



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Number 11

November 2025

A Community of Members Age 55+ Helping One Another to Lead Safe, Active, and Connected Lives

## AHA YEAR-END CAMPAIGN

Cele Garrett, AHA Executive Director

Within the next week, you'll receive a letter in the mail from AHA member Klaus Bright, on behalf of AHA. We all get lots of letters and emails as the year draws to a close—but I fervently hope you will open that letter, read Klaus's personal story and consider a special year-end contribution to AHA. AHA spends most of our time and energy on services and programs to meet our members' needs. But a few times each year—now being one of those times—it's important for us to convey that AHA is a nonprofit organization that cannot exist without support from the community we serve. We reach out to many people during this campaign—and you're hearing from us a little earlier in the hope that Klaus's letter doesn't get lost "in the shuffle."

I hope you believe that supporting AHA is an investment worth making. Loneliness and isolation among older adults continues to be a growing problem—and a village like AHA is here to provide social engagement and a compassionate helping hand. The health care industry is experiencing rising costs and record shortages in the labor market. Those who study these problems know that community-based groups like AHA are a low-cost way to help older adults achieve healthier outcomes.

But "low cost" doesn't mean "no cost." There are real expenses associated with running a professional nonprofit—and, despite all we do to stretch every dollar in our AHA budget, those costs only increase over time. As the holiday season approaches, I thank you in advance for counting AHA among the organizations you will support.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH UPDATE

by Alan Dinsmore, AHA Board Chair

Last month, we shared with you the news that Cele Garrett is moving on from the executive director position here at AHA. While replacing Cele won't be easy, we have begun the process in earnest. I promised to keep you up to date on our progress.

As the Chair of the AHA Board, I have appointed an Executive Director Search Committee. AHA Board Members Victoria Almquist, Ray Biegun, and Karen Streich along with AHA Volunteer Christena Nielsen have all agreed to join me on this committee. We have had an impressive response to the announcement of the search. We will soon begin the process of sorting qualified candidates and plan to have the interviews underway within the next few weeks. Our goal is to recommend a candidate to the full AHA Board by the end of November so that the board can give its approval at its December board meeting.

As always, Cele and the AHA team of Tegan Cohen and Veronica Ferris have been incredibly supportive of the work of the committee. We appreciate their efforts to keep us organized and on task in this important work. Thanks, team!

## November 2025 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 join Zoom.

Tuesdays, November 4, 11, 18, 25	<b>Weekly Scrabble</b> at the home of Jeff and Donna Gathers. Limit of 3.	1:30pm
Tuesday, November 11	<b>Ladies' Night Out</b> at Spice Kraft Indian Bistro, 2607 Mt Vernon Ave. Limit of 10.	5-7pm
Wednesday, November 12	<b>Movie Group</b> This month's picks are: <i>Flow</i> (2024) and <i>Widow Clicquot</i> (2023).	4pm
Wednesday, November 12	<b>Dine Around</b> at Los Toltecos, 4111 Duke St. Limit of 8.	6-8pm
Friday, November 14	<b>AHA Happy Hour</b> at the home of Teddy McBay. Limit of 30. Please note that Happy Hour will be on <u>Friday</u> this month.	5-7pm
Monday, November 17	<b>Lively Arts Discussion</b> at the home of Marie Cataffo (address provided on registration). Limit of 10.	10am
Tuesdays, November 18 and 25	<b>AHA Yoga</b> at The View in Alexandria House. Spaces may be limited. *Mat Yoga 9:30-10:30; Chair Yoga 11am-12 noon.	9:30am - 12pm*
Wednesday, November 19	<b>Third Wednesday Book Club</b> This month's book is <i>The Loneliness of Sonia and Sonny</i> by Kieran Desai. On Zoom.	7pm
Thursday, November 20	<b>Tech Thursday</b> Understanding the Apple, Google, and Microsoft clouds. AHA office. Limit of 10.	1pm
Thursday, November 20	<b>Men's Night Out</b> at Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Ave. No limit.	5-6:30pm
Monday, November 24	<b>Morning Brew</b> at Paris Baguette, 4616 Kenmore Ave. <b>No limit.</b>	10am
Thursday, November 27	<b>Thanksgiving Lunch</b> at Laporta's, 1600 Duke St. Limit of 6.	11am

### TO REGISTER

Please call or email Veronica Ferris at [AHA@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:AHA@AtHomeInAlexandria.org) or at (703) 231-0824

### AHA'S COVID GUIDELINES

AHA no longer requires, but **highly recommends**, COVID vaccines for members attending in-person events. If you don't feel well, please test prior to attending AHA events.

## SPECIAL EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

### America's Hidden Helpers

As of 2017, there were 20+ million veterans in the U.S., many with service-connected conditions requiring ongoing care. About 5.5 million hidden helpers, many of whom are young people, provide tireless, unpaid support to help veterans live richer, fuller lives.

Join Leah Hellwege from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, to learn how the Hidden Helpers Coalition works to recognize and support caregiver youth. Sara Rotenberry will share her personal experience growing up in a caregiving home. **Wednesday, November 5, 2-3pm** at Community Center Lounge at Montebello Condos, 5905 Mt. Eagle Dr. Co-sponsored by Mount Vernon at Home and Synergy HomeCare.

### Medical Advocacy Panel Discussion

This presentation will address the importance of having a plan in place in the event of a hospital stay-- whether that stay is a planned surgery or an unexpected event. This team of panelists will talk through what you can expect from a hospital stay and the discharge plan. You'll also learn more about resources available to you if you do not have an advocate (family member or otherwise) in place. This in-person presentation will take place at Brightview Senior Living, 6509 Telegraph Rd, Alexandria on **Thursday, November 13, 10-11:30am**.

