

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

*Editor's Note: The article that follows is the first of a series of articles by the AHA Member Services Committee, chaired by Susan Pettey. The first discusses how to prepare for a medical appointment. A second article, *Planning for A Scheduled Hospital Stay*, will be in the September newsletter. October will have *Preparing to Come Home (from a hospital stay)* and *After Coming Home*.*

*For November, *Planning for Medical Emergencies* will be the focus.*

*The final in the series, *Resources for Advance Planning for Health Care Decisions*, will be in December.*

All the articles are available in the AHA Website under

Preparing for a Medical Appointment

AHA Member Services Committee

To make the most of the visit with your physician or other health professional, you will want to organize your thoughts and develop an agenda.

Bring a list of all current prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and vitamins that you take. Report any problems you have had taking your medications (side effects, timing, etc.).

List any symptoms or changes you have noticed since your last visit. Be as specific as possible, such as when the problem began. Think about what questions or concerns you want to discuss with the health professional. Write them down.

Arrive on time. At the beginning of your appointment, give the health professional a copy of the list of your concerns and questions.

Before you leave, be sure that your questions and concerns have been addressed and that you have an accurate understanding of:

- What was discussed at the appointment
- Any diagnosis made
- The treatment or plan, including medications (dosage and possible side effects) and other treatment options (e.g. therapies) that may be available to you
- Any follow-up needed after the appointment, including the nature and contact information for the follow-up, and who will make the appointment.

Ask your physician to give you a clearly written statement with those key elements in it, as well as a hard copy of any referral form or physician order.



AHA's "Lending Closet" Can Help Meet Members' Needs

AHA folks: Remember that AHA has a "Lending Closet." If you are into a temporary rehab or recovery and need some items, check with the office.

The Lending Closet has canes and crutches, a couple of walkers, custom tennis balls for walker feet, wheelchairs, a toilet-seat extension, a tub seat and more.

Contact AHA at 703-231-0824



On the balcony: Pam Nelson, Ann Liddle and L Liddle.



Hanging on the railing. A good view of the brightly lit Wilson Bridge in the left background.

Photos by Steve Nelson



A happy hour before the fireworks: Left to right: Mary Nefedov, Maggie French and (standing) Penny Roberts and Julie Gentry

AHA, Goodwin House at Home Collaborate on Wellness Workshop

At Home in Alexandria (AHA) is pleased to continue the tradition of partnering with Goodwin House at Home to copresent an informative and interactive session Aug. 29.

Entitled “A Road to Discovery: Achieving Emotional Wellness Regardless of the Bumps Along the Way,” the workshop will feature remarks by AHA’s Ruth Arnold, Goodwin’s Beth Robinson and social worker and therapist Rebecca Harrison. Registration is 1:30-1:50 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 29, in the auditorium of Goodwin House Bailey’s Crossroads, 3440 South Jefferson St., Falls Church, VA 22041.

Complimentary valet parking and refreshments will be offered. After welcoming remarks, the panel members will speak from 2 to 3 p.m., followed by a period for questions from the audience. The speakers will share trends in aging and techniques for resilience, discuss how to create support systems and offer tips for managing stresses.

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett expressed AHA’s “thanks to Goodwin House at Home for welcoming us once again to their Bailey’s Crossroads location for this workshop.” Alan Dinsmore and Carol Downs of AHA helped plan the event.

Leaders Proud of AHA Progress

In its seven years, At Home in Alexandria has become “a village model,” often leading workshops at the annual national conference, Chair Jane King reported in a letter to AHA members.

“There is something for everyone in AHA,” she said.

As she wrote her report, AHA counted 219 members, representing 165 households, and “eighty-plus superstar volunteers.”

Using the first six months of the year as a predictor, AHA is on its way to have filled 1,300 member requests in 2018 and to have hosted 160 events “ranging from discussion groups to happy hours to book club meetings,” King said.

“We are no longer the ‘new kid in town,’” she said.

