

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

## AHA's Seventh Anniversary A Cause to Celebrate

By Chair Jane King



AHA will mark its Seventh Anniversary May 16, 2 p.m.-4 p.m. at the Cameron Station Community Center, 200 Cameron Station Boulevard.

AHA volunteers are planning a great event whose theme is Music for Life and which will feature a fun challenge in addition to live music.

At 212 members strong, and with a wonderful corps of volunteers, a strong staff and board, and a broad array of services and programs, At Home in Alexandria has much to celebrate on its Seventh Anniversary.

We love the chance to bring our members and guests together so that they have the opportunity to get to know each other better and to share in AHA's successes.

Lynn Falk, an AHA associate member, and her trio of mandolin players will greet members and guests at the door. As they enter the large community room, all will see pictures of children around seven years old scrolling repeatedly on a large screen.

Who are these children? They are AHA members when they were around seven years old. The challenge will be to identify them.

After all have had a chance to mingle and enjoy some food and drinks, the Music for Life program will begin, with more music by the mandolin players and a speaker on the great benefits of music for every age.

And then the challenge begins—the chance to guess the identity of the members whose pictures have been scrolling on screen.

If you plan to attend, and we hope you will, please RSVP to the office (703-231-0824) and be sure to send your picture to the office so that it can be scanned for use at the Anniversary event.



## Get Ready to Spring2ACTION for AHA on April 25

“Alexandria's Giving Day,” Spring2ACTION, is coming Wednesday, April 25, and AHA has set an ambitious goal for its participation in the community-wide event that gives a big boost to nonprofit groups throughout the city.

No longer just a day-long event, this year's fundraising effort is encouraging people to give any time from April 11 to midnight April 25. Visit our fundraising page at [www.givegab.com/nonprofits/at-home-in-alexandria](http://www.givegab.com/nonprofits/at-home-in-alexandria) and make your tax-deductible gift within those dates.

And if you want to follow AHA's Spring2ACTION fundraising efforts up close, drop in at our “mission control,” in the Del Ray Café, 205 E. Howell, from early April 25 to midnight. Have a sip or nibble or chat and watch the leaderboards with our team.

Several AHA folks are planning to set up matching gifts, to multiply the effect of donations. To spread the word, put a post on your favorite listserv and encourage people to contribute to AHA.

AHA depends on the Spring2ACTION gifts to support its operations, fund special projects and subsidize memberships for those in need. The donations supplement our income from membership dues, which make up around half our annual budget. We are setting a more ambitious goal and urge everyone to help AHA reach it.

If you have a Facebook account, please go to AHA's Facebook page and “share” the S2A posts as you see them on your newsfeed. Let's all think now about supporting AHA in this special way. Thanks to all.



**Don Peterson talks about the nation's political divide, at an AHA Conversation With program.**

## **Both Parties Trending Left, Leadership Remains on Right**

Recent elections have shown both Republicans and Democrats are trending to the left, a “political buff” told an AHA audience.

In the Feb. 25 Conversation With program, Don Peterson showed dozens of pie charts and bar graphs comparing recent elections on the basis of political leanings, income, education and other factors.

The 2016 presidential election brought a “perfectly divided political landscape,” Peterson said.

He emphasized battleground states of 2016 and 2020 elections, “growing polarization, growing differences between left-leaning and right-leaning states, urban and rural, with stark differences in outcomes ... if we continue to pull apart.”

Peterson had a career with the CIA and retired from the Senior Intelligence Service with a Distinguished Intelligence Medal. For his AHA program, he projected on a screen the myriad trends he saw from official sources and statistics on voting patterns, and from vital statistics.

Both parties are moving a bit left, he said; Republicans trending centrist and Democrats trending progressive.

At the same time that Republicans generally are becoming more centrist, the GOP leadership in Congress is generally more conservative than Republicans nationwide. Virginia has become a centrist state, he said, and the coming elections show centrist states on both political sides are “up for grabs.”

Dramatizing the extent of the national divide, he said, “You would not be caught in Wyoming with a (Hillary) Clinton sticker and you would not be caught in Hawaii with a Trump sticker.”

States “at issue” in 2016 and 2020 are Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Florida, he said. Former swing states Ohio and Iowa “appear more firmly Republican,” Peterson said.

