

# Silver Streak

Vol. 8 No. 1

Senior Services of Alexandria

Spring 2007

## And a Good Time Was Had by All !!

Another fun evening! Another wonderful honoree! And a beautiful new venue! These describe this year's "Honoring the Best!" event on March 30 at Belle Haven Country Club.

A major fundraising event for Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) each year, the Spring Gala again raised dollars to fund services to seniors while entertaining attendees with dinner, music and a silent auction.

Marian Van Landingham, SSA's 2007 "Senior Extraordinaire," managed to attend despite a recent hip fracture. Susan Winn, SSA Board President, welcomed guests, and George Pera, former SSA Board President, introduced Sen. Patsy Ticer, who recounted a history of Ms. Van Landingham's accomplishments. Ms. Van Landingham received a commemorative engraved vase from SSA and Alexandria Mayor Euille provided a proclamation in her honor, which was presented by City Councilmember Paul Smedberg.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stearman, regular supporters of the event, were the first dancers on the floor. (Mr. Stearman's other 'first' is as a founding member of SSA in 1968.)

Ms. Van Landingham's table guests included long-time assistant Sherry Brown, Susan Kellom (Alexandria Democratic Committee) and her husband, Ben Kellom, Christa Waters, Sen. Patsy Ticer, Dr. and Mrs. Gerry Hinn and Harlene Clayton.

The Belle Haven Country Club provided a beautiful setting, overlooking rolling hills, beautiful landscaping and the golf course.



Marion Van Landingham  
& Eileen Longstreet



Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Stearman



Patsy Ticer, Marion Van Landingham  
& Ethel Underwood

Pictures by Steve Hunt, Mount Vernon Voice

## When a Few Extra Pounds can be a GOOD Thing

A University of California at Irvine study suggests that "when you're 80 years old, carrying a few extra pounds might not be such a bad idea. In fact, it may be beneficial."

The study found that previously established "body mass index" standards used for adults may be more relevant for younger adults than for older ones. *Body mass index* (BMI) refers to the total amount of your body mass that is made up of fat. The earlier acceptable BMI ranged from 18.5 to 24.9. However, BMIs of 25 to 25.9 in older adults were found to actually offer protective elements. "We found that the body mass index recommended

for everyone isn't necessarily the best for the elderly" says Maria Corrada, an epidemiologist in the UCI School of Medicine, who led the analysis effort. "It appears that if you're in your 80s or 90s you may live even longer if you are a *bit* overweight."

The survey data was taken from 13,451 residents in a large retirement community. The residents provided their height and weight at the age of 21 and at the time of the survey. Those who were slightly overweight at the time of the survey had the lowest mortality rates over time and those whose BMI was below 18.5 had the highest mortality rates, even higher than those

with a BMI of 30 and up. However those who were either overweight or obese at age 21 had increased mortality rates even if the weight was lost later. The overall message: the acceptable BMI range needs to be re-evaluated for the senior community. The good news? If you had a relatively normal BMI in your youth, but are slightly overweight in your 70s, 80s, and 90s, your life expectancy is greater than those of the same age whose BMIs are 24.9 and less and is greater than those who were overweight in their youth, even if they later lost the weight. (Source: American Journal of Epidemiology, May 2006)

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*From the Executive Director*

Need help to balance your check-book? Pay bills on time?

As we age and become elderly, we might lose the capacity to manage our personal finances. We can become forgetful, or lose bills and thus forget to pay them. Or have vision problems. Or even feel a little confused from time to time. For some of us, our income is not adequate to pay for the expenses of daily living. And sometimes even family members prey on us for “loans” or to use our credit cards. Mail solicitations for phony sweepstakes, “free” chair-lifts and other medical equipment, and telemarketers trying to get us to buy something or reveal our social security number are all examples of things others might do to prey on us. If any of these conditions exist for you, you may need help.

Recognizing the need for help, SSA implemented a “money-management” service for Alexandria’s elderly, vulnerable and disabled persons.

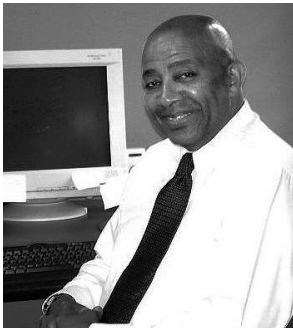
The Money Manager can meet with you at home, and help to sort and pay

bills, and balance your checkbook and reconcile savings’ statements. The money manager can also work with credit card companies to resolve payment issues, interpret Medicare statements, negotiate with banks to remove charges for overdrafts, and identify fraudulent marketing solicitations and deceptive practices. She can also help identify additional sources of income and community-based human services, when appropriate. A small fee is charged only to those with incomes above a certain amount. For very low-income seniors, the service is free.\*

Please be sure to call the Money Manager at 703.836.4414, ext 14 if you, a family member, a friend or neighbor needs this assistance. To donate funds to support this service, contact Senior Services of Alexandria, 700 Princess Street -Mezzanine, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: 703.836.4414 ext. 10. FAX: 703-836-1252

\*The money manager does *not* provide investment, trust, tax, or tax preparation service or advice.

**New Staff at SSA**



Eugene Thompson recently joined SSA as Director of Employment Counseling and the In-Home Care and Chore Worker Service. Thompson’s background is in museum management, including serving as consultant and museum curator for the Alexandria Black History Museum, as Public

Art Consultant for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and as Public Art Director for the Philadelphia office of Arts and Culture. His roles have included a great deal of interaction with the public, and a keen interest in helping people to enjoy public art. A native Alexandrian, his natural warmth and pleasant personality are key elements for what promises to be a quality experience for clients who come to him for help to find jobs and in-home assistance. Please call Eugene Thompson at 703.836.4414, ext. 13, if you have a job opening you would like to fill, are looking for a job, or need help at home.

