

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

Sharing Ideas at the WAVE Conference

by Cele Garrett

This past spring, WAVE board members entertained the idea of expanding our typical quarterly meeting into an all-day “mini-conference.” We wanted to bring together the Washington/DC/Virginia villages for a more deliberate idea-sharing. We sensed there could be enough interest to bring together 80-100 staff, board members and volunteers. Those thoughts culminated with our first-ever WAVE regional conference on November 14. (After registration numbers sailed past 125 and reached 170 people, we stopped calling it a “mini-conference”!)

Nine AHAsers attended the conference and everyone split up to ensure that each breakout session was covered. Session topics ran the gamut: fine-tuning administrative functions, addressing insurance and liability issues, finding ways our village services can help tackle the widespread challenges of social isolation, and utilizing the latest technology to better care for loved ones.

We shared strategies and discussed ways to build a financially sustainable base for our organizations. AHA's Jen Heinz led a session on voice-activated technology. I joined Arlington Neighborhood Village's executive director Wendy Zenker to co-facilitate a session on marketing, branding and communications.

At the end of the day, we found it gratifying to know that we all share the same challenges and that we're not “in this alone.” More important, this meeting reaffirmed that we all share a deep passion for the work we do.



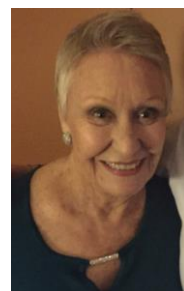
Back: Cele Garrett, Susan Pettey, Jane King, Megan McIntyre, Dara Surratt
Front: Barb Rosenfeld, Jen Heinz, Pam Nelson

Thank you, AHA Volunteers

by Cele Garrett

Were it not for our fantastic volunteers, AHA would have to shutter the doors and “close the shop.” We are completely dependent upon them. Though the year is not complete, so far, we have had 55 volunteers meet 1,130 member requests. Additionally, the AHA office itself is the beneficiary of our volunteers' time and talents: Each month, a group of volunteers meet in the AHA conference room to coordinate the newsletter mailing. Laura Noble recently inventoried the items in our loaned equipment closet. Merly Kremenetski comes into the office to help with data entry. Recently, our volunteer George Lee has helped us with various computer challenges.

As the holiday season approaches, it's the perfect time to express our gratitude for the folks who serve on AHA committees, oversee various social events and AHA workshops, produce this newsletter, drive our members to appointments, organize book groups and walking tours, run errands and bring groceries to our members, and offer their professional skills to us.



Although it was a World Series game night, many guests enjoyed the annual volunteer appreciation party at the home of Josefa Gibson, pictured here. The beautiful setting, great food and expansive views created a pleasant evening for all.



Nancy Berg, left, with volunteers Terri Audrain and Patricia Mullen

Making Memory into Memoir

by Jane King

Kay Cowan, who leads AHA's new memoir writing program, knows that capturing memories and experiences important to us is no easy task. However, Kay has devised a model for memoir writing that works without being a worrisome burden. She has asked the 10 of us in the memoir writing group to submit one page every two weeks about any memory we choose. And Kay leads us by joining us—by offering a page about a memory she shares with us.

We get an unexpected benefit. In reading their work, we get to enjoy learning about the lives and interests of nine other AHA members.

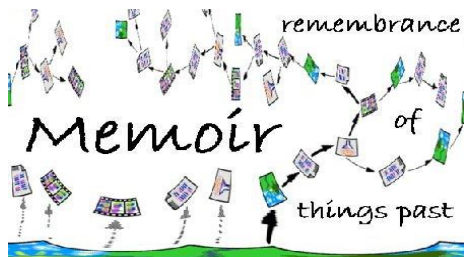
We begin each session by splitting into two groups at tables at the Abyssinian Market and Coffee House at the edge of Old Town. We then share with the table our one-page memory. We review them one at a time and discuss with each writer the theme, our understanding of it and any suggestions we have for enhancing the story. We then exchange our one-pagers with the other table. We do not focus intently on grammar, though we would certainly note if a correction is essential. We are much more interested in helping each other create the strongest version of our memories.

Though the subjects vary every two weeks, some have arisen more than once, to include affectionate tributes to dogs and stories about international adventures. Our broader intentions vary.

I am torturing myself by trying to define the magic occurring for eight of us who have remained close friends, and travel and meet frequently, since our college days—this could be book length! Another member of the group is portraying the significant events in her life for her grandchildren. Still another is writing about her quest on behalf of flexible working hours for women.

We believe that our families and friends will enjoy the results of our efforts.

Memoir writing turns out to be fun because Kay assures that it will be. You may want to consider joining Kay's memoir writing program early in the new year.



