

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

AHA Board Welcomes Five New Members

By Bob Eiffert, AHA Board Chair

Last month, I wrote a salute to the six outgoing members of the AHA Board of Directors. To help fill the gaps that they will leave, the board selected five wonderful new candidates.

Marjorie Conner (top photo) lives with her mother and provides care for her in their home. Conner is a practicing attorney and holds a Master's Degree in communications management with over 30 years of experience specializing in communications law and regulations, and network security/privacy, representing various clients. She serves on the Alexandria Commission on Aging and is a past member of the Alexandria Commission on Information Technology.

Sherry de Vries spent five years active duty and 22 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. She then worked for an international bank in banking operations in Europe and Great Britain. She also worked at the FAA in Aerospace Medicine helping to set up the drug and alcohol testing program for aviation. She was president of the Inner-City Civic Association for three years. She has also been a member of the Alexandria Human Rights Commission and a board member and president of the Alliance for National Defense (a group supporting women in the military, now disbanded).

Adam Perry (middle photo) served four years active duty in the U.S. Navy and holds a Bachelor of Arts in business management from St. John's University. Adam enjoyed a career of more than 40 years as a salesman in New York City. He and his wife, Etta, relocated to Alexandria after retirement in 2018. He is chairman of the deacon board of his church and a volunteer with Friends of the Beatley Central Library on its semi-annual book sale project.

Susan Pettey is an attorney and holds a master's degree in public administration. In Massachusetts, working for the Department of Public Health, she headed up the state's first program to establish quality standards for ambulances and ambulance staff. In Washington D.C., she worked on Medicare legislation and policy for the Department of Health and Human Services, and long-term care organizations. She is the current chair of the AHA Member Services Committee.

Susanne O'Neill (bottom photo) holds a master's degree in educational psychology and gifted education. For 18 years she did extensive work in identifying and serving minority gifted students in Prince William County Schools. She has also served as the Director of Basic Literacy at the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia and as a tutoring coordinator for the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium. Now retired, she volunteers with the Outreach and Refugee Committees at Christ Church and several other service organizations.

We are indeed fortunate to have such talented and gifted AHA members who are willing to serve us in so many ways. We welcome these five to our board.



January 2021 Zoom Calendar

Please call or email the AHA office to register for these programs or register online through the AHA Hub. 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 you with the meeting link after you have registered for the program.

| Date | Program | Time |
|-----------------|--|----------------|
| Jan. 6, Wed. | Artful Hands: Coffee and discussion; work on crafts. | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Jan. 7, Thurs. | Ladies Night "In". | 5:00-7:00 pm |
| Jan. 8, Fri. | The Politics Forum: Helen Desfosses on "The Conflict-ridden Trump-Biden Presidential Transition". | 1:30-3:00 pm |
| Jan. 11, Mon. | Art talk with Lee Ann Lawch: Through the Garden Gate. | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Jan. 11, Mon. | The Monday Book Club: "Sugar in the Blood" by Andrea Stuart. | 1:00-3:00 pm |
| Jan. 12, Tues. | "What's in the News" discussion. | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Jan. 13, Wed. | Erwin Timmers, Co-Founder of Washington Glass Studio, on the Studio's Public Art projects. | 1:00-2:30 pm |
| Jan. 14, Thurs. | Diagnostics & Treatment for Non-Surgical Orthopedic Conditions, with Dr. Marc Gruner. | 1:00-2:30 pm |
| Jan. 14, Thurs. | Birthday Party Celebration for all January birthdays. | 5:00-6:00 pm |
| Jan. 15, Fri. | Roundtable: Planning for 2021: Bring suggestions. | 10:00-11:00 am |
| Jan. 15, Fri. | Politics and Theater with Molly Smith. Arena Stage Artistic Dir. | Noon |
| Jan. 19, Tues. | AHA Board Meeting. | 2:00-4:00 pm |
| Jan. 21, Thurs. | Men's Night "In." | 5:00-6:00 pm |
| Jan. 22, Fri. | Dementia Friends Info Session. | 10:00 am |
| Jan. 25, Mon. | Readers' Theatre Group. | 2:00-3:30 pm |
| Jan. 26, Tues. | "What's in the News" Discussion. | 10:00-11:30 am |
| Jan. 26, Tues. | Spies & Spymasters: spy stories from the Int'l Spy Museum. | 1:00-2:00 pm |
| Jan. 27, Wed | Coffee & Conversation: Dean Heistad on Amelia Air, animal transport service. | 10-11:30 am |
| Jan. 27, Wed. | Armchair Travels: Jen Heinz talks about her visit to Cuba. | 1:30-2:30 pm |
| Jan. 28, Thurs. | Racial Equity Discussion: Brit Bennett's 2020 novel of black/white twin sisters: <i>The Vanishing Half</i> . | 10:00-11:30 am |

