

## **NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, May 14, 2013**

### **Board Meeting – Alexandria Historical Society**

**April 9, 2013**

President Bill Dickinson called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. at the Black History Museum. Other members present were Ted Pulliam, Debbie Ackerman, Dave Cavanaugh, Jackie Cohan, Audrey Davis, Tal Day, and Linda Greenberg. Also attending the meeting was Treasurer Emeritus Ann Paul.

**Peggy Gross:** Dickinson proposed a moment of silence in honor of Vice President Peggy Gross, who recently passed away unexpectedly. He then opened the meeting for board members' remarks on her service to AHS and to the city.

Members remembered her as a capable, energetic, and dedicated member of the Society and Board officer who also was strongly committed to her family and community. She will be greatly missed.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the March meeting drafted by Greenberg and Pulliam were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Adamo, who could not be present at the meeting, earlier circulated the Treasurer's Report for March 1 – March 31(attached). Dickinson reported also that there were five new members thus far in April.

**Website:** Dickinson reported that Mr. Pyle, who previously had indicated interest in being webmaster for the Society, had decided against taking that position and that a webmaster still was needed.

Adamo had indicated in an earlier email that she recommended suspending website usage reports until we change website managers because of difficulties with compiling the information under the current website management. The Board expressed general approval of her recommendation.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Rosenwald School Lecture:** Dickinson reported no new progress on the lecture.

**War of 1812 Commemoration:** Dickinson reported that the full city committee on the War of 1812 Commemoration had met on March 26 and decided to have the signature event commemorating the war on Sunday, August 31, 2014 at Waterfront Park (behind Virtue Feed and Grain). He also mentioned that he had discussed with the Potomac Riverboat Company the possibility of their operating a cruise on the river from Alexandria to Fort Belvoir as part of the commemoration. Food would be served on board, and a lecturer would speak on the British Navy's operations on the Potomac in 1814. It was thought that if 100-120 people were on board, the cruise, plus food, might cost around \$50 per person. Saturday or Sunday probably would not

work with the Riverboat Company, but a Thursday or Friday night might be workable. For more information, see his email of March 26 (attached).

There was some doubt expressed that a sufficient number of people would sign up for the cruise. Cavanaugh suggested that serving wine in addition to food might make it easier to attract people. Ackerman suggested partnering with a local brewery or vintner. Selling tickets through our new website also was mentioned as a possibility. Day reported that OHA had applied for funds to finance a new staff member who could help publicize the event. The new person would be a combination of outreach person and historian.

Davis mentioned the possibility of holding an 1812 film festival. Dickinson said that at the March 26 meeting, Peter Pennington suggested the possibility of having a British tall ship to come to Alexandria around the time of the commemoration as well as a unit of the Royal Navy. Pennington, a British citizen and retired Royal Navy officer, is exploring this possibility with the British Embassy as well as with the Tall Ship Association. Pennington also suggest holding a naval ball in Alexandria to commemorate the event.

**Strategic Objectives:** Cavanaugh had nothing new to report.

**Carver School:** It was reported that a meeting in support of saving the school was being planned to be held at a church near the school. The Board was pleased that extra time had been given to find a way to preserve the school building.

**April 18 Lecture:** Dickinson reminded the Board that Guy Gugliotta will talk on his book Freedom's Cap at the Lyceum on April 18. Cohan said she would have the one page flyer ready tomorrow and send to Dickinson to distribute. Greenberg volunteered to arrange for a projector and other items necessary to set up for the lecture. Refreshments of cookies, lemonade, and water were provided at the last lecture, and a discussion was held about whether that should be done again. Greenberg and Ackerman said the cost was about \$15-\$20, and it was generally agreed that that providing refreshments at our lectures was a popular addition and that it should be continued.

**AHS History Awards:**

News Release: Davis had prepared the news release on the awards (attached) and sent it to Lance Mallamo at OHA for circulation.

Printed Programs: Adamo had circulated last year's program for approval of the format (attached). General agreement was that last year's format was fine and should be used again this year. Davis said she had sent to Adamo the press release with additional information for the program in it. It was generally considered that the President's address at the beginning of the program was fine and needed very little, if any, updating.

