

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY YEAR IN REVIEW

2013–2014

December 2013

The Arlington Historical Society once again manned an information table at the December 7 Holiday Boutique sponsored by the Aurora Hills Women's Club (AHCW) and conducted at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. This annual event has been a major fundraiser for AHCW, which has generously supported AHS for the past seven years. The Boutique had a wide range of items for sale: elegant hand-crafted wooden toys, made-to-order door wreaths and delicious chili, all at reasonable prices despite the fund-raising objective.

The Arlington Historical Museum opened a special exhibit, "Season's Greetings From Arlington: Christmas Cards & Ornaments To Decorate The Holidays, 1920-1940," featuring Depression-era Christmas cards donated to the Society by Frank Burdell. Long-time Arlington resident Virginia Colclough and James Plitt also donated Christmas ornaments that were featured in the exhibit, which remained open until January 19, 2014.

January 2014

Why did the Metro subway run up the Wilson Boulevard corridor rather than along the recently constructed Interstate 66? Why didn't the Metro line go up the Columbia Pike corridor as at least some of the original planning envisaged? How did Arlingtonians feel about the building of Metro through their county? How were the Metro lines through Arlington funded? What were the politics involved between the DC government, the Arlington County government and the Federal Government regarding the building of Metro? We all know how much Metro has changed Arlington, but what was Arlington like before its construction? All these questions and more were answered in a brilliant illustrated lecture given by Kevin Craft to a full house of nearly ninety citizens at the Arlington Central Library on January 9.

AHS held its traditional Winter Social at the Arlington Historical Museum on the afternoon of January 11. The event was a success, with some 35 AHS members, prospective members, and friends in attendance.

February 2014

The Board of Directors made changes to the Bylaws of the Society affecting

Article V, relating to committees. The major change is that the Nominating Committee will now be comprised of at least three members of the Society appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors. Previously, the Bylaws provided that the Nominating Committee would “normally” be made up of the three preceding presidents of the Society, with the Immediate Past President serving as chairman.

The changed Bylaws now also provide for the appointment of an Audit Committee consisting of at least two Directors by the President, with the approval of the Board. The Bylaws previously mentioned the Audit Committee in the article concerning the duties of the Treasurer, but did not provide specifically for its appointment.

A new exhibit opened at the Arlington Historical Museum: “Arlington’s All-Star First Baseman: George McQuinn,” celebrating the career of Arlington native George McQuinn, who played for several major league baseball teams from 1936-1949. He spent most of his career with the St. Louis Browns, helping them win their only American League Pennant in 1944. He also was one of the leaders of the World Champion 1947 New York Yankees. McQuinn was born in a small home in the Ballston area in 1910 and was a member of the Washington-Lee High School class of 1929.

The Arlington Historical Museum welcomed Ms. Addy Monterrosa as a new volunteer. Ms. Monterrosa, who has extensive archive and museum experience, will help with the ongoing cataloging of AHS’s artifacts in storage and will also help develop policies to better preserve the artifacts in our collection.

March 2014

The March public program featured Don Alexander Hawkins; his topic was “Geography is Destiny: Arlington through Four Centuries.” Arlington originally came into being as part of the Federal District mandated by the Constitution. Though separated politically in 1846, its position relative to the city of Washington imposed upon the county a vital complementary role in its development. The lecture emphasized how, because of its proximity and its geography, the county has served the agricultural, industrial, transportation, defense and residential needs of the nation’s capital while developing into a prosperous independent community.

AHS was an enthusiastic participant in the March 23 dedication of new historic signage and other improvements at Fort Ethan Allen. 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 gray Sunday afternoon.

April 2014

The Arlington Historical Society hosted Dr. Nancy Perry to discuss the destruction of Queen City at its public program on April 3. In 1942, the federal government exercised eminent domain by taking 27 acres of land to build a road network around the new Pentagon in Arlington. The land had been occupied by over 900 residents of the African-American neighborhood of Queen City. The presentation combined interviews with ten of the original residents, oral histories, land records, census data, photographs, and news articles.

AHS once again hosted several Leadership Arlington groups at the Arlington Historical Museum during their "Neighborhood Day," April 10. Neighborhood Day is LA's way to introduce members of the current class to a variety of county neighborhoods.

