

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



Annual Gala Once Again Proves a Boost To AHA Spirits and Coffers

AHA's Annual Gala "was fun, engaging, high-spirited and run without a hitch," AHA Vice Chair Jane King said. "We indeed painted the town red." Gala Chair Pam Nelson "did her usual masterful job," King said.

"We continue to get a little better at this each year," AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett said. Nelson said, "We had a great mix of veterans and first-timers on the Gala Committee. It was truly a group effort."

Sandy Heistad, one of the newer members of the group, said, "I especially liked

all the enthusiasm people expressed during the evening. They loved the event and had a very good time." With the Gala revenue, "AHA continues to be in good shape financially," Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reported.

Be a Snow Buddy, Call a Snow Buddy

Yes, it may be time again to think about snow on the driveway, cars and walks. The weather people are already speculating on when snow is expected.

Last year, we escaped with only one light snow, but who knows? And, one snow buddy got relieved of duty when the member said a friendly neighbor had already beat him to the job. **When/if snow comes and you need somebody to clear it at your home, or if you want to volunteer, phone AHA 703-231-0824 or go online aha@athomeinalexandria.org**



The Season of Giving

By Cele Garrett, AHA Executive Director

As this newsletter hits your door, you may already have another envelope in your mailbox: a letter from AHA volunteer and member Susanne Adams, inviting you to consider AHA in your year-end contributions.

Many individuals evaluate their charitable giving at year's end—to maximize tax deductions if needed or to see which causes they'd intended to support throughout the past year. That's why you hear from so many nonprofits right now. You may grow weary of all those fundraising letters, but remember that many nonprofits rely on year-end giving to help them over the hurdle.

Did you know At Home in Alexandria accepts gifts of stock as well as money? When you donate securities, you receive the same income tax savings as you would with a check, but with the added benefit of eliminating capital gains taxes, which can be as high as 20 percent,

Already, AHA has heard from a handful of supporters getting a jump on their donations—even before receiving our letter—and we are humbled and grateful.

A Matter of Balance Classes To Be Repeated in Spring

By Cele Garrett, AHA Executive Director

The first class of 11 "A Matter of Balance" participants "graduated" this past month. Mayor Silberberg came to the last session to offer her congratulations and to express her support. I'm very grateful to Brenda Bloch-Young, Chriss Nielsen and Babs Waters for their leadership on this project. And, many thanks to those AHA board members who were willing to be the guinea pigs in this first class! Brenda has received a commitment from the Cora Kelly Center for the spring term beginning in March. Thanks also to Bob Eiffert, who spoke with Holly Hanisian from Goodwin House at Home. They want to provide a second instructor (to join Babs) for our spring classes.

AHA Members Try Out Fitness Club

A contingent from AHA tried out the training and facilities of a fitness center in November to see whether any were interested in joining.

The photos below show the group being guided by Sport and Health instructor Bernard Moore. Kerry Hart also instructed, which gave the group an excuse for this mnemonic device: “Moore for more health, Hart for heart health.”



Fitness Instructor Bernard Moore of Sport & Health talks to the AHA group.



AHA's "Horizontal Rockettes" practicing leg lifts at Sport and Health. Clockwise from left: Penny Roberts, Shelly Schwab, Kit Leider, Ruth Arnold



Look What Awaits at Happy Hour
The “groaning board” of goodies at AHA Happy Hour, one of AHA’s most popular evening events.



AHA’s Penny Roberts opens the program “Conquering Clutter” at the Beatley Library before an audience of 35.

Joint Program Offers Tips On Dealing With “Too Much Stuff”

A November program on decluttering sponsored jointly by AHA and the Beatley Library offered tips on how to “declutter” a house and otherwise transform living space into a more aging-friendly atmosphere.

Penny Roberts introduced the program, attended by 35 people interested in such topics as “What do I do with all my stuff?”

Whether interested in moving or making their home more livable as they age, the listeners had many questions.

Megan Schmidt of TAD Relocations covered the main options: “Sell it,” “Donate it,” “Give it away.”

Tour your home, she advised, to get a firm idea of “the things you would not grieve to lose tomorrow.” Then “sort and segregate.” Find out if relatives want something. “Send a list to everybody” to determine interest.

Then prepare to sell some items, through auctions, estate sales, consignment, online and such, she advised. Donate, to charities, donation centers, thrift and consignment shops. Or give it away, to donation drives, public entities like libraries, such things as Craigslist, or friends and neighbors. Finally, consider junk dealers or trash pickup services.

