

# Arlington Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 2016

Volume 61, Issue 2

## President's Message

*Karl Van Newkirk, President, Arlington Historical Society*

Fellow members of the Arlington Historical Society:

I'm writing this on a cool day in April, and thinking that we've been going through a crazy winter. First it was unusually cold, and then it turned warmer earlier than usual, and all the flowers started prematurely blooming. And now that it's April, it's turned cool again!

Unfortunately, the giant wisteria at the Ball-Sellers House seems to have succumbed; it's less than a shadow of its former self. We'll all miss it.

In the last issue of this newsletter I reported that your Society was working on a revision and upgrade to our website, as well as to this newsletter. Matt Briney has taken the lead on this project, but it has taken a little longer to define what we wanted than we initially anticipated. We now expect to roll out the new website in May. And trying to integrate the Newsletter into the website is temporarily on hold; we want to complete the first task before starting on the next. As we worked through this, we also came to the realization that the combination of newsletter plus website was more than one person could effectively handle. We are grateful to Jennifer Beckman-Shaw for agreeing to temporarily assume the position of Newsletter Editor. Thank you, Jennifer!

In other news, on April 14th I was pleased to represent the Society at a symposium organized by the Arlington Civic Federation on the occasion of their 100th anniversary. I was even more pleased to accept, on behalf of the Society, their Special Certificate of Recognition for "all that the Arlington Historical Society does to preserve the rich history of Arlington County." If you stop by the

*(Continued on page 2)*

Join us on Friday, May 13, 2016, for the  
**AHS 60th Annual Banquet**  
The Columbus Club of Arlington  
Special Guest Speaker: Congressman Don Beyer

Register at [www.Eventbrite.com](http://www.Eventbrite.com)  
(Search 'Arlington Historical Society')

## Inside This Issue

- ◇ Notice of Annual Meeting and Public Program "Mosby's Men"
- ◇ What's New at the Ball-Sellers House in 2016
- ◇ *Martha Jefferson Randolph: Republican Daughter and Plantation Mistress*
- ◇ Upcoming Public Programs
- ◇ *Becoming Madison*
- ◇ Book Review: *Zula Remembers*
- ◇ Upcoming Ball-Sellers House Events
- ◇ Arlington History Bike Ride

## Board of Directors

W. Karl Van Newkirk, President

John P. Richardson,  
Vice President

Gerald Laporte, Secretary

Michael S. Febrey, Treasurer

Dr. Mark Benbow

Jennifer Dubina

Ali Ganjian

Tracy Hopkins

Garrett Peck

Johnathan Thomas

Michelle Vanek

Robert White

*("President's Message," Continued from page 1)*

Museum, you can take a look at the signboard plaque that we received.

Community groups and individuals other than our members have been visiting our facilities recently. I am aware of visits by the Questers, by a tour group sponsored by the Arlington Office of Senior Programs, by the Robert E. Lee Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star, by an Encore Learning class, and by a Smithsonian tour of Arlington. It makes me proud to think that these and similar groups consider us "worth a visit." Thanks to all who made these happen!

By now you should have received your invitation to the Society's Annual Banquet on May 13th, featuring Congressman Don Beyer as our speaker. And don't forget that our program meeting on May 12th will also be our Annual Meeting, where officers and members of the board of directors for 2016-17 will be elected. I hope to see many of you there – at both events!

*Karl*

## **Notice of AHS Annual Meeting with Mosby's Men Presentation**

*Gerald Laporte, Secretary, Arlington Historical Society*

The annual meeting of members of the Arlington Historical Society will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. at the Arlington Central Library Auditorium, 1015 N. Quincy Street. Officers and directors for the coming year will be elected at the annual meeting.

It's expected that the business portion of the annual meeting will be short. A presentation on Mosby's Men by Eric Buckland will follow. As most members are aware, Mosby's Men was a battalion of cavalry in the Confederate army during the American civil war that operated in Northern Virginia. They were noted for their lightning strikes on Union targets and their ability to consistently elude pursuit. Eric Buckland is the author of five books on Mosby's men. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the U.S. Army, where he served for twenty-two years in Special Forces and several airborne divisions.

