

AHA: Nearly 300 People Strong

By Cele Garrett

We've all been given a big reminder of how much our lives can change in one short month. Though we've followed the news about COVID-19 since first learning about the outbreak in January, it's human nature to address things in our lives that are more urgent and closer. And who can blame us for enjoying our days without constantly worrying about or "borrowing trouble" from, the future. But here we are.

It has been inspiring to talk with so many members and volunteers over the past several weeks. Personally, I've seen repeatedly that our AHA community is made of "tough stuff." Yes, AHA members are a hardy bunch, but that doesn't mean we aren't anxious. Each of us manages stress the best way we know how—and some of us are better at it than others. I urge each of us to stay in contact with one another. AHA will continue to reach out to you regularly too. Do not be shy about letting AHA know if you are feeling lonely because of the limits that have been placed on all of us. We can help with this! Collectively, we are a group of almost 300 people (members, associate members and volunteers) willing to be there for one another. We are all eager to hear how you are doing.

I'm proud of the way our volunteers are stepping up to check on members and shopping to ensure that you have groceries and prescriptions you need. Our staff is working from both home and office to field requests and to communicate with those in need. Our board members are doing special outreach to members without email or internet access. A few board members are leading the charge to set us up and trained for virtual meetings and gatherings. AHA truly is a community.

AHA is well connected with other villages and other organizations that serve our older neighbors. We are working hard to send you the best information currently available about local resources that can make your daily life easier. AHA has had to adjust temporarily some specific services we offer to members, but we can still help you.

I invite each of you to share with us the things that are helping you during this time. It may be an activity, a book of poetry, an uplifting music performance you find online, a goofy video, or any number of things. Your health and well-being is of paramount importance to AHA. We fully realize the coming weeks and months will be challenging but we will get through it together.

Spring2ACTion: Together, We Will Make a Difference

By Cele Garrett

Once a year, Alexandria nonprofits come together for Spring2ACTion, an online "giving day" hosted by ACT for Alexandria (Alexandria's community foundation). This will be AHA's ninth year with Spring2ACTion. The organizers believe that the spirit of giving is not threatened by COVID-19 but strengthened by the community desire to ensure our nonprofits make it through the crisis. In fact, ACT just announced its decision to move the date of Spring2ACTion to **Wednesday, April 15**, from the previous date of April 29. The campaign lasts until midnight. As in previous years, you can contribute to the campaign early; the online portal will open on April 3.

Obviously, this is a unique situation for our Alexandria nonprofits. We've never held this important "giving day" during a national pandemic. We may not have as much fanfare as in years past. But we are as motivated as we have ever been to make this day important—as much for community building as revenue building. We will have some matching gifts that will double your gift—and we are so very grateful to those matching gift donors who have already committed to help us. We won't have our usual "nerve center" fun at Del Ray Café, which we will miss this year. Please mark your calendar for this important day for our community and for AHA and watch your email for further updates.



Virtual Health and Wellbeing Options During a Societal Pause

by Mara Benner

With the recent coronavirus (COVID-19) news, it may feel as if there has been a dramatic change in life. No traffic during rush hour in Alexandria. No socializing with friends at a local café, and AHA events are being disrupted, too. Alexandrians have felt a halting to the business and normality of our day to day activities. The disruption to life is unsettling and requires us to find new ways to engage for our health, wellness and peace of mind.

As we continue to track updates from our government agencies (see more information and resources below), the social isolation being requested of us now is offering a collective pause for the Washington metropolitan area. Life's usual demands are allowing time, space and opportunity to reimagine life as we know it.

Social isolation calls on us to follow the passions or interests that we may have made excuses to previously ignore. Have you always wanted to read that enticing book? Now you can. Have you wanted to spring clean your house? Go for it – now is the perfect time. Have you wanted to plant flowers or start a garden? Yes, you do have the time to do that, too. What creative outlets have been calling you? This societal pause may be the right time to pursue the endeavor, concentrating on positive activities rather than ruminating on the unknowns.

Alexandria Businesses Innovating Health and Fitness:

As our society is forced to reimagine our lives virtually, there are several Alexandria-based businesses who have started offering their services online. Yoga, physical therapy, meditation and more businesses offer services that can be accessed from the comfort of your own homes. Local residents may explore a city business that they had not known about previously or check out their favorite businesses online. (If the company is not currently online, be sure to check back in a few weeks as it will likely have more options for you.)

