



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 #95
March 4, 2011***

President's Message...

Since the AOI began its 146th year on December 7th, we have already hosted two very successful events: Our annual New Year's Day reception and our February luncheon at which 123 members and guests enjoyed Gordon Brown's talk on William Thornton.

Since our last newsletter, though, there are a couple of newsworthy items of which members should be aware:

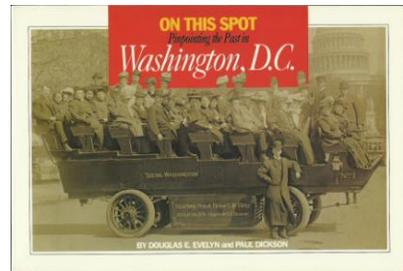
In recognition of Veterans' Day, then Mayor-Elect Vince Gray not only called upon the District's citizens to honor those who have sacrificed or risked their lives in defense of their county (without the benefit of representation in Congress, of course) but also called attention to a damaged memorial (believed to honor DC employees who served in either/both WWI and/or WWII) that hung in the pre-rehabilitated Wilson Building and seeks 'clues' from citizens about the plaque's origin. The *Post's* John Kelly wrote a comprehensive piece on Nov. 10th crediting WTOP's Mark Segreaves, AOI's Nelson Rimensnyder and Bill Rice together with then Council Secretary Cynthia Brock-Smith for their combined and continuing efforts in researching the plaque's history. Mayor Gray has issued a "Chairman's Challenge" to help resolve the mystery and have the plaque restored by Nov. 11, 2011. You can contribute your comments or expertise at dcwarmemorial@dccouncil.us and you can read more at www.dccouncil.us and click on the "Historic John A. Wilson Building" tab.

In the spirit of "Good Things Come to Those Who Wait" or "Patience is a Virtue" there is finally movement on interpreting and opening Clara Barton's Missing Soldier's Office as a museum. AOI members will recall that member Gary Scott and GSA's Richard Lyons presented Richard's rare 1996 find at 7th & E. Sts., NW at one of our luncheons. Richard recalled how on a rainy day in 1996 a suspicious noise and other creepy feelings drew his attention to an envelope appearing through a hole in the GSA-controlled building where he was working. (Con't. p.3)

March's Luncheon Event:

"On This Spot: Pinpointing the Past in Washington, DC"

AOI Members Doug Evelyn & Paul Dickson Present the Latest Edition of Their Popular Book



Please join us...

Friday, **March 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. (**\$22 per person** - please have checks completed prior to arrival and made payable to "AOI" 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., March 16, 2011.

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., 3/17, 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 (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.

Future Meetings...



The AOI's 145th Year – Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

April 15, 2011 – Elizabeth Smith Brownstein presents, “Abraham Lincoln’s Life in Music”

May 20, 2011 – Jim Johnston, “The Loughboroughs of Washington”

June 17, 2011 – Park Ranger Alexa Viets on “Washington’s Circle Fort Parks and the Civil War Sesquicentennial”

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.

If You Were Not At Our February Meeting...

President Bill Brown opened the first luncheon meeting of 2011 at the Channel Inn Pier 7 Restaurant. There were 124 members and guests present, the largest turnout in over a year.

The first order of business, approval of the minutes for the last meeting copies of which were placed at each table so that members could review them prior to voting on a motion for their acceptance. Such motion was offered by **Carl Cole**, seconded by **Bob Proudley**, to accept the minutes for Nov 19, 2010 as drafted. There were no additions or corrections offered, and the minutes were accepted with enthusiasm.

There were 12 new applications for membership since the last meeting. The applicants are **Christina Griffin** (nominated by Dudley Brown); **Author Anthony Pitch**--a favorite speaker (nominated by Nelson Rimensnyder); **Katherine Mansfield Houle** (resulting from a WAMU interview); **Darwina Neal** (nominated by Bill Brown); **Stephen "Skip" Moskey** (nominated by James Goode); **David Marshall** (via Historical Society of Washington); **Richard Cook** (friend of Bob Truax); **Colleen Joffe** (nominated by Barbara & Richard Drechsler); **John Pumphrey** (nominated by Murray Howder); and **Anne Hargrove** (Kay Eckles). Applicants to rejoin are **Mark Griffin**, and **Anne Sellin**. **Lee Rogers** moved, seconded by **Allen Beach**, that all applicants be accepted into membership. The motion was heartily approved.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented her report. In it she presented a recap of 2010. Membership was 366, of which 52 were new. Donations last year totaled \$5,451. Our investment account increased \$14K to \$179,000 at year's end. The average meeting attendance for nine functions was 87 people. Hulit noted that the membership renewals were mailed Feb 17, and within 10 days over 100 renewals were received!

