



- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA -

Entrusted With History's Future

Newsletter for the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the District of Columbia
VOLUME 21, NUMBER 1 FALL 2023

Festive Spring Reception Honors NSCDA National President Katherine Cammack

Over 100 DC Society members and their guests gathered at the historic home of Betsy Nottingham on Friday, April 14 for “Let’s Celebrate!” -- a festive reception honoring Katherine Cammack, the National President of the NSCDA. Several current and former National Officers were among those saluting our current National President.

Threatening skies and a few brief showers moved some of the celebrating indoors, but Betsy’s beautiful garden was enjoyed by everyone, as were the Oyster Bar, an elaborate Charcuterie Board, Smithfield ham biscuits, and an array of passed hors d’oeuvres.

The current DC President Marta Miller Dunetz introduced guests to our honoree on Betsy’s wisteria-covered front porch. Katherine Cammack is traveling to various NSCDA Societies to meet their members, and the DC Society was delighted to have this opportunity to entertain our National President.



National President Katherine Cammack (center) is welcomed by DC Honorary President Betsy Nottingham (L) and current DC President Marta Miller Dunetz (R).



Annual Meeting on May 17, 2023

Celebration and Camaraderie

The DC Society's Annual Meeting is a highlight of the year, and the time when members gather to celebrate the accomplishments of the previous year and look forward to the exciting plans for the new year that lies ahead. Due to ongoing renovations at Dumbarton House, this year's May event was held at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, and we are grateful to Mary Wheeler for being our Sponsor. Our business meeting was followed by a festive tea, and both were attended by a capacity crowd of 80 DC Society Members, Courtesy Dames, and elected Candidates. Special guests included NSCDA Executive Director Carol Cadou and NSDCA Vice President Ellen Boomer, a President Emerita of the DC Society.

Marta Miller Dunetz, outgoing President, presided, and the meeting began with an Invocation by The Reverend Doctor Lynn Ronaldi, a new DC Dame and the Rector of the historic Pohick Church in Lorton, VA. Reports were given by Treasurer Lucy Rhame, and Registrar Llewellyn Bensfield. Marta thanked both women for their many years of service in these important positions.

Next on the Agenda was the President's Report, during which Marta described the outstanding accomplishments of each individual committee. She emphasized that the hard work of the Committee chairs and those working with them contributed to the overall success of the 2022-2023 year, continuing a pattern of success that can be built upon in the years to come. Marta thanked all the members of the "volunteer army" responsible for this success, and singled out the Officers and Committee Chairs who are rotating off the Board.

The Nominating Committee Chair, Bunny Muir, gave the report of her committee, announcing those serving during the upcoming 2023-2024 year as Officers and members of the Board of Managers, plus those joining the Board as new Committee Chairs. Following confirmation by Corresponding Secretary Leslie George that the slate had been elected unanimously, Marta presented the DC Society's historic gavel (made with wood from Mount Vernon) to incoming President Eleanore Boyse. Doris Dixon and Ellen Schreiber are serving as Vice Presidents.

Eleanore made a few remarks and surprised her predecessor by announcing Marta's selection for the NSCDA Roll of Honor, a national award recognizing dedicated service to the NSCDA and the DC Society. Eleanore adjourned the meeting, and all attendees enjoyed conversation and camaraderie at the festive tea that followed.



President's Message

It is an honor and great privilege to have been elected 37th President of the DC Dames since we were established in 1891. Thank you for putting your trust in me and I look forward to serving you. Much appreciation goes out to Marta for her tireless work, boundless energy, and exceptional dedication to the Dames these past years. I also would like to thank the outgoing Board for its hard work and commitment to making the DC Dames such a dynamic and successful organization. It is a hard act to follow but with such a terrific Board and your support we will continue to thrive.

This issue contains a great overview of our past and future events. We have an exciting year ahead of us with many planned activities and ways to become involved. I am pleased to see that the DC Dames is growing fast and that we are attracting so many new members. We welcome involvement from all our members so do let me know should you be interested in becoming more active. Additional activities and events will be posted on our website as they are confirmed. Please do visit NSCDA-DC regularly for updated information and news.

