

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

## AHA Board Names Two Standout New Members

The Board of Directors of AHA elected two new Board members Nov. 20—Kathie Fricke and Sandy Heistad, who assumed their posts effective Dec. 1.

The AHA village got a “two-fer” with the new appointments: Heistad agreed to become secretary, succeeding Helen Desfosses, who remained a Board member; and Fricke agreed to become treasurer, succeeding Chriss Nielsen, who will continue very active in AHA.

Kathie Fricke retired from Georgetown University in 2014 after more than 35 years, during which she served as executive assistant to the university treasurer. She prepared and reconciled budgets. She studied at the University of Wisconsin and is a former member of the Association of Administrative Professionals. In addition to volunteering with several AHA events and activities, Fricke has served as a volunteer at the American Horticultural Society, Campagna Center and Sibley Memorial Hospital.



**Kathie Fricke**



**Sandy Heistad**

Sandy Heistad received a bachelor's degree in English and taught in Chicago public schools. She has a master's degree in counseling and student development. At the University of Iowa, she rose to senior academic advisor in the College of Liberal Arts. Heistad served as board president of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in Iowa City and board member of the University of Iowa performing arts center. Before moving to Alexandria, she worked to establish a village similar to AHA in her neighborhood in Iowa.

At the AHA Board's Nov. 20 meeting, both Heistad and Fricke were approved for the Board without dissent.

Desfosses is a retired political scientist at the State University of New York at Albany, and a former elected official in Albany. **(See story p.2 on her analysis of the mid-term elections.)**

Nielsen was a thorough and well-informed treasurer and she will continue to be involved in AHA, particularly in fundraising.

Board Chair Jane King reported Nov. 20 that AHA “has been attracting record numbers” of new members in recent months. Jen Heinz, as marketing and membership manager, has kept “a drumbeat” of activities to contact prospective members, from arranging coffees to spreading the word through the newsletter, emails, Facebook posts and the like, King said.

Executive Director Cele Garrett reported 227 members, of which 128 were associates and 99 full members, in the latest count. Among the newest are Leo Reddy, Diane Banet, Edmund Willis, Alanna Duckett, Bobbie Jacob and Barbara Bamford. Sadly, AHA received word that Roberta Diehl, who became an associate member just weeks ago, had died.

Garrett reported AHA has temporarily joined the coalition called Village Movement California, to learn from its research and idea sharing. Garrett, among other efforts, represents AHA on the Mayor's Advocacy Roundtable, focused on older residents of Alexandria.

King attended AARP's annual Livable Communities Conference in Charlotte, N.C. AARP recognizes that villages can play an integral role in supporting older adults and enhancing a community's livability. AARP featured a breakout session at the conference on the impact of villages on communities. The session focused on the fact that traditional care models cannot fully meet the needs of older adults. Villages, as does AHA, can fill the gap. However, AHA is now challenged to attract many new volunteers, to assure that essential services can be provided to AHA members.

To ease the staff workload, King asked all in AHA to tell her their ideas for increasing the number of volunteer drivers.



**Helen Desfosses (at rear) is introduced by Barbara Rosenfeld for election postmortem**

## Conversation With . . . Helen Desfosses On Mid-Term Elections

The mid-term elections left President Trump “discomforted” and the Democrats in an internal debate over whether, or how much, to shift leftward, AHA Board Member Helen Desfosses told an AHA audience. Desfosses is a retired political scientist professor at the State University of New York at Albany.

In the turmoil, “The United States will find its way,” she said, in one of the series of Conversation With programs. This one attracted an audience of 28 to the Alexandria House home of Barbara Rosenfeld.

The campaigns for, and results of, the mid-terms, showed the “growing instability of the president” but also showed the Democrats generally “moving to the left, which may be at their peril,” Desfosses said.

“We had a mid-term rebuke of the president,” dramatically in the House, but also in some local and state votes, which “left him in an increasingly uncomfortable position.”

