

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

## AHA Explores Fitness Programs: Stay Fit to Avoid those Falls!

By Cele Garrett, Executive Director

On February 21, AHA was pleased to join forces with Senior Services of Alexandria and the Northern VA Falls Prevention (NVFPA) to present the documentary *Saving Claire* and then hear from a panel of speakers on the dangers—and the prevalence—of falls in older adults. (See photos below.) We heard about ways to make our homes safer by removing fall hazards and incorporating safety items. To truly reduce our chances of taking a life-altering fall, however, we must give attention to improving our balance and our strength.

Fortunately, there are many options for doing this—and they need not be costly. NVFPA offers several balance classes, including Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) and Matter of Balance. These classes are free of charge. Visit [NOVAFallsPrevention.com](http://NOVAFallsPrevention.com) to learn more.

Remember that AHA has an ongoing partnership with **Vitality Society™**, an online fitness and enrichment program with numerous offerings each week: Pilates, balance and dance therapy, hula hooping, playful posture, Tai Chi and many other special events. AHA members get a reduced rate on the monthly fee—and Vitality Society often offers a free one-month trial. I'm a member of VS myself, as are several AHA members. ([vitality-society.com](http://vitality-society.com))

AHA is gauging members' interest for a **new chair yoga class**. We've chosen the practitioner and we have some ideas for a space to hold the classes. Contact the AHA office if you're interested in a free demo class in the coming month.

And, another new idea to check out: AHA is exploring a partnership with an **online customized fitness program called Vivo**. Vivo is a live, online and interactive small group fitness program committed to helping individuals reverse age-related muscle loss and get stronger. The program is created exclusively for older adults; their trainers understand that many seniors are already experiencing type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, Parkinson's and other age-related maladies. Vivo's program includes a one-on-one assessment and exercise plan. Vivo has scheduled a free demo class for AHA members on Wednesday, March 20 at 12noon. Vivo's head trainer will lead us through some sample exercises, explain the foundation of Vivo's program, and hold a question-and-answer session at the end. The core fitness tool used for these classes is exercise bands. (If you've ever gone through physical therapy, you are familiar with them!) Join me for the demo class by registering through AHA Hub or by email ([aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org)) or by phone (703-231-0824). (**TeamVivo.com**)



**Left:** A large turnout for viewing *Saving Claire* and panelist discussion of concerns, facts and tips about the dangers of falls.

**Right:** Suzy Coffey of SuzyFit demonstrating a strength and balance exercise to help prevent falls. Sara Pappa, moderator, left in the photo, is with Marymount University's NVFPA.

## March 2024 Calendar

Please note that the programs in this calendar may be scheduled via Zoom or in person. 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. In-person events are open to those who are fully vaccinated.

Wednesday, March 6	<b>StrongerMemory series begins</b> (NOTE: every Wednesday until May 22. This program requires 10 attendees.)	3-4pm
Friday, March 8	<b>Dementia Friendly Alexandria Information Session</b> – via Zoom. See more details on page 3.	10am
Saturday, March 9	<b>AHA Happy Hour at The View</b> in the Alexandria House, 400 Madison Street.	5-7pm
Monday, March 11	<b>Grief Support: A Journey of Many Roads</b> at AHA office conference room.	3pm
Tuesday, March 12	<b>Ladies' Night Out</b> at Aldo's, located at 2850 Eisenhower Avenue. No limit.	5pm
Wednesday, March 13	<b>Movie Group</b> – discussion of <i>The Good Shepherd</i> and <i>Past Lives</i> . – via Zoom.	4-5pm
Wednesday, March 20	<b>Vivo Online Customized Fitness Program Demo</b> – via Zoom.	12 noon - 1pm
Wednesday, March 20	<b>Dine Around at RT's</b> , located at 3804 Mount Vernon Ave. Limit of 8.	6pm
Thursday, March 21	<b>Tech Thursday: "How to Identify Email Scams and What to do if You Fall for One"</b> at AHA office, 3139 Mount Vernon Avenue. Limit of 10.	1-2pm
Thursday, March 21	<b>Men's Night Out</b> at Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Avenue. No limit.	5-6:30pm
Monday, March 25	<b>Readers Theater</b> with Steve Nelson – via Zoom.	2pm
Tuesday, March 26	<b>Coffee and Conversation</b> at Table Talk Restaurant, at 1623 Duke Street. Limit of 12.	10-11:30 am
Tuesday, March 26	<b>Interview with Councilman John Chapman</b> with Howard Weiss – via Zoom.	4-5pm
Wednesday, March 27	<b>"A Showcase for Women Innovators"</b> with guest speaker Jane Plitt, founder of National Center of Women Innovators – via Zoom.	10-11am
Thursday, March 28	<b>Lunch Around</b> at The Loft at Lena's - Havana 151, located at 401 East Braddock Road. Limit of 10.	12 noon

