

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

## ARLINGTON CULTURAL COUNCIL

The Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) is a local council of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, consisting of resident volunteers appointed by the Arlington Board of Selectmen for three-year terms. Council members, who may serve for as many as two consecutive terms, are charged with the responsibility of supporting and encouraging the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in Arlington, primarily through the annual distribution of state allocated funds to applicants through a competitive grant process.

Though much of its business is related to grant cycle activities, occurring September through December, the Council is active year-round. Each year, the Council participates in the annual Town Day celebration, offering a community art project at its table. This year, Town Day visitors created Art Cards to take home for their own use. Town Day also provides the ACC with important opportunities to distribute information, including grant applications and guidelines.

On April 13 the ACC celebrated 2009 Grant Recipients at Town Hall. About 60 guests, including awardees and Arlington residents, gathered for the reception. On display at this reception was last year's Town Day art project, a community mural, *Arlington Paints the Town*, that had been painted by Town Day visitors in the Fall of 2008. MCC representatives were on hand to award the Council a Gold Star award for sponsoring this mural. Board of Selectmen Chair, Clarissa Rowe, announced the current year's grants recipients, as reported in the 2008 annual report. All four members of our state legislative delegation, Reps. Brownsberger, Garballey, Kaufman, and Sen. Donnelly, attended and spoke about the importance of arts and culture programming.

In June the Council held two summits, the first being an Artists' Summit, where more than 50 individual artists who live and work in Arlington gathered. The second was a Cultural Organizations' Summit, which brought together nearly 40 representatives of for- and not-for-profit organizations of businesses that do cultural work in Arlington. These summits were significant community input meetings for the Council and the results have informed our planning for new initiatives that will respond to the needs of Arlington's cultural community.

The most recent ACC application deadline was October 15, 2009. Two coaching sessions were conducted at Robbins Library for those seeking help in completing their applications. Following the deadline, applicants were invited to two public sessions that provided opportunity for them to elaborate on their projects. Soon thereafter, the Council held a voting meeting to decide which applications would be funded. Applicants not receiving funds were notified in November, and those receiving funds will be notified in February 2010 (as directed by the MCC).

In this most recently completed grant cycle, 32 applications were received from schools, individual artists, and cultural groups. Requests for funds totaled \$37,436. Proposals were received from residents of Arlington as well as other towns and cities in Massachusetts. Following deliberations, the Council awarded 20 applicants a total of \$10,000 allocated by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as follows:

- Center for Cancer Support & Education - Writing It Down: Literature from the CFCS (\$500)
- David Bates & Roger Tincknell - Earth Rhythms: Stories & Songs for the Whole Earth (\$250)
- Richard W. Clark: Life - Language & the Pursuit of Happiness: Ernest Hemingway Alive! (\$350)
- Hands on History Inc.- Hands on History: Continental Soldiers by the 7th Mass Regiment (\$550)
- Yetti Frenkel - The Anonymous Poet: A Poetry and Image-Making Adventure (\$250)
- Arlington Center for the Arts - Face It (\$350)
- Cyrus E. Dallin Museum - Restoration of 'My Mother,' a bust of Jane Hammer Dallin (\$500)
- Liz Buchanan - Making Music Across the Generations (\$300)
- Peirce Elementary School PTO - Darlyne Murawski: Butterflies, Moths & Their Caterpillars (\$250)
- Dena Ressler - Learn to Dance to Klezmer Music (\$600)
- Robbins Library - The Story of Our Lives (\$1,000)
- A Couple of Redheads - BROAD-ville: A Women's Vaudeville Show (\$1,000)
- Thompson School: Martin Luther King Celebration (\$750)
- Malong Malual- Alal Community Project (\$350)
- Julie Leven - Viva Due Violin! Virtuoso, Vocal & Fiddling Extravaganza (\$600)
- Dallin Elementary School: West African Drumming (\$350)
- Friends of Spy Pond Park - Spy Pond & Spy Pond Park Environmental Art Activities (\$750)
- Music to Cure MS - Marketing Expenses -- M2CMS Concert (\$250)
- Kendall Dudley - Postcards to Afghanistan (\$750)
- Too Human - A Celebration of Song: The American Songbook and Beyond (\$300)

The ACC generally meets on the second Monday of each month at the Robbins Library. All meetings are announced in advance and are open to the general pub-

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lic. The Council regularly submits articles to the Arlington Advocate, soliciting grant applications, publicizing funded projects, encouraging participation in Council activities, and sharing general information about meetings and events.

