



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 57, NO. 1 APRIL 2012

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow AHS Members: This is my last newsletter missive to you as president of the Arlington Historical Society. My two-year term will expire when our next board of directors and officer elections are held at Arlington Central Library on Thursday, May 10.

It has been a rewarding and fulfilling two years. It has also been daunting and challenging; a very demanding set of responsibilities exist, given shortages of funds and personnel, to keep this organization running as a strong, viable component of Arlington’s cultural landscape.

I want to personally thank all of you who have in any way contributed to the Society, whether with your membership, extraordinary donations of funds, your time, talent, ideas and suggestions. None of what has been accomplished would have been possible without your generous support and commitment. THANK YOU! Please continue to stay active and engaged!

Hopefully on the horizon is a new effort to secure a public-private relationship with Arlington County to ensure the ongoing and future vitality of our two wonderful Museums – the AHS Hume School and the Ball-Sellers House.

Many challenges remain. The potential merger of the Arlington Heritage Alliance with AHS is still in the mix of major changes, and it could significantly add to our already full plate of responsibilities. We still need more people active on the board of directors, the key word being “active.” My philosophy regarding board membership is that each person should consider that a role as a member of a working board involves most work being accomplished between infrequent meetings, not during meetings. We need people willing to roll up their sleeves and work to help in a dozen or more areas, such as fundraising, membership, programs, publications, promotion and publicity, community and educational outreach, collections and museum management. We need more docents to help keep the museums open and operating, and more frequently.

We’ve had some notable successes over the last couple of years:

- 1) Attainment of an anonymous donation of \$17,000 to accomplish improvements for handicap access, and repairs and maintenance at the Ball-Sellers House.
- 2) Establishment of an educational field-trip program for students at Oakridge Elementary School through formal agreement with Principal **Dr. Lynne Wright**, and leadership from teachers **James Proctor** and **Rachna Fraccaro**.
- 3) Excellent maintenance and upkeep of the Hume School due to the wonderful, superb generosity and steady commitment of the **Aurora Hills Women’s Club**.
- 4) Acquisition of superb new artifacts for the AHS Museum collection, including a new portrait of a youthful Frank Hume donated by the **Hume family**, lithographs of Fort Scott and “the new Hume School,” and a number of outstanding artifacts from the pre-9/11 and renovated Pentagon (many now on display at the Museum).

Please see President, page 2

SAVE THE DATE

AHS Annual Banquet
Monday, June 18
6 p.m.
Keynote: Ed Bearss
See page 7.

AHS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, May 10
7-8:30 p.m.

“The Sleeping Sentinel of Chain Bridge”

Arlington Central Library
Auditorium, 1015 N.
Quincy St.

For details, see page 5.

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PRESIDENT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- 5) Through the creative and artistic efforts of **Maya Giacobbe**, a Wakefield High School student, the Hume School Museum is depicted on the registration decal of more than 100,000 automobiles in Arlington County.
- 6) Host of a county-wide 10-year commemoration of the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon, in association with Oakridge Elementary School students, parents, faculty and staff, and Arlington County Fire Department Station Five, Aurora Hills. The Hume School Museum bell was rung 184 times by Oakridge students to commemorate each of the victims of the Pentagon attack, and a memory book was created.
- 7) Appointment of **Dr. Mark Benbow** as Museum Director and Curator. Benbow is a history professor at Marymount University, and his return to the museum is a huge plus.
- 8) Agreement with and endorsement from the Arlington Heritage Alliance to merge with AHS, thus strengthening our advocacy position for historic preservation in Arlington.
- 9) Support for and direct involvement with the Arlington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Committee, including co-sponsorship of the Civil War HistoryMobile at the 2011 Arlington County Fair.
- 10) Affiliation and cooperation with Potomac Overlook Park Director **Martin Ogle** in the re-creation and re-interpretation of the original farm barn on the site.
- 11) Affiliation with the Arlington Food Assistance Committee to grow vegetables in the garden at the Ball-Sellers House.

