

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

Your Questions Answered: Voting in the City of Alexandria

Compiled by Julie Gentry and Kit Leider

How can I get an absentee ballot if I do not have a computer? Call The Office of Voter Registration and Elections (703-746-4050) before Oct. 23 and they will send you an application. Send your completed application to the office at 132 North Royal Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Upon receipt of your application, the office will send your absentee ballot.

When is the latest date to request an absentee ballot by mail? Oct. 23.

Can I cancel my request for an absentee ballot and vote in person? Yes. If you have received your requested application and it includes your email address, send an email message from that address to voters@alexandriava.gov. If your application does not include an email address, you must bring a signed written request cancelling your original request to the election office OR send that written request to the election office.

I received my ballot in the mail and want to vote in person instead. How do I do that?

If you have received your absentee ballot in the mail and have decided to vote in person early, you must return the blank ballot to the election Office. If you wish to vote on Election Day, you must bring your blank ballot to your polling place.

Will Alexandria honor the form sent by a third party requesting an absentee ballot? Yes. The application is considered valid if the last four digits of your Social Security Number and signature are included.

How can I track the status of my absentee ballot application? Go to: <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/Lookup/absentee>; select, Apply to Vote Absentee by Mail; enter the information requested to see the status of your ballot.

Do I need a stamp to mail my absentee ballot?
No, ballots have prepaid postage.

On an absentee ballot, is a witness signature required? No, this requirement has been waived. (However, you will see it on the absentee ballot envelopes, which were printed prior to recent legislative action to waive the witness signature.)

Will drop boxes be available?

Yes. Drop boxes will be available during the dates/times listed for in-person early voting at the election office and satellite voting locations. Drop boxes will be available at all polling places on Nov. 3 from 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

Can a voter who is driven to 132 North Royal Street request curbside drop-off?

Yes. A few voter parking spots are available directly in front of the office to drop off your completed ballots or to vote early. The election office is open Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. The closing time is extended as Election Day draws nearer. Additionally, three satellite ballot drop-off sites have been established: Beatley Library (5005 Duke Street), Minnie Howard School (3801 West Braddock Road), and George Washington Middle School (1005 Mt. Vernon Avenue). The drop-off boxes are located inside at all sites. The satellite offices each have limited hours leading up to Election Day. The AHA office has the full schedule for each site.



October 2020 Zoom Calendar

Call or email the AHA office to register 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 the Zoom app on your computer or device. The AHA office will provide the meeting link after you have registered for the program.

Date	Program	Time
Oct. 5, Mon.	"Ivy Hill Cemetery: Past, Present & Future" with Lucy Burke Goddin	10 -11.15 am
Oct. 9, Fri.	The Politics Forum: Helen Desfosses on "Critical Dynamics of the 2020 Presidential Election"	1.30 - 3.00 pm
Oct. 11, Sun.	Conversation with Councilman John Chapman	11.30 am-12.30 pm
Oct.12, Mon.	The Monday Book Club: "Before We Were Yours" by Lisa Wingate	1 - 3 pm
Oct. 13, Tues.	"What's in the News" Discussion	10 - 11.30 am
Oct. 14, Wed.	"Who is Going to Lose and Why" with guest Alan Lichtman	1 - 2.30 pm
Oct. 15, Thurs.	Supreme Court Cases Argued by Presidents	4 - 5 pm
Oct. 15, Thurs.	Men's Night "In"	5 - 6 pm
Oct. 16, Fri.	Roundtable Current Affairs: Topic: "TBD"	10 -11.30 am
Oct. 19, Mon.	Art Talk with Lee Ann Lawch: "Japanese American Artists in the First Half of the 20 th C."	10 -11.15 am
Oct. 21, Wed.	Coffee and Conversation with Dan Scott of River Farm, AHS.	10 -11 am
Oct. 26, Mon	Reader's Theatre	2 -3 pm
Oct. 27, Tues	"What's in the News" Discussion	10 - 11.30 am
Oct. 28, Wed.	Michael Campasano on small group travel and traveling single.	1 - 2.30 pm
Oct. 29, Thurs.	Racial Equity Series: Colson Whitehead's "The Nickel Boys."	10 -11.15 am
Oct.30, Fri.	Ladies Night "In" - Halloween Edition. Masks optional!	5 - 7 pm

October 2020 NOT on ZOOM Calendar

Oct. 14, Wed, 1-3.30 p.m., Blazing Saddles Bike Ride. Ride to Washington, D.C. and explore new and hidden memorials. Meet at the bike path, North Fairfax and Madison Streets. All riding abilities welcome. Reservations required to maggie.stauffer@comcast.net by Oct. 13.

October Programs

Monday, October 5 "Ivy Hill Cemetery: Past, Present and Future." This 22-acre site in the middle of the Rosemont neighborhood of Alexandria is home to many species of birds, wildlife, and flora, a favorite walking spot for many. Cemetery manager Lucy Goddin will share insights about this historical Alexandria burial ground.

