

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

AHA Member Survey in March

by Executive Director Cele Garrett

It has been three years since AHA offered a member survey to gauge how well we are meeting our members' needs. Living with a pandemic over the past two years has given each of us new insights into what we each need to remain safe, confident and healthy as we age.

We are pleased to be working with Customer Care Measurement & Consulting (CCMC), a professional firm that is generously providing services to AHA on a *pro bono* basis. CCMC is headed by President and Co-Founder Scott Broetzmann, a longtime resident of Alexandria. Though the firm is located here, it provides services for clients across the country, like AARP, SHEA and Squire Patton Boggs. Scott and his team have helped us to design this survey and, most important, will provide third-party analysis of the information you share with us.

Members will complete the survey online. Those who do not use a computer will have a chance to participate with a printed copy. Completing the survey should not more than 12 minutes of your time. I thank you in advance for giving us your honest thoughts when you receive the survey this month.

Learn Before We Can Act

by Jane King

As the lead for AHA's Social and Racial Equity program, a call with AHA Board member Adam Perry, sent me in a direction that I hope is thought provoking to others as it is to me. Adam came across a book about many Alexandria Black residents, with a foreword by former Mayor Bill Euille. The book also attracted the attention of the local media in February, Black History Month.

Named *African Americans in Alexandria, Virginia, Beacons of Light in the Twentieth Century*, the book tells the story of 63 African Americans who contributed to the development of Alexandria in spite of segregation. Some are remembered in our buildings (for example, the Durant Center and the Ladrey Senior Building) and others for creating businesses, such as the Greene Funeral Home. Others deserve our attention for their unstinting care for their community, which promoted the development of our remarkably diverse city. (The book was featured via Zoom on February 24, but the discussion will continue in the March 24 Social and Racial Equity program.)

Participants in the Social and Racial Equity Zoom meetings were anxious to take some kind of action, and in hopes of learning what to do, Penelope Roberts, Nancy Veldhuis and I attended a six-hour session sponsored by ACT for Alexandria, called "Allyship," which urged against haste. An online *Forbes* article defines Allyship as a "lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individuals." The program argues persuasively that we need to "walk beside or behind marginalized people" and "hold a mirror to ourselves" and be necessarily humble in our ambitions.

Allyship describes the steps essential to understanding ourselves and recognizing our own biases, essential steps before we can act in support of those who are marginalized. And Allyship makes clear that this is a demanding process requiring us to challenge our assumptions about our own perspectives. The Allyship session acknowledges that this can cause some personal discomfort as we make changes in our views and actions. All are welcome to attend the Social and Racial Equity group for further discussion.

March 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.

Mar. 1, Tues.	<i>Race Against Time</i> with investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell.	11-12 pm
Mar. 8, Tues.	What's in the News	10-11:30 am
Mar. 8, Tues.	Interested in Joining a Movie Discussion Group? Join Barbara Brennan to talk about getting started.	2-3 pm
Mar. 8, Tues.	Ladies' Night In	5-7 pm
Mar. 9, Wed.	As part of Women's History Month, The Alexandria Library will feature our own Rita Mattia (see article on page 4).	4-5 pm
Mar. 10, Thurs.	Michael Gibson will discuss researching and writing two novels on the experiences of Americans during World War II.	10-11 am
Mar. 11, Fri.	Helen Desfosses, PhD, will moderate an important discussion on "Why is Inequality So Hard to Eradicate as A Feature of American Life? Is the Smugness of Those Doing Well a Barrier to Real Change?"	1:30-3 pm
Mar. 15, Tues.	Board Meeting	2-4 pm
Mar. 17, Thurs.	Men's Night In	5-6:30 pm
Mar. 18, Fri.	Roundtable discussion: "COVID and Mental Health: It's complicated". Speaker is Janice McLean, PhD.	10-11:00 am
Mar. 24, Thurs.	Social and Racial Equity book discussion, part 2: <i>African Americans of Alexandria, Virginia, Beacons of Light in the Twentieth Century</i> with introduction by former Mayor Bill Euille.	10-11:00 am
Mar. 28, Mon.	Readers Theater	2-3:30 pm
Mar. 30, Wed.	Coffee and Conversation	10-11:30 am

Program Notes

Tuesday, March 8 **Movie Discussion Group.** AHA is exploring the idea of hosting a monthly movie group. Participants will watch two pre-selected movies (available on Amazon Prime or Netflix) at their convenience from home, then come together to discuss these two movies and choose two movies for the coming month. AHA volunteer Barbara Brennan will lead the general interest discussion.