We mourn the recent loss of several long-time AHS members and “super-activists,” including **Willard Webb, Bette Clements, Robert Watson, June Verzi, Doris “Tish” Bangs Sansbury** and **Ditty Boaz**. Over the years, these individuals generously and selflessly contributed time, talent and treasure, and they gave so much of themselves to lead, guide and encourage others to get involved with AHS. Hopefully, they knew how much they were appreciated, and their respective relatives and survivors know how grateful we all are for what they did for the AHS. They are all very much missed!

I ask each and every one of you to seriously consider the following requests:

- 1) **Get more involved with the Society.** Volunteer as a board member, docent, or in any other way in which your individual interests and talents can be of benefit. The options are endless!
- 2) **Contribute funds.** Make a generous donation to the Society. Our budget situation is always frail.
- 3) **Donate items to the Museum.** Anything that has a historical connection to Arlington, its people and/or its past that will help to preserve and tell about Arlington’s history. Before you (or your friend or neighbor) decide to get rid of that old radio, furniture item, photograph or home movie, please contact AHS! Almost every item in our collection was donated; we rely on contributions to keep our collection vibrant, diverse and historically significant.
- 4) **Lobby the County Board.** The Society could use their support for AHS museums and activities.
- 5) **Support AHS activities and events.** Volunteer to help, offer advice or suggestions and GET MORE INVOLVED!

In closing, I’d like to extend special thanks to and recognize individuals who have helped me and made my job more enjoyable (and doable!): Major thank you to all of our **museum docents** who quietly and freely give up their Saturdays and Sundays to keep the Hume School Museum open and accessible for visitors and guests; **Carole DeLong** and all the members of the Aurora Hills Women’s Club for their steady generous support for Hume School Museum upkeep and repairs; **Lindsey Wray**, our superb, extremely talented and dedicated newsletter editor, who not only ensured lively and interesting editorial

(Continued next page)

content, but also creatively designed and laid out each issue, on time and under budget; **Elise Dickinson** and **Sacha Potter**, interim newsletter editors; **Ann Tutundjian**, interim treasurer; **George Dodge** for his enduring dedication to the Society and his wonderful re-enactments at our public programs; **Eleanor Pourron**, who quietly and efficiently manages and operates our Hume School Museum Bookstore and remote sales at the AHWC Holiday Boutique and the Arlington County Fair; **Rich Kelly**, wonderful Arlington Ridge neighbor, for always being willing to help out – pro-actively, quietly and modestly; **Sedge Moss**, a devoted Arlington historian and kind, good friend, for his steady, reliable support, and for always looking for ways to improve our museum displays and public presence; **Andy Barr**, AHS Life Member, for his steady generous support of the Society, an example of which was his purchase of 10 seats at the AHS 2011 Annual Banquet for Arlington high school students; **Leah Rubalcaba**, Community Relations Officer at Fort Myer for twice allowing AHS members exclusive access to the incredible historic resources there, and **Kim Holien**, Army historian, for sharing his encyclopedic knowledge of that history; **The Arlington Ridge Civic Association** for cleanup and beautification of Museum grounds; **Alice Andors** (former board member) and **Patty Kime** for superbly planning and executing our last two highly successful Annual Banquets; **Karl VanNewkirk**, for his superb professionalism as our magazine editor; **Kevin Vincent**, **Gerry LaPorte**, **Marty Orth** and all members of the Ball-Sellers Committee; **Val Kitchens** for her consistent generosity of ideas and donations; **Gerry LaPorte**, steady advisor and voice of rational reason and common sense; **Bill Thomas**, former Arlington County Planning Office official; **John Richardson**, for assistance in promoting a public-private partnership and sustainable funding model with Arlington County; and the current AHS board of directors: **Patty Kime**, **Ali Ganjian**, **Rebecca Kupper**, **Matthew Keough**, **Susan Daniel**, **Tim Gribben**, and **Warren Nelson** for all their individual contributions of time and talents; good friends **John Moroz** and **John Courtright**, thank you for your support. Thank you to Wells-Fargo Bank for a \$1,000 Community Outreach Grant! Thank you to the **Arlington Heritage Alliance board of directors** for the opportunity to join them and expand our AHS mission to include critically important local historic preservation education and advocacy. Finally, an extraordinary thank you to that anonymous donor who made a major contribution for the purpose of improving and preserving the Ball-Sellers House!

