

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

Emerging from the Pandemic, AHA Celebrates an In-Person Event

AHA celebrated the first in-person happy hour since February 2020 on June 19. Twenty-five members gathered at the home of AHA Chair Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry for an evening of great food, beverage and fellowship. Bill Clayton even brought a pitcher of margaritas to share! Hosts Bob, Michael, and Pam and Steve Nelson will do it again on July 17.



Michael Curry and Nancy Kincaid Barry Stauffer and Vice Chair Pam Nelson Maggie Stauffer and new member Ann Greer



From left: David Butler, Kathie Fricke, Teddye Clayton, Joyce Bachman, Sandy Heistad, Bob Eiffert, John and Nancy Veldhuis, Paul Cooper and Penelope Roberts

July 2021 Calendar

Please note the programs in the table below are scheduled either in person or via ZOOM.

For ZOOM programs, the AHA office will provide you with the meeting link after you have registered for the program.

For in-person programs, you must be fully vaccinated. Documentation is NOT required.

July 9, Fri.	Politics Forum: "Former President Donald Trump: An Analysis of His Impact, His influence, and His Future." moderated by Professor Emeritus Helen Desfosses. Via ZOOM	1:30-3 pm
July 10, Sat.	Alexandria Birthday Fireworks on the balconies of Nancy Kincaid and the Bachmans. Bring drinks only. Alexandria House, 400 Madison St. Limited to 25	7-9:30 pm
July 13, Tue.	What's in the News. Via ZOOM	10-11:30 am
July 13, Tue.	Ladies' Night OUT. Bella Napoli, 1310 Mt. Vernon Ave.	5-7 pm
July 14, Wed.	Going on a Plastic Diet: How to Reduce Your Use, with Jeanne Lenehan. Via ZOOM, sponsored by Silver Spring Village	2-3 pm
July 15, Thurs.	Men's Night OUT at the home of "L" Liddle. 526 S. Pitt St. Limited to 10	5-7 pm
July 16, Fri.	Roundtable: National Popular Vote Interstate Compact with Eileen Reavey. Via ZOOM	11-12 am Note time change.
July 17, Sat.	Happy Hour at the home of Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry, Bring your own drinks and nibbles. 1418 Juliana Pl.; Alexandria 22304	5-7 pm
July 19, Mon.	Dine Around at Bastille. 606 N. Fayette St.; street parking	6-8 pm
July 20, Tue.	Board Meeting Via ZOOM	2-4 p110m
July 22, Thurs.	Social and Racial Equity Series. <i>Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019.</i> Book assembled by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain of content by 90 writers Via ZOOM	10-11:30 am
July 28, Wed.	Coffee and Conversation at the Alexandria Pastry Shop. Bradlee Shopping Center, 3690-H King St.	10-11:30 am

Program Notes

Summer Break

- There will be no Politics Forum in August, but the program will resume on September 10 from 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- The Readers Theater Group will not have meetings in July or August. Wait until the fall season for new shows.
- Armchair Travels is taking a "vacation" for July and August. No doubt you are all eager to have some adventures of your own this summer. Keep in mind these adventures could be great Armchair Travel programs in the future, so take lots of captivating pictures.
- Monday Book Group will reconvene in the fall.

Saturday, July 10 Alexandria Fireworks. Nancy Kincaid will host 10 guests; the Bachmans will host 15.

Wednesday, July 14 Going on a Plastic Diet. Plastics permeate our lives, but plastic recycling is mostly a myth. Join Jeanne Lenehan as she describes her 10-year journey to reduce her use of plastics. She will give you tips to get started and alternatives gleaned from her own exploration and experience. Her goal is to increase awareness and help others make responsible choices.

Friday, July 16 Roundtable. National Grass Roots director Eileen Reavey will discuss the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC) that will guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Compact ensures that *every* vote, in *every* state, will matter in *every* presidential election.



Roundtable Guest Updates AHA on City Broadband

The Roundtable discussion group, hosted by Julie Gentry, learned about recent developments in Alexandria's broadband expansion efforts. Guest speaker Catherine Rice, chair of the City of Alexandria Commission on Information Technology and project manager for Coalition for Local Internet Choice, said her goal and that of the commission is to put choices in front of City Council and staff to improve competition and to "future-proof" systems so that there is minimal need for repeated digging and undergrounding wires and cables as technologies evolve.