## Program Notes

**Wednesday, March 13** **Movie Group** will discuss the following films: *The Good Shepherd* (2007), available on Netflix: A spy movie where a literary scholar becomes a member of the exclusive secret society, Skull and Bones, while a student at Yale. He is recruited for the newly formed OSS by President Roosevelt's intelligence adviser. This is a consistently intelligent and engrossing movie about the creation of a self-perpetuating international espionage community exercising ruthless power in the belief that they are disinterestedly working for the good of the nation. *Past Lives* (2023), available on Amazon Prime: Nora and Hae Sung, two deeply connected childhood friends, are wrest apart after Nora's family emigrates from South Korea. Decades later, they are reunited for one fateful week as they confront destiny, love and the choices that make a life. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture 2024.

**Friday, March 8** **Dementia Friendly Alexandria.** Jane King and Ray Biegun (Dementia Champions as well as AHA members) will lead us through this interactive session.

**Thursday, March 21** **Tech Thursday** with Chris Miller will conduct another session on email scams, how to avoid them and how to fix it if you fall for it.

**Wednesday, March 27** **A Showcase for Women Innovators.** Who knew that WiFi, GPS, rocket fuel, electric heaters, car signals, mechanical dishwashers, and duct tape are some of the many examples of innovations created by women! But does anyone know who these accomplished women were? Over the course of her career advocating for women's equality (Executive Director of NOW, author, business owner), Jane Plitt began to realize that our country needed someplace to showcase women innovators in all fields to change society's perceptions and inspire young girls.

To meet that need, Jane founded the National Center of Women's Innovations (NCWI). This Alexandria-based organization brings focus to the forgotten accomplishments of women innovators and use those accomplishments to inspire the next generation. (WomenInnovations.org)



## AHA Interview with Councilman John Taylor Chapman

Continuing with AHA's recent one-on-one discussions with local political leaders, this month's special guest will be Alexandria City Councilman John Taylor Chapman on Tuesday, March 26 at 4pm.

As a fourth-term member of the City Council, Chapman currently serves on the Northern VA Regional Commission, the Alexandria Sister Cities Committee, the City/School Subcommittee, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP), the Gang Prevention Task Force, and numerous additional committees.

Prior to his election to City Council, Chapman served on many boards and community groups, including the Taylor Run Citizens' Association, the Volunteer Alexandria BoD, and the First Night Alexandria BoD. He is a former president of the Alexandria branch of the NAACP. Chapman is a graduate of Saint Olaf College, the Minority Political Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia.

He currently works for Fairfax County Public Schools and is the founder of the award-winning Manumission Tour Company, which tells the stories of African Americans in early Alexandria through tours and presentations. To register: [aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org); 703-231-0824.

## Become Dementia Friendly By Cele Garrett

Dementia Friendly America is a national network of communities working to ensure that their communities are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers. The City of Alexandria qualified for and joined this initiative in 2019. AHA serves on the Dementia Friendly Alexandria action team.

The core tool is a one-hour education session led by trained Dementia Champions. Jane King and Ray Biegun (Dementia Champions as well as AHA members) will lead us through this Zoom session on **Friday, March 8, 10-11am**. They will address normal aging versus dementia, the typical progression of dementia, conversation tips for communicating with a person who has dementia and more. Participants will receive a Dementia Friend certificate upon completion.

