

A community of members ages 55+ helping one another to live safe, active and connected lives

20 Years of the Village Movement

by Executive Director Cele Garrett

Though At Home in Alexandria does not have the word “village” in its name, we are considered a village organization—one of over 280 local nonprofit villages across the country serving older neighbors in their respective communities. This month marks 20 years since the very first one—Beacon Hill Village (BHV) in Boston—began operation. It wasn’t long before word of BHV’s work spread like wildfire and countless groups sought to replicate that model in their own community. A small national office was established to offer support and training to these “startups”—and that entity, the Village to Village Network, continues today. Our established movement has proven to be a cost-effective, sustainable solution for healthy, vibrant aging. Collectively, villages serve about 40,000 older adults.

Tuesday, Feb. 15 is National Village Day and the central event will be a virtual celebration from noon to 1:30 p.m. The event is co-hosted by BHV and the Village to Village Network. It will feature BHV founders, trace key developments in the movement, highlight stories from various villages and celebrate the role of villages today. The event is limited to 1,000 attendees. Any AHA member who wishes to view the event can email me at cele@athomeinalexandria.org.



February 2022 Calendar

All the programs in this calendar are scheduled via **Zoom** unless otherwise noted. The AHA office will send you the Zoom link after you have registered for a program. The link will allow you to attend via computer or phone.

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| Feb. 1, Tues. | Freer in Egypt: Join a Smithsonian Museum of Asian Art docent on this online tour to explore Charles Lang Freer's vision, retrace his travels, and look carefully at the objects he acquired during his visits. | 1-2 pm |
| Feb. 8, Tues. | What's in the News | 10-11:30 am |
| Feb. 8, Tues. | Ladies' Night In | 5-7 pm |
| Feb. 11, Fri. | Helen Desfosses, Ph.D. will moderate a straight-from-the-headlines discussion of the question: "How Hopeful Do America's College Students Feel about Their Future and the Nation's? So What?" | 1:30-3 pm |
| Feb. 15, Tues. | Board Meeting | 2-4 pm |
| Feb. 17, Thurs. | Men's Night In | 5-6:30 pm |
| Feb. 18, Fri. | Roundtable: Turning solid waste into electrical energy at the Covanta Alexandria facility. | 10-11:00 am |
| Feb. 22, Tues. | Armchair Travels: Churchill, Canada, with Penny Roberts, who loved visiting the town as much as seeing the bears. | 1:30-3 pm |
| Feb. 23, Wed. | Coffee and Conversation | 10-11:30 am |
| Feb. 23, Wed. | StrongerMemory™ information session to learn about this self-directed program of exercises that have been shown to improve memory. | 2-3 pm |
| Feb. 24, Thurs. | Social and Racial Equity book discussion: <i>African Americans of Alexandria, Virginia, Beacons of Light in the Twentieth Century</i> with introduction by former Mayor Bill Euille | 10-11 am |
| Feb. 25, Fri. | "A Healthy Heart: You Can't Beat It," presented by Virginia Hospital Center cardiologist. | 11-12 pm |
| Feb. 28, Mon. | Readers' Theater | 2-3:30 pm |
| Mar. 1, Tues. | <i>Race Against Time</i> with investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell, register by Feb. 28. | 11-12 pm |

Program Notes

Friday, Feb. 18 Roundtable Discussion. Learn about the Covanta Alexandria facility that takes our solid waste and turns it into electrical energy. Manager Don Cammarata will explain the processes involved and how the facility takes care of the waste products that result and their efforts to mitigate climate change. Your questions and concerns are welcome.

Thursday, Feb. 24 Social and Racial Equity Discussion. *African Americans of Alexandria, Virginia, Beacons of Light in the Twentieth Century* reports the experiences of 67 Black residents of the city whose stories are important to an understanding of the city's history. Bill Euille, former mayor of Alexandria, says that, "I believe the recognition of these individuals is long overdue and that, as it brings attention and honor to lives too long kept out of our city's public histories, it helps bring balance to the record of who and what we are."

Friday, Feb. 25 Healthy Heart: You Can't Beat It. Are you heart smart? Increase your knowledge of how the heart works, the warning signs of disease, the "big four" risk factors that contribute to heart problems, and treatment options. Cardiologist Brian Clark, MD, will describe what you need to know and do to build and maintain a strong heart. This event is hosted by Virginia Hospital Center.