Broadband is the term used to mean any high-speed Internet access that is always on. Rice (left) declared the City is a "one-pony" show because Comcast is the sole provider of broadband services via its cabling.

Alexandria has been committed to building a fiber network for its own use. There are currently about 90 public buildings included in this effort.

According to Rice, the City wants to provide the environment where more companies can come in and provide competition for internet services that lead to better pricing and technology innovation. Rice stated that, "It's no surprise that the arrival of Amazon HQ2 and the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus creates a new need and impetus" for better services.

With the American Rescue Plan Act, a Federal COVID pandemic recovery program, Alexandria received \$30-40 million to improve various needs in the city which could include storm water flooding control as well as digital system upgrades. Rice said establishing a "digital equity plan" is an important City goal. This includes not only getting internet service to all homes and schools, but also providing computers and training for those currently lacking this capability.

Power of the People and the Purse Closes Power Plant

By Ernie Lehmann

It was not easy. But it was happening. The dirty, old, polluting, coal-fired Mirant power plant located in North Old Town Alexandria was operating at only 50 percent capacity. In so doing, its owners lost half the profits it could have made.

Why? The dirt, dust and chemical pollutants it produced when operating full bore exceeded the health limits established by the Virginia Department of Environment. At that maximum level, asthma attacks to the children and adults became life-threatening. The civic associations, like North Old Town Independent Citizens Association (NOTICE); the Sierra Club; the River Keepers; Alexandria City Council members and private citizens demanded that it close. Even coal industry consultants advised the owners to close.

For a time, they all failed. It stayed open. But conditions for its continued operation were established. These conditions required the plant to operate at only 50 percent capacity. Instead of making \$200 million a year in profit it was reduced to \$100 million.

This went on for three years until 2012. After losing \$300,000,000 they threw in the towel. The plant was closed in October 2012, to widespread jubilation. One very interesting sidelight to this affair came out at an AHA fundraising function a few years later. It turned out that the Mirant plant owners were given the exact same advice to close, from both their advisors and their antagonists.

In a future edition, we will discuss the various ideas for what should replace the power plant.

(The author of this story is Ernie Lehmann, an AHA stalwart and co-founder who was heavily involved in the effort to close the Mirant plant.)



Mirant power plant with bike trail.
Photo from Alexandria Times.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

COVID recovery, collected by Bill Clayton

From hugging grandkids to inviting dinner guests to concentrating on cicadas, AHA members had a wide variety of ways to express their glee at the fading of the pandemic. Oh, there are still clouds on the horizon – from “vaccine hesitancy” to threat from variants, but overall, the picture of emergence from the pandemic has been hopeful and relieved.

Beach with friends dating back to high school. That is the pleasant emergence **Penny Roberts** chose: “I was able to spend the first weekend in June at the beach in Avalon, N.J. with seven high school friends. We have gotten together alternate years for 25 years. Had to miss last year. Lots of hugs, walking, and good old New Jersey Sloppy Joe’s (no, not the ground meat variety).”

“First dinner was with grandkids in New Jersey,” former AHA Chair **Barbara Rosenfeld** said. “Then we had vaccinated friends for dinner (in Alexandria), then out to a restaurant and ... a group indoors at A La Lucia.”

Julie Gentry had travel in mind. “I’m heading to Long Island in July to visit my brother and sister-in-law and have started researching trips abroad in 2022,” Gentry said.

Loretta Darst, AHA’s Marketing Manager, reported: “Being with vaccinated friends and family and having the ability to go maskless and not worry about social distancing has been wonderful. It had been over a year since I had gone inside anyone’s home or had anyone in my home. Easing into normal and loving every minute of it.”

The fear of COVID has in some cases been replaced with a fear of over-celebrating. This from **Gretchen Klimoski**: “As I became aware that most all of my friends - both in Virginia and in Ohio - were fully vaccinated AND that Massachusetts had a one percent infection rate AND that we had spent the entire past summer with NO visitors, I enthusiastically put out a call to see who might want to join us at our Cape Cod home this summer. Was this a good idea? We’ll see.”

