



# 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 #91  
April 2, 2010*

## ***President's Message...***

Three years ago this month a fire devastated the Georgetown Branch Public Library and along with it the historic Peabody Room. Named for philanthropist George Peabody whose foundation established Georgetown's first public library in 1876, the Peabody Room has become a repository for everything historic about Georgetown. In addition to containing valuable biographies, archives and family histories, it contained numerous, priceless artifacts including original portraits of Francis Dodge and Yarrow Mamout.

AOI member and Peabody Room Archivist Jerry McCoy reports that while progress has been made in restoring the building, time is running out to receive a \$50,000 matching grant from the True Foundation to restore many of the artifacts damaged by smoke and water during the fire (see related story on page 3).

As the AOI continues its quest to ensure the health of the District's historic records (DC Archives, Recorder of Deeds, Kiplinger Library, Sumner Museum & Archives and the Washingtoniana Collection), we encourage you to follow the developments of the restoration of the Georgetown Branch Library and to contribute generously to help meet the fund-raising goal to receive the matching grant.



DC Fire Department Pours Water on the April 20, 2007 Fire That Consumed the Georgetown Branch Library

*Bill Brown*

## **April's Luncheon Event: Washington: Politics and Place**

Presented by Dr. Mark Ozer



***Please join us...***

Friday, **April 16th**, 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. (**\$21 per person** - please have checks completed prior to arrival and made payable to AAOI@ or bring exact change). Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our voice mail **202-342-1865**, no later than noon Wed., April 14, 2010.

**This 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., 4/15, may result in you being charged.****

Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest=s names for name tags, your meal preferences (Filet of Sole w/Scallops, Seafood Newburg, Chicken, Beef ,Veggie Plate or Fruit Plate) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute cancellation.

**>>>Note: We have had to re-price our luncheon to \$21 per person. Please bring exact payment!<<<**

## ***Future Meetings...***

The AOI's 144<sup>th</sup> Year B Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

- May 21, 2010 – Female Re-enactors of Distinction (FREED) with Patricia Tyson, Theresa Saxton & Friends
- June 18, 2010 – Dr. Joseph Browne and William Gilcher: Adolf Cluss and the Washington Barracks (Ft. McNair)
- July 4, 2010 – Annual Palisades Fourth of July Parade. Meet in front of Eng. Co. 29 (MacArthur/Whitehaven) at 10:30am to walk with AOI's 1905 American La France Steam Pumper
- Sept. 17, 2010 – Reminiscences kicked-off by Lee Rogers with a slide presentation from the Truax Collection
- Oct. 15, 2010 – John Richardson presents, "How Alexander Shepherd Saved the District"
- Nov. 19, 2010 – To Be Announced; Annual Election of Officers and Directors

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.

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## ***If You Were Not At Our March 2010 Meeting...***

The second luncheon meeting for this year was held at the Channel Inn on March 18, 2010. As noted by President Bill Brown, it is our 145th year. There were 84 members and guests in attendance.

A motion to approve the minutes for the previous meeting as they were printed in the newsletter was made by **Allen Beach** and seconded by **Martha Beach**. The motion was approved.

Bill announced that there were seven new applicants for membership. They are: **Margaret Hobbs, Joyce Bailey, Lynda Cokinos, John de Ferrari, Edwin Grosvenor, Sister Ann Cecelia Coxen, and Jane Lemon**. A motion to accept the applicants was made by **Al Wheeler**, seconded by **Bob Proudley**. The motion was approved.

Bill mentioned that former member **Louise Grass** has passed away.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented a brief report. There are 268 members in good standing as of this time, with about 75 still to be renewed. Income from membership and member contributions are ahead of last year's corresponding data at this point. Disbursements since the last meeting include a donation to the Kiplinger Library, in memory of **Jim Gaffney**, for the conservation of documents for Columbia Hospital for Women. It has been necessary to increase the cost of our lunches to \$21, the first increase which has been passed along in five years.

Bill made announcements of several meetings of importance to members, including events concerned with the Franklin School project, the Historical Society of Washington, the Goethe Institute, the Committee of 100, and others.

