



NEWSLETTER

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow AHS Members:

This is my first message to our readership as president of the Arlington Historical Society, and I want to say first that I am delighted to play this role in 2013-2014. Before becoming submerged in the details of an all-volunteer local organization, I want to use this opportunity to paint a picture of where I hope to see AHS in the next few years.

The long-range dream is completion of the long-discussed Arlington Heritage Center, a combined museum and visitors center built on a portion of the old Navy Annex property below an expanded Arlington National Cemetery. The purpose would be to serve as a one-stop gateway to Arlington for tourists and other visitors. The center would ideally contain AHS's own museum (Hume School collection) and the Black Heritage Museum, along with other participants to include the Air Force Memorial, the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, the Arlington County Visitors and Convention Bureau, and a gift shop featuring Virginia history and crafts. This multi-phase, expensive project would require an ambitious public-private partnership but would be well worth the effort.

In the coming years I see AHS as a professionally staffed organization managing a wide variety of activities. One would be strong institutional links to the Arlington school system, providing enrichment in the study of history through field trips, essay contests and curriculum support. Another would be links to Arlington's diverse minority communities, featuring documentary films and lectures about the black, Hispanic, Vietnamese and other groups that make Arlington such a mosaic. A third link would be to Arlington's neighborhoods and civic associations, many of whom serve as repositories of important records of neighborhood creation and history; AHS would be a resource for workshops in how to conduct neighborhood historical research and how to preserve the results, as well as publicizing what they do.

In my dream of the future, AHS would be an active partner with Arlington County in preserving our history and creating robust attractions for the millions of tourists who visit the national capital area each year. This part of the program would provide direct benefit to the Arlington business community. Above all, the AHS of the future would serve as a connector and a catalyst for making the study of Arlington history and culture rewarding in its own right and a source of economic benefit to the county. All Arlington residents would be the beneficiaries.

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VOLUNTEER FOR AHS

The Arlington Historical Society seeks a treasurer to help us run our all-volunteer organization dedicated to local history.

For details, see page 3.

RENEW YOUR AHS MEMBERSHIP

We need your help to realize our 2013-2014 goals. Please renew your commitment to AHS before the new membership year begins July 1. Sign on again to Arlington's own historical organization and become part of a growing body of support for Arlington history.

www.arlingtonhistory.org/join/membershipform

MARCH PROGRAM COVERS RETROCESSION ACT OF 1847

By Tom Dickinson, AHS Past President

Local historian and railroading history expert **Ron Beavers** delivered a fascinating presentation on March 14 for the bi-monthly AHS public program at Arlington Central Library.

Almost 100 people, a standing-room-only crowd, filled the auditorium as Beavers explained the origins of the Retrocession and its underlying economic drivers. The Constitutional basis for the 10-mile square (100 square miles) Federal District, which included what was then Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria, seemed to ensure a perpetual territorial allocation. However, as Beavers explained, when economic interests and capitalism are involved, even Congress can be persuaded to act.

There were several underlying causes – all of them economic – of the Retrocession that resulted in the Virginia component of the Federal District being ceded back to the state of Virginia. One of the major reasons Virginia wanted its piece of the 10-mile square back was to protect its thriving slave trade from congressional meddling. Aside from the slave trade, another grievance was that Congress had passed a law early on prohibiting construction of public buildings on the Virginia side of the river.

In addition, as Beavers explained in detail, there were a number of Virginia entrepreneurs eager to establish rail lines to bring commercial goods and products to and from the port of Alexandria. They chafed under rigid Federal restrictions on getting approval to build new railroads under the Federal District jurisdiction and control. Beavers is a recognized expert on railroading in the 19th and 20th centuries, and he clearly explained this particular economic influence as a Retrocession Act root cause.

These economic interests joined together, and by an Act of Congress on July 9, 1846, the Retrocession was approved. President James K. Polk signed the Bill on September 7, 1846. The Virginia General Assembly then approved the Act on March 3, 1847. Virginia's portion of the Federal District returned to Virginia.

