



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

# AHA! NEWSLETTER MAY 2015 VOL. 6 NO. 5



Above: Steve Nelson and Cele Garrett start Spring2Action with coffee, cellphones and computers.

## AHA Does Well in Spring2Action

At Home In Alexandria made its goal from the day-long donation-fest called Spring2Action April 22. Gifts to AHA put it in 18<sup>th</sup> place among 133 organizations that participated.

Planned and led by Executive Director Cele Garrett, the AHA team worked out of Del Ray Café, sending out appeals, monitoring results and celebrating. The village also picked April 22 to celebrate its fourth anniversary, and many supporters dropped by to energize and encourage the team.

The goal was \$18,000, and by the time the day ended, AHA was within a whisker of its goal – but reached it two days later when mailed and online donations were tallied.

“I think we can be proud that we had such a great showing,” Garrett said..

In a videotaped message, Chair Barbara Rosenfeld said to supporters, “We are just humbled by your generosity.”

Aside from the financial goal, the gifts to AHA on the special day showed that an increasing number of Alexandrians know about AHA.

“I find it gratifying that more and more people in our community are familiar with AHA,” Garrett said. “Not only is Spring2Action a critical fundraiser for us, it’s also a great way to tell more people who we are and what we do.”

AHA workers and visitors broke out the champagne in the afternoon and were treated to pastries.

(See photos on Page 2 of AHA workers and visitors at the “war room” for the day, Del Ray Café.)

## Honors and More Honors for AHA Standouts

Several outstanding people in AHA have won recent awards:

- **Vice Chair Jane King** was honored with the **Annie B. Rose Lifetime Achievement Award** of the **Commission on Aging**, for her years-long devotion “to significantly enhancing the community, especially to advancing social justice and aging concerns.” King chaired the commission for four years and oversaw the role of the commission in developing the Strategic Plan on Aging.  
The award will be presented Tuesday, May 12, at 6 p.m. in City Hall.
- **The Alexandria Historical Society** honored AHA member **Ted Pulliam** April 22 with the **T. Michael Miller award**, for his “efforts to preserve our history.” Pulliam is a historian who has lectured extensively, including in the Conversation With series of AHA programs.
- **Alan Dinsmore**, AHA board member, will be honored May 23 with the **Celebration of Life Award of Mary’s House for Older Adults**. Mary’s House is a facility still being developed in the District of Columbia to provide affordable housing for older members of the LGBT community. Dinsmore is an openly gay member of the Alexandria Commission on Aging. The award recognizes individuals whose work “has been instrumental in decreasing social isolation among LGBT elders.”
- **Mitch Opalski**, a member of AHA’s Advisory Council, has won the **Lois Van Valkenburgh Excellence in Aging award** from the **Commission on Aging**. The award recognizes a person who “has made outstanding contributions to elevating the quality of life for older Alexandrians.”

The awards ceremony will be Tuesday, May 12, at 6 p.m. in City Hall.



**Spring2ACtion “support team,” left to right, Montsie Lehmann, Linda Langley, Penny Roberts, Mary Nefedov and Ernie Lehmann, at AHA action center, Del Ray Café.**



**Champagne and laughter: Left to right, Chriss Nielsen, Cele Garrett, Linda Langley, Mary Jayne Swanson, Jane King and Terry Derr.**



**Vice Chair Jane King and AHA co-founder Ernie Lehmann discuss strategy on Spring2ACtion day.**

## ***AHA Chosen to Help Conduct National Study***

At Home in Alexandria (AHA) has been selected by the University of California-Berkeley as one of 20 villages in the country to participate in a national study of villages. The study is being conducted in partnership with the Village to Village Network, the professional association for members of the rapidly growing U.S.-based village movement.

Data will help demonstrate the value of villages to local and federal policymakers and grant-making organizations. The evaluation will also provide information for individual villages aiming to improve member benefits, services and programs, and to demonstrate impact on members.

