



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 Historic Organization –
Founded December 7, 1865 – Our 155th Year!**

**Bulletin #161
February 2020**

“Movie Theaters of Washington, D.C.”

By Barbara Bates

Authors Robert Headley and Pat Padua gave highlights from their book on the movie theaters of Washington, D.C. They provided a handout on the history of these theaters with a bibliography: They listed 12 categories from Kinetoscope Parlors to Vaudeville and Burlesque (1894-1905) to the Megaplexes of the present. Mr. Headley indicated that Bob Truax was instrumental in their doing research on movie theaters.

Nickleodeons were the first theaters built for the movies including the Star in 1906 as the first; Howard (1910); and the Keith (1912) that also included vaudeville; this theater had a Turkish bath in the basement and apartments for the performers. By 1913 theaters were big business such as the Savoy (1913) on 14th Street that could seat 1,200 people. The movie palace era began in 1917 and included the Knickerbocker at 18th and Columbia Road where 90 persons were killed in 1922 when a snowfall on the roof caused it to collapse. The Metropolitan opened in 1918; the Miles Davis Orchestra played there. Other theaters from that era still in existence are the Lincoln (1922), the Warner (originally the Earle) that all had small marquees due to a city ordinance, and the Tivoli (1924); sound movies were being shown. The Fox (1927) became the Capitol Theater and was the biggest in D.C. with 3,000 seats; it was located in the Press Building and was destroyed in 1963. Art-Deco palaces and neighborhood houses began to appear from 1928 to 1941.

(Cont'd. page 3)

February's Luncheon Event:

“Casey Trees: To restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of the nation's capital”

With Melinda Peters, Director of Education



Please join us...

Friday, **Feb. 21, 2020**, 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**, no later than **Tues., Feb. 18, 2020**. **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., 2/20, 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 (***Grilled Salmon with Kang Pao 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 154th Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

March 20, 2020 -- Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Executive Director of the DC Public Library

April 17, 2020 – TBA

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...

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (AOI) held the eighth and last luncheon meeting of its 154th year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel at noon Friday, November 15, 2019 with 77 members and guests present. **President Jan Evans** welcomed everyone, expressing her appreciation for the support shown her for her year as President (AOI's first woman President!) and thanking everyone for inviting guests and potential new members. **Vice-President Bill Brown** conducted the initial portion of the business meeting. He said that barring any corrections of the notes of the October meeting, which were printed in the current newsletter, they would stand as AOI's official account of the luncheon meeting.

New Members: There was one member application for consideration: **William Frederick Harvey (Jan Evans)**. The new member was approved upon a motion, seconded by **Vicki Crawford** and **Charles Szlinker**.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented her report:

Luncheon Report

- 73 Attended our October luncheon
- As always, our thanks to those who paid for the luncheon even though they were unable to attend.

Membership

- We're ending the year with 323 members, 25 of whom joined for the first time.

2019 Income to Date

- Income from Dues is almost \$5,900
- Thanks to your generosity, we have received a little over \$4,800 for our Unrestricted Fund
- Interest and dividends from our Investments

have yielded \$3,300

Non-Routine Expenses Since the September Luncheon

- \$1,952 Margaret Hobbs for reimbursement of memorial headstones honoring two WWI female Yeomen
- \$30 Weebly for Domain Name -- 1 year
- \$500 Grant to Heurich House Foundation

Board Decision

- As you may know our primary source of income is from dues which cover our basic expenses for membership -- the newsletter, postage and telephone
- We rely on your donations and the income from our Investments to cover other expenses.
- At our Board meeting earlier this week, we voted unanimously to keep our dues at the bargain rate of \$20 and encourage you to donate to our Unrestricted Fund.

Our thanks

- On behalf of the Board, our heartfelt thanks for your support and for making 2019 another outstanding year for the AOI!

Vice-President Brown then suspended the Business Meeting in order to introduce Nominating Committee Chair **Barbara Drechsler** to conduct the Annual Election of Officers and Directors. The nominations were read (and published in advance in the Newsletter according to the By-laws of the organization) and with no additional nominations from the floor, motion to close the nominations moved and seconded by **George Hutchinson** and **Patricia Clark** and a motion to approve the slate by acclamation moved and seconded by **Charles Szlinker** and **Barbara Ioanes**, the Officers and Directors for the 2020 membership year are:

President, Thomas Neale
Vice-president, Jan A.K. Evans
Secretary, incumbent John P. Richardson
Treasurer, incumbent Hulit Taylor
Historian, incumbent Nelson Rimensnyder
Directors: Margaret Hobbs, Jessica Hodge and Gary Scott
Barbara Bates and Carl Cole will continue to serve out their two year terms and do not require election. **Bill Brown** will fill **Thomas Neale's** unexpired term.

