

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

AHA events coming your way

By Cele Garrett

We realize meeting via Zoom is not the same as getting together in person. Personally, I have found our virtual gatherings to be more enjoyable than I expected. For starters, we do not have to drive to a destination and look for a parking spot. The current situation has forced AHA to think more creatively about bringing our members together for interesting conversation and idea sharing.



Having U.S. Congressman Don Beyer, left, as our Zoom guest a few weeks back was a real treat.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have State Delegate Mark Levine in another AHA event. We are seeking speakers on a variety of topics in the coming months so watch for new events we are adding to the calendar regularly.

We are pleased to have Mara Benner, of Four Directions Wellness, lead us in a three-part weekly wellness series that begins on June 8. Barre3 yoga instructor Amy McNamara will offer a three-part yoga class beginning June 4. On June 5, painter Sigrid Ware will provide a demonstration of her encaustic painting technique. And, LeeAnn Lawch, a docent with the Smithsonian American Art Museum, will lead several art discussions for AHA members through the summer.

This is just a sampling of the latest offerings from AHA – all made possible by friends in the community who are giving generously of their time. Advance registration is required for all events – through AHA Hub, by email to aha@athomeinalexandria.org or phone: 703-587-6405.

Smart911: Have you signed up?

By Cele Garrett

This past month, I finally checked off an item on a longstanding “to do” list: I created my Smart911 safety profile. With Smart911, any time you make an emergency call from a phone registered with your safety profile, the 911 system recognizes your phone number and automatically displays your profile on the screen of the person who receives your call.

This information could include emergency contacts, details about medical conditions, your pets and much more. You can include as little or as much information in your profile as you like. This free service is voluntary, so you determine how much information you want emergency responders to know about you. Mobile phone users are especially encouraged to sign up, as mobile phone calls to 911 only provide a general location of the caller, not an exact address. You will always be asked to state your current location if you call 911, but having your main addresses on file could save emergency responders precious minutes it may take to reach you. You can include in your profile several additional addresses where you spend time (a secondary home, a relative’s home, etc.). For example, I included the AHA work address in my own profile. Smart911 is a national effort and Alexandria is one of numerous cities that participates.

I completed my online profile in less than 15 minutes and found the process to be relatively easy – and it gave me peace of mind. For more information, go to <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Smart911> or call 703-746-4311.



June 2020 Zoom Calendar

June is AHA Arts Month

Please call or email the AHA office to register for these programs or register online through the AHA Hub, at least two days before the program date.

The programs in the table below are all scheduled to take place using Zoom on your computer or device. The AHA office will provide you the meeting link after you have registered for the program.

Date	Program	Time
June 4, Thurs.	Yoga with Amy McNamara	3-4 pm
June 5, Fri.	Art Talk and Studio Tour	10-11 am
June 8, Mon.	Integrative Wellness Series (1)	10-10.45 am
June 8, Mon.	The Monday Book Club	1-3 pm
June 9, Tues.	"What's in the News" Discussion	10-11.30 am
June 10, Wed.	"The Thirteen" Choral Group	10-11 am
June 11, Thurs.	How to Critique /Talk about Art	10-11.30 am
June 11, Thurs.	Yoga with Amy McNamara	3-4 pm
June 12, Fri.	The Politics Forum	1.30-3.00 pm
June 15, Mon.	Integrative Wellness Series (2)	10-10.45 am
June 16, Tues.	TechTalk	10.30-11.30 am
June 16, Tues.	AHA Board Meeting	2-4 pm
June 17, Wed.	Armchair Travels	1-2 pm
June 18, Thurs.	Men's Night "In"	5- 6 pm
June 19, Fri.	The Roundtable Current Affairs Discussion. Topic TBD.	10-11 am
June 19, Fri.	Ladies' Night "In"	5-7 pm
June 22, Mon.	Integrative Wellness Series (3)	10-10.45 am
June 23, Tues.	"What's in the News" Discussion	10-11.30 am
June 24, Wed.	Coffee and Conversation	10.30-11.30 am
June 30, Tues.	"The Art of Travel"	1-2 pm

NOT on Zoom Calendar

Thursday, June 18, Blazing Saddles Bike Ride, 1-3 pm, ride to Shirlington, stop for coffee, and ride back. Meet at the bike path, N. Fairfax & Madison Streets. Reply to maggie.stauffer@comcast.net by June 17.

Art, music, literature – what would we do without these critical components of our culture, especially during challenging times like we are living through now. Our AHA Program Committee is excited to offer special programs this month to celebrate the arts.

Friday, June 5 – Artist **Sigrid Wares** will provide a demonstration of encaustic painting, which is painting using colored wax and hot iron tools you might usually expect to see used in quilting. You will be able to see her painting technique up close as she narrates this intriguing creative process during this Zoom meeting. She will also provide a “tour” of her studio and share examples of her encaustic and other artworks. RSVP by June 3.