Peter Crouch of AHA spoke about reducing paperwork and choosing things to keep when moving.

He handed out sticky notes for marking items “keep,” “family,” “sell,” “donate,” “discard.”

The IRS or online search sites can give guidance on what receipts to keep and how long. Diligence may mean cutting or avoiding the tax from a house sale, Crouch said. “When in doubt, keep the receipt.”



Peter Crouch

AHA Well Represented At Village to Village Conference

by Jennifer Heinz

A sizable delegation from AHA attended the November Village to Village conference in Baltimore, giving presentations and participating in plenary and side sessions.

AHA attendees from staff included Cele Garrett, Jen Heinz, Dara Surratt, Bernice Courtenay and Monica Estabrooke. AHA member attendees were Barbara Rosenfeld, Jane King, Susan Pettey, Bob Eiffert, Alan Dinsmore, Mary Jayne Swanson, Nancy Blanton and Pete Crouch.

Jan Pomerantz, an Advisory Council member, was a presenter with Garrett and Estabrooke.

Most attendees at the conference were from Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, but there were about 400 attendees in all, from as far away as California.

Garrett, Estabrooke and Pomerantz presented a session that was very well received, entitled "Fund Development for Mature Villages." The AHA participants fanned out to cover as many sessions as possible and will be sharing their notes.

The PowerPoint presentations from the sessions have been downloaded from the Village to Village Network website and will be a continuing resource on a variety of important topics, including reducing social isolation, increasing village diversity, emergency preparedness and supporting vulnerable members.



L to R: Jan Pomerantz, Monica Estabrooke and Cele Garrett work on their presentation to the conference.



In left photo, clockwise from left: Cele Garrett, Mary Jayne Swanson, Jane King, Susan Pettey, Pete Crouch, Dara Surratt. Middle Photo: Alan Dinsmore, Bob Eiffert, Jen Heinz. Right photo: Susan Pettey, Barbara Rosenfeld, Bernice Courtenay.



Virginia Martin introduces program.

Cynthia Boyer Gives Tour of Her Art

Cynthia Boyer gave AHA villagers a tour of her eclectic art collection on Nov. 19, wowing visitors.

The program was introduced by Virginia Martin, chair of the "Conversation With" series.

The Boyer home has the amenities of a museum, with track lights and many

niches and surfaces to display art —paintings, pottery, sculptures and displays of her particular skill—fabric art, both wearable and for display.

Boyer said she and her husband, Al, first got fascinated with Mexican art 60 years ago. Their interests and acquisitions broadened to ceramics and sculptures and along the way, she became friends with prominent artists and crafts people. One time, she got a sculpture "and I think I made jackets" for the artist's wife as payment, she said.



Martin with Boyer, cuddling metal sculpture of warthog.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Penny Roberts has a tee shirt that reads: "Free the bound periodicals." Others in the **Walking Group** were puzzled. Did it mean newspapers in bondage? Jailed journalists? No. Penny said: "It is just silliness, and comes before storing everything in the Cloud, when libraries used to take a year or a half year's worth of periodicals, say Atlantic Monthly, and would bind them into large volumes for storage."

I guess it is better than "I'm With Stupid."

When she was not unbinding periodicals, **Penny** was traveling in Portugal. She reported: "Had a lovely time. Spent two nights in a castle, the inside of which was lavishly decorated with scenes of Portuguese history in tiles. Wellington slept there, too. And I was in awe of the magnificent library at the university in Coimbra."

The evening AHA **Dine Around group** encountered a rare thing: a restaurant that does not take reservations. Not to be denied, two of the diners came 'way early to grab a large booth for the other five who wanted to dine.

These are the times we live in: The **Bill Claytons** had five friends over for Thanksgiving lunch. The conversation was dominated by discussion (punctuated by visits to online sources and the Claytons' copy of the Constitution) of the 25th Amendment covering presidential disability and succession.

Speaking of Thanksgiving, seven from AHA enjoyed **Thanksgiving Day lunch** at Laporta's Restaurant: **Nancy Kincaid, Brigitte Guttstadt and sister Ursula McKinney, Jean Antone, Shirley Rettig and Shelly and Dick Schwab.** The three-course set menu included soup or salad, turkey with many trimmings, and dessert.