The Nominating Committee of the Arlington Historical Society is expected to recommend that the following slate of officers and directors be elected at the annual meeting to fill all vacancies:

**President:** Karl Van Newkirk, **Vice President:** Johnathan Thomas, **Secretary:** Gerald Laporte, **Treasurer:** John Tuohy; **Directors:** Annette Benbow, Barbara Bouchard, Jennifer Dubina, Ali Ganjian, Cathy Hix, Tracy Hopkins, Frank O'Leary, Susan Webber, Robert White

Information on these candidates will be available at the meeting.

Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

All elected officers will also serve as members of the board of directors ex officio. In addition, Dr. Mark Benbow, Museum Director, will serve as a director ex officio.

The Nominating Committee consists of Annette Benbow, Chairperson, Jennifer Dubina, and Tracy Hopkins.

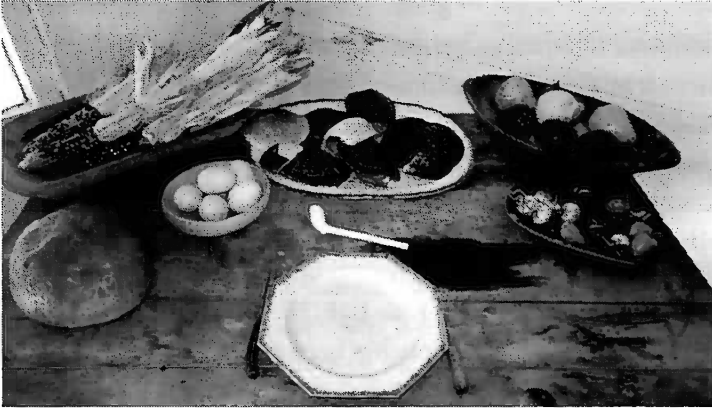
A reception with refreshments honoring the newly elected officers and directors will take place at the end of the meeting.

# New at the Ball-Sellers House This Season

Annette Benbow, Director, Ball-Sellers House Museum

Imagine yourself transported back through time to when Arlington was the colonial frontier and you are standing in John and Elizabeth Ball's home. What would you see there? When you step inside the Ball-Sellers House, a 1740s farm cabin, we want it to look, smell, and feel as if the Ball family had just stepped out.

This year you'll see several things that remind you that this house was alive and busy. You'll see a supper table set with foods like:



- ◇ Corn: a staple the Balls grew themselves along with other vegetables like potatoes and beans
- ◇ Turtle: an example of wild game that John Ball and his family would have caught or shot along with squirrel, fish, deer, and rabbit
- ◇ Eggs: the Ball family kept chickens
- ◇ Fruit: cherries, pears, and apples from the family's small orchard



Elizabeth Ball had five girls – three were born in the house. So we now have a cradle with a baby's nightgown at the foot of the parents' bed to remind visitors that this house almost always had children in it.

The third new item is a pedal-driven knife grinding stone. This is one of several tools we know John Ball owned and it reminds us this was a hard-working family.

Come and be transported back to the colonial era in the oldest house in Arlington.

**FREE!** Open Saturdays 1:00-4:00 P.M. (April through October)

For more information on the Ball-Sellers House, contact: [Annette.benbow@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Annette.benbow@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org)



***Rescheduled !***  
**George Washington's Forest Walkabout**  
 History Walking Tour Guided by Local Historian Kevin Vincent  
 Saturday, May 14th (1:30-3:30 P.M.)  
 Walk Begins and Ends at the Historic Ball-Sellers House



# March 2016 Public Program: Author Lecture on *Martha Jefferson Randolph: Republican Daughter and Plantation Mistress*

Jennifer Dubina, Board Director, Arlington Historical Society

On Thursday, March 10th, AHS welcomed Dr. Willian Wayson to Marymount University to discuss his book *Martha Jefferson Randolph: Republican Daughter and Plantation Mistress*.

Dr. Wayson provided the audience with new insight into the life of Martha Jefferson Randolph as told through an investigation of her relationship with her father, Thomas Jefferson. Wayson explored this relationship through six themes: affection, public service, separation, family of letters, place, and debt. These themes were drawn from a study of over nine-hundred personal letters written by Martha; her father; her husband, Thomas Mann Randolph; and others.

Through these private writings, Dr. Wayson presented a new perspective of Martha, her father, and the relationship between the two. The death of Martha’s mother and their subsequent trip to Paris transformed their relationship. In Paris, bonded by grief, the two formed an emotional attachment and commitment that would continue throughout the rest of their lives, superseding their commitment to friends, spouses, and children. Wayson followed this bond through Jefferson’s time as Secretary of State, Vice President, President, and beyond.

