

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



The AHA Board of Directors

Members posed for this “official” photo-portrait at the Feb. 19 meeting.

Front Row: Linda Langley, Barbara Rosenfeld, Penny Roberts, Susanne Adams

Second Row: Mary Jayne Swanson, Chair Jane King, Treasurer Kathie Fricke, Brenda Bloch-Young, Barbara “Babs” Waters, Executive Director Cele Garrett, Secretary Sandy Heistad

Third Row: Helen Desfosses, Editor Bill Clayton, Pam Nelson, Vice Chair Bob Eiffert, Alan Dinsmore

—Photo by Marketing Manager Jen Heinz

Ready, Set, Go: Spring2ACTION time!

by Cele Garrett

Right now, winter seems interminable but we all know spring eventually will arrive. For those of us who work in the local nonprofit world, springtime means more than putting away the winter sweaters and watching the daffodils pop. Spring means **Spring2ACTION**, the city-wide online fundraising campaign for the 150+ nonprofits in the community. The big day is **Wednesday, April 10** though “early giving” actually begins on March 27. Alexandria’s community foundation, ACT for Alexandria, sponsors this campaign each year. ACT arranges for the online platform that we all use, provides training and technical

support, creates colorful signage, and even offers prize money at various points during the big day. This is the 8th year that AHA has participated and, since those early days, we’ve caught the notice of many people.

Thank you for remembering AHA during Spring2ACTION. Amid the hoopla and the excitement of the big day—and the goofy things the nonprofits do on Spring2ACTION Day to stand out in a very big field—we’re all here to do an important job: raise the funds needed to keep our organizations strong and sustainable. We’re grateful for the boost ACT gives to the nonprofits, the attention of the local press during this fundraiser.

Details will be coming soon.

AHA to Celebrate 8th Anniversary With a Trip Down Memory Lane

AHA will celebrate its 8th anniversary May 8 in the community room at Cameron Station. Chair Jane King reported that the theme for the anniversary will be “Embrace Your Story.”

We will have a special guest speaker who works with small groups of individuals to capture some of their memories for therapeutic purposes.

We will explore the many benefits of capturing life stories and memories and we’ll showcase examples from AHA members who have written a memoir, created personal history scrapbooks or told their story on video.

King said the memoir theme “will enable us to introduce a new program focus for AHA for launch in the fall.”

The Cameron Station venue was arranged by Babs Waters, who with her husband, Elliott, is active in the Cameron Station neighborhood. More details about the anniversary celebration will be announced later.

Other AHA Programs, Projects

Cele Garrett said she is hoping to have a program on Brain Health. AHA is also planning a welcome event for new members, to be hosted by Maggie and Barry Stauffer.

In the past year, AHA has added some new programs to its diverse offerings, Program Chair Penny Roberts reported. They include:

- **The Monday Book Club.** The group selects the book, of any genre, fiction or non-fiction. Check the calendar for meeting location and subject, and just sign up.
- **Current Events Conversation.** This group usually meets the last Friday of each month, in the conference

Invite Prospects to Coffee to Learn More About AHA

Do you know someone interested in joining AHA?

Our AHA staff and Membership Committee will be hosting an informal “coffee klatch” for prospective AHA members and volunteers on Tuesday, March 5, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Abyssinia Market & Coffeehouse, 720 Jefferson Street.

If you know someone who would like to learn more about AHA membership benefits or has time to volunteer to serve our members, please invite them to drop in and chat with us.

If that’s not convenient for your friend, please invite them to an upcoming AHA event to “check us out.”

Please be sure to provide an RSVP if one is required.



AHA’s new handbooks for board members, members and volunteers

room of Safeway at Bradlee shopping center. Check the calendar for meeting dates and times.

Mark your calendar now for a notable event on April 11: Louise Kenny will lead an hour-long tour of the Library of Congress beginning at 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch. Call the AHA office to register for this event or register online at www.athomeinalexandria.org.

The Program Committee needs help. Can you help locate a nice place for lunch or dinner? Help support the movie group? Lead a discussion? Or do you have an idea for a program you might like to start up? There is a Penny (Roberts) for your thoughts. Contact psroberts378@gmail.com or call her at 703-836-9644.

Pam Nelson and her Governance Committee have completed work on some important components of AHA handbooks: updating the conflict-of-interest policy, clarifying protocols for volunteer drivers and (with considerable work by Susan Pettey) reviewing insurance coverage. Board Chair Jane King praised Nelson for the painstaking and important work of her committee. The committee is responsible for ensuring that the three separate handbooks for board members, other AHA members and volunteers are up to date.

With the ups and downs of membership, AHA was at 223 members: 123 associates and 100 full members at the time of the February board meeting.

