

# Foundations & Perspectives

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**Crumbling Down  
and Building Up**

**AOC Employees  
ExCEL in New Programs**

**Bells, Buzzers,  
Clicks and Clocks**

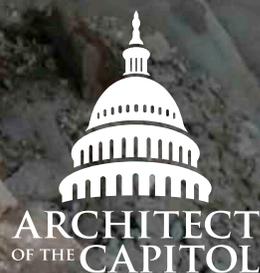




Photo by: Dewitt Roseborough

*Vince Incitto and Cordell Shields review the contents of a storeroom.*

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Photo by: Chuck Badal

*View from the access bridge on the West Front that leads to the Capitol Dome Restoration Project.*

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**Front Cover:** Carroll Rodgers (foreground) and Robert Wallace restore the wall outside the Capitol Senate entrance. Photo by: James Rosenthal

# Letter from the Architect



The Architect of the Capitol can trace its beginnings to 1791 when President George Washington selected three commissioners to provide proper accommodations for Congress to conduct its business in Washington, D.C. As we carry that mission forward in the work we do today, preservation is key to our success.

Over the next few years, stone preservation will be a top priority for the AOC, as nearly every building is encased in stone and almost all are in need of repair (page 22). Soon scaffolding will be visible on buildings around campus including the Capitol Building, Russell Senate Office Building and the Cannon House Office Building to name a few. These critical stone renovation efforts will ensure that the work of Congress can continue for decades to come.

As you know, our mission goes beyond preserving the exterior of Capitol Hill's iconic structures. The AOC also maintains many items inside the buildings – from member offices to committee rooms, we even conserve thousands of clocks throughout the Capitol campus (page 6). Recently we helped design the updated version of the legislative call system, which consists of the bells and buzzers you often hear throughout the buildings. Congress relies on the clocks to inform them of the day's business, as the combination of lights and sounds signals the time for votes and other actions (pages 10 & 11). AOC employees meticulously maintain these clocks to ensure the process of democracy can continue without interruption.

Just as we preserve the buildings and items they hold, we must also preserve the knowledge of our workforce. The Training and Employee Development Branch has worked hard to expand professional development opportunities and facilitate ways for employees to share their knowledge across jurisdictions. As more veteran employees begin to retire, we have found ways to capture their institutional knowledge. The newly established Exchange of Critical Expertise and Learning (ExCEL) Program will ensure the next generation of AOC workers is fully equipped to continue our important work (page 2).

I am so proud to lead the talented men and women of the AOC. Thank you for the invaluable contributions you make each day to support the mission entrusted to this agency by President Washington more than two centuries ago.

Stephen T. Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP  
Architect of the Capitol

# AOC Employees *ExCEL* in New Programs

While the Architect of the Capitol's core mission is to preserve the buildings in our care, we realize that to be successful, preserving knowledge is just as important as preserving the buildings. In a period of tightening budgets, success will be determined by investing in the employees of the AOC and in working better together. As veteran employees retire and walk out of the buildings they've spent decades preserving, all of their institutional knowledge goes with them.

Photos by: Susanne Bledsoe



*CVC Visitor Guide Julie Butler leads a group of visitors through National Statuary Hall.*

“The AOC has a specialized workforce and we’re always looking for ways to try to capture in-house knowledge. I’ve met AOC employees that have worked in the same trade, but with different jurisdictions, for decades and have never met one another. After hearing that, I immediately knew we had to get them in the same room. There’s so much they could learn from each other,” said Peggy Hernandez, Chief of the Human Capital Management Division, Training and Employee Development Branch (TED).

Two years ago, employees provided feedback via the Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS), which offered a snapshot of what the AOC was doing right and how it could improve in certain areas such as fairness and professional development. Across the AOC, new initiatives were developed to address employees’ concerns, including expanding professional development opportunities. Two programs were developed to do just that, the Exchange of Critical Expertise and Learning (ExCEL) Program, and the Architect’s Mobility Program (AMP). As a result of the OAS, the ExCEL Program was launched in the fall of 2013 and the number of AMP positions increased.