Finally, I will be attending the National Conference in St. Louis October 19-22. The conference is open to all Dames and I encourage more of us to join. It is a great way to learn more about the Dames at the National level and to explore St. Louis and surroundings. It should be interesting, fun, and there is much to see! To register please go to: <https://dumbartonhousetrial.salsalabs.org/nationalconference2021/index.html>

I look forward to seeing all of you this coming year.

Eleanore H. Boyse
President of the DC Society: NSCDA



Honoring the Women who served in the United States Military, Memorial Day 2023, Arlington National Cemetery



DC Society Delegates and Alternates to the 2022 Biennial included (L-R) Gretchen Bukowski, Eleanore Boyse, Doris Dixon, Mary Johnson, Marta Dunetz, Anne Randolph, Kathy Prendergast, Sarah Demarest, and Leslie George.

Historic Houses Supported by NSCDA-DC

Why Support Sulgrave Manor in England, When we are a National Society in America?

The connection of the National Society of Colonial Dames in America and a small manor house in Northamptonshire, England, is both singular and significant to our Organization.

As the NSCDA's longest, continuously supported property, and the only overseas museum property, Sulgrave Manor was donated jointly to the the people of the United States and Great Britain in 1914 by the British Committee for the Celebration of the Hundred Years of Peace between our two countries. The Charter of Sulgrave Manor Trust was created: "to preserve Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home of the family of George Washington, the first President of the United States of America, for the public benefit; and to provide and support education in subject areas relevant to Sulgrave Manor and its historic role to the history of Anglo-American relations and to the history, literature, and institutions of the United States."

When the Manor keys were turned over to the American Ambassador in 1914, the Maryland Society President, Mrs. T. Harrison Garnett, represented the NSCDA. The National Society commissioned and donated a copy of Charles Wilson Peale's 1772 portrait of George Washington to the Manor and in 1915 the NSCDA sent \$1,000 to Sulgrave Manor which was acknowledged as "the first contribution we have received from American sources."



In 1923 the membership of the NSCDA was about 9,000. During the Biennial Council meeting, the decision was made to create an endowment of not less than \$100,000 for the benefit of Sulgrave Manor. Each member was asked to collect \$10 in subscriptions of \$1 or more from her state. Within the first year \$112,000 was raised and gifted to Sulgrave Manor and presented formally 'as a gift of friendship' in a folio volume entitled The Sulgrave Endowment Record, which contains the thirty thousand contributors who donated to the initial fund. The Endowment, now called The Sulgrave Manor Fund for the Future, continues to grow. Your annual contribution to The Friends of Sulgrave Manor demonstrates our ongoing commitment toward peace and friendship between the American and British people, as well as serves as a monument to our common heritage.

In honor of the 100th Anniversary of this cooperation, Sulgrave Manor celebrated the occasion last May with a ribbon-cutting by the American Ambassador to Britain opening an enlarged exhibit about George Washington which focuses on his personal attributes and life. The exhibit enables visitors to fully understand the impact George Washington had during his lifetime, and how his legacy still resonates through six generations from his 5th great grandfather Lawrence Washington's purchase of Sulgrave Manor in 1539.

Book Clubs Thriving after Post-Pandemic Year

What a difference a year makes! Last summer, all three DC Society Book Clubs were planning a return to in-person, indoor meetings. Now, all three are thriving, but each has undergone a change. The background is that when Betsy Nottingham was DC President and interested in starting a book club, she asked the Historical Activities Committee Chair, Judy Stover, to gauge interest at an organizational meeting at Judy's home on a snowy day in January 2015. The strong interest by attendees led to the establishment of both a day and evening book club. They each met in February 2015 and read the same book, which was a biography of Louisa Catherine Adams (the fascinating wife of John Quincy Adams). Fewer than three years later, a second daytime club was established, and each group took on a distinctive name to identify them as independent entities.