Four ACC members completed their terms during 2009: Karen Dillon, Jean Yoder, Betsy Campbell, and Michelle Meagher. David Fechter is currently on leave. Three members joined the ACC in 2009: Eliza Burden, Amy Fischer, and Scott Samenfeld.

Those who are interested may contact the Arlington Cultural Council at the following email address: [arlingtonculturalcouncil@yahoo.com](mailto:arlingtonculturalcouncil@yahoo.com) or by visiting our website: [www.arlingtonculturalcouncil.wordpress.com](http://www.arlingtonculturalcouncil.wordpress.com)

## ARLINGTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) was established in 1970 to preserve and protect significant buildings within the Town that constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the Town. This work is described in the By-Laws of the Town of Arlington, Title VI, Article 6. To accomplish these goals, the Commission maintains an *Inventory of Historically and/or Architecturally Significant Properties* and administers the demolition delay bylaw through formal public hearings and informal meetings with owners of inventoried properties. The Commission is an advocate for historic preservation in Arlington. The AHC usually meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Whittemore-Robbins House and all meetings are open to the public.

### Hearings and Property Monitoring

The Commission conducted formal hearings on seven inventoried properties in 2009: 53 Brattle St., 323-329 Broadway, 180-82 Medford St., 15 Oldham Rd., 6 Park St., 51 Smith St., and 71 Walnut St.

Oversight on the properties from 2005-2009 hearings continued through out the year. Monitored properties included the ones listed above plus 21 Appleton St., 3 Brantwood Rd., 3-5 Brattle St., 90 Jason St., 40 Lake St., 43-45 Massachusetts Ave., 821 Massachusetts Ave., 11-13 Peirce St., 18 Water St., and the former Symmes Hospital.

In December the Permanent Town Building Committee appeared before the Commission to preview plans drawn up by Donham & Sweeney, architects for the renovation of the Central and Highland fire stations. The Commission voted to endorse the plans and congratulated those working on the project for design work that was sensitive to the historic character of these important structures. The Central fire station is believed to be the nation's oldest octagonal-plan firehouse and the Highland fire station was patterned after the Old State House in Boston. Both were designed by a leading ar-

chitect of municipal buildings, George Ernest Robinson of Belmont.

The Commission continues to monitor the historic Dr. Charles A. Atwood House at 821 Massachusetts Ave. The Atwood House was scheduled for rehabilitation rather than demolition when it was included as part of the site plan for the former Hodgdon-Noyes Buick dealership, where a new CVS pharmacy is being built as approved by the Redevelopment Board.

The historic house and barn at 18 Water St. were slated for demolition upon expiration of the demolition-delay imposed by this Commission at a public hearing in 2008. Upon expiration of the 12-month delay, the barn was razed. However, the house ultimately was retained in the redevelopment of the parcel.

### Historic Markers

The Commission managed the historic house marker program for all Arlington properties on the *Inventory*. Four signs were distributed in 2009. Requests for the distinctive blue oval plaque remain strong. Each plaque displays the year the property was built and a historic house name, if any.

### Web Site

The Commission continues to maintain and improve its own website that provides a copy of the *Inventory of Historically and/or Architecturally Significant Properties* and describes the process for hearings before the Commission as well as listing our publications and projects. [www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org](http://www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org).

### Education and Outreach

Throughout the year, Commissioners participate in many activities that educate and inform citizens about historic preservation. The AHC participated in Town Day with a booth.