Data to be collected include a village organizational profile, a new-member questionnaire and a monthly reporting of services, programs and activities provided by the villages. The new-member questionnaire focuses on reasons for joining the village, anticipated needs to be met by village volunteers and other providers of senior services, potential home modifications and interest in village activities and events. All other members will be asked to participate in a similar survey.

UC-Berkeley is the first academic institution to undertake a national study of this size of open and active villages. A pilot study by UC-Berkeley of nine California villages offered the initial structure to conduct the national study. Criteria used to select the villages were: village models, geographic region, size and age of the village, villages serving all levels of income and villages that had the capacity to collect the data.

Our survey period will be early June through late July. In the coming weeks, the AHA office will provide more details about participating in this important survey. Don't worry—the process is not lengthy or complicated.

### **Dates of Note**

- **Saturday, May 16, 5-7 p.m.**, Alexandria House: **Josefa Gibson** again hosts a party to **honor AHA volunteers. RSVP to AHA by May 14: 703-231-0824.**
- **Sunday, May 17, 3-5 p.m.**, Alexandria House: **Retired Maj. Gen. Robert Latiff** discusses “The Ethics of War.” Latiff, holder of a Ph.D. in materials science and a consultant on advanced technology, teaches at Notre Dame and George Mason University. **RSVP to AHA by May 14.**
- **AHA and Goodwin House at Home** are collaborating on **three workshops** discussing estate planning, all at the Bailey’s Crossroads Goodwin House, 3440 South Jefferson, Falls Church. **RSVP to Ann Lam at [goodwinhouse.org](http://goodwinhouse.org) or phone 703-575-5202.**

Dates are as follows:

- **Wednesday, May 6, 1-3 p.m.**, “**Managing Your Estate.**” AHA Advisory Council member **Ken Labowitz** will talk about choosing an executor and other estate issues.
- **Wednesday, June 3, 1-3 p.m.**, “**Details and Decisions.**” Discussion of how to have positive family conversations about estates.
- **Wednesday, July 15, 1-3 p.m.**, “**Managing Your Space and Your Possessions.**”

## Garrett Describes Village Concept at Program on Innovative Approaches to Aging

AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett was a featured speaker at a morning-long session April 15 on innovative aging-in-place programs. Sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria, the program presented speakers from AHA, Goodwin House and the City's Commission on Aging and Division of Aging and Adult Services. SSA Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson moderated a Q&A session.

The date was special for AHA, Garrett said: It was the fourth anniversary of AHA's inauguration of services for Alexandria senior citizens. For the aging, she said, AHA has been "another pair of eyes, another caring group of people. That is very special."

She traced the history of AHA in the "village movement" and said the latest effort is a pilot program of subsidized memberships for people of modest means. Requests for transportation dominate AHA's volunteer work, she said, but the busy social schedule has become the most important function for many members.



Executive Director Cele Garrett



The crowd at the program stretches and exercises, led by AHA's Dan Kulund.

### SSA Inaugurates "Groceries to Go"

Senior Services of Alexandria has started a grocery delivery service for seniors 60 and over who have difficulty shopping. The free deliveries will be every other Thursday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to seniors using debit or credit cards, and volunteers will even put the purchases away. phone 703-816-4414, ext. 120 or go to [friendlyvisitor@seniorservicesalex.org](mailto:friendlyvisitor@seniorservicesalex.org)



### Conversation With Historian Lance Mallamo

Lance Mallamo, director of the historic Lloyd House, traced the early years of Alexandria for an AHA crowd on April 26. The session in Lloyd House was one of the AHA series called Conversation With.

Mallamo, who helped create the WETA documentary on Alexandria's early history, showed dozens of slides to the AHA audience of 17 people.

In **photo at left**, he points to the city's shoreline of decades ago. For each scene, his vast knowledge of the city's history provided an anecdote and the answers to the audience's questions.