January Program Notes

Wednesday, Jan. 6 Artful Hands, inaugural meeting. Are you a woodworker, a quilter, a weaver or do you make models or paint toy soldiers? Are you willing to show an example or explain how it is done? Come join this new group for an organizational meeting or contact Penelope Roberts: penelope.roberts@icloud.com to learn more.

Monday, Jan. 11 Art Talk with Lee Ann Lawch: Through the Garden Gate. What better escape from January's cold days than a stroll through some beautiful gardens? Docent Lee Ann Lawch takes us through a hand-picked variety of garden-related images and objects from SAAM's collection.

Wednesday, Jan. 13 Regional Public Art Projects by the Washington Glass Studio. Erwin Timmers, co-founder of the Washington Glass Studio and Co-founder/Director of the Washington Glass School, Mt. Rainier, MD, will talk about his site-specific public art projects throughout the Washington area.

Friday, Jan. 15 Politics and the Theater with Molly Smith, Arena Stage Artistic Director. Molly has served as Arena Stage's Artistic Director since 1998 Register at https://fbwevillage.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=471107&item_id=1332064

Thursday, Jan. 14 Innovative Diagnostic and Treatment Options for Non-Surgical Orthopedic Conditions. Dr. Marc Gruner has trained with leading experts in ultrasound and regenerative medicine at Mayo Clinic, acquiring expertise in cutting edge ultrasound-guided surgeries. Register at www.littlefallsvillage.org/Ortho by the prior day.

Friday, Jan. 22 Dementia Friends information session. Learn practical tips and guidance on how best to interact with a person living with dementia. This is part of the Dementia Friendly Alexandria initiative. This event is open to the public.

Tuesday, Jan. 26 Spies & Spymasters. Seduction, deception, daring - these are only some of the traits that describe spies and spymasters. Join Chevy Chase At Home and the International Spy Museum to explore the stories of spies. Register at https://www.chevychaseathome.org/content.aspx?page_id=4008&club_id=559717&item_id=1287770

Wednesday, Jan. 27 Coffee & Conversation hosts Dean Heistad, founder of Amelia Air, www.ameliainair.org. He will talk about this unusual non-profit that rescues animals from high-kill shelters and transports them by air to other rescue organizations, which will find them their forever homes.

Wednesday, Jan. 27 Armchair Travels. Jen Heinz will share images and highlights from her January 2015 trip to Cuba when she worked for Encore Chorale and accompanied 19 Encore Chorale singers on their 11-day "people-to-people" tour.

Social and Racial Equity in Alexandria

by Jane King

Many Alexandrians regard its diversity, including the city's racial and ethnic composition, as one of its major assets. City Manager Mark Jinks, however, recognized that the city had considerable work to do to assure social and racial equity. He chose to act and hired Jaqueline Tucker as Alexandria's Social and Racial Equity Officer. Tucker, who graduated from Howard University's law school, had already done considerable work in equity issues.