Newly Elected President Thomas Neale welcomed everyone on the Officers' & Directors' behalf and in addition to spouses and family members: **Vera Abbott** had with her today daughter **Denise Rolark Barnes**; **Tom Buckingham** had with him **Lori Combs and Louise Oertly**; new member **Patricia Richards** had with her **Catherine Hartz**; **Marie Savoy** had **Kim Savoy** as her guest; and **Connie Kerwin** had with her **Ann Kerwin**.

Brief Announcements: President Neale brought to everyone's attention that today was member **Georgia Herron's** 95th Birthday. He then read, sought and received approval for a Resolution which recognized **Past-President Bill Brown's** 19+ years of leadership. All Officers and Directors in attendance stepped forward to join him at the lectern to present **Bill** with the Ceremonial Resolution and a gift in recognition of his service since 1999 as AOI's President and, this past year, Vice-President. The resolution may be read on AOI's Facebook page.



Nelson Rimensnyder challenged the audience with a number of historic questions and provided 'prizes' consisting of historic documents, pamphlets and memorabilia from his collections and archives. Nelson's questions related to early legislation regarding the height of buildings in the new Capital of the Nation. The correct answers and those who won are available on the luncheon audio on AOI's web site.

The Day's Speaker: [see cover story] Today's speakers' (Robert Headley and Pat Padua) book "Movie Theaters of Washington, DC" charted the storied history of motion picture exhibition in the nation's capital.

They tailored their presentation today to, "the History of Motion Picture Exhibition in the Washington Metropolitan Area." We thanked member **Paula Smith-Vanderslice** for recommending the day's program... **Paula's** Grandfather **Louis Ribnitzky** spent his career with Warner Brothers first as a "booker" for the Warner (Earl) Theatre and retired in 1964 as the Head Film Buyer for Stanley Warner Washington.

This program recap is provided by AOI Director Bill Brown.

[AOI's programs may be heard at <http://www.aoidc.org/aoi-luncheon-audio.html>]

"Movie Theaters" (from page 1)

Examples include the Penn (1935), Trans-Lux (1936) that was first a newsreel theater that became a regular movie theater after the war, Uptown (1936), Bethesda (1938), Apex (1940), and the Senator (1941). Very few theaters were built during the war years. After the war, the boom years from 1946 to 1950 resulted in many new theaters and drive-ins such as the Macarthur (1946), and Dupont (1948); the Beltsville Drive-in (1949) was one of the first in the area. Drive-ins lasted until the land became too valuable. The authors refer to the awful fifties (1951-1959) when many theaters closed. The Ontario (1951) was built during this time.

Open Air theaters, walk-ins and drive-ins were built between 1910 and 1988; examples include Dreamland (1910) and Mount Vernon Open-Air (1938) theaters, Beltsville (1949) and Rockville Drive-in (1953) theaters. The rebirth of movie houses took place between 1960-1968 with the Embassy (1963), Janis I-II (1965), L'Enfant (1968) as examples. After 1968 and through 1995, new theaters had multiple auditoriums and were being built in suburban shopping centers as well; examples include the Outer Circle (1970), White Flint (1977), AMC Union Station (1988). The Megaplexes with 14 to 16 screens began appearing in 1995 and continue to the present; examples include Regal Rockville (1998), Bethesda Row (2002), Landmark E Street Cinema (2004) and Regal Gallery Place (2004).



AOI's Newsletters are printed and distributed by:



AOI's web address is: aoidc.org and our email address is: aoiofdc@gmail.com

Please check out our Home Page and listen to the audio of 2016-2019 luncheon talks by our esteemed guests at www.aoidc.org. And, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org which may contain more timely events and calls-to-action than our web site

Address Correction Requested

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Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

This Historical Society of Washington, D.C., and Washington History Center are now open Tues. thru Sat. 10am-5pm at the Carnegie Library.



Its Kiplinger Researcher Library is open by appointment, Tues.-Fri., 10-4. Visit dchistory.org for exhibit hours or to make an appointment to conduct research.

Directors:

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Bill Brown 202-342-1638
Carl Cole 202-889-8813
Margaret (Maggie) Hobbs 202-547-0964
Jessica Hodge 301-704-5133
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.