



# The Association of 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 – Our 150<sup>th</sup> Year!*

*Bulletin #128  
November 2015*

## *President's Message...*

One-hundred and fifty years ago this month, 31 prominent Washingtonians gathered to discuss what could be done about changes they were witnessing to their city. These gentlemen, including former Mayors William A. Bradley and Peter Force, feared that the influx of veterans and freed slaves, an increase in government workers and general post war turmoil would result in their city losing its distinctiveness and, equally troubling, its first 75 years (chartered in 1790) would be forgotten.

After an initial meeting on November 24, 1865, the group met again on December 7<sup>th</sup> in City Hall (now the Court of Appeals) to officially organize their new organization: the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia. Their goals were somewhat amorphous, lofty and aspirational but, nevertheless, called to “keep alive the reminiscences of the past and the social and paternal communion of the present and the future” and “to maintain and promote a lively interest in matters of local historic and cultural interest and to keep alive and preserve reminiscences of the past.”

Since its founding, the mission has continually adapted to meet changing civic challenges and demographics. Throughout its history the AOI has remained one of the most active and engaged organizations among its peers and served as a model for the AOI (Colored), quite possibly the Columbia Historical Society (now Historical Society of Washington) and even organizations which have become somewhat ubiquitous – the Board of Trade, the Federal City Council, the Chamber of Commerce. When your organization is the *first* civic organization of its kind, it is pretty reasonable, if not easy, to imagine it served as a model for others.

Today's AOI is certainly more diverse in membership than a century and a half ago but we believe that we have continued to maintain our founders' goals, despite their motives. I hope you will agree.

*Bill Brown, President*

## November's Luncheon Event:

**“The Smithsonian's Gardens”**

**With Carole Ottesen**



*Please join us...*

Friday, **Nov. 20**, at the **Capitol Skyline Hotel** (free Parking) 10 I ('Eye') Street, SW. (Metro Rail to Navy Yard Station), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m.

**(\$35 per person** - please make your check payable to “AOI” and have it completed prior to arrival or bring exact payment).

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our voice mail **202-342-1865**, not later than noon Tues., Nov. 17, 2015.

**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., 11/19, will 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 (***Panko Crusted Baked Cod with lemon butter sauce, Grilled Skyline Chicken Breast, Grilled Black Angus Flank Steak, or Braised Ratatouille of Vegetables***) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute event cancellation.

## Future Meetings...



The AOI's 150<sup>th</sup> Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

Feb. 19, 2016 – To Be Announced

March 18, 2016 – Cindy Gueli: “The Lipstick Brigade” (Women Workforce in World War II)

April 15, 2016 – Stephen Grant: “Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry & Emily Folger”

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 call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute information.

## If You Were Not At Our Last Meeting...

[Draft minutes of our last meeting for approval at the Nov. 20, 2015 luncheon.]

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (AOI) held the 7<sup>th</sup> luncheon meeting of its 150<sup>th</sup> year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel at Noon Friday, October 16 with 67 members and guests attending. The draft minutes of the September meeting were approved as circulated upon motion of **Anne Renshaw** and **Patricia Clarke**.

One new member was approved: **Paul Chestnut** (nominated by **Bonnie Duncan**) upon motion by **Allen Beach** and **Shirley de la Barre**.

AOI Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented the membership and treasurer's reports:  
Membership

- We now have 350 members in our organization
- \$500 grant to the 2015 Historical Studies Conference

Gala: RSVP's continue to come in. If you have not yet sent yours in, there is still time to do so.

Luncheon Report

- Attendance at our September luncheon was 76.
- AOI's subsidy for the luncheon was \$122.88

While there were no 'first timers' present, **Bill Brown** used the opportunity to recognize member **Dr. James Goode** and reminded those present of his significant (albeit serendipitous) discovery of the thought-to-be-lost records of the AOI (Colored). Bill also informed the membership of the passing of member **Dr. Clarence F. Schatz, Jr.**, who had a dental practice in Tenleytown for more than 30 years and the death of **Donald Rothacker**, a member, who produced the DVD/video version of **Gail Spilsbury's** "Washington Sketchbook" which made its debut at our March 2015 luncheon.

**Robert Barbuto** announced that in celebration of George Washington University's Colonials Weekend the Albert Small Museum and Textile Museum would be open, free of charge. Member **Allen Beach** asked for the floor to commend **President Brown** on his story suggestion to *The Washington Post's* **John Kelly's** on the District's Height Act and

the futuristic depiction of the city's skyline in the Fox TV series, "Minority Report."

**Nelson Rimensnyder**, having challenged everyone at last month's meeting to name another native Washingtonian other than Alexander Shepherd for whom a federally commissioned ship was named, was disappointed that no one had an answer and the required *back-up documentation/evidence*, so, he extended his offer of a trip on the *USS Brown* and dinner in Baltimore to next month's meeting. He then offered several trivia questions, as follows:

- 1) Q: Name the oldest, currently operating cemetery in the District of Columbia?

A: Rock Creek Cemetery... first interment was 1719! (**Nancy Harris** had the answer.)

- 2) Q: In 2001, philanthropist Betty Casey offered to build what on Foxhall Road?

A: A house for D.C.'s mayor. (Can't recall who provided the correct response)

- 3) Q: Recently a proposal was put forth by Mayor Bowser for a bronze statue to join Governor Shepherd in front of the Wilson Building. Who is it for?