Arlington Historical Society Board member and author Garrett Peck hosted a talk about his latest book, *Capital Beer: A Heady History of Brewing in Washington, D.C.*, at Mad Fox Brewery in Falls Church on April 16.

On April 19 the Ball-Sellers House sponsored a walking history tour of Washington Forest led by Kevin Vincent, who has done extensive research on the early history of Arlington. George Washington owned property throughout Virginia, including land in present-day Arlington.

May 2014

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

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 and young volunteers worked miracles on the schoolyard and the difficult back slope leading down to Joyce Street. 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 Arlington Historical Society took part in the annual Potomac Overlook Park Open House on Sunday, May 4, a tradition going back several years.

On May 6 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 students’ artwork was displayed on the second floor of the museum through June 20.

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? On May 8 AHS 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.

That same May 8 meeting also constituted the annual meeting of the Arlington Historical Society. Two major actions were taken: the election of officers and directors for 2014-15 (see page 4), and the approval of amendments to the AHS constitution that streamlined procedures, reduced the number of officers and expanded the size of the board of directors.

AHS hosted a book-signing party at the Arlington Historical Museum on May 15 to celebrate local journalist Charlie Clark’s new book, *Arlington County Chronicles*. More than thirty members and friends were present to celebrate.

The Arlington Historical Society held its annual membership banquet at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn Key Bridge on May 30. After an invocation by Museum Director Dr. Mark Benbow, 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 the Society’s public programs, and the Cornelia B. Rose Award was presented to the Aurora Hills Women’s Club for its significant annual support of the Hume School building. The keynote speaker for the evening, Greg Hamilton, the publisher and co-founder of *Arlington Magazine*, presented a fascinating talk: “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.

June 2014

On June 4 the Society gave certificates and cash awards to five Arlington County students who participated 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 first place award went to Noah Kennedy of Washington-Lee (His essay appears in the *Magazine* beginning on page 61). Second and third place awards 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 were given in partnership with Columbia Lodge 285, which provided the cash payment that went with each award.

AHS and the Arlington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee co-sponsored the monthly public program on June 12. The topic was "The Civil War: The Fort Stevens Raid and the Virginia Defenses." Loretta Neumann, Vice President of the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, who has studied and photographed the defenses of Washington for more than seventeen years, brought these events to life with historical photos of the military campaign; she also discussed the effort to preserve these sites for future generations.

July 2014

On July 15 the Board of Directors revised Article I of the bylaws of the Society, which deals with membership categories. On the same date, the Board approved new dues levels for some membership categories (see the inside front cover). In a major revision of membership benefits, the Board also voted to have the Society join the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Program and provide the museum and other cultural institution reciprocal benefits of the NARM Program to AHS members at the Donor and Life Member levels. This will permit AHS members at these levels to free or member admission prices and member museum store discounts at almost 700 participating institutions in the United States and Canada.

August 2014

AHS welcomed some 45 guests to a Friday evening reception on August 15 at the Arlington Historical Museum to inaugurate a new rotating exhibit by Museum Director Mark Benbow. The exhibit featured Rosslyn's Cherry Smash soda factory, which took over an Arlington beer-making establishment that had gone by the boards as a result of Prohibition. Dr. Benbow spoke briefly about

the exhibit, and Garrett Peck, author of the new book, *Capital Beer*, spoke about his research and signed copies of his book.

Continuing a tradition of acknowledging the vital role played by docents at the Arlington Historical Museum and Ball-Sellers House, AHS held its annual Docent Social at the museum on August 30. The event was enlivened with the arrival of local author and raconteur Charlie Clark, who was happy to sign copies of his new book, *Arlington County Chronicles*.

September 2013

The program season kicked off on Thursday, September 11 with Chief James Schwartz of the Arlington County Fire Department, who provided an historical overview of the ACFD beginning with the formation of the first volunteer fire company in 1898.. The chief continued by discussing the department's evolution over the years as it has adapted to meet a growing community's needs. ACFD was the lead firefighting agency that responded to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack at the Pentagon, during which Chief Schwartz led the unified command fire and rescue effort.