Wednesday, June 10 – Music lovers will enjoy a conversation with **Matthew Robertson**, Artistic Director of “The Thirteen.” Founded in 2012 and performing in the Washington area, “The Thirteen” is an all-star professional ensemble known for its reimagining of choral music. Matthew Robertson has conducted the ensemble across the United States and in various recordings. Join us for a conversation about Matthew's inspiration for founding the group, some of its recent challenges, and its unique take on choral music. RSVP by June 8.

Wednesday, June 17 – The Museums of Cooperstown - The Nationals World Series display, the Hamilton-Burr duel display, the Cardiff Giant hoax - all can be found in the museums of Cooperstown NY. This quaint town is known for baseball and the Hall of Fame but has much more to offer. Join Bernard Enright for this travelogue and museum tour and he will have you convinced to take a drive to Cooperstown on your next vacation. This is a Zoom program and the link to the program will be sent to registrants the day before the program. RSVP by June 15.

Wednesday, June 24 – Coffee and Conversation Zoom meeting with AHA member Rita Mattia, who has published her first book.

Tuesday, June 30 – The Art of Travel – Join fellow members as they share artworks collected during their travels around the world. This is a Zoom meeting. RSVP by June 28.

Important note: Update to Zoom 5.0 for improved security. Refer to the AHA May 22 eBlast titled “AHA Update: Important Zoom information” for detailed instructions or call the office for assistance.

Local Gal Keeps Trying Stuff

by AHA member, Rita Mattia

After retiring from 50 years of writing advertising in New Jersey (my home state), New York, Maryland, Virginia, and the District, I failed to reinvent myself as a fine art photographer.

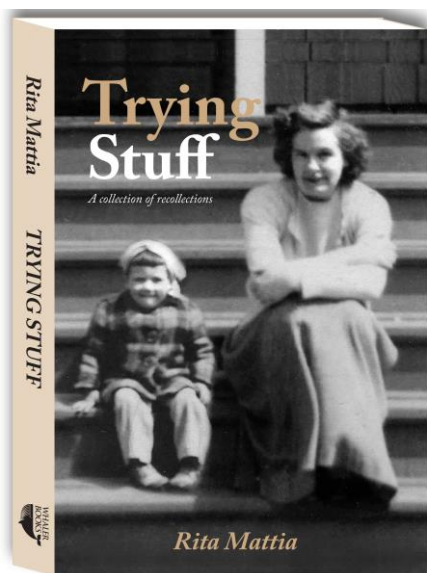
Undaunted, I failed even more miserably with *Rita Restores*, rejuvenating vintage photographs and ephemera. As I have told anyone who will listen, “I was much better at doing restorations — many clients wept with joy — than I was at running a business. I was the last to weep.”

Then, rummaging through a box marked “Rita Writes” last summer, I found things scribbled over several decades, including some terrible plays, weak poetry, and a ghastly novel. But I also found some short pieces about my life and family. I shared some with friends who helped me decide I should try to succeed again at 76 — this time as a published author. Hence, my new book is a collection of personal essays called: *Trying Stuff*.

The book contains edited versions of some of those rediscovered pieces, as well as dozens written last year. In fact, I finished editing it just in time to have almost nothing to do during the quarantine.

Published by Mariner Media of Buena Vista, Va., the softbound book comprises 300+ pages of stories and photos and is available exclusively from me, for \$20, excluding shipping.

I may Zoom-speak about my book at one or more AHA events this summer. If so, I will then also have tried to be a public speaker.



Young Rita Mattia and her mother Teeny Mattia on the cover of *Trying Stuff, A Collection of Recollections*

Carol Downs Moves to North Carolina



The City of Alexandria and At Home in Alexandria will soon be losing a great advocate, Carol Downs. Carol will move to Chapel Hill, N.C., this summer to be near her daughter. Carol has worked unstintingly on behalf of our older residents for over a decade. Carol was called on to use her professional experience in aging issues to influence the development of AHA, serving as co-chair of the board of directors in its early years. Blessed with an incomparable ability to create friendships wherever she goes, Carol frequently opened her home to AHA fundraisers and meetings and is known as a “hostess with the mostess.” A member of the Alexandria Commission on Aging for 13 years, Carol served as its chair and more recently chaired its outreach committee. From January 2019 to May 1, 2020, Carol served as State President of AARP Virginia. Carol’s compassion for those in need combined with a remarkably quick wit enable her to advocate for change effectively, but with an often lighter touch. Everyone who knows her will remember her boundless energy and exuberant personality, but also her total dedication to issues affecting older adults. We will miss her terribly, but we wish her the best as she starts a whole new chapter of her life.

When in doubt, just take the next small step.

You think it's bad now? In 20 years, our country will be run by people home-schooled by day drinkers...

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Bill Clayton says he went through “Perils of Pauline” in early May. First, his computer contacts list was hacked and about 25 friends phoned him to ask, “Were you emailing me for money?” Then, (on Teddye’s birthday) he sat down for breakfast and suffered a Transient Ischemic Attack (teeny stroke). Teddye called 911 and an ambulance took Bill to the hospital for a two-day stay. Then the police showed up three times in the ensuing days: Some glitch in the phone landline was calling 911 and hanging up. (Teddye had made her 911 call from a cellphone.) Then the phones quit working altogether – and because of coronavirus, a Verizon technician was not permitted to come into the house to fix the phone.

