

NEXT MEETING: April 10, 2012

Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society March 13, 2012

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Dickinson at the Black History Museum at 6:34 p.m. Other members present were Peggy Gross, Anne Paul, Ted Pulliam, Audrey Davis, Debbie Ackerman, Lisa Adamo, Dave Cavanaugh, Jackie Cohan, Tal Day, Adrienne Washington, and Katy Cannady.

Minutes: The minutes of the February board meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report on Finances and Membership: Paul circulated a treasurer's report for the period February 1, 2012 to February 29, 2012 (attached).

She reported only one new member for that period. Later in the meeting she suggested that the Board organize a bus trip to Stratford Hall for members. Cannady pointed out that this would be a way to attract new members and build enthusiasm in old members. Dickinson later suggested that publication of the *Chronicle* on the website be delayed as a way of rewarding members, who as part of their paid membership receive the *Chronicle* by mail, and as a way of attracting new members.

OLD BUSINESS

AHS 2012 Awards: Arrangements for the annual history awards program set for April 25 were discussed.

Nominations for the Miller History Award: Paul reported that the nominations committee had received three nominations for the T. Michael Miller Alexandria History Award and one nomination for a special award. She also reported that George Combs, the head librarian at the Special Collections Branch, had given the nominations committee some suggested procedures called "Book Judging Made Simple."

Davis suggested that Sharon Frazier and Linwood Smith be given some recognition in the awards program for sharing with the Black History Museum the African American dollhouses that they made. The dollhouses are modeled on actual Alexandria businesses, churches, schools, and other buildings important to the cultural life of Alexandria's African American community and are a new exhibit at the Museum.

Awards Presenter: Davis reported that she would write a letter to Senator Patsy Ticer to ask her to be the presenter of the awards. Paul suggested that Senator Ticer be given special recognition as was planned last year when she was unable to attend the awards program. Last year the plan was to present her with a bouquet of flowers and an appropriate resolution of thanks suitably framed. The Board also wanted to inform her that the gifts did not mean that she will not be asked again to present the awards.

Proclamation: Bertsch is to write the proclamation.

Press Release: Davis will draft the press release, and Lance Mallamo, director of OHA, will release it.

Refreshments: Greenberg and Cohan are in charge of refreshments.

Printed Program: Adamo will prepare the program, and Paul will review it.

Student Awards: Ackerman reported that she had heard some information from three of the schools and is waiting for information from one, T.C. Williams. She also said she will pick up the awards.

Photographer: Day volunteered to be the event photographer.

Speaker: Dickinson reported that the main speaker will be Stephanie Brown, head of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Center. He requested ideas on what she should speak about. Canaday suggested she talk about the economic advantages to Alexandria of its history, such as history serving to attract tourists. Day suggested she use her own career working with Colonial Williamsburg, George Washington's Mount Vernon, and historic Alexandria as an example of the practical use of an education in history.

AHS Mission, Constitution, and Bylaws: Gross circulated a draft of changes to the bylaws based on the discussion at the February meeting (attached). After a discussion of the draft changes, Day moved that the draft, with a few suggested changes, be approved as a preliminary final draft with a final draft to be voted on at the April meeting. Cavanaugh seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Cavanaugh suggested that when the amendments are presented at a membership meeting they be accompanied by a general explanation of the changes, a suggestion that met with general approval. Members thanked Gross for her good work on this project.

Rosenwald School Special Event: Dickinson reported that he had talked with Stephanie Deutsch, author of *You Need a School: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South*, and that she was enthusiastic about participating in an event in Alexandria, possibly as a lecturer, to celebrate the Rosenwald School that was located on the site of T.C. Williams. He also indicated that representatives of the NAACP and the Virginia Theological Seminary were interested in participating and suggested that Jewish groups also might be interested. He posed the possibility of holding the event at T.C. Williams and maybe erecting a plaque there to commemorate the Rosenwald School legacy. Another possibility would be to hold the event at the Virginia Theological Seminary.