It has been my honor to serve as president of our Arlington Historical Society for the last two years. It is a terrific organization with a unique and special mission that must be sustained and maintained. That can only be done with your help. I look forward to many more years of fun and interesting activities with you. Keep in touch. **THANK YOU!**

GIVE THE GIFT OF HISTORY

AHS memberships make great gifts!

Visit the AHS Museum or
www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org for details.

Memberships include:

- A quarterly newsletter
- The annual AHS Magazine
- Discounts at the AHS Museum bookshop
- Invitations to special member-only events



Tom Dickinson

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AHS MEMBER PROGRAMS

AHS member programs are held at 7 p.m. in the Arlington Central Library auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy St.

Upcoming programs:

July 12
 September 13
 November 8

For details, visit www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

**AHS Hume
 School
 Museum**

Photo by
 Maya Giacobbe



AHS PROGRAM EXPLORES ARLINGTON BUSINESS HISTORY

By Tom Dickinson, AHS President

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 at 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 presentation was inspired by artifacts in the AHS Hume School Museum collection: two card tables from the late 1940s or early 1950s that contain advertisements from Arlington businesses. These unique items were donated by former H-B Woodlawn Program co-founder and administrator **Ray Anderson**, who found them in an old Masonic Lodge building.

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.

Clark opened his presentation with a photo of a General Store in Jackson City near the 14th St. Bridge/Long Bridge, and then walked everyone around the County by business category: restaurants, hardware stores, car dealers, gas stations, banks, real estate firms, etc. Here's a sampling of what he covered:

- Kanns at Virginia Square, Hecht Company Store, Herbert's Youth Fashions, Mary Bain's Gift Shop, Casual Corner, McCrory's, the "Arcadian Gardens" and Ted Lewis.
- Long-gone but fondly remembered eateries and restaurants: The Colonial Restaurant, The Little Tavern ("Buy 'em by the Bag"), Howard Johnsons, The Three Pigs Barbecue, The Orleans House, the Steak and Egg Kitchen, the Frank 'N Stein, Topps ("Home of the Sir Loiner"), Hot Shoppes, Speedies, the Toddle House, Hamburger Hamlet and Giffords Ice Cream.
- Then, in order to get around town, you need a car from: Alcova Motors, Joyce Motors, Bob Peck Chevrolet.
- Nuts and bolts and anything else could be found at Arlington Hardware, Yeatmans, Virginia Hardware, Bill's Garden Center, Robinson's 5&10.
- How about a night out at the movies? Theaters included The Ashton, the Byrd, the Arlington, the Palace, the Buckingham, the Glebe, and the Wilson, all of which (except for the Arlington) are gone now.
- Family recreation and fun could be found at Skor-Mor Bowling, Putt-Putt Mini-Golf, Tuthill's Pool Hall and Junior 3 Slot Car Racing.
- There were plenty of drugstores, such as Drug Fair, Fantle's, Peoples Drug Store and Dart Drug.
- Favorite five-and-dime stores were Kresges, Woolworths, Ben Franklin, Murphy's and McCrory's.
- These real estate companies fed and prompted Arlington's boom in residential growth: Yonas, Dittmar, Rucker, J. Fuller Groom, Brock and Broyhill.

Last but not least, Clark talked about the single pump Esso gas station and bait-and-tackle shop at the upstream side of the Virginia end of Chain Bridge; it was a true landmark in this area. The small open space is still there, and you can park there and enjoy the views from the bridge, noting the historical markers nearby. (This is Pimmit Run, where the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were stored for safekeeping when Washington, D.C. was ransacked and burned by the British during the War of 1812.)