The ExCEL Program provides opportunities for jurisdictions to work together and for employees to share their knowledge with fellow colleagues. By focusing on the unique goals of the individual participants, the ExCEL Program’s flexibility opens the door to a variety of ways in which employees can grow and learn from each other.



*Angela Davis observes House Office Buildings Stonemason Nathaniel Clayton demonstrate how to repair marble stone.*

Only a few weeks into his three-month ExCEL detail with the Energy Management Control Systems (EMCS) Shop, Andy Selby, A/C Equipment Mechanic with the Supreme Court Building and Grounds, is surprised by how much he has already learned. “I’ve had a positive experience so far. I’ve learned things I wouldn’t have attempted to do by myself at the Court, but now would feel very comfortable doing them, and I’ve only been here three weeks,” he said.

Scott Bieber supervises the EMCS team, which is part of Planning and Project Management’s Design Services Division and handles

building automation across the Capitol campus and at additional off-site facilities. The team is responsible for overseeing the HVAC, lighting and plumbing systems, as well as monitoring energy usage in all of the buildings. It plays a role in designing, engineering, installing and maintaining major systems campus wide, including air handlers, pumps, lights and even fountains, and also oversees the Building Automation Communication network.

This particular partnership showcases how the ExCEL Program provides benefits for both jurisdictions involved. “Andy will take the



*Scott Bieber and Andy Selby review the building automation system at Ft. Meade.*



*Mason workers Sean Carpenter (left) and Fred Scott (far right) listen to Nathaniel Clayton describe the process to color match repaired stone as Mike Miller discusses the art of color matching with Mr. Ayers.*

knowledge he's gained here back to the Supreme Court and will be more self-sufficient. He'll be able to troubleshoot on his own, which will help him better manage the building, and he'll have to rely less on my team for support," Bieber said.

As Bieber's team works behind the scenes to keep the buildings up and running, it is the front-line staff at the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) that works to ensure each visitor has a memorable experience. Gabrielle Downer and Julie Butler, both Visitor Guides in the CVC, were recent participants in the ExCEL Program. They were detailed to the Curator's Division for two months to learn more about the curator's responsibilities. They helped organize the division's archived files and assisted visiting fellows with their research projects, among other assignments.

"I was able to enhance my research skills and learn more about all of the different items the Curator Division

has in its collection," Downer said. "I was grateful to have the chance to learn more about the artwork. I was able to incorporate a lot of what I discovered into my own tours."

Butler also enjoyed learning things she could include in her tours. "Every tour is different and I let the questions lead the tour. When I get questions that I can't immediately answer, I prefer to fully research the question versus just Googling the

topic, which time in the Curator's office allowed," she said.

Both relatively new to the AOC, Downer and Butler have now established relationships with the Curator's Division, so the next time they're stumped by a visitor's question, they'll know where to go to find the answer.

While fostering relationships to exchange information between



*CVC Visitor Guide Gabrielle Downer was detailed to the Curator's Office for two months through the ExCEL Program, learning about the Curator's different roles and broadening her own research skills.*

jurisdictions is a major initiative of the ExCEL Program, building relationships within jurisdictions is the focus for AMP. AMP allows employees who currently occupy career-limiting positions and lack qualifying experience to move into positions where they can gain a specialized skillset, enabling them to progress according to their abilities.

“There are employees that have been here 30 or 40 years and are now leaving. Every time someone leaves, it gets harder to replace them. You just can’t hire someone off the street and then expect them to know everything in two years. That’s why AMP positions are so important. They can learn the basics of being a stonemason, but they also learn how to take care of the buildings that are unique to Capitol Hill. I make a point to engage the younger workers on my staff. I constantly talk to them, reminding them that one day they’ll have to step up and lead the way for future generations,” said Mike Miller, Mason Supervisor for Library Buildings and Grounds.

