

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY YEAR IN REVIEW

2011–2012

October 2011

The Arlington Historical Society and Arlington Heritage Alliance presented a walking tour of historic Fort Myer on October 12. It offered an exclusive look at some of the base's most famous sites, including the parade grounds where Orville Wright conducted the first military test flight, the base stables, home to the Caisson Platoon that serves military funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, and more.

The Board of Directors of the Arlington Heritage Alliance (AHA) made a formal presentation to the AHS Board of Directors on October 19 regarding the possibility and advisability of a merger between the two organizations. In actuality, this would probably mean the dissolution or disestablishment of the AHA, and the creation of a permanent Committee for Historic Preservation under the AHS. The AHS board then began a consideration of the implications, positive and negative, of such a merger.

November 2011

The Arlington Historical Society and Arlington Heritage Alliance sponsored a local version of the PBS film series "Prohibition", with a program entitled "Prohibition in Arlington." The program was held at a joint meeting of the organizations on Thursday, November 10, at the Arlington Central Library, and featured a presentation by Garrett Peck, literary journalist and author of the book "Prohibition in Washington, D.C.: How Dry We Weren't."

On November 19, the Society co-sponsored the program "Indians of Arlington" with Potomac Overlook Regional Park. Held at the park, the event featured Park Director Martin Ogle, who spoke and gave a walking tour of areas of the park known to have been inhabited by Indians in prehistoric times.

December 2011

On Saturday, December 3, the Aurora Hills Women's Club (AHWC) held their Annual Holiday Boutique at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in South Arlington. It was a terrific event that was a lot of fun and very well attended. Arlington Historical Society is particularly grateful and indebted to all who made the event possible because AHS is a direct beneficiary of a very generous donation made annually by the AHWC. The donation is derived from the proceeds of the Boutique.

In the evening of the same day we held our annual Winter Social for society members and friends at the Arlington Historical Museum.

January 2012

Chris Clarke gave a presentation on Civil War uniforms, both Confederate and Union, for the January 12 AHS program, which was held at the Central Library.

March 2012

Charlie Clark, journalist, raconteur, historian, AHS member and columnist for The Falls Church News-Press, provided an informative and enjoyable tour around Arlington's business and commercial history at the AHS Membership Meeting and Program on March 15, held at the Arlington Central Library. More than 70 people in attendance were led back almost a hundred years, as Clark explained with abundant illustrations how the business character of Arlington has changed.

Clark's comments inspired a vibrant response from the audience. Many remembered the places that once marked Arlington County, and many added details from their own memories. Clark managed to ignite the cumulative memory of just about everyone, with references to various businesses that used to thrive in Arlington.

On March 31, ten University of Maryland students from Professor Richard Bell's class – about ordinary citizens living in America at the time of the Revolutionary War – visited the Ball-Sellers House.

May 2012

The Aurora Hills Women's Club held their Annual Tea at the Hume School on May 3. AHWOC President Carole Delong presented the Arlington Historical Society with a check in the amount of \$5,000. The donation, which has become an annual tradition, is made from the proceeds of the AHWOC Holiday Boutique held each year in December. These funds are set aside for the preservation of the Hume School. During the Annual Tea, AHS also presented the Aurora Hills Women's Club with a plaque to recognize their ongoing support.

The Friends of Hume School enjoyed another successful neighborhood volunteer day on May 5, with about 70 volunteers. It was a record turnout, largely due to the participation of three Mormon singles congregations from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Mormon singles outnumbered our steady ARCA and Garden Club participants, and their energy, ingenuity and ability to organize their efforts are much appreciated. The grounds at Hume School were weeded and mulched, and the group undertook some new projects along the

stairs down to South Lynn Street and some surgical invasive wisteria removal along the north side fence.

Fact and legend overlapped in the tale of Civil War Private William Scott, "The Sleeping Sentinel of Chain Bridge," as portrayed by George Dodge on Thursday, May 10, in the Arlington Central Library auditorium. Scott was caught sleeping on guard duty at Chain Bridge in 1861. A member of Company K of the 3rd Vermont Infantry, Scott was court-martialed and sentenced to be executed on September 9, 1861. A petition was presented to President Abraham Lincoln, who conferred with General George B. McClellan. A pardon was issued, but it was not read to Scott until the day he was to be killed. He was later mortally wounded on April 16, 1862, at the battle of Lee's Mills near Yorktown, Virginia. Scott's death came to the attention of poet Francis De Haes Janvier, who wrote a fictionalized account that included Lincoln dashing to Chain Bridge to save Scott's life.

