

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow AHS Members:

In my last letter, I highlighted the activities of the Arlington Historical Society, and the actions of our members and supporters. I wanted to recognize all of the accomplishments since the previous newsletter had been published, and the volunteers that made them possible. In this letter, I would like to take a different focus, and recognize just one aspect: your support. Without your membership dues, donations, or volunteer efforts, there would be no great activities of the Arlington Historical Society to highlight. This past fall, we revived the Bell Ringer Campaign and raised more than \$5,000. We know that this money will make a tremendous difference in our mission, and thank you sincerely for your continued support.

Bell Ringer Campaign Supporters

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DONATING HISTORY

The Arlington Historical Society recently donated a copy of every issue of the Arlington Historical Magazine – since its 1957 inception – to the library at Marymount University.

MARCH AHS PROGRAM

“A Historical Perspective of the 1847 Retrocession Act”
Thursday, March 14, 7 - 8 p.m.
Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St.

Historian and author **Ron Beavers** will lead a discussion on the Retrocession. Arlington became part of the District of Columbia with the creation of the new federal government in 1790 and remained a part of D.C. until 1847.

For a 2013 events calendar, see page 2.

PRESIDENT, CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

(Bell Ringer, cont'd)

Henry Hulme	Hunter Peil
Frank Impala	James Reddig
Hazel Jeffries	John Richardson
Carrie Johnson	James & Janet Rogers
Patrice Kelly	Carol Siciliano
Ida Claire & Thomas Kerwin	Diane & Brad Smith
Russell & Ingrid Keune	Seymour Stiss
Gerry LaPorte	Mary & Donald Strehle
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Jane & Nancy Renfro
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Elizabeth Wray

Your support is invaluable. If you have not yet donated, please consider including a donation with your membership renewal.

Best Regards, Ali Ganjian – ali.ganjian@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org

P.S. Visit the Arlington Historical Society online at www.arlingtonhistory.org.

AHS 2013 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

MAY

Membership meeting & public program
Ambitious Failure: Chain Bridge – *Carole Herrick*
Thursday, May 9, 7 - 8 p.m.
Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St.

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.

DECEMBER

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

HELP AHS GROW

AHS is reviewing how it can promote the history of the County and give many more people, including children, the chance to learn about their community. In order to do this, we are seeking a volunteer who can help us with membership growth: a new Membership Chair. The main responsibilities are:

The Membership Chair would be responsible for handling membership retention, growth, and acquisition.

Membership Retention: Conducting our annual membership renewal campaign.

Membership Growth: Develop membership program to acknowledge all new, renewed, and upgraded memberships.

Membership Acquisition: Lead efforts to gain new members by promoting membership at AHS events.

The time commitment will be 10hrs/mo April - June and 2hrs/mo July-March. A basic understanding, or willingness to learn, Word and Excel are required.

Please contact us at info@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org by April 1 if interested. There will be an initial call, and then a chance to meet with members of the board to discuss the role. The full board will then make a decision on the appointment.

BALL-SELLERS HOUSE OPENS FOR SEASON IN APRIL

By Annette Benbow, AHS Board of Directors

Major League Baseball isn't the only thing opening this spring. The Ball-Sellers House Museum will open April 6. As the stewards of John Ball's 1750s unheated and unlighted homestead, we close up each October and reopen in the spring to warmer weather.



The Ball-Sellers House in 1767

We may be closed for winter, but we are not hibernating! Thanks to an anonymous donation, we have been able to hire Commonwealth Renovations to do repair work on both sections of the property: repairing or replacing street-side lattice and weather damage to the wooden porch entrance of the 1880s house and improving drainage within the cellar of the 1750s cabin. The company has been working closely with **Gerry LaPorte**, the AHS liaison to the county's Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board, to ensure that all work is done in accordance with county historic site requirements. The work is likely to begin in mid-March.

Before the digging begins, AHS volunteer gardener **Luella VanNewKirk** will be leading the effort to remove and replant the heritage flora on the north and east sides. Commonwealth Renovations may still be at work on our opening day, but visitors will appreciate the fact that much-needed

work is being completed to not only keep the building looking better, but also to help preserve this Arlington treasure.

Another project that the Ball-Sellers House Museum Committee will be working on even after April's opening day is implementing recommendations made by Marymount University students of Public History last semester. Their class projects focused on how the Ball-Sellers House Museum could better tell the story of the house and its owners. We are already exploring ways to partner with Marymount on how to do this, so visitors may see quite a difference in the exhibits in October from what we start with on opening day. We'll be reconvening our committee in early March to make plans.