Thursday, March 10 **Special guest speaker** Michael Gibson will discuss researching and writing historically accurate fiction, with a focus on his two World War II novels, *The Broomcorn Field* and *Leaving Pontotoc County*.

Friday, March 18 **Roundtable:** Confused, frightened, frustrated, angry, resigned? COVID has evoked these emotions in us and more. Seniors have additional issues to process. How can we better face the challenges of determination vs. disease vs. polarizing views and behaviors? Join Janice McLean, PhD, a retired clinical psychologist who taught at Ohio State University for 20 years and practiced for 35 years in hospital and group practice settings.

March Highlights

Women's History Month – "Outlandish Tour" at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, features herbal medicine and women of the 18th Century. Get tickets at shop.alexandriava.gov and select Events.

March 12 – set your clock forward at bedtime for the start of **Daylight Savings Time**

March 17 – St Patrick's Day

March 20 – first day of Spring



In Memoriam

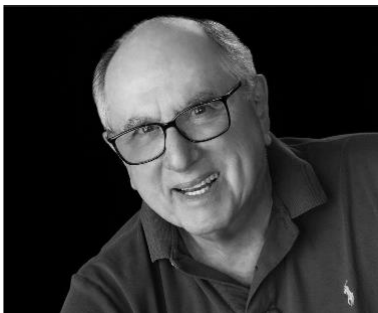
by Cele Garrett

Martin Tolchin

A few years ago, it was our good fortune to gain a delightful new AHA member when Marty Tolchin moved across the river into Alexandria to join his partner, Barbara Rosenfeld. He had already been an enthusiastic supporter of the village movement for many years—and he remained active in several endeavors, even publishing his memoir *Politics, Journalism and the Way Things Were: My Life at the Times, The Hill and Politico* only three years ago. (AHA members may remember a most enjoyable presentation in 2020 when he regaled us with stories from his publishing days.) Marty passed away on February 17 at the age of 93.

The following is excerpted from his obituary published in the *New York Times*: Tolchin reported for the *New York Times* from the early '70s from his post in Washington, “covering Congress with a keen knowledge of its twisting ways and power plays” and was later the founding publisher and editor of *The Hill*, a successful newspaper devoted to events on Capitol Hill...a publication that often broke stories picked up by larger publications. Tolchin received the 1982 Everett McKinley Dirksen award for distinguished reporting of Congress. Earlier in his career, he and his wife Susan Tolchin (now deceased) co-wrote several books that included *To the Victor: Political Patronage from the Clubhouse to the White House* (1971), *Dismantling America: The Rush to Deregulate* (1983), and *Glass Houses: Congressional Ethics and the Politics of Venom* (2001). Tolchin temporarily came out of retirement in 2006 to help launch *Politico*.

In addition to Barbara Rosenfeld, Marty is survived by his daughter Kay Rex Tolchin and a grandson. A son, Charlie, died of cystic fibrosis in 2003.



Martin Tolchin

Bernadette Troy

We are sorry to report that AHA member Bernadette Troy passed away on February 21 at the age of 79. A longtime Alexandrian, she and her husband Pat owned the Ireland's Own restaurant and the Irish Walk apparel store in Old Town. Pat died in 2018. (Note: At the time this newsletter went to press, obituary or memorial service plans were not completed. We hope to have those details in our March 1 eBlast.)



Anna Leider

It is not customary for us to write about family members of our AHA members, but Anna Leider felt like a (young) AHA honorary member because her mother. Kit Leider, is a longtime AHA member—and Anna was well known by many. As a former voter registrar in Alexandria, she oversaw more than 40 elections in our city. Her vast political experience included working for Sen. John Warner, serving as Bill Clinton's campaign manager in Alexandria, serving as chair of the Alexandria Democratic Committee from 1993 to 1997, and ultimately serving on the Electoral Board. As former Mayor Allison Silberberg noted, “Anna did a magnificent job for many years as the Registrar in our city's Office of Voter Registration and Elections. She was always fair and highly organized. What an unthinkable and heartbreaking loss.” Mayor Justin Wilson recently remarked, “Nobody was more committed to our city and its people. We will miss Anna.” Jack Powers, current secretary of the Electoral Board, noted, “Anna was a competent, compassionate and highly knowledgeable elections official. She is sorely missed.” Anna died on February 12 after a battle with glioblastoma at the age of 62.



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

by Susanne O'Neill

Attention Travelers: I know you didn't do much traveling in 2021, but I suspect you have taken some fabulous trips in the past. Why not dig out those memories, souvenirs and photo albums and share these with your fellow AHA friends? We would love to vicariously enjoy a trip with you in the next few months and get inspired to make plans for a trip ourselves in 2022 or 2023. Armchair Travels is the third Wednesday at 1:30-2:30. Pick a month and email me at oneillsn@msn.com. I'm ready to go!