Thus freed from red tape and bureaucracy, local businessmen established the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad, chartered by the State on March 20, 1847. Shortly thereafter, the Manassas Gap Railroad was similarly chartered.

Beavers held everyone's attention for more than 90 minutes with an illustrated presentation that included period maps, drawings, photographs and drawings from various publications of the time.



AHS MAY PROGRAM

AHS hosted local historian **Carole Herrick** on May 9 at Arlington's Central Library.

For an audience of more than 40 people, Herrick discussed her book – "Ambitious Failure: Chain Bridge, the First Bridge Across the Potomac River" – which details the construction of the eight chain bridges.

Photo courtesy of Annette Benbow

IN MEMORIAM

Valerie Kitchens died on February 16 in Arlington. She was 76.

Kitchens was the wife of **Allen Kitchens**, who served as president of the Arlington Historical Society from 1985-1986. She was a longtime member and supporter of AHS.

According to her Washington Post obituary, Valerie Kitchens "was a powerful force of positive change and activity in regard to conservation, politics, and various issues that impacted Arlington County."

She is survived by her son **Jeffrey**, daughter **Sharon**, sister **Beverly**, and brother **Karl**.

AHS ELECTS 2013-2014 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The Arlington Historical Society membership elected 2013-2014 officers and directors at the annual membership meeting May 9 at Arlington Central Library. Past President **Tom Dickinson** was chairman of the nominating committee and conducted the election. The new president is Arlington resident **John P. Richardson**, a retired intelligence officer who has written a biography of Gov. Alexander R. Shepherd, the builder of Washington, D.C., in the decade after the Civil War. Other officers are **Karl Van Newkirk** (Second Vice President), **Gerry LaPorte** (Corresponding Secretary), **Annette Benbow** (Recording Secretary) and **Tim Gribben** (Treasurer). Both Van Newkirk and LaPorte are former AHS presidents.

New directors joining the AHS board are **Luis Araya**, chief of the Development Services Bureau in the Arlington County Department of Environmental Services; **Courtney Cacatian**, marketing manager for the Arlington County Convention and Visitors Bureau; **Dr. Max Gross**, a Middle East historian and former Dean of the School of Intelligence Studies at the National Defense College; **Garrett Peck**, author of four books on the history of the Washington area; and **Fred Stokeld**, former director of International Business Relations for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Immediate Past President **Ali Ganjian** and Hume School Museum Curator **Dr. Mark Benbow** serve ex-officio.

"This coming year will see major AHS rebuilding and expansion," Richardson said, "with internal emphasis on organizational systems and external emphasis on outreach to key sectors of the Arlington community, particularly the school system and telling the stories of Arlington's minority communities and neighborhoods." The AHS mission statement, adopted at a March 2013 board retreat, is "To help Arlingtonians better understand our community through its history."

AHS 2013 EVENTS

Save these dates for exciting AHS programs. For updates and additions, please visit www.arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

SEPTEMBER

Membership meeting & public program
Arlington History – *Karl VanNewkirk*
Thursday, September 12, 7 - 8 p.m.
Arlington Central Library,
1015 N. Quincy St.

NOVEMBER

Membership meeting & public program
Civil War Logistics – *Ron Beavers*
Thursday, November 14, 7 - 8 p.m.
Arlington Central Library,
1015 N. Quincy St.

Membership Winter Social
Saturday, November 30, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
AHS Hume School,
1805 S Arlington Ridge Rd.

