



NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The AHS Annual Meeting on May 8 saw the election of the 2014-2015 Officers and Directors, who had their first board meeting, May 21. We are off to a good start.

The past year has been active and productive for AHS. We doubled the library lecture programs from bi-monthly to monthly, launched a collaboration with the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington (BHMA) to create a black history exhibit at the Arlington Historical Museum, and built ties with Arlington TV to film and broadcast the library lectures, and with WETA-TV to create a film clip and blog on upcoming speakers for their "Boundary Stones" blog. We have strengthened ties with Arlington National Cemetery and Arlington House, the two most important national institutions in the county. The Ball-Sellers House has received major press coverage, and the Arlington Historical Museum has featured unique and entertaining exhibits, from a local major league baseball player to Oakridge Elementary School student camera projects. Our second annual history essay contest in conjunction with Columbia (Masonic) Lodge #285 has been completed, and we plan to launch the Arlington History Passport Project once startup funds are obtained. AHS has delivered on our commitment to emphasize schools, neighborhoods, and minorities in our programming.

AHS's goals for the coming year include strengthening our conversation with the Arlington business community, to show how attention to history can be good for business. As we develop a greater range of projects and activities, there will be opportunities for corporate donors to associate themselves. We intend to strengthen ties with Virginia state historical offices and agencies, which are in a position to support AHS in a variety of ways. We intend to be useful and active across the board. We welcome your help.

John P. Richardson, President

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Looking for some historical fun this summer?

Visit our website to see what the Arlington Historical Society has planned!

WWW.ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

AHS 2014 Annual Banquet

by Garrett Peck

Arlington Historical Society held its annual membership banquet at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn Key Bridge on May 30, 2014. A friendly crowd of 65 people attended, including Arlington County Board Member Chris Hynes, Commonwealth's Attorney Theo Stamos, and Alexandria Historical Society President Bill Dickenson. The evening included a welcoming reception and a dinner punctuated with much conversation.

After an invocation by Dr. Mark Benbow, the director of the Arlington Historical Museum, AHS President John Richardson announced the winners of two new awards that the society created. The 2014 Volunteer of the Year Award went to AHS program manager Jennifer Jablonsky, who has greatly expanded society programming. AHS formerly held five annual programs, but thanks to Jen it is now holding monthly lectures, in addition to art events, book signings, exhibits and tours.

AHS presented the 2014 Cornelia B. Rose Award to the Aurora Hills Women's Club (AHWC) for its significant annual support of the Hume School. "We were surprised! We're honored," said Mary Downey, AHWC's current president. "It's great to have this recognition." AHWC was formed in 1958, just two years after AHS, and its motto is "continuing community commitment." The club hosts an annual tea at the Hume School; in December it will hold its ninth annual Holiday Boutique, whose proceeds go to various charities, including to AHS.

President Richardson then introduced the keynote speaker for the evening, Greg Hamilton, the publisher and co-founder of Arlington Magazine, for a fascinating talk called "For the Record: How Community Journalism Works." Hamilton drew much interest from the audience as he explained what it's like building a startup publication.



Arlington Magazine was founded in 2011 as a community lifestyle magazine and is published six times a year. "I had a sense that all the ingredients for Arlington Magazine were here to thrive," Hamilton said, given the county's affluent and educated population. "We've been profitable since our fourth issue."

Hamilton described the "big four" of local media: digital, print, radio, and TV. Everyone has some digital presence, but few major players are exclusively digital. Big media has a gap in local coverage, and is often fixated on news. Magazines provide the bigger picture. It requires a different format and a different style of writing, or "big, dense, rich stories," as Hamilton described it.



Arlington Magazine's investigative journalism has often struck a chord with the public. Hamilton, who lives Arlington with his wife Maureen and three elementary school-aged children, noted the major public response to the September/October 2012 edition that addressed school crowding. "The problem came on really fast," he said, as Arlington experienced a baby boom that few anticipated. He described it as a "snake eating a pig," where overcrowding in grade schools shifts to middle schools, then to high schools just a few years later. "I feel we did a valuable service" in addressing this, he said.

The special Arlington history issue from November/December 2013 had the highest sell-through rate in the past year. Hamilton noted the popular response he got from articles written by journalist Charlie Clark, who was in the audience. Clark wrote about the Nazi Party in Arlington, and also covered a shootout at the Lee-Harrison shopping center.

Hamilton explained how he and his editor, Jenny Sullivan, develop their story ideas. Does a story affect a lot of people in the county? Is it interesting? Is it a complex issue with many sides to it? Will people care and will they talk about it? Unlike a newspaper, which decides what to print the day before, a magazine's articles are mapped out and writers assigned, often the year before, as advertisers want to know what's in the publication calendar. "Arlington is a target-rich environment for journalists," Hamilton concluded.

