

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

## **AHA Program Leaders: Take a Bow!**

by Executive Director Cele Garrett



Over the past fifteen months, as we moved our events to an online format, there have been so many exceptional programs created and led by AHA members. If newsletter space were not limited, I would enumerate every single one of them. Highlights from just this past month include Julie Gentry's Roundtable featuring Erik Olson, an expert on agriculture's impact on climate change. I found Helen Desfosses' latest Politics Forum discussion on domestic terrorism to be one of her most thought-provoking sessions yet. Matthew O'Neill (son of AHA member Susanne O'Neill) gave a magnificent talk about Hong Kong (see photos) where he has made his home for the past 13 years. Master gardener and AHA member Bob Faden led our first in-person event with a garden tour. And, AHA played a leadership role in developing a three-part presentation on Black Artists—with Part 2 bringing in an audience of more than 50 people. (Catch Part 3 in June.) Take a stroll through June's calendar to find more goodies to come.

## **Have the Stars Aligned for Downsizing?**

by Peter Crouch

Despite the pandemic, or partly because of it, the seller's market in real estate has continued. A several-years-long trend toward fewer houses on the market has only become a more acute shortage. As we all obeyed stay-at-home orders, even fewer of us were selling our houses than in prior years. As safety measures became standard protocol, however, buyers and sellers returned to the market after the first month or so of COVID-19. More buyers than sellers, and the number of homes for sale remains extremely low. The overall effect has been that prices have accelerated, and most well-maintained homes are receiving multiple offers when they go to market. It is tough to be a buyer these days, but great to be a seller.

That dynamic can keep a seller from considering a move, since they will likely be buyers for their next house. When you look more closely, however, it could be a wonderful time to move to smaller housing. The statistics show that the housing shortage is most acute in the single-family arena. The number of detached houses is way down over previous years, followed by townhouses. This makes sense: shortages have been building for several years, and the pandemic has driven some folks out of apartments/condos and into single-family homes, increasing demand.

So, what is the opportunity for downsizing? First, single family prices have accelerated by as much as 15% in the last 12 months depending, of course, on location and condition. For many existing homeowners, this means their homes are worth much more. Plus, condos are the softer area in the market, again depending on location and condition. For anyone who was considering downsizing before the pandemic, this could be a wonderful opportunity to sell high and buy low (and close in/"walkable.") If downsizing away from our high-cost area, the benefit could be even more pronounced.

Another factor is the treatment of capital gains taxation on the sale of a principal residence. Every taxpayer selling a principal residence is entitled to an exclusion of gain of up to \$500,000 for a couple. (Always check with your tax professional regarding your personal situation.) So, if a house has gone up dramatically in recent years, and you are thinking of going smaller, you could have a nice opportunity to go smaller with a great tax benefit.

*Cont'd on page 3*

## June 2021 Calendar of Events

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

June 8, Tue.	What's in the News	10-11:30 am
June 8, Tue.	Ladies' Night In	5-6:30 pm
June 11, Fri.	Politics Forum, Dr. Helen Desfosses will discuss "The Trump Impeachment Process: Where Did It Leave Us? Where Did It Leave Him?"	1:30-3 pm
June 15, Tue.	Board Meeting	2-4 pm
June 17, Thurs.	The World Awaits Your Visit. Reserve Now: Navigating Post-COVID Travel	1-2 pm
June 17, Thurs.	Two Star Chefs Who Are Making A Difference: Jose Andres and Ris Lacoste on the future of post-pandemic restaurants and the DC foodies scene.	2-3 pm
June 17, Thurs.	Men's Night In	5-6:30 pm
June 18, Fri.	Roundtable: City Municipal Broadband Status with Catharine Rice.	10-11 am
June 19, Sat.	Happy Hour at the home of Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry	5-7 pm
June 22, Tue.	Armchair Travels: "Living in Italy" with Jo and Richard Sheres	10-11 am
June 23, Wed.	The Current State of U.S. Russian Relations with author and journalist Gregory Feifer, hosted by Little Falls Village. Register with AHA.	1-2:30 pm
June 24, Thurs.	Social and Racial Equity Series: <i>How the South Won the Civil War</i> by Heather Cox Richardson.	10-11:30 am
June 25, Fri.	Downsize or Staysize: Helping You Clear Your Spaces. AHA co-hosts with Mt Vernon at Home. (see page 4 for details.)	10-11:30 am
June 28, Mon.	Readers Theater Group	2-3:30 pm
June 29, Tue.	Art Talk; Black Artists Part 3: Three Black Artists Respond.	3-4 pm
June 30, Wed.	Coffee and Conversation	10-11:30 am

## June Program Notes

**Thursday, June 17 Two Star Chefs.** Listen to a conversation between Jose Andres and Ris Lacoste as they discuss what generosity of spirit means to them. Learn how they each attacked the challenge of the pandemic with their culinary expertise to support residents of Washington, D.C. Hosted by Foggy Bottom West End Village.

