

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

## CULTURAL COUNCIL



The Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) is a local council of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, consisting of 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, ACC is active year-round. ACC generally meets on the second Monday of each month. All meetings are announced in advance and are open to the public. During FY2018, meetings took place at the Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room.

Major personnel changes occurred with three new members joining the Council, Kimberley Harding, a Basketry and Fiber Artist, and two MCC fellows: Asia Kepka and David B. Harris. Asia is a professional photographer and David a professional trombonist and music professor at Berklee School of Music and New England Conservatory. Seven members left the Council, three for work commitments, and the others from an upset on the Council that has now been resolved.

2016-17 has brought a welcome improvement to the application process, initiated by MCC: a transfer to a completely electronic application and award process. A great improvement, ACC members can read, track and submit grant decisions online, having electronic access to past grant history, and automatically generating the Annual Report for the MCC. The required multiple paper copies of each application are now history.

On April 11, the ACC honored its 2017 Grant Recipients at a reception at the Arlington Center for the Arts, 20 Academy St, Arlington. About 45 guests attended, including grant recipients, Arlington residents, and valued arts advocates Selectman Joe Curro and State Representative Sean Garballey. Representative Garballey presented the grantees with handsome, official State of Massachusetts Commendations, that were warmly received. Entertainment was provided by the Creek River String Band, one of the 2017 grant recipients, and refreshments were graciously donated by FoodLink, Not Your Average Joe's, Anthony's East Side Deli and Trader Joe's. Chair Lisbet Taylor welcomed guests and acted as emcee, as a new format unfolded. Each grantee, introduced by his or her Council liaison, gave a brief description of the project funded, bringing insights into

the valued impact of the Cultural Council's work in the Arlington community.

In April, Council members Lisbet Taylor and Kimberley Harding participated in Robbins Library's "PLUGGED IN TO VOLUNTEER SPEED DATING," a first ever event where volunteer organizations such as ACC could explain their missions then meet one-on-one with interested prospective volunteers. Located at different tables, the two Council members spoke with about 6 people, resulting in one candidate. While no yield resulted, it was a chance to publicize ACC goals and purpose, and created camaraderie and good will among organizations and volunteers alike.

During the Spring months, ACC joined forces with other prominent arts and culture town organizations who under the leadership of the Arlington Planning Department and ACAC (Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture) created The Arlington Cultural Plan. ACC assembled lists of artists and grantees, participated in focus groups and in two Town Hall Community gatherings to disseminate and assimilate the findings. ACC looks forward to becoming a member of an ongoing umbrella group for arts and culture. It is a heady time to be part of Arlington's municipal cultural initiative.

In September, ACC conducted an Application Information Session for those planning to apply for funds. Members offered attendees advice on their proposal ideas, stressing that evidence of thoughtful planning and preparation for projects and their budgets, including letters of agreement with venues, earned higher points in the selection process.

By October, ACC's FY 2017 deadline, because the 15<sup>th</sup> fell on a weekend, a total of 30 grant applications from schools, individual artists, and cultural groups were submitted to ACC. Requests for funds totaled \$31,977. \$12,300 was the allocation from the MCC.

Following the application deadline, applicants were invited to a choice of two optional presentation sessions in November, providing an opportunity for them to elaborate on their projects and answer clarifying questions from Council members.

On December 12, the ACC held a proposal deliberation meeting, for a total of \$12,300 in available MCC funds to be allocated. Eighteen grants were awarded. Applicants not receiving funds were notified by the following week, and those receiving funds were notified in January 2017, as per MCC guidelines.

### 2017 Grant Recipients

- Arlington Center for the Arts: Arlington Porchfest \$1,000
- Arlington Children's Theatre: ACT's Summer Season 2017 Actor Financial Aid \$800
- Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture: Pathways \$1,400
- Belmont World Film: Family Festival \$750

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- Cantilena Inc.: Commissioned piece: Of a Sun She Can Remember \$500
- Nayda A Cuevas: Puerto Rico and the U.S.: the untold and forgotten histories of my Puerto Rican heritage \$750
- Delvena Theatre Company: Truly Eleanor \$550
- Claudia Donnet: Middle Eastern Dance Performance \$500
- Dan Fox: 6th Annual Arlington Jazz Festival \$1,000
- Marc Gurton: Día de los Muertos artist residency at 13forest Gallery \$750
- Steve Henderson: Mabel and Jerry, an original play \$200
- Laura Kiesel: Writing for Survival: Where I Come From and Where I am Going \$600
- Old Schwamb Mill: Annual Fall Open House \$400
- Powers Music School: Musical Storytelling Programs \$300
- Robbins Library: Arlington Author Salons \$1,500
- Lawrence “Stroker” Rogovin: Creek River String Band \$300
- True Story Theater: Protecting Our Loved Ones \$1,000