THE BALL-SELLERS HOUSE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Docents

The Ball-Sellers House will be open every Saturday from 1 - 4 p.m. from April through October. If you would like to volunteer as a docent once or twice this season, please call **Marty Orth** at 703-941-4086 or send her an email at tikal2@juno.com.

Revitalization committee

If you would like to be a part of the history of the oldest building in Arlington, please contact **Annette Benbow** at 703-698-5714, or annette.benbow@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.



BALL-SELLERS HOUSE HELPS FEED NEEDY ARLINGTONIANS

The Ball-Sellers House property will once again host a Plot Against Hunger in partnership with Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC).

Last year, AFAC was able to provide more than 200 pounds of fresh vegetables to the needy in Arlington. We look forward to another year of growing and providing farm-fresh foods much like John Ball did.

Left: The garden at the Ball-Sellers House

FROM THE AHS MUSEUM CURATOR: MINI-EXHIBITS



By Dr. Mark Benbow, Museum Director

In 2013 I will be setting up a series of “mini-exhibits” at the Arlington Historical Museum in the Hume School. The first one, on display through March, is The Little Tea House, an Arlington institution from 1920 until 1963. A famous restaurant with a spectacular view of Washington, D.C., it hosted many first ladies and other famous diners including **Amelia Earhart**. The exhibit was promoted by the kind gift of an original 1947 menu and other artifacts from **Ciro Taddeo**, a local resident.

Other mini-exhibits planned for 2013 include:

- A New England Yankee in Fort Reynolds, 1864-1865
- Arlington All-Star First Baseman: George McQuinn
- Guarding the Skies of Arlington: Fort Scott in World War II
- The Old Arlington Brewery Reborn: The Cherry Smash Story

The Little Tea House is the first of several mini-exhibits planned for 2013. Stop by the museum to see it before the end of March.

facebook



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

ON THIS DAY IN ARLINGTON HISTORY

March 12, 1936 — A justice of the Virginia Court of Appeals approves a bid by residents of East Falls Church to secede from the town of Falls Church and to be absorbed into Arlington.

April 20, 1861 — Colonel Robert E. Lee resigns from the United States Army two days after he was offered command of the Union army and three days after his native state, Virginia, seceded from the Union. His official resignation was only one sentence, but he wrote a longer explanation to his friend and mentor, General Winfield Scott, later that day and he revealed to his former commander the depth of his inner struggle. Two days later, Lee was appointed commander of Virginia’s forces with the rank of major general. He spent the next few months raising troops in Virginia before being sent to western Virginia to advise Confederate commanders struggling to maintain control over the mountainous region.

May 24, 1861 — Residents of Northern Virginia awake to find federal troops have begun to occupy the seceded territory within 12 hours of the Virginia legislature’s ratification of secession.

June 3, 1903 — The first “Barcroft News” is written, edited, and published by O. Edward Haring, the son of Oscar Haring, who ran a general store at Columbia Pike and Four Mile Run. Local historians later learned that the actual writer and printer of the paper was Sydney Marye, an uncle of Eddie Haring who also lived in the neighborhood with his family. Marye’s daughter, Adaline Marye Robertson, who lived in Barcroft until the late 1990s, remembered that it was a family joke that Sydney insisted on crediting the paper to Eddie. The four-page paper was only 4 by 5 ¾ inches and served a community of 20 houses. It was the third publication to be printed in Arlington County and the first neighborhood newsletter.

— Compiled by Annette Benbow, AHS Board of Directors

AHS BUILDS CAPACITY THROUGH NONPROFIT PROGRAM

By John Richardson, AHS board of directors

The Arlington Historical Society scored a “first” last fall, being named one of six winners in a competition for an Arlington-County-funded program to strengthen local nonprofit organizations. AHS was competing against nine other Arlington nonprofits that submitted applications for the 2012-2013 Nonprofit Capacity Building Program (NCBP). The program jury represented four County agencies.

NCBP provides a unique opportunity for executive directors and board members of local nonprofits to engage in a 12-month, professionally tailored program designed to build capacity. **Richard Brewster** of Nonprofit Leadership works with the board to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide direct assistance to increase capacity, capabilities, and sustainability.

NCBP is an initiative of Arlington Economic Development (AED) that has been in effect since 2009. Until last year, three winners were funded by the County Board each year, and three more were funded under the federal block grant program. Now that the block grant program has been discontinued, the County has struggled to maintain funding at the earlier level of six winning applications. In 2011 and 2012 the second group of three NCBP winners has been funded through a supplemental County budget vote. AHS was declared one of six winners but had to wait several weeks for the supplemental budget vote to know whether we would be able to participate. AED assured us that everything possible would be done to provide some level of assistance in the event that additional funding was not available, but things turned out for the best.