**Thursday, June 17 Benita Lubic, President of Transeair Travel,** will talk about the present status of travel, where Americans can travel now, restrictions and the COVID Passport. This event is hosted by Little Falls Village. Please register by June 15.

**Friday, June 18 Roundtable.** Guest Catharine Rice, Project Director for the Coalition for Local Internet Choice (CLIC), and consultant with Broadband-Matters, immediate past president, and treasurer of its Virginia Chapter, chair of the City of Alexandria's IT Commission will discuss the status of broadband in the City and how to make it more accessible to all residents.

**Saturday, June 19 In-person Happy Hour.** Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry offer their home to celebrate the summer solstice and Juneteenth. As in the past, bring your own drinks and nibbles to share. The event will be indoors and limited to 20 vaccinated individuals, so registration is required. There is plenty of free, on-street parking. Accessibility notice: there are two steps to get into the house, and six steps down (and back up) to get to a bathroom. Address is 1418 Juliana Place, 22304, just off Seminary Road near Francis Hammond Middle School.

**Tuesday, June 22 Armchair Travels. Living in Italy.** Richard and Jo Sheres share their experiences and accounts of life in Italy. "A combination of fortuitous circumstances, good timing and simple determination turned out to be possibly the best five years of our lives," according to Rich.

**Tuesday, June 29 Art Talk: Black Artists Part 3.** The works of contemporary artists Kara Walker, Titus Kaphar and Howardena Pindell are explored, with an emphasis on their works that respond to inequality and repression in the art world and more broadly. Presenter is Nancy Hirshbein, Hirshhorn Tour Guide and Dial-a-Docent Founding Member.

## AARP Lists a Dozen Ways You May Be Hurting Your Heart

by Bill Clayton

- Using an alarm clock to wake up. Doctors who study sleep found that people who slept less than six hours a night had “a 20 percent greater risk of heart attack” over the course of a seven-year study. The National Sleep Foundation says getting seven to nine hours of sleep a night is advised.
- Research differs about whether coffee is good or bad for you. But “what you’re putting in it” is of concern. Sugar “is a bad way to start your day,” the AARP article said. And non-dairy creamers, as compared with natural milk, have harmful trans fats.
- Walking too little to get your heart rate up.
- Postponing the flu shot.
- Drinking diet soda daily, which raises the risk of developing diabetes. If you need a “daily bubbly fix,” try sparkling water with a bit of lime for flavor.
- Letting chronic anger or resentment build and last. “Try letting go of your resentment by forgiving the offender,” the AARP says, or talking with a therapist or trying “stress reducers such as yoga, tai chi or meditation.”
- Not connecting with a social network. It is unhealthy to be lonely and socially isolated, so schedule regular calls, meetings or chats.
- Snacking on chips instead of fruit. Because our sodium intake is too high, people should make fruit “an ongoing part of your snacking routine,” the AARP says.
- Making red or processed meat a daily indulgence. Regularly, substitute salmon or tuna or other food rich in omega-3 fatty acids.
- Regularly eating fried foods could increase the risk of coronary heart disease. Better choices are a baked potato or fries cooked in an oven or air fryer.
- Regular flossing or brushing can lower levels of gum disease. Studies “have suggested a link between gum disease and increased risk of heart disease.”



## Suggestions for Using Zoom

by Victoria Almquist

1. Always mute yourself when joining a meeting.
2. Stay muted when not speaking and remember to unmute yourself to speak.
3. It is requested that you turn your video on when you are speaking if you have it turned off.
4. Whenever your video is on be aware of how your camera is positioned and center yourself in the middle of the screen. Also make sure there is adequate lighting so you can be seen.
5. Turn your video off when moving your device (e.g. - walking to another room) or when doing other activities (e.g. - answering a call, eating, working). It can be distracting to other participants when someone on screen is moving around or engaged in activities not related to the meeting.
6. Avoid using the chat function to ask a question or make a comment. Use the raise your hand function instead, unless the host specifically asks participants to use chat. Once you have been called on, use the same function to lower your hand.



## Voter Information

The League of Women Voters, Education Fund provides a website, [vote411.org](http://vote411.org), to assist you with candidate information. Enter your address to access upcoming elections. Here in Virginia, we have a Democratic primary coming on June 8. Early voting is available in Alexandria until June 5 at 132 North Royal Street, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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### *Downsizing, cont'd from page 1.*

With the roll-out of the vaccines, and the lifting of some restrictions, there is a prospect of life getting back to somewhat “normal.” It might be time to consider, or reconsider, that move to smaller housing. The opportunity right now is to take advantage of the strength of the single-family market, the relative weakness of the condo market, and the current very favorable tax treatment of housing gains. Dad always told me buy low and sell high. Have the stars aligned for you?

## What's Up with AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

**Michael Curry and Bob Eiffert** took a road trip earlier in May. Bob says, "We had six days visiting friends in Blacksburg and Charlottesville. It was so good just to get away and enjoy ourselves! And we managed to buy a full tank of gas on the way home, so we were set for the (gas pipeline) panic."