Share your adventures, whether here at home or abroad, with AHA members. We love to have your notes and photos about events in your life – family visits, getting in touch with old friends or jaunts to favorite places. Send an email to marybier@comcast.net or to aha@athomeinalexandria.org.



Penny Roberts traveled to Churchill, Canada and onto the tundra in October 2021 to observe polar bear activity. In a recent Armchair Travels presentation, Penny reported on the artists of the Pangea Seed Foundation, who painted murals in Churchill to bring joy to a town that had suffered loss of jobs and a catastrophic storm. Above is one of the amazing murals of the local treasure.

AHA Member to Participate in Women's History Month Program at Library

In commemoration of Women's History Month 2022, the Kate Waller Barret Branch of the Alexandria Public Library will offer an online talk from 4 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9, with local author and AHA member, Rita Mattia. You must register to attend: <https://alexlibraryva.org/event/6013226>.

Rita will answer questions about writing not one, but two books—and creating and hosting a podcast—during the pandemic. She will also read from these stories, which cover everything from her own experiences as a single mother to the day her mother fought off a snake to protect a Brownie troop to the perils of working in the mid-20th Century in a field dominated by men. In addition, there may be story of a female ancestor who survived a shipwreck to land on these shores in the 19th Century.

Sleep Problems in Older Adults

Want to know more? AHA member Alan Dinsmore suggests this link might be of use to AHA members who want to know more about sleep research and aging.

Go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and in the search line enter: **Sleep and Sleep Disorders in the Older Adult**.

This is an informative 52-minute presentation by Jose S. Laredo, MD, University of California San Diego, in an easy-to-understand presentation. Dr. Laredo reviews the problems we encounter with difficulty sleeping as we age, the disorders that may affect sleep and the ways to break unhealthy habits or treat disorders.

Are you interested in starting up a Travel Group? Ready to “spread your wings”? It could be fun to plan a trip with your AHA friends. Send ideas and suggestions to Susanne O'Neill, oneillsn@msn.com.



Unwanted or Expired Drug Disposal

by Helen Desfosses

There are many safe ways to dispose of unwanted or expired prescription drugs, but I was never quite sure what they were. The Food & Drug Administration website says that you can do it yourself by taking the pills out of their original containers, "mixing them with an undesirable, inedible substance like kitty litter or used coffee grounds, placing them uncrushed in a sealable bag or container, and then disposing of them in a secured trash can."

Or, if determining what a "secured trash can" is sounds too involved, you can wait until your community has a Prescription Drug Take Back Day. These are held twice a year in accordance with Drug Enforcement Agency national take back events, and the next one is April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at drop-off sites staffed by the Alexandria Police Department.

Finally, if you don't want to wait that long, you can Google "Disposing of Unused and Expired Medication Safely." A list of participating community facilities and businesses will pop up that have permanent medication drop boxes. In Alexandria, according to the FDA, this list includes Inova Alexandria Hospital Visitor's Center Lobby, the Alexandria Police Department Headquarters on Wheeler Avenue, and the Neighborhood Pharmacy of Del Ray, located at 2204 Mt. Vernon Avenue in Alexandria.

AHA Board Notes

At its February meeting, the AHA Board elected board member Sherry de Vries to the position of Secretary effective March 1. Sherry brings experience in the military, banking and FAA, along with volunteer work in the community. Pam Nelson said, "I am pleased that Sherry will be joining the Executive Committee sharing her expertise in this important role for AHA."

Did you know that ...

... **AHA** offers notary services? AHA treasurer extraordinaire Kathie Fricke is a notary, and she is happy to volunteer this valuable service to AHA members as a convenient, free service. She even does house calls. The next time you need the services of a notary, simply call the AHA office.

Please welcome new members:

- Donna and Jeff Gathers - Associate members
 - Susan McGrath - full member
-



Seen on a sign at the Indian Hills, Colorado, community center.

Board of Directors

Pamela Nelson, Chair	Victoria Almquist, Vice Chair
Sherry de Vries, Secretary	Kathie Fricke, Treasurer
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John Veldhuis

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IN THIS ISSUE

- P. 1 Member survey*
- P. 1 Learn before we act*
- P. 2 March calendar*
- P. 2 Program notes*
- P. 3 In Memoriam*
- P. 4 What's Up*
- P. 4 Library program*
- P. 4 Sleep problems*
- P. 4 Travel group*
- P. 5 Expired drugs*
- P. 5 Board Notes*