Key to the success of NCBP is Brewster, a nonprofit specialist with Nonprofit Leadership who is paid by the County to work with the NCBP participants over the course of a year. Brewster, who came to the United States from England several years ago, had a distinguished career in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors and has received high marks from local nonprofits with which he has worked in Arlington. Following a December 2012 meeting with AHS board members at which overall objectives were discussed, Brewster has interviewed most of the current AHS directors and others, including critics, in order to gain a broad perspective on the Society’s strengths and weaknesses. Brewster’s plan is to prepare an assessment based on the interviews and to commence an interactive dialogue with the AHS Board in order to help the Society strengthen its strategic focus and fundraising programs so that it can take a leadership role in articulating and directing historical research and preservation in Arlington in the years to come.

Brewster shared his initial thoughts about the Society: “AHS is a fascinating organization and presents a real conundrum. It owns and has succeeded in preserving for the citizens of Arlington two of the most historically significant buildings in the region, the Hume School and the Ball-Sellers House (To see and, indeed, touch what is probably the only extant 18th-century clapboard roof in the country is quite an experience.) But AHS is at the moment an all-volunteer organization of relatively modest means. The Society’s exciting challenge, therefore, is to find ways in which it can mobilize more Arlingtonians to explore their local history and raise significantly more money. The board is very engaged and I’m looking forward to a great first discussion about AHS’ future at its February meeting.”

AHS decided to apply for NCBP because the Board realized that despite major program strengths and ownership/management of two historic Arlington properties, it was operating on a model from when it was established in the mid-1950s. In many respects things were easier in those days, and AHS has not kept pace to meet the challenges of the 21st century. A leadership role is there for the taking, and AHS is determined to reconstruct and strengthen itself in order to play that role. Arlington is positioned at the heart of many of the most important events in the history of the U.S., even though the County lacks the dramatic physical record of Alexandria or Washington, D.C.

One of the most important prospects is a campaign to construct an Arlington Heritage Center on land to be exchanged with Arlington National Cemetery on the former Navy Annex site in a deal that will expand space for gravesites while giving the County a multi-acre piece of ground, one of whose uses is to be a combined museum and information center for several tenants, including the Arlington Historical Society, Black Heritage Museum, Air Force Memorial, the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, and perhaps others. AHS looks forward to working as a partner with Arlington County on this and other worthwhile projects.

Read the latest on
the Arlington
Heritage Center
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ARLINGTON TAKES STEP TOWARD HERITAGE CENTER

By AHS Board of Directors

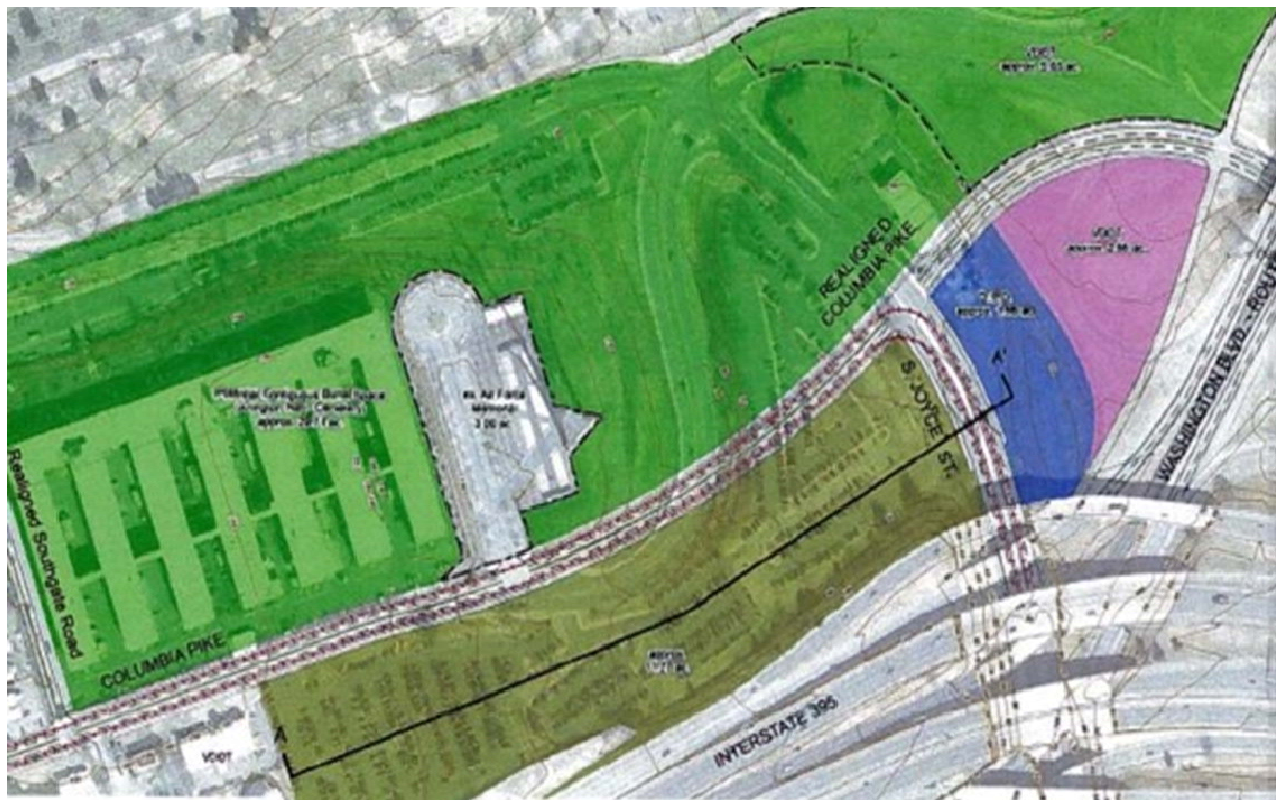
Since **Gerry LaPorte's** op-ed piece in the November 2012 newsletter, Arlington County Manager **Barbara Donnellan** has signed a new agreement with the U.S. Department of Army over the Navy Annex site. **Brian Stout**, Arlington County's federal liaison in the County Manager's Office, spoke to the AHS Board at its January meeting to answer questions about the new land exchange agreement. The agreement provides the Army with the property north of a realigned Columbia Pike (see map below) in exchange for providing the County with a slightly larger amount of land south of a realigned Columbia Pike.

