

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

A Heartfelt Thank You

by Cele Garrett

We are already one month into the year 2020, but when our January newsletter went to press, our calendar year-end campaign was not yet complete. Now that we have closed the books on 2019, it seems a good time to thank you—our wonderful friends—for supporting AHA's important campaign at year's end. We finished the campaign at over \$16,000 with the help of nearly 80 contributors. It takes many people to keep our village strong. Thank you from all of us at AHA.



Important Heart Health

By Roberta McGregor
Retired nurse and AHA volunteer

Since February is American Heart Month, this is the perfect time to remind everyone of the signs of a heart attack and stroke. This annual celebration began to encourage Americans to join the battle against heart disease by becoming aware of the signs of a heart attack. A heart attack occurs when a part of the heart does not receive an adequate supply of blood and oxygen, usually caused by a blockage in a coronary artery, which supplies blood to the heart muscle. This then causes the tissue of that area of the heart to die.

Symptoms of a heart attack are tightness or pain in the chest, neck, back, arms, jaw, or upper abdomen; fatigue; dizziness; lightheadedness; clammy skin; sweating; heartburn, indigestion, nausea or vomiting; shortness of breath; abnormal heartbeat; or anxiety.

Women are more likely to have shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, and back or jaw pain. If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately.

AHA's new Mission and Vision Statements

By Cele Garrett

AHA will celebrate its ninth year in operation this spring. Our founders and other leaders of AHA established our mission and vision statements early on so we could clarify our organization's purpose and objectives in the community. At this point in our operation, we took stock of our goals, our members' needs, our current work, future anticipated needs, the local environment we serve and other factors. We agreed it was time to refine our mission and vision statements—and to establish and communicate our core values.

Sometimes it's hard to see a broader perspective from "outside the box" so we had valuable guidance from our AHA member and Advisory Council member Jan Pomerantz. With her depth of experience in nonprofit strategic planning, Jan helped us to jump-start our strategic plan a few years ago. We're grateful for her help in walking us through this recent process. Here is the result:

Mission statement: AHA is a member-driven nonprofit village that builds and sustains a 55-plus community to successfully navigate aging. Together, we share activities, programs and services, including access to needed assistance.

Values:

- Resilience
- Independence
- Engagement
- Confidence
- Health and well-being
- Safety/security

Vision statement: To be an advocate for older Alexandrians to live safe, active and connected lives.

Looking for a Good Deal in Alexandria? Use the Silver Service Card

by Jane King

You may ask, “What is the Silver Service Card?” Some of you may have one already, but it’s important if you don’t that you learn about it and make sure you obtain one. Silver Service Cards, available to Alexandrians age 60 and over, enable users to take advantage of discounts in establishments across the city. Over 50 businesses, from restaurants to retailers, health and many other services.

Each business determines the discount it offers. Examples include restaurants that offer a 10 or 15 percent discount on specific days or every day. Services include two cleaners that offer discounts.

At Home in Alexandria is a sponsor of the Silver Service Card, as are the City of Alexandria and Senior Services of Alexandria (which administers the program). The cards are available from AHA or Senior Services.

It’s a good idea to keep the Silver Service Card in your wallet—so you don’t forget to use it. For a listing of businesses that offer discounts, go to <https://seniorservicesalex.org/programs/silver-service-card/>.

Conversation with Bob Levey

by Penelope Roberts

Bob Levey is a prize-winning journalist who has covered the Washington scene since the Johnson Administration. For 23 years, he wrote a daily column, “Bob Levey’s Washington,” for *The Washington Post*. The column looked at all aspects of life in the nation’s capital. It won major awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Washington Journalism Review. Currently he writes a monthly column for *Senior Beacon Newspapers*. He has also recently parlayed his extensive experience of newspaper reporting, politics and Washington lore into fiction with *Larry Felder, Candidate*. Please join Bob on Sunday Feb. 23 from 3-5 p.m. at the home of Georg and Ruth Morduch, 1250 S. Washington St. RSVP by Feb. 20.

Program Volunteers Needed

In the recent AHA member survey, there was good feedback from members who suggested new program ideas. Efforts like this require leaders, facilitators, hosts and venues. In order to develop more programs of interest to AHA members, we need your support. Contact Penelope Roberts or call the AHA office to discuss any ideas you may have to host or facilitate a program.