One such employee to benefit from AMP is Angela Davis. A Masonry Helper with Library Buildings and Grounds, Davis was first hired in 2006 by the AOC’s Senate Office Buildings’ Labor Division. At the time, she was the only female laborer in the division and after applying for the mason AMP position in 2011, she became the first female employed in a mason shop.

“I applied for the program because I wanted to learn a skill. Without the AMP Program it wouldn’t have been possible because I didn’t have the skills to be in the mason shop.



*Glenn DeVinney, Masonry Supervisor for Senate Office Buildings, instructs AMP employees on the basics of color matching for marble repairs.*

I’m so grateful for this opportunity. I’ve looked at where I came from and where I am now, and this program was a wonderful opportunity,” Davis said.

Glenn DeVinney, Masonry Supervisor for Senate Office Buildings, has recently worked with TED to develop training for stonemasons. Due to dwindling interest, there’s not a lot of external training opportunities for the trade. Their collaboration led to the first ExCEL group event as employees from masonry shops across AOC jurisdictions attended the event this past spring. The event brought together 30-year veteran masons with those that have only recently begun to learn the trade. Instructors demonstrated techniques to repair marble and match colors on repaired stone.

While the main focus of the ExCEL event was on educating AMP employees, James Bentley, House

Office Buildings Mason Supervisor notes that everyone, supervisors included, benefitted in attending. “It was helpful for me to have a chance to talk to other supervisors about materials they’re using and discuss best practices. Everybody learned something that day. Even those that have been here for years,” he said.

TED hopes to continue to build on the success of the first ExCEL event and plans to organize more group events in the future. “By continuing programs such as ExCEL, we are achieving organizational success by making the best use of our internal knowledge,” Hernandez said. “Sharing and capturing that inherited AOC expertise is essential for our future.”

For more information about the ExCEL and AMP Programs, contact the Training and Employee Development Branch at 202.226.3068.

— By Erin Nelson



Photo by: Carol M. Highsmith

# *Bells, Buzzers,* Clicks and Clocks



**In a world where everyone carries a cell phone and some carry more than one, it is surprising that people still check the historic clocks on the Capitol campus for the time of day.**

On a weekly basis, Library Buildings and Grounds Electrician Eugene (Geno) Blowe winds the magnificent clock above the west door in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, known as Mr. Flanagan's clock for the man who created it. First thing on Monday mornings, he winds the clock with a key. The winding and setting mechanisms are located in the back of the clock, which Blowe reaches by taking an elevator to a locked alcove overlooking the Reading Room that houses the clock.

Before winding and resetting the clock, Blowe carefully checks the time of day on his cell phone. "If the clock is even a few minutes off, we get complaints from people in the Reading Room right away," Blowe says, noting that the clock loses about five minutes a week. "Even with their laptops and cell phones and watches, they still go by the Flanagan clock."

Sculpted by John Flanagan in 1896, this grand clock in the Library's Main Reading Room is topped by a life-size bronze statue of Father Time with his scythe. He is encircled by a mosaic of zodiac signs and three-dimensional statues of women and children representing the seasons. Two young male readers lean against either side of the clock.

The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for the maintenance of most of the clocks on Capitol Hill. It's a big job. According to Electronic Mechanic Supervisor John Bean from the Electronic Engineering Division, on the House side of the campus there are approximately 4,000 clocks, and there are close

to that number in the Senate. Each Congressional office suite has at least three clocks, including wall clocks and mantle clocks in the members' personal offices. A



*Left: The magnificent Flanagan clock in the Main Reading Room of the Jefferson Building. Right: Library Buildings and Grounds Electrician Geno Blowe sets the Flanagan clock to the time displayed on his cell phone.*



*Top: AOC Electronic Mechanic Valerie Williams winds the Car of History from the back. Right: The Car of History adds beauty and grace to National Statuary Hall.*

number of historic and sculptural clocks are cared for by the AOC, Senate and House Curators.

Approximately 20 AOC Electronic Mechanics from the Electronic Engineering Division are trained to work on the clocks. This division is responsible for clocks across the campus, as well as cable television, fiber optic cable transmissions and other electronic equipment, including audio set-ups for special events.