The Literary Ladies are the original daytime book club, and while they filled two vacancies, they are now complete with 15 members. Over the years, the members have developed deep personal connections, leading them to decide recently to continue meeting monthly, but to alternate between a meeting that is more social and one where a book is read and discussed. This policy will be discussed and reevaluated after being tried this year. Marta Dunetz chaired the Literary Ladies from its inception until last fall, when Betsy Nottingham became its overall leader. For September, their book is Nathaniel Philbrick's *Travels with George: In Search of Washington and His Legacy*.

The newest book club, the History Hounds, went through a year of transition, losing several members, including the chair, Nancy Ody, who moved to Boston. But, after recruiting several enthusiastic new members and sharing leadership responsibilities, the group is energized and totally engaged. With the addition of a new member joining in the fall, they will number 13. The History Hounds currently are reading *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Mary Johnson, an original member of the History Hounds, can answer any questions.

Judy Stover continues to coordinate the original evening group of readers. First known as the Evening Explorers, they recently became The Bluestockings, a name given to educated women in the 18th century who were willing to discuss the issues of the day. Judy explains this behavior was politically incorrect at that time, and men thought the female brain was not able to process or understand such complicated topics. Our Dames Bluestockings are proud to continue the name. Their September book is *George Washington: The Political Rise of America's Founding Father* by David O. Stewart, who spoke to the DC Society a few months after this book was published. There are 20 members of The Bluestockings, but because of busy schedules, only about eight to ten attend each meeting.

No matter when they meet or where they meet, those in all three book clubs treasure the camaraderie and close friendships that have developed and bind them to one another.



Pictured poolside during a meeting of the Literary Ladies at Helen Curtin's home are (L-R): Nan Whalen, Alma Paty, and Sarah Demarest.

We're forming a new book club!

If you are interested in joining, please contact Ellen Schreiber at ellenschreiber24@gmail.com. An organizational meeting will be held in the fall.

We Love to Welcome New Members!

Now is a Great Time to Think About New Candidates

In November 2022, at the NSCDA Biennial, a *National Membership Drive* focusing on legacies was adopted. The legacy program provides a streamlined, abbreviated process for legacies to be nominated. Under this program, a legacy is defined as a daughter, sister, niece, granddaughter, mother, first cousin, or aunt, who share the same ancestor. The National Legacy Membership Drive will conclude with the Biennial in November, 2024. Members of the NSCDA-DC have embraced the new Legacy Membership Drive, nominating 1/3 of the candidates considered by the Board in the past year.

Since June of 2022, at six NSCDA-DC Board meetings, the Board welcomed 29 official candidates for membership. Of the candidates elected, nine were legacies. Many of the candidates elected over the past year have completed their lineage paperwork and are now members.



Dames gather before the Hunt Brunch held at the Chevy Chase Club April 16, 2023.

As summer comes to an end, this is the perfect time to think about proposing a friend or family member for membership in the NSCDA DC. With several exciting Dames events coming up this fall, there will be many opportunities to introduce your proposed candidate. By joining you at an event, she will meet other members and learn about the fascinating and fun things we do.

The process to propose a new member is not difficult. Simply complete the *Proposal for Membership Form*, including the name of the candidate's NSCDA approved ancestor, the names of the proposer and endorser, and the two events your candidate has attended. If your candidate is not sure about the name of her ancestor, we can provide contacts who can help her investigate.

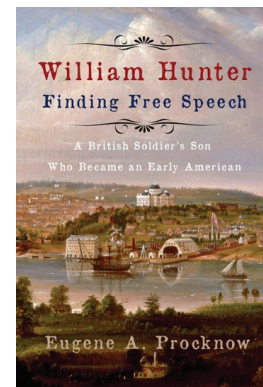
After the form is completed, the proposer and endorser include their letters of support for the candidate. Proposing and endorsing letters should provide information on the candidate such as: how long the proposer or endorser has known her, her interest in joining the DC Dames, and why you think she would be a good addition to the DC Society. Submit the completed package (form, two letters, candidate photo and CV) to the Membership Committee Co-chairs. Emailed letters and uploaded forms are fine, as well as typed or handwritten letters scanned in or mailed. Applicants will be considered at Board meetings on September 13, 2023, November 8, 2023, January 17, 2024, March 13, 2024, and June 12, 2024. After approval by the Board, the candidate has one year to complete her lineage paperwork.