Modern Technology Makes DASH Convenient and Reliable

by Jane King

In this and in coming editions, the AHA Newsletter will describe the many services available in the city that can serve the needs of its older residents. DASH is one of many of them.

All of us see DASH buses circulating the city, but those of us who have not been a frequent DASH passenger know little about it. DASH, in addition to providing transit throughout Alexandria, is funded in part by the city, runs the Old Town Trolley and provides free transit for many students to schools.

DASH has worked hard to accommodate the needs of older passengers. The Alexandria Commission on Aging worked with DASH over the past two years to assure that its plans clearly focus on the requirements of older residents for frequent access to bus service. Many of those living in facilities for older adults rely heavily on DASH, though many throughout the city, wherever they live, find that DASH is an important alternative to driving.

Frequency of service and on-time performance are essential to good transit. In creating its 2021 to 2030 plan, through intensive involvement of residents, DASH assured that both would be key to its continuing success.

DASH connects with Metrobus, Metrorail, Virginia Railway Express and all local bus systems. The basic fare for DASH is \$2.00, and a monthly pass is available for \$45.00 a month.

DASH is currently making transit easier for riders through several technologies. A web DASH Tracker, compatible with smartphones, provides real-time predictions on the arrival of a bus at a stop. It also offers a network of over 30 solar-powered arrival displays. These are installed directly at bus stops. Others are large LCD displays that are installed at key locations like City Hall and the Mark Center, including local apartment buildings, government offices and the local community college.

The DASH website provides a trip planner on its homepage and DASH ride guides are located around the City of Alexandria and inside each DASH bus to provide route schedule information. DASH customer service is also available via telephone at 703-746-DASH to help answer questions from trip planning to current bus location. The next time you see DASH in your neighborhood, you may want to consider giving DASH a try if you have not done so. You can’t beat the price.



Beware of Dominion Energy Scam

Your phone rings and the caller ID displays “Dominion Energy.” The caller tells you that, because your account is behind, your power will be disconnected within the hour unless payment is provided immediately over the phone with a prepaid debit card. Sound familiar? It’s a scam—and this activity is on the rise. Dominion Energy’s web site offers the following information:

“We will never call, text or email to request personal information such as your Social Security Number, credit card number or bank account number. (Scammer may be trying to take your identity, your money or both.)

“Never purchase a pre-paid card to avoid shutoff. We will not insist on just one type of payment. You can pay in person, online through your account, or at a designated payment center.

“Never allow anyone in your house or apartment who claims to be a Dominion Energy representative unless you have scheduled an appointment or reported a problem.”

Dominion Energy’s phone number for Virginia customers is 866-366-4357. If you suspect you have received a fraudulent call, verify what you’re being told about your account. Hang up and call Dominion’s phone number—or sign into your online account to confirm whether a payment is due.

AARP Foundation’s Tax-Aide

Virginia residents can get their taxes done for free beginning in early February and continuing through April. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, the nation’s largest free tax assistance and preparation service, will provide free tax preparation in locations across the state. AARP membership is not required. To find a Tax-Aide location or more information, including which documents to bring to the tax site, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide.

Decluttering and Downsizing Experts Share their Tips

The Feb. 6 workshop is filling up, but AHA, a co-sponsor of this event, is still taking RSVPs. Call the AHA office, 703-231-0824, email aha@athomeinalexandria.org or register through AHA Hub if you would like to attend. This workshop is open to the public, so bring a friend. Right at Home In-Home Care is providing refreshments, so please RSVP for an accurate count on attendees.



Alexandrians Learn to Spot a Stroke and Save a Life

by Cele Garrett

Several years ago, longtime Alexandrian Alan Stillman dedicated himself to educating residents about the signs of stroke. The gap in the public’s knowledge prompted him to create Stroke Smart Alexandria (SSA), a city-wide health campaign to teach every person who lives and works in our city the signs of stroke. The campaign emphasizes the need to call 911 immediately, a step that can make all the difference in the outcome.

