

Silver Streak

Vol. 9 No. 3

Senior Services of Alexandria

Fall 2008

Message from the Executive Director



We are proud of our working relationship with our transportation partners who ensure that our clients arrive safely to their destinations every day. In conjunction with the City of Alexandria, SSA staff work with Alexandria Yellow Cab, Whitetop Cab and Diamond Transportation.

Adults 60 and over, through the Senior Taxi Program, can travel to doctor's appointments, the pharmacy and to grocery stores Monday through Friday, during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at a reduced fare. Reservations need to be made one day in advance by calling Senior Services of Alexandria at 703-836-4414, ext. 15. Our caring reservationists arrange the round trip with Alexandria Yellow Cab, and even chat with the clients if they want to talk.

"Alexandria Yellow Cab, in conjunction with Senior Services and the City of Alexandria, has proudly provided transportation to the Seniors of Alexandria. Last year alone, over 14,000 trips were taken to the doctor's office,

pharmacy, and grocery store. At Alexandria Yellow Cab, we recognize the value of this service and look forward to maintaining this relationship in the years to come," commented General Manager Rhett Buer.

SSA also works with Whitetop Cab and Diamond Transportation to provide trips for the disabled of any age. At a reduced fare, through the DOT para-transit program, these clients can travel to any destination - - - visit a friend, go to a museum, in addition to medical appointments and grocery shopping. As with Senior Taxi, SSA's reservationists handle the arrangements, which also need to be made one day in advance by calling 703-836-5222.

"As the General Manager of White Top Cab Company, it is a great pleasure of mine to serve the DOT customers. We value our relationship with City of Alexandria and Senior Services of Alexandria," said Ken Aggrey.

Robbie Werth, President of Diamond Transportation Services, says that his company has worked with Senior Services of Alexandria for the past twenty-five years as a partner for the provision of the DOT Paratransit Service. "During this period of time, DTS and SSA have worked

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Are You Ready?

Sara is a 67 year old retiree of low income. Enrolled in Medicare she receives supplemental medical insurance through her former employer. Together, Sara thinks her medical expenses are covered in full. Unfortunately last year Sara was diagnosed with breast cancer. Soon thereafter she received word from her former employer they were cutting back on their retirement health benefits because of the economic slowdown. Her company would no longer provide prescription drug benefits. Panicked, Sara confided to her neighbor about her predicament. Her neighbor suggested she contact the Alexandria Office of Aging and Adult Services. She did, and was referred to a local VICAP Counselor.

They say free advice is worth exactly what it costs, but that's not true of VICAP, short for Virginia Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. VICAP is a state run locally implemented program that provides **FREE** health benefits counseling services for Medicare beneficiaries and their families or caregivers. The mission of VICAP is to educate, advocate, counsel and empower people to make informed health care choices.

VICAP counselors can help you:

- Figure out your long term care needs,
- Explore long term care financing options, including long term care insurance,
- Review your Medicare supplemental insurance needs, compare policies and pursue claims and refunds,

- Understand health care options under managed care and Medicare Advantage,
- Enroll in Medicare Savings Programs,
- Understand doctor bills, hospital bills and Medicare Summary Notices,
- Understand Medicare/Medicaid eligibility, enrollment coverage claims and appeals,
- Identify resources for prescription drug assistance, and
- Identify and report Medicare/Medicaid fraud and abuse.

Information is power and because of Sara's positive interactions with her VICAP counselor she now has a better understanding of her Medicare options, entitlements, and benefits.

Because government programs, health insurance and the health care industry are constantly changing-rules, processes, procedures, and costs- VICAP counselors provide accurate, timely, and objective information. The program gains considerable strength by its ability to remain flexible to local community needs. The program and its volunteers generally reflect the cultural, ethnic, economic and geographic diversity of the community. VICAP can respond quickly and effectively to emerging local problems or concerns regarding changing legislation, questionable insurance sales practices, or increasing costs of services and policies, for example.

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Executive Director

VICAP Continued from page one.

VICAP also saves consumers literally hundreds of thousands of dollars each year from unclaimed benefits, lack of awareness of assistance programs, duplicate policies, and inefficient use of health care dollars.

Finally, relative to other community services, VICAP is incredibly cost-effective because the program relies primarily on volunteer counselors to provide the

bulk of services. Using lay people in this capacity also serves to keep the program consumer-oriented, especially when peer volunteer counselors are used.