Arlington Historical Society Elects 2014 – 2015 Officers & Directors

The Arlington Historical Society elected the 2014–2015 slate of officers and directors at its annual meeting on May 8 at Arlington Central Library. The society re-elected John Richardson as President, with constitutional amendments now making this a two-year assignment. The other officers, who serve ex officio as directors, are Karl Van Newkirk, Vice President; Gerry Laporte, Secretary; and Nick Noble, Treasurer. The meeting elected as directors Luis Araya, a senior Arlington County staff member; Annette Benbow, who serves as director of the Ball-Sellers House; Ali Ganjian, a Wells Fargo technical advisor; Max Gross, a retired historian and university dean; Garrett Peck, a telecom analyst and widely-published author on local subjects; and Fred Stokeld, a retired business specialist. Dr. Mark Benbow of Marymount University serves on the board ex officio as director of the Arlington Historical Museum. The AHS membership approved amendments to the AHS constitution that streamline procedures, including reducing the number of officers and expanding the size of the board of directors.

Top Eight Questions About Being a Docent with AHS

1. What the heck is a docent?

Our docents are volunteers who are guides or educators for visitors to our museums. They are critical to our ability to share Arlington history with visitors.

2. What experience do I need to be a docent?

No previous museum experience or knowledge of Arlington is necessary.

3. Do I need any special qualifications?

An interest in history and in learning more about the history of Arlington is key. No other skills are necessary.

4. What do AHS docents do?

AHS has 2 very different museums, so there are two distinct docent roles to choose from.

The Arlington Historical Museum on Ridge Road has exhibits that range from Native Americans to the 21st Century. Docents allow visitors to tour the museum by themselves and are available to answer questions. Docents stationed here work in pairs.

The Ball-Sellers House Museum is a small cabin in the Glencarlyn neighborhood that was built in the 1750s. It is the oldest house in Arlington and is preserved and exhibits how the original owner and builder, John Ball and his family, would have lived. Docents provide a tour to visitors and highlight some architectural features and a bit about each of the 5 families who owned the house. Docents may work individually or in pairs.

5. What kind of training do I need?

The museum director provides new docents at the Arlington Historical Museum with a walk-through tour of the exhibits and the building. We also provide docents with a manual that helps answer questions. Because docents are paired with a more experienced docent, little training is required.

At the Ball-Sellers House, we pair you up with different docents so you can hear a couple versions of the tour. Then we continue to pair you up while you get comfortable telling the story yourself. When you are comfortable we'll give you the option of continuing to work with a partner docent or you can choose to go solo. We have a docent manual and several small articles about the history of the house, its environs, and its owners and we can send those to you online. They are also available in a binder for docents who want to brush up while at the house.



6. If I became a docent, how much time commitment would there be?

Docents can volunteer as often as they choose. The Arlington Historical Museum is open every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year from 1-4 pm. We are also planning to expand our hours to include the first Wednesday of every month from 12-3. Our scheduler would work with you to accommodate your availability.

The Ball-Sellers House is open on Saturdays 1-4 pm April through October with some extended hours occasionally throughout the season for special events. Our scheduler would work with you and your availability to pair you up with a couple different docents so you can hear how they tell the story. Then, when you're ready, she would schedule you either solo or with a partner.

7. What's in it for me?

- If you love history and want to share it with others, then you'll love being a docent.
- If you want to learn more about your community, then this is a great way to learn more.
- If you are looking to spend your valuable free time on a worthy cause, then being a docent for AHS--an all-volunteer organization that receives no funds except from membership dues and donations--is worth your time.
- If you believe as we do that building better communities begins with understanding how we got where we are today, then being a docent will be a great contribution to your community.

8. How do I volunteer?

Send us an e-mail at info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org or call us at 703-942-9247 and let us know. One of our docent coordinators will return your call or e-mail.

We hope this answers some of your questions and gets you thinking about volunteering with us. We look forward to hearing from you!

AHWC Holds Annual Tea

by John P. Richardson

The Aurora Hills Women's Club (AHWC) held a successful annual tea, May 1, at which President Mary Downey presented an oversized check for \$9,000 to AHS President John Richardson and Past President Ali Ganjian (the actual donation was made several months ago). More than 30 club members turned out in their finest, including a wide variety of hats, plus the best teacups to go with an elegant array of things to eat.