TGIF at the Fin and Hoof

The TGIF gathering welcomed a newcomer, **Teddy McBay**, center, in blue. Next to her is **Steve Nelson**, who recruited her for the pickleball team upon learning of her interest in that sport. The other member of the AHA pickleball "team" is **Ann Kaupp**, whose wrist is just visible at the lower left corner. Others were **Nancy Kincaid, Pam Nelson, Ann and L Liddle, Helen Desfosses, Bill Clayton and Sandy Heistad.**

Interest Groups

Our village has several Interest Groups, of which the newest is the Mystery Book Club.

Members are invited to join and take part in these lively groups, listed below with contacts:

- **Mystery Book Club** – L Liddle 703-548-1962 llliddle@gmail.com or Kit Leider 571-970-0317 ksleider@aol.com or Penny Roberts 703-836-9644 psroberts378@gmail.com. Liddle is also the contact for any interest in a Chess Club.
- **Opera in HD** – Penny Roberts
- **Movie Group** – Jane Starkey 703-528-0809 jane_starkey098@comcast.net or Nancy Kincaid 703-836-4794 nancyk764@verizon.net
- **AHA/Alexandria House Bridge Group** – Nancy Kincaid (see above)
- **Theatre Buffs** – Margaret French maggiem321@aol.com or Megan Evans meganevans@verizon.net
- **Walking Club** – Bill Clayton 703-548-0958 tbclayton@comcast.net or Barbara Rosenfeld barbarabrosenfeld@gmail.com
- **What's in the News** – Brenda Bloch-Young 914-715-3463
- **Blazing Saddles bicycling group** – Maggie and Barry Stauffer 703-549-8680 maggie.stauffer@comcast.net

Note: The Walking Club and Blazing Saddles are in their winter hiatus and will resume with warm weather. The Mystery Book Club has proven so successful that bookworms are thinking about another genre. Check with the current book group contacts if you have ideas of another group.



Cameron Station Meet and Greet

Cele Garrett (rear, holding coffee), Jen Heinz and Jane King (right background) led a Nov. 28 meet-and-greet session at Cameron Station that filled a table and part of the coffee bar, telling the story of AHA.

Several visitors expressed an interest in AHA.

Chuckles and Chortles

- Ah, the youngest generation: A teacher tells a pupil his book report is late. He totally befuddles her with this made-up language: “I ghostposted it to my Zipcast over the Jetnet so you would get it early.”

(Periodically, Leonardo Contardo sends the Newsletter paraprodsokians – word plays with a twist. Here are some of his favorites.)

- I find it ironic that the colors red, white and blue stand for freedom, except when they are flashing behind you.
- A man asked me for a small donation for the new swimming pool. I gave him a glass of water.
- Take my advice; I’m not using it.
- Hospitality is the art of making guests feel at home when you wish they were.
- Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.
- I am good at multi-tasking: I can waste time, be unproductive and procrastinate all at the same time.
- If I had a dollar for every girl who found me unattractive, they would eventually find me very attractive.

Uptick in Membership

Executive Director Cele Garrett reported that, as the newsletter was being written, AHA membership stood at 167, slightly above a month previously but below the goal.

The number emphasizes what the AHA leadership has repeatedly said—all the villagers should be involved in building membership.

New members include Babs and Elliot Waters, Louise Meng, Jessica LeFevre, Joan Johnson, Susanne and Bud Adams, Marie Cataffo and Jane Flinn.

Controlling Key Risk Factors May Help Prevent Dementia

The Mayo Clinic Health Letter reports that more than one-third of dementia cases “could potentially be prevented by addressing several key risk factors.”

Among them:

Diabetes, hypertension and obesity—

Taking diabetes medicine as prescribed, controlling high blood pressure and consuming a healthy diet “may help you lose any excess weight and improve your cardiovascular health, thus potentially reducing your dementia risk,” the article said.

Inactivity—“Exercise can help increase blood flow to the brain, reduce the loss of brain cells and improve cardiovascular-related dementia risk factors.”

Smoking—Smoking “has been linked to a 41 percent increased risk of dementia.”

Depression and social isolation—Mayo says some research “suggests that depression can negatively impact stress hormones and alter brain structure. Being socially isolated can also be a risk factor for dementia.

The report says if you have depression, “your doctor may recommend therapy or medication.”

In view of concerns about dementia and Alzheimer’s, Mayo Clinic reminds people: “For many people, minor forgetfulness is a sign of normal aging.”

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