For the *Membership Proposal Step-by-Step Check List*, and a printable, fillable nomination form, contact Membership Co-Chair Doris Dixon at dorisdixon8@gmail.com or call her at 202-285-0486. You may also contact Membership Co-chair Nan Whalen at glamella.nan@gmail.com with questions. We are here to support you through the process. We look forward to meeting your candidates!

Speakers and Programs

Upcoming Events

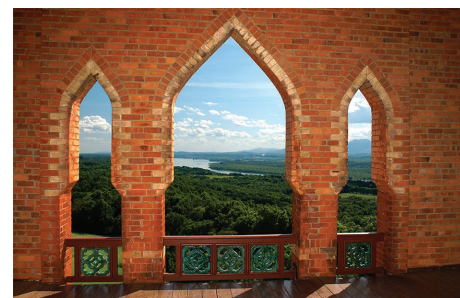
September 20, 2023; 6:30 p.m. – Historian Eugene Procknow will discuss his new book, *William Hunter: Finding Free Speech, A British Soldier's Son who Became an Early American*. Through a chance encounter at a dinner party, Mr. Procknow learned of a journal passed down through generations of an American family. The journal was penned by an unsigned son of a British soldier who fought in the American Revolution. Mr. Procknow discovered the author's identity and provides a fascinating look into William Hunter's life as a newspaper editor, publisher, politician, and community builder in early 19th century America. Gene Procknow is a former management consultant with one of the world's largest consulting firms and lives with his family in Washington, DC. **His book will be available for purchase.**



October 4, 2023; 6:30 p.m. – Annual Memorial Decorative Arts Lecture, Natalie Larson, Textile Furnishings Historian and Specialist. Established to honor the late Linda Mattingly, NSCDA-DC, the Annual Memorial Decorative Arts Lecture spotlights experts, historians, authors, and others from the field of historic decorative arts. Natalie Larson's expertise in documenting, conserving, and reproducing historic textile furnishings makes her an ideal speaker for this year's lecture. Ms. Larson often analyzes holes and gouges in antique bedsteads for her museum clients, who are scattered from Maine to Mississippi or looking for traces of lost hardware and carved ornaments, frames decorated with wallpaper and alterations to accommodate modern mattresses. Examples of Ms. Larson's work includes restoration of Mount Vernon's dazzling Yellow Bedroom's bed hangings and restoration of the bed hangings extant in the furnished Dumbarton House bedroom. She has advised organizations including the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Monticello, the Woodlawn Museum and Gardens (Ellsworth, Maine) and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts.



October 25, 2023; 6:30 p.m. – Dr. Sean Sawyer, Ph.D., Washburn & Susan Oberwager President, The Olana Partnership. Landscape painter Frederic Edwin Church is a well-known luminary of the Hudson River Valley School. Impressed by the architecture he saw during a trip to the Middle East in 1869, Church built a home on his New York estate to incorporate Middle Eastern elements and designs. Architect Calvert Vaux sited the new home impressively at the top of a long slope and Church named it, Olana, derived from the Arabic, meaning "our place on high." Together, Olana and Frederic Church represent a complex period in American history, in the aftermath of the Civil War. Dr. Sawyer has been president of The Olana Partnership since 2015, after serving as Executive Director of The Royal Oak Foundation, the American partner of the National Trust of England, Wales & Northern Ireland.



Excursions

A Very Busy Year for the Excursion Committee!

With the closing of Dumbarton House for renovation, the Excursion Committee was asked to double its number of activities for our members. Given that charge, the Committee offered 12 events between May 2022 and May 2023. There was a wide range of activities: events at several historic homes; private Dames visit to De La Brooke Manor, the historic home of our member Stephanie McCormick-Goodhart; a trip to Baltimore for a private tour of Mount Clare Museum House, which is under the Stewardship of the NSCDA-MD; visits to two cemeteries - the Rock Creek Cemetery and President Lincoln's Cottage and the adjoining First National Cemetery; visit/tour of the National Guard Memorial Museum and the National Museum of the United States Army; two docent led museum tours – one on Maya Lin and the other of highlights in the West Building of the National Gallery of Art; guided visits of two places of worship – Historic Pohick Church and The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and, the finale of the year, a private tour of Oak Spring – home and garden of Rachel “Bunny” Mellon. Some of the events were during the week and others were on a Saturday when families were invited to join. All events were very well-attended, often with waitlists, and usually included lunch together.