## **Things We Do**



**A Matter of Balance class, led by Board Member Babs Waters (at rear), convenes weekly to learn ways to avoid falls. The first session explored participants' thoughts about falls. Subsequent sessions will focus on balance techniques to prevent falls.**



**What's in The News, one of the most popular AHA events, discusses in a free-wheeling way the events of the day—nowadays, chiefly politics. Brenda Bloch-Young (foreground) hosts the events and channels the crowd into the subjects, which range from Trump to immigration to taxes to imports to tariffs to ... well, you name it. These sessions are often SRO, so please check the AHA schedule and RSVP.**



**Above, the group attending Maggie and Barry Stauffer's reception introducing neighbors and friends to AHA.**

**The Stauffers, splendid entertainers, enjoy hosting these gatherings.**



Social worker Mary Ray (seated) talks to an AHA audience about ways to cope with grief and loss.

## Handling Grief and Loss

Clinical social worker Mary Ray guided an AHA audience through the coping mechanisms and challenges of handling loss and grief.

Individuals who experience loss -- “of a loved one, a pet, a job, a dream, an ability or something else dear to us”— should “practice excellent self-care,” such as doing things that are sources of pleasure and diversion. Or spend some “quiet alone time” in a calm place. Take care of your own health, Ray advised.

For the caregivers such as those in AHA helping a member cope with loss, Ray said, “Be a good listener.... Share a personal loss and ask if the member would be open to hear how you coped.”

Ask what the person would like to make them feel better, Ray said. “You can ask even though you may not always get that need met.”

She advised caregivers to help others “see that life continues after loss, and hopefully we choose to invest in new life and relationships, even while we carry those we have lost in our hearts.”

## Fund Development

At AHA's most recent Board of Directors meeting, Executive Director Cele Garrett, Operations Supervisor Monica Estabrooke and Advisory Council Member Jan Pomerantz presented a talk titled "Fund Development for Mature Villages."

This was based on a presentation the three did at the national Village to Village conference last November, which received very high marks from participants.

Pomerantz advises nonprofits and foundations on performance excellence and financial sustainability.

Garrett said, “Monica and I have fundraising backgrounds—Monica's on a larger scale than mine—and it was fun to team up with Jan for the national conference presentation. Jan and her husband Everett are AHA members—and Jan's professional expertise is a real bonus for us. We're lucky to have her.”

The Board welcomed the opportunity for this discussion about financial sustainability.

## These Days In “The Other Vietnam”

Filmmaker Sandy Northrop gave an AHA audience a look at Vietnam “after the war” with scenes from her documentary films interspersed with her comments and readings from writings of her late husband.

The March 18 program, another in the Conversation With series of AHA, attracted 16 to her apartment, which is adorned with Vietnamese art and objects. She made documentaries about Vietnam when her husband, David Lamb, worked for the *Los Angeles Times* in Vietnam. Lamb died in 2016.

Northrop said of postwar Vietnam, “We both loved it.” The people were vigorously entrepreneurial, she said, and “They were delightful.” One aspect of the communist system: Sandy and David worked with Vietnamese “helpers” who, every several days, would report in detail “everything” about what David and Sandy were doing.

Things were cheap and traffic was chaotic, she said. One could buy the entirety of a vendor’s bike load of flowers for the equivalent of \$5, she said. The traffic contrived to swerve around any obstacle such as slower traffic or pedestrians.



Barbara Rosenfeld, standing at bookshelf, introduces filmmaker Sandy Northrop for the Conversation With program on Vietnam.

## Spreading the AHA Word To Doctors

AHA would like to reach out to local physician practices to let them know of our services.

Pete Crouch, Bob Eiffert and Linda Langley are all patients of the Northern Virginia Family Practice of physicians, a concierge-style practice with member fees.

They gave a presentation to the physicians of the practice in November, and NVFP invited AHA to do presentations to the practice’s members. Crouch, Eiffert and Langley will do that May 9 at 6:30 p.m. and May 19 at 10:30 a.m. AHA members will be invited to attend if they would like to learn more about NVFP. There will be more information in the May newsletter.

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

The AHA **Board of Directors** had just embarked on a serious discussion of membership turnover, needs and challenges, when a yell went up from the Board table: "My baby arrived. My first granddaughter."

