



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 – Our 149th Year!*

*Bulletin #116
April 2014*

President's Message...

Beginning a New Era...

With our April 18th luncheon, the AOI will welcome its members and guests to our new luncheon location at the Capitol Skyline Hotel. Located at South Capitol Street and I Streets, Southwest (specifically 10 I Street, SW), this southwest landmark, now in its 50th year of operation, will provide the AOI with the quality, hospitality, convenience and value to which we are accustomed.

We understand that change doesn't come easily, but one of our primary considerations was maintaining a venue in DC and our new host is located only 7 blocks from our previous location.



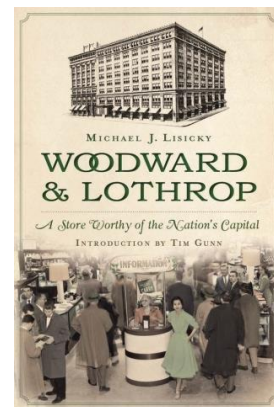
AOI member Ed Kaminski put us in touch with the Capitol Skyline Hotel management and Ed provided this background: "The hotel is now owned by the Rubell family of Miami. The Rubells are big art lovers and have purchased the Randall School, across the street from Skyline, from the Corcoran. The plan is to build a very modern large apartment building and a contemporary art museum..."

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April's Luncheon Event:

"Woodward & Lothrop: A Story Worthy of the Nation's Capital"

With Michael Lisicky



Please join us...

Friday, **April 18**, at the **Capitol Skyline Hotel** (free Parking) 10 I Street, SW. (Metro Rail to Navy Yard Station), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m.

(\$30 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., April 15, 2014 – EARLIER RSVP TIME!!

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 for name tags, your meal preferences (**Grilled Skyline Chicken Breast, Grilled Black Angus Flank Steak, Sun Dried Tomato Pesto Crusted Flounder or Braised Ratatouille of Vegetables**) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute cancellation.

>>> NOTE NEW LOCATION<<<

Future Meetings...



The AOI's 149th Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

May 16, 2014 – Michael Canning: “Hollywood on the Potomac”

June 20, 2014 – Frank Cooling, “The Battle of Ft. Stevens” – Tentative

Sept. 19, 2014 – Patricia Daly-Lipe: “William A. Hemmick: From Patriot Priest (WWI) to the Vatican”

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 April 18, 2014 luncheon.]

AOI held the second meeting of its 149th year at Pier 7 Restaurant Friday, March 21. 111 members and guests were on hand to hear Erin Bergin Voorheis speak about her recent book, “The Washington Arsenal Explosion: Civil War Disaster in the Capital,” which represented completion of a work begun by her father, who passed away before publication.

The draft minutes of the February 2014 meeting were approved as distributed.

Membership Report: New member **Gene Fisher** (nominated by Nelson Rimensnyder) was approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report

- We now have 292 members. Thanks to your generosity, we have received \$4,800 for our four Designated Funds. We have spent \$141 for Directors' Liability Insurance in non-routine expenses.
- Our investment account has earned \$313 this year in dividends and interest.

The following “first-timers” were present: **Deborah Sherwood'** and **Shirley Johnson.**

Brief Announcements:

-AOI member **Thomas Neale**, a friend of Joe Grano's and a fellow parishioner at Church of the Annunciation, has arranged for a tribute service to Joe on Sun., April 6th at 12:30. Annunciation is located at 3810 Massachusetts Avenue (just north of Wisconsin on the left side) near Idaho Avenue. We will meet for lunch

afterwards at the Westchester.

-Brochures on the back table about the War of 1812 exhibit that will be at Anderson House (Order of the Cincinnati) until Sept. 20.

-Booklets on the back table commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Military School, of which AOI is a supporter and heritage partner.

-Engine Company #29 (4811 MacArthur Blvd., NW) will be rededicated March 28, after extensive renovations.

Nelson Rimensnyder posed several trivia questions focused on Manny and Alma Fernandez, owners of the Channel Inn:

Where was Manny Fernandez born? (Spain)

Why was Channel Inn's opening delayed by a year? (a fire)

Why did the Fernandez family leave Spain? (Civil War)

Where did Manny meet Alma? (Greenbrier Resort, W.Va.)

How did Mrs. Sweeney persuade the British not to burn Rhodes Tavern in 1814? (She said it was owned by a widow for whom it was the sole source of income).

The speaker today was **Erin Bergin Voorheis**, daughter of **Brian Bergin**, who worked for years researching and writing about a seldom-recalled Civil War disaster at the Washington Arsenal (now Ft. Leslie J. McNair) June 17, 1864 that resulted in the deaths of 21 women employed there making ammunition for the Union forces. As the son of Irish immigrants, Brian Bergin was drawn to the Arsenal tragedy since so many of the victims were women of Irish origin.

