

Report from the Ball-Sellers House

BY KEVIN VINCENT

The Ball-Sellers House had another successful year with many visitors coming to tour Arlington's only 18th century home. Although there are many opportunities nearby to visit preserved mansions of the "rich and famous" of the 18th century, such as George Washington's Mount Vernon or George Mason's Gunston Hall, we are lucky to have in Arlington a very rare surviving home of a typical farmer who lived in our area 250 years ago. A visit to John Ball's cabin is a wonderful way to learn how the average person lived in the 1700s.

Our wonderful team of docents led hundreds of visitors through the house while we were open each Saturday afternoon from April to October. At the beginning of November a great team of volunteers closed the house down for winter. Luella VanNewkirk, Jud Buchanan, Marty Orth and Betty Vertiz put the grounds and garden into shape for the winter. Earlier this year Luella and Karl VanNewkirk generously paid to have the trees in the yard trimmed. As always Marty Orth stayed on top of everything all year to make sure the house remained open each Saturday and then closed the house down for the winter. Many thanks are owed to all of them and to our other docents, including our tenant Emma Sky Wolf, for their great work in preserving this precious historic resource.

But more work remains to be done. A committee led by Gerry Laporte and Ross Dickinson is evaluating options to correct a serious drainage problem that is allowing water to seep into the cellar of the John Ball Cabin. The committee is considering proposals to make sure water drains away from the house instead of into the cellar, and is also seeking funding to pay for this expensive project. We also need to replace the house's outdated fire alarm system and dehumidifier.

The future success of the Ball-Sellers House depends upon continued contributions of these and other AHS volunteers. And we need more volunteers to serve on the Ball-Sellers Committee to help with the many tasks that have to be handled each year to keep the house open to the public. We need your help to keep the Ball-Sellers House going next year and in the future.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Ball-Sellers Committee, please contact Kevin Vincent at kevin.vincent62@gmail.com (and if you don't get a quick response, email him at kevin.vincent@dot.gov to tell him to check his gmail!)