### RAFT Services and Caregiver Self-Care and Resilience Training

Join the RAFT program for an interactive workshop on caregiver self-care and resilience. We know that family caregivers often experience high rates of stress, which can take a toll on both their physical and mental health. This workshop will be a time for caregivers to discuss ways to integrate self-care techniques into everyday life. **Wednesday, November 19, 11am-noon, on Zoom**.

## CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING WITH AHA AT LAPORTA'S



Celebrate Thanksgiving with other AHA members by sharing lunch at [Laporta's Restaurant](#). Laporta's is offering a prix fixe traditional Thanksgiving meal. The price is \$55.99.

In addition to a first course of soup or salad, Laporta's will be serving a traditional Thanksgiving feast of organic free-range turkey with walnut dressing, giblet gravy, candied sweet potato, mashed potato, green bean, creamed onions and peas, and relish tray. Of course, their in-house desserts will also be served. Register on the Hub or to the office.

## CHOOSING THE BEST MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM

Recently, AHA Tech volunteer Chris Miller led a discussion about medical alert systems. It was a lively discussion with AHA members sharing their experiences with different solutions.

We know that many of our members want to have safeguards in place in case something happens. For those who weren't able to attend, Chris has shared an article from MedicalAlertBuyersGuide.org. This independent website is dedicated to testing medical alert systems and other products to help seniors. The article explains the various options – from in-home systems to mobile systems to smartwatches.

<https://www.medicalalertbuyersguide.org/articles/how-to-choose-the-best-medical-alert-system/>

## MEDICARE'S 3-DAY RULE

We all know how challenging it is to navigate Medicare coverage. Understanding the rules can have a big impact on your out-of-pocket costs.

The rules governing Medicare coverage for stays in skilled nursing facilities are especially challenging. The "Medicare 3-day rule" outlines the strict requirements for when Medicare will cover these stays. The rule requires beneficiaries have a medically necessary inpatient hospital stay that lasts at least three consecutive days before Medicare Part A will cover any subsequent care in a skilled nursing facility. Huh?!? It is all so confusing! AHA Member Julie Gentry read a recent report from CBS News that she felt helped her better understand the issue and asked that we share the article with all of you.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/what-is-the-medicare-3-day-rule-how-does-it-impact-coverage/>

Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) counselors can also help you navigate coverage options. VICAP counselors recently presented to AHA. Please reach out if you would like a copy of the slides. VICAP's contact information: VICAP@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-5712. Their office is located at 4850 Mark Center Drive, 9th floor. Information is also available at Medicare's official government website, [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov), and the Social Security Administration website.

## DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!



The general election is upon us. On November 4, we will elect Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, House of Delegates, Commonwealth's Attorney and Sheriff. Early in-person voting comes to an end as of today, November 1. But you can still vote in person on election day. For more information, please call 703-746-4050 or visit [alexandriava.gov/elections](https://alexandriava.gov/elections).

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS



Daylight saving time ends Sunday, November 2, 2025. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday night before you go to bed. With the change, it will get darker earlier in the evening across Virginia and the entire U.S.

## SOLO AHAER GROUP UPDATE

The Solo AHAer Group is up and running! This group will continue to meet monthly and will continue to evolve to best meet the participants' needs and interests. Please reach out to the office if you would like to join the Solo AHAer group.

## AHA T-SHIRTS COMING SOON!



We've heard from members and volunteers alike that it would be nice to have an AHA t-shirt. T-shirts are a great way to spark conversations about what AHA does. T-shirts also help volunteers be more visible to members when they pick them up.

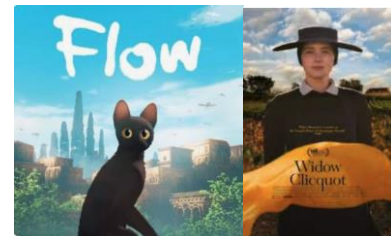
Now is your chance to weigh in on the design and to reserve your t-shirt! We will be making a custom order, and will only order shirts for people who indicate they are interested. Please reach out to the office with your thoughts and your T-shirt size.

## AHA ZOOM MOVIE GROUP

Under AHA Member Barbara Brennan's leadership, the AHA Zoom Movie Group is going strong. The next Zoom meeting of the group is November 12 at 4:00 p.m. AHA will send the Zoom link after you have registered for the program. The two movies for the November discussion are:

***Flow*** (Amazon Prime). Winner of the Best Animated Feature at the 2025 Academy Awards, this Latvian adventure film features no dialogue and follows a cat trying to survive along with other animals in a seemingly post-apocalyptic world as the water level dramatically rises.

***The Widow Clicquot*** (Netflix). In this period drama, Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin Clicquot assumes the reins of the fledgling wine business that she and her recently deceased husband had nurtured together. Steering the company through dizzying political and financial reversals, she defies her critics and revolutionizes the champagne industry to become one of the world's first great businesswomen.



### Board of Directors

Alan Dinsmore, Chair	Victoria Almquist, Vice Chair
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Ruth Arnold	Jenny Elrod
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**Executive Director**  
Cele Garrett

**Marketing and Membership Manager**  
Veronica Ferris

**Operations and Member Services Manager**  
Tegan Cohen

**Editor:** M. Laurie Cammisa

### Advisory Council

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Emie Lehmann	Mitch Opalski
Vicki Vasques	

## CONTACT US

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## SPECIAL DAYS IN NOVEMBER

*November 2* Day Light Savings Time Ends

*November 4* Election Day

*November 11* Veterans Day

*November 27* Thanksgiving

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### **Welcome New Volunteers**

Madeline Taylor, Stacy Zaeh, Jamie French,  
Susan Falt, Gary Hacker

AHA Offices will be closed  
Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28  
for Thanksgiving.