Dr. Wayson’s presentation gave the audience a unique perspective into the lives of the Jefferson family. The first-person accounts that dominated the presentation let the audience see Martha and her father in a new light. While Thomas Jefferson’s life and career have been well documented by countless historians, the relationship between Jefferson and his daughter has not been as well documented. Dr. Wayson’s presentation offered the audience just a glimpse into that relationship and left many audience members eager for more!

## Upcoming Public Programs

### June 2016

#### *Historic Cemeteries of Northern Virginia*

Charles Mills

Thursday, June 9, 2016, 7:00 PM

Arlington Central Library Auditorium

1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington, VA 22201

### July 2016

#### *‘By Measures Taken of Men’: Clothing the Classes in William Carlin’s Virginia*

Katherine Egnor Gruber

Thursday, July 14, 2016, 7:00 PM

Arlington Central Library Auditorium

1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington, VA 22201

### September 2016

#### *Arlington Cemetery Then and Now*

Dean DeRosa

Thursday, September 8, 2016, 7:00 PM

Marymount University, Reisch Library Auditorium

2807 North Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207

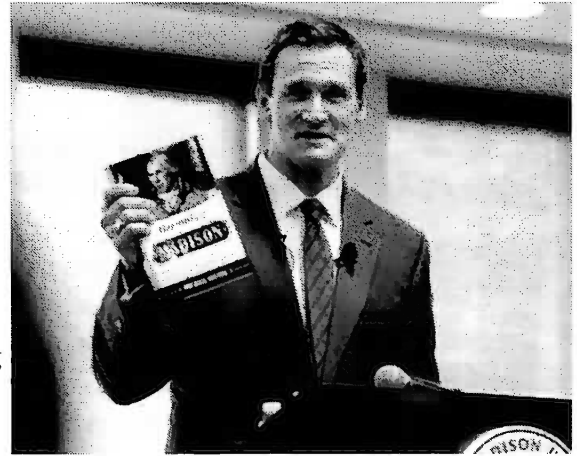


## April 2016 Public Program: Author Lecture on *Becoming Madison*

Max L. Gross

The April 14, 2016 program of the Society brought to Marymount University author Michael Signer, who discussed his recently published book *Becoming Madison: The Extraordinary Origins of the Least Likely Founding Father* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2015). Mr. Signer, a graduate of Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, is a lawyer, historian, writer, and accomplished public speaker who stood up as an unsuccessful candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia in 2009 and currently serves as mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia. He has published a previous book, *Demagogue: The Fight to Save Democracy from its Worst Enemies* (2009), which explores the history of demagoguery in America.

As Mr. Signer noted at the beginning of his talk, James Madison, fourth President of the United States, has tended to be overlooked by historians exploring the seminal years of the foundation of the American republic. In recent years, however, there have been several books about Madison, perhaps one of the most notable being that of Lynn Cheney, wife of former Vice President Dick Cheney. Despite Madison's being one of the authors, along with Alexander Hamilton, of the important Federalist Papers, which sought to explain the meaning of the new Constitution drawn up in Philadelphia in 1789, historians have tended to focus on the other Founding Fathers in the establishment of the republic and the Constitution which replaced the earlier Articles of Confederation.



Perhaps one of Madison's key roles was to win the battle for approval of the Constitution in the state of Virginia, where he was opposed by such notable figures as Patrick Henry and George Mason, who preferred the Articles of Confederation to the more centralizing formula drawn up in Philadelphia. States' rights were then and remain an important issue in American politics, and to Madison's opponents the Articles did a better job of protecting states' rights than the new Constitution. Signer's question in the book is to ask how Madison, this boyish-looking young man of only five feet and two inches in height, who suffered from periodic, serious debilitating bouts of anxiety, came to play the important role he fulfilled in the foundation of our United States.

The author laid stress on a quality of Madison's conscience, a theme that he developed in the book and in his lecture. This important quality, not present in many figures who aspire to political office, was especially notable in Madison and makes him a worthy figure of study for many reasons. Signer carries his study of Madison only up to the decisive vote on the Constitution by the Virginia Legislature, leaving the story of his later political roles, including President of the United States, to other writers.

The talk was very well received by the audience of about eighty, and many were inspired to buy a copy of the book, as well. It was yet another of the fine programs offered to the public by the Arlington Historical Society on the second Thursday of every month.