Like Blowe, Electronic Mechanic Valerie Williams winds historic clocks in the Capitol on Monday mornings. "Maintaining and working on the clocks is definitely different from anything I've ever done in my career," says Williams, who has worked at the AOC for 20 years.

Williams winds the Car of History clock in National Statuary Hall from the back, which she accesses by climbing a narrow staircase to what was once the visitor gallery in the

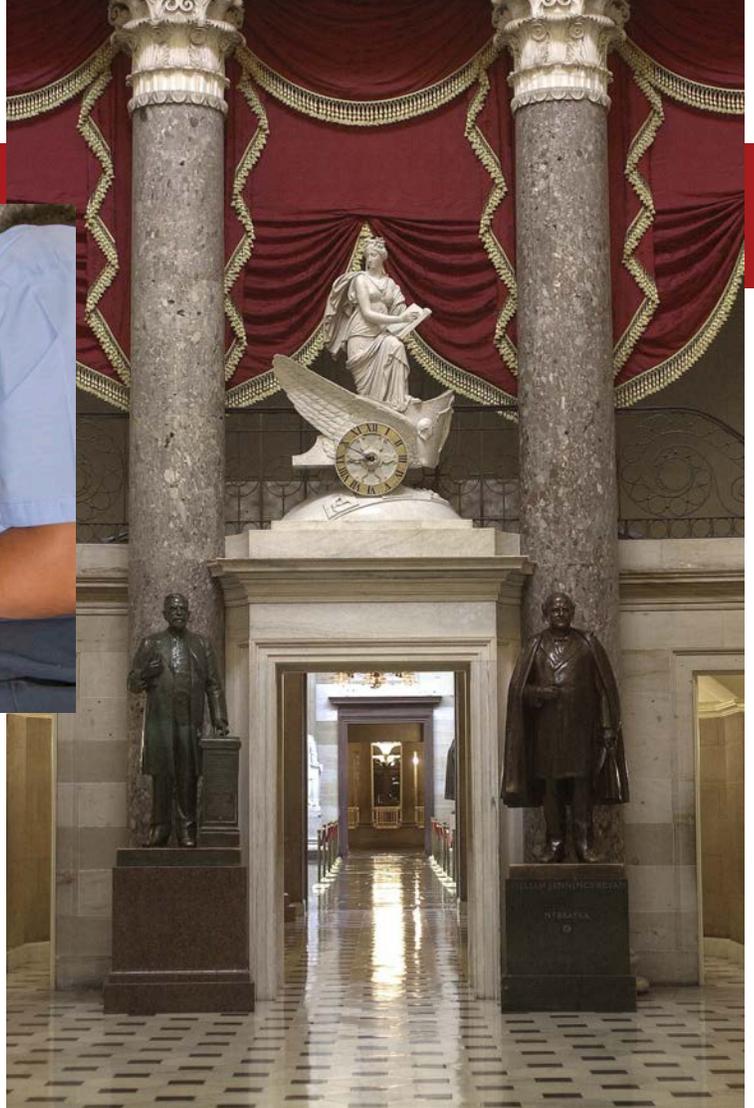


Photo by: Chuck Badal

former House Chamber. If the hands on the front of the clock need to be reset, however, Williams accesses the front of the clock with a ladder.

The Car of History is one of the best-known clocks in the Capitol. The second Architect of the Capitol, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, first sketched the clock that he wanted to be placed over the north door of the Hall of the House of Representatives, opposite the Speaker's desk. He drew a female figure seated in a chariot. The wheel of her chariot became the clock by which the members told time.

Latrobe had Italian sculptor Carlo Franzoni make the model for the clock and carve it in marble. Latrobe's design was changed to depict what we see today. A standing female figure, Clio, the muse of history, is clothed in heavy classical Greek or Roman garments. In her left arm, she holds a book while looking in the opposite direction. With her right hand, she is writing or pointing to her notes. Installed in 1837, the clock's works are by Simon Willard, who some consider America's most well-known clockmaker of the period. Although the meeting place for the House of Representatives moved in 1857, the clock still faces an entrance to the House Chamber.

