

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

In Just a Few Weeks – Be Ready to Sip, Munch, Party... ...at the Annual AHA Gala and Auction



5:30 to 9 p.m. October 22, Carlyle Club

By Executive Director Cele Garrett
and Gala Chair Pam Nelson

AHA's annual benefit gala is just a few weeks away now.

We've established a wonderful tradition of coming together in a festive way to celebrate all that AHA has accomplished throughout the past year.

Camaraderie, catching up and just plain fun are always great reasons to come together, but the important goal of this event is

to raise funds for our organization to keep our operations and services stable. AHA has three important fundraising projects each year—and the gala is the only one that's a traditional event. (Our two other fundraisers—the year-end mail letter campaign and annual Spring2ACTion online fundraiser—are just as critical even if they're not as much fun as the gala!)

This year once again you can expect some great silent-auction items. You might want to visit our web site to get a preview of the items. While you're there, you can purchase your gala tickets if you still need them. And, purchase a few raffle tickets for our wine auction. We'll be drawing for several baskets full of some very good vintages. (And who can't use a few

more bottles of wine to have on hand at home?) Roaming salespersons will offer raffle tickets during the event.

Aside from the raffle, each Gala ticketholder gets a first glass of house wine, beer or liquor free.

Consider bringing a friend or two to the gala.

We're bringing back the popular Christophe Ludet Jazz combo and clearing some space on the dance floor. You can participate in a trivia contest on Alexandria history. (We thought it would be an enjoyable addition to our "Paint the Town Red" theme.) NBC4's Julie Carey will join us again and AHA volunteer extraordinaire and member Pete Crouch will emcee.

Oh, and one more thing: Some of us are going to "get our red on"—literally—and outfit ourselves in the theme color for the evening.

The wine raffle tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25—so, even if you buy several, you may win wines worth many times the raffle price.

Steve Nelson, organizer of the wine raffle, reminds AHA villagers that the Raunswinders are steady and generous supporters of At Home in Alexandria, having held wine and beer tastings and having dedicated a portion of their profits to AHA.



Wine merchants Rick and Barbara Raunswinder donated two mixed cases of wines—red, white and sparkling—to the wine raffle. Their wines and others that have been donated will be raffled in bundles of three or four wines, each bundle worth \$111 to \$215.

Getting to the Gala

The Carlyle Club is located at 2050 Ballenger Ave. Street parking is available. Or, park in the garage under the Club: from Elizabeth Lane take the access road behind Catholic Charities to the garage entrance. Parking is free, but an attendant will give you a parking stub. Take the elevator to the first floor, exit the building, and turn left. The club entrance is on the corner.

AHA Conversation With . . . Focuses On Navigating SEC Regulations

A former member of the Securities and Exchange Commission guided an audience in the complexities and highlights of the work of the commission.

Cynthia A. Glassman spoke at the latest AHA Conversation With, a joint event with Mount Vernon At Home.

She described for the three dozen persons the various roles of the SEC in investor protection, maintenance of orderly and fair markets, and facilitation of capital formation. The commission operates through 12 different offices around the country.

Since the days of Bernie Madoff, who bilked potential investors in a huge Ponzi scheme that fraudulently offered very large returns on investment, the commission has changed its enforcement. Dr. Glassman said separate regulatory offices knew bits of the scheme, but “nobody pulled it together” until it had reached huge proportions.

Now, she said, the SEC has “a better way” of detecting and stopping such big Ponzi frauds.

Her audience came alive particularly when she started discussing scams. Many in the AHA-MVAH audience had received scam phone calls or emails. Her general advice: Do not give information if you are suspicious, hang up, don’t open the email link. Ask questions of the “grandchild” who wants money by wire to a foreign country. Realize that the IRS does not issue warnings by phone. Don’t give money to a “Nigerian prince” who says he has won or inherited a big sum and needs an American’s “good-faith donation” to help him claim it.

Healthy Living for Every Age

AHA is partnering with Sport and Health on a program on “maintaining strength, balance and good nutrition as we age.” The first of what is hoped to be a series will be Monday, Nov. 13, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Sport and Health, 209 Madison St.

