



The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

Welcoming Young & Old Alike to Join in Remembering the Past and Working for an Even Better Future

*The District's Oldest Civic Organization –
Founded December 7, 1865*

*Bulletin #85
April 3, 2009*

President's Message...

Last month I focused on the benefits of networking at monthly AOI luncheons as demonstrated by Carolivia Herron's discovery of newly-found facts surrounding the Marian Anderson story. Carolivia's research was immortalized last month at the premiere performance of the opera "Let Freedom Sing" at the Atlas Theatre for which Carolivia wrote the libretto.

At the March AOI luncheon there were additional examples of successful networking and fact-sharing. AOI member Conrad Reid (former CEO of Security Storage) had emailed me hoping to contact someone who had information about Galt Jewelers as he was working on a history of the US Marine Corp emblem. Al Wheeler provided the name of a past Galt executive but, perhaps a reader of this column has more they could share (email me at aoi_of_dc@verizon.net).

And speaking of sharing... an email via our website from Amy T. asked for any information members may have on her grandfather's old restaurant, The Governor Shepherd. We were able to determine that it was the restaurant at the Governor Shepherd apartments which were located at 2121 Virginia Avenue until demolished in 1984.

Finally, while continuing to 'input' the names of all of AOI's past members into our database at the HSW's Kiplinger Library (the Sesquicentennial Project), I came across an interesting and timely membership application. It was from 1926 for Ulric S.J. Dunbar – the sculptor of the Governor Shepherd Statue (see page 3 for related story). His application revealed he was born on January 31, 1862 in Ontario, Canada and had lived in DC since 1884. In 1926 he lived on Vista Street, NE and, unfortunately, died in 1927. I had not known of his AOI connection until now.

So, you see these 'connections' are an important part of AOP's functions and communiqués.

Bill Brown

April's Luncheon Event:

Architectural Historian Don Hawkins

Peter Charles L'Enfant: The Plan

The second of two lectures celebrating the Centennial of L'Enfant's re-interment at Arlington Cemetery

Please join us for...

our Luncheon Meeting on Friday, April 17th, at the Channel Inn (free Parking) 650 Water Street, SW. (Maine Avenue via Metro Rail Green to Waterfront Station/SEU, Metro Bus 70 or Downtown Circulator Bus), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m. (\$20 per person - please have checks completed and payable to AAOI@), concurrent with our Business Meeting and followed by our Feature Presentation.

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our new voice mail **202-342-1865**, no later than noon Wed., April 15, 2009.

This NEW voice mail box number is the only means to make a reservation*. Late reservations make planning very difficult for us and failure by you to cancel prior to Noon on Thurs., 4/16, may result in you being charged.

Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest's names, your meal preferences (Fish, Seafood Newburg, Chicken, Beef, Veggie Plate or Fruit Plate) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or last-minute cancellation.

Future Meetings...

The AOI's 144th Year B Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

May 15, 2009 – “Historic Blair House” presented by Curator Candace Shireman

June 19, 2009 – Former AOI Vice-present and retired DC Police Chief Ernest Brown (1876-1966) will ‘return’ to reminisce about his years on the police department.

July 4, 2009 – Join AOI members and march in the annual Palisades Fourth of July Parade (10:30, Whitehaven Pkwy. at MacArthur Blvd., NW)

Sept. 18, 2009 – “They Done Killed Papa Dead!” – Author Anthony Pitch highlights his newest work on the Lincoln Assassination and Member Reminiscences (if time permits)

Oct. 16, 2009 – Historian Dr. Carroll R. Gibbs discusses the District of Columbia doughboys of World War I

Nov. 20, 2009 – Author/writer Bob Levey presents an update of his “Bob Levey’s Washington” & Annual Election of the AOI’s Board and Officers

NOTE: All meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative. *If our published RSVP line (202-342-1865) is not answering or appears out-of-order, please call 202-342-1638.

Remember: No luncheon meetings July/August nor December/January

Note: The Board of Directors meets at the Heurich House Museum at 10 a.m. on the Monday immediately prior to a scheduled luncheon meeting.

Be Advised: In case of inclement weather, the AOI follows the closing schedule of the Arlington County Public Schools or call AOI at **202-342-1865** for last minute information.

If You Were Not At Our March 2009 Meeting...

The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants held its second meeting of 2009 on March 30 at the Channel Inn. There were 90 members and guests attending.

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be adopted as they appeared in the March newsletter. The motion was approved.

Membership Chairman John Daly announced that seven new applications were received for membership since the last meeting. They are **Carol Galaty** (spouse of Gil Hill); **Anne Martinez** (sponsored by Nelson Rimensnyder and Joe Grano); **Nola Klamberg** (sponsored by Bill Brown); **Jerry and Helena Peters** (sponsored by Bill Wilson); **Amy Ballard** (from website); **Kathleen Bashian** (tour guide sponsored by Vicki Schwartz). Carl Cole moved, seconded by John Gill, that the applicants be accepted for membership. The motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer Hulit Taylor presented a brief upbeat report. She noted that membership continues strong, and that we are 20 members above where we were at the

comparable time last year. The total membership to date is 263. Income from member's dues is \$245 above last year, and members' donations are \$480 above the comparable 2008 figure. Expenses since the February meeting included grants to the 1st US Colored Troops Cadet Regiment and to the Military Road School Preservation Trust and the cost of AOI's tax return preparation by an outside professional firm. Our investment account has decreased significantly, as expected, due to the current state of the economy. We continue to meet all of our budgeted and projected costs without difficulty and in a timely manner. Hulit expressed the appreciation of the Board to the membership and its generous contributions to hold these informative meetings and to fund projects in keeping with the AOI mission.