Yoga:

- Ease Yoga <https://www.easeyogacafe.com/>
- Good Vibes Yoga <https://www.goodvibes-yoga.com/>
- Mind the Mat <https://www.mindthemat.com/>

Meditation and Mindfulness:

- Mindful Junkie and @Breathr <http://www.mindfuljunkie.com/mindfulness-workshops/2020/3/17/daily-live-mindfulness-meditations-5-minutes>
- Four Directions Wellness Mindfulness Mondays <https://fourdirectionswellness.com/community-give-back/>

Healthcare Services:

On March 6, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a range of providers such as doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists and licensed clinical social workers to offer telehealth to their patients. At the same time, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General also permitted reduced or waived cost-sharing for telehealth visits funded by federal healthcare programs. While there are some stipulations, the Federal government passed these regulations due to COVID-19, in order to allow seniors to connect with their healthcare team more quickly and safely.

Other healthcare services are also being delivered online via videoconferencing. Additional options may be available through healthcare providers so be sure to check prior to deciding not to go or visiting them in person.

Healthcare services also include our mental and emotional wellbeing. A review of Alexandria psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and other therapists indicates that most are moving to an online platform. These are uncertain times that can precipitate an array of emotions such as anxiety, depression, hopelessness and many other feelings. Remember that you are not alone, and help is just a videoconference away.

Other Options for Consideration:

There are numerous applications readily available to support meditation, mindfulness and even bedtime stories that help you fall asleep. Some examples include:

- Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/>
- Calm <https://www.calm.com/>
- Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/>

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And finally, COVID-19 is expected to revolutionize the way that we provide services in the United States. For instance, colleges and universities are going online, opening opportunities for adults to explore a wealth of subjects and new learning through adult education. The world of digital possibilities has just expanded – hobbies, religious or spiritual courses and services, meet-up groups, interactive platforms for book clubs and more will be available online. Follow your passions, support your health and wellness and explore from the comfort of your own home.

Mara Benner is the founder of Four Directions Wellness, intuitively connecting body, mind, emotions and spirit. The organization is affiliated with the GW Center for Integrative Medicine and offers online individual sessions, classes and consulting. Learn more at www.fourdirectionswellness.com

Be Counted – Census 2020

City of Alexandria encourages residents to complete the 2020 U.S. Census. In 2019 alone, Alexandria received more than \$36.7 million based on the results of the 2010 Census. These funds supported Medicaid, free school breakfasts and lunches, Safe Streets to School, supplemental nutrition programs and many more local services.

DO THE FIVE Help stop coronavirus

- 1 **HANDS** Wash them often
- 2 **ELBOW** Cough into it
- 3 **FACE** Don't touch it
- 4 **SPACE** Keep safe distance
- 5 **HOME** Stay if you can

Tax deadlines for Federal returns and for Virginia returns have changed. Check with your tax advisor.

AHA 9th Anniversary Party: Expanding Our Horizons

By Jane King

Now is a good time to think about doing something interesting—and fun. AHA has an offer you won't want to refuse. AHA is planning our 9th anniversary celebration and the theme is "Expanding Our Horizons" – through travel – your travel. We want you to share your travel experiences, whether it be your trip to New York City, San Francisco, Williamsburg, Antarctica, Europe, Africa, or anywhere else in the world.

The original date of this anniversary event was May 13, but we are postponing the party and will let everyone know the new date as soon as regular events can resume.

How do you get involved? We're creating a travel slide show for the party featuring your travel photos. We know you have some favorites, so please send your photos (up to 5 per person) to Jen Heinz at jenheinz@athomeinalexandria.org. The larger the photo file size, the better. So, if forwarding from an iPhone or other "smart phone," send in "original size" or "large size" when attaching to an email. Photos sent from your computer should be attached (not inserted) to the email and should be at least 300KB in size. Again, the larger the file size the better for viewing on a large screen.

If you're not someone with digital photos, that's ok. We're happy to display your favorite photo book or travel photo album at the party. Let Jen know what you intend to bring. These coming weeks would be a great time to assemble that album that you have been promising to start.

To encourage planning for future travel, a Road Scholar "Ambassador" will describe the possibilities available through its programs. AHA board member, Brenda Bloch-Young, will report on her reasons for choosing Road Scholar for her travel--nine times. Other surprises may also be in store.