The success of the tea was slightly miraculous. As of 8:00 AM that day, it was still scheduled, as usual, to be held on the Hume

School front lawn, even though it had been raining steadily for the past four days. The lawn was sodden, yet a truck with the party rentals was waiting in the parking lot. The mass of chairs, tables, high heels, and tent would have turned the lawn into a quagmire. Providence came in the form of AHWC spouse John Finlay, owner of the Crystal City Sports Pub, who showed up to check on progress, evaluated the situation, and offered the second floor of his establishment as a backup. The offer was gratefully accepted, and the event relocated without missing a beat. The sun even came out, as if to bless the program. AHWC is one of the strongest supporters of AHS, and its generosity is appreciated by all.



AHS GIVES HISTORICAL ESSAY AWARDS



by Max L. Gross

On June 4, 2014 the Society gave certificates and cash awards to five Arlington County students in its annual local historical essay awards contest. The topic of this year's contest was "To What Extent was Arlington County Heroic or Quixotic in its Pursuit of School Integration, Considering Contemporary Trends." The awards went to four Washington and Lee high school students and the fifth to a student from Wakefield. As Board member Max Gross, standing in for President John Richardson, remarked, "All of the essays were excellent. It was very hard to rank them."

The first place award went to Noah Kennedy of W&L. Second and third places went to other W&L students, Audrey O'Donnell and Allison Jaffe. Honorable mentions went to Wakefield student Wendy Berrios and W&L student Antonio Mestre.

The awards are given in partnership with Columbia Lodge 285 whose generosity makes it possible to attach a cash payment with each award. Columbia Lodge was represented at the ceremony held at Washington and Lee High School by Master Rolf Penderton and Lodge Secretary Ray Anderson. Noah's essay will be published in the 2015 edition of the Arlington Historical Society Journal.

The Arlington County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Pat Murphy attended the ceremony, as did Washington and Lee Principal, Gregg Robertson and other faculty representatives from both W&L and Wakefield.

Hume School Hosts Arlington Leadership

by John P. Richardson

AHS once again participated with Leadership Arlington (LA) by hosting several visiting groups at the Arlington Historical Museum during their "Neighborhood Day," April 10. Neighborhood Day is LA's way to introduce members of the current LA Signature class to a variety of county neighborhoods. John Richardson, AHS president, welcomed the groups and provided answers to questions they had been instructed to ask about AHS and the collection. Because of time limitations, roughly one-third of the class visited the museum in groups of three or four. As is often the case, a number of the visitors admitted that they had never been inside the museum despite having driven by the building many times. Several accepted the invitation to ring the school bell in the upstairs classroom, which appeals to young and old alike.

AHS enjoys its relationship with Leadership Arlington and looks forward to introducing Arlington's historical museum to future Signature classes.



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AHS Presents The Civil War: The Fort Stevens Raid and the Virginia Defenses

by Garrett Peck

AHS and the Arlington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee hosted Frank Cooling and Loretta Newman at this month's public program on Thursday, June 12. They jointly presented "The Civil War: The Fort Stevens Raid and the Virginia Defenses."

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Stevens, the only Civil War battle in the nation's capital and the only time in the nation's history that a sitting president – Abraham Lincoln—came under direct enemy fire. Historian Frank Cooling shared more about the exciting campaign leading to the Battle of Fort Stevens, with a special emphasis on events in Northern Virginia. Loretta Neumann, Vice President of the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, has studied and photographed the Defenses of Washington for more than 17 years and brought these events to life with historical photos of the military campaign, and discussed the effort to preserve

these sites for future generations. She is a former Congressional committee staff professional, federal executive, and private consultant, with extensive experience in national parks, conservation, and historic preservation. She has served on the boards of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, DC Preservation League, and other national and local organizations.



Loretta Neuman pictured with Model 1861 U.S. 15-inch Columbiad cannons (Rodman guns) at Fort Foote, Maryland.



Frank Cooling at the 2012 Fort Stevens Commemoration.

Benjamin Franklin Cooling is Professor of National Security Studies at the Eisenhower School, National Defense University in Washington D.C. A prolific author of works in military, air and naval history, specializing in the defense economic base, he has also authored Civil War studies on operations, occupation and partisan warfare in Kentucky and Tennessee, as well as campaigns in the national capital region. His publications include *Counterthrust: From the Peninsula to the Antietam* (2007) as well as four other books relating to Jubal Early's Washington Campaign, including *Jubal Early's Raid, 1864* (1989/2007); *Monocacy*; *The Battle That Saved Washington* (1996/2000); the co-author of *Mr. Lincoln's Forts; A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington* (1988/2010) and *The Day Lincoln Was Almost Shot; The Fort Stevens Story* (2013). Rowman and Littlefield will publish Cooling's *Jubal Early: Lee's Bad Old Man* in fall 2014.