Nearly everyone has a family member or friend with dementia so this session is relevant for all of us. Space is limited and registration is required: [aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org). Once registered, you will receive a confirmation with the Zoom link.

## It's **BAAACK!** By Bob Eiffert

As many of you may have experienced, COVID and other respiratory illnesses are back.

They never went away, but we are in the midst of another uptick and many of us have been affected. It is still a good idea to wear a mask in public, especially at large gatherings, and hand washing is always critical. It is up to us to protect ourselves and each other!

A previous AHA newsletter noted that anyone can request four free at-home COVID tests from the CDC through the U.S. Post office. There is another free resource that is available in Alexandria: The Alexandria Health Department is distributing free at-home COVID tests through Alexandria public libraries. Each test kit includes two tests, and anyone can get two test kits (i.e. four total tests) simply by asking at the main desk of any of our four Alexandria city public library branches. No identification is required. Because there is no record-keeping, you can obtain the test kits at any time without restrictions. If you have priced test kits at a store, you know they range in price from \$15 to \$25 for a box of two.

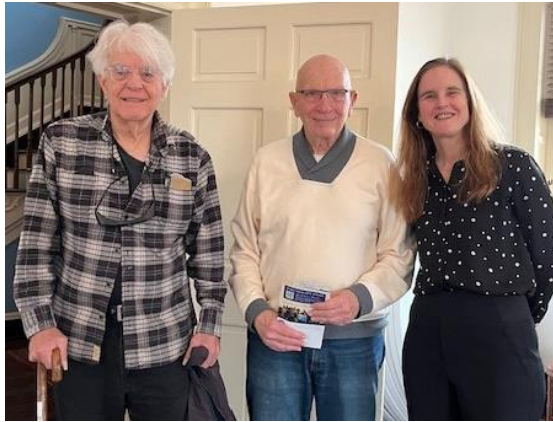
This is a great public service of our Health Department, so please take advantage of it.

## Elancé at West End to Hold an Open House By Cele Garrett

One of AHA's 2024 corporate sponsors is Elancé. They are holding an open house at their West End property on Tuesday, March 5, 2-4pm. (This is the property formerly known as Brandywine Living.) Guests will get a tour of the penthouse level and private suites. You may not be looking to move in the immediate future, but it's not a bad idea to check out options before you may need additional services. If you are a full AHA member, you are welcome to call AHA to arrange for a ride to the event and back.



## What's Up with AHA Members



**Doug Land and Alan Dinsmore** met and spoke with Dr. Grace Elizabeth Hale, Virginia Commonwealth University professor of American Studies and History and author of "In the Pines: A Lie, a Reckoning." Dr. Hale's lecture at the Lyceum was sponsored by the Alexandria Historical Society. This is the true story of a murder in Prentiss, Mississippi when a Black man was accused of rape. He was executed in an "underground lynching," a cover-up murder that had become commonplace after President Truman's 1946 Civil Rights Commission cracked down on public lynchings.

Watch for more opportunities for AHA members to attend in person or Zoom on Alexandria and Virginia history.



**Amelia**, the Great Dane, the namesake for Amelia Air, enjoying a ride in comfort. **Dean Heistad**, son of AHA member **Sandy Heistad**, told the story of his nonprofit, Amelia Air, on a Zoom program recently and how the organization started and continues to transfer dogs, cats, and other pets from kill shelters to those in more urban areas where these animals can be adopted. Dean, an avid flyer, along with co-founder, Petra Janney conduct several flights a month saving hundreds of pets every year. Read more at [AmeliaAir.org](http://AmeliaAir.org).

## Wheelchair Transfer

By Roberta McGregor

If you are a volunteer, you might be interested in viewing two YouTube videos on transporting members who are wheelchair users. The videos are succinct but include valuable information on the safe manner to transport members and wheelchairs, and to prevent your physical injury. Google: "Wheelchair Transfer" or "Loading a Wheelchair into a Car."