Check Penny Roberts for details. Future programs in the series may include yoga, tai chi, meditation or mindfulness. Penny is at: psroberts378@gmail.com

Chats for Smaller Groups

Executive Director Cele Garrett announces AHA is exploring the idea of a series of sessions with smaller groups to explore “topics our members often ask about.”

The first session will be on Tuesday, Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the AHA office conference room. It will be entitled “A Little Help, Please.”

Janet Barnett of Synergy Home Care will “answer your personal questions and dispel the myth about in-home companion care—what it is, what it isn’t, and when it makes sense,” Garrett said. No RSVP is needed—just show up.

Plan to Attend Senior Law Day Program Oct.14

Register now for the seventh annual Senior Law Day, which will be held on Saturday, Oct. 14, at T.C. Williams High School auditorium, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The program is free (see below for how to register).

Co-sponsored by the Alexandria Bar Association and Senior Services of Alexandria, the program theme is “Aging in Alexandria: Planning for Life Transitions.” Local experts will discuss wills, power of attorney, legal and financial considerations related to life transitions, support services and senior residential living options.

The featured speaker will be Thomas West, partner at Signature Estate and Investment Advisors, LLC. This free event is co-sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association.

A light breakfast will be served.

Call 703-836-4414, extension 110 or go to www.seniorservicesalex.org to register.

SSA said the program is part of its fall tradition, “for seniors, families, friends, others. Come and find out what legal work you need to do. . . and what can happen if you don’t do it.”

AHA Cosponsors Program On Safe Driving as You Age

Experts on driving and seniors gave a detailed lecture Sept 25 on how to keep your driving skills sharp with the passing of the years.

The event at the Beatley Library was cosponsored by several entities, including AHA and NVRides, a network of service providers working to improve voluntary driving programs.

Fairfax Police Officer Sheila Ayers urged aging drivers to be alert to health and reaction-time changes that affect driver performance. Examples are vision, hearing, depth perception and familiarity with changes in automobiles, she said: “Be sure your car fits you.”

Drivers who buy new cars should take time to know their advancements in systems and protection, Bervin D. Elliott of the AARP driver safety program said. Even a driver’s loss of flexibility can affect driving – in reaction times, for example, Elliott said.

A panel moderated by television hostess Ingrid Parris-Hicklin discussed healthy approaches to driving.



Correction

In the September edition, a story about French heroines of the Resistance misspelled the name of Jeanne Bohec. We regret the error. See Page 3 for a report on the book recounting their actions.

Interest Group News

These folks are serious. The photo at right shows the **Bridge Club**, made up of AHA and Alexandria House players.

Bill Gemmill, at left in the photo, seems confident to have his hand on display for the few spectators. His wife, Francine (in stripes), had a serious fall at her home soon after this photo was taken, and at this writing was steadily recovering.

The bridge players regularly number at least two tables and usually play in The View room atop Alexandria House, as shown here. Nancy Kincaid, who organized the club, is in the left background.

The **“What’s in the News” interest group** is busting its britches. Its sessions are held at breakfast time in a separate room of the Royal Restaurant. The most recent session attracted 19, with several new faces in the crowd.

Trouble is, the room’s long table gets crowded at around 12 people and extras sit in chairs along the walls. The limit seems to be 22, so **THESE GROWING PAINS REQUIRE THAT AHA FOLKS RSVP AHEAD**. The acceptances will be cut off at 22.

The discussion/coffee sessions are often lively, in view of the intense developments in many areas of national and world news. The Sept. 12 event featured a long discussion on the current initiatives to remove statues of Confederate leaders and generals as well as the Confederate soldier in the middle of the intersection of Duke and Prince Streets.

Hostess Brenda Bloch-Young reported, “Feelings were mixed as many felt we need to review the context of



The Bridge Club is one of AHA’s many interest groups.

when the statues were erected and use these statues to reflect on our history.”

There was strong support for the "Dreamers"—immigrants brought to the United States as children—and for making the law’s protections permanent. This included a lengthy discussion on the need to enforce immigration laws.

The **Blazing Saddles**, those wild bicyclists spreading the AHA fitness story worldwide, resumed their schedule with a Sept. 21 outing, gathering at Madison and North Fairfax and cruising on over to Shirlington, with a stop for coffee in between.