One can't help but think how sad it is that so many of these businesses that once gave Arlington its commercial depth, vibrancy and character are now gone, replaced by bland and impersonal condos, apartments, high rises and office buildings, and predictable, sterile, chain restaurants. But Clark closed on a positive note, urging attendees to patronize old-time businesses like Bergmann's Cleaning and Sam Torrey shoe shop, a few of which are still around.

We did not record this wonderful presentation, which means we'll have to reprise it sometime in the future. Hopefully Clark's list of vanished businesses will not have grown much by then!

MAY PROGRAM: BOARD ELECTIONS, CIVIL WAR PORTRAYAL

Fact and legend overlap in the tale of Civil War Private William Scott. **George Dodge** will portray Scott — doing his best to sort out history and fiction — at the May Arlington Historical Society program. The program and membership meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 10, in the Arlington Central Library auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy St.

Dodge, who portrayed Confederate soldier Alexander Hunter for an AHS program in March 2011, will again use his acting skills to invoke a notable historical figure. Pvt. William Scott, known and commemorated in verse as “The Sleeping Sentinel of Chain Bridge,” was caught sleeping on guard duty at Chain Bridge in 1861. A member of Company K or 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.

Scott’s story is a fascinating piece of Arlington history, which complements ongoing commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

Also at the May meeting, AHS members in good standing will have the opportunity to vote for a slate of candidates for the AHS board of directors. The Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for all board and officer positions established under the Society’s bylaws: President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Corresponding and Recording Secretaries, Treasurer and Directors. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else, or have questions, please contact **Jennifer Sale Crane**, Chair of the Nominating Committee, at jen@slipt.net or 202-329-5898.

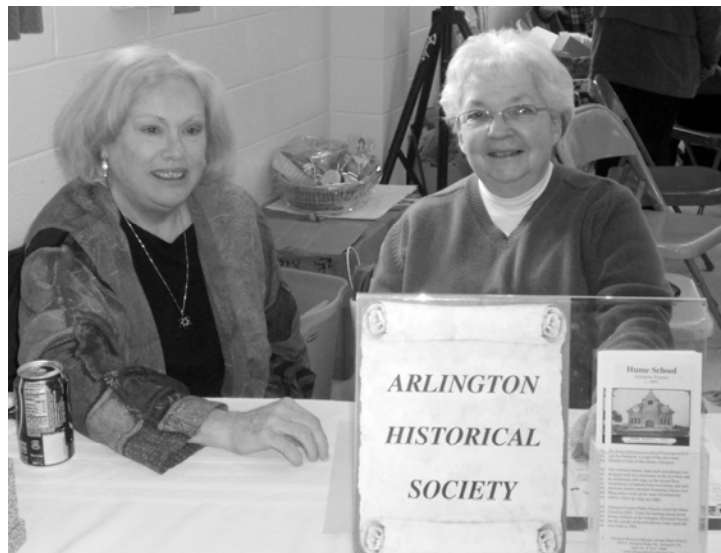
AHS GETS PRESENT FROM HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

By **Rebecca Kupper**, AHS Board Member

The Aurora Hills Women’s Club (AHWC) held their Annual Holiday Boutique on Saturday, December 3, at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in South Arlington. **Carole DeLong**, **Alice Andors** and other AHWC members staged 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 the very generous donation made annually by the AHWC. The donation is derived from the proceeds of the Boutique.

A very special thank you to **Eleanor Pourron**, who set up and ran the AHS table at the Boutique. Pourron did a brisk business in book sales, and her presence all day kept AHS visible to the public. Many people stopped by the table to talk about what AHS does for the community. Eleanor was assisted at the table by AHS Board Member **Rebecca Kupper**.



Rebecca Kupper (left) and Eleanor Pourron at the AHS table at the Aurora Hills Women’s Club Holiday Boutique. (Photo courtesy of Rebecca Kupper.)

FAIRFAX HISTORY CONFERENCE EDUCATES, INSPIRES

By Tom Dickinson, AHS President

The beautiful, new Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center was the site of what must certainly be the best DC Metro/Northern Virginia area history conference. Fairfax County hosted their 7th annual event last November.

