

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

AHA Celebrates a Bit of History

Competing successfully with an arts festival and the rain, AHA welcomed scores of guests to a garden party and tour of the historic “Murray-Dick-Fawcett House” in Old Town Sept. 23.

The event, one of a series of attractions to substitute for the annual Gala, featured the current resident, Joe Reeder, as a tour guide and storyteller. The house, originally built around 1772, is considered one of the earliest homes in Alexandria.

The party “was a team effort in every sense of the word, from initial planning to the execution,” Executive Director Cele Garrett said. She and AHA member Leonardo Contardo (a close friend of Joe Reeder’s) and AHA supporter Nora Brownell “brainstormed” the plan for the party. They and a set-up crew of Scott Garrett, Pete Crouch and Anne Augusterfer prepared the scene. When the rain came, they set up large tents and strategic umbrellas and the party went on. AHA staff member Dara Surratt positioned an umbrella in a tree over the bar, where Scott Garrett and Derrick Surratt poured.

Caterers Christine and Larry Ponzi, owners of Pizzaiolo and St. Elmo’s, provided tasty fare and their daughter, Liese, with help from volunteers Campbell Weiss, Davis Hyre and Hews Hyre, served and were “runners.” Staff member Kim Carlisle used her creative talent to craft the signs. Marketing Manager Jen Heinz found and signed up guitarist Christopher Wyton to perch on the house’s covered porch and strum music for the crowd.



Above, a portion of the crowd ignoring the rain and enjoying the visit.

“AHA veteran Monica Estabrooke greeted the crowd and kept us organized,” Cele Garrett said.

The lead corporate sponsor was AHA’s Pete Crouch, with Crouch Realty Co. of McEneaney Associates. Other sponsors were ACC Family Home Care, Goodwin House at Home, Old Dominion Home Care and Synergy HomeCare.

“We extend our sincere thanks to individual donors Maggie Moose and Barbara Rosenfeld,” Cele Garrett said.

AHA docents for the tour were Susanne Adams, Anne Augusterfer, Jane Coughran and Linda Langley.

Joe Reeder told guests stories of the house and its contents.

Photos by Jen Heinz



At left, sponsors Alexandra Johnson of Old Dominion Home Care, Joan Knetemann of ACC Family Care, Mitch Opalski of Synergy HomeCare.

At right, the Hennessys and docent Jane Coughran in the old kitchen.

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AHA and Goodwin House Collaborate on Wellness Program

At Home in Alexandria and Goodwin House at Home collaborated in August on a program, “Achieving Emotional Wellness, Regardless of the Bumps Along the Way.”

Introduced by AHA Advisory Council Member Carol Downs and planned in part by AHA’s Alan Dinsmore, the program included an expert panel, questions and answers, and refreshments. AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett made some welcoming remarks about the work that AHA and Goodwin House do, which often involves collaboration.

Approximately 60 people attended.

“Often,” Downs said, “the underlying part (of wellness) does not get addressed.”

“Loneliness should not be thought as a normal part of the aging process,” psychotherapist Rebecca Harrison said. “Most of aging is related to lifestyle changes.... Elders with a positive view of life live much longer than those with a negative view.”

Beth Robinson of Member Services in Mount Vernon At Home, said aging folks should “make a plan that supports positive aging.” Part of the plan is to “learn to accept what you have and what you want to do.” And, know where to find help, she said.

Ruth Arnold, who is a member both of At Home in Alexandria and of Goodwin House at Home, said, “There are no set rules,” but good ideas are to keep active and keep engaged with people. She does those chiefly by walking miles each day and by participating in several AHA activities.

“There are so many opportunities to stay young, engaged and happy,” Arnold said. With a background in foreign service, she has had many of those opportunities.

A chart from Goodwin House at Home said, “Feeling great goes beyond a physically healthy lifestyle. There are multiple dimensions to whole-person wellness” Those include emotional, spiritual, social, physical, intellectual and occupational elements that support wellness in community life,” the Goodwin chart said.



Penny Roberts, who arranged the visit; Ann Liddle, who alerted Roberts to the show; and Liddle’s brother, Michael Schneider, examine the display. In the background: crafts-woman Sharon Frazier chats with guest Lee Coughlin.