1956

The AHS  
Newsletter...



Celebrating  
60 Years!

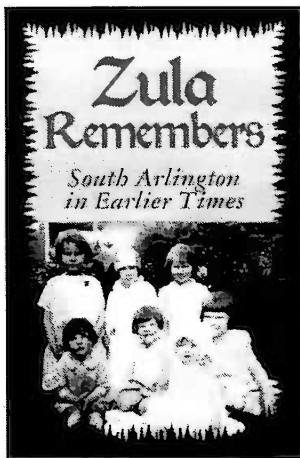
2016

# AHS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Contact Board Director and Volunteer Coordinator Robert White (robertwhite7@aol.com)  
Or call the Arlington Historical Museum at (703) 892-4204

## *Book Review: Zula Remembers: South Arlington In Earlier Times*

Jennifer Shaw, Newsletter Editor, Arlington Historical Society



**Zula Remembers: South Arlington in Earlier Times**

**Zula Dietrich**

**Loft Press, 2006**

In her memoir *Zula Remembers: South Arlington in Earlier Times*, lifelong Arlingtonian Zula Dietrich offers to readers two indivisible coming-of-age stories: her own and that of the leafy South Arlington enclave just west of present-day Crystal City where she grew up (and still lives to this day).

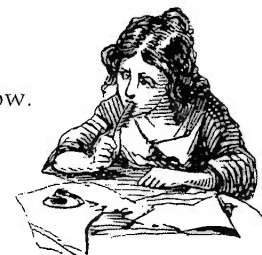
With the voice of a born storyteller, Ms. Dietrich narrates a carefully curated selection of reminiscences of growing up in the first half of the twentieth century in a South Arlington that better resembled a sleepy small town in the American South than the dense smart-growth champion it would eventually become. Readers learn of loveably quirky neighbors; beloved, bygone businesses (most in the area's short downtown strip – the stretch of 23rd Street known these days as “Restaurant Row”); long-gone tracts of wilderness where a young Ms. Dietrich assuredly scuffed the knees of many a pair of “knickers”; double features at the Airport Drive-In Theater; Christmas morning carols on the steps of the Calvary United Methodist Church; and, of course, the Washington-Mount Vernon streetcar line, which passed directly to the east of Aurora Hills, Ms. Dietrich's family's neighborhood. Looming ever in the background (and providing a contextual framework for the personal anecdotes) is the larger story – often tragic, occasionally progressive – of a suburban community in transition.

*Zula Remembers* is divided thematically into three sections (“People,” “Places,” and “Things to Do”), each with a generous handful of chapters that can be read in any order (though their particular placement complements the rhythm of the narrative perfectly). The title page of each of the book's three sections is splashed with a collage of black-and-white photographs from Mr. Dietrich's own collection. The photos help the reader put faces to the book's various characters, especially Ms. Dietrich herself in childhood and early adulthood: one can easily picture the freckle-faced girl roller skating all the way down Frazier Avenue (now 23rd Street) on a sunny day in the late 1920s.

Zula Dietrich's skill as a storyteller sets a memoir like hers apart from dry history books full of dispassionate facts. Eminently readable, *Zula Remembers* will stay with readers long after the current incarnation of South Arlington is a thing of the past.

The Arlington Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.  
We welcome news items, photos, and articles for inclusion in the newsletter.  
Please submit copy by email to bikewoman76@aol.com or by postal mail the address below.

Newsletter Editor, Arlington Historical Society  
P.O. Box 100402  
Arlington, VA 22210



## Upcoming Events at the Ball-Sellers House

### May 2016

#### *Memorial Day at the Ball-Sellers House*

Monday, May 30, 2016, 1:00-4:00 P.M.

### June 2016

#### *Glencarlyn Day*

Saturday, June 4, 2016, 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.

To help the Glencarlyn neighborhood celebrate its annual Glencarlyn Day, the Ball-Sellers House will offer extended hours. Visitors can tour the house and sample free colonial snacks and beverages while relaxing under the wisteria arbor.

### July 2016

#### *Independence Day at the Ball-Sellers House*

Monday, July 4, 2016, 1:00-4:00 P.M.