Dedication of Ft. Ethan Allen Project

by John P. Richardson

AHS was an enthusiastic participant in the March 23 dedication of new historic signage and other improvements at Ft. Ethan Allen, near Old Glebe Road. The event, combining a program in the Madison Community Center auditorium with guided tours of the fort, brought out a large crowd on a cold and grey Sunday afternoon. AHS, which manned an information table, was part of the renovation planning process, with members providing suggestions for strengthening the replacement historic signage. The inauguration capped a long and successful effort by the Old Glebe Civic Association to upgrade Ft. Ethan Allen, rewarded by a county grant of almost one-half million dollars. The county historic preservation office played a key role in facilitating renovation.

Civic Association president, Bruce Shuttleworth, was master of ceremonies for the auditorium program, which included brief talks by historians and county political leaders, enlivened by Civil War music provided by a country band. The local Boy Scout troop presented colors. Ft. Ethan Allen, which was spared hostile activity during the Civil War, was one of two strong forts guarding the Virginia side of Chain Bridge. Union troops from New York and Vermont were the principal forces within the fort. One of the speakers read excerpts from letters written by Vermont soldiers stationed there.

Guided tours of the fort in the afternoon showed off the elegant new signage, walkways, and fencing. A decision had been made not to rework the sagging but evident visible earthworks in and around the fort. A replica of a 20-lb. Parrott gun has been mounted on a parapet to increase verisimilitude. A neighbor's house in what would have been the line of fire from the gun sported a white flag run atop the chimney.

Remembering Arlington's "Little Saigon"

by Max L. Gross

Do you remember "Little Saigon?" That stretch along Wilson Boulevard in Clarendon during the 1970s that was characterized by a variety of Vietnamese stores and restaurants—the Saigon Market, Café Dalat, the Pacific-Oriental Company, Nam Viet, Vietnam Alterations, and others? It came and went, most of the businesses migrating in the early 1980s to what is now the Eden Center in Falls Church at Seven-Corners.



Kim O'Connell discussing "Little Saigon"

On May 8, 2014, the Arlington Historical Society hosted a crowd of about fifty at the Arlington Central Library to hear Kim O'Connell, a local writer and journalist, and daughter of a former Vietnamese immigrant, recall her memories of that special Arlington community which she illustrated with stories and pictures from the era.

She noted that by 1975, soon after the fall of Saigon, possibly 15,000 Vietnamese had settled in the United States, mostly in California, but some came to Arlington. Especially those from the South Vietnamese capitol seemed to prefer relocating near the U.S. capitol. By 1978, the number had grown to nearly 250,000. The flight of the "boat people" created a humanitarian crisis that the United States government did much to resolve. This last group received many government services, and as Arlington had become an early settlement, government officials in Washington tended to steer them towards Arlington and Northern Virginia.

The 1970s was also the decade of the construction of the Metro, and property values along Wilson Boulevard were temporarily low. Clarendon in particular was an area where store space could be rented fairly cheaply and once one store had been established others followed. For the burgeoning Vietnamese community in Northern Virginia, noted Ms. O'Connell, the emergence of a central Vietnamese shopping area was a boon. She told stories of how her Vietnamese mother used to "love" her weekly shopping trip to "Little Saigon" where for a few hours she could meet and chat with friends, find familiar products and engage in long conversations (long in the mind of her impatient daughter) in her native language. (She still loves her regular visits to the Eden Center.)

With the completion of the Metro and the rapid development of Clarendon in the early 1980s, rents began to rise and most of the shop owners could no longer run profitable businesses. It was at this time that most began to move out, many migrating to the still flourishing Eden Center. The Nam Viet restaurant in Clarendon remains the sole legacy of that era.

Despite the concerns of some Arlington citizens that the Vietnamese were changing the face of Arlington and taking up too much of County social services, Ms. O'Connell credited the Arlington County Government with doing much to help the Vietnamese community integrate into their new country. She especially noted the 1978 establishment of a community center for youth at the old Page School, which became a magnet for new American youth of Vietnamese origin. She also thanked Arlington County officials for being supportive of the local Vietnamese annual Tet (New Years) festival, as well as the annual Women's Day celebration, commemorating the actions of the Tran sisters, famous in Vietnamese history.

Ms. O'Connell concluded her program by inviting to the stage two Vietnamese friends, Ms. T.H. Bach and Ms. Anh Thu Lu, who told their personal stories and assisted in a most interesting question and answer session that followed.