AHS SEEKS TREASURER

The Arlington Historical Society is in need of a volunteer treasurer to perform the following duties:

On an Ongoing Basis

- Write and mail checks for expenses (or pay from online bank account)
- Deposit receipts (cash and checks)
- Maintain check log and donor log (in Excel)
- Enter all transactions into Quicken
- Update membership database (temporary duty)

On a Monthly Basis

- Reconcile checking account
- Prepare Treasurer's reports (Statement of Cash on Hand and Comparison of Actual Expenses to Budget) for Board by running Quicken reports and then updating Excel spreadsheets with actuals
- Attend board meeting

On a Quarterly Basis

- Prepare and submit sales tax report (for museum sales)
- Generate mailing labels for newsletter (temporary duty)

On an Annual Basis

- Prepare draft budget for new fiscal year
- Produce Income Statement and Balance Sheet
- Produce and file IRS Form 990 (return of organization exempt from income tax). AHS has been filing the electronic postcard version.
- Produce list of donors for publication in AHS magazine

If interested, please contact AHS President John Richardson at johnjoyce2@verizon.net or 703-534-3577.

USS ARLINGTON COMMISSIONED; AHS TO FORM EXHIBIT

By John Richardson, AHS President

The April 6 commissioning in Norfolk, Va., of the USS Arlington was a great success, thanks in large part to the efforts of Commissioning Committee Vice-Chair **Jim Pebley** and the Navy League. The weather cooperated, being bright and sunny if windy on the pier. The gala Friday evening and the stand-up breakfast Saturday morning were excellent preludes to the commissioning ceremony itself.

The Arlington Historical Society has been closely associated with the commissioning, contributing \$250 to the establishment of a "Tribute Room" aboard ship that tells the story of the 9/11 Pentagon attack. AHS has been collecting ship memorabilia and plans to create a special exhibit in the Arlington Historical Museum (Hume School) so that visitors can appreciate the significance of the ship's naming after Arlington County to honor the victims of the terrorist attack and Arlington's first responders, who did a magnificent job under difficult circumstances. It was an honor for me to serve on the USS Arlington Commissioning Committee as the AHS representative.

The USS Arlington is designated LPD-24, a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock and the third U.S. Navy ship to be named for Arlington, Va. Like her sister ships, USS New York and Somerset, she is named in commemoration of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Steel taken from the Pentagon after the 9/11 attacks will be displayed aboard.

Just about every area political and county government personality was on hand in Norfolk: the governor, **Rep. Jim Moran**, D-Va., all five Arlington County Board members, fire and police department chiefs, the sheriff, Delegates **Pat Hope** and **Bob Brink**, County Manager **Barbara Donnellan**, Federal Liaison **Brian Stout**, County Treasurer **Frank O'Leary** and key aides. **Maryellen Baldwin** of the Hampton Roads Navy League and her crew put on a seamless performance. The Commissioning Committee was congratulated on every occasion: Commissioning Committee Chair General **John Gallinetti** was emcee of the Friday gala, and Pebley, O'Leary, Police Capt. **Kevin Reardon**, and others from the

committee were cited. **Herb Wolk** was acknowledged as a representative of 9/11 victims' families, as well as for his stunning stained-glass creation commemorating the commissioning.

The commissioning ceremony platform was awash in medals and gold braid, from the Marine Commandant through several admirals and other Department of Defense officials to **Cdr. Darren Nelson**, the ship's skipper. The ship was open to visitors after the ceremony, and sailors and marines were on hand to explain the amphibious marine equipment, aircraft (helicopters and an Osprey), and the ship itself. The skipper was on the bridge and ready to answer questions. The ship next door, sharing the same pier, was the aircraft carrier, USS George (H.W.) Bush, making a dramatic backdrop.

The events confirmed the significance of the addition of a superior ship to the U.S. Navy and its fighting mission; they were a dramatic reminder of the ship's importance to the people of Arlington County.

The next step for AHS is to move from the initial role of supporting creation of the "Tribute Room" aboard ship to a permanent committee that will



Photo courtesy of John Richardson

The USS Arlington was commissioned April 6 in Norfolk, Va. The Arlington Historical Society has been collecting ship memorabilia for an exhibit in the Arlington Historical Museum.

maintain direct county-ship ties and, hopefully, follow through on creation of a Tribute Room copy in Arlington County to serve as a permanent, publicly accessible teaching tool for generations of Arlington students and other residents.