According to AOC Curator Barbara Wolanin, who considers the Car of History one of the most beautiful and graceful sculptures in the Capitol, Clio is recording in her book what the members of the House of Representatives are doing as they make history.

The more modern clocks at the Capitol do more than just tell time. Their lights and buzzers help members of Congress monitor floor activities in their respective chambers.

There's always been a need to inform members of votes and other actions in the chambers. It's been said that before the House and Senate office buildings were built, a man with a bell walked the hallways of the Capitol announcing votes.

On July 24, 1888, the House approved a resolution to add legislative signal bells to the House wing of the Capitol to keep members informed of House floor proceedings. When the first office buildings opened – the Cannon House Office Building in 1908 and the Russell Senate Office Building in 1909 – signal bells were installed to alert members to quorum calls and pending votes.

According to Bean, electric clocks were installed throughout the campus in the 1960s. They had several functions – lights and buzzers indicating floor activity and keeping correct time. That system worked for about 40 years until high-frequency transmissions started interfering with and degrading the Capitol's signals, thus disrupting service. Bean, who has worked for the AOC since 1978, says that was when the AOC decided to build a wireless system to operate the clocks. The new system was built parallel to the old so there

**Each Congressional office suite has at least three clocks, including wall clocks and mantle clocks in the members' personal offices.**

would be no disruption in service to members who had come to rely on the clocks. (The system of signal bells is different for the House and the Senate. Read more about the legislative call systems on pages 10 and 11.)



*Williams winds a beautiful mantle clock in the Capitol office of the Chairman of the House Rules Committee.*

Photo by: Dewitt Roseborough

The new system went online about five years ago after the Electronic Engineering Division replaced, modified or retrofitted all of the clocks in the House and Senate office buildings and the Capitol. David Cho, AOC Electronic Engineer, was instrumental in designing the new system while Bean assisted with its implementation and installation.

Parliamentarians now use tablets on the floor of the House and Senate to make the selections that send out the signals for votes and other actions. These tablets are also linked to the countdown timers in the tunnels from the House and Senate office buildings which inform members of how much time they have to get to the floor to vote.

Two other famous clocks grace the Capitol. The eleven-foot-tall Voigt clock (also known as the "Ohio clock") outside of the Senate Chamber is so famous that the busy corridor where it's located is unofficially known as the Ohio clock

# What Do

corridor. Ordered in 1815 from Philadelphia clockmaker Thomas Voigt, the stately clock is adorned with a shield containing 17 stars and 17 stripes, which could be where its nickname came from. (Ohio was the 17th state, but was admitted to the union in 1803, well before the clock was ordered.) However, the Senate has original correspondence placing the order for the clock, and there is no connection made to Ohio's statehood. Since the clock's arrival in 1816, it has stood in or near the Senate Chamber.

During the lapse in federal appropriations last October, staff who wind the Voigt clock were furloughed. It was the stopped Voigt clock that provided one of the most profound symbols of the shutdown.

Another famous clock in the Capitol, made by Simon Willard, is the large wall clock in the Old Supreme Court Chamber. Delivered to the Supreme Court Chamber in the Capitol in 1837, it has always maintained its association with the Court even though it's been moved several times. According to the Senate Curator's office, it strikes the hour one minute early, and there have been various stories about adjustments to its timekeeping over the years.

These two clocks and others on the Senate side of the Capitol are maintained by the Office of the Senate Curator. Like at the AOC, staff in that office get calls when the clocks aren't running properly. "People look at the clocks for the time, because this is a working seat of government," said Deborah Wood, Collections Manager in the Office of the Senate Curator. "It would be confusing to run these clocks and not have them reflect the correct time of day. That is part of the reason we maintain them meticulously."