A Visit to the Past Through Dollhouses

A group from AHA paid a fascinating visit Sept. 12 to a collection of intricate dollhouses reflecting the life and culture of African-Americans in Alexandria.

The display at the Alexandria Black History Museum included 26 miniature buildings or room boxes—from the Obama family in the White House’s Lincoln Bedroom to a hat shop to a gas station.

Sharon Frazier and Linwood Smith built, acquired, furnished, decorated the collection of dollhouses, down to the tiniest detail on an inch-to-foot scale. Here, Watson’s Store with a quilt draped over the balcony and jack-o’-lanterns hanging from the porch. And over here, “Preparing Thanksgiving Dinner” with all the dishes and plates and implements. And there, the hat shop with many hats Frazier painstakingly fashioned to scale.

Smith, a retired mechanic, built the outsides of the houses and Frazier, a retired public health nurse, did the interiors. Friends and fellow churchgoers, they toured shows featuring miniatures to acquire the tiny contents – or fashioned them meticulously.



AHA’s Alan Dinsmore introduces the panel at a joint program with Goodwin House at Home: Rebecca Harrison, Beth Robinson and Ruth Arnold, who is a member of both AHA and GHAH,



Craftsman Linwood Smith points with pride to a meticulously built “Buffalo Soldier’s Cabin,” honoring the African-American soldiers in the U.S. Army in the 1800s. Note the chimney—small found stones glued together in a veneer up one end of the cabin.

Preparing to Come Home from a Hospital Stay

Editor's Note: The article that follows is the third of a series by the AHA Member Services Committee, chaired by Susan Pettey. The first was in the August newsletter, the second in the September newsletter. This one covers preparing to come home from a hospital stay and after coming home. The November article will be **Planning for Medical Emergencies**. The final article, **Resources for Advance Planning for Health Care Decisions**, will be published in December. All the articles are on the AHA Website under "Resources."

Prepare to come home: Meet with the discharge planner along with your caregiver or advocate.

Know your options when you leave the hospital: Will you need rehab at a facility, or skilled home health care, or hired help to assist you with personal care, meals and household tasks?

If outside help is being arranged, get the name of the company and contact information, as well as specifics of what they are to do and when.

Do not be afraid to advocate for yourself and ask any questions that you may have during your stay.

Hospitals have patient advocates available to any who want one.

Get the name of the hospital contact person to call with questions or concerns after you leave the hospital, in case your doctor's office is unable to answer them before.

Make sure you have a written copy of the discharge instructions including:

- A complete list of medications to be taken when you get home (The doctor in the hospital should have reconciled the medicines you used to take before hospitalization with any new medications.) Keep this information together and close at hand.
- Any ongoing procedures (dressing changes, wound care, injections, etc.) or treatments you will need, including instructions, and who will be performing or assisting with these.
- Any signs and symptoms that you should report to your doctor.
- Activities permitted (such as driving, showering) and those to be avoided.
- Any scheduled follow-up appointment.
- The company name and contact information of outside help or skilled home care, if that is being arranged for you at home.

Confirm any follow-up appointments that have been made or that need to be made soon after you return home.

Make sure you and any friend—or advocate who is with you—understand all instructions, as you could still be groggy from medications or anesthesia. Do not be afraid to ask questions.

Arrange for someone to be with you on the day of discharge to pick up needed medications, food, and any medical or other supplies you might need



AFTER COMING HOME

You will need to answer your phone and/or check your messages. You may want to keep a telephone near you at all times when you return home after hospitalization. You may get calls from home care workers from their cell phones to arrange visits, and they will need to reach you before they come to see you.

Keep the discharge instructions in a readily available place. Review these once you are home.

Review the discharge medication list and make sure you have all the medications. It is sometimes helpful to write out a medication schedule to follow since there may be new and or changed meds.

Make follow-up appointments as needed.

Call AHA for extra help as needed.

Follow any instructions about activities permitted such as exercises, diet, and walking, showering. Pace yourself! Listen to your body.

Accept offers of help from family and friends. Ask for things if you need them.