Awards Program: Ackerman went over the plan for presenting the student awards, announcing the speakers, etc., and it was generally approved. She said that she had RSVPs from 3 out of the 4 student awardees and their parents. She was still waiting for responses from their teachers. She also said that one of the winners of the first student award in 1984 will be present. Davis has

made arrangements for the adult history awards. She also moved that Pam Cressey, who just retired as head city archaeologist and who will be a speaker at the awards program, be made a lifetime member of the Society. Dickinson seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Refreshments: Greenberg volunteered to arrange for the refreshments and Ackerman and Davis volunteered to assist her.

**March 27 Lecture Critique**: Dickinson reported that 45-50 people attended Richard Striner's lecture on slavery as the cause of the Civil War and on his book *Father Abraham*, and he had received many complimentary comments about the lecture.

**Nominating Committee**: Greenberg is the Chair of the Nominating Committee. All officers are elected annually. Members of the Board whose term expires this year are Ackerman, Cohan, Coster, and Day.

**Alexandria History Bibliography**: Dickinson asked for a volunteer to develop a bibliography of basic readings on Alexandria history for the Society's website. Pulliam volunteered to develop the bibliography.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**The Chronicle**: Greenberg reported that the next edition of the *Chronicle* will be distributed next week.

**Future Speakers**: Friedman has volunteered to arrange for future speakers. The speaker on May 22 will be John Hennessy, a Civil War historian with the National Park Service, who will talk about the aftermath of the Battle of Fredericksburg during the Civil War. The speaker on June 26 will be Charles V. (Chuck) Mauro, a local historian from Fairfax, who will talk on his book *A Southern Spy in Northern Virginia: The Civil War Journal of Laura Ratcliffe*.

A discussion was held about how to reward John Hennessy. As a federal employee, he could not accept the customary honorarium. One suggestion was to give him a membership in the Society. Ackerman suggested that the author of a new biography of President Coolidge would make a good future speaker. Dickinson suggested that anyone with ideas about possible future speakers should send them to Friedman.

**Newsletter**: Cohan said she would send the next edition of the newsletter to Dickinson tomorrow. Dickinson noted that the printer now being used sometimes was slow and suggested possibly moving to another source.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**Marketing of AHS Events**: Cavanaugh wondered whether Society events were being marketed in a timely manner. He noted that the March 27 lecture was attended by 45-50 people and that with an honorarium of \$250 the price was about \$5 for each person attending. He personally had contacted several people who did attend and had sent information to local newspapers. He suggested that we could do better by using such additional media as Twitter and Facebook. His suggestion was generally approved. Day suggested ways to use Twitter efficiently. Cavanaugh

suggested that the key might be to find out what format a media outlet might need (for example, a short information for an entry in a calendar and longer information for other types of placements) and supply it. For the upcoming events, Dickinson said he would send the one-page flyer to all Board members, and they should forward it to people they think might be interested in the event.

**COMCAST Coverage of Lectures:** Dickinson reported that COMCAST no longer will be covering AHS lectures. COMCAST has a contract with the city for coverage and will stress other events, such as city council and school board meetings. OHA has budget and authority to have some of its lectures covered, and Dickinson suggested that OHA might agree to cover some of the Society's lectures. Meanwhile, Friedman is looking into alternatives.

**Relations with Other Local Historical Groups:** Dickinson is to summarize information he has on other local historical groups and circulate the summary to Board members.

**Budget, Revenue, and Expenses:** Dickinson noted that our expenses are increasing but that so far we are holding our own. He expressed hope that with the new website and its new capabilities, we could reduce expenses and increase membership.

**City Council Members Tour:** Dickinson noted that city council members seem to be unfamiliar with Alexandria's historical sites, both city-owned and non-city-owned. He suggested that the Society might organize a bus trip that for about three hours one day would take them to each of the sites for a short presentation. Day said he would mention this idea at a future HARC meeting. He also suggested that because of the time such a trip would take and the tightness of council members' schedules, it might be better to work with Allison Silberberg as our liaison with the council as was suggested at an earlier meeting. Ackerman mentioned that the proposed bus tour to all sites was basically what the Carlyle House did every Candlelight Tour and seemed unnecessary. Cavanaugh also noted that judging by their website, the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association seemed insufficiently interested in promoting the city's history.

**Library and the City Budget:** Treasury Emeritus Ann Paul addressed the Board on the inadequacy of the budget proposed for the Alexandria Library. Under the budget, the library system would be required to reduce its hours of operation and cut back even further on its book purchases. She passed out talking points and information used by the Library Board in supporting the library (attached) and urged Board members to support increased funding for the library.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pulliam  
Secretary

Attachments