The theme of the 2011 Conference was “The Civil War Comes to Fairfax County,” commemorating the events of 150 years ago when Union and Confederate forces began their see-saw confrontations and skirmishes, centered less than a mile from the conference site.

The keynote speaker was **Dr. Stephen Potter**, Regional Archeologist for the National Park Service, National Capital Region. Dr. Potter is a specialist in the 17th Century Chesapeake frontier, colonial America, and the archeology and history of the Civil War. He gave a fascinating talk on the archeology and battle of Brawner Farm – “No Maneuvering and Very Little Tactics” – which aptly described much of the action in Fairfax County during the earliest phases of the Civil War.

Dr. Potter was followed by **Richard Gillespie**, who gave a detailed review of the realities of the Virginia secession vote in May 1861 in his presentation, “The Spring the Civil War Came to Virginia.” Gillespie is the director of education for the Mosby Heritage Area and a 30-year veteran history teacher at Loudoun Valley High School.

David Blake, chairman of the Buckland Preservation Society and owner of Buckland Farm in Prince William County, gave a fascinating lecture on Buckland: “A Land of History, A Land to Preserve.”

Susan Hellman, director of Woodlawn Plantation, spoke about “Woodlawn on the Eve of the Civil War – A Changing Cultural Landscape,” which was an interesting overview of the peaceful Quaker presence at the start of the Civil War.

Art Candanquist spoke about “The Centreville Military Railroad,” telling the story of a little known but important railway operation/connection during the Civil War. His remarks were given from the perspective of Capt. Thomas Sharp, a Confederate officer from Pennsylvania who helped the South build and operate its railroad system.

Gar Schulin closed the event with a passionate address about “Robert E. Lee – The American.” He detailed the great personal character traits of the Confederate leader and explained why Lee was honored, admired and respected by North and South alike.

The conference also included many exhibits, displays, book sales and signings, and historical memorabilia, handouts, pamphlets and brochures. This is a premiere event in the area, and great credit goes to **Lynne Garvey-Hodge**, conference chairperson, and a very dedicated planning team. These supporters of local history deserve acclaim for putting together these conferences, which only get better each year.

Chris Clarke gave a presentation on Civil War uniforms for the January AHS program. In this drawing, left: Infantry C.S. Army, overcoat. Right: Private, U.S. Infantry, fatigue marching order.



TITANIC CONNECTIONS?

The 100th anniversary of the April 15, 1912, sinking of the RMS Titanic recently occurred. AHS wants to know if there are any links connecting Arlington to the Titanic. For example, the monument at Arlington National Cemetery is dedicated to Major Archibald Butt, military assistant to Presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. Maj. Butt died during the Titanic disaster; his body was never recovered.

If anyone knows of any Arlington/Northern Virginia connections to the Titanic, please contact **Tom Dickinson** at tomwd3@gmail.com.

ED BEARSS TO SPEAK AT AHS ANNUAL BANQUET

Ed Bearss, National Park Service Historian Emeritus and renowned expert on the Civil War, will be the keynote speaker for the AHS Annual Banquet scheduled for Monday, June 18, at 6 p.m. at the NRECA Conference Center in Ballston.

Bearss' presentation, "Arlington and Northern Virginia in the Civil War...Union or Confederate?" will cover Union forces stationed in Arlington, Confederate sympathies, government, Arlington House, contrabands, occasional skirmishes and more.

"Mr. Bearss is a living encyclopedia on the Civil War," said AHS President **Tom Dickinson**, "and his interpretations and descriptions bring history to life like no one else."

Tickets are \$25 for AHS members, and will be made available to the public starting May 21 for \$40. Deadline is June 10. To purchase tickets or join the Society, visit the AHS website, www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org, or call 703-892-4204.

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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.

WWW.ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

**HISTORY AWAITS.
COME VISIT!**

HUME SCHOOL MUSEUM

1805 South Arlington Ridge Rd.
Open Saturdays & Sundays
1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Free

Come visit our permanent exhibits on
the 200+ year history of the county.

BALL-SELLERS HOUSE

5620 South Third St.
Open Saturdays 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
April through October

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Free admission, but donations appreciated.

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