Democrats fell short of their dream of taking the Senate, and they have some internal tensions as well, Desfosses said, focusing on the struggle for the House speakership. Nancy Pelosi has her critics, but she “is a coalition builder” and that may help her win the speakership.

President Trump may be “a genius at moving from one argument to the next,” creating distractions and shifting the political spotlight,

Desfosses said. “But he is not a consoler-in-chief.”

The domestic debates and differences are taking place in a wider background of world turmoil. She mentioned Great Britain’s continuing debate over Brexit and the tension with Saudi Arabia over Jamal Khashoggi’s death.

“Trump is in a very, very dramatic time,” Desfosses said, and that puts the country “in a very unpredictable phase.” “But I am an optimist,” she said. “I don’t know how to be anything else.”

## Conversation With . . . Dr. David Bernanke on Changes in Medicine

There have been many changes—some good, some not-so-good—in the field of medical care in the decades that Dr. David Bernanke was a practicing physician. (He retired 10 years ago.)

Bernanke presented another in AHA’s series of Conversation With . . . programs, entitled “A Personal View: How Medicine Has Changed,” Oct. 28 to an audience of 20.

One major change is, “There is now a plethora of drugs” for doctors to consider, he said. And many more women are in the medical care field.

“Of the 130 in my medical-school class,” he said, “there were 10 women.”

He said a black classmate rose to the presidency of the American Medical Association. Several acquaintances of Bernanke’s won Nobel prizes, one of them at the age of 45.

Bernanke attended college at Cornell and medical school at New York University. His internship and residency were at Yale. He spent two years at the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health. An internist, he was for a time chief of medicine at Alexandria Hospital.

One change Bernanke mentioned is the increase in paperwork doctors and their staffs face. By the time he retired, he said, “Twenty percent of the day’s work was paperwork.” Doctors are “burning out,” he said, and turning to other endeavors. Medical care costs have increased dramatically, he added.

Bernanke had two bits of advice: Listen to nurses, for their practical experience, and “carry with you, like any other form of identification, a list of your medicines and medical conditions.”



**Barbara Rosenfeld (right) introduces Dr. Bernanke (seated).**

## Resources for Advance Planning for Health Care Decisions

*Editor's note: The article that follows is the last of a series by the AHA Member Services Committee, chaired by Susan Pettey. This article and the four that preceded it are available in AHA's website, under "Resources."*

Many people shy away from planning for future situations they may not be able to control, but actually advance directives are the best way to continue to control important decisions even if we are unable to communicate our wishes at that moment.

A living will, a power of attorney for health care and a document indicating to whom confidential health care information may be released are considered key advance planning documents (in addition to a will and power of attorney for financial matters).

A living will states the wishes of the author regarding health care choices if the author is unable to communicate those choices. A power of attorney for health care allows an individual whom the author appoints to make decisions on the author's behalf if the author is unable to make decisions for himself or herself. A durable power of attorney takes effect only when the author cannot make decisions personally. Together these documents are considered "advance directives," and are your opportunity to guide your agent and health care providers on the care you want if you are unable to communicate your preferences. Keep these documents safe and easily retrievable. Hospitals will want a copy of your POA in order to speak to him or her.

A lawyer is not needed to prepare advance directives, although preparing such documents is considered an essential part of estate planning. Most important is that advance directives accurately reflect the author's decisions about care. Advance directives may also be used to specify wishes about organ donation and cremation or burial.

Preparing advance directives requires considering what forms of life-sustaining treatments are available, considering what treatments are wanted or not wanted, and communicating those decisions to loved ones and health care providers.