On April 28, this Commission participated in an educational program sponsored by the Arlington Historical Society entitled *Caring for Your Older or Historic Home*, where an illustrated lecture was given by Sally Zimmerman of Historic New England. Representatives of this Commission, the Historic Districts Commission, and the Arlington Historic Preservation Fund were available following the lecture to meet with property owners and provide brochures and other materials.

### Other Activities

The Commission continues to work with other Town agencies on the maintenance and restoration of the Whittemore-Robbins House and its outbuildings, the Winfield Robbins Memorial Gardens, the Town Hall and its grounds, and the Jarvis House at 50 Pleasant Street.

Mr. Duffy represented the Commission regarding changes to historic features of the interior of the Rob-

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bins Memorial Town Hall, including consultation on a proposal for lighting improvements for the auditorium, and working with the Margaret Spengler Memorial Committee to determine appropriate placement of a bronze plaque in the front lobby. This Commission unanimously endorsed the proposal to rename Library Way as Peg Spengler Way.

This year Ms. Robinson worked with representatives of DPW, Planning Dept. and Library to create new plans to preserve the Olmsted Brothers wall along the Library edge. She also represents the Commission on the Mill Brook Conservation Area / Cooke's Hollow Feasibility Study committee working on proposals to significantly upgrade Cooke's Hollow Park.

This Commission has been working with the Arlington Fire Department regarding the optimal placement of outdoor antennae on historic Town-owned buildings, and to support the modernization project to change from hard-wired fire alarm boxes to a wireless system.

Commissioners represented the Historical Commission on various municipal boards and historic organizations in Arlington, including the Historic District Commissions, Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, the Arlington 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee, the Arlington Preservation Fund, the Arlington Historical Society, the Old Schwamb Mill, and the Battle Road Scenic Byway Committee.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Historic Districts Act, M.G.L. Chapter 40C, was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of the Commonwealth through a local review system that encourages and ensures compatible improvement and development. Over 100 communities across the Commonwealth have enacted local historic districts to protect their historic resources and to ensure the preservation of the character of their community.

Arlington has seven established historic districts that include 351 properties that the community has recognized as unique resources worthy of protection. The seven districts and the dates they were established or most recently enlarged are: Avon Place, 1996; Broadway, 1991; Central Street, 1982; Jason/Gray, 1998; Mount Gilboa/Crescent Hill, 1991; Pleasant Street, 2006; and Russell, 1983.

The Arlington Historic District Commission (AHDC) is required by law to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes, whether they be a minor alteration, new additions, or removal of trim or structures. The Commission consists of qualified volunteers appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and always includes a property owner or resident of each District (if one is willing to serve), an architect, a real estate professional, and

a representative from the Arlington Historical Society.

During 2009 the Commission met twelve times to hold hearings for property owners seeking approval for certificates for exterior work to be conducted on their homes. Part of the regular meetings included eighteen Informal Hearings held for property owners seeking advice or resource information for work to be conducted, and twenty one Formal Hearings. As a result of those meetings twenty five Certificates of Appropriateness and twenty four Certificates of Non-Applicability to be undertaken were granted. There were two Denials issued. During the year the Commissioners worked on educating the public on the role of the Historic District Commission at Town Day.

Jonathan Hindmarsh resigned as a Commissioner-At-Large.

## CYRUS E. DALLIN ART MUSEUM

The Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum has proudly celebrated its tenth anniversary from October 2008 through 2009. Since its founding, the museum's collection has quadrupled and its attendance has steadily increased. Countless Dallin descendants, Arlington residents, scholars, and owners of Dallin works have contacted the museum to share and exchange information and view our exhibits.

This year nearly 3,000 people visited the galleries, enjoyed new or restored acquisitions, and participated in a wide variety of special events.

The museum acquired several significant works and archival material including:

- *My Mother* (1904) plaster bust of Jane Hamer Dallin, Cyrus' mother. This portrait was the predecessor of the *Pioneer Mother Monument* in Springville Utah.
- *George Abbot Smith* (1917) bronze low-relief of the founder of the Arlington Historical Society and after whom the Smith Museum is named.
- *Cyrus E. Dallin* plaster low-relief prototype portrait by Paul Adrian Brodeur, Dallin's student at Massachusetts College of Art.