## Arlington History Bike Ride

*Tracy Hopkins, Board Director, Arlington Historical Society*

If you like to bicycle, try the Arlington History Ride. It is a 25.6 mile self-guided tour with twelve stops. Most riders need at least four hours, including the stops, for the ride. If the ride seems too long, consider breaking it into two or more parts. The ride starts at the Arlington Historical Museum on Arlington Ridge Road (the Historic Hume School), but you can really start anywhere that interests you.

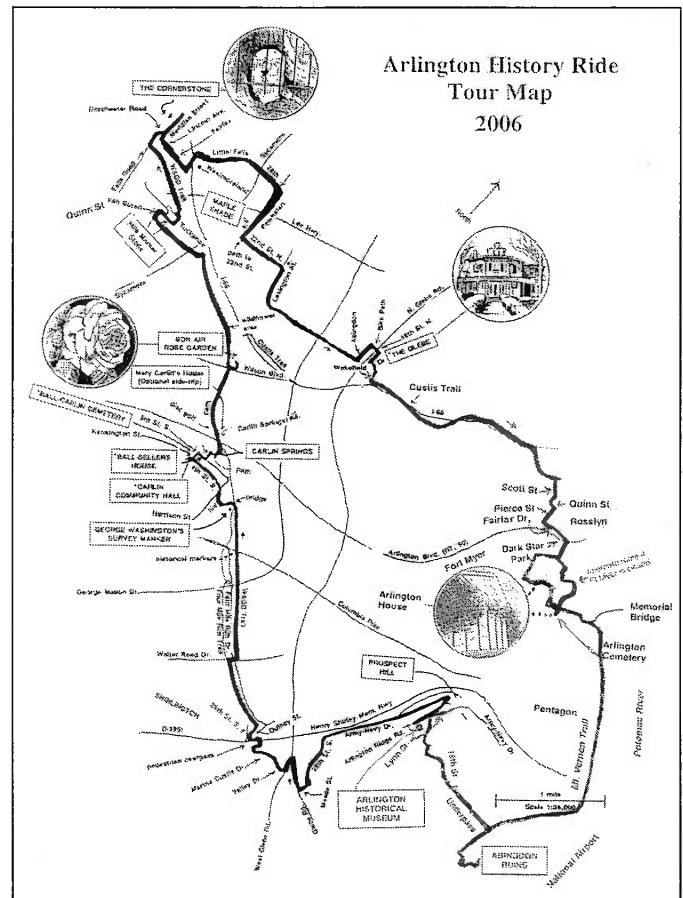
Use the link below to get more information about the ride. The guide starts with photographs and excellent descriptions of the history stops.

<http://bscl.org/the-arlington-history-bicycle-ride-arlington-virginia-usa/>

The Arlington History Ride wouldn't be complete without some history about the ride. Randy Swart, an Arlington Historical Society member who lives in Barcroft, first created the ride in the 1980s. He got help from Sarah Collins (now deceased), who was a member of the Arlington Historical Society as well as a longtime staff member of the Arlington Public Library's Virginia Room (now the Center for Local History). The map used to be distributed on paper. Now the Arlington History Ride is available electronically. Randy said recently:

"It was a huge kick for me to discover Arlington's history, and how many of the old landmarks are still around. It has made living in Arlington more fun. I hope the ride does some of that for other people as well."

Happy bicycling – with a helmet, of course!





NON PROFIT ORG  
 US POSTAGE PAID  
 ARLINGTON, VA  
 PERMIT NO. 1578

P.O. Box 100402  
 Arlington, Virginia 22210

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

## History Awaits. Come Visit!

**Arlington Historical Museum**  
 1805 South Arlington Ridge Road  
 Arlington, VA 22202  
 Phone: (703) 892-4204  
 Hours: Saturdays, Sundays, and  
 Select Wednesdays 1:00-4:00 P.M.

**Ball-Sellers House Museum**  
 5620 Third Street South  
 Arlington, VA 22204  
 Phone: (703) 942-9247  
 Hours: Saturdays 1:00-4:00 P.M.  
*(April through October)*  
 Summer Holidays and Special Events

**T**he Arlington Historical Society, founded in 1956, is a non-profit organization incorporated under Virginia laws. The Society supports research, collection, preservation, discovery, and dissemination of Arlington County's history. Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. in the Arlington Historical Museum at the Historic Hume School. Board meetings are open to the public.



**WWW.ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG**

**FACEBOOK: 'ARLINGTONHISTORICALSOCIETY'**