The ACC is pleased to report on three grant highlights: the crowd-pleasing, well-attended “Porchfest,” with over 100 music groups on porches throughout the Town; Cantilena’s May 7<sup>th</sup> premiere of *A Sun She Can Remember*, an original work for women’s chorus by Ellen Gilson Voth at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church; and the popular *Arlington Author Salon* series, held at The Kickstand Café.

Plans for 2018 include recruiting for new members, the annual “Celebration of Arts and Culture” in the Spring, Town Day booth in September, and the annual Grant Cycle, with grant applications due on October 16, 2017.

## COMMISSION ON ARTS & CULTURE (ACAC)

The mission of Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC) is to advocate for arts and cultural opportunities throughout Arlington and advise the Town on matters of a cultural and artistic nature.

The Commission meets monthly, on the first Thursday of the month in the Jefferson Cutter Gallery. All meetings are open to the public.

### Town-wide Cultural Plan

ACAC, in partnership with the Department of Plan-

ning and Community Development (DPCD) completed an Arts and Culture Action Plan for the Town in August 2017. The plan was completed with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) through a technical assistance grant (PMLA). We appreciated the opportunity to work with MAPC who were able to integrate the needs of multiple arts constituencies with the priorities outlined in a recently completed Master Plan, particularly in the areas of creating complete streets, wayfinding, pedestrian safety, repurposing buildings, and activating public space. The cultural plan has strengthened relationships between the arts and cultural community, Arlington boards and commissions, and the DPCD and created opportunities for exciting new collaborations, such as those currently underway: the Pathways public art project along the Minuteman bike path aimed at providing continuity through the Cultural District, the vacant storefronts project, and the development of a centralized arts and culture website. We also look forward to the infusion of creativity into future Town planning initiatives and development.

The plan includes an additional organizational plan, completed by TDC and funded by community block grant funds, to help coordinate and consolidate Arlington’s multiple arts organizations. In the fall of 2017, representatives from this commission, Arlington Public Art (APA), Arlington Cultural Council (ACC), Arlington Tourism and Economic Development Committee (ATED), Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA), and the Cultural District Managing Partnership (CDMP) came together in several meetings to work out the structure, charter, and budget request of the merger recommended by TDC. The proposed result of the merger to take effect in FY18 is an expanded Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture to be known as AC<sup>2</sup>, pending discussion with our brand consultant/website developer.

### Website Development

A \$12,000-15,000 allocation from the FY17 budget was made toward the development of a comprehensive arts and culture website for the Town, inclusive of a cultural calendar. The Commission is currently reviewing proposals and anticipate a website by end of FY18.

### Cultural District Designation Application

Since the completion of the plan in August of 2017, the Town has been awarded Cultural District designation from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. MCC’s decision was delayed until the ACA’s new location was secure, the CDMP had started meeting, and the gap between East Arlington and Arlington Center was being addressed. With the installation of Pathways, public art along the bike path, starting in June of 2017, the ACA’s signed lease and renovation funds raised, and a strong line of communication developed between MCC and the DCDP to issue reports on the CDMP and other infra-

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structure issues, the MCC deemed Arlington ready for the Designation. The CDMP has held monthly meetings to work out their procedures, structure and subcommittees, and a group to consider how to activate the section on Mass Ave. between Franklin St. and Lake St. (otherwise known as the “Committee to Fill the Gap” subcommittee is already active.

### Bike Path Projects

The MCC had advised ACAC and the MP to think about how to make the Cultural District feel continuous from Arlington Center to East Arlington, so ACAC engaged Cecily Miller, public art consultant who has been working with APA. Miller advised that the area between Mass Ave and Arlington Center would be a longer term, larger budget process and suggested starting by mounting smaller scale public art on the bike path. On behalf of ACAC, Miller solicited proposals from nine artists. Proposals were reviewed for consideration and prioritization for implementation, contingent on fundraising. Also on Miller’s advice, ACAC applied to the Arlington Cultural Council for a pilot grant to start with just three public art projects for the same bike path area that could be mounted this spring/summer.

This initiative celebrates art, nature, community, and the 25th Anniversary of the Bikeway.