The lifetime risk of stroke is one in five for women, one in six for men. Those odds increase even more for those with risk factors like smoking and high blood pressure, and simply advanced age. The heavy toll on the patient and the family is plain to see. Stroke is among the top five causes of death and disability and affects 80% of all families. At the heart of SSA is a visual education tool, developed with input from various medical experts and Stillman’s own experience in visual language publications. To help everyone retain the information, this tool is available in the form of wallet cards, refrigerator magnets and posters. Be a champion for SSA and give the materials out to those you frequently meet. By spreading the word, you may just save someone’s life, even your own!

Can You Spot a Stroke?
QUICK RESPONSE SAVES LIVES – CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY

Stroke Test: Smile

Pass (Illustration of a man smiling)

Fail (Illustration of a man with one side drooping) **CALL 911**
One side droops.

Stroke Test: Raise arms

Pass (Illustration of a man raising both arms)

Fail (Illustration of a man with one arm drifting downward) **CALL 911**
Arm drifts downward.

Know the Symptoms

- Weak or numb on one side of body
- Slurred speech
- Loss of balance
- Loss of vision
- Severe headache

Strokes Kill and Disable

- 3rd leading cause of death in U.S.
- 80% of families affected
- 700,000 have stroke each year
- 1 in 4 strokes are fatal
- Leading cause of permanent disability

This graphic, also a magnet available in the AHA office, was created by Alan Stillman as part of his campaign to bring awareness to Spot a Stroke.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

by Bill Clayton

Another well-attended Happy Hour in Alexandria House. Leaning over the goodie table is **Ernie Lehmann** and leaning over the wines is **David Butler**. Butler and **Alan Dinsmore** brought a guest, **Kathy Sheppard**, center rear, whom they hope to interest in joining. **Vikki Cooper** is at the center of the photo. Photo by Steve Nelson.



"Greetings from Cabo San Lucas. Enjoying fish tacos with a Pacifico right now." You could almost feel warm ocean breeze and taste a sip of Mexican beer, when **Brenda Bloch-Young** emailed Bill Clayton from Baja.

Elisabeth (Liz) Campbell of AHA has won another term as treasurer of the Alexandria Democratic Committee.

Another talent of **Toni Popkin's** -- decoupage. The picture below shows three examples of her converting vases into art by decoupage. Toni learned decoupage years ago and first sold some at an open house where her service dog, Bud, was being trained. She has also donated them as door prizes and provided them as centerpieces for the 25th anniversary of Brain Injury Services. Presumably with a straight face, she called her decoupage results "Bud vases." The pun does not diminish their value, we hope.



Attendees set a record for **Dine Around** on Jan. 20 at Whiskey and Oyster Restaurant. Twenty-two persons sent RSVPs for the event, but 17 attended.

Dementia Friends **Jane King** and Mary Lee Anderson, of Senior Services, are bringing the Dementia Friendly Alexandria message to the faith community. They recently conducted a workshop at Christ Church.

The Politics Forum

by Bill Clayton

The headlines in the United States and abroad gave Dr. Helen Desfosses a wealth of topics for her AHA-sponsored Politics Forum program Jan. 10: Iran, the Middle East, anti-Semitism, money in campaigns, and several other topics. More than two dozen people from AHA and Alexandria House attended.

Tension and contention often dominate the public mood and the political discourse, Desfosses said. Decades ago, a prominent Democrat and a prominent Republican could exchange angry words in the legislative halls and sit down in the evening for a beer together. That is largely gone, mainly because when the legislative day is over, the lawmakers must raise money for their campaigns.

Turning to Iran, Desfosses said Iran had not been a prominent news item, but with the assassination of General Suleimani and an Iranian ballistic missile attack on an air base housing American forces, the United States and Iran were feared to be at the brink of war.

One solution to a lot of the world's problems lies in the vote, Desfosses said. In the United States, "We have a disgracefully low record of voting," she said. The audience had several suggestions: make Election Day a holiday, bring back the military draft, make a period of national service mandatory, and others.



Board member Helen Desfosses holds up a book by Howard Fields, a reporter who covered the Nixon impeachment. The book concentrated on the congressional hearings considering impeachment of Richard Nixon.