Wednesday, October 14 "Who is Going to Lose and Why" featuring American University historian Alan Lichtman. (Our thanks to Little Falls Village and the Council of Former Federal Executives & Associates for extending an invitation to attend.)

Thursday, October 15 "Supreme Court Cases Argued by Presidents" Lorna Grenadier, docent with the U.S. Supreme Court and the National Portrait Gallery leads this through this unique history. (Our thanks to Foggy Bottom West End Village for the invitation.)

Monday, October 19 Art Talk with SAAM docent Lee Ann Lawch: "Japanese-American Artists in the First Half of the 20th Century, Part 1." We examine how Japanese American artists persisted during the years of incarceration in internment camps.

Wednesday, October 21 Coffee and Conversation will welcome back Dan Scott of the American Horticultural Society at River Farm to update us on the gardens there and on recent AHS news.

Wednesday, October 28 Michael Campasano of Overseas Adventure Travel will join us to talk about small group travel and traveling single with a small group.

Thursday, October 29 Racial Equity Series: Book discussion on Colson Whitehead's *The Nickel Boys*. AHA member Jane King will lead the discussion on Whitehead's 2019 novel, which has been named one of TIME's best books of the decade.

Sunrise Offers Fall Webinar Series

Sunrise Senior Living is hosting a series of free webinars that address a variety of important health topics—from *palliative care* to *living with Alzheimer's* to *ethical wills* and more. Visit [GoToStage.com/Channel/SunriseWebinarSeries](https://www.gotostage.com/Channel/SunriseWebinarSeries) for more information.

Commission on Aging Plans for Age Friendly Alexandria

by Bob Eiffert, Jane King and Babs Waters

On Sept. 18, the Roundtable hosted a zoom program introducing the City of Alexandria's Commission on Aging (COA) Age Friendly Alexandria initiative. AHA members Alan Dinsmore, Bob Eiffert, Jane King, and Barbara (Babs) Waters of COA and Senior Services of Alexandria president Mary Lee Anderson presented an overview of the program and of the individual implementation steps in the plan. The COA will present a series of articles in upcoming issues of the AHA newsletter to highlight those specific goals and to measure their progress.

The City of Alexandria has been designated as an Age Friendly Community by AARP and the World Health Organization (WHO). As the U.S. affiliate of WHO's Age Friendly Community initiative, which determines the eligibility of communities throughout the world to be designated as age friendly, AARP is empowered to accept communities in this country into its Network of Age Friendly Communities. To qualify in the U.S., communities must prepare a comprehensive plan and submit it first to the community's chief elected leader for approval and then to AARP for its review.

Before planning commences, a number of significant steps must be taken. This includes an assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses. To assist the City's COA, which created the Alexandria plan, AARP conducted a telephone survey of 500 Alexandria residents to ascertain their concerns. AARP's Public Policy Institute also has created a "dashboard," called the Livability Index,

that rates a community in such areas as housing, transportation, health, and community engagement. The Commission found the Index to be especially useful in evaluating those aspects of the City's capacity to meet the needs of older residents. You can find the Index for communities in the U.S. on AARP's website at livabilityindex.aarp.org.

To prepare for planning, the COA reviewed census data, scheduled many listening sessions with older residents, completed extensive national research on solutions for creating greater livability for older adults and garnered the insights from over 50 members of community organizations. Once the plan was completed, the COA submitted it in spring 2018 to City staff, who reviewed and revised it where necessary to assure that it met with the plans of the various City departments, such as Housing, Transportation, and Planning and Zoning. City Council then considered and approved the plan in May 2018.

The plan, which covers January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021, was submitted to AARP and approved by July 2018. To continue making progress following the first three years, the process is repeated to derive a new three-year plan. The COA will work through 2021 to revise and update the plan to reflect successes and shortcomings in executing the current plan, and another community assessment will be conducted. The current plan contains a number of specific goals to address concerns that were identified during the prior assessment process.



AHA Member Marty Tolchin Speaks Up at The Politics Forum

The Politics Forum, led by AHA member Helen Desfosses, featured a special guest recently: fellow AHA member and retired journalist Martin Tolchin. Marty shared some fascinating stories from his recent book, *Politics, Journalism and the Way Things Were*. This event attracted nearly 50 attendees. **The next Politics Forum** is set for Friday, Oct. 9, 1:30 p.m. when Helen's talk will be "Earthshaking Dynamics of the 2020 Presidential Election."

Marty Tolchin, guest at a recent Politics Forum

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Blazing Saddles cyclists, left to right, **Paul Horne, Maggie Stauffer, John Kosciw, Mary Peet, Barry Stauffer, Miriam Ellsworth, and Leon Ellsworth** enjoy a coffee break stop on their 20-mile ride from Old Town to the Georgetown waterfront on Sept. 17.