We hope your search for favorite travel photos will allow you the opportunity to relive some happy and exciting travel memories — and that you'll share those with fellow AHA members and volunteers.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers



Before the virus warnings became so dire, Lunch Around met at Trademark Drink and Eat. From the left, **Jessi MacLeod, Ruth Arnold, Kathie Fricke, Jane Cohen, Nancy Kincaid (hidden), Sharyn Hennessy, and Linda Langley.**

Photo by Sandy Heistad

Ruth Arnold is the cheery “Happy Birthday” sound each AHA member hears on the telephone when their birthday comes around. But more than being Birthday Greeting Girl and a stalwart of AHA, she is a walking fiend.

The **AHA Walking Group** frequently encounters her on its route along the Potomac River. By then, the group might have covered a couple of miles, while Arnold – stopping briefly for a chat – might be on a 10-mile hike around town

Except during the coldest months, when her condo building’s Exercise Room is a lot more attractive, Ruth reckons she regularly walks “10-plus” miles a day. Those hikes often include a long morning walk through Old Town and along the Mount Vernon Trail (sometimes encountering the Walking Group on its Tuesday outings), and later in the day on errands around town, or maybe downtown between museums. She owns a spiffy MG, which she says, “spends a lot of time parked in the garage.”

Ruth grew up in a part of London similar to Old Town. She says her parents were avid exercisers. “With a decided lack of enthusiasm,” she and her sister followed behind “along the paths of Kensington Gardens,” she recalls.

Need a project while staying inside?

- Declutter files, photos, and paper memorabilia.
- Clean out a drawer or closet.
- Review your will, health docs and estate plan.

Remembering “Rick” Schena

by Bill Clayton

AHA member Richard “Rick” Schena got a kick out of life and people. This gregarious man died Feb. 22 at the age of 93. His wife, Ruth, said fellow residents of Porto Vecchio knew him as the friend who was always walking the halls, visiting and talking with anyone in his path. He always had a story to tell, a song to sing or a tune to whistle. “He never met a stranger,” Ruth Schena said.



Rick Schena served in the Navy for 23 years, then joined the Army Air Corps, which became the U.S. Air Force.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, two daughters-in-law and one granddaughter. The family plans a Celebration of Life April 17 at 11 a.m. at Porto Vecchio.

Traveling, a Learning Adventure

by Bill Clayton

Ernie and Montsie Lehmann took a Caribbean vacation to Antigua, which opened up a discussion of the neighboring island of Montserrat, Montsie’s real name. By coincidence, on the flight back, Montsie sat next to a gentleman who had just been visiting the island of Montserrat.

You may wonder, how did both the lady and the island get the name Montserrat? Columbus named the island for its topography reminiscent of the “serrated mountain” (hence Montserrat) area near Barcelona. As for the lady, Ernie reports: “At the time of Montsie’s birth, 1934, every first-born female in Catalonia was given the name of its patron saint, Montserrat. At the time I first met Montsie in 1960, there were at least five different Montserrats in her family.” Montsie was born of Catalan parents in the Philippines.

No virus here – Ladies Night Out at Cheesetique in Del Ray

The “social distancing” guidelines not yet in effect, the Ladies Night Out group enjoyed what may be the last physical gathering for the foreseeable future. The next meeting may be a virtual one from living rooms on FaceTime, Zoom or simply by text. Cheers!



From left: Pam Nelson, Kathie Fricke, Sharyn Hennessy, Penelope Roberts, Virginia Kress, and Ann Liddle.
Photo by Sandy Heistad

The First Lines of 10 Classic Novels, Rewritten for These Times of Social Distancing

Submitted by Brenda Bloch-Young from Jessie Gaynor

Mrs. Dalloway

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. Then she remembered the florist was closed. And the party was cancelled. Finally, some time to rest and reflect on her marital choices.

Swann’s Way

For a long time, I went to bed early. I wasn’t even that tired. It was more like, hey: here’s a good way to pass the time.

Middlemarch

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by the same leggings and sweatshirt she has been wearing for the last five days.

Notes from Underground

I am a sick man... I am a spiteful man... I am a man who is going to McSorley’s to celebrate St. Paddy’s Day!

The Bell Jar

It was a queer, pandemic spring, the spring they cancelled all the orgies, and I didn’t know what I was doing in New York.

The Great Gatsby

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since. “Whenever you feel like going to a restaurant,” he told me, “just remember there are people in this world whose immune systems haven’t had all the advantages yours has had.”

Moby-Dick

FaceTime me, Ishmael.

The Hobbit

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. He planned to stay there indefinitely in order not to make the lives of essential healthcare personnel more perilous.

Jane Eyre

There was every possibility of taking a walk that day, as long as we kept six feet between us and the others on the path.

Pride and Prejudice

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be hoarding toilet paper.

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