During an AHA Zoom meeting on Dec. 10, Tucker described her role and assured that she is seeking widespread engagement by residents, businesses, schools, and all participants in city life. She argues that racism is rooted in the nation's history and Alexandria cannot exempt itself from the responsibility to seek equity for all its residents. She said that our institutions at every level "shut people out."

Tucker noted the disparities in the income and health of Black and Latino residents when compared to White residents. To demonstrate the consequence of the disparities in health and income, she explained that that residents of one side of Glebe Road have a life expectancy nine years shorter than those on the other side.

She stressed that local governments have a significant role to play to enhance the livelihood of those currently subject to discrimination. The Alexandria Public School System will be a focal point and several important community organizations support the effort. She has so far held three sessions seeking community perspectives and will develop a Racial Equity Action Plan.

When asked if she expects to achieve equity for all residents during her work, she responded "not in my lifetime." She approaches what can be a difficult discussion, however, with great personal warmth and accessibility. Those on the AHA Zoom call said

they were interested in participating in any way that would be helpful.



Left, Jacqueline Tucker on recent AHA Zoom program

AHA's Year-end Campaign

By Cele Garrett

Did you know that, on average, it takes \$1,000 per member to run a village? This is a common measurement in our industry. And, as our own village membership has grown, we have found this to hold true. Over seven years ago, I was fortunate to step into my role of executive director when AHA had 85 members and a budget of \$110,000. Now, AHA has 218 members and a budget of just under \$200,000. Our membership fees are far below \$1,000, which is why we must pursue additional fundraising. Raising money is a natural part of any nonprofit organization. We realize, however, that not everyone is able to support AHA, as it has been a difficult year for many.

As of Dec. 29, we are at 72 percent of the fundraising goal for our year-end campaign. We are deeply grateful to our wonderful supporters, members and volunteers who have brought us this far with the campaign. We welcome contributions in any form or any amount - whichever is easiest for you: by phone to our office, 703-231-0824, by AHA Hub (if you are an AHA member) or by mail, either with a check or credit card.

You will see that in January we have 20 events to offer on our calendar. Yes, we are still "virtual," but the pandemic has not stopped our momentum. AHA continues with the important practical support that our members need. The only exceptions: technical support is by phone rather than in-person and in-home maintenance has paused for the time being. Thank you for being a part of our AHA community and, whether it is your time, your financial contribution, or your creative energy, we are immensely grateful you have been here for us.

Do you need an AHA member directory?

If it has been a while since you have had an updated AHA membership directory, you can call our office to request one. Directories are no longer mailed out since migrating to a database system that allows our members to print their own directory.

Call, 703-231-0824, or email the office, aha@athomeinalexandria.org, to request either a printed copy to be mailed or an electronic copy sent via email. The directory is also available on the AHA Hub, at the **Resources** tab.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

Julie Gentry says, "I decided that to lift my spirits and help my local community during this time of COVID and staying in more, I'd take one day a week (I chose Thursday) as a take-out day. I get to try places I may not have eaten at before, and I'm helping a small business. Take out Thursday it is!"

Forget the pandemic, ignore the hurricanes. **Teddye and Bill Clayton** observed two catastrophes in their neighborhood. One day, a city services truck broke down at their corner. A couple days later, on garbage-pickup day, the garbage truck broke down just in front of their house. What's next?

To avoid COVID isolation, seven AHA widows who live at Porto Vecchio have declared themselves a family unit. They are **Cynthia Boyer, Lynne Dearborn, Helen Grayson, Trudi Hahn, Donna Harris, Virginia Martin, and Ruth Schena**. Some or all get together for events such as summer cookouts, frostbite happy hours on the terrace, movie nights, and potluck dinners.

The Monday Book Club

Planning ahead, the Monday Book Club has selected the following books for discussion through March. Start reading now. Contact **Linda Langley**, langleylk@gmail.com, for more information. All are welcome.

Jan. 11 - *Sugar in the Blood* by Andrea Stuart
Feb. 8 - *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Mar. 8 - *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf

Rescued by Julie Claus

Wild, abandoned,
broken, I wanted you
anyway. Out of loneliness
I rescued us.