According to the agreement, the Army will acquire the Southgate Road behind the Navy Annex, which is currently being demolished to make way for more cemetery burial space (the area in green). In exchange, the county will be given land south of Columbia Pike (the beige area to the south), which would be straightened and rerouted down the former Navy Annex parking lot to form a right-angle intersection with South Joyce Street.

The actual land exchange is not likely to take place any time soon, and many details remain to be settled. Stout told the AHS Board that the County hopes to develop a public-private partnership in creation of the Arlington Heritage Center. He said that no funding has been identified yet for the realignment of Columbia Pike and that development of the streetcar plan is not linked to it. Stout said that the County sees considerable benefit from the new agreement with the Army, provided the moving parts can be realized. It will, however, require wording in a future Defense Authorization Act to come to fruition.

Nevertheless, Arlington County Board members see this as an important step and say they now look forward to some of the opportunities it could bring, including land for a future Arlington Heritage Center. The center may serve as a multi-tenant museum that could encompass a Freedman's Village Museum, a research and education center, and other space for special events such as those hosted by the Air Force Memorial. Board Chairman **Walter Tejada** was quoted in local media as saying, "This paves the way for an agreement that will allow us to support their expansion goals. At the same time, it enables us to meet our goals: preserving and displaying Arlington County's history and heritage by establishing an Arlington Heritage Center and Freedman's Village Museum."

AHS plans to work closely with and support the County in realizing the intentions expressed in the land swap agreement.



LOCAL AUTHOR ATTENDS AHS WINTER SOCIAL

Story and photos by Annette Benbow, AHS Board Member

On Dec. 8, AHS members enjoyed an opportunity to meet local author **Michael Lee Pope** at the Winter Social at the Arlington Historical Museum at the Hume School. Pope signed his books on local history for members, including his newest book, which discussed at the AHS public program on Jan. 10: "Shotgun Justice: One Prosecutor's Crusade Against Crime and Corruption in Alexandria and Arlington."

AHS Members also chatted with AHS board members and volunteers about 2012 accomplishments and plans for 2013. It was a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of the season and a great chance to hear the inside scoop on Arlington history and AHS projects.



LEFT: Author Michael Lee Pope signs his book, "Shotgun Justice," which he discussed during a Jan. 10 AHS program.
 RIGHT: AHS members mingle at the Winter Social, held Dec. 8 at the Arlington Historical Museum.

AHWC HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE



Sponsored by the Aurora Hills Women's Club, the 7th annual Holiday Boutique was held Dec. 1 in Arlington.

Proceeds from the event benefit the Arlington Food Assistance Center and the Arlington Historical Society. For more information about the club, visit www.ahwc1958.org.

Photos courtesy of Mark Benbow

ABOVE: AHS Museum Director Mark Benbow staffs an AHS table at the Holiday Boutique in December.

RIGHT: Attendees browse holiday gift items and bid at a silent auction. AHS earned nearly \$400 from sales at the Holiday Boutique.





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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.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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