New members of AHA are Annabelle Reitman, Herb Zucker and Joan Bonderaff.

Reitman was among the 12 who attended a Dine Around recently at London Curry House.

Zucker was introduced by Susanne Adams to the What’s in the News gathering and proved a most unusual attendee—he did not jump into the discussion, which was occasionally a chorus of voices chattering on several topics.

AHA Hub is Now Live

By Jen Heinz

Thank you for your patience as the office rolls out the new member/volunteer website, AHA Hub.

We're off to a good start and hope that your experience, if you've opted to log in, has been positive. If you have an email address on record with us and do not recall receiving your Welcome email (with your username and password) on February 4 or 5, and/or the Mid-Month Update email on February 14th, please get in touch with the office to let us know. There's always the possibility that your email spam blocker is rejecting the emails and we can resolve that problem.

Volunteers take note! We will soon be sending you information about the Volunteer Self-Signup (VSS) module within AHA Hub. This will replace NV Rides as the means by which we log service requests and volunteers sign up for them. **Non-member volunteers**— you will soon be receiving your username and password to access AHA Hub and the VSS.

All volunteers will receive training materials to walk you through the use of the system. We think you will really like the system once trained on its use. Please continue to use NV Rides until you hear more from us. The use of the AHA Hub website to register for programs and events, renew membership or update your contact information is completely voluntary. **If you have any questions or would like assistance** in accessing AHA Hub, just let us know in the office and we'll be happy to walk you through it as needed. Thank you.

Preparing to Discuss the News

Week after week, the separate dining room of Royal Restaurant fills with AHA folks wanting to vent over current events at the What's in The News program. Brenda Bloch-Young presides with a firm and informed hand.

Much preparation goes into each session. Bloch-Young explains:

"I read The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, and The Economist on a regular basis and often via newsletters and always including the op-ed pages. I try to avoid TV news with the exception of the PBS NewsHour. My topics are generally issues being covered by all of these organizations from different points of view.... I begin jotting down a list of topics about 10 days prior to the meeting date and add or delete based on the coverage I am reading or seeing before sending out a tentative list four days prior to the event."

Bloch-Young is a tax expert, so if somebody refers to taxes, she will say, "Time out. Taxes are my expertise."



Getting to Know You

AHA plans to host a series of small-group gatherings designed to help AHA people get to know each other and become more familiar with AHA's activities. The photo above, at a gathering set up by Executive Director Cele Garrett and Mary Jayne Swanson, shows Swanson, Josette Desfayes, Nancy Kula and Naomi Morales. The photo below shows a luncheon organized by Garrett, Susanne Adams and Mercedes Kremenetzky. Left to right are Rosa Guerreiro, Kremenetzky, Garrett, Odie Curtis, Sally Bartley, Sylvia Lowe and Susanne Adams.



Welcome Spring and Support AHA

As we go to press, seats still remain for the "Welcome Spring" dinner March 30 to support AHA programs and operations.

AHA members, volunteers, and friends are invited to this special fundraising event at the home of Carol and Stuart Downs. After a long winter, we look forward to seeing the first blooms in Carol's lovely garden and then enjoying drinks, casual dinner and conversation.

The group size is limited to 20 guests in addition to the hosts. Please join us in support of AHA and enjoy a lively evening in a beautiful setting as we toast the start of Spring. You may purchase tickets securely online at <https://aha.clubexpress.com> (members) or <http://athomeinalexandria.org/donate/> (non-members). You may also contact the AHA office to reserve your seat and make payment by check. The cost is \$50 per person. Thank you!

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

AHA people get around. **Brenda Bloch-Young** reports: "While I was in Key West escaping the winter weather, I found a chair at the pool of my hotel during the late afternoon. I overheard the woman sitting next to me mention that she was from Virginia"—in fact, Alexandria. "We began exchanging information.... She casually mentioned that she was a member of a village"—in fact, AHA. "We were both stunned. **Mary Margaret McGrail** was in Key West on a tour and I was there on my own exploring the city. We laughed at the random encounter so far from home."

Also getting around—**Carol Downs**. She and a friend took a 13-day Viking Ocean Cruise to several ports along the South China Sea and Java Sea. Kuala Lumpur's Petronas Towers, among the world's tallest. The rich cultural mix of Singapore. Along the Java Sea, Samarang, trade center of the Dutch East India Co. (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves). And of course, a dance show in Bali.

Speaking of **Carol Downs**, in addition to being on the AHA Advisory Council and supporting AHA, she is now volunteer state president for AARP Virginia, working with more than 250 volunteers across Virginia. Her husband, Stuart, asked how much it paid. She said, "They've doubled my salary" He said, "But they aren't paying you anything." She said, "Yes, but they're DOUBLING it."