All installations are on the Minuteman Bikeway in Arlington between Linwood Circle and Swan Place near Spy Pond.

*FLUTTER* - Fort Point-based collaborators **Claudia Ravischiere** and **Michael Moss** have created *FLUTTER*, 60 translucent blue plexiglas butterflies arranged in a meandering pattern across a chain-link fence overlooking scenic Spy Pond. Butterflies are symbols of strength, courage and transformation in many cultures. The public is invited to contemplate



*FLUTTER* exhibit at Spy Pond.

their extraordinary journeys and consider the impact of habitat destruction.

*Rhetoric of Opposites* - Arlington-based artist and graphic designer **Nilou Moochhala** has created a piece inspired by the way that polarizing language has become a divisive force in current national debate. She has developed 25 pairs -- for the Bikepath’s 25 years -- of juxtaposed words that highlight difference and eliminate nuance, grey area, or common ground. “Us/Them” “True/False” “Stay/Leave” and “All/None” are examples.



*City Fox* - A London-based street artist who goes by “**Stewy**” has sent two of his stenciled prints of urban wildlife across the Atlantic to a new home. London’s green parks and back yards offer food and shelter to many of the same animals -- or their cousins -- found in Arlington. Stewy is collecting an A-Z visual “dictionary” of them, and uses street art to remind city dwellers of these creatures; like street art itself, urban wildlife is sometimes a source of delight and other times viewed as pests to be exterminated. A London fox and rabbit are wheatpasted to the walls of a pedestrian underpass that runs underneath the Bikeway. This small tunnel is the ideal site for a tribute to the marginalized, barely tolerated wild animals who survive in hidden spaces along green corridors such as the Bikeway.



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*Current* - Provincetown-based environmental artist **Frank Vasello** arrived for a short residency in early October. Vasello constructed "Current", a sculpture from natural materials gathered along the Bikeway in September and worked with students at Ottoson Middle School to create a second sculpture on the grounds of the school.



"Current" exhibit seen along Minuteman Bikepath.

*Ripple* - Arlington artist Adria Arch designed RIPPLE, a participatory installation. Working under Adria's leadership, The Arlington Knitting Brigade -- a new group of community volunteers recruited for the project -- created colorful sleeves for a grove of trees along the path. Knitters used a common 5-color yarn palette but each develop their own designs. 57 community knitters created 4 foot sections which now adorn some 14 trees and will stay on location through the winter. RIPPLE celebrates the beauty of the path and has engaged many knitters who have contributed their skills to a larger effort and in a way that they might never have imagined.

Pathways is supported by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council, a local agency funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. SunBug Solar is a co-sponsor of Rhetoric of Opposites.

Thanks to the efforts of Cecily Miller, the ACAC was awarded a matching grant in the amount of \$2500 to help implement the Pathways projects.



Ripple exhibit along Minuteman bikepath

### Goals for 2018

- Implementation of TDC organizational plan to reorganize Arlington's art organizations under one umbrella.
- Implementation of Arts and Culture Action Plan working closely with DPCD.
- Assist in the launch of an Arlington Cultural District.
- Building and maintaining website, as a one-stop source of information about cultural events and programs for Town residents and visitors.
- Continue to advocate for arts and cultural activities and institutions within the Town as well as to promote Arlington as an arts and culture destination.



Arlington Knitting Brigade

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## ARLINGTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) was established in 1970 as the Town agency responsible for community-wide preservation planning as described in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 8D.

The Commission is an advocate for historic preservation in Arlington and;

- Encourages appropriate maintenance and restoration of the Town's historic structures and open spaces.
- Educates and advises municipal departments, boards, commissions, and citizens on historic preservation and the significance of Arlington's historic buildings, landscapes, objects, documents and other landmarks.
- Provides guidance and advice to owners of historically significant properties.
- Participates in the management and maintenance of historic resources owned by the Town, e.g., Arlington Town Hall, the Whittemore-Robbins House.

In addition, the Commission reviews and acts upon any applications for building permits that involve changes to historically or architecturally significant structures in Arlington under the Town's demolition-delay bylaw.

To accomplish these goals, the Commission maintains Arlington's *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.

### Hearings and Property Monitoring

The Commission conducted formal hearings on eleven inventoried properties in 2017:

21 Ashland Street, 47 Bartlett Avenue, 89 Beacon Street, 15 Colonial Drive (demolished), 418 Massachusetts Avenue, 1167 Massachusetts Avenue, 30 Orvis Road, 12 Schouler Court (1-yr demolition delay), 39 Winter Street (1-yr demolition delay), 43 Winter Street (1-yr demolition delay), 27 Wyman Street, in addition to three informal hearings on inventoried properties.

