



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

AHA! NEWSLETTER May 2016 VOL. 7 NO. 5



Alexandria's Town Crier

Oyez! Oyez! AHA Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

At Home in Alexandria celebrates five years of helping our city's senior citizens, with a festive gathering May 17 at Temple Beth El Hebrew Congregation. All are invited to attend and share in the celebration.

The fifth anniversary observance will feature remarks by Judith Viorst, poet/humorist/author who helped AHA kick things off five years ago at our inaugural gathering.

The event will be called to order by Alexandria Town Crier Benjamin Fiore-Walker, who will read a proclamation and bid the crowd draw near for the program.

AHA's co-founders—Ernie Lehmann, Dr. Judith Jones and the late Richard Moose—will be remembered when AHA thinks back on its five years and the April 15, 2011, inauguration day for At Home in Alexandria. (Calendar problems caused AHA to pick May 17 for the 2016 event.)

AHA Wins Award

Coincidental with planning for the anniversary celebration, AHA was honored with the Commission on Aging's 2016 Excellence in Aging Award for an Organization. AHA stalwart Nancy Kincaid submitted the nomination and the Commission approved and announced the winners of its awards April 14, one day before AHA's actual fifth anniversary.

Five awardees in four categories will receive awards in a ceremony in the lobby of City Hall May 10, at 5:30 p.m.: Vanessa Greene and Gant Redmon for the Annie B. Rose Award, Wanda Dowell the Lois Van Valkenburgh Excellence in Aging Award, Robert Fulk the Public Service Award and AHA the award for an organization. The ceremony is open to the public and is free. Refreshments will be served.

"The timing couldn't be better," AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett said. "AHA will be presented this award just one week prior to our fifth anniversary event on May 17. To have achieved this honor when we're a relatively young organization is quite meaningful."

At the invitation of AHA Board Member Bob Eiffert, who serves on the Commission on Aging, AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld will receive the award at the ceremony on behalf of the entire AHA village.

Eiffert is one of several people in AHA who also serve on the Commission.

April "An Excellent Month"

The award announcement was part of "an excellent month" of April, Rosenfeld said. AHA was a major player in the 24-hour Spring2ACTion citywide donation effort April 20 (see story and photos, page 2).

AHA membership exceeded 160 in April and—including Board and Advisory Council members—volunteers totaled over 90.

Much of April was spent by the Development Committee and Board of Directors planning for the anniversary event and—beyond—the annual Gala and Auction in the fall.

Garrett arranged for AHA to be visible at the Governor's Conference on Aging, in Richmond, with a lobby banner display in conjunction with a rural village called LowLINC.

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen reported that, despite the fact that revenue lagged behind expenses in March, the gap was less than expected and the village maintains nine months of reserve.

AHA and Goodwin House at Home cosponsored the first of three seminars, "An Escorted Tour of the New Country of Nutrition," April 27, which drew scores of members of the two groups to Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads. It was the first of three joint programs on nutrition, diet and health planned by AHA's Carol Downs and Alan Dinsmore. The second will be May 23 and the third June 22.

,Spring2ACTion Donations Exceed Goal, Come From Record Number of Donors

The annual contribution fest called Spring2ACTion was a good one for At Home in Alexandria, bringing in more donations than expected. The event was a 24-hour effort by 153 nonprofits in the city to compete for the generosity of Alexandrians. AHA set an ambitious goal of \$20,000, substantially above last year, and met it before the midnight deadline. The final total was \$22,141.

Executive Director Cele Garrett, Operations Co-Managers Monica Estabrooke and Diane Atchinson and “techie” Les Carr were the main team for AHA’s effort. Garrett, working at the “nerve center” Del Ray Café, with Estabrooke and Carr at the office and Atchinson backing up the effort, stirred the prospects, reminded them of their pledges, and recorded the results. Several other AHA folks, and Mayor Allison Silberberg, joined in.

By noon, Garrett said, “We are in a good place.” As the hours wore on, AHA members showed up to lift the spirits.. Chris Nielsen provided some wine and champagne and four small tables filled with people encouraging the effort.

Del Ray Café donated a portion of the day’s profits to AHA, which helped put us over the goal. Around 9:30pm AHA was still \$1,600 shy of the goal in a slow period. AHA decided to send one last-minute email reminder. It made all the difference.