Whether you are a baby boomer, a current Medicare beneficiary or a family member or caregiver, VICAP is a comprehensive, one-source avenue for free, accurate and objective information about the Medicare program. *Joel Mecklar*

A LIVING LEGEND --- ONE OF OUR OWN!!!



Picture by Nina Tisara, Tisara Photography

Congratulations to Rev. George Pera, past president of SSA, for being named to the prestigious list of Living Legends. The Living Legends Project is jointly sponsored by the Rotary Club of Alexandria and the Alexandria Gazette Packet, and recognizes individuals "whose vision and dedication make a tangible difference to the quality of life in Alexandria,"

as stated in the August 28 edition of the Alexandria Gazette Packet. Rev. Pera was identified as one of these special people.

Rev. Pera, past president of SSA, also serves as Westminster Presbyterian Church's Pastor-Emeritus. He is involved in numerous community organizations such as A.L.I.V.E., Agenda: Alexandria and the Alexandria Hospital Foundation, just to name a few. SSA sends our heartiest congratulations to Rev. George Pera.

Message from Executive Director Continued from page one.

together each and every day to deliver accessible transportation to the citizens of Alexandria. It is an honor and a privilege to work with the dedicated staff of SSA," commented Mr. Werth.

Because of our caring community, SSA is able to provide transportation to the senior and disabled community who can no longer drive, or who need assistance with getting to important places. This opportunity enables these individuals to live with dignity and purpose. It is important to note that the City Manager has proposed funding reductions for Senior Taxi. SSA is committed to providing this valuable service and is working closely with the City to ensure there is no reduction in service.

Janet Barnett

Picture by Louise Krafft



DOT/Para-Transit Reservationists Lamanda Jones and Alisa Thornton discuss Senior Taxi with Senior Taxi Reservationist Donna Clarke

Picture by Tina Richardson



Youth attending Del Ray's First Thursday on Sept. 4 provided "lemonade" for participants. Proceeds from the sale were donated to Senior Services of Alexandria.

**Mark Your Calendars
2009 Upcoming Events**

January 14 2009

Claire Kincaid Travel Series
Stardust Restaurant,
608 Montgomery Street

January 22 2009

Dine Out/Help Out - Satay Sarinah,
512 A S. Van Dorn Street

March 28 2009

SSA GALA
HONORING THE GENERATIONS
Hilton Alexandria Mark Center,
5000 Seminary Road

***"The Alexandria Calendar 2009"
Now Available for Holiday Gift-Giving!***

The Alexandria Calendar 2009, produced as an annual fund raiser by Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), since 1980, is available for \$12 each. The Calendar contains pen-and-ink drawings of Old Town scenes by distinguished local artist Deron DeCesare.

SSA, a nonprofit organization, provides meals for homebound seniors, transportation, job counseling and referral and money management.

The calendar makes a wonderful holiday gift, which lasts throughout the year. The calendars are available at the SSA office, 700 Princess Street, and at local shops in Old Town.

For calendar information, call 703-836-4414, ext. 10



THIS IS YOUR SPACE!!!!

Each edition of Silver Streak will provide this space for any senior to provide a photograph, a short story, a poem, a joke or any creative expression. Send your submission and share it with our readers. This issue features Patrick O'Brien's plans for retirement.

It's great fun and sure beats work!

Photo by Daryl Popper



I recently retired after 44 years working in libraries, including the last 16 as director of the Alexandria Library. About a decade ago, I began to think seriously about what I was going to do when I retired. I already knew two things for sure, that we loved Alexandria and planned to stay here and that I hate golf.

On an Elderhostel trip in early 2001 to study Appalachian culture, history, and music, my wife and I stopped at the North Carolina Center for the Folk Arts on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Asheville. It was there that I noticed woodturnings for the first time, notably some exquisitely turned bowls and tall vase shaped vessels with carved legs. I noted the woodturner's name, Alan Hollar. As we were leaving the center, I noticed that he was doing a woodturning demonstration in about half an hour. We stayed and watched in fascination as he turned small blocks of wood into works of art.

In the middle of our week-long study of Appalachia, we were having dinner with the musician who was teaching the music of the mountains when the subject of woodturning came up. She told us that she taught at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, and that they offered woodturning classes throughout the year.

That summer, I got the Folk School catalog and registered for a week long course in the fall. I had done woodworking over the years but had never done a thing on a lathe. From the moment I turned the lathe on and changed a square piece of wood into a cylinder, I was hooked. During that week, I turned wood morning, afternoon, and evening producing honey dippers, garden dibbers, small platters, and bowls. It was the most fun I had had in many years, not to mention the satisfaction of turning out so many useful and beautiful wooden objects.