Maggie Stauffer chose to have elective foot surgery at the Harborside Surgery Center located at National Harbor. A COVID-19 serological test was required before the surgery and an INOVA testing drive-through center was conveniently located next to the CVS on South Washington Street. Wearing a mask, patients were allowed into the surgery center where there were no others in the waiting room. Using a new pen out of a box, Maggie filled out forms in the waiting room. The nurses all wore two masks. After a patient was discharged in a wheelchair, she noticed the wheelchairs were sprayed with a disinfectant and wiped down completely. Recovery is underway.

Kathie Fricke required a permanent filling after root canal surgery that was done before the lockdown orders. Arriving at the dentist's office, Kathie, wearing a mask, was required to knock on the door to gain entry. A dental technician immediately took her temperature and asked about travel outside the country in the last three months, if she had a cough, fever, muscle aches, headaches, and if she had been exposed to anyone that had the virus. Kathie was allowed entry into an empty waiting room where all chairs were turned towards the wall. When in the examination room, the dentist and the technician wore protective gear (mask, protective shield, and surgical gown) and the equipment was covered in plastic. Kathie wore protective glasses during the procedure. On checking out, she noticed the two receptionists were wearing masks behind a protective shield. The dental office said they were trying to keep visits to a minimum – and with lots of protection.

Toni Popkin is elated to announce, “I am free.” Toni tested positive for COVID-19 and was isolated, quarantined but, happily, recovered.

Sign of the Times

Jane Starkey had started revising her will, power of attorney and medical power of attorney just before the pandemic struck. She and her lawyer worked by telephone to finalize the new documents. When they needed to be signed, witnessed, and notarized, while keeping social distance, the law firm asked if Jane would like to be the first person to use a new “curbside” document signing process. Jane parked on the street outside the office, and her lawyer, two witnesses and a notary public all arrived, masked, and gloved. Also masked and gloved in her car, they passed Jane the documents to sign. (See photo below). The process went smoothly and more quickly than expected. While she waited in the car, the law team made copies and then delivered the original and copies back to Jane.



How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Cele Garrett

With warmer weather arriving, our thoughts turn to our yards, gardens, and plant containers. AHA volunteers, still not able to help with in-home maintenance, can offer help in your yard. Some of our AHA master gardeners are offering deliveries. If your favorite nursery does not offer delivery, please request an AHA volunteer to pick up for you. Meanwhile, check out these options from two locally owned plant nurseries:

Nature by Design (300 Calvert Ave., Alexandria, 703-683-4769) This nursery is open and using a contact-free business model. Deliveries in the Del Ray neighborhood are free of charge; deliveries into other neighborhoods will have a discounted delivery fee.

Greenstreet Gardens (1721 W. Braddock Rd, Alexandria, 703-998-3030) To order curbside pick-up, email inthedirt@greenstreetgardens.com. In the subject line, type “Braddock Road” and in the message you can request what you would like to order and include your phone number.

Keeping in Touch with You

Have you been enjoying the weekly email that the AHA staff has been sending to you each Friday? These emails provide members and volunteers with information about AHA services, calendar and event updates, ideas for entertainment and spending time at home creatively, contact information for COVID-19 resources, and more. Please check your email for these updates during the pandemic. Many thanks to Board Vice Chair **Pam Nelson** for printing and mailing these weekly updates to our members who do not use email.

Recipe for the Times

- 1 portion of tolerance
- 1 level head filled with patience
- 1 heaping tablespoon of humor
- 1 cup running over with friendliness

Cover with neighborliness,
Keep on the stove 24 hours a day.
Renew ingredients frequently.

From "A collection of energized recipes from Northern States Power employees and retirees that will feed a community and help everyone!" - published in 1996. Submitted by Brenda Bloch-Young

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AHA Receives CARES Act Funds

by Chair Bob Eiffert

In April, AHA applied for a Payroll Protection Program forgivable loan through the CARES Act with the hope to be included in the second round of stimulus loans. On May 3, Cele Garrett received word from our bank that AHA had been approved for a forgivable loan. So began the process of completing and submitting the closing documents on a very tight timeframe. Because the PPP loan program was rolled out so quickly, there was not much advance guidance provided so our review raised numerous questions. With the help of some local friends who had gone through this process recently, we were able to get up to speed quickly. We thank Del Ray Cafe's Margaret Janowsky, whose guidance was immensely helpful. Kris Brown, an attorney who serves as president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (and daughter of AHA board member Jane King), volunteered her counsel, which proved invaluable. With the help of Margaret's and Kris' expertise, the executive committee approved and submitted the documents before the deadline. On May 15, AHA treasurer Kathie Fricke reported that the funds were deposited in our checking account. This loan provides help with payroll costs, rent and utilities over the next eight weeks. We will ensure that we document the expenditures and that we will be in full compliance with the terms of the loan so that it can be forgiven.

This is an outstanding example of our great community – both inside and outside of AHA – working together to keep us strong. It was a group effort, but special mention goes to **Kathie Fricke** for her dedication and extra attention to detail on our behalf.



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