It was **Linda Langley**, violating Robert's Rules for decorum, consulting her smartphone and announcing the birth of **Athena Sage Langley**, six pounds, six ounces, in Oakland, Calif., first daughter of **Matt and Minakshi Langley**.

After lively congratulations to the grandmother, the Board collectively cleared its throat and got back to business.

Alexandria was weathering a series of storms when AHA got this email from former **Chair Barbara Rosenfeld**: "I am sitting in a lounge chair near the sea in beautiful Punta Cana, Dominican Republic....Just finished an Aqua-fit class in a lovely outdoor pool. Temp. about 80 degrees. Lovely soft breeze blowing off the turquoise Caribbean as I return to my chair in the shade of a thatched roof. Ah, here comes the waiter to offer me a drink. What a tough life! I can't believe it will really snow when we return."

Maybe AHA should open a satellite office. **Rosenfeld** told the Board recently that there are more than two-dozen members of AHA living in Alexandria House.



### Antarctic Welcome

The photo above shows the penguin welcoming committee on **Penny Roberts's** visit to Antarctica. Below, an ice arch sculpted by wind, water and temperatures.



## VOLUNTEER CORNER

Volunteer Chair Mary Jayne Swanson reports: "Since the first of the year, we have six new volunteers. All but two are drivers; one is a nurse and wants to be a buddy. We have two gardeners and all are interested in our other needs."

### Did an AHA Volunteer Do Something Outstanding?

Let AHA know if an AHA volunteer did something unusual or praiseworthy for a member.

The volunteers do not get enough recognition for what they do—and they are the *raison d'être* of At Home in Alexandria. AHA is all about volunteers helping Alexandria's seniors to remain, independently, in their homes.

Whether it is transportation or home maintenance or technology help or errands or just a dinner gathering or home visit to ease loneliness, AHA's dozens of volunteers are standing by to help AHA members.

**Want to praise a volunteer? Call 703-231-0824.**

### Timely Tax Talk

A calendar quirk puts Tax Day off a bit this year, but on April 15, AHA Board Member Brenda Bloch-Young will discuss the impact of the Tax Reform Bill.

This year's Tax Day will be April 17 because the 15th falls on a Sunday.

Bloch-Young's talk is one of the AHA series Conversation With. The event takes place from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, April 15, at the 725 Timber Branch Drive home of AHA Advisor Carol Downs. RSVP by April 12.

### Tech Tuesday: Focus on Photos

Our next Tech Talk will be Tuesday, April 17, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the AHA office and will focus on photos. We'll talk about how to transfer photos on your phone to your computer, how to send photos from your phone via email or text, easy online methods for creating photo books, and quick editing techniques and apps that will enhance your photos.

Please RSVP to the AHA office by April 15 to reserve your seat – limited space is available.

### When Insults Had Class

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease."

Disraeli: "That depends, sir, on whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

## Alexandrians Honor Former Mayor Patsy Ticer

Alexandria paid tribute March 19 to Patsy Ticer, a civic standout who died Aug. 7, 2017 at the age of 82.

The Friends of the Alexandria Commission for Women and the Alexandria Commission for Women hosted a "Tribute to the Honorable Patsy Ticer" at the Washington Masonic Memorial.

A crowd of 250 attended. Ticer was the first elected female mayor of Alexandria, a four-term state senator and a valued member of AHA.

### Chuckles

- I thought growing old would take longer.
- Aging has slowed me down, but it hasn't shut me up.
- I still haven't learned to act my age.
- I believe in the Hereafter: When I climb to the second floor, I look around and ask myself, "What am I here after?"
- I talk to myself; sometimes you need expert advice.

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Alexandria had its heaviest snowfall of the year on the first day of spring.

### Snow Buddies Get Work

The scene above, of an Alexandria backyard during the latest nor'easter, shows why the AHA office got calls from eight members needing snow and ice removal.

Four Snow Buddies took care of the calls and in some cases, found that the member's needs had been filled by neighbors. The Buddies reported the snow was wet and heavy and in places had been refrozen to an icy layer. It also confused some flowers already out for spring.

### Slick Trick for Walkers

A neighbor on the listserv put us onto this neat trick for people who use walkers: tennis balls custom cut to slip on the feet of a walker. They provide a soft glide and come with pad replacements. The ones shown at right are from CVS, photographed by Bill Clayton.



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