

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

## SHARING A BIT OF NEWS

by Cele Garrett, AHA executive director

As October begins, the weather changes, the leaves change—and there is change afoot for me as well. After a wonderful 12+ years with AHA, I have made the decision to step away from my role here. I use the words “step away” purposefully, as I could never truly “leave” AHA. I hold dear the friends I’ve made within this special community we’ve all built together.

I will remain an AHA member and volunteer, but I believe it’s always good to have new and different energy in an organization. This feels like the right time to allow someone else to take the reins.

AHA’s board of directors has begun its search for the next executive director—and they are approaching this process in a thoughtful way. I will remain until at least the end of this calendar year to ensure a smooth transition with my successor. We will keep you posted along the way.

Meanwhile, I’m still here for now and would love to hear from you with any thoughts or suggestions you might have as AHA approaches its 15-year anniversary in six months. (It’s sure gone by quickly!)

## CHANGE IS BITTERSWEET

by Alan Dinsmore, AHA Board chair

There is a particular kind of bittersweetness that accompanies a moment like this.

As the Chair of the Board of AHA, I am accepting Cele’s desire for change with both deep sadness and immense gratitude. I have never known AHA without Cele. There isn’t a member or volunteer – including me – that Cele has not touched with warmth and compassion. She’s also a great leader. She has increased our members and volunteers and expanded our programs and services offered. She has built a strong team of committed and accomplished staff that do extraordinary work in supporting our members and volunteers.

While we will miss her steady hand and unwavering commitment, we also celebrate her next chapter. She leaves us with a strong, stable foundation which guarantees our success in the future.

## October 2025 Calendar

Note: Happy Hour is on hiatus in October.

All Tuesdays in October	<b>Weekly Scrabble</b> at the home of Jeff and Donna Gathers. Limit of 3.	1:30pm
All Tuesdays in October	<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, October 8	<b>Movie Group</b> This month's picks are: <i>The Penguin Lessons</i> (2024) and <i>Of Mice and Men</i> (1992).	4pm
Tuesday, October 14	<b>Ladies' Night Out</b> at Josephine's, 109 S St Asaph St.	5-7pm
Wednesday, October 15	<b>Dine Around</b> at Vermillion, 1120 King St. Limit of 8.	6-8pm
Wednesday, October 15	<b>Third Wednesday Book Club</b> this month's book is <i>The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History, from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement</i> by Sharon McMahon. On Zoom.	7pm
Thursday, October 16	<b>Men's Night Out</b> at Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Ave.	5-6:30pm
Saturday, October 18	<b>Solo AHAer Kick Off</b> at the home of Virginia Martin. Limit of 40. Details on page 3.	5-7pm
Thursday, October 23	<b>Lunch Around</b> at Home Grown Alexandria, located at 1600 King St, Alexandria, VA 22314. Limit of 12.	12 noon
Thursday, October 23	<b>Tech Thursday</b> New Phones and Computers: How to Decide Which Device is Right for You. AHA office. Limit of 10.	1pm
Monday, October 27	<b>Lively Arts Discussion</b> at St. Elmo's Coffee Pub - Old Town North, 529 Montgomery St. Limit of 8.	9:30am
Monday, October 27	<b>Morning Brew</b> at Panera, 3201 Duke St.	10am

## OCTOBER SPECIAL EVENTS

### Solo AHAer Kickoff!

AHA is launching a Solo AHAer group for those who are solo aging and are interested in spending time with other "solo" folks. The kickoff event will be a wine and cheese night on Saturday, October 18 from 5-7pm at the home of Virginia Martin. This will be a fun way to meet people and discuss the vision for the Solo AHAer group, so bring your ideas! Bring your beverage of choice; Virginia will supply the cheese. Register to the AHA office.

### Medicare Open Enrollment

During the annual open enrollment period (October 15 to December 7), you have a chance to review your Medicare coverage, compare plans, and make changes that could save you money and improve your benefits.

Join AHA and counselors from the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) on Monday, October 20 at 1pm on Zoom to learn more about: Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug plans; Maximizing your benefits and saving money; Avoiding common schemes during Open Enrollment.

### Mayor Alyia Gaskins Speaking

The Porto Vecchio Condominium is inviting AHA members to join an event with Alexandria Mayor Alyia Gaskins. The event is on Thursday, October 23 at 7:30pm.

The Mayor will talk about city projects that are in development or before the City Council and other committees. Please submit questions to Kathy Ansell, [jayansell@comcast.net](mailto:jayansell@comcast.net), by October 15. RSVP to AHA if you would like to attend, as space is limited.

## LEARN ABOUT HIDDEN HELPERS

Join Mount Vernon at Home, At Home in Alexandria, and SYNERGY Home Care for a program about the Hidden Helpers Coalition established by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

Hidden helpers are children, teens, and young adults who are helping care for wounded, ill, or injured service members or veterans. The Hidden Helpers Coalition (HHC) is a national alliance seeking to support these youth.

Please join us in the Montebello Community Center lounge (5900 Mount Eagle Dr., Alexandria) on Wednesday, November 5 from 2-3pm to learn more about the issue and how you can get involved. Light refreshments will be served.