AHS ANNUAL BANQUET FEATURES CIA HISTORIAN

By Garrett Peck, AHS board of directors

Ever wonder if your neighbor is a spy? **Dr. David Robarge**, chief historian of the Central Intelligence Agency, might be able to help you get an answer.



Photo courtesy of Garrett Peck

Dr. David Robarge, chief historian of the CIA, was the keynote speaker at Arlington Historical Society's annual membership banquet, held May 31 at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn/Key Bridge. Nearly 100 people attended the banquet, including Arlington County Board member Chris Zimmerman and Commonwealth's Attorney Theo Stamos.

ton, when New York Times reporter **Seymour Hersh** threatened to publish a story on CIA counterintelligence activities. After Angleton's dismissal, the CIA turned away from counterintelligence. It was left with an "Angleton hangover" or "Angleton syndrome."

The third story was about **Aldrich Ames**, "the CIA's most destructive spy ever," as Robarge called him. Ames, who lived at 2512 N. Randolph Street in Arlington, headed the Soviet counterintelligence division and began spying for the Soviets in 1985. Over the next nine years, he revealed all of the US's spies within the Soviet Union, and 10 people were rolled up and executed. It was a devastating loss. Ames was caught in 1994 and is spending the rest of his life in a federal penitentiary in Pennsylvania.

During the Q&A session after his talk, Robarge noted how difficult counterintelligence is to pursue in a free society like ours. The CIA ran away from its own counterintelligence, learning the wrong lesson – and enabling a spy like Ames to operate with impunity for years. Robarge concluded his remarks: "When you're dealing with controversy and scandal, learn the right lessons – and don't forget the past."

As the keynote speaker at the Arlington Historical Society's annual membership banquet on May 31, Robarge delivered an illustrated, eye-opening lecture called "Spies Next Door," which covered three interlocking stories – much of which unfolded in Arlington.

You've probably driven past the National Foreign Affairs Training Center at South George Mason Dr. and Arlington Blvd., now run by the State Department to train Foreign Service Officers. But during World War II, the U.S. Army took over the former girls school, Arlington Hall, for its then-remote location for electronic interception.

Hundreds of people at Army Signals Intelligence worked on the VENONA project to decipher Soviet codes – and the project helped identify 300 Soviet spies who had infiltrated the federal government. Sadly, two moles compromised the project in 1949, and the Soviets changed their spying operations.

Robarge then told the story of Arlington resident **James Angleton**, the CIA's counterintelligence chief from 1954 to 1974. Angleton was quirky and an oddball, but understood after VENONA was compromised that someone needed to hunt out moles within the intelligence community.

"His career went down in flames," Robarge noted of Angle-

DID YOU MISS THIS YEAR'S AHS BANQUET?

Watch highlights of the banquet, including Dr. Robarge's remarks, on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wh8oB9odg6U



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Arlington Historical Society is on Facebook! Like our page to keep up to date on AHS programs, and historical news and events.

VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP ARLINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

By Chick Walter, Friends of Hume School

Saturday morning, May 11, spring volunteer day, marked the 8th year of spring and fall volunteer days to clear and maintain the grounds around the Arlington Historical Museum. The volunteer group Friends of Hume School had the usual strong turnout from our local Mormons' single congregation, the Green Manor Garden Club, and from Arlington Ridge Civic Association members who began this grounds effort in 2005. Longtime partners in the Arlington County Parks Department continue to provide mulch and tools, as well as occasional planting and landscaping. Morning refreshments are provided by ARCA, and lunch is provided by neighbor **Rich Kelly**.

In the past year, Kelly's crew has renovated the front lawn, which they now routinely mow and maintain for AHS. **Bonnie Flynn** and **Chick Walter**, coordinators of the Friends of Hume School, provide interim weed control, pruning, raking and

clearing the stairs between volunteer days. To support our planting and watering needs, Kelly recently had the outside faucet repaired. Walter oversaw contracting for the new iron railing for the back entrance, which was funded by the Aurora Hills Women's Club.



