivet injured Fitzgerald, who turned down a Purple Heart, calling it not justified in his case.

After the war and with the help of the GI Bill, Fitzgerald obtained a bachelor's degree and went to work for Humble Oil Co. (now Exxon), eventually becoming the firm's chief geologist. He and his wife, Mary Helen, moved to Alexandria and he embarked on a new career, with the World Bank. In that work, he traveled to more than 100 countries, advising the Bank about potential oil-producing areas.



Tom Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald was the *bon vivant* of AHA's TGIF regulars. On his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, he bought a round of drinks. He would walk the several blocks to the bar until he had to be wary of Old Town's uneven sidewalks.

He was a Depression child and thus became very frugal. He

had a rich life and career but spoke so softly those around him could not hear everything. He could be serious but also had a whimsical bent, speakers at his memorial at St. Mary's Church said.

"He loved AHA and we loved him," Board Member Helen Desfosses said.

Fitzgerald once took Ann and L Liddle to dinner at the Warehouse. He proudly showed them a low interior wall decorated with caricatures of favored longtime customers. Among them was Tom Fitzgerald.

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

**Vice Chair Jane King** and three college friends, frequent group travelers, took a cruise of the southern Mediterranean in early February. What Jane describes as “the trip of a lifetime” included Malta, Algeria, Tunisia, Sardinia, Valencia and Barcelona. The Tunisia highlight was the Bardo Museum with its Roman mosaics. A standout in Barcelona was Sagrada Familia, the quirky cathedral designed by Antoni Gaudi.

The touring group had at times an armed escort through touchy areas, but nothing to spoil the fact they “relished every moment,” **Jane** reported.

Meanwhile, **Chair Barbara Rosenfeld** touched off a mini-revolution by emailing that she was then on a beach, basking in the sun and holding a glass of wine. Some AHA radicals led by **Bill Clayton and Ken Hill** rose up in protest but said they could do little with cars that would not start in the Alexandria cold wave. And **Treasurer Chriss Nielsen** was no help, emailing that she was then in Tucson with her husband, **Tom Crowley**, and “looking at 88 degrees today.”

So the false rebellion collapsed and the returning **Chair** emailed that her air flight was delayed by mechanical troubles and the passengers departed in the wee hours of a Sunday. AHA peace was restored.

**Ambassadors for AHA: Dodo and Charles Ablard** spent some time at Borrego Springs Resort in California. They learned another guest was interested in forming a village. **Charles** gave her some advice and a copy of the AHA newsletter. The woman’s friend in Alexandria, **Sandy Heistadt**, just joined AHA. **Charles** said he explained that he is on the Board and a volunteer, and offered his help.

(**Charles** told AHA he was “in the desert” for the Borrego Springs visit. **See the photo below** to understand how desertlike it is. Oases would blush to be so pretty.)



**Ann Liddle** visited Costa Rica to celebrate a friend’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. **Ann**, an artist, met two prominent Costa Rican artists, **Rossella Matamoros and José Sancho**.

## Board Challenges, Roles For AHA Standouts

Chair **Barbara Rosenfeld** has advised all Board members that they will have a continuing and increasing role in AHA’s strategic planning.

One adjustment will streamline Board meetings and get Board members up to date on the major AHA goals. **Rosenfeld** asked that all reports be submitted enough in advance for Board members to read them before the meeting. That could eliminate all but essential discussion at the meetings and focus Board member’s attention on the monthly strategic topic for discussion.

**Rosenfeld** said Board members should be thinking of how much, and how, to expand membership; and how to “expand our leadership pool.”

**Vice Chair Jane King**, who is also Membership Committee chair, said the strategic planning should help identify new approaches in member recruitment and retention.

**Alan Dinsmore** has been researching other villages’ approach to serving frail members.

**Dinsmore, King and Bob Eiffert** serve on the AHA Board and also are on the Commission on Aging, working on “making Alexandria more dementia-friendly.”

**Maggie Stauffer and Penny Roberts** have volunteered to help that effort.

**Eiffert** moderated a Senior Services of Alexandria panel Feb. 15 on “Senior Housing.” Participants included AHA Executive Director **Cele Garrett** and **Jane King** in her other role, with AARP. **Eiffert** also examined affordable housing and the Commission on Aging role in the City’s approach.