## IN MEMORIAM

AHA Member and decorated combat veteran **David Benjamin (Ben) Browning, Jr.** passed away in August. Ben will be remembered as a man of integrity, character and graciousness. He was a delightful conversationalist who enriched the lives of all he knew through his advice, humor and generosity.

In the August newsletter, we reported that **Audrey Faden**, spouse of AHA member Bob Faden, had passed away in July. A master gardener, Audrey helped design, install and maintain the Simpson Park Garden, for almost 30 years. A plaque in her honor was installed in the garden in September.



# COVID ALERTS, VACCINES AND TESTING

by Veronica Ferris, marketing and membership manager

As we enter the fall, COVID continues to spread, and the rules continue to change. Make sure to check for updates regularly.

**My COVID test has expired. Should I use it?** If you are feeling under the weather, you should consider testing. Do NOT use an expired test. Extended expiration dates are no longer in effect, as there is not currently an emergency use authorization. Free tests are available at the Alexandria Health Department or libraries. For information about when to test, visit [www.alexandriava.gov/COVIDTesting](http://www.alexandriava.gov/COVIDTesting).

**I want to get a vaccine. Do I need a prescription in Virginia?** You do NOT need a prescription if you are 65+ or 18–64 with at least [one underlying condition](#). All others MUST get a prescription.

**Will insurance cover the cost of the vaccine?** It is best to check with your insurance company.

**Where can I get up-to-date information about the vaccine?**

- Receive periodic updates from the City of Alexandria via text message. Simply text ALEXCOVID19 to 888777 to receive these updates.
- Visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/covid-19-vaccine-faqs/>

## TAX LAW ROUNDUP

by Brenda Bloch-Young, AHA member

The 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) impacts seniors by:

**Creating a temporary Social Security tax deduction.** Federal tax on your tax Social Security depends on your income. OBBBA creates a temporary, additional deduction to reduce overall taxable income for eligible seniors. This deduction is for tax years 2025 through 2028 only. Seniors 65+ can claim an additional \$6,000 deduction (or \$12,000 for married couples filing jointly) that may reduce or eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits. The deduction is gradually reduced if your income exceeds \$75,000 (or \$150,000 for married couples).

**Increasing state and local tax (SALT) deductions.** Taxpayers earning less than \$500,000 will benefit from the increased cap for SALT deductions. The cap increases from \$10,000 to \$40,000. Taxpayers must itemize their deductions to benefit.

**Keeping lower tax rates.** The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) lowered personal income tax brackets for tax years 2018-2025. OBBBA makes these cuts permanent.

**Keeping Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs).** QCDs may be the most beneficial tax planning strategy for seniors. Seniors over the age of 73 must take the Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from traditional IRAs to avoid tax penalties by December 31. All seniors over 70.5 years of age can use their RMDs to make QCDs directly to qualified charities they support. Taxpayers can reduce taxable income and help satisfy RMD requirements at the same time.

As always, we recommend that you consult with your tax advisor.

# NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION

The general election on November 4 will elect Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, House of Delegates, Commonwealth’s Attorney and Sheriff. You can vote in three ways: in person on election day, early in person, or by using a mail-in ballot. For more information on all three options, please call 703-746-4050 or visit [alexandriava.gov/elections](http://alexandriava.gov/elections) or [vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation](http://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation).

## DO YOU NEED SOMETHING FIXED??

You can bring items from home that are broken, torn or not quite working correctly to the Fixit Clinic on October 25. This free Community Repair Event will be held at the Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library from 11am-2pm. Community volunteers do the repairs. [www.AlexLibraryVa.org/event/14435338](http://www.AlexLibraryVa.org/event/14435338)

# AHA MEMBERS OUT AND ABOUT



Clockwise from top left: AHA Member Jessi MacLeod visiting Arrowsic, Maine, where she lived for 18 years; members enjoying a night out at the Signature Theater watching a performance of “Play On!”; Brenda Bloch-Young in Mexico City with her daughter and friends visiting from Korea; and The Lively Arts Discussion Group meeting in September.

Please send pictures from your recent adventures to newsletter editor Laurie Cammisa at [Laurie@The-Red-Binder.com](mailto:Laurie@The-Red-Binder.com) or to Veronica Ferris at [Veronica@AtHomeInAlexandria.org](mailto:Veronica@AtHomeInAlexandria.org).

### Board of Directors

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Cecile (Cele) Garrett

**Marketing and Membership Manager**  
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## CELEBRATING OUR LIVING LEGENDS

Three extraordinary individuals with connections to AHA will be honored as 2025 Living Legends in Alexandria: AHA Member Kitty Porterfield; Senior Services of Alexandria Executive Director Mary Lee Anderson; and Gerald File, partner of AHA Member Sharon “Teddy” McBay. Celebrate these individuals on November 12 from 6-9pm. at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.



— AT HOME IN —  
**ALEXANDRIA**

3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22305

## SPECIAL DAYS IN OCTOBER

October 1	Yom Kippur
October 13	Indigenous Peoples' Day AHA Office Closed
October 20	Diwali
October 31	Halloween

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## Welcome New Members

Linda Couture, Barbara Seaman  
Christel and David Ribble, Martha E. Garcia

## Welcome New Volunteers

Kathy Ochoa, Thomas Traub,  
Natalie Lickfield, Jill Britton

## CONTACT US

### At Home in Alexandria

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