Welcome, Eugene!

**Bea Taylor,  
Senior Taxi Reservationist, Retires**



For over eleven years, Alexandria seniors were greeted by Bea Taylor when they called to schedule Senior Taxi reservations. Her kind manner and warmth were consistently provided to those who called for reservations. I also personally know how much callers enjoyed talking with her when

they called and how they appreciated the quality service she was known for providing. Bea decided to retire in March 2007. She says “it’s the interaction with the people I enjoyed so much. I’ll really miss talking to and helping the people who called.” We at SSA will miss Bea, too. She was a loyal and caring employee who enjoyed serving seniors and did so expertly.

Eileen H. Longstreet, Executive Director

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

## New Delivery Volunteers for Meals on Wheels!!



Meals on Wheels Volunteers from First row: Keith Powell. Second row: Rita Turner, Nawal Hammad, Larry Williams, Michele Peyton, Debora Turner, Jeanette Devins. Last row: Raymond Covington, Patrick Brinson. Not pictured: Maria Hernandez

Alexandria Meals on Wheels (MOW) is pleased to highlight a new team of volunteers from the Patent and Trademark Office Federal Credit Union (PTOFCU). The team of ten volunteers began delivering meals to homebound Alexandria seniors in August 2006. Keith Powell, the “team leader” for the group, is in charge of coordinating the volunteers who will deliver each month. “All of the PTOFCU volunteers are dedicated and very friendly” says Brenda Walls, Manager of Meals on Wheels, “and are a joy to work with on their volunteer-day.” We decided to ask them a few questions about their volunteerism.

**Q.** What prompted you to volunteer with Meals on Wheels (MOW)?

**A.** Since our office re-located to Alexandria from Arlington, we decided we wanted to do something positive in our new community. Participating as volunteers with Alexandria MOW was a great way for the board of directors and the management of PTOFCU to accomplish this.

**Q.** How many employees of PTOFCU participate? And is their participation mandatory or did they all freely volunteer?

**A.** We have ten employees who volunteer their personal time to help deliver meals. It is strictly their decision to volunteer.

**Q.** What have your employees learned from their MOW volunteer experience?

**A.** We have learned not to take for granted what we have been fortunate enough to acquire in our lives. There are many people who are less fortunate than we are, and serving them warms our heart each time we do so.

**Q.** Would you recommend volunteering with Meals on Wheels to others?

**A.** We would heartily recommend volunteering with MOW. In fact, many of us have already recommended this kind of volunteering to friends and family, including those who live in other parts of Virginia and other states.

You can call 703-836.4414, ext.12 to volunteer. Don't wait. More help is always needed and appreciated.

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## **DRUG INTERACTIONS: Don't be a Victim!**

Patients are prescribed drugs that can potentially cause interactions from 10 to 30% of the time. This information was published in the National Association of Retired Federal Employees in its August 2006 publication. Side effects, as a result of the faulty prescribing, affect over 2 million people annually and are estimated to cause up to 100,000 patient deaths annually as well. These ‘drug-to-drug’ interactions can involve combinations of prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, minerals, foods, alcohol, tobacco and herbal products. The greater the number of different drugs one takes, the more likely an interaction can occur. As seniors age, they are less able to tolerate drugs’ side effects and they are affected even more when drug interactions occur.

**Here are a few tips to avoid the dangers:**

- **Keep a written list of all your medications, the dosage, and how frequently you take them** and update it each time a new drug is prescribed.

- **Show the list** to EVERY health care provider.
- Each time you are given a **NEW** prescription, **ASK about the common signs/symptoms of a drug reaction**
- **Before you start taking an over-the-counter (OTC) medication or herbal product, discuss it with your doctor or pharmacist** in terms of its potential to interact with any **other** medications you are taking.
- **Obtain all tests that your doctor prescribes to monitor your response** to a newly prescribed medication.
- **DO NOT** use drugs that are prescribed for someone else.

For more information, go to your library and check out **The top 100 Drug Interactions: A Guide to Patient Management**, by John R. Horn, PharmD, Professor of Pharmacy, Univ. of Washington or use the library’s computer and internet service to go to [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov) for even more information.

## Contributions

Enclosed is a donation of \$ .....from  
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 In Honor of.....\*

In Memory of.....\*

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### Send your 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](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org)*

## Donations were made to SSA in Memory of

**Katherine Mooney**  
by Susan Longstreet

**Max Gazin**  
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## Donations were made to SSA in Honor of

**Phyllis Bickham**  
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**Alfred Parsons Duncker**  
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**Bernard Greifer's 85th Birthday**  
by Himself

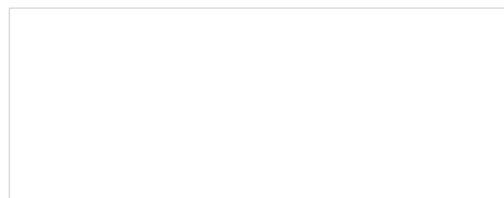
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SSA Annual Meeting and Luncheon  
 Goodwin House - 4800 Fillmore Avenue  
 June 13, 2007 at 12 noon Lunch:\$25  
 Call 703-836-4414, ext. 10

*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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