It's the Scottish Walk!

AHA members and volunteers are encouraged to help raise awareness of AHA by participating in the Scottish Walk Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 7. There's a float for those who prefer to sit and ride, or you can walk alongside the float and pass out candy to the children along the route. Look for the AHA float near the corner of S. St. Asaph and Wolfe Streets at 10:30 a.m. The parade starts at 11 a.m. and takes about 1 hour.

Wear a red jacket if you have it – AHA will provide red scarves and AHA hats. [Please sign up online here](#) or by calling the AHA office. Please let Penelope Roberts know if you want to ride on the float by calling her at 703-836-9644.

Paraders are invited to stop in at the home of L and Ann Liddle, 526 S. Pitt Street, from 9:30-10:30 a.m., for cider before the parade lineup at 10:30 a.m.

Chills, Chuckles and *Pistoles* on North Old Town Tour

by Bill Clayton

An AHA group braved breezy cold Nov. 20 to explore North Old Town on an "illustrated walk" led by Mike Kenny.

Starting at the corner of Pendleton and Union Streets, the group made several stops for Kenny to recount history and quirks in Alexandria over the centuries. Among the stops: A surprisingly deep river docking at the start, recalling the days when there was a thriving port before Alexandria had its name. The group chuckled at the fact that *pistoles*, a Spanish currency, were the money of tobacco commerce in those bygone days. Subsequent stops, accompanied by Kenny's historical knowledge and wit, followed at Oronoco Bay, the foot of Madison Street, the Alexandria Canal, "Promenade Classique" sculpture cluster, and others.



Mike Kenny, center, with attentive AHA members.

The Season of Giving

by Cele Garrett

As this newsletter hits your door, you may have received another envelope in your mailbox: a letter from AHA volunteer and member Bill Clayton, inviting you to consider AHA in your year-end contributions. Many individuals evaluate their charitable giving at year's end—to maximize tax deductions if needed or to see which causes they'd intended to support throughout the past year. You may grow weary of all those fundraising letters but please remember that many nonprofits rely on year-end giving to help them over their financial hurdle.

Did you know At Home in Alexandria accepts gifts of stock as well as money? When you donate securities, you receive the same income tax savings as you would with a check, but with the added benefit of eliminating capital gains taxes, which can be as high as 20 percent. Already, AHA has heard from a handful of supporters getting a jump on their donations—even before receiving our letter—and we are humbled and grateful.

The Roundtable Discusses Affordable Housing

There is a collective will for affordable housing in Northern Virginia according to Michelle Krocker, Executive Director of Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA.org). Krocker was a guest, along with Maria Wasowski of the Alexandria Planning Commission, at the most recent Roundtable discussion meeting. AHA's Vice Chair Bob Eiffert, formerly with the Office of Housing, introduced both guests.

Starting with some definitions, Krocker explained that, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), housing is affordable when costs (rent plus utilities) do not exceed 30% of the household's gross monthly income. The area median income (AMI) determines the eligibility for a variety of housing programs. Workforce Housing is defined as housing affordable to households earning between 60-120 percent of AMI. Market affordable housing includes older housing/rental stock that may have fewer amenities but is an important part of a community's housing resource.

In Alexandria, the Planning Commission reviews development plans, requests for non-conforming uses and special use permits and then makes recommendations to City Council. Wasowski explained the process for reviewing development plans may include requirements for affordable housing or allowances for contributions to the Housing Trust Fund.

Attendees were encouraged to pay attention to local hearings, and to speak up, either in support of affordable housing issues or with concerns about the surrounding issues of transportation, schools, health and aging.

Nefedov Memorial Service

by Bill Clayton

Family and friends paid fond tribute to Mary Johrde Nefedov, in a memorial service Nov. 10 at Everly-Wheatley funeral home.

Nefedov, a longtime active member of At Home in Alexandria, died at age 92 on Oct. 17 at Silverado Memory Care. Barbara Watts, an ordained funeral celebrant, presided over a program that included several speakers remembering Nefedov's beauty, brilliance and quirks.

Photos included one that recalled her distinguished career in oceanography, in which she directed an office that supported the ships and other facilities used by the oceanographic institutions such as Scripps, Woods Hole and Lamont Doherty.

The speakers at the service included relatives and friends. Among a dozen from AHA who attended, Maggie Stauffer and Pete Crouch added to the anecdotes. Stauffer remembered with awe the fact that Nefedov once had an Information Technology person on retainer. Crouch recalled her love of food and of collecting. "She was logical, tenacious and very principled," a friend, Sandy Toye said.