That meeting also was the occasion for the election of officers and board members. Elected were Ali Ganjian, President; Tom Dickinson, First Vice-President; Tim Gribben, Treasurer; and John Richardson and Ashley Craighill, Directors.

June 2012

The first Saturday in June brought residents of the Glencarlyn neighborhood together to celebrate the bonds that unite them. On June 2, volunteers at the Ball-Sellers House served refreshments and gave tours to neighbors and others. The residents were also invited to dress in period costume.

WalkArlington, an initiative of Arlington County Commuter Services within the department of Environmental Services, gets "more people walking more of the time" by promoting the health, environmental, community-building, and commuting benefits of walking. On June 10, nearly 75 hot and sweaty walkers descended upon the Arlington Historical Museum at the end of a neighborhood walk. Rebecca Kupper and Karl VanNewkirk discussed Arlington history and the museum with the visitors, many of whom lived in the neighborhood. A number of people were surprised to find out how much content there was, and many walkers said they would be back to visit the museum at greater leisure later.

On Saturday, June 16, docents from both the Ball-Sellers House and Arlington Historical Museum were recognized at the annual Docent Social. Docent Coordinator Matthew Keough commented that "it was a sunny, perfect day, so we were able to set up the tent and have the picnic on the front yard of the museum. We handed out service pins for people who have volunteered for 5, 10, 15, and even 25 years of service." The social opened with a moment of silence to acknowledge the sudden death of docent H. Steven Dolan, who passed on Thursday, June 7. Dolan not only volunteered as a docent; he also contributed to

the Arlington Historical Magazine. He will be deeply missed by fellow docents and the Arlington Historical Society.

The annual banquet was held on June 18 at the NRECA Conference Center in Ballston. Ed Bearss, National Park Service Historian Emeritus and renowned expert on the Civil War, was the keynote speaker. Speaking to more than 150 banquet attendees, Bearss' presentation, "Arlington and Northern Virginia in the Civil War...Union or Confederate?" covered Union forces stationed in Arlington, Confederate sympathies, government, Arlington House, contrabands, occasional skirmishes and more. Following his keynote speech, Bearss received a standing ovation from the audience. Tom Dickinson, AHS immediate past president and banquet master of ceremonies, recognized Bearss with a first-ever Lifetime Achievement plaque. In so doing, AHS honored an Arlingtonian war hero and a living American legend "for a lifetime dedicated to promoting interest in and preserving the history of the United States."

August 2012

By action of the Board of Directors, Annette Benbow and Karl VanNewkirk were elected to fill vacant positions on the Board of Directors.

The Arlington Historical Society had a booth at the Arlington County Fair, held August 8–12 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center. In addition to the AHS table, the fair featured carnival rides, musical entertainment, and arts and crafts exhibits.

On Wednesday, August 29, a vehicle struck the fence at the Hume School and drove away in a hit-and-run accident. Repairs were funded by a generous donation from the Aurora Hills Women's Club.

September 2012

During the month of September, Museum Director Dr. Mark Benbow procured two new display cases for the museum. The Society purchased them from a church via an ad on Craig's List. The glass and chrome cases are small, but they're in good shape, and both are now part of the Civil War section in the museum. Also, an exhibit on the Wright Brothers in Arlington was installed.

During the fall semester, Marymount University students of the Introduction to Public History course studied the Ball-Sellers House Museum, Glencarlyn's historic treasure. They conducted group projects to recommend ways to update the museum displays. Their history professor and Arlington Historical Museum Director Dr. Mark Benbow challenged his students to come up with realistic recommendations within a very tight budget, while also taking into account county and state regulations for historic buildings. Each group visited the museum and evaluated the displays to prepare a brief presentation with specific

suggestions to improve the museum. The student groups then presented their projects to the Ball-Sellers House Committee and members of the Arlington Historical Society Board of Directors in early December.

October 2012

On Saturday, October 13, the Friends of Hume, supported by the local Mormon singles congregation, held their annual Fall Volunteer Day to clean up the grounds at the Hume School. Chick Walter, Bonnie Flynn and Shannon Crowley were instrumental in organizing this semi-annual effort.

On Friday, October 19, AHS staffed a table at History Network during the DC Historical Studies Conference. Many thanks are due to AHS Director John Richardson and AHS First Vice President Tom Dickinson for representing our organization.

On Saturday, October 27, AHS staffed a table at the Arlington Teen Volunteer Fair.

November 2012

Members of the Marymount University History and Politics Club cleaned the Hume School Museum on November 17 as part of their service project. The History Club cleaned windows and floors, dusted, swept away cobwebs, and otherwise made the museum nice and clean for the holiday season.