After the Civil War, Alexandria "struggled for decades to rebuild," Mallamo said. He showed the city's growth and changes up to the 1950s. Along the way, there are some ironies, he said: The Mirant power plant, forced in recent years to close

because of pollution, was celebrated as a "wonderful thing" when it opened. The early George Washington Parkway, he said, "had no speed limit," but a sign said "Do not dilly-dally." Washington Street looked particularly wide because there was no parking. A scene of the glass factory showed child labor: Robert Kidd, age 10.

The first aerial photo of Alexandria, in 1909, was not taken from an airplane but rather from a dirigible. Schoolteacher Elizabeth Rainey posed with her 1924 Ford Model T and became a model for advertising the car. The Potomac Yard was depicted in its heyday as a major train staging area, long since replaced by hundreds of townhomes. The 1950s greatly accelerated Alexandria's development, Mallamo said.



Lance Mallamo, center in white shirt, shows slides.

## What's Up With AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

**Don Ford** is recovering from quadruple bypass surgery. He returned home weeks ago and was in good spirits, although rankling at the long recovery time.

**Ken Hill** is a glutton for punishment. No sooner had his term ended as President of the North Ridge Citizens' Association than he was nominated and elected the group's treasurer.

**Bill Clayton** searched for a village in Denver for his cousin, **Frank Clayton**. The Denver village, called "A Little Help," is on **Clayton Street**. Not in the family, but still....

The latest book by **Shelly Schwab**, *A Departure from the Script*, is now available as an audio book. Her books are under her full name, Rochelle Hollander Schwab. *A Departure from the Script* is a light-hearted look at a mom who helps her daughter plan a same-sex wedding and who falls for another woman herself.

One of the TGIF sessions, in the Fin & Hoof Bar, was visited by a woman of the cloth. **Julie Gentry** reports that **Sister Georgette Lehmuth, OSF**, accepted an invitation to join the small group—and she



**Pictured are Pam Nelson, Sister Lehmuth, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld and the pizza.**

even shared her pizza. Her order is in New York, but **Sr. Lehmuth** is interested in the aging-in-place "village movement," and AHA has added her to its list of contacts.

The **Adam Cohns**, friends of AHA Board member **Helen Desfosses**, threw a splendid 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party for her on an ideal spring day at their beautiful home near Mount Vernon. The festivity drew dozens of guests, including many of Helen's AHA friends.

A new member had warm words of praise for the help he got from volunteer **Kelly Miller**.



**At left, AHA member and volunteer Ken Hill (l) chats with North Ridge Citizens' Association President Bruce Johnson, who honored Hill at his retirement from the NRCA presidency and election as treasurer. Hill received gifts and a donation to one of his causes, the Peace Corps.**

## Volunteer Corner

**(Editor's note: This issue introduces a new monthly column presenting brief sketches of some volunteers who stand out in AHA.)**

Caring for senior citizens? "That's my thing," volunteer **Susanne Adams** said. She spent several years traveling back and forth to her native Switzerland to take care of her parents, assembling a "care team" for them.

Susanne, a nurse, was persuaded to become a volunteer with AHA by Nancy Kincaid, another resident of Alexandria House. Susanne showed her suitability one day when, having already helped get out the newsletter, she learned of a member needing to go to the hospital. She jumped at the chance to use her nursing training, driving the member to a hospital and being a patient's advocate, smoothing the way for urgent care. Her husband is an architect, her daughter is a teacher and her son is in the entertainment business. She speaks French, German, Dutch and Italian as well as English.



When **Rachel Spehler** moved to Alexandria from Chicago, she had done some fund-raising, some law work and some volunteering with the Chicago chapter of Little Brothers – Friends of the Elderly. She wanted to find something similar, and she found it in At Home in Alexandria. As AHA's luck would have it, she and her husband, Eric Messersmith, moved a few doors from **Sabra and Chet Avery**, members of AHA, and soon Rachel was doing some jobs for Chet, who is blind.

