

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

Where the Rubber Hits the Road: Volunteers Filling Soaring Need for Transportation

AHA volunteers filled a sharply increasing number of requests for transportation in 2017, Executive Director Cele Garrett reported in January.

Requests for rides in 2017 totaled 876 compared with 585 the previous year. The increase came as total membership increased only modestly.

Other categories of service totaled far fewer requests than transportation, but some had a steady increase. For 2017, there were 148 requests for outdoor services and maintenance compared with 115 in 2016.



Requests for “personal connection,” which included contacts such as personal visits and “buddy help” outside the specific task-oriented member requests, totaled 140, up from 125 the previous year.

Calls for help with technology totaled 70 in the past year, only a modest change from previous years’ requests.

A dramatic increase was shown in a listing of the sponsored and cosponsored events in which AHA was involved. For 2017, those rose from 124 the previous year to 184 at the end of 2017—nearly a 50 percent increase.

Membership growth, a topic of repeated challenge to AHA, showed dramatic increase in the early years, a natural factor of a young association members, but has lagged in recent years because of retirement, death, moves, and other factors. The increase in associate memberships has been steady for years, rising in 2017 to 72 compared with 98 full memberships.

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, whom the Board praised for agreeing to stay on another year, repeated the current mantra for the village: “members, members, members.” Still, she reported, “We are very strong as an organization.” She said she will research what other villages are doing with membership dues and categories. The year-end appeal for donations gave AHA “a very strong finish” to its fiscal year, Garrett said.

Under the AHA Strategic Plan, the goal is to increase full single memberships by eight each year, full member households by four each year and associate households by eight each year.

The office staff is working on ways to “streamline the way we do things in the office,” Garrett said, and “enhance or improve” the volunteers’ and the members’ experiences with AHA.

Jane King, presiding over the Board meeting for the first time as its chair, said, “As we grow as an organization, there is ever more to do.” She asked each AHA committee chair to submit an operational plan for the year, keeping in mind the effects on the staff workload. It was Bob Eiffert’s first meeting as vice chair.



Pam Nelson took over as Governance Committee chair, succeeding Helen Desfosses, who assumed the job of secretary. Nelson, who retired last year from the consulting firm Harris Corp., chaired the 2017 Gala Committee. She dubbed as “The Three Ladies” the newcomers to the Board: herself, Babs Waters and Susanne Adams.

Desfosses won praise for her knowledgeable and thorough work on the Governance Committee, whose purview covers everything AHA does.

In the next six months, the Board will be discussing possible changes in membership categories and dues.

Program Chair Penny Roberts said the Beatley Library is interested in collaborative programs with AHA, using library space or facilities.

Venue Change Alert

The Feb. 25 Conversation With Don Peterson on “Politics Today” has been moved to the community room of Portner’s Landing, 621 N. St. Asaph.

Ruth Morduch will admit attendees at the front door.

Vance Hall 1930-2018

At Home in Alexandria member Walter Vance Hall died Jan. 6 at the age of 87.

He had served with the Foreign Service in Seoul, Naples and Huva, Fiji, and with the United States mission to the United Nations. After his retirement in 1982 Hall continued to work with the State Department, on Freedom of Information cases.

Hall studied at Hampden-Sydney College, served in the Navy and received a degree in foreign service from Georgetown University.

Hall served two terms on the Alexandria Archaeological Foundation. He enjoyed tutoring children, gardening, entertaining, cooking and reading.

He is survived by his wife, Julia (whom he married in Rome in 1963), two sons and two grandsons.



Vance Hall (R) with family
John, Denise, Anders, Julia, and Lleyton
Alexandria Times photo

Change\$ in Taxe\$

Check your tax advisor for changes that may affect you in the new tax law. One category that may affect many seniors affects deductions including mortgage interest, for financing after 1/1/18:

Deductibility is limited to interest on \$750,000 for couples, \$375,000 for individuals.

- Home equity interest is no longer deductible.
- Deductibility of state and local taxes is capped at \$10,000.

One major thing left alone: the \$500,000 per couple (\$250,000 per individual) exclusion for capital gains tax on selling a principal residence. But be sure to keep receipts for capital improvements.

Cold Season Precautions From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

It is the cold season and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has valuable suggestions for avoiding and treating colds.

“Viruses that cause colds can spread from infected people to others through the air and close personal contact,” the CDC reports.

“You can also get infected through contact with stool (poop) or respiratory secretions from an infected person. This can happen when you shake hands with someone who has a cold, or touch a doorknob that has viruses on it, then touch your eyes, mouth, or nose.

“Help reduce your risk of getting a cold by washing hands often with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds.