A major exhibit, *The Dallins in Arlington Heights*, was installed in collaboration with the Arlington Historical Society and Old Schwamb Mill. With antique books and brochures, archival photographs, portraits in oil and plaster, historic memorabilia, and sculpture, the exhibit documented the Dallin family's civic and social life within the Town. The four-gallery exhibit at the Schwamb Mill from December '08 through March '09 was supported by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council (ACC), a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). One gallery was dedicated to color reproduc-



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tions of Arthur Dallin's stained glass windows.

A reception, *Tea with the Dallins*, was held for the Dallin family and Arlington's community at the Mill within the exhibit. Ed Gordon lectured on *Arlington Heights: From 1870's Suburban Neighborhood to Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literary Arts Colony*.

The trustees hosted a series of five anniversary lectures about Dallin, his work, and family including:

- *Anne Hutchinson*, the monumental bronze statue in front of the Massachusetts State House symbolizing freedom of speech, was presented by Susan Greendyke LaChevre, Curator of the State House collection.
- *Paul Revere: Cyrus Dallin History and Art* by Paul Dobbs, Librarian and Archivist at the Massachusetts College of Art, illustrated Dallin's 58 year effort to erect the statue in Boston.
- *Lethe: Recalled from Oblivion* by David Formanek, Exhibits Department, USS Constitution Museum, depicted the art, mythology, and history of this larger-than-life original, nude plaster figure.
- *The Tale of Two Studios and Cyrus E. Dallin* by Robert Shure, artist, conservator, and owner of Skylight Studio (Woburn, MA.), examined the relationship with the Caproni Brothers Foundry (Boston, MA.) which manufactured plaster and bronze reproductions of Dallin's statues.
- *Vittoria Dallin and her Pageants* by Doreen Stevens, Administrator of the Arlington Historical Society, demonstrated that Cyrus and Vittoria were active in the culture and spirit of Arlington's "arts colony."

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration lecture series and *Dallin in Arlington Heights* exhibit was aired on local television in co-operation with Arlington Community Media Inc.

The museum participated in Arlington's annual Town Day festivities by sponsoring its ninth *Art on the Green*. Nearly two-dozen vendors offered their arts and crafts in Whittemore Park. Several authors promoted their books at Dick Haley Bookseller's booth. Hank Philippi Ryan from Channel 7 News returned to autograph her mystery novels.

The Oral History interviews continue with James McGough chronicling the lives of Cyrus and Vittoria Colonna Dallin through the perspective of their family, friends, and neighbors. These videotaped sessions are expected to be a documentary production for local television.

Arthur Dallin's stained glass windows that appear in churches throughout New England are being pho-

tographed. Fifteen color photos are on exhibit at Town Hall, second floor until March 31, 2010.

Guided tours for elementary school students and special interest groups are conducted by trustees and docents. Our goal is to have all third grades from the APS visit. Consider bringing your group or club for a personal and in-depth presentation.

### Acknowledgements

The museum's Board of Trustees was saddened by the death of Ardio DiBiccari on January 1, 2009. Mr. DiBiccari was a well-known sculptor living in the Boston area who created many outstanding works of art during his long career.

These activities were accomplished through the hard work of our Board of Trustees, continued support of the Dallin family, individuals outside and within the Town of Arlington, matching grants from companies, and assistance grants from the ACC. Due to the generosity of these and other sources, the museum increases its collection, implements educational programs, publishes articles, researches art and history, promotes the Arlington 4 Culture consortium, is launching a redesigned website, expanding its gift shop items, and preparing for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the births of Cyrus E. and Vittoria C. Dallin in 2011.

The museum, located in the historic Jefferson Cutter house in Arlington Center, at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Rte. 60, is open through the dedication of its volunteers Thursday through Sunday from noon to 4:00 p.m. Please call 781-641-0747 for tour reservations, to verify opening times, and to volunteer.



Jefferson Cutter House, site of Cyrus E. Dallin Museum.