**Garrett** gave a presentation to a women’s group Feb. 9. **Garrett** reported AHA membership at 157.

New associate members are **Sandy Helstad and Sandy Sterne**, and new full members are **Harriet McCune, Tom Farnam and Naomi Morales**.

Volunteer Chair **Mary Jayne Swanson** announced three new volunteers: **Richard Klimoski**, a George Mason professor; **Wendy Driver**, who (interestingly) wants to be an AHA driver, and who works in the Pentagon; and **Kathie Fricke**, who has worked with seniors at Sibley Hospital.

AHA Advisor **Carol Downs and Dinsmore** have scheduled a spring series of workshops, all free, all at Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads, all 10 a.m.-11:30a.m. and all to convey better understanding of the medical system:

- April 26 -- “Getting the Most Out of Your Doctor’s Visit,” featuring a local physician;
- May 10 -- “Who’s Got Your Back?” with a panel of professionals discussing the geriatric care manager, medical advocate and services facilitator;
- May 24 -- “Your Hospital Stay and Beyond” with two officials of Virginia Hospital Center discussing hospital admittance and discharge.

Reservations are encouraged.

## Tips and Hints

You use a cane? Sometimes, people leave them behind or otherwise misplace them. Just tape or print your phone number to the cane and the finder can contact you.

Particularly if you have had new prescriptions, talk to your primary doctor about all your “meds” as to whether some of them counteract others or some are not necessary any longer.

You know the “potato trick” to remove the metal base of a lightbulb that not only has burned out but also has separated from its base? Make sure the switch is TURNED OFF, carefully remove the glass, then use the smaller end of a potato to press into the base and gently turn it to unscrew the base. If the potato end is too large, try the blunt end of a ginger root. Crazy, but it works.

Getting rid of outdated electronics: There are several outlets.

- **SALE** – Check online. Several sites buy used electronics such as digital cameras and Blackberrys.
- **DONATE** – A website called CharityChoices.com has a list of charities that accept outdated but still-functioning devices.
- **RECYCLE** – Alexandria’s Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Collection Center is at 3224 Colvin, just off Duke Street. Waste such as old batteries and paint and a long list of waste items can be dropped off at the center, open Mondays and Saturdays, 7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.

### Board of Directors

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### Operations Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Bernice Courtenay

## Interest Group News

The **AHA History Interest Group** is sponsoring a visit Friday, March 24, to historic Woodlawn Plantation during the Annual Needlework Show.

The first site operated by the National Trust, Woodlawn was part of George Washington’s Mount Vernon. In 1799, he gave the site to his nephew, Lawrence Lewis, and Lewis’ new bride, Eleanor “Nelly” Parke Custis, Martha’s granddaughter, and they built the Georgian/Federal house designed by William Thornton, architect of the U.S. Capitol. “Nelly” Custis was an avid needle crafter. The Needlework Show & Sale honors her legacy. Crafters from all over the country enter their exquisite works. Woodlawn is also home to Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous design, the Pope-Leighey House.

The cost is \$15. A lunch menu is an additional \$20. Please RSVP to AHA soon so that we can make reservations. AHA: 703-231-0824.

The **Walking Group**, which has taken the winter off, resumes March 21 at 9 a.m. at the T.C. Williams Boathouse at the foot of Madison Street. The walk—at each person’s desired pace—goes parallel to the river to near the George Washington Parkway, and back. It is a lovely view of the river and adjacent landscaping. Interested? Phone Bill Clayton 703-548-0958.

The **Bridge Group**, jointly with Alexandria House, gathers Friday, March 10 in the apartment of Nancy Kincaid in Alexandria House. See calendar but RSVP to Kincaid by March 8, at 703-836-4794

## Tolchin to Discuss Trump

Martin Tolchin of the Wilson Center, former congressional correspondent for the New York Times, will discuss “Trump: What Next?” March 30. The event, sponsored by the Georgetown Village, will be from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at St. John’s Church in Georgetown, 3240 O St., NW, in D.C.

Interested? RSVP to Lynn Golub-Rofrano at email [lynn@georgetown-village.org](mailto:lynn@georgetown-village.org) or phone 202-999-8988.

Tolchin is the founder of The Hill newspaper and the Politico publication. Both cover politics and policy.

The Wilson Center is a nonpartisan forum for research and dialogue on global issues.

### CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria  
3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22305  
703-231-0824

[aha@athomeinalexandria.org](mailto:aha@athomeinalexandria.org)  
[www.athomeinalexandria.org](http://www.athomeinalexandria.org)