Advance directives are also a way to specify the kinds of care that are desired. Resource documents available to help develop an advance directive include:

- Five Wishes directive from [www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org). This document allows a person to provide information on the person he or she wants to make care decisions in case of incapacity, the types of medical treatments the individual wants or does not want, the type of comfort care desired and what the individual wants loved ones to know. Five Wishes is easy to understand and meets Virginia requirements for advance directives. There is a \$5.00 charge for the document, which can be printed out or completed online.
- Model Virginia advance directive, available from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization site at [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) (click on "advance care planning," then look for "State-specific Advance Directives").
- Resources from the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging:
  - Toolkit for Health Care Advance Planning. Includes 9 tools for advance planning.
  - Giving Someone a Power of Attorney for Your Health.

These documents are available online from [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law\\_aging.html](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_aging.html)

### Choking — How to React

Occasionally, many people try to eat too fast or without cutting the portions small enough.

The Mayo Clinic *Health Letter* says, "The universal sign of choking is hands clutched to the throat." Other indications are inability to talk, difficulty breathing, inability to cough forcefully, skin or lips turning blue.

What to do: Give five blows to the back between the shoulder blades; or use the Heimlich Maneuver: stand behind the person, wrap your arms around the waist, make a fist with one hand and place it just above the person's navel; grasp the fist with the other hand; give five quick, upward thrusts as though trying to lift the person. Repeat the "five and five" until the obstruction is dislodged.

### Is it a Stroke? Simple Tests May Tell

"Think F.A.S.T.," the Mayo Clinic Health Letter advises, if you think someone is having a stroke.

**F is for Face** – Ask the person to smile. Does one side of his or her face droop?

**A is for Arm** – Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**S is for Speech** – Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Are the words slurred?

**T is for Time** – If you see any sign, time is important. Call 911 so the person can be taken to a hospital emergency department or stroke center as soon as possible for evaluation or treatment. Emergency Medical Services personnel in ambulance or fire truck can give initial treatment.

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

When two AHA members lost their regular ride to the Y, a team of volunteers marshaled by AHA's office workers and scheduled by **Steve Nelson** swung into action, assuring drivers for weekdays. Drivers included **Catha Pavloff, Steve Nelson, Howard Weiss, Linda Langley and Bill Clayton.**

**Monica Estabrooke**, operations supervisor (an ironic title considering her operation), underwent open-heart surgery to replace her mitral valve. The surgery went well, her daughter reported, but she is expected to take it easy on office work for the rest of the year.

**L Liddle and Richard Klimoski** are combining their talents—and much flour and effort—into baking baguettes. As L tells it, “Last February, Richard K. invited me to join him at a French baguette bread-making class in Leesburg offered by Melinda Friend, the proprietor of ‘Knead and Know.’ We and four other people gathered in her kitchen for the best cooking class I’ve ever taken. All class members made—and took home—the tastiest baguettes ever, plus some of the equipment necessary.” Liddle and Klimoski get together occasionally to make baguettes. It takes three days: one hour making the starter mixture on Day 1; one hour on Day 2 yields the basic baguette dough, which rises overnight; Day 3 of over two hours involves forming, rising and baking 10 baguettes.



### AHA Group Lunches at Tempo on Thanksgiving Day

Clockwise from left rear:

Mary Nefedov, Jean Antone, Kathie Fricke (the hostess for Lunch Arounds), Shirley Rettig, Pat Roland, Mary Margaret McGrail, Jane Starkey, Nancy Kincaid

## The Perfect Marriage: Life Transitioners and Nurse Practitioners

By Jan Hussey

Transitioners are lucky long-lifers in the 85-to-Eternity age group who remain in relatively good health and miraculously have outlived the concerns of modern physicians. Doctors practice what once was known as the “healing art,” which naturally eliminates transitioners who, having lived beyond healing, are virtually on their own to navigate a steady decline.

Fully aware of the good fortune that has seen them to the finish line, in a sense, still standing, transitioners nevertheless face minor health concerns requiring simple remedies or reassurance rather than the dangerous dosages or unnecessary procedures so familiar to the young (those under 85). The scary part is that having outlived the “healing art,” this exceptional group occupies a vast limbo with no specific “go to” authority for serving their special needs.