Our featured speaker **Ann McClellan**, is the author of "The Cherry Blossom Festival: Sakura Celebration." This book is the prime reference for the event, and has been adopted by the National Cherry Blossom Festival organization. It was an extremely worthy choice.

In her talk Ann provided us with stories and background that was not included in the book. Sakura means cherry blossoms.. The history and traditions of the sakura celebrations go back over a thousand years in Japan. Ann noted that there are written records from the 8th century. Using wonderful photographs and artist's illustrations, she outlined and provided interesting details of the history of these traditions in Japan, and how they came here and to the rest of the world as well. American women played an important role, including Helen Taft (First Lady spouse of President William Howard Taft) and Eliza Scidmore of Madison Wisconsin, an intrepid traveler and writer who motivated the First Lady in the quest to beautify Washington. Their work and that of David Fairchild of the Department of Agriculture, Colonel Spencer Cosby of the Army Corps of Engineers, and many others led to the gift of Japanese Cherry trees in 1910 and 1912. Ann related some of the societal aspects that made the sakura celebration so important. Her presentation was not only a delight to see and hear, but also had a profound impact on the way we think of our relationship with the people

and culture of Japan, and by extension upon our own life as well. It was a most worthwhile experience.

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](mailto:aoi_of_dc@verizon.net)

AOI's newsletters and publications are printed and assembled by the staff of FedEx Office of Georgetown.



AOI is a member of Cultural Tourism DC:



### ***AOI Supports and Encourages Members to Support Restoration of Peabody Room Artifacts...***

#### ***DCPL Foundation Matching Fund Challenge for Peabody Room***

The District of Columbia Public Library Foundation has announced a matching fund challenge to benefit the Peabody Room, the Georgetown history special collections housed in the Georgetown Neighborhood Library. The Alice and Russell True Foundation will match every dollar up to \$50,000 of donations received by the DCPL Foundation to benefit conservation of the Peabody Room's collections by November 1, 2010. To kick off the fundraising effort, the True Foundation has already made a donation of \$10,000.

Part of the DC Public Library's Special Collections, the Peabody Room contains books, documents, photographs, and artwork spanning three centuries of Georgetown history – one of the most significant collections of neighborhood history in the nation. Many of the archival materials in the collection were water

damaged from the April 30, 2007 fire that heavily damaged the library.

A portion of the True Foundation donation will go towards the conservation of two books: *The Spirit of Laws* by Charles Louise de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (Aberdeen: 1756), owned by Samuel Chase (1741-1811), one of four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence and *A Treatise of Captures in War* by Richard Lee (London: 1759), owned by Samuel Chase, Jr. (1775-1841). Both men are ancestors of the Foundation president.

To participate in this challenge, please make donations payable to the "DC Public Library Foundation" and note "Peabody" in the memo section of your check. Checks may be mailed to DCPL Foundation, 901 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001. You can also donate online at [www.dcplfoundation.org](http://www.dcplfoundation.org) and click "yes" when asked if you'd like your donation to go to the Georgetown Fund.

The DCPL Foundation is most grateful for this significant opportunity and hope that many will give to ensure that the full match is obtained. For further information, please contact Anna Velazco, Executive Director of the DC Public Library Foundation at: 202-727-4943, email [avelazco.dcplfoundation.org](mailto:avelazco.dcplfoundation.org) or visit [www.dcplfoundation.org](http://www.dcplfoundation.org).

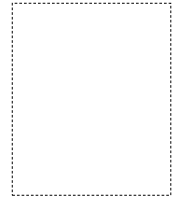
Jerry A. McCoy  
Special Collections Librarian/Archivist



A DC police detective 'stands guard' over salvaged artifacts in the aftermath of the April 20, 2007 fire

*Address Correction Requested*

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-- Help keep AOI alive and strong: invite friends to join and be sure to renew your membership!  
-- DC Emancipation Day celebration at the US Capitol Visitors Center, Fri., April 16<sup>th</sup> 8-noon. Check DC Vote's web site at: [www.dcvote.org/events](http://www.dcvote.org/events).  
-- Support the Restoration of Documents & Artifacts at the Historic Peabody Room (see enclosed story) at [www.dcpfoundation.org](http://www.dcpfoundation.org)



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