“Practice good cough and sneeze etiquette: always cough and sneeze into a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, completely covering your mouth and nose.”

If soap and water are not available for washing hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Viruses that cause colds can live on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

When possible, stay away from people who are sick.

Contact the CDC at www.cdc.gov

Birthday Giving Reversed

New Vice Chair Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry reversed the usual routine of a birthday—they spent Bob’s birthday Friday, Jan. 19, delivering household and personal supplies to very-low-income, homebound seniors in rural Giles County, Va.

Eiffert reports: “We drove over 100 miles to deliver supplies to eight of the most remote mountain places you could imagine. The poverty is grinding, and some of the houses were nearly falling down around the people.

“But they were very appreciative of the help, and we came away feeling both gratified and thankful for the overabundance of our own lives.” Their “guide” was Deena Flinchum of Blacksburg, an extraordinary volunteer for the elderly, who received a grant for the work.

Memorial Gift

AHA extends its sympathies to the family of Virginia (Ginger) Quinn, longtime Alexandria resident and AHA supporter. We appreciate the family kindly choosing AHA as one of their beneficiaries of a memorial gift.

Spotlight on Sandy Northrop

By Ann Kaupp

When you meet Sandy Northrop, documentary filmmaker and AHA associate member, you are drawn in by her energy, passion for life and curiosity about the world.

I walked away from our meeting with a smile on my face and thought how privileged I would feel to accompany her on a film project and watch her at work.

Northrop was born in Princeton, N.J., and at an early age realized that visual arts would be her focus in life. In 1969, she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with a major in photography, at the University of Michigan.

Describing herself as a hippie, wearing purple bell-bottoms and opposing the Vietnam War, she headed to San Francisco, where she landed a position in a film laboratory. Later she became a freelance film editor, often working at American Zoetrope, founded by Francis Ford Coppola. Sandy felt that editing was a natural role for her. She came to realize her increased ability to impact an audience when photography was combined with music and narration.

While working, Sandy commuted to Stanford University. In 1972 she received a Master of Arts degree in communications and headed to Los Angeles, where she worked as an independent contractor and edited the Federal Aviation Administration's documentary *In Celebration of Flight*.

Sandy returned to the East Coast in 1975. A mutual friend of hers and journalist David Lamb, who recently had covered the 1975 fall of Saigon for the *Los Angeles Times*, set up a blind date between the two. She was wearing her purple bell bottoms and David was wearing madras pants.

It was love at first sight; two weeks later they moved in together.

David soon was assigned to Nairobi as the Black Africa bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*. During their four years there, Sandy worked on films for National Geographic. In 1980, David received a Harvard fellowship. Sandy found herself back in the editing room working on three one-hour shows on Saudi Arabia. David

became the *Los Angeles Times* Middle East bureau chief, based in Cairo. His books *The Africans* and *The Arabs* were published in 1987 and 2002, respectively.

Sandy and David returned to the United States in 1985, spending the next four years in Los Angeles. Sandy ventured out on her own, assuming all the roles involved in producing a film—raising money, filming, editing, advertising, etc. She had met pianist Jimmy McKissic and when she learned that he was going to debut at Carnegie Hall, she filmed his life story, aired on PBS.

She continued filming and writing and when David was assigned to Vietnam by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1997, Sandy worked on a trilogy of films about Vietnam—and learned to shoot her own documentaries.

Back in the United States in 2001, David developed cancer, which took his life in 2016. AHA members will remember the programs Sandy and David put on for AHA about their experiences.

Sandy still returns to Vietnam, which she considers a second home.



Sandy Northrop

Brenda Bloch-Young, Sandy Northrop Featured in Spring Conversations

Two of AHA's talented members will be featured at the March and April Conversations.

On March 18, Sandy Northrop will speak on Vietnam. She is a documentary filmmaker who produced a number of films on Vietnam when her husband David was South Asia bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times*. She has returned to Vietnam many times since and will speak about her February, 2018 trip accompanying a group of Vietnam veterans.

On April 15, Brenda Bloch-Young, an AHA Board member and retired CPA/Tax Director, whose career included several years at PWC, will speak on the new tax law. Her title is "Tax Reform or Tax Cut? Implications of the Tax Cut and Jobs Act." Brenda currently teaches a class at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) on investment basics in retirement and is a frequent moderator of OLLI's Investment Forum. She chairs AHA's discussion program "What's in the News," which has proven a lively look at current politics, taxation, immigration and other front-page topics.

Don't miss these two terrific speakers in the Conversations With . . . series, March 18 and April 15.