Roundtable Discusses City Legislative Priorities

Attendees focused on several key subjects identified by City Council, commissions, and agencies for consideration by the General Assembly, meeting now in Richmond.

- **Firearms:** will any of the bills being considered be effective in reducing gun violence?
- **Education:** will providing additional funding for education materially improve outcomes?
- **Climate Change:** what can municipalities do to reduce the impact locally?
- **Voting Rights:** will changes made to voting districts promote equal access for all citizens?

The next Roundtable is Friday, Feb. 21. Topics under consideration are either the impact of the opioid epidemic on Alexandria, or the role and responsibilities of the Alexandria Planning Commission.

2019 - A Great Year for Investors

by Brenda Bloch-Young

By now, you should have received all your year-end statements and seen the results. Last year was the best year for equities in over 20 years. The S&P 500 was up close to 30%. Bonds were up last year, as well. With this huge increase in value, there are consequences.

As you may know, the RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) from your IRA for 2020 is based on the value of the account on Dec. 31, 2019. The IRS has also updated the distribution tables reflecting new life expectancies. You will likely be surprised by the significant increase in your 2020 RMD based on the outstanding returns we earned as investors. As you meet with your tax preparer, or if you prepare your own forms, I recommend taking the time to estimate your 2020 income based on this increase in the RMD. This may be the year to direct that additional distribution to qualified charitable donations to reduce taxable income.



Board of Directors

Bob Eiffert, Chair	Pamela Nelson, Vice Chair
Sandy Heistad, Sec'y	Kathie Fricke Treasurer
Susanne Adams	Brenda Bloch-Young
Peter Crouch	Helen Desfosses
Linda Langley	Penny Roberts
Mary Jayne Swanson	Barbara "Babs" Waters
Jane King	Victoria Almquist

Editor: Mary Ann Bier

Executive Director

Cecile (Cele) Garrett

Marketing Manager

Jen Heinz

Advisory Council

Laurie Blackburn

Carol Downs	Richard Hobson
Judith Jones, MD	Louise Kenny
Jessica LeFevre	Ernie Lehmann
Tim Lovain	Mitch Opalski
Jan Pomerantz	Vicki Vasques

Operations Co-Managers

Dara Surratt and Megan McIntyre

Operations Support: Kim Carlisle

Alexandria's Division of Aging and Adult Services

by Annabelle Reitman, Ed.D.

The Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) is part of Alexandria's Department of Community and Human Services. It's important to be acquainted with its programs and benefits, which you or someone you know could use now or need in the future.

Terri Lynch, Director of DAAS, states that its mission is "to provide an array of services for the city's older adults and adults with disabilities." The overall goal is to enable residents to continue to live securely, independently and meaningfully and to remain healthy as they age. Priority is given to people with the most risk of being institutionalized or of low income. Seven programs are provided:

- * Long-term Care Assessments
- * Caregiver Resources
- * Supportive Home and Community Services
- * Nutrition and Wellness Services
- * Information and Counseling
- * Safety, Protection and Legal Services
- * Transportation and Other Services.

This array of services includes a monthly caregiver support group, information and referrals for services and programs, Adult Protective Services, Homemaker Services Program, Meals on Wheels, and transportation for weekly shopping.

To provide some of these services, DAAS has established partnerships through the Community Collaborations and Special Programs. The Division has contracted with Department of Transportation, providing transportation for people with disabilities; with Senior Services of Alexandria; and Snow Buddies.

Future articles in the newsletter will cover the DAAS programs and services in more detail.

DAAS's Contact Information: 703-746-5999, DAAS@alexandriava.gov or www.alexandria.gov/Aging.

CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria
3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-231-0824

aha@athomeinalexandria.org
www.athomeinalexandria.org



— AT HOME IN —
ALEXANDRIA

3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305

IN THIS ISSUE

- P. 1 Heart Month*
- P. 1 Mission Statement*
- P. 2 Silver Service Card*
- P. 2 DASH for Seniors*
- P. 2 Conversation With...*
- P. 3 Executive Director Notes*
- P. 3 Spot a Stroke*
- P. 4 What's Up with...*
- P. 4 Politics Forum; Roundtable*
- P. 5 Investor Tips*
- P. 5 Aging & Adult Services*