A: Marion Barry (Nelson added, "Wait until they see how much a bronze statue will cost... it may end up being just a bronze bust.") (**Patricia Clark** provided the correct answer.)

- 4) Q: For many years after the parting of the provisional capital of New York and Philadelphia, members of Congress complained about the lack of comfortable accommodations in the District. What other city was considered in 1804?

A: Baltimore (**Larry Feinberg** provided the correct answer)

Bill Brown then introduced the day's speakers, AOI member **George Hill** and **Dave Jackson**, President and Superintendent, respectively, of Georgetown's Oak Hill Cemetery. The cemetery is known for its natural beauty, its famous clientele and many powerful monuments and grave markers.

Chartered in 1849, it is still an active burial ground with about 50 burials yearly. There are 20,000 people buried there, many are famous artists, sports figures, politicians, journalists, Civil War participants, educators and many are regular citizens of Georgetown and the rest of the city.

It is a challenge to care for old cemeteries which were usually built on land too poor to use for housing or businesses. Then the land is covered with trees, grave stones and pathways. These ‘obstacles’ make a cemetery beautiful but also make it difficult to maintain. The land in Oak Hill is so uneven with many grave markers and plantings that landscaping and grave digging is still done by hand.

A surprisingly small crew is responsible for the daily maintenance but there are also more specialized projects such as the restoration of the Chapel, designed by James Renwick and built in 1850, which was recently completed. Besides taking care of expected needs such as roofing and stained glass, many small decorative touches hidden by dirt and age were discovered and repaired. All aspects of the work were meticulously researched and completed by restoration specialists to bring the Chapel back to its original beauty.

Oak Hill is still a cemetery and people are still buried there. The cemetery’s daily activities are financed by the selling of plots. In 150 years, many graves have been filled. The staff and the Board of Managers have found innovative ways to make room for new graves. There is a new columbarium for cremains and the walkways have been prepared to allow individuals to be buried under them with their names and other information engraved on the stone above the grave.

The Board of Managers of the cemetery has recently developed a 100 Year Plan to maintain the grounds and the buildings so that even when there is no space left for burials, the cemetery will continue to be relevant to the city as a museum.

The next AOI program will be held on November 20 at the Capitol Skyline Hotel and will feature a talk by Carole Ottesen on the Smithsonian’s Gardens.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Brown and Maggie Hobbs on behalf of John P. Richardson,  
Secretary

### ***AOI’s Sesquicentennial Gala***

There are still seats available for the AOI’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary gala to be held Saturday, December 5, from noon until 3pm at the Capitol Skyline Hotel. Tickets must be reserved and **paid in advance**. The price is \$75 per person. If you have intended to RSVP but misplaced the invitation or just overlooked the event, you can still mail your check – made out to ‘AOI -- to:

AOI Gala  
4425 Greenwich Pkwy NW  
District of Columbia 20007-2010

Due to the nature of the event, the expenses the AOI has incurred to produce this once-in-our-lifetime event, we are sorry that we are unable to accept ‘walk-ins’ or payment on the day of the event.

### ***2015 Nominating Committee Report***

October 7, 2015

Dear President Brown:

The Nominating Committee has proposed Officers for the coming year and the Directors for 2016-2017. The nominees have agreed to serve if elected:

Officers (1 year terms):

- President William N. Brown (incumbent)
- Vice-President Jan A.K. Evans (incumbent)
- Treasurer Hulit Taylor (incumbent)
- Secretary John P. Richardson (incumbent)
- Historian Nelson Rimensnyder (incumbent)

Directors:

- Margaret (Maggie) Hobbs 2016-2017
- Jessica Hodge 2016-2017
- Gary Scott 2016-2017

The following Directors do not require re-election as they have not yet completed their two-year terms:

- Carl Cole Thru 2016
- Damon Cordom Thru 2016
- Lucinda (Cindy) Janke Thru 2016

The members of Nominating Committee hope this slate of nominees will meet with the approval of the membership.

Sincerely yours,  
Barbara Drechsler, M. Jean Lockard & Richard Drechsler



**In Memoriam**

**Lucinda Prout Janke 1943-2015**

*Address Correction Requested*

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants  
of the District of Columbia  
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW  
District of Columbia 20007-2010

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**Officers:**

William Brown, President 202-342-1638  
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW, Wash., DC 20007  
Jan A. K. Evans, Vice-President 301-968-4749  
John P. Richardson, Secretary 703-534-3577  
Hulit Pressley Taylor, Treasurer 202-625-0203  
Nelson Rimensnyder, Historian 202-546-4668  
Jim Embrey, F.D. Liaison 571-436-7774

**Past President:**

A. L. Wheeler 202-337-0030

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

**AOI Sesquicentennial Gala** -- there are still seats available for AOI 150<sup>th</sup> Gala on Sat., Dec. 5, 2015 from noon until 3pm. Members may still reply via their response cards provided with the invitation. Reservations must be paid in advance. There will be no provision for walk-ins or paying at the door. Call 202-342-1638 if you need further information.

**Directors:**

Carl Cole 202-889-8813  
Damon Cordon 301-215-7022  
Margaret (Maggie) Hobbs 202-547-0964  
Jessica Hodge 301-704-5133  
Lucinda (Cindy) P. Janke 202-425-6614  
Gary Scott 202-544-4862



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