Chet waxes eloquent when asked about Rachel: "She is a wonderful person. She's a magnificent citizen. She is one smart cookie," Chet Avery exults. Well, yes. Rachel graduated magna cum laude from the College of Wooster in Ohio and summa cum laude from De Paul University College of Law.

Rachel has helped Chet learn to use his iPhone, which has a feature that reads printed messages to him. She offered the Averys her snow-removal services during the winter. She checks on them periodically.



**Editor's Note: Has a volunteer done something special for you? This Volunteer column needs to know. Please call Editor Bill Clayton (703-548-0958) or the AHA office (703-231-0824) and tell us about it. We can't mention all the dozens of volunteers, but will spotlight a few each month And, as usual, AHA can use more volunteers. Let us know of any acquaintance or neighbor who has expressed an interest in helping our very gratifying work.**

AHA recently did a survey to get suggestions and comments from volunteers. Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts reports that from earliest replies, it seems most volunteers have been with AHA more than one year. They want more coverage in the newsletter of what they do, and more mention in the website. A fuller report will follow when the survey replies are complete.

## Walkers Resume



Photo at left shows the AHA walkers at their April 7 seasonal resumption of the Tuesday walks along the Potomac. Dan Kulund, who brought “robust walking” and “robust aging” to AHA and Alexandria, is shown displaying the proper walking technique to Chair Barbara Rosenfeld and member Shelly Schwab, as other walkers, Cindy Long and Mary Nefedov, are nearly hidden behind.

Kulund, who was on the Board of Directors, is moving to Charlottesville to resume a teaching career. The Board passed a resolution praising him for his dedication to seniors’ fitness.

### Chuckles and Chortles

Where there’s a will, I want to be in it.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit.  
Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

Some application forms ask whom to notify in case of emergency. I always put, “DOCTOR.”

A clear conscience can be a sign of a bad memory.

Change is inevitable, except perhaps from a vending machine.



### Pinochle, Anyone?

At Home in Alexandria has been asked if Alexandria has a pinochle group. Do you know?

Are you interested?

Please reply to the office: 703-231-0824.

### Cancer Signs You Cannot Ignore

The Johns Hopkins health letter says to be aware of changes in your health that may signal cancer:

- Unexplained weight loss of 10 pounds or more when you are not trying. Can be an early sign of pancreatic, stomach, lung or esophageal cancer.
- Blood in the stool could point to rectal or colon cancer.
- Mole changes—Any change in size, color or symmetry of a mole might signal skin cancer.

### Board of Directors

Barbara Rosenfeld, Chair	Helen Desfosses
Jane King, Vice Chair	Alan Dinsmore
Chriss Nielsen, Treasurer	Linda Langley
Linus Liddle, Secretary	Steve Nelson
Bill Clayton, Editor	Penny Roberts
Charles Ablard	Mary Jayne Swanson
Brenda Bloch-Young	

### Executive Director

Cecile (Cele) Garrett

### Advisory Council

Carolyn Abshire	Laurie Blackburn
Carol Downs	Stewart Dunn
MaryAnn Griffin	Richard Hobson
Judith Jones, MD	Louise Kenny
Ken Labowitz	Ernie Lehmann
Tim Lovain	Temple C. Moore
Richard Moose	Mitch Opalski
George Pera	Patsy Ticer
Vicki Vasques	Marian Van Landingham

### Office Co-Managers

Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson

### Sign in St. Elmo’s Coffee House in Del Ray

“An unattended child will be given an espresso and a free kitten.”

### CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria  
3139 Mount Vernon Ave.  
Alexandria, VA 22305  
703-231-0824

[AHA@athomeinalexandria.org](mailto:AHA@athomeinalexandria.org)  
Web [www.athomeinalexandria.org](http://www.athomeinalexandria.org)