Garrett said, “Fundraising is never easy but it's a critical activity for nonprofit organizations like AHA. It took the work of many to make this campaign the success that it was. We send our heartfelt thanks to all of our supporters.”

There were 170 donors to AHA -- 17th in money total—“not too shabby” for a group five years old, Garrett said.



Del Ray Café co-owner Laurent Janowsky chats with (clockwise) Linda Langley, Cele Garrett, Barbara Rosenfeld and (partly hidden) Alice Cohan and Mary Nefedov on Spring2ACTion day.



Mayor Allison Silberberg (L) helps Cele Garrett track the last few donations—and makes a contribution herself two hours before midnight.



Clockwise from left: Linda Langley, Steve Nelson, Cele Garrett, Pam Nelson, Alan Dinsmore discuss strategy at the Del Ray Café “nerve center” of AHA operations.



More than 20 people attended the discussion.

Islamic Scholar Fascinates AHA Group

Dr. Sayyid Syeed, national director of the Islamic Society of North America, told an AHA audience of his work fostering understanding among religions. His talk April 24 was another in the AHA series “Conversation With” and attracted nearly two dozen people to the Porto Vecchio home of Virginia Martin.

Various groups can interpret parts of the Koran differently, he said, but the basic message is “compassion, peace and love.” He handed out shortened versions of the Koran to the audience. Part of his work is to explain Islam, he said, and part is to bring interfaith dialogue and peace.

By 1963, the year of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream”

speech, there were a quarter of a million Muslim students in the United States and nearly every university had a Muslim student organization, Syeed said. In the 1980s, he served as an official of a federation of those student groups. The events of 9/11/2001 made it “more critical” for Muslims and other religions to understand and work with each other. In 2010, he helped form the Shoulder to Shoulder campaign against anti-Muslim sentiment. Syeed also has worked to promote intra-faith understanding within Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad said Muslims “must protect Christians and Jews,” Syeed said.

The next Conversation With is June 12.

Affinity Groups’ News

The cycling group “Blazing Saddles” is the newest of AHA’s affinity groups. The group’s founders are experienced bikers Maggie and Barry Stauffer.

To register for the rides, call them: 703-549-8680 or Maggie.stauffer@comcast.net. The first ride is Wednesday, May 11, assembling at the T.C. Williams boathouse at the foot of Madison Street and setting out at 1:30 p.m., riding down the bike path to the LBJ Memorial Park. The group will set a pace of about 10-12 miles an hour, and cover 12 miles, with a stop halfway. They ask that riders come early enough for a gear check.

The **History Affinity Group**, organized by Brenda Bloch-Young, had a lecture March 29 on Civil War nurses. Its next will be at 7 p.m. May 25 at the Lyceum, about Alexandria’s 1939 sit-in for civil rights. The \$5 ticket can be bought through the Alexandria Historical Society website.

Questions? Contact bblochyoung@gmail.com or 571-319-0222



Maggie & Barry Stauffer



Dining Around

Above, the maître d’ greets Brigitte Guttstadt (left rear) as an old friend and steady customer at the Warehouse restaurant. Others are: counterclockwise from front left: Vera Waller, Margaret French, Nancy Kincaid, Jessi MacLeod.



AHAPPY Hour

The newly renamed Happy Hour continues to be popular with AHA members and guests. The photo at left shows the crowd at the April 9 gathering in the Drake Room of Alexandria House. The group included two guests who became members—Bob and Betty Kuehne. Awaiting their turn at the groaning board, in foreground with their attention on the food, are Mary Nefedov, Murney Keleher and Linda Langley. Pam and Steve Nelson plan and oversee the events and longtime member Nancy Kincaid hosts and helps set up and clean up.

What's Up with AHA Members, Associates And Volunteers

Ernie Lehmann exulted: "The mail delivered my new German passport April 9th." (Readers may recall that Ernie, at the prodding of two friends, got his German citizenship restored – the Nazis had canceled it for Jews -- and his passport issued. The dual citizenship will enable his descendants to avail themselves of certain benefits in Germany.) Ernie called it a "breathtaking" outcome in a life "so rich in its events and experiences."