Together we changed
our definition of
wild abandon.

submitted by Sandy Heistad

Let's Celebrate Birthdays by Maggie Stauffer



The New Year will be bringing an exciting new venture to AHA as the Birthday Fairies arrive to virtually celebrate all our members who share a January birthday with other special January birthday babies. Our members will be joining with other famous Capricorns and Aquarius celebrants like Dolly Parton, Kevin Costner, Diane Sawyer, Jeff Bezos and Oprah to celebrate their birthdays this month. Wear something red to the party that represents your birthstone, the beautiful, fiery red garnet. Then pour a glass of bubbly, have your cake and candles handy and get ready to have fun as we celebrate our birthdays together on Thursday, Jan. 14, from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Not celebrating your birthday this month? No worries. AHA's Birthday Fairies, Susanne O'Neill and Maggie Stauffer, will be hosting a virtual monthly birthday party on the second Thursday of each month.

Please RSVP to the office and watch your mail for a special January birthday party invitation coming your way.

Attention Travelers: by Susanne O'Neill

I know you did not do much traveling in 2020, but I suspect you have taken some fabulous trips in the past. Why not dig out those memories, souvenirs, and photo albums and share them with your fellow AHA friends?

We would love to vicariously enjoy a trip with you in the next few months and maybe get inspired to make plans for a trip ourselves in 2021. Armchair Travels meets the third Wednesday at 1:30-2:30 p.m. Pick a month and email me. I am ready to go! Susanne O'Neill, oneillsn@msn.com.



Modest “Pay Bump” from Social Security in 2021

by Bill Clayton

The numbers are small, “but at least more people will get to keep the increase, thanks to a recent change in the law noted by AARP,” in a recent AARP Bulletin article.

The yearly increases in Social Security payments have typically been reduced by increases in Medicare Part B premiums, which are deducted from Social Security payments.

But a recent change in law – backed by AARP – “will see the Medicare Part B premium hike for this year reduced substantially.” That will mean the cost-of-living increase will be preserved for many beneficiaries.

An average Social Security check for retired workers will increase about \$20 (about \$33 for a retired couple). For a widow or widower, the increase would be about \$19, for a disabled worker about \$16.

The downside for those on Social Security is that the Social Security system “is facing increasing stress,” AARP said, “in part because job cutbacks caused by the coronavirus pandemic led to a reduction in the payroll taxes that pay for the program. Trustees recently estimated the trust fund reserves for retired workers and their survivors will run short of money in 2034.”

Age Friendly Plan – LGBTQ Goal

by Jane King

Last month's newsletter introduced the overarching, priority goal of Alexandria's Age Friendly Plan: Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion. While the Alexandria Commission on Aging expected to achieve this goal by supporting increased “outreach to minority communities and identifying needs,” it determined that the LGBTQ community warranted special attention. It thus chose to highlight their specific concerns and needs by creating a second but related goal: “Create inclusive services for LGBTQ older adults.”

To support this community and identify needs, the Alexandria and Arlington Commissions on Aging and the Arlington/Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Alliance (AGLA) convened a listening session in January 2019. Attendees stressed that programs and services for LGBTQ older residents are currently insufficient and residents frequently encounter discrimination by providers. Their advice was sought on ways to improve services, how they might vary and assure that differences are respected.

An action that the plan calls for is “to conduct cultural competency training for those providing services to Alexandria’s LGBTQ older adults.” To that end, the Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) provided for its staff virtual webinar trainings offered by SAGE (Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders), a national organization located in New York City. SAGE created these trainings so that service providers could create a more welcoming community for LGBTQ older adults.

Alexandria’s Second Annual Pride Fair (June 2020) included virtual workshops about LGBTQ-inclusive services. The kickoff workshop was “Older LGBTQ Adults: We’re in This Together!” The Commission and DAAS and the local LGBTQ advocacy organizations continue to work together to promote the need for additional services and

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