Tuesday Mar. 1 Race Against Time
The stories of investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell have helped put four Klansmen responsible for the murder of three civil rights workers in the "Mississippi Burning" case and a serial killer behind bars. His stories have also helped free two people from death row, exposed injustices and corruption, prompting Justice Department investigations and reforms.

Sleep Problems?

Consumer Reports took on the challenge of sleep problems in a recent issue (Feb.2022) of its magazine. As for so many of us, you may have experienced any number of common issues like difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep when waking in the night or too early in the morning.

Struggling to fall asleep because your mind is racing as soon as you get in bed? Is the room dark, quiet and a comfortable temperature? If so, try an exercise to relax your muscles: concentrate on relaxing groups of muscles starting with your feet and working up to your head. You may try going to another room and do a short, calming activity until you feel sleepy again. Of course, establishing a routine bedtime and wake-up time is helpful, too. If you like to read before sleeping, choose something peaceful – poetry, a happy short story – no murder mysteries!

Staying asleep or trying to get back to sleep when you have woken in the night or too early in the morning leads to a tired feeling all day. Light-blocking shades in the bedroom are very helpful here. Reducing or even eliminating caffeine or alcohol in the afternoon or evenings has shown to help with sleep and rest.

A newer theory is that “hypervigilance” is a type of anxiety where you focus too much on what you fear may disturb your sleep. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is well known to help relieve these types of anxieties. You may, however, learn to do this on your own. And, of course, there’s an app for that. The article suggests an app called CBT-i Coach, developed at Stanford University in collaboration with the federal government. Although not necessarily a cure or a replacement for actual therapy, it is worth a try. Another standby to support relaxing and falling asleep is slow, deep breathing reduced to six breaths a minute.

Also recommended are the sensible solutions to have a good mattress, good pillows and bed linens, and perhaps an air purifier. A popular item is a weighted blanket to make you feel cozy or a cooling pad if you are a “hot” sleeper.

Nighty-night...



Valentine's Day Word Search

(Words can be spelled forwards, backwards, diagonally, up, or down.)

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | C | E | L | E | B | R | A | T | I | O | N | Z | R | T |
| F | O | V | U | D | B | Z | V | A | S | E | P | Y | R | O |
| R | X | A | I | S | N | O | O | L | L | A | B | U | I | E |
| T | M | L | M | C | P | K | R | R | F | Z | E | N | X | U |
| N | I | E | G | Z | U | C | I | P | L | K | I | D | O | O |
| Y | N | N | Y | P | Q | P | U | S | I | J | Z | Y | M | Y |
| Z | E | T | Y | Q | Y | C | C | N | S | S | A | E | N | J |
| H | D | I | K | P | M | E | D | A | L | B | D | N | Z | K |
| N | S | N | Z | F | B | N | S | C | K | Q | X | O | T | J |
| P | U | E | D | T | E | C | P | T | A | E | Q | H | I | X |
| Z | Z | I | M | S | S | Q | W | Z | F | D | S | M | R | L |
| D | P | H | S | G | Q | B | U | D | D | I | E | S | Y | N |
| R | P | I | S | X | K | V | W | G | K | N | G | J | C | H |
| D | U | C | J | I | D | M | N | E | O | U | E | N | F | C |
| W | V | L | D | I | F | K | N | G | M | P | M | J | B | B |

Word List

| | | |
|-------------|----------|-----------|
| BALLOONS | GIFTS | MINE |
| BUDDIES | HONEY | TRUE |
| CELEBRATION | KINDNESS | VALENTINE |
| CUPCAKES | KISS | VASE |

A Bit of Valentine's Day History

Love it or hate it, February 14 is celebrated by millions of people around the world annually. Like so many of our celebrations, Valentine's Day may date back to a pagan festival that was held on the Ides of February, a time that's most often associated with fertility and birth. Pope Gelasius put an end to the festival, noting its pagan origins.

Of several legends surrounding its origin as a holiday as we know it, the most popular legend tells the story of a man who wanted to help Christians escape Roman prisons. In this telling, the imprisoned Valentine sent the first “valentine” greeting to a young woman who had visited him. It is said that before his death, he signed a letter to her “From your Valentine,” exemplifying love, empathy and sacrifice.

Moving to the 19th Century, Richard Cadbury of the chocolate company began the practice of selling his candy as a Valentine's Day token in the United Kingdom. About the same time, Esther Howland began selling boxed Valentine greetings in the United States.

What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

No move is perfect, but “chaos” best describes the **Claytons’** move from their home of 47 years to what **Bill Clayton** calls the Bide-A-Wee Home for the Infirm, an apartment in Goodwin House Alexandria.