I returned to the school five weeks later to take another slightly more advanced course. My biggest problem in utilizing what I was learning was that we had just moved to an 11th floor condominium and I had no place to set up a lathe of my own. For more than a year I traveled down to the Woodcraft Store club in the evenings and on weekends to use their one lathe, if no

on else had claimed it before me. I also took a couple more classes from professional turners and joined the Capital Area Woodturners, a 250-member chapter of the American Association of Woodturners.

A good friend from the Rotary Club of Alexandria offered me half of his two-car garage to set up shop. I jumped at the offer, bought my first lathe, and turned there 5 or 6 evenings every week. In 2003, I started a side business called OhBeWood and became a partner in an art gallery in Occoquan, the Artists' Undertaking, where my woodturnings are always available. I also began doing shows like Art on the Avenue in Del Ray and entering works in the monthly shows at the Art League of Alexandria and Art in City Hall. I eventually outgrew the garage and began renting space in a furniture maker's studio on Monroe Avenue. By then, woodturning had become a consuming passion, and I knew exactly what I was going to do in my retirement.

I've taken more courses at Arrowmont in Gatlinburg, master classes at the Anderson Ranch for the Arts in Aspen, and several advanced courses at the John C. Campbell Folk School. I am now a faculty member and taught week-long intergenerational classes there the past two summers.

As the rental space in Del Ray became prohibitively expensive and because I needed more room, I started to look around for other space to set up shop. When I heard that the old Lorton Workhouse prison was being transformed into a Torpedo Factory-like artists' center, I applied and was juried in among the first group of artists. In September, I moved into a studio twice the size of my old space at considerably lower rent. More than 100 artists are now resident in the initial eight buildings that have been converted into studios. Some buildings feature specialties like glass, ceramics, fiber arts, photography, and dance. Restaurants, a theater, a glass blowing building, a museum, affordable apartments for artists, and a culinary school are among the features coming to the new Workhouse Arts Center in the near future. So now, I head down to Lorton in the morning and back to Alexandria in the afternoon, gleefully against rush hour traffic both ways. The Center is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday from 11 to 7 and Sunday from 12 to 5. Come on down and watch me play on the lathe.

Contact me at; www.ohbewood.com

DOT: Para-transit..... 703-836-5222	In-Home Care & Chore help:.....703-836-4414, ext 13
Senior Taxi:..... 703-836-4414, ext 15	Meals on Wheels:.....703-836-4414, ext 12
Employment Counseling..... 703-836-4414, ext 13	Money Management for Elderly: 703 836-4414, ext 14

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 In Honor of *
 In Memory of *
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**Send your tax-deductible contributions to SSA
 700 Princess Street, - Mezzanine
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314**

*For information about making a bequest in your will,
 call 703-836-4414 Ext. 10
 or visit www.seniorservicesalex.org*

Donations were made to SSA in Honor of

Al Duncker
 for his service to SSA
 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parsons
Marian Van Landingham
 on her birthday
 by Janet Barnett
Rev. George Pera
 recognized as a Living Legend
 by Janet Barnett

Donations were made to SSA in Memory of

Mrs. Karen Parsons Duncker
 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parsons
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 by The Honorable Constance H. Frogale

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 call the Federal Trade Commission's
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Congratulations to Reservation-ist Callie Terrell. Callie received the 2008 Community Service Award from the Departmental Progressive Club for her outstanding contributions to the City of Alexandria and beyond.

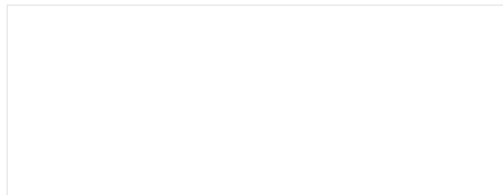
The Silver Streak is a quarterly publication of Senior Services of Alexandria.
 Contributors: Janet Barnett, Patrick O'Brien, Judy Drewry and Joel Meckler. Production by John Drummond

Senior Services of Alexandria *Silver Streak*

A Publication of
Senior Services of Alexandria
 700 Princess Street-Mezzanine
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 CATALOGUE FOR
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Please designate Senior Services of Alexandria in the United Way Campaign, Combined Federal Campaign and the Combined Virginia Campaign.

The mission of Senior Services of Alexandria is to provide comprehensive, accessible, and affordable services to seniors who reside in the City of Alexandria which support the independence and self-sufficiency that enable seniors to age with dignity in their homes and this community.



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