President Brown introduced first timers, guests and their hosts and mentioned several items of interest as announcements. He noted that Catholic University has instituted a college course, "DC 101," which will be taught to

freshman and others and recognized CU's Dean of Arts and Sciences, **Larry Poos**, as a guest. He mentioned that at our New Year's Day reception **Tom Sherwood** of Channel 4 spoke with **Pat Tyson and Theresa Saxton** of the Military Roads School Preservation Trust, and the result of this will be an 8-10 minute segment to be shown on Channel 4 tomorrow evening around 7:30 pm about the school's preservation activities. Bill also announced that **Cindy Janke and Kesh Ladduwahetty** are doing research for the centennial of the Eaton School, and that if anyone has information relevant to the history of this DC elementary school please contact Cindy. **Murray Howder** had requested time for an announcement, and he came forward to thank the Board for issuing the AOI membership directory. His thanks was greeted with applause, and Bill noted that the directory has been helpful already. Historian **Nelson Rimensnyder** spoke of several items of DC history, mentioning 1) the manufacture of a bottle cap made here for use by dairies throughout the country, and 2) that the IRS due date for tax reports this year has been extended because April 15 is a legal holiday in the District--it's Emancipation Day.

Today's speaker is **Gordon S. Brown**. He is a retired Foreign Service official, and was the Ambassador to Mauritania. He is a history scholar, and his most recent book is "Incidental Architect: William Thornton and the Cultural Life of Early Washington, DC, 1794-1828." He gave us an extremely fascinating discussion of the early formative days of the district and Thornton's unique contributions. William Thornton is best known as the original architect and designer of the Capitol building. He became a city commissioner, and then the director of the Patent Office. The title of Gordon Brown's book "Incidental Architect" reflects Thornton's multitalented life occupations and demands. He was also trained as a physician although he did not practice it, and an inventor/engineer, and an intellectual focal point for early Washington society. Gordon Brown's insights into what made things happen in Washington is amazing. His talk was a pleasure to hear, being done with wit and humor. The speaker noted the contradictions in Thornton's life--trained as a doctor, he never practiced; he opposed slavery, but kept slaves; he was an engineer with patents, but none ever made money nor were even put into use; he was an architect who

never got things straight; he was affable socially but malicious with his opponents; he was intense in defending his lifestyle, his reputation and his persona. Gordon noted that Thornton may have been a gentleman snob, having come from plantations in the Islands (Tortola), he became attracted to the Virginia life style of horses, a big house and not doing anything. His best friends were Federalists. Interesting questions and answers followed. This was a great presentation.

Respectfully submitted.
Seymour Selig, Secretary



Please visit us at our web site at <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply "Google" Governor Shepherd and we'll pop-up!

Our e-mail address is: aoidc@verizon.net

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

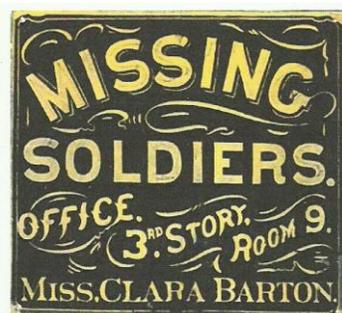


AOI is a member of Cultural Tourism DC:



President's Message (Cont'd)...

The letter, it turned out, was correspondence between Clara Barton and the family of a missing Civil War soldier. Richard had stumbled upon Clara Barton's Missing Soldiers Office on the 3rd floor of 437 7th Street. Now 15 years later, the GSA is in discussions with the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD to develop and run it as a museum. A Friends of Clara Barton's Missing Soldiers Office has been formed to support their efforts and you can subscribe/support them by mailing or emailing: Nancy Hill, Friends of Clara Barton's Office of Missing Soldiers, American Red Cross NCR, 8550 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax, VA 22031 or hilln@redcrossna.org.



"Let Freedom Sing" to Reprise in March...

AOI Member Carolivia Herron wrote the libretto for the chamber opera 'Let Freedom Sing' which celebrates the life of Marian Anderson. Contact the Takoma Theatre Conservancy at: www.takomatheatreconservancy.org or call: 202-379-4838 for ticket information.

Save the dates!

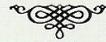
Let Freedom Sing: The Story of Marian Anderson

A chamber opera celebrating the renowned African American singer whose voice inspired the nation

Thursday, March 24, 2011: 7pm
Takoma Educational Campus at Meyer
In support of Takoma Education Center

Friday, March 25: 8pm
Washington Ethical Society
Gala Evening in support of saving the Takoma Theatre

Sunday, March 27: 4pm & 6pm
Atlas Theatre



*Sponsored by the Takoma Theatre Conservancy
In conjunction with the Washington National Opera,
Washington Performing Arts Society and The Learning Maestros*

*Composer Bruce Adolphe (New York) and
Librettist Carolivia Herron (Washington DC)*

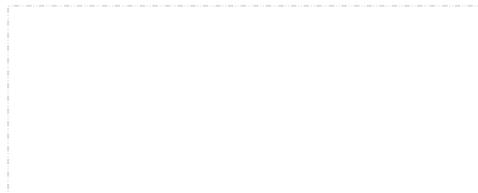


AOI member Carolivia Herron (4th from left) takes a curtain call at the Atlas Theatre following the March 22, 2009 premiere of "Let Freedom Sing."

Please: Don't forget to mail in your 2011 Membership Renewal form and dues today!

Address Correction Requested

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◆ Help keep AOI alive and strong: invite friends to join and be sure to renew your membership!
◆ Visit the Historical Society and Kiplinger Research Library at the Historic Carnegie Building.
www.historydc.org. Library hours: Tue-Sat, 10-5



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