Barbara Rosenfeld vacationed in New Orleans and, while visiting the Louis Armstrong Park, danced with a jazz-parade marcher who proclaimed his pride in the historic "Real Tremé" neighborhood.



Barbara Rosenfeld enjoying New Orleans

Several AHA folks have visited **May Adams**, in rehab at Fountains on Fillmore. May says she does not want visitors, but her sister and the nurses say visits lift her spirits and help her recovery from a stroke.

We want May back in action: She introduced the Walking Club to tai chi and has been to many AHA events.

Mary Page "Frisky" Hickey spent nearly three weeks on an academic tour of India, mostly in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The group saw many temples, forts and archaeological sites in addition to touring several outstanding gardens, she reports.

Hickey, a noted painter of botanical subjects, said there was no time for painting on this tour, but she has many photographs to spur her artistic muse.

Helen Desfosses was elected treasurer of the Alexandria Library Board of Trustees. She is in her second term on the Board, having served as co-chair of the Investment Committee.

Volunteer Corner

Volunteer Chair Penny Roberts, herself needing volunteers in her recovery from knee-replacement surgery, reported that they "have been super, getting me to physical therapy appointments, checking up on me, providing food, and generally cheering me on. Great bunch."

And she should know, having long been chair of the volunteers as their number grew from a couple of dozen to the current over 90 certified and over 70 active.

Volunteer **Susan Pettey** won plaudits from **Roberts** and **Membership Chair Jane King** for her work on the relatively new Member Services Subcommittee.

"She has done an outstanding job with this subcommittee," King said.

The subcommittee's job is "assuring that AHA is doing all that it can to support our members, through AHA's policies and programs," King said. Particular emphasis is given to members who "may need special attention." She pointed out the subcommittee has two nurses on its roster.

Pettey "leads by listening carefully to all views to shape the that will make an important difference in AHA's work," King said.

Another volunteer drawing praise is **Les Carr**, who provided technical help during Spring2ACTION and has been an active "techie" for AHA. (see the **Spring2ACTION story, page 2**)

Les uses her bachelor's degree in fine arts to design websites and her fascination with "everything digital" to respond to AHA members' needs "with everything from helping program a computer to working with iPhones and iPads and such." In her spare time, she likes cooking, singing and composing poetry.

She returned a call from Editor Bill Clayton by Phoning from Mazatlán, Mexico, where she was celebrating her 30th wedding anniversary.

Bill Clayton joined dozens of (mostly college-age) youngsters in the annual cleanup of Four Mile Run, a broad creek that runs to the Potomac near National Airport.

The cleanup leaders reported the group of 30 volunteers armed with garbage bags collected 1,675 pounds of refuse from the creek and its banks, including a bicycle, computer parts, paint cans and many, many cigarette butts.



Tom Fitzgerald Returns

The TGIF gathering welcomed back Tom Fitzgerald (middle background), who had been on a sad journey west because of the death of his daughter. From left: Nancy Kincaid, Pam Nelson, Fitzgerald, Mary Nefedov, Tom’s caregiver and Steve Nelson.

9-1-1 System Upgraded

Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax 9-1-1 call centers have upgraded their service to accept text messages in addition to voice or TTY calls. Anyone in need of immediate police, fire, or emergency medical assistance may call or text 9-1-1 from any landline, mobile phone, or TTY device. Text messages may be preferable for persons who cannot hear or speak because of disability or danger. A text message should include as much location information as possible.

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AHA Walking Club regulars Bill Clayton and Ona Ziegler test their falling reflexes (below) on “Falling Rock” along the Potomac River. **Join the Tuesday walkers. See calendars enclosed in this newsletter.**



Sandra Lee Conley

People in AHA, asked about Sandra Conley, invariably replied, “delightful,” “thoughtful.” “lively.” Conley, an AHA member, died April 13 of leukemia, in her home and surrounded by friends and her son, Rudy.

Her family described her as “a proud Kentucky woman and educator,” who taught theater in a way that motivated youngsters to go on to college. During a year battling the disease that took her life, she “never whined or complained,” a friend said.

Doug Fleming To Be Buried in Arlington

Doug Fleming’s burial will be Thursday, May 26 in Arlington National Cemetery. Meet at the Visitors’ Center before 11 a.m. for the procession to the burial site. A reception will follow at the Fort Myer Officers’ Club.

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