Mine Sasaguri, the Japanese journalist who had filmed the Saddles in Alexandria, messaged that, alas, her editors cut her presentation and the Alexandria section was not in it. Sasaguri said maybe next time.

The **Walking Club** NEEDS WALKERS. The usual group numbers around four or five. This time of year, the morning weather is often mild and, with a breeze off the Potomac, pleasant.

Walkers noted in recent outings the yearly algae bloom and-or hydrilla spread in the river. It becomes thick enough for herons and egrets to stand on it to rest or graze. Mallards and Canada geese float around the edges. If you are interested in walking, gather Tuesdays at the foot of Madison Street, near the T.C. Williams boathouse. With cooler weather, starting time is 9 a.m.

After a pause, the **Opera Group** resumes Oct. 7, with Bellini’s Norma, at the AMC theater off Eisenhower Avenue. This is a new venue, at Hoffman 22, at 216 Swamp Fox Road, off Eisenhower Avenue. Buy tickets right away and check with Penny Roberts to sit with the group. The next opera comes quickly: On Oct. 14, the Met Live opera is Die Zauberflöte (the Magic Flute) at Hoffman 22.

A new Interest Group is forming: the **Mystery Book Club**. At the organizational meeting in Sheraton Suites, hosted by Kit Leider, nine readers showed up and “agreed to forge ahead,” Penny Roberts said. The group scheduled a Nov. 8 first meeting, at the home of Ann and L Liddle, 526 S. Pitt St. Members are asked to let Penny Roberts know of any interest in a more general book club.

Courage and Persistence – Heroines of Occupied France

Monique Saigal, who escaped the Nazis in occupied France, captivated an AHA audience Sept. 11 with a discussion of her book about 18 *“French Heroines 1940-45.”* They were among the many women who not only struggled to be a help in a largely male war but also fought the Nazi occupiers.

Maiti Girtanner created an escape channel to help people flee the Gestapo to England or North Africa. She hid some temporarily in a property through which German occupiers often roamed. Yvette Farnoux stole food for imprisoned Resistance fighters and got it to them thanks to “a few trustworthy guards.” Brigitte Friang joined a network for clandestine parachute drops and weapons landings. She learned all the landing places’ coordinates and the hiding places, meeting other operatives in person because communications were bugged. Jeanne Bohec taught teams to blow up railroads. Others described guiding supply flights to landing zones lighted by flashlight.

These are but a few of the stories of bravery and ingenuity of French heroines during the occupation.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

An AHA team assembled to spend some time Saturday, Sept. 16, telling the AHA story to passersby at the Alexandria Farmer's Market.

The group, headed by **Nancy Kincaid**, included **Penny Roberts, Pete Crouch and Bill Clayton**. Other AHA members who were shopping and dropped by: **Leonardo Contardo and Shelly Schwab**.

Leonardo went home with his market purchases and did what he invariably does: emailed a couple of items for the newsletter.

One of AHA's master gardeners, **Teddy Clayton**, was at the market helping with the weekly Plant Clinic of the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia.

Teddy and Bill Clayton helped Teddy's sister adjust to assisted living in Forrest City, Ark. In that southern small town, the Claytons were struck with the hospitality and friendliness. Fellow shoppers in stores say "Hello." Workers in small service stations say "yes, sir" and "ma'am."

Forrest City, named for Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, appears (to an outsider) not to have generated a debate over whether to change its name or remove vestiges of the Confederacy.

The Conversation With series takes on a particular lilt on Sunday, Oct. 29, with a presentation by Lynn Falk and the Potomac Mandolin Ensemble.

The informal discussion and eclectic musical presentation will be at 3 p.m. in the home of **Ruth and Georg Morduch** in Porto Vecchio. From classic to folk music to familiar tunes, there will be performances on mandolins, guitars and a mandola, which is to mandolin what viola is to violin.



Atul Gawande on Villages

Atul Gawande, physician/surgeon/author, entranced a large audience Sept. 25 with a discussion by webcast of how the village movement can affect choices toward the end of life. A large crowd attended a presentation cosponsored by At Home in Alexandria and Mount Vernon At Home, with special thanks to ACCFamily Home Care for sharing the cost, in the sanctuary of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church. He said the village movement can be "one of the right things easing people at the end of life." Older people, he said, are greatly—and sometimes needlessly -- affected by "boredom, loneliness, and helplessness."