Bud the Wonder Dog and his AHA companion, **Toni Popkin**, are bursting with pride: Bud has been declared “Mister June” for the 2021 calendar of the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria. The dogs for the calendar months were leaders in the “votes” they accumulated in the AWLA fundraising effort this year. With a little help from Toni, Bud sent a card to the newsletter, in care of Bill Clayton, announcing his win. There was a photo “from my AWLA photo shoot,” Bud said. The card was signed with a paw print and a “LUV, Bud.”

Brenda Bloch-Young embarked on a long Cookie Quest to ease the boredom of the pandemic and advance the lore of chocolate chip cookies.

As she describes her search: “Since March, I have been trying several recipes and ingredients to bake the best chocolate chip cookie.”

Consider the quandaries Brenda faced in baking a great cookie: Adding tahini or toasted coconut? Nuts or no nuts? Sprinkled with sea salt? How large, how flat the cookie? Refrigerate the dough? For how long? What is the best chocolate? And if you are thinking you should be her Main Taster, she already has assembled a group to taste the product. And **Bill Clayton**, ever the Inquiring Reporter, volunteered to taste a batch – “Yummy.”

In the “Who Knew?” category, Brenda found a chocolate chip developed by Remy Labesque, senior industrial designer for Tesla automobiles. Another favorite, she says, is the dark bittersweet chip by Guittard, where the baker bangs the cookie sheet on the counter to make flatter, wrinkled cookies.

Brenda was “fascinated to find that there are SO many options and variations of the chocolate chip cookie. I welcome advice from AHA members.”

Alexandria Health Department – Leads Fight against Covid 19 in the City

Part Two
by Jane King

The Health Department now faces its biggest challenge since it was created after World War One. Starting with the first COVID-19 case in Alexandria, the department has conducted contact tracing to identify the source of spread and notify those who have been exposed and urge them to be tested. By tracking cases, it identifies zip codes and neighborhoods whose numbers of COVID infections require special attention. In conjunction with the City of Alexandria, it reports the case numbers, deaths, and other important COVID-related information daily.

As has been widely reported, the Latinx and Hispanic neighborhood of Arlandria has been hit hard by COVID, primarily because of social and economic factors that make physical distancing and access to care difficult. For the AHD, lower-income, often underserved communities are a core concern, and it has focused significant resources to help stem the infection. As the website states, AHD carefully analyzed all available data and determined that those most subject to COVID-19 “fall on those in long-term care facilities, congregate living facilities and communities of color.”

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/health/info/default.aspx?id=116274>.

Its staff cannot tackle COVID-19 alone. To test residents of zip codes such as Arlandria and the West End’s with high rates of COVID, AHD is partnering with the city and Neighborhood Health, a local community health center, to provide free targeted testing in nearby locations. AHD’s Medical Reserve Corps, volunteers who are prepared to act in emergencies, have helped to carry out several different crucial tasks for COVID response. They include staffing AHD’s COVID hotline, (703)746-4988, weekdays from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., delivering personal protective equipment to long-term care facilities and doctor offices, supporting testing events, putting up educational signage around the community, providing education to civic groups, conducting infection control assessments in facilities, and supporting contact tracing efforts.

The Alexandria Health Department is a pillar of the community. This short report can only touch the surface. For its detailed data on the incidence of COVID-19 in Alexandria, go to <https://www.alexandriava.gov/performance/info/dashboard.aspx?id=114883>.

The Harvard Health Letter has some Instant Memory Boosters

- NAMES – When you first meet someone, associate the name with an image. “Mason” with the mental image of a stone mason, for instance. Then use the person’s name in conversation.
- WHERE YOU PUT THINGS – Always put the important “go to” items, such as keys and eyeglasses, in the same places. For other items, say aloud where you are putting them.
- THINGS PEOPLE TELL YOU – Ask the person to speak slowly, so you can concentrate better. Repeat to yourself what the person said and think about its meaning.

Need a Ride?

Between now and Election Day, AHA volunteers are available to drive you to the election office to vote early or to drop off your completed ballot. And, as done in previous years, AHA volunteers can drive you to your local precinct on Election Day.



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Karen Akers Joins AHA Team

By Cele Garrett

We are pleased to announce that Karen Akers is the newest AHA staff addition, bringing our team back to four part-time staffers. Karen assumes the role of membership and marketing manager.

Karen and her husband John King live in Vienna, Virginia. They are the parents of daughters Emily, 24, and Madeline, 22. Karen serves as a board president of the Vienna Choral Society, where she is also a chorister, and board director of the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation. In recent years, her professional positions include serving as director of community outreach for the Kensington Falls Church, an assisted living and memory care center. Recently, she oversaw marketing and business development for Belleview Medical Partners, a house calls physician practice nearby.



Karen’s deep experience in administrative leadership and organizational team building came from working in academic and nonprofit organizations that include the George Washington University, Virginia Tech’s Northern Virginia Graduate Center, and the Brookings Institution.

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