Event planners with AHA are exploring suitable alternating venues for the gatherings such as TGIF and Ladies' Night Out.



Above: AHA'ers Lunch Around in February at Mason Social. Clockwise from left: Jessi Macleod, Lydia Enright, Linda Langley, Howard Weiss, Ruth Arnold, Kathie Fricke, Jane Cohen.

The 12 attendees at the Feb.18 Dine Around at London Curry House in Cameron Station included some new faces to that event. The group welcomed Annabelle Reitman and Edmund Willis.

King To Be Recognized As a Living Legend

Eight outstanding Alexandrians, including AHA Chair Jane King, will be recognized March 14 as Living Legends of Alexandria.

The induction of legends will occur at a reception from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Masonic Memorial. Tickets are \$45 until March 8 and \$60 after that. Buy tickets by credit card payment online (alexandrialivinglegends.org) or at the event, or by check to Box 918, Alexandria, VA 22313. Tickets will not be mailed to you—your registration will be noted as you check in at the event.

King will be honored for her many years advocating for citizens over 50. She led the development of the Alexandria Strategic Plan on Aging and served as chair of the Commission on Aging. She is an officer and outstanding volunteer for AARP Virginia.

March Conversation With a Music Theme

The speaker for the March 24 Conversation With program will be maestro Jeff Dokken, exploring his career as conductor of the NOVA Symphony Orchestra and some of the Encore singing groups.

AHA member Sandy Northrop summarizes the program: "Join Jeff on a rollicking ride as he talks about how his love of music has carried him from the White House to Carnegie Hall and from Ecuador to Rome."

The program will be 3-5 p.m., Sunday, March 24, in the Alexandria House home of Sandy Northrop, #1202.



Photo at right shows half the crowd of 18 for a TGIF at Charlie's On the Avenue. In the crowd were AHA co-founder Ernie Lehmann at left, and Fannie Allen, a Conversation With program speaker, at right.

A Serious Fall? Call 911

Members and volunteers: Please remember that if a member has a serious fall, he or she should call 911, even when somebody from AHA lives nearby. For a less serious fall, but one that keeps a person from getting back up, call this City number: 703-838-4660.

Chuckles and Chortles

Why do actors say, “Break a leg?” Because every play has a cast.

Where are average objects made? At the satisfactory.

The way to drown a hipster: Throw him into the mainstream.

My bagel was trying to slide off my plate—until I put lox on it.

What did the Tin Man say when run over by a steamroller? “Curses. Foil again.”

A girl called me and said, “Come on over. There’s nobody here.” I went over. There was nobody there.

The dyslexic devil-worshipper sold his soul to Santa. Atheism is a non-Prophet organization.

I called my band “999” but it never got a gig.

Ladies, feed a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and you get rid of him for the whole weekend.

My dog used to chase people on a bike a lot. It got so bad, finally I had to take his bike away.

I picked up a hitchhiker and he said, “What are the odds that you’ve given a ride to an axe murderer?” I said, “What are the odds of there being two axe murderers in the same car?”

How is it possible to have a civil war?

Health Tips

Television is fattening?? The *Harvard Health Letter* reports, “The risk of obesity rises almost 25 percent with each two-hour increase in television viewing.”

Harvard does not say if viewing weight-loss programs has any effect.

Other revelations from the *Harvard Health Letter*:

- Researchers say that the lycopene in tomatoes “helps lower the risk of prostate and other cancers” but also could lower the risk of stroke caused by blood clots.
- Foods such as olive oil, fish and nuts—high in healthy unsaturated fats—have been linked to lower rates not only of dementia caused by Alzheimer’s but also of mild cognitive impairment.
- Vigorous exercise 45 minutes at a time, four times a week, may help prevent Alzheimer’s.
- Exercise and blood sugar: “The more active you are, the more your muscles will remove glucose from the blood,” the *Health Letter* says.
- “Laugh it up,” the folks at Harvard say. “Laughter has been found to lower levels of stress hormones, reduce inflammation in the arteries and increase ‘good’ HDL cholesterol.”

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The “Sun Sneeze”

Do you often sneeze when you look at the sun or a bright light?

The folks at the *Mayo Clinic Health Letter* have a name for it—“sun sneeze.” It often happens when a person moves from a darker place out into the sunlight; the optic nerve causes the pupils to contract suddenly and gives the same sensation as an irritation to the nose. Voila: a sneeze.

Mayo says researchers, maybe tongue-in-cheek, call it autosomal dominant compelling helio-ophthalmic outburst. Get it? ACHOO.

Sun sneezing affects 11 to 35 percent of people, Mayo says. It is usually harmless, but potentially could cause difficulties to an auto driver, such as when emerging from a dark tunnel into the bright sunlight. Sunglasses or the car’s visor could help.

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