

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

Happy Birthday, AHA!

A great crowd turned out on May 8 for AHA's 8th Anniversary Celebration at the Cameron Station Community Room and all seemed to enjoy the program, the array of good food and champagne. For many, AHA's occasions like this are an opportunity to see old friends, meet new members and guests and share in the camaraderie that AHA engenders.

The anniversary's theme was "Embrace Your Story," which served as an introduction to memoir writing. AHA plans to give members a chance to describe some of their memories in writing, with support from their peers, during a hands-on program for small groups that AHA plans to launch in the fall. Nancy Morgan, the featured presenter at the celebration, proved to her audience that all of us can capture our stories with a little prompting. But she also made the case that writing about some aspects of our lives is good for our health. She knows of what she speaks. Nancy is Director Emeritus of the Arts and Humanities Program at the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Nancy, who lost her husband at an early age, found that keeping a journal on a forty-day train trip promoted her endurance—and created great interest among her fellow travelers. They began sharing their stories with her.

This experience ultimately led to Nancy's work as a Writing Clinician. She has led writing workshops for individuals and groups to manage the emotional impact of cancer. She has conducted research to assess the relationship between writing and emotional and physical well-being.

During her presentation, she tested her methods by asking the assembled group to break into twos and threes and describe their memories of the smells they recall from the kitchens in their youth. Everyone gladly participated. Some remember the great joy of the smell of a favorite cake, but one participant remembered chopping liver while her fiancé proposed!

The anniversary celebration each year takes the work of AHA's staff and many volunteers. Thanks to Cele, Jen, Dara, Kim and Monica. Pam Nelson and Annie Stat were the providers of all the good snacks and drinks. Pete Crouch, Bob Eiffert, Jane King, Linda Langley, Penny Roberts, Elliott and Babs Waters planned the event and helped with the logistics.



Steve Nelson recognizing Bill Clayton for 100 issues of the AHA! Newsletter



Speaker Nancy Morgan and Chair Jane King



The Spread

Derby Party Fundraiser

by Bill Clayton

“They’re OFF.” The shouted announcement rang through the Kentucky Derby Party at the home of Maggie and Barry Stauffer, bringing a few-seconds hush on the partygoers. But it was only temporary – the hubbub was punctuated immediately with “Come ON, Maximum Security,” “Come ON, Country House.”

Turmoil turned to chaos when the apparent result was challenged successfully.

Forty-four people came together to celebrate and support AHA’s first Kentucky Derby Fundraiser, hosted by the Stauffers, Pam and Steve Nelson, and Ann and Bill Stat. This was one of a series of smaller, informal fundraising events meant to make up for the cancellation of the annual AHA gala.

Maggie Stauffer greeted guests at the door, in delicious Derby attire featuring an outfit with the usual frilly pastels of Derby Day topped by a showy Fascinator hat. Many of the female guests had the

obligatory large, flamboyant hat – notably Joyce Bachman with her large hat adorned with a flower wreath

The celebrants sipped icy mint juleps and other potables from a wine bar. Nearby, they picked their choices of the horses then in parade at Churchill Downs. Pam Nelson, Scott Garrett, Ann and Bill Stat helped serve the goodies. Steve Nelson kept the books and protected the bets.

And then, an announcement from Maggie Stauffer of a special celebrity guest. Slowly, elegantly, down the stairs came – No. It’s not a Derby jockey, with his long boots and colors; it is ... Barry Stauffer in full, although a bit tight, jockey regalia. He was a sensation for the crowd, although he ventured: “I don’t think you have ever seen a jockey this big.” Shortly afterward, the actual Derby jockeys, boosted to the backs of their mounts by attendants, paraded before the mob crammed into Churchill Downs’s grandstand.

The Derby party offered *hors* (not horse) *d’oeuvres* in a wide variety from ham biscuits to veggie-and-dip to cheeses to ... well, a table full. There followed dessert nibbles – derby pie, brownies and lemon squares.



Bill & Ann Stat



Jockey Barry Stauffer & Maggie



Joyce & Dick Bachman



Steve & Pam Nelson

*And the
Winner
is ...
AHA!*



Liz Groover, Barry Stauffer & Ruth Arnold

Longtime AHA Member Celebrates Milestone Birthday

AHA member Brigitte Guttstadt celebrated her 95th birthday on April 25 with a luncheon arranged by her sister Ursula. The luncheon was held at The Hermitage, where Brigitte now resides.



Bill Clayton noted that she doesn't talk much these days, but **Brigitte Guttstadt** still has a wry sense of humor. The cake decoration read, "Happy 95th Birthday."

Somebody arriving for the party said, "What does the cake say?"

Brigitte immediately piped up: "Forty-nine!" That brought down the house, as they say.