Mary Nefedov with Nancy Kincaid, Penelope Roberts and Ruth Arnold.

Barry Stauffer Recognized for Cemetery Care



On a crisp Saturday in late October, friends and city leaders (including the City's newly retired chief arborist) came together to honor Barry Stauffer. His longtime leadership in stewarding the grounds clean-up of the historic Old Town Cemeteries is known by many. Barry's children and a few other special friends gifted the cemetery with a lovely young sapling dedicated to Barry—a fitting tribute.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Congressman Don Beyer was having breakfast the morning of the What's in the News meeting at the Royal Cafe. **Brenda Bloch-Young** invited him in to say hello. He applauded the idea of AHA members discussing the news and said he would love to join us at a future date. Wouldn't that be fun!



Kit Leider, Brenda Bloch-Young, Louise Meng, Congressman Don Beyer, and Herb Zucker.

Teddy and Bill Clayton took their yearly few days of vacation in Cuernavaca, Mexico, known as "Land of Eternal Spring." Guests arrive at the villa and are served by the host and his "staff," a cook, a driver/butler/all-around handyman, and two other servants. Much sunshine, much tequila, much rest. Three English bulldogs were the entertainment.

Jane King's daughter, Kristin Brown, is president of *Brady*, the gun violence prevention advocacy organization, named in honor of Jim and Sarah Brady, former Alexandria residents. They fought for seven years for the Brady Bill, which required background checks for all gun sales. The bill was signed in 1993 by President Clinton.

At a major Brady fundraiser on November 14, President Clinton, along with other Democratic and Republican honorees, won a Brady award for signing the Brady Bill into law and his continuing support for the prevention of gun violence.



Sophia Brown, Jane King, Bill Clinton, Kristin Brown, Katie Brown and Kris's friend, Bruce Shuttleworth, in front.

Mystery Book Group Opens Wait List

The AHA Mystery Book Club, AMBC, has been very successful in developing a dedicated group of members who love the mystery/thriller/crime genre. Because of space limitations in members' homes and for the sake of convenient discussion, membership has been limited to 15. However, in order to offer new members an opportunity to join the discussions, the AMBC is accepting new members on a waiting list. Please contact Ann Liddle, annliddle123@gmail.com, if you would like to join the wait list or if you would like information for creating a new book group.



Of the 14 members present at the home of Sandy Heistad, shown here, Sandra Sterne, Jane King, Mary Peet, Pam Nelson, Kathy Fricke

Community Calendar

December 6, 2019 - December 7, 2019, 49th Annual Campagna Center Scottish Christmas Walk Weekend & Parade; parade starts at 11 a.m., other activities throughout the weekend.

December 7, 2019; Boat Parade on the Potomac; parade starts at 5:30 p.m.; dockside festivities 2 to 8 p.m.

December 31, 2019; 25th Anniversary of First Night Alexandria; see website for details firstnightalexandria.org

Senior Services of Alexandria

January 11, 2020; Caregiver Support: Resources to Guide You; Immanuel Church on the Hill, 3606 Seminary Road;

February 20, 2020; Housing Options and Home Improvement; Beatley Central Library, 5005 Duke Street.

Conversation With ... Seeking Help

“Conversation with...” is losing its longtime facilitator, Barbara Rosenfeld. After two very successful years, she will be turning her attention to other interests. We don’t want to lose this valuable social program, but we can’t keep it alive without additional help.

First, do you have time and interest in facilitating this program? Responsibilities include soliciting names of potential speakers and working with volunteers to reach out to potential speakers and hosts for the presentation.

Secondly, are you willing to serve as part of the committee that contacts prospective speakers and assists in locating space? Barbara has offered to work with the person or persons who take over in order to make the transition as easy as possible.

Please contact Barbara Rosenfeld at barbararosenfeld@comcast.net, or Penelope Roberts at psroberts378@gmail.com to learn more or to volunteer.



The Politics Forum Off to a Great Start

Aided and inspired by Nancy Kincaid, Penelope Roberts, and others, Helen Desfosses, an AHA board member, presented a talk on contemporary politics to AHA members as well as Alexandria House residents and others. The talk had the intriguing title, “Politics is not a Four-Letter Word.” The talk was so well received that Desfosses, a former elected official and a political scientist, felt emboldened enough to give another talk on a contemporary political issue: “Impeachment or Self-Impeachment? That is the Question.” Together, these well-received political discussions have become the core of another AHA series, “The Politics Forum.”

The non-partisan forum will meet monthly and will be led by Helen Desfosses. Check the AHA calendar for dates and times.

Enjoy the holidays with friends and family; be safe, travel well, eat healthy and remain calm.



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