

Docent Happenings

By MATTHEW KEOUGH

The Arlington Historical Society docents at both the Hume School and the Ball-Sellers House have had an exciting year. We have had some sad losses and some welcomed additions to the docent lineup. There have been some challenges and unique situations, like the pumpkin sale. On the other hand, we had a very festive time at the Docent Social on April 24 and look forward to exciting things in the future.

The docent schedule has seen a lot of changes over the past year. We were all saddened to learn of the passing of a long time docent and former AHS President, Bob Watson. We also miss seeing Laura Watson docenting on the fifth Sunday of each month since she has retired from volunteering. More recently, we were saddened to learn that a founding member and docent, Bette Clements, had another stroke. We thank Janet Lefferts and Seymour Stiss, who are both retiring shortly, for their long and dedicated service to the AHS. There have also been some welcomed additions to the docent lineup. Both Savannah Timme and Ali Ferrell were new this year and have become regular docents at the Hume School. Peter Vliet graciously agreed to substitute for Seymour Stiss and has become a full time docent. Some newer additions like Dana Lynn, Tina Yu, Linda Endquist, and Michelle Dacus Car have also greatly helped out the stability of the docent schedule. We are always looking for more docents so please contact me if you are interested in joining this exciting group of people.

There have been some challenges over the past year. The Ball-Sellers security system and fire detection system both need to be replaced because of some false alarms that have been occurring. The head of the Ball-Seller's Committee, Kevin Vincent, has done a great job keeping the Board of Directors informed of the updates that need to occur at the house. Luckily for Kevin he has found a new job but this means we are in search of a new head of the Ball-Sellers Committee. Thanks to the docents one of the oldest standing houses in Virginia is still thriving and ready to invite more new eyes to come see its treasures. At the Hume School Museum, there was a pumpkin sale in the front lawn during the month of October. This created more work for the docents due to the increase visitors and people asking for change. Thanks especially to Eleanor Pourron for making sure the bookstore was always fully supplied. The air conditioner also broke so this created an eyesore with buckets in the middle of the museum to catch the falling water over the summer. Hopefully this will be resolved shortly.

Although we faced many challenges over the past year and will face more challenges in the future there is still a great deal to be excited about. The annual Docent Social was held on April 24 at the Hume School Museum and was a resounding success. Thanks to Jennifer Crane and Diane Gates for helping to coordinate the logistics of this fantastic event. The “Chicken Out” meal was great and the side dishes that everybody brought were delicious. There was a great attendance of Ball-Sellers House and Hume School docents including Bob and Laura Watson! There are also some exciting things to look forward to, including a docent gathering/holiday reception on December 5. Lois Chadbourne is also working on a new docent orientation packet which will help new volunteers become better acclimated to the Arlington Historical Society! Personally, I want to give a huge thank you to all the current and former docents of the Arlington Historical Society.

[Editor’s Note : Bette Clements passed away while the *Magazine* was in the final editing process.]