Thanks to the help of volunteers, the Arlington Historical Museum had a successful spring cleanup effort on May 11.

Photo courtesy of Bonnie Flynn

AHWC DONATES \$5,300 TO AHS AT ANNUAL TEA

By John Richardson, AHS President

The Aurora Hills Women's Club held its annual tea on May 2 on the front lawn of the Arlington Historical Museum, which provided an elegant backdrop for the presentation of this year's ceremonial check in the amount of \$5,300 to the Arlington Historical Society. This is AHWC's 6th year of contributing funds to AHS for the upkeep and maintenance of the museum building, totaling in excess of \$30,000 to date.

This year's donation represents receipts from AHWC's Holiday Boutique, held at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. **Carole DeLong**, along with Boutique co-chairs **Diane Perry** and **Susan Small**, presented the check to AHS then-president **Ali Ganjian**, with president-elect **John Richardson** and a turnout out of some 30 AHWC members – many wearing tea hats and gloves – in attendance.

AHWC members provided the customary variety of tea sandwiches and other delicacies to go with the ritual cups of tea. AHS deeply appreciates the generosity of AHWC and looks forward to continuing cooperation.



Photo courtesy of Carole DeLong

BALL-SELLERS HOUSE SPRINGS INTO ACTION

By Annette Benbow, AHS Recording Secretary

The Ball-Sellers House had a busy spring, and summer is already heading in the same direction. We've had several special tours of the house museum, including:

- April 18: **Karl Van Newkirk's** Encore Learning Class "Arlington History" (formerly Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute)
- May 2: Arlington's Robert E. Lee Chapter of Questers
- May 5: Cub Scout Bear Den 548 with their parents

We have other special tours being planned this season and welcome an opportunity to tailor tours for special groups. On June 1, we helped Glencarlyn celebrate its annual Neighborhood Day by serving lemonade and inviting our neighbors to see the changes and new exhibits.



Photo courtesy of Annette Benbow

Cub Scout Bear Den 548 at the Ball-Sellers House with Annette Benbow in period costume.

As part of the AHS Capacity Building Program, we'll be taking a close look at how we can improve the inside living space of the 1880s section of the Ball-Sellers House. We're not sure yet how much we can accomplish financially or should do – we don't want to change the 1880s atmosphere with too much modern stuff – but our resident caretaker has moved and we will be seeking a new resident caretaker in the fall after we finish. In the meantime, we removed a holly tree to reduce the potential for wood rot on the 1880s house (thanks to **Luella Van Newkirk**) and are taking the opportunity to paint the 1880s house and two external buildings (the well house and the privy-shed). We'll also be hosting the annual AHS Docent Appreciation Social on June 29 to allow all our folks to see the inside of the 1880s house.

The benefits of all this spring's preservation work on the structure are paying off. The 1750 cabin's root cellar is staying much drier now after rain storms. Thank you again to the generous anonymous donor who funded the improved grading, replacement of some rotting woodwork, repointing of the cellar stone work, and installation of a french drain to move rain water away from the foundation. This generous gift also enabled the Ball-Sellers House to install a historically appropriate handrail and makes the exterior painting (mentioned above) possible. We could not have done any of this critical work on Arlington's historical treasure without this wonderful donation. What a wonderful gift to help ensure our future!

AHS HOSTS HISTORY WALK AT THE BALL-SELLERS HOUSE



On May 4, AHS hosted Colonial-era amateur historian, **Kevin Vincent**, former Chair of the Ball-Sellers House Committee) on a walking tour of George Washington's Forest starting at Arlington's oldest house, the Ball-Sellers House.

About 25 walkers participated in the 3-mile walking tour that covered sites of key colonial and Revolutionary-era historic events in Arlington.

Photo courtesy of Annette Benbow



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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.ARLINGTONHISTORY.ORG

**HISTORY AWAITS.
COME VISIT!**

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL 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
Also arrange a visit by calling 703-379-2123.
Free admission, but donations appreciated.

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