The Board is looking at the best practices for keeping the village sustainable and strong.

AHA has established a major and planned giving campaign, is simplifying fundraising, is pursuing grant opportunities and ways to streamline operations. The Board is examining the AHA dues structure and its comparison with other villages.

“I am very proud of all that we have accomplished,” King said.

Executive Director Cele Garrett announced new members include full member Catherine Sinclair and associate members Victoria Almquist, Howard Weiss, Anne and Eugene Augusterfer and Lydia and James Enright.

The Board discussed a proposal by Governance Chair Pam Nelson to require in the Bylaws that Board members be members of AHA. The Board will vote in September.

The Board is pleased with our financial position at the moment,” Vice Chair Bob Eiffert said, “but is concerned about raising funds in a variety of ways to assure long-term sustainability. We want to assure a robust future to continue to serve Alexandria's older residents with as full a range of services as possible.”



Happy Hour Draws a Crowd

Howard Weiss and Pam Nelson chat at Happy Hour. In background, a group around the table of goodies including newcomers Lydia and James Enright.



Ladies Night Out

The AHA Ladies' Night Out group at their new location, Sundays in Saigon. In foreground, Kit Leider, Nancy Kincaid (munching) and Penny Roberts. In far center background: Linda Langlely, who arranged for the new venue for the ladies.

Service Dogs Explained

By AHA Member Toni Popkin
(Whose Service Dog is “Bud”)

“I wish I could have my dog with me all the time.” Have you thought this when you see a service dog team? I hear it all the time.

The general public is confused about laws governing use of service dogs. I'd like to clear up some of the misinformation.

Here are some things to know.

Service dogs are not pets. They are trained to do specific tasks to assist persons with disabilities. They learn to focus only on their partner, ignoring other people, dogs and smells. They become comfortable in various everyday situations, keeping quiet in public and able to adapt to going anywhere with their partner.

There is no such thing as a certified or registered service dog, despite scam sites that sell papers, vets, identifications, and other bling purporting to show a pet is a service dog.

Emotional support animals are pets. They are vastly different from service dogs and are not specially trained to do anything – they make you feel better. They are not trained to ignore other dogs. In many states, it is illegal to take a pet in public, pretending it is a service dog. To qualify for an emotional support animal, you must have a diagnosed mental condition and documentation from your mental health professional,

Therapy dogs are different from service dogs or emotional support animals. They are tested for temperament and visit groups of people where they can offer hugs and love and be petted. They visit nursing homes, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, schools and libraries. They must be invited and have no public access to any other place.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Eleven people participated in the first meeting of the **Current Events discussion group**. Hosted by Virginia Martin, the group discussed the Second Amendment. After an August break, the group will reconvene in September, with **Julie Gentry** as host for a discussion of increasing voter participation.

The success of the Mystery Book Club has given rise to the **Monday Book Club**. Subject matter will be determined each time by the person who agrees to moderate. The next session will be at 2 p.m. Sept. 17 at the Royal Restaurant. The book will be the novel *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikery* by Gabrielle Zevin.

Other possible interest groups that have been suggested are in search of a host. Check with **Penny Roberts** if you are interested in starting a group—dancing, evening movies, arts, museums, or others. You can reach Penny at Psroberts378@gmail.com

The Ladies' Night Out and TGIF groups have found a new home, maybe permanently: Sundays in Saigon. The previous venue, Sheraton Suites, discontinued its happy hour and **Linda Langley** asked her friends at Sundays in Saigon about filling the void. So far, the two groups have liked the change. The place is quiet enough for comfortable conversation and the munchies have a Vietnamese touch.

Ah, the world travelers. Asked for a newsletter item on AHA pickleball players, **Ann Kaupp** replied in effect, "Not now. I am in Borneo." But she sent a video of a young orangutan and a photo of a certificate attesting that she had "donated blood" by being bitten by a Tiger Leech.