The relief from having had the vaccine “was tremendous,” **Ann Liddle** said. “Now with the mask mandate gone for the vaccinated it feels wonderful. We went out to dinner as normal; met with friends and did not have to sit outside unless we wanted to. I’ve even gone to the grocery store maskless. Yippee!”

The pandemic’s departure is far from complete. **Dara Surratt**, an AHA operations co-manager, described the graduation from T.C. Williams, the last class under that high school’s name: “The school set up hundreds of folding chairs, three feet apart, in Chinquapin Park.” The Surratt twins, Caroline and Emily, “were allowed to take off their masks to smile for the camera as they walked across the stage.”

As the pandemic fades slowly, the cicadas have arrived. The latest outdoors sport for the **Bill Claytons** has been counting the cicada carcasses on the front steps. Under the steps lives a chipmunk that apparently dines well on Brood X. The Claytons have seen several cicada wings, leftovers from a chipmunk feast, scattered on the steps.

And this from **Nancy Berg**: “I took advantage of the vaccinations to visit my sister in western New York. I drove up with my two sons (who live in Washington D.C.), and found a general relaxation in mask use and other restrictions en route to her cottage. I had not seen her in two years, and the visit was a big success. She has a lovely cottage on the lake where we spent summers as kids, and we reconnected with her and with some of the many family members who still live in the area.

Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry can report that Manhattan is back to being fully open. They visited Times Square on June 12 and mingled with huge crowds that would rival pre-pandemic days. They also had their first trip to Fire Island for a day at the beach. Visits to Amityville for the horror house and Teddy Roosevelt’s Sagamore Hill summer estate rounded out the trip.



An Epic Event

Left: Cicada emerging from its 17-year rest. (from Pam Nelson)

Right: A beautiful adult specimen. (from Mary Ann Bier)

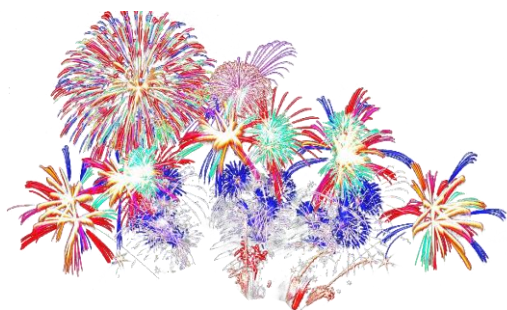
**For all the Dog Lovers and Walkers,
as Seen on a Fence**



AHA Opens In-Home Volunteer Support

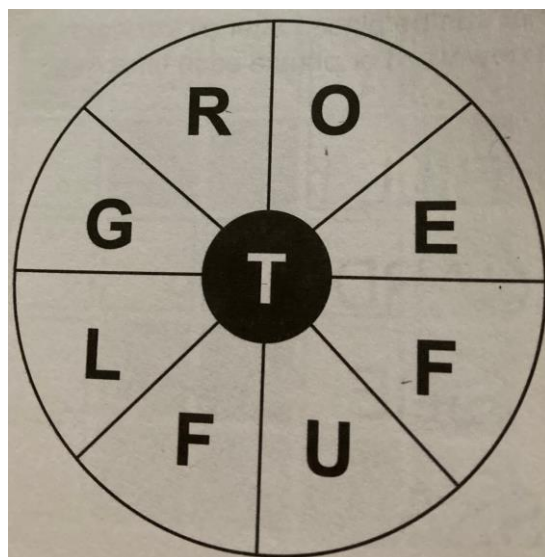
by Executive Director Cele Garrett

We are grateful to our members for their patience these past months when we had to "officially" pause our in-home volunteer services. Now that our community has been vaccinated and the local COVID case counts continue to drop, we can finally announce that "we're back." We will be glad to see some of our members whom we have not laid real eyes on lately. Some of our volunteers are vacationing so the more advance notice we have for member requests is always appreciated. Happy summer to everyone!



L

Word Wheel



How many words of three or more letters can you find in the word wheel? Form words by using the letter in the center of the wheel plus a selection from the outer wheel, where no letter may be used more than once in any word. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found.

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