The explosion at the Washington Arsenal – entirely avoidable – was caused by natural combustion of fireworks material left in the sun to dry June 17, 1864 by the Arsenal director, Thomas Brown. The material exploded, sending sparks in all directions, at least one of which flew through the open window of a so-called “choking room” where rows of young women added lead bullets to cartridges containing black

powder and “choked” them closed. The boxes of completed cartridges were to be removed immediately because of their volatility, but due to the press of work, filled boxes remained in the choking room and added to the inferno when an errant spark from the drying fireworks ignited gunpowder on one of the tables where the young women worked. In the instant inferno caused by fast-spreading explosions, 21 female workers died and many more were injured. In a gesture of maturity and pride, the surviving women workers and other Arsenal employees not only arranged a dignified funeral procession but also raised \$3,000 for a stone memorial by sculptor and stonemason Lot Flannery that stands to this day over a mass grave in Congressional Cemetery. President Abraham Lincoln was chief mourner, although he did not speak. Arsenal chief Thomas Brown was censured and demoted but not fired. Congress appropriated \$2,000 for the victims’ families.

Our next meeting is Friday, April 18, when **Michael Lisicky** will recall with us: “Woodward & Lothrop: A Story Worthy of the Nation’s Capital”

Respectfully Submitted, John P. Richardson, Secretary

President’s Message Continued...

...The design for the Randall school is by Bing Thom (the architect who designed the new Arena Stage building).” While the final mix of retail, residential and commercial is still being determined, the design promises to be exciting while maintaining Randall’s façade (see below). During our visit to the hotel, we were pleased to see an exhibit featuring a local artist adorning the walls of the lobby.



A few things to keep in mind to make your first visit to the Capitol Skyline Hotel a stress-free one: **Directions** – if you usually come to the Pier 7 via Maine Avenue, rather than turning toward the waterfront on 7th, turn east on 7th and immediately bear right on I Street. Continue 6 blocks on I Street and make a right turn into the underground garage just beyond the portico. Don’t inadvertently get into the line of cars waiting for the inspection station on Half Street! From I395 from VA, take the South Capitol Street exit and turn right onto I Street. From I395/695 south from MD, take I-695 to Washington Ave SW. Turn right onto Washington Ave SW, continue onto S Capitol St SW and turn right onto I St SW. The hotel has 2 levels of parking. If you cannot find a space in the garage, exit the ramp on the south side (not the

one you came in from) to their large, fenced-in exterior surface lot. From the garage, walk through the open door, through the vending area to the elevator lobby or just walk up a ¾ flight of stairs (to your right) which takes you directly to the ballroom reception area. If you are traveling via Metro, of the two stations serving the area, the Navy Yard station is the closest; but, be extremely careful crossing South Capitol Street.



RSVPs: Our procedure for RSVP’ing will be the same as it has been; however, we need to provide the hotel our ‘count’ **72 hours** in advance. So, the ‘deadline’ for RSVPs will be noon on the **Tuesday** (not Wednesday!) prior to Friday’s luncheon. If you do not RSVP by the deadline, your food choice may not be available and it makes planning for both us and the hotel very difficult, so please... RSVP by the deadline. In order to accommodate us, the luncheon price will now rise to \$30/person (all inclusive). We regret this \$5 increase; however, as Board Member John Richardson recently pointed out, “I think we have just been jolted, albeit deftly, into 21st century restaurant prices.” The actual luncheon cost is \$34, inclusive, but the Board has elected to ease the transition by underwriting \$4 per person for the remainder of this year.

Food Choices: The hotel’s Assistant General Manager John Schumacher has crafted a unique menu for us helping maintain the variety of choices that we have enjoyed: ***Grilled Skyline Chicken Breast, Grilled Black Angus Flank Steak, Sun Dried Tomato Pesto Crusted Flounder or Braised Ratatouille of Vegetables.***

Again, the AOI Board appreciates your patience and understanding as we embark on this new luncheon meeting ‘adventure.’ We recognize there will be some ‘bumps’ along the way but we will strive to make our luncheon events as successful and memorable as always. We hope everyone is as enthusiastic as we are as we relocate our successful activities to our new venue.

Bill Brown

Our web site is <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply “Google” ‘Governor Shepherd’ and we’ll pop-up!

Our e-mail address is: aoidc@gmail.com

Address Correction Requested

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Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

View AOP's web site at www.aidc.org/upcoming-events.html and *listen* to Paul Leeper's and Conrad Reid's programs.

Note Change of Location for our Luncheons!!!
See details inside, including EARLIER RSVP
DATE!
Now at: Capitol Skyline Hotel, 10 I St., SW

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Gary Scott 202-544-4862



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