A young orangutan hangin' out in Borneo, below. At right, Kaupp's "certificate" congratulating her for "donating blood" through a bite from a Tiger Leech in the Danum Valley Conservation Area of Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.



William Robert Hahn, Jr., 1933-2018

AHA member Bill Hahn, a resident of the Washington D.C. area since the 1950s, died April 21 after a long battle with lung cancer.

Born in New York City, Hahn attended Stuyvesant High School and later earned a degree in electrical engineering at George Washington University and a doctorate at the University of Maryland.

Hahn served in the army from 1953 to 1955, as a heavy weapons infantryman.

His career was in acoustical engineering, with a specialty in underwater acoustics and sonar. He taught electrical engineering courses at the University of Maryland and George Washington University.

He lived since 2001 in Old Town with his third wife of 26 years, Trudi Bellardo Hahn.

Bill Hahn loved classical music and was an avid art collector. He was an aficionado of fine wines, dark ales, and single-malt scotch whiskeys.

After he retired, Bill and Trudi enjoyed traveling throughout the U.S., Europe, and Canada, and visiting Trudi's children, Lewis Bellardo and Annalisa Braithwaite, and their families.



Bill Hahn

AHA Buddies Meeting Scheduled in September

Please mark your calendars now for the next meeting of **AHA Buddies**. We will meet Sept. 26 at noon, at the home of Susanne Adams, 510 South Fairfax Street. Susanne has generously offered to provide lunch for us.

We will discuss how things are going with you and your volunteer work with your buddies. In addition, Alan Dinsmore has lined up Beth Robinson from Goodwin House to speak about durable medical equipment and assistive devices that may be useful to our buddies.

I hope to see you in September.

Susan Pettey, Buddies Chair

Rock-Solid Messages

On Wednesday, Aug. 22 at 10:30 a.m., at the AHA office, **member Toni Popkin** will host a workshop on painting Kindness Rocks to give to someone who needs a kind word. Toni will supply materials and suggest ideas. Space is limited, so register early.



Tour of Beatley Library's Special Collections for AHA Members

Board Member Alan Dinsmore has arranged with the Beatley Library for a tour of its Special Collections.

A librarian will also lead a discussion about managing personal papers and memorabilia—what to keep, and what outlets there may be for your documents.

Mark your calendar: The tour is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 12. Meet at the library, 5005 Duke St.



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AHA, Meet Alexa; Ask Her Anything

Marketing/Membership Manager Jen Heinz introduced an AHA audience July 24 to Alexa, one of several home assistant devices with voice recognition. (You know the kind: You call out "Alexa" and ask her questions and she provides answers—the time, weather, population of Shanghai, etc. etc.)

Heinz said the two most popular devices are Amazon Echo and Google Home. You can find out what they do by going to their websites.

But Heinz cautioned that their features are so numerous that you must "start small and build from there." To start, you need to download the Alexa app on a smartphone or your computer. For demonstration, Heinz walked the group through the setup for Amazon's Echo Dot.

She handed out a four-page list of instructions, features and Q&A.

When you are all set, you call out "Alexa" (or the word that "wakes" your particular device). Then, you can ask a question, listen to music, get news briefings, set up calendar reminders and access games or controls for "smart home" devices.

There are more than 25,000 of those "skills" in the world of Echo/Alexa, Heinz said. Some villages are working to add skills of their own.

As noted, Heinz has four pages of explanation — too much to mention here. This handout and others from past Tech Talks are available under the Resources/Articles tab of the AHA website.

Chuckles

Did you ever wonder:

- Why you never see the headline: "Psychic wins lottery"?
- Why "abbreviation" is such a long word?
- Why the person investing all your money is called "a broker"?
- Why do we call "Rush Hour" the time of day when traffic slows to a crawl?
- Why didn't Noah swat the two mosquitoes?
- Why does the sun lighten our hair but darken our skin?
- Why isn't there mouse-flavored cat food?

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