Despite the existence of untold numbers of organizations designed to help the elderly, transitioners often fail to sort and dial through the confusion. They sorely need the reassuring skills of a transition doctor.

Next to birth itself, the final period of human life (which some refer to accurately as second childhood) is physically, psychologically and spiritually the most challenging of all lifetime, requiring a single source of skilled support, understanding and nurturing much the same (despite the inevitable reverse prognosis) as the multiple needs of first childhood.

Are there no practitioners in the medical sphere who are singularly capable of ushering the aged person OUT of this world just as safely, securely and tenderly as he/she was ushered INTO it? This is a task of true compassion requiring overlapping disciplines—keen intuitions and philosophical observation as well as medical techniques.

Very soon today's small platoon of transitioners will morph into an army of old Baby Boomers clamoring for the skills that independent nurse practitioners are prepared to offer 85-and-counting transitioners. Will these angels of transition please step forward ....

### A Reminder: You Can Save Some Tax With Qualified Charitable Distribution

Are you planning your year-end giving? If not, now is the time to begin making these decisions. You may save some taxes.

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) eliminates the taxation of a distribution paid directly from an IRA owned by an individual (who is age 70½ or over) to a qualified charity. Many IRA plan administrators (i.e., brokerage firms) require that these requests be made well in advance of year end to insure appropriate reporting and delivery of the funds. This may be part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) or an additional amount.

**Contact your financial or tax advisor for additional information.**

## Bud the Wonder Dog and Toni Popkin

Toni Popkin and her service dog, Bud, have been in demand. They did presentations at three days of training for about 70 paramedics on the topics of service dogs and public access.

They also met with Yellow Cab, discussing the possibility of training the entire fleet on the practical and legal aspects of customers with service dogs.

Popkin lectures often about access for fully trained service dogs and how the legitimate dogs' access is jeopardized by "scam online websites that sell IDs, registrations, and/or certifications — none of which are legitimate or necessary."

### A Resource for Long-Term Care

Alan Dinsmore points out a potentially valuable resource:

Morningstar, a financial analysis site, has just published the 2018 update entitled "Seventy-Five Must-Know Statistics About Long-Term Care, 2018 Edition."

If you are interested, go online to Morningstar.com and enter the title in the search field.

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## AHA's Year-End Campaign Relies on You

By now, you likely have received a letter from AHA Board Member Barbara Rosenfeld, asking you to consider a year-end contribution to AHA. A few of our supporters have let us know of their year-end gift and we are very grateful.

This past year, we decided not to hold our fundraising gala. Expenses for the event increased each year, making it a challenge to raise the same level of net revenue. And, we felt that staff and volunteer time necessary to prepare for the gala was put to better use by serving our members during this busy time of year.

Instead, we hosted the September garden party, which was smaller in scale and lower in price. (After all, many of our supporters do like a good party!) Of course, we couldn't yield the same level of revenue as we had with the gala, so this year AHA is especially reliant on our year-end campaign.

Thank you in advance for considering a gift to AHA at year's end. — **Cele Garrett, Executive Director**

### Some Cold-Weather Health Tips

"Winters chill can be especially hard on the fingers and toes if you have arthritis or a condition such as Raynaud's disease that affects blood circulation," the Mayo Clinic Health Letter reports.

To maintain warmth and comfort:

- Encourage circulation—Wiggle or massage fingers and toes. "Windmill" arms or shake arms and legs.
- Wear mittens—The best are fleece- or wool-lined.
- Double up on socks; moisture-wicking fabrics help.
- Carry hand and foot warmers, available in sporting goods stores.
- Soak hands or feet in warm (NOT hot) water.
- Try specialty gloves—Therapeutic gloves designed for patients with Raynaud's may help.
- Exercise—Regular physical activity helps increase blood flow to the body's tissues.
- Don't smoke—Smoking narrows blood vessels, which can restrict circulation.

Tell your doctor if numbness or pain in fingers or toes persists.

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