Caregivers can avoid that by letting the elderly make choices, even some potentially harmful ones—that "allow them to have lives of more purpose and fulfillment," Gawande said. The surroundings must feel as close as possible to home. The key to end-of-life issues is to ask a person, "What makes your life worthwhile? What are your good days?" Gawande asked.

The webcast, to many of the hundreds of villages now operating in the United States, was a postponed celebration of the 15th anniversary of the start of the village movement at Beacon Hill Village in Boston.



The fall prevention class, one of a long series

AHA Members Participate in Fall Prevention Program

Friday, Sept. 22, was declared Fall Prevention Awareness Day by the National Council on Aging (NCOA). AHA members participated in a Fall Prevention program (photo above), one of a series to teach seniors how to avoid falls.

AHA Marketing Director Jen Heinz attended a recent session and the group demonstrated a basic stretch at the end of the class. The plan is to "get to the fancier exercises in coming weeks," she said.

Brenda Bloch-Young is coordinator of AHA participation in the classes.

The NCOA lists six steps to prevent a fall:

- Find a good balance and exercise program.
- Talk with your health care provider to assess risk.
- Review your medications with your doctor; avoid side effects that may increase risk of falling.
- Check your vision and hearing annually.
- Remove tripping hazards from your home. Increase lighting where needed. Have grab bars in key areas.
- Involve family members in taking simple steps to stay safe.



Atul Gawande

Chuckles and Highlights

These from a driving trip from Alexandria, VA, to Arkansas and back:

- Roadside sign in Tennessee: “Buckle up Y’all; It’s the Law.”
- Waitress in an Arkansas restaurant: “Did y’all already get y’all’s tea?”
- Sign on back of truck advertising “Access Technology.” Turns out it was referring to a dealer in doors.
- Daily newspapers are hard to find in small towns on a Sunday. But, a big Walmart store in eastern Arkansas has a long aisle selling guns.

Satirical Gem of the Day

About Congress: The newsletter of the Georgetown Village quoted the satirical group Capitol Steps as saying they had intended to start their career in show biz with a congressional Christmas theme “but they could not find three wise men or a virgin.”

What they found was Washington’s funny bone and they have been spoofing Congress for the past 30 years.

The routines range from talk about Hillary Clinton’s missing emails (she is “Deleter in Chief”) to Donald Trump’s talk about Mexicans who are all right because “they mow my hair.”

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Scams Victimizing Seniors

The National Council on Aging reports that scams aimed at senior citizens are so prevalent that they have become “the crime of the 21st Century.”

Here are the top ones, with NCOA’s advice:

- 1) **Beware of people posing as Medicare agents and asking for personal information.** They can use the information to bill Medicare and pocket the money.
- 2) **Counterfeit prescription drugs.** Mostly on the Internet, where seniors search for better prices. Some of the counterfeits do not help a medical condition and some may be outright harmful.
- 3) **Funeral and cemetery scams.** Scammers read obituaries, show up at funerals, and attempt to collect a false debt from the grieving family. Disreputable funeral homes sometimes charge for a fine casket even when there is a cremation.
- 4) **Anti-aging products.** Older Americans can ask a doctor if they really work.
- 5) **Phone scams.** A caller says he or she has found (or won) a large sum and will share it only if the older victim withdraws money or wires money.
- 6) **Email scams.** Messages that seem to be from a legitimate entity ask a senior to “update” personal information. Do not bite.
- 7) **Investment schemes.** From pyramid schemes offering wildly large returns to the “Nigerian Prince” seeking a partner to help claim the money.
- 8) **Property tax scam.** An official-looking letter offers to help reduce a property assessment for a fee.
- 9) **Prize scam.** A caller informs a senior over the phone of a rich prize or lottery victory that can be claimed only with payment of a “winner’s fee.”
- 10) **The grandparent scam.** A caller says, “Hi, Grandma; do you know who this is?” The grandparent’s guess of a name gives the scammer an opening to say he or she has lost money or passport and needs money wired immediately.

NCOA says to keep handy the phone numbers and resources you can turn to, including the police, your bank (if your account has been raided) and Adult Protective Services in your area, which can be located through a government resource line: 1-800-677-1176. The website is www.eldercare.gov.

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