AHS Supports Potomac Overlook Park Open House

by John P. Richardson

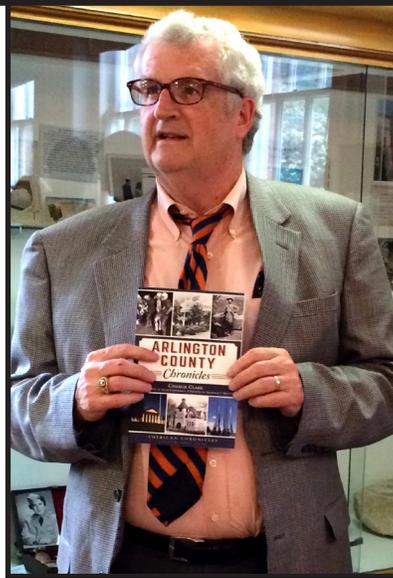
The Arlington Historical Society took part in the annual Potomac Overlook Park Open House Sunday, May 4, a tradition going back several years. AHS manned an information table -- complete with white cotton tablecloth -- provided by park ranger Roy Geiger. John Richardson was the AHS representative, standing in for Dr. Mark Benbow, who has handled the responsibility in the recent past. The Open House had a children's program in the park building down the road, sounds of which could be heard from our vantage point midway. There was a steady stream of visitors, most with young children, some of whom were attracted by the AHS exhibit of museum items, including a primitive stone axe head and a model Jeep (Jeeps were tested at Ft. Myer early in the war). The weather was perfect, and it was another good opportunity for AHS to bring its activities to a wider Arlington audience.



Book-Signing Party

by John P. Richardson

AHS hosted a book-signing party at the Hume School on May 15 to celebrate local journalist Charlie Clark's new book, Arlington County Chronicles. More than 30 members and friends were present to celebrate, and the author signed even more copies since at least one brought a bag of copies to be autographed. Charlie Clark is a true friend of Arlington history, having written entertaining and informative columns on every topic imaginable in the Falls Church News-Press. The weather, threatening a deluge, held off out of respect to the guest of honor.



Arlington Historical Museum Welcomes Oakridge Elementary Art Show

by Jen Jablonsky

On Tuesday, May 6, 2014, the Arlington Historical Museum welcomed more than 75 students and parents from the Oakridge Elementary School. The families came to the museum for the opening of the "Capture My Perspective of Oakridge" art show and to tour the museum.

The student art show demonstrates how the Oakridge Elementary School artists envisioned and captured their personal perspectives of their school using photograph technology from various eras throughout history. From a pinhole camera to iPad photography, the various cameras were used to express the main idea through still life, portraiture, architecture, and landscape.

The art show introduced a whole new audience to the Hume School. The families spent much of their time on the first floor of the museum engaging with the displays and learning more about their community. The brand new children's space was a hit with many of students taking "selfies" in period dress. Upstairs others played school in the recreated schoolroom and the school bell rang almost non-stop!

The students' artwork will be displayed on the second floor of the Arlington Historical Museum thru June 20. You can view the students' artwork when the museum is open on Saturday and Sundays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.



Hume School Volunteers on Spring Cleanup

by John P. Richardson

The Hume School volunteer grounds team showed up in force Saturday, May 3 for the annual spring cleanup. Led by coordinator Chick Walter, the combined force of old hands and young Mormons worked miracles on the schoolyard and the difficult back slope leading down to Joyce St. At 9:00 AM a large supply of rakes, shovels, and wheelbarrows awaited the volunteers, along with a pile of county-supplied mulch that was liberally applied to the garden areas once weeding and trimming were complete. The Arlington Ridge Civic Association provided water, oranges, juice, muffins, bagels and cream cheese. While restaurateur, Rich Kelly, showed up with hot dogs and accouterments for a well-deserved lunch. The spring cleanup is a key element in the Arlington Historical Society's efforts to present the Hume School, which houses the Arlington Historical Museum, as an attractive visitor destination, and the loyal volunteer cadre plays an important role. As an historic reminder, Chick Walter brought copies of photos taken ca. 2005, when he took on the challenge of wrestling the overgrown, jungly Hume School property into shape. To help him with this challenge, he was joined by a group of about 10 Arlington Ridge Civic Association residents plus AHS' Sara Collins, and aided by two County Parks employees provided under the auspices of the Remove Invasive Plants program, which was jointly run by the Extension Service and the County Parks Department. At that time the vine overlay was so dense that it was difficult to see several large, downed trees deep within. Now the place sparkles.





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The Arlington Historical Society (AHS) is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization founded in 1956 and incorporated under the laws of Virginia for literary and educational purposes that support research, collection, preservation, discovery, restoration and dissemination of the local history of Arlington County.

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