You may wish to limit visitors or set a time limit for visits so that you have the rest you need for your recovery.

Do not hesitate to call your hospital contact number or your doctor or nurse with questions or concerns including any symptoms you may develop.

Take pain medication as instructed; you will actually heal faster if your pain is managed. If you are unable to manage your pain, call your doctor.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Leonardo Contardo found out that the Masonic Temple had the only Alexandria statue of George Washington, who once lived in Alexandria and surveyed its streets. Leonardo pledged \$10,000 toward a Washington statue at the foot of King Street and is seeking donors.

The City Council named AHA's **Toni Popkin** to the City's Commission for Persons with Disabilities. She said that when she joins in October, she will be the only member with a traumatic brain injury and the only one with a service dog.



Josefa Gibson getting chummy with a seaplane pilot during a visit to "breathtaking" Alaska. They flew over fjords and landed on the water. She also took a ride on "a train like the miners did."

Other stops included Seattle and family visits in San Diego and Tijuana.



Waiter at Sunday in Saigon serves "Ladies' Night Out" guests, including Shelly Schwab on waiter's left. The Ladies gather the second Tuesday of every month.



Kathie Fricke, AHA Chair Jane King, Anne Augusterfer, Bud Adams and Susanne Adams visit a room at the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House during AHA's Garden Party.

More Photos of the AHA Garden Party



Host/resident Joe Reeder and Mayor Allison Silberberg



Linda Langley, Holly Wallace, Liz Campbell, Barbara Rosenfeld, Lucille Hamblin



Steve Nelson steadies a glass and an umbrella while Scott Garrett pours. Not shown: The other bartender, Derrick Surratt.

Ready for the rain (or a Nor'easter): Brenda Bloch-Young, AHA Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, and Julie Gentry.



Board Happenings

By Executive Director Cele Garrett

For the past year, our board has been reviewing our current operations, paying close attention to each expense and revenue source. The board's ultimate goal is to ensure sustainability for our organization so long as there is a community need for our services. The increased level of requests from our current members, increased number of inquiries about our services from the community in general, and steady increase of new members (40 so far this year), indicate that our services remain in demand.

This overall review has included assessing our current rate structure. As indicated in a letter that AHA Board Chair Jane King mailed to members in June, the board recommended a first-ever rate increase beginning in January 2019, on the eve of AHA's 8th year in operation. The board voted to approve the recommended rates at its September board meeting. They are as follows:

Full Household member: currently \$800/year; 2019 rate: \$850/year

Full Single member: currently \$550/year; 2019 rate: \$600/year

Household Associate member: currently \$250/year; 2019 rate: \$350/year

Single Associate member: currently \$250/year; 2019 rate: \$300/year

Without dissent, the board approved the changes.

Also without dissent, the board approved a Bylaws change specifying that members of the board should be members of the organization.

AHA membership rose to 219 as of mid-September. New members include Richard Banks, Louise Godden, Mary Sturm, Martha Harris, Judith Phillips and Marylin Means and Ann Martone.

Spreading the word—the *Alexandria Times* chose AHA for its “Cause of the Month” in August and included a banner and a free advertisement. AHA bought a full-page ad for September and placed an ad in the month’s *Zebra*.

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Dara Surratt and Kim Carlisle

Chuckles and Chortles

- If flying is so safe, why is the airport the terminal?
- Why don't sheep shrink in the rain?
- If you can smile when things go wrong, you probably have someone in mind to blame.
- Never go to a doctor whose office plant have died.
- One tequila, two tequilas, three tequilas, floor.
- “Stressed” backward is “desserts.”

When insults had class:

- “He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.”—Oscar Wilde.
- “I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend if you have one.”—George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill.
- Churchill in response: “Cannot possibly attend first night; will attend second ... if there is one.”
- “I’ve just learned about his illness. Let’s hope it is nothing trivial.”—Irvin S. Cobb.
- “Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without an address on it?”—Mark Twain.
- “I feel so miserable without you. It’s almost like having you here.”—Stephen Bishop.

Thanks to the suppliers of these and many other chuckles for the newsletter: Leonardo Contardo and Nancy Kincaid.

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