



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 #79
April 4, 2008*

President's Message...

AOI members know that DC Councilmember Jim Graham (Ward One) was responsible for assembling the coalition of volunteer contractors who relocated the Governor Shepherd statue from Blue Plains to its permanent home on the grounds of the John A. Wilson (District) Building on January 29, 2005.

In the fall of 2007, Councilmember Graham requested the Henry Ulke portrait of Governor Shepherd be returned to the Wilson Building from storage at the District Archives. The framed portrait, completed in 1871 when Shepherd was a member of the Board of Public Works, was installed on the large, south wall of Jim Graham's office directly opposite the Councilmember's desk. During a visit with Mr. Graham on Friday, March 28th, he told us he hoped to have the portrait relocated to an appropriate alcove in the east stairwell where it can be seen by the public and of his desire to have a similar portrait of former Mayor Walter E. Washington commissioned to display in the corresponding stairwell on the west side of the entrance. AOI can think of no better tribute to these two past District leaders.



Councilmember Jim Graham, AOI Historian Nelson Rimensnyder, AOI Director John Richardson & AOI President Bill Brown with Ulke portrait of Shepherd.

April=s Luncheon Event:

The Threads of Time, The Fabric of History

Rosemary Reed Miller and Cindy Williams will discuss some of the 38 profiles of African-American Dressmakers & Designers from 1860 to 1960 featured in Ms. Miller's book. There will also be an opportunity for an informal, audience-participation fashion show!

Please join us...

for our Luncheon Meeting on Friday, April 18, 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 the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. **202-383-1813, no later than** noon Wed., April 16, 2008.

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., 4/17, 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 143rd Year B Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

May 16, 2008 - Laura Apelbaum on the Jewish Historical Society's new book, *A Jewish Washington: Scrapbook of an American Community*

June 20, 2008 – District of Columbia State Preservation Officer David Maloney will speak on the city's Historic Preservation efforts, codes and issues. (Tentative)

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 HSW at 202-383-1813 for last minute information.

If You Were Not At Our March 2008 Meeting...

The second luncheon meeting of this year was held at the Channel Inn on March 21. President **Bill Brown** opened the meeting and proceeded to move forward expeditiously in light of the full program to follow. There were 95 members and guests in attendance.

Minutes of the previous meeting (Feb 15) as presented in the newsletter were approved as printed, following a motion and second.

John Daly announced the names of four new applicants for membership. They are **Cornelius 'Neil' Davies**, (nominated by Bob Lang); **Suzanne Oyster Luce** (John Jay Daly); **Patricia Armbruster**; and **Blanche M. Moore** (Tom Sherwood). All were approved by vote of the members present.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented a brief report. Current membership is 257 of which 12 are new, not counting today's applicants. At this time last year there were 241 active members. Income from membership has increased from last year; however, donations are down, as is investment income. Nevertheless, our financial situation appears quite solid.

The presentation today commemorates the 100th anniversary of the National Press Club, which was founded in March 1908. A number of AOI members are also members or have strong ties to the Press Club. An interesting program highlighting this history was presented.

Bill introduced AOI member **Don Larrabee** to emcee this history. Don was president of the National Press Club (1973). He presented a brief introduction on the background of the NPC and the documentary film which was prepared for the centennial. The documentary film entitled "The National Press Club: A Century of Headlines" will be broadcast on PBS

television on Monday night March 31st. It runs 57 minutes. For our meeting an eleven minute preview was shown. The full video was made available at the meeting for purchase by AOI members at a special discounted price.

The preview pointed out that the National Press Club was founded in March 1908, and that the compelling reason was not the lofty ideal of defending the first amendment, but rather the fact that the bars in Washington closed at midnight!

Following the preview, Don introduced the speakers, who are distinguished members of both the NPC and AOI.