Oversight on the properties from 2016-17 hearings continued throughout the year. Monitored properties included the ones listed above plus 122 Claremont Avenue, 187 Forest Avenue, 252 Gray Street, 3-11 Lakeview Street, 1210 Massachusetts Avenue, 7 Medford Street, 47 Mystic Lake Drive, 22 Williams Street and the Whittemore-Robbins Carriage House.

In addition to property hearings, the Commission held formal hearings for approval of seven new signs in the Arlington Center National Register Historic District at:

9 Mystic Street, 444 Massachusetts Avenue, 454 Massachusetts Avenue, 458 Massachusetts Avenue,

487 Massachusetts Avenue, 489 Massachusetts Avenue, and 677 Massachusetts Avenue.

### Arlington Community Preservation Act (CPA)

The Historical Commission is actively supporting three historic preservation grants approved by the CPA Committee and Town Meeting in 2017. Members of the Commission are working with the Town on the implementation of a grant to add additional properties to Arlington's *Inventory of Historically and/or Architecturally Significant Properties*. In 2018 135 properties will be researched and added to the inventory. In addition CPA-funded projects to restore the water features in the Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden and to prepare a Preservation Plan for the Old Burying Ground began in 2017.

### Historic Markers

The historic house marker program is for all Arlington properties on the *Inventory*. Each plaque displays the year the property was built and a historic house name, if any.

### Web Site

The Commission continues to maintain its own web site 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 activities that educate and inform citizens about historic preservation. The AHC participated in Town Day with a booth.

### 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 Garden, the Town Hall and its grounds.

Commissioners represented the Historical Commission on various municipal boards and historic organizations in Arlington, including the Arlington Preservation Fund (Patrick Guthrie and Dianne Schaefer) the Arlington Historical Society (Pamela Meister), and the Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee (JoAnn Robinson).

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## ARLINGTON 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 340 Local Historic Commissions across Massachusetts are already established and working closely with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. They serve as local preservation advocates and as an important resource for information about their community's cultural resources and preservation activities.

Arlington has seven established historic districts that include approximately 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 2017 the Commission met twelve (12) times to hold hearings for property owners seeking approval for certificates for exterior work to be conducted on their properties. Part of the regular meetings included twelve (12) Informal Hearings held for property owners seeking advice or resource information for work to be conducted and twenty-three (23) Formal Hearings. As a result of those meetings and additional CONA applications not requiring a hearing, twenty-one (21) Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), thirty-seven (37) Certificates of Non-Applicability (CONA) to be undertaken were granted. In addition, there were four (4) Application Denials (7 Pelham Terrace, 75 Westminster Ave. and 41 Westminster Ave. (twice denied)).

During the year the Commissioners also worked on educating the public on the role of the Historic District Commission, updating maps of the Historic Districts and on the town's Master Plan and Community Preservation Act. Letters of support were sent on various CPA applications.

### Commissioner Changes in 2017

Jonathan Nyberg stepped down in November 2016 as a Commissioner-at large after many years of service

as the Board's appointed "realtor". A letter was sent to the Greater Boston Area of Realtors (GBAR) asking for a potential replacement candidate, and Ellen "Nellie" Aikenhead was nominated and ultimately sworn in in May of 2017 as the "realtor" designee to the AHDC.



## CYRUS E. DALLIN ART MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Cyrus Dallin Art Museum promotes new insights into our shared history by exploring the life, work, and values of this celebrated sculptor of Arlington. The values of the Museum are shaped by Cyrus Dallin's own values, as manifest in his life and work. In accord with Dallin's ideals, the museum makes art accessible to all, provides opportunities for learning and exploration, works in partnership with others who share Dallin's commitment to artistic expression, education, and social justice, and interprets our country's complicated history.

Over 900 people from around the world visited the museum in 2017. The museum is open year-round on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 to 4:00 P.M. Volunteer docents offer tours during regular hours and group tours at other times by appointment. Tours are tailored for adults and children with consideration for each group's area of special interest. The museum is located in the Jefferson Cutter House at 611 Massachusetts Avenue. Contact the museum at [info@dallin.org](mailto:info@dallin.org) or call 781-641-0747. The web address is [www.dallin.org](http://www.dallin.org).

The Museum offers programs throughout the year for members and visitors of all ages. Additionally, progress has been made on strategic goals.