Many interesting announcements of activities that might be of interest to members were diligently announced by Bill Brown. Bill preceded this by the careful introduction of new members and guests, old members who had not attended for a while, and personal good news as well as sad news about members Louisa Day and Charles Matson who have passed away.

Historian Nelson Rimensnyder reported on the AOI effort to learn more about the records of an organization modeled after AOI, but which apparently no longer

exists. That was the incorporated group known as the "Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (Colored), Inc." The group was organized during the segregated period of Washington history, when African American men (as well as all women) were not eligible for membership in AOI. An organization that paralleled AOI's activities was the Bethel Literary and Historical Association, founded in 1881... AOI was founded in 1865. The Bethel organization provided an intellectually appealing activity for members predominantly from the upper class society strata. They did not admit anyone who was born into slavery, however. They were quite active and in 1912 had over 1000 members. There was some dissatisfaction with the class discrimination policies and in 1913 a group broke away to form the AOIDC(Colored), Inc., with rules and procedures very similar to our AOI. Nelson reports that some of their meetings had attendance of over 400 people. They seem to have gone out of existence in the 1970's, although it is not known from Nelson's research exactly why, at least so far. Nelson said that there was a joint AOI/AOI-Inc meeting in 1919 to honor all of the DC veterans who had served in World War I and that he is digging further into this fascinating story.

Nelson also reported on a new quarter coin effort along the lines of the recent state quarter competition, which featured designs to honor individual states, finally permitting the DC quarter with Duke Ellington's image. There will be a competition for a new series which will have historical sites and monuments and which DC will be able to submit nominations for a DC honor. Nelson is our point person for this also, and is soliciting suggestions and encouraging members to submit them. The process may be a long term one, however, but at least we are in at the beginning. Nelson also mentioned that our April meeting will be the day before Emancipation Day in the District. He pointed out that when Abraham Lincoln was a Congressman he submitted a proposal to establish emancipation in Washington. Nelson is preparing a flyer on this for our next meeting.

Our main speaker today was well known historian Kenneth Bowling, who is one of the foremost authorities on the early history of Washington. He is particularly knowledgeable on the life of P.C. L'Enfant, the person who created the master plan for the City of Washington and the District of Columbia. Most of us learned of "Pierre L'Enfant" but Dr. Bowling's work has largely established that L'Enfant changed his first name to the Americanized form "Peter", and that was what he

used and preferred over Pierre. Historical preference now seems to favor using Peter, thanks to Bowling's work. Dr. Bowling's talk was riveting and engendered complete audience attention. A very worthwhile question and answer session followed the talk, during which the speaker further enlightened the audience. Dr. Bowling is the author of a book on the 1st Continental Congress, from which much of today's talk was taken. He made autographed copies available for sale, the proceeds of which contribute to the support of this research project at George Washington University. Another outstanding program today!

Respectfully submitted,
Seymour Selig

Please visit us at our web site at <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply AGoogle@ Governor Shepherd and we'll pop-up!

Our e-mail address is: aoi_of_dc@verizon.net

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Thank You!...

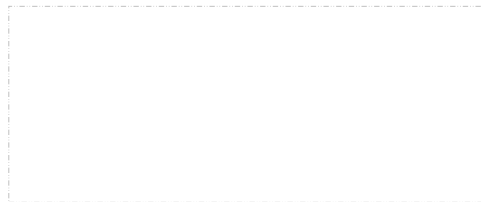
...to members who have renewed their membership in the AOI for 2009. And, an extra THANK YOU! to those who donated to one of our funds. If you haven't sent your renewal to us, please do so.

Shepherd Statue Up-date...

Most AOI members are aware of our successful efforts this past January to have the Shepherd Statue lighted. The M.C. Dean Company provided the lighting for the statue at no cost to the AOI or to the District. Their president, Bill Dean, was present the day the statue returned and pledged his commitment to provide lighting. AOI is continuing its efforts to provide a commemorative plaque at the base of the statue. Wording has been finalized and the AOI is working with potential vendors. We had hoped to have the plaque placed in time for the statue's centennial on May 3, 2009; however, our plans are now focused on having it in place by the Governor's 175th Birthday, January 31, 2010.

Address Correction Requested

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-- Help keep AOI alive and growing: invite a friend to join and be sure to renew your membership!
-- The free exhibits, book shop and café at the Historical Society are now open Tuesday thru Sunday, 10am-5pm!



The Heurich House Museum is the former home of the Historical Society of Washington and served as AOI's headquarters from 1956 until 2003.