## Managing the Hospital Stay

By Alan Dinsmore

AHA members had the benefit of a presentation by Colleen Duewel of Lionheart Eldercare and Counseling. Colleen's presentation concentrated on the hospital stay from emergency room processing and the information needed if that process results in hospital admission. Here are a few tips:

- Always carry or have access to your complete set of prescription drugs.
- Know that the hospital doctor staff often will not include your own personal physician. If possible, determine hospitals where your physician has admitting privileges.
- Have personal items nearby such as hearing aid batteries, cell phone and charger, glasses and other devices you rely on to help you read and understand.
- Unless this is a planned procedure, it is always more effective to be transported by Emergency Medical Systems. EMS will ensure that the hospital knows you are coming and will be ready to admit you if necessary. It's never a good idea to drive yourself and sit in the emergency waiting room until you get called into the ER treatment area.
- Be prepared for your departure and related procedures such as the discharge plan.
- Know that you can disagree with this plan if you feel it is not safe.

Hospital discharge is a topic on its own. We hope to cover this in another program.



## COVID and Paxlovid

By AHA member Barbara Rosenfeld

I recently had to get a prescription for Paxlovid (yes, COVID finally caught up with me!) When my son went to pick it up from CVS, I had a \$200 copay. The Federal government is no longer providing it free as of the end of last year.

But I had read in Dr. Leana Wen's column in the *Washington Post* that Medicare recipients could get reimbursed by Pfizer. I had to jump through a few hoops but eventually got a voucher from Pfizer online and took it to CVS, which refunded my \$200. One tip: be sure to keep your CVS receipt.

The website to apply for reimbursement is [PaxcessPatientPortal.com](https://www.paxcess.com).

I had a good experience with Paxlovid. My case was mild, and I was better in a few days.

**NOTE:** Since this article was submitted, Dr. Leana Wen provided additional information in her *Washington Post* column that clarifies a new procedure. Some qualifiers: You must be a **Medicare, Medicaid or uninsured patient with a doctor's prescription** to sign up for Pfizer's Paxcess program to get a voucher for Paxlovid. To sign up go to [Paxlovid.iassist.com](https://www.paxlovid.iassist.com) or call 877-219-7225.

## Are you Eligible for the Virginia Livable Home Credit?

By AHA Member Brenda Bloch-Young

As of January 1, 2023, the allowable tax credit each taxpayer may claim on their Virginia income tax return has increased to \$6,500. The purchase of a newly constructed residence meeting accessibility/visibility features qualifies as well as retrofitting your existing residence. For renovations made to your existing residence the credit is 50% of the total amount expended, but not to exceed \$6,500.

Renovations eligible are:

- Accessible route to a zero-step entrance into the residence
- Zero-step entrance into the residence
- Doors with at least 32 inches of clear width
- Hallways and passages with at least 36 inches of clear width
- Accessible light switches, electrical outlets and environmental controls
- Accessible bathroom
- Accessible and useful kitchen facilities
- Chair Lifts Elevators
- Sensory Modifications

For more information: <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/lhtc>

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## Thinking about StrongerMemory?

from Rob Liebreich, Founder of StrongerMemory at Goodwin Living

Soon after we introduced StrongerMemory at Goodwin Living campuses, I sat down for lunch with a group of residents. During lunch, one resident shared that she heard good things about the program, though she felt confident in her brain health and was not going to do the program.

She went on to share that since learning about the power of reading aloud, she started to read her religious scriptures aloud instead of silently, and she remarked on how improved her focus had become.

Want to use our StrongerMemory program? Great! Want to just make reading aloud a part of your daily habit? Also great! If we all shift our daily habits even a little bit, we can make a HUGE impact on our brain health!

**Editor's Note:** Join AHA's StrongerMemory series starting on March 6 with leader Roberta McGregor, [rmcgregor13@comcast.net](mailto:rmcgregor13@comcast.net). Sign up on AHA Hub, by email ([aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:aha@AtHomeInAlexandria.org)) or by phone (703-231-0824).



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SPECIAL DAYS IN MARCH

**MARCH 10 RAMADAN BEGINS**  
**MARCH 10 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS**  
**MARCH 17 ST PATRICK'S DAY**  
**MARCH 19 SPRING BEGINS**  
**MARCH 31 EASTER**

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