AHA Co-founder Pays a Special Visit

by Executive Director, Cele Garrett

The AHA Member Services committee, led by Susan Pettey, invited one of AHA's founders, Dr. Judith Jones, MD, PhD, FISPE to be the featured guest at the April 23 meeting. Often, the committee invites professionals in the fields of caregiving, medicine, social work and related areas to offer their expertise. This particular meeting had a twofold goal: To hear from Dr. Jones, who has a depth of experience in internal medicine, drug safety, epidemiology and geriatrics. It was also a chance for Dr. Jones to learn more about how AHA addresses the needs of our most frail or vulnerable members.

She discussed many topics, including concierge medicine, integrative medicine, technology in record-keeping, and the importance of patient advocacy. She noted, "There is an increased emphasis on the *patient*. Before, practitioners of various medical disciplines were focused on perfecting their own craft." Though strides have been made, she pointed out that this movement "isn't quite there yet." She emphasized the importance of being more assertive in asking the practitioners to communicate better on issues affecting our care that we don't fully understand.

Dr. Jones lives in Clifton, VA and keeps busy traveling, consulting, and teaching an epidemiology class at the University of Michigan.

Bob Eiffert Receives Annie B. Rose Lifetime Achievement Award

by Jane King

The most prestigious honor the Alexandria Commission on Aging confers was awarded to AHA's vice chair, Bob Eiffert, on May 14. Mayor Justin Wilson presented the Annie B. Rose Lifetime Achievement Award to Bob at the Commission's ceremony in the Vola Lawson lobby of Alexandria's City Hall.

The award commends "an individual whose exemplary achievements span a lifetime of public service and whose achievements have been devoted to significantly enhancing the community." Over many years, Bob has been focused on securing the well-being of Alexandria's older residents. He has acquired extensive expertise in issues related to aging and has won the admiration of city leaders and all advocates for the aging in Alexandria and beyond.

Bob is an invaluable resource to AHA, to the Commission on Aging (former chair), to the Northern Virginia Aging Network (active member), to the Goodwin House Foundation (board member). He is a natural born problem solver, always ready to offer thoughtful suggestions for moving forward, whatever the issue.

Of particular concern to Bob is the lack of affordable assisted living in the city. His expertise in housing issues enables him to serve as an expert and very engaged proponent. Bob has been tireless over the years in the effort to find land in the city and a method for funding a facility. It's proven to be a very tough goal to achieve, but we can expect that with Bob's unremitting attention, it will happen.

AHA is so fortunate to have him as our vice chair!



Babs Waters, Chair, Commission on Aging, with Bob Eiffert, winner of Annie B Rose Lifetime Achievement Award

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

AHA occasionally debates whether to continue its periodic appearance at the Farmer's Market. But the "staff" at the May 11 market – **Penny Roberts, Kathie Fricke and Bill Clayton** -- found that there can be several good contacts made, even when not many people stop by. One person signed on as a volunteer. Five or six others stopped to talk about AHA. And, in the It's A Small World category, a couple told Clayton they had just moved to Alexandria from Spartanburg, South Carolina. He said he had been in Spartanburg the previous day, visiting his sister at the Summit Hills nursing home. "Summit Hills?" they asked. "We have a relative at Summit Hills."

Brenda Bloch-Young reported that the What's in the News group is exhausted from the "news." Since no one was smiling in the accompanying photo it's not shown here! This month represents the 2nd anniversary for this popular group.

Mercedes Kremenetzky, an AHA volunteer, just returned from Santa Fe, Argentina, her hometown. She happily visited family and friends. Also, she had the opportunity to share the excitement of the Argentine people about elections to be held in October 2019 to elect a President, members of the national congress and the governors of most provinces.

Is **Nancy Kincaid** a stalwart of AHA? We all knew, but now fresh proof: Nancy fell and hurt her spine. While awaiting admission in the emergency room, she reached out via her phone to ensure that key folks were aware and that her cat was taken care of. After successful surgery, she moved to recuperation at Woodbine for a couple weeks. She asks that friends refrain from visiting at this time. She is focusing on her recovery and getting high marks for her perseverance.

Board Notes

by Bob Eiffert

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett reported that AHA membership totals 232: 110 full members and 122 associate members. The conversion to the new AHA Hub database continues to get smoother.

AHA Board Chair Jane King reported that we have several non-driving volunteers with some amazing skill sets. Volunteer Committee Chair Mary Jayne Swanson will be working with staff to identify what categories of volunteers we have so we can publicize their skills and availability to AHA members.

Beware: Contractor Fraud!

by Pete Crouch

Recently, a member of At Home in Alexandria needed a plumber for a shower problem. She called a plumber whom she found in a mail ad, and they came to fix the problem, which should have cost \$500-ish. He went "shopping" in her house to find other things to "fix," and that night billed her credit card \$10,026. We were able to get the money back, but there are two takeaways:

1. ALWAYS use contractors who have been referred by other satisfied clients - AHA, Mount Vernon at Home, and those I have vetted.
2. Set a maximum limit with your credit card company that can be charged without a phone call from them to you.