Looking ahead, on Wednesday, September 6th, in the Charles Town, West Virginia area, there will be a very special private tour of two homes of George Washington's brothers. Our guide will be the esteemed Adam Erby, Curator of Fine and Decorative Arts at Mount Vernon. We have also planned a return to Oak Spring on May 1st for a guided tour by Elinor Crane.

Among a few of the event possibilities being considered by the Excursion Committee for the coming year are: visiting the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land during the Christmas season when the unique Creche collection will be displayed, having a curator's lecture on selected art in the NGA East Building, arranging a special introduction to Planet Word, touring Rubell Museum and/or the Capital Jewish Museum and/or National Museum of the Marine Corps and/or The House of the Temple (a Masonic temple) on 16th Street.

Thank you to all those supporters of the excursions. We look forward to more special events together!



Dames gathered for a “Highlights of the Collection” private tour given by an official National Gallery of Art lecturer.



Dames at the guided Rock Creek Cemetery History Walk and Picnic. We rested at the grave of “Clover” Adams with St Gauden's statue, hidden within a surround of topiary ewe.



26 Dames had a private tour of the largest Roman Catholic Church in North America. The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.



In celebration of George Washington's birthday, a group of 22 Dames and Friends toured the historic Pohick Church in Lorton, VA (built 1772).



Dames and future Dame for the docent led tour of the special Maya Lin exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery.

Patriotic Services

Congressional Essay Winners honored at Dumbarton House

Several DC Dames, shown in the photograph, welcomed the 2023 Congressional Essay Contest scholars to Dumbarton House on Tuesday, June 20th. For more than 40 years, the NSCDA Corporate Societies and Town Committees have sponsored a national Congressional Essay Contest with winners receiving a scholarship for a week-long, civic focused seminar in Washington, DC. Our DC Society sponsors 2 winners each year, underwriting their tuition for the seminar.



Top row from left to right: Linda White, Sheri O'Connell, Ellen Schreiber, Abby Sullivan, Gretchen Bukowski (co-chair PSC) and Mary Bradshaw
Next row down: Sandy Webster (co-chair PSC)
Third Row: Cynthia Toussaint and Cathy Jones
Front row: Daisy Berexa and Laura Phinizy



While vacationing in Wyoming in July, Elizabeth Webster with sons, John and Webb, visited the Mandel Post Office in Sheridan which is the NSCDA-WY historical property housed at Whitney Commons Park. The log cabin was originally built in 1880 by George Mandel and passed through several ownerships undergoing many additions. John Loucks bought the home in 1882 and became the new postmaster and had the named changed to Sheridan Post Office. By 1883, the log cabin was moved to the center of town and a large extension was added. E. A. Whitney, for whom the park is named, purchased the property and opened the town's first bank there. Whitney lived in the log cabin until his death in 1917. The building resided in several locations thereafter, deteriorating with each move. The structure was given to the NSCDA-WY, and in 1976-77, the Society restored the smaller cabin using the original roof, floor, window frames and door reconstructed from the sawn lumber from the early extension. The Wyoming Society continues as owner and conservator of the Mandel Post Office.

Patriotic Services

Governor Youngkin Spoke at Naturalization Ceremony

Governor Youngkin was the keynote speaker at the June 10th Naturalization Ceremony. On this Declaration Day celebrating the 247th anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, we witnessed the oath of citizenship given to 50 new U.S. citizens from 20 countries.



Pictured with Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin are Colonial Dames from the DC, VA, WVa, and MD Societies as well as Regents to Gunston Hall.



There's Nothing Like a Dame!