RSVP to the AHA office to attend either or both. Phone 703-231-0824.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Steve Nelson, when told he appeared to be recovering nicely from double knee replacement, played with a current phrase in the political lexicon: They are what the President would call “fake knees,” he said. (Editor’s note: For shame, Steve Nelson.)

Carol and Stuart Downs rang in the new year in Key West and reported there is no “ball drop” as in Times Square. “Ever different, the Conch Republic pays homage by – what else – dropping a giant conch shell from the roof of Sloppy Joe’s Bar,” Carol reported.

Years ago, **L Liddle** taught **Helen Desfosses** how to play chess, so she could keep up with her grandson **Zach**. We will let her report on the next challenge:

“There’s a new one with the younger grandchild, **Jake**, who wants to be a rock climber. I accompanied him ... to an indoor climbing facility, gasping as he scrambled like a mountain goat up a 60-foot wall.” She thinks that, in contrast to chess, she cannot learn rock climbing.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

We Want You!

AHA has many roles for volunteers. As former Chair **Barbara Rosenfeld** was wont to say: We are all volunteers; some have not yet latched onto a role. But hidden in the statistical survey of what we did for members in 2017 is a wide range of functions, some through the AHA operations managers, some with a committee or coordinator:

- Driving members to appointments
- Running errands, shopping
- Maintenance
- Small repairs
- Yardwork
- Helping with paperwork or decluttering
- Snow removal
- Patient advocacy
- Arranging a translator
- Referral to professional services

Find your volunteer role with AHA.

One good source is the AHA website

www.aha@athomeinalexandria.org

Or email aha@athomeinalexandria.org

Or phone 703-231-0824



The new Board of AHA at its Jan. 16 meeting. Clockwise from foreground: new Chair Jane King, Executive Director Cele Garrett, Linda Langley, Penny Roberts, Susanne Adams, Babs Waters (distant background), Mary Jayne Swanson, Charles Ablard (background), Secretary Helen Desfosses, Pam Nelson, outgoing Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, Vice Chair Bob Eiffert, Treasurer Chriss Nielsen.

“Tech Tuesdays” Series Begins

In photo at right, Marketing Manager Jen Heinz guides Alan Dinsmore on the intricacies of storing photos in a computer, in the first of a series of “Tech Tuesdays” tutorials. This session was attended by five AHA members learning more about electronics. It covered photography, voice recognition and computer maps.



Session Planned on Grief and Loss

We all at times have lost something or somebody dear to us, or have experienced the sense of loss that comes from life changes such as decreased independence. How we process those life changes makes a big difference.

Mary Ray, licensed clinical social worker, will speak to At Home in Alexandria about coping with our own grief and how, as volunteers and caregivers, we can help others who are dealing with loss and grief.

The session will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on March 8, 2018 at Portner’s Landing’s community room, 621 St. Asaph Street.

Board of Directors

Jane King, Chair	Brenda Bloch-Young
Bob Eiffert, Vice Chair	Susanne Adams
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Mary Jayne Swanson

Executive Director

Cecile (Cele) Garrett

Marketing Manager

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Vicki Vasques

Operations Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke, Bernice Courtenay
and Dara Surratt

AHA’s Alan Dinsmore Participates in Planning for Safer Streets

The City has adopted “Vision Zero” with the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028.

Data collected by City of Alexandria public safety agencies show that older residents of Alexandria are very much at risk of serious injury or death from such as vehicle speed, distracted driving and drivers running red lights and stop signs.

Old Town and the West End have some of the highest crash rates involving severe injury to pedestrians.

The goal is to reduce these crashes through traffic safety enforcement, engineering of safer road and intersection design, and public education.

AHA Board Member Alan Dinsmore participated in the working groups that designed the final product and provided statements in support of Vision Zero at two City Council hearings.

The complete final design can be viewed at the City of Alexandria home page.

www.Alexandriava.gov/VisionZero

Program Committee Seeks Ideas For Programs, Interest Groups

Program Chair Penny Roberts asks: **Do you have an idea** for an AHA program? The Program Committee needs members and volunteers to help develop programs for AHA’s members. Contact Penny at psroberts378@gmail.com or Alan Dinsmore wingsofthemorning@comcast.net or 703-851-2040.

Are you looking for kindred spirits to share your particular interest? Chess? Science fiction? History? Hiking?

Let Penny Roberts or the Program Committee know. AHA has several interest groups but some members have expressed interest in forming new groups.

You can reach Penny at psroberts378@gmail.com. However, don’t expect an immediate reply: She will be in Antarctica until Feb. 23, but will be checking emails if the penguins allow.

CONTACT US

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