Climate Change is Real

by Sherry DeVries

Sixteen well-informed persons met at the monthly Current Events Discussion to explore climate change. Julie Gentry moderated the discussion. The topics ranged from climate change as a national security threat, alternate forms of energy, cities and states that are signed up to the Paris Accords, to why scientific information on climate change is denied.

The group noted that almost all the world countries acknowledge the threat of human-driven climate change; however, not many meaningful steps are being taken to reduce the threat. The consensus was that it is important to elect individuals who believe in climate change and will act to reduce it.

The group meets monthly and doesn't have a leader but expects those who attend to come prepared with fact-based information to discuss. The May meeting will be on Global Migration and in June the topic is Gerrymandering.

AHA/SSA/ACT Strategic Philanthropy Talk Set for June 11

AHA has teamed up with Senior Services of Alexandria and ACT for Alexandria (the local community foundation that supports Alexandria nonprofits) to offer our members, volunteers and donors a chance to get advice from local estate attorney Kim Fiske and wealth advisor Laurie Blackburn. Though the new tax laws affect individuals in different ways, they present a challenge to many people who can no longer receive a tax deduction for their charitable donations. Our presenters will offer simple strategies that can help you minimize taxes and maximize your charitable giving to those causes you care about. This talk will take place on Tuesday, June 11 from 3-4 pm at Mia's Italian Kitchen restaurant, 100 King St. RSVP to this event through AHA Hub or by contacting the AHA Office, 703.231.0824; aha@athomeinalexandria.org. There is no charge and refreshments will be provided.

On Tuesday, June 25, 11-noon, in the Portner's Landing Community Room, 621 S St. Asaph St., Bennie Blackley of Community and Human Services will discuss programs available through Adult Protective Service for seniors; how to spot potential abuse of vulnerable older individuals, or raise the issue; and how to get help and advice. Open to all.

What do lobbyists do?

Are there good guys as well as the others we often read about? Join us to learn more when Alan Dinsmore takes the chair at the Sunday, June 23 **Conversation With....** at 3 pm at Portner's Landing community room, 621 N. St Asaph Street. Alan's topic is "The Lobbyist's Job: An Insider's View."

Alan's knowledge of lobbying is based on 30 years he spent on Capitol Hill and inside the White House, as well as his experience in the private sector. From 1976-79, he was on the professional staff of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, where he specialized in issues of senior housing and Medicare/Medicaid fraud and abuse. From 1980-2006, he was Associate Director for Advocacy for the American Foundation for the Blind. There he worked on a range of issues including Medicare reimbursement and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Alan is a member of the AHA Board. He also serves on the Alexandria Commission on Aging and is chair of the Commission's transportation committee.

RSVP to the AHA office or online, by June 20 if you wish to attend. Let Barbara Rosenfeld know (barbararosenfeld@comcast.net or 703-836-0485) if you can bring a snack and what you will bring by June 20.

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Notes from the Executive Director

by Cele Garrett

It was wonderful to see so many friends at our anniversary event on May 8. May was a busy social month for AHA, as you can see from the photos in this newsletter. Happily, the fun continues in June!

As we turn the corner on spring and head into summer, we send our good wishes for "happy travels" to members who are heading out of town. (Remember that AHA can offer short-term plant watering if you need it while you're gone.) Summer is a big vacation season for many of our volunteers as well. At this time of year, it can be challenging for our office staff to fill as many member requests as possible. If you're a volunteer and in town for much of the summer, I encourage you to log in to AHA Hub to see if one of our members has a request that hasn't yet been filled. If you haven't yet tried the new Volunteer Self-Sign-In (VSS) interface of AHA Hub, don't hesitate to call the office for assistance.

On the subject of volunteering: we have a few AHA committees that could use an additional volunteer or two. One particular need is for event coordinators. We have a few monthly events that need a "point person." Two volunteers can even team up together to swap off leading an AHA monthly event or outing. With over 180 social and educational events each year, we truly could use a few extra hands. Volunteers are welcome to attend AHA events; it's one of the perks of being a volunteer!

Chamber event focuses on the senior business sector

On May 14, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce hosted a "Senior-Focused Business Network," featuring what it called the "The Senior 411" panel. The three panelists were AHA Board Chair Jane King, Senior Services of Alexandria's Mary Lee Anderson, and Terri Lynch from the City of Alexandria's Aging and Adult Services. The Chamber is hoping to hold these events on a regular basis to educate the business community on relevant topics, trends, laws and technology.

Pete Crouch announces a paper shredding event at the First Baptist Church, 2932 King St, on June 15, 10 am – 1 pm. AHA will set up a table to hand out brochures and information.

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— AT HOME IN —
ALEXANDRIA

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