First up was **Austin Kiplinger**, who noted that the NPC had been in existence for only ten years when he was born, and only for 34 years when he became a member. His father (W. M. Kiplinger) was a very early member of the NPC. He recalled his impressions of his father's office when the Press Club was in the Albee Building on 15th Street above Keith's Theater. He remembered that his father's office was behind the theater marquee, and what a great spot this was to watch the inaugural parades. He spoke of the "Round Table" of his father's associates. His most vivid impression was seeing President Franklin D. Roosevelt coming to the Press Club for the annual dinner in 1941. The public never saw images of the infirm FDR photographed below the waist, but the President would navigate clutching a cane and supported by his strong son Marine Major Jimmy Roosevelt. Austin recalls this as one of the most painful and moving experiences of his life, one which made a deep impression on him. Austin graciously refrained from telling more stories, although he obviously had many others, so as to share the limited time for this fascinating program.

John Cosgrove was NPC president 47 years ago. He was responsible for preparing the 50 year history and the 100 year history of NPC. He related how shortly after his arrival in Washington in 1937 he noticed a building at 19th and H streets with a sign "Oldest Inhabitants" on it. He wondered if he

could be around long enough to join some day. John described interesting events, and was also impressed by President Roosevelt's determined efforts in getting around. John had observed FDR attending services at St. Thomas church and that anyone could have observed this. He noted that security was quite different then; church goers were only requested to wait until the President had exited before they left. John presented AOI with a copy of the 100 year history "Reliable Sources--100 years at the National Press Club," signed by NPC members who belonged to AOI also (Austin Kiplinger, John Daly, Jerry Bastarache, John Cosgrove) and relevant others. Bill Brown will place this book in the Kiplinger Library of the Historical Society of Washington.

John Daly was active in the NPC in the 1970's. This was during the Watergate years, and there was much activity to keep him, luncheon speakers and reporters busy. John noted that a most interesting speaker was anthropologist Margaret Mead, who upon being questioned as to whether a woman is emotionally equipped to be President, replied "Most men aren't." That was 35 years ago. John's father was a member of NPC beginning in 1911.

AOI Director **Sherwood Smith's** father was also a very early member of NPC, and his office overlooked Pennsylvania Avenue. Sherwood remembers the inaugural parade in 1933 and seeing President Roosevelt riding with President Hoover. Sherwood also saw President Roosevelt struggling to get to a Grid Iron Club Dinner and then waving to the adoring crowd as he was on his way. Sherwood commented on the positive contributions of the Press Club, but mentioned that some of the wives were not that happy about all night poker sessions.

Sally McClendon McDonald, daughter of Sarah McClendon, described some of the tribulations impacting women reporters who wanted to be members of NPC but could not because of their gender. Sarah McClendon was a Washington reporter from 1944 until she died in 2003. She was one of the first women to become a member after the gender restriction was voted out in 1971. She held a White House Press pass longer than any other person. She originally came to Washington as a lieutenant in the Woman's Army Corps to open an office in the Pentagon. She was very proud to be a member of the Press Club, and she had great impact upon it. She was a strong influence to accept women into membership. She eventually became a member of the Board of the Club. The Sarah McClendon Scholarship Program for journalism students at the University of Missouri honors her achievements. She was an extremely popular and key member of the NPC.

Paul Dickson is an NPC member present when they finally voted to accept women. He related a colleague's strong comment regarding those who would not accept woman as members thereafter. Paul is a favorite of AOI for his research and writing on the Bonus Army.

This was a most enjoyable and informative program.

Respectfully submitted,
Seymour Selig

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

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AOI is a member organization of:



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Join AOI Members for Annual Emancipation Day Rally & March...

Come join us Wednesday, April 16th at 2:30 p.m. and march from Freedom Plaza to the U.S. Capitol to commemorate Emancipation Day and call for DC Voting Rights. We will meet in front of the Shepherd Statue at the Wilson (District) Building on the SW corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street at 2:15. This will be third year that AOI has participated in the rally. **Check for last minute possible change in date due to Papal visit!!!**

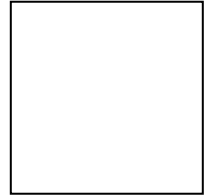
National Press Club Presentation was a Great Success...



AOI member and past NPC President Donald Larrabee listens as member Austin Kiplinger reminisces about the NPC at the March 2008 AOI luncheon.

Address Correction Requested

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-- Please renew your 2008 AOI membership if you have not already done so.
-- Help keep AOI alive and growing: invite a friend to join!
-- Visit the Kiplinger Research Library at HSW now open Tuesday-Saturday, 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.