The movers parked their van in front of the “old” house right at the beginning of a heavy snow. When the van was full, it went off to Goodwin House. Movers left the Claytons’ bed, but no bedclothes. The power went off during the storm. Old sheets, intended for rags, were the “covers” that cold night.

Because the move could not be completed the next day, Goodwin House set up two cots for the Claytons in their new quarters.

They can laugh about it now, but the thing that prompted laughter on moving day was the moving of the grand piano. Seven stalwarts of the piano-moving company, with a heavy-duty piano dolly, lifted the 450-pound cabinet grand piano onto the dolly and wheeled it off the deck into the snow of the Claytons’ backyard, down to Halcyon Drive and – why not?—rolled the piano on its dolly up the middle of the street for two blocks to the new owners of the piano.

The moving company’s name? Moving Sucks Movers LLC.



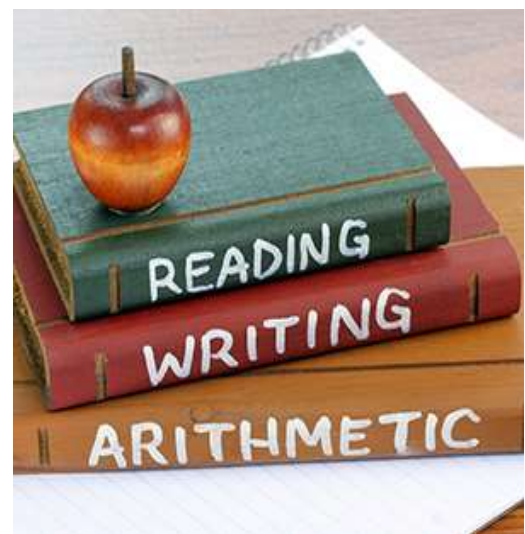
Seven movers wrestle the Claytons’ cabinet grand piano down a snowy path to the street.

StrongerMemory™ to Start Soon by Cele Garrett

In the last few newsletters, we have mentioned the StrongerMemory™ program that AHA will begin offering in March. On Wednesday, Feb. 23 from 2 to 3 p.m., AHA will offer a StrongerMemory™ information session. Any AHA member interested in the program is encouraged to register and attend this virtual session so you can make an informed decision about participating in the 12-week program, which consists of self-directed participation in exercises that have been shown to improve memory.

Goodwin House is offering this program to villages, with the only expense being the cost of reproducing the workbooks (which AHA will cover). Goodwin House has invested energy and resources into the program—and villages are reporting favorable results. After careful review, we felt that our AHA members would appreciate this opportunity. I am grateful to our wonderful volunteer Roberta McGregor, who will facilitate this group initiative. Roberta has been working with the StrongerMemory™ program director at Goodwin House and participating in the monthly village facilitator meetings to prepare for these sessions.

There will be a limit of 20 spots in the program and we do anticipate that it will fill to capacity. For a couple in a household, both parties can share one spot in the program. Call the AHA office with questions or to sign up—or sign up through AHA Hub.



Join the Roundtable

If you made a New Year's Resolution to try something new this year, then here's your chance. The Roundtable discussion group facilitated by Julie Gentry held a planning session recently to develop programs for 2022. Upcoming programs include learning about:

- Covanta Alexandria waste-to-energy facility (see calendar for Feb.18)
- What is the Precision Medicine Initiative?
- Alexandria's curbside recycling program, what qualifies, and where it goes
- Alexandria Renew water resources mission
- Cryptocurrency/bitcoin/NFT's/blockchain-oh my!
- What is the status of broadband expansion work in Alexandria?
- Housing options for aging in place
- Food insecurity among seniors
- The role of Adult Protective Services
- What is a gerontologist vs. a geriatrician?

The group meets on the third Friday of the month at 10 a.m. Please join the discussion to learn what is happening in Alexandria as well as those topics you always wanted to know more about.

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ONE WAY TO FIND OUT IF YOU ARE OLD IS TO FALL DOWN IN FRONT OF A LOT OF PEOPLE. IF THEY LAUGH, YOU'RE STILL YOUNG. IF THEY PANIC AND START RUNNING TO YOU, YOU'RE OLD.

Falling is no joke – take care, review your surroundings and be prepared to call for help when you need it.



Julie Gentry and Snoopy send Happy Valentine's Day greetings to AHA

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Happenings in February

February is Black History Month

**February 1 Lunar New Year –
Year the Tiger**

February 2 Groundhog Day

February 14 Valentine's Day

February 21 Presidents' Day

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