### Goals Achieved

- Fostered local partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, Commission for Arts & Culture, Friends of the Drama, and Arlington Continuing Education to collaborate on cultural projects and programming.
- Supported the successful nomination of the Arlington Cultural District to the Massachusetts Cultural Commission.
- Marketed the museum to new group audiences including the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UMass Boston.
- Furthered historical research about Dallin's

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*Cyrus Dallin instructing sculpture students at the Massachusetts Normal Arts School (now the Massachusetts College of Art and Design). This vintage photo is a recent purchase by the museum and supports our understanding of Dallin's teaching career.*

advocacy efforts on behalf of the civil rights of Native American peoples. Museum Director Heather Leavell presented a talk at Plimouth Plantation on this subject in November.

- Continued to collect and preserve Dallin's artwork. This year's acquisitions included a plaster bust of Charles Lindbergh and an oil painting of a French landscape titled, *Auvers-sur-Oise*, which is on long-term loan from Dallin descendant Pat McCabe. Received a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council to help with the costs of conservation and cleaning of the Lindbergh bust and another oil painting by Dallin.
- Embarked on a new digitization initiative with financial support from family members Jim and Misty Corey, resulting in the scanning of over 1,000 archival photos by Dorian Color.
- Collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce to host visitors at First Lights tree lighting event.
- Continued an affiliation with the North American Reciprocal Membership organization, which offers discounted or free admission at over 880 participating institutions.

### Activities and Programs

- A children's sculpture workshop took place in February during school vacation week. This popular program offers an age-appropriate tour of the galleries and a hand-building sculpture class during which children build armatures and work with clay to create their own animals and other figures.
- Nick Batzell of Skylight Studios presented a talk about the traditional sculpture making process as Dallin would have worked in his day.
- Offered a hands-on sculpture workshop for adults led by instructor Rosalyn Grunmann.
- Organized a museum tour for the Osher Life-long Learning members from UMass Boston.
- Assisted the museum non-profit with the second annual Summer Soiree Gala fundraiser.
- The Museum's busiest day of the year, Art on the Green, is an important part of Town Day celebrations. This event gives artists an opportunity to exhibit and sell their works. Artists and craftsman offered a colorful display of original works. Local writers were on site for book signings.
- Director-Curator Heather Leavell presented a talk at Plimouth Plantation on the subject of Dallin's social activism and leading role in

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reform efforts to improve the government's treatment of Native peoples.

### Future Goals

- Celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the museum on Oct. 18, 2018 with special programming.
- Participate in next steps for the newly designated Arlington Cultural District as a member of the Managing Partnership.
- Continue renovation of museum galleries, unveil recent acquisitions, and seek funding for interior restoration of the Jefferson Cutter House.
- Seek to broaden our audience via social and traditional media, outreach to tour groups, and ongoing community participation.
- Work with area schools to develop additional learning opportunities for students.
- Upcoming spring events: April 15, 2018: Reading of Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride* during Patriot's Day weekend celebrations. April 24, 2018: Heather Leavell will speak about Dallin's social advocacy on behalf of the civil rights of Native Peoples in a talk co-sponsored with the Arlington Historical Society.

### Special Recognition

As we enter our twentieth year as a museum, we would like to give special recognition to museum founders James McGough and Geraldine Tremblay, both of whom are still active in museum activities and dedicate many hours of their time to the betterment of the organization. James P. McGough and his father operated the Town Barber Shop across the street from Town Hall from 1970-2007. James often would ask his clients about the artist who designed the Robbins Memorial Flagstaff. His inquiries eventually led to the establishment of a committee to survey the works in Town buildings by artist Cyrus E. Dallin. The survey in turn led to the establishment of the museum Board of Trustees. Geraldine (Geri) Tremblay was for many years the Latin teacher at Arlington High School. Now retired, she is the President of the non-profit Board of Directors of the museum as well as an active member of the Board of Trustees. Geri, James, and nine others were the founding members of the Board of Trustees, who on a sunny afternoon on October 18, 1998, cut the ribbon and opened the doors to the museum with its two galleries in the Jefferson Cutter House. The Museum would like to recognize James and Geri's vision, hard work, and dedication to making this Town gem a reality and an ongoing enterprise.



*James McGough and Geraldine Tremblay, two of the original founders of the Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum, enjoy the fruits of the labors at the Dallin Museum's Summer Soirée in August 2017.*



*James P. McGough (right) and his father in the Town Barber Shop across the street from Arlington Town Hall.*