Anne Randolph, Nina Randolph,
and Mary Bradshaw



Keith and Janet Lindgren, Mary and Peter Johnson



Clark and Mason Bavin, Adam Erby
of Mount Vernon, and Lucy Rhame.



Dames enjoy a trip to Richmond.

New Volunteer Opportunities

Dumbarton House would love DC Dames to help out as docents and beautify the garden. Please contact Eleanore Boyse for more information at emboyse@gmail.com.



Lee Allen, Nina Randolph, and Kate Patterson enjoying Rachel "Bunny" Mellon's garden.



The current board photographed after the June 7 meeting.



Hannah Cox and Llewelyn Bensfield celebrating in April.



Dames at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia.

Communications

NSDCA-DC Photo Directory

In an effort to help us recognize and get to know one another better, we have created a directory which includes headshots as well as emails, telephone numbers, and home address contact information. It is password protected and only available to members and courtesy members of NSCDA-DC. The information in the online directory will be updated often, so it is the best place to find your fellow Dames' latest phone numbers, etc.

The Photo Directory can be found:

- 1) on this website <https://nscdadc.ctrn.co>
- 2) on our website, nscdadc.org, on the "For Members" page (password: dcdames1891)
- 3) or on the Online Member Directory mobile app. The convenient mobile app allows you to call, text, or email your Dames friends from your phone easily. Instructions on downloading the app are found below. Please check out your member profile, which has already been created, and send in corrections and headshots to nscdadc@gmail.com.

Please contact nscdadc@gmail.com with any concerns, corrections, or questions. We hope you enjoy the Photo Directory!



A mobile app is available for our directory!

Download the app by searching "Online Member Directory" in your app store.
Enter our mobile code: NSCDADC

Young Dames



A group of NSCDA-DC Young Dames attended a screening of *Love & Friendship* (based on the Jane Austen novel) on Wednesday, July 19, at Dumbarton House. The screening was part of the 12th annual Jane Austen Film Festival at Dumbarton House.

Dames Christmas Tea and Boutiques

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Dumbarton House

Featuring:

Audrey Cadwallader - Ananya by Rose Imports from India

Christmas Wreaths sponsored by Dames Historical Activities Committee

Meg Carter Designs

Laura Digges - Papier Fleurs

Lynn Keith - Cheese Straws and Peppermint Bark

Shelley Rodgers - Hot Pepper Jelly

Nancy Smith - Walton Street Stationery

Mary Wheeler - Beeswax Candles

Dumbarton House, Gunston Hall, Sulgrave Manor

and more to come!

*Suggested contribution to Fisher House
sponsored by Dames Patriotic Services Committee*

Co-Chairs

Shelley Rodgers and Mary Ann Way



These photos capture some of the magical moments of the 2022 Christmas Tea!

Calendar

2023

- September 6 Private Tour of Harewood, current residence of a Washington family descendant in Charles Town, WV. National Historic Register Property built in 1770 for Samuel Washington, elder brother of George
- September 13, 10 a.m. DC Dames Board meeting
- September 20, 6:30 p.m. Evening lecture with Eugene A. Procknow, author of *William Hunter: Finding Free Speech: A British Soldier's Son Who Became an Early American*
- October 4, 6:30 p.m. Annual Memorial Decorative Arts Lecture with Natalie Larson, curator from Williamsburg, who will speak on historic bedchambers tying the talk in with the recent restoration of the bedchamber at Dumbarton.
- October 19 - 22 National Conference at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri
- October 25, 6:30 p.m. Evening lecture with Sean E. Sawyer, Washburn and Susan Oberwager, President, The Olana Partnership. Olana is Hudson River School painter Frederic Church's home on the Hudson. Church (1826-1900) designed the house and lived there with his family. The property is considered one of the most important artistic residences in the U.S.
- November 15, 4:30 DC Dames Board meeting at Betsy Nottingham's, followed by a light supper
- December 6, 11 a.m. -2 p.m. Christmas Tea and Boutique

2024

- January 17, 10 a.m. DC Dames Board meeting
- March 13, 10 a.m. DC Dames Board meeting
- May 1 Excursion to Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring
- May 15 DC Dames Annual Meeting