Cavanaugh mentioned that he had access to photos of the old school and that people who attended the school were still alive and might be interested in participating in an event. Adamo mentioned that she had some contact with the people at the farm in southern Virginia where Booker T. Washington had lived. Washington suggested the event might be held at Fort Ward.

Dickinson suggested forming a team to brainstorm the possibilities and maybe plan an event. The team would be composed of different interested groups and individuals. He indicated he would contact Stephanie Deutsch about her availability to meet with such a group. Day, Cavanaugh, and Adamo volunteered to be on the team

NEW BUSINESS

Balloon Event: On April 28 at Fort Ward, there will be a display and talk about Civil War balloon technology.

Floral Display at Freedmen's Cemetery: Davis raised the question of whether the Board wanted to present a wreath at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery. The cost would be around \$300. She also reported that plans for the groundbreaking were incomplete, and they would be more fully developed at a planning meeting to be held March 31.

Paul moved and Day seconded a motion to wait until closer to the time of the cemetery dedication ceremony to be held in 2013 to decide whether to send a wreath to the dedication ceremony. That motion passed unanimously. It also was pointed out that the Board could make a decision about a wreath for the groundbreaking ceremony when more information about the ceremony was available.

Davis also reported that Lillie Finklea, who had been instrumental in protecting the cemetery, was in poor health and at Woodbine Health Care Center.

Virginia Theological Seminary Chapel Ruins: Dickinson raised the question whether the Board wanted to take a position on whether the Alexandria Board of Architectural Review should approved a plan prepared by the Virginia Theological Seminary for its use of the ruins of its chapel that burned about a year ago. After a general discussion, it was decided that the Board would not take a position on this issue, but that Board members could do so individually. Dickinson reported that VTS planned to mount a plaque honoring the first responders to the fire for the professional manner in which they had saved the nearby Aspinwall building. Washington suggested that it be communicated to VTS that the plaque also should recognize the African Americans who had helped build, maintain, and support the chapel.

Slave Pens Inquiry: Dickinson reported that the Lyceum had received an inquiry about the presence of slave pens in Alexandria and that Wilkins had agreed to handle the inquiry.

War of 1812 Commemoration: Pulliam volunteered to attend meetings of local people and organizations developing plans to commemorate in Alexandria the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812.

City Budget for an Historical Sites Maintenance Plan: Day reported that the proposed city budget would not fund a plan for maintaining the city's historical sites and museums. Instead, any necessary maintenance would be done on an emergency basis.

AHS Presidents' Plaque: Ackerman displayed the handsome plaque on which smaller engraved plaques were mounted, each bearing the name of a past president of AHS. The plaque is to be hung in the Lyceum and be presented at a future AHS lecture. All Board members approved of her efforts in having the plaque engraved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Program: Gross reported that the lineup for programs through June is the same as reported at the February meeting.

Board Officer and Member Nominations: Gross reported that the nominating committee will meet at la Madeleine at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14. Gross suggested that another member be added to the committee, and Ackerman volunteered to be the new member.

Newsletter: Cohan reported that Bertsch had completed the March newsletter and that it would be distributed soon. Paul suggested that future newsletters contain periodically a paragraph by the Board representatives to HARC and the Archaeology Commission on the activities of those groups.

Website: Adamo earlier had distributed a report on Website usage and trends (attached). She mentioned a few of the trends, such as the tendency of lower use in winter when the Board is inactive and higher usage when it was time for members to renew their membership. She also mentioned the comparatively high Russian usage, but she thought that mainly represented an attempt to insert spam onto the site. She said the site was protected against such an attempt.

Archaeology: Cannady reported that the Archaeology Commission had issued a call for its annual Ben Brenman Awards. The awards have been given in the past to a wide variety of people and organizations that have benefited Alexandria archaeology and history. She indicated the nominations would be open for the next couple of weeks, and she would circulate to the Board members the letter requesting nominations.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam
Secretary