Visiting family out-of-state has been one of the losses during a year of pandemic. **Mary Ann Bier**



just returned from travel to Nebraska to be at her grandson Zack's (in photo) high school graduation; seeing all the family in person was special, too.

The airports and planes were crowded but all travelers were masked and well-behaved.

May birthday babies enjoyed a Zoom party. Shown here are hosts **Susanne O'Neill** (top left) and **Maggie Stauffer** (top right). **Barb Rosenfeld** is at top center. From bottom left, Carmen Raventos-Suarez, Brenda Bloch-Young and Julie Gentry. Wishing you another great year!



**Matt O'Neill** with his sister Cristina (middle) and mother **Susanne O'Neill** (far left) in an earlier Hong Kong visit. Matt recently gave an Armchair Travels presentation about his Hong Kong life that can be viewed online. Watch for details in the AHA eblast.



## Downsize or Staysize: Helping you Clear your Spaces

Friday, June 25, 10-11:30am on Zoom

By Cele Garrett

This past year has afforded us extra time to look at all the things we have accumulated through the years. How do we feel about our possessions as we move forward? How can we part with those sentimental collections? Whether we anticipate a future move or want our living spaces to work better for us, most of us struggle with the process of "editing" our space. This panel of presenters will help us tackle the tough decisions about which things to keep and which to part with.

This is not a formal presentation; it is a chance for you to ask your questions to our panel of experts, whose professions involve walking their clients through this journey. When you register, you will have a chance to pose questions in advance. You can bring additional questions to the session. AHA is pleased to team up with our "sister" village Mount Vernon at Home for this event - and we are grateful to work with Steve Gurney of ProAgingSourcebook, who will host this meeting.

Panelists include Karen Gardiner, Simplify for Life; Peter Crouch, Crouch Realty Group of McEneaney Associates; Lori James, Ararity Auctions; and Maria Spetalnik, Conquer the Clutter.

Register online at [aha.clubexpress.com](http://aha.clubexpress.com), send an email to [aha@athomeinalexandri.org](mailto:aha@athomeinalexandri.org), or call the office at 703-231-0824.

## Thought for the Month

Here's another medical fact (and I am not making this up): Studies show that one's body temperature declines from decade to decade and that the drop becomes particularly pronounced in the elderly. Therefore, old folks are the coolest people on Earth.

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## Another Puzzle

from Brenda Bloch-Young

In the following words, change one letter to two letters and you will form a country.

Ex. Belle → Belize (changing the second "l" to "iz")

1. Brawl
2. No Say
3. Brunt
4. Mondo
5. Belays
6. Canal
7. Panda

# Handicapped Parking Permits Can be Very Useful

by Susan Pettey

If you have limited mobility on either a temporary or permanent basis, you may be eligible for a handicapped parking permit. The handicapped permit will allow parking in handicapped parking spots near the entrances to businesses. The permit can save time, energy, and frustration for the user. It is also helpful to volunteers who transport AHA members to appointments.

Ask your health care provider if she or he thinks you qualify for a temporary or permanent handicapped permit. Individuals for whom walking may present a safety hazard (such as those with Alzheimer's disease) are also eligible for a handicapped placard. Physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners may certify disability. In some instances, podiatrists and chiropractors may also certify eligibility.

You can get a handicapped parking application from the DMV online or at a local office. Or, contact the AHA office if you'd like for us to mail you a copy. You'll want to have your portion of the form completed before taking it to your health care provider. They can complete the portion that certifies disability.

## Senior Law Day

Senior Services of Alexandria and the Alexandria Bar Association present their virtual 2021 Senior Law Day with a focus on Estate Planning and other Life Choices from a COVID-19 perspective. This webinar will take place on three Friday mornings in June.

- **June 4, 10 a.m.: "Lessons Learned"** with Rachel Baer, Family First Law; Lindsay Hutter, Goodwin House; and Dr. Rina Bansal, Inova Alexandria Hospital.
- **June 11, 10 a.m.: "Housing Options and Technology Tools"** with Natalie Page, Life and Estate Planning Law Center; Vanessa Bishop, Elder Care Consultants, Inc.; and Alice Paxton, Paladin Life Care.
- **June 18, 10 a.m.: "Legal Updates"** with Mary Horner, Legal Services of Northern Virginia; Xue Connelly, Wade Grimes Friedman Meinken & Leischner PLLC; and Joe Blaszkow, Blaszkow Legal. Register at [www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org) or call 703-836-4414 ext. 110.



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## Upcoming Birthday Celebrations

by Maggie Stauffer & Susanne O'Neill



The monthly birthday celebrations, which have been happening on Zoom for the past five months, will be taking a break this month. Stay tuned for the possibility of resuming the fun as we move forward with more in-person events. And a special 'Happy Birthday' goes out to all our June birthday babies.

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