So, the next time you're in the Main Reading Room at the Jefferson Building or in National Statuary Hall, take a moment to look up from your cell phone to check the time of day – on a clock wound by hand every Monday by one of your AOC colleagues.

— *By Sharon Gang*

## **SENATE & HOUSE LEGISLATIVE CALL SYSTEM**

A system of bells, buzzers and lights throughout the Capitol and the Senate and House office buildings keeps members informed of what is happening in the chambers. Some of the lights are installed in clocks, such as the one displayed on page 11.

For more information about congressional operations, visit the Capitol Visitor Center's Exhibition Hall and find the "reading rails" in front of the small House and Senate theaters.

# the Clocks Say?



## SENATE LEGISLATIVE CALL SYSTEM

 NUMBER OF RINGS	 NUMBER OF LIGHTS	ACTIVITY
1 (long)		Senate is convening
	<b>RED</b> (stays on)	Senate is in session
1	1	Call to vote by yeas and nays
2	2	Quorum call
3	3	Call of absentees ("live quorum")
4	4	Adjournment or recess (end of daily session)
5	5	Seven and a half minutes remaining for yea or nay vote
6	6 (cuts off)	Morning business is concluded
6	6 (stays on)	Recess during daily session

## HOUSE LEGISLATIVE CALL SYSTEM

 NUMBER OF RINGS	 NUMBER OF LIGHTS	ACTIVITY
	<b>ORANGE</b> (stays on)	House is in session
2	2	Call to an electronically recorded vote. These votes are recorded for the House Journal, and 15 minutes are allotted for members to vote
3	3	Quorum call. Call for the minimum number of members—218—required to do business
4	4	Adjournment of the House
5	5	Call to a five-minute electronically recorded vote. On noncontroversial bills, five minutes are allotted for members to vote
6	6	Recess, or pause, in the proceedings of the House

Photos by: Photographer



# AOC BIKE COMMUTERS: *In Their Own Words*

Photo by: James Rosenthal

While commuting to work in Washington, D.C., will always be a challenge, few modes of transportation leave the commuter with this feeling: invigoration. In fact, that's how Shaun Abell, Horticulturist with the U.S. Botanic Garden, describes his daily commute by bike every morning. And he's in good company. Quite a few Architect of the Capitol employees commute by bike, forming a group that meets monthly to promote cycling to fellow AOC employees.

*Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers addressed the League of American Bicyclists at the 2014 National Bike Summit.*

Their discussion topics include how to break down barriers to bike commuting, finding ways to educate and train those interested in biking to work, and encouraging safe practices—all with limited resources.

The group, which has been active since the National Bicycling Summit in March, is incredibly passionate about biking and bike safety. Their mission is to spread the word that biking can be many things: fun, energizing, economical and above all—safe.

Jamie Herr, Sustainability Program Specialist with the Sustainability, Energy and Water Conservation Division in Planning and Project Management, is the leader of the AOC Bike Group. “We’re a dedicated group of individuals from many different jurisdictions, all working to address some of the roadblocks and challenges AOC employees and visitors may encounter when biking to Capitol Hill,” she said. “We’re focused on meeting the goal set by Mr. Ayers to become a League of American Bicyclists’ Bike Friendly Business.”

Photo by: Chuck Badal



## Q: WHY DO YOU COMMUTE TO WORK BY BIKE?

*Members of the bike group share in their own words their thoughts and advice on commuting to work by bike.*



“It’s fun, and riding through the U.S. Capitol Grounds is both beautiful and inspiring.”

*Mary Jean Pajak, Management Analyst with the Performance, Strategy and Innovation Division*



“It is a refreshing way to wake up in the morning, it is faster than commuting by Metro and a more convenient way to get around the city.”

*Mark Galvan, General Engineer with the House Office Buildings*



“It does several things simultaneously. It is a fun way to get to work, a great form of exercise, and it does not pollute the environment. When I get to work, I feel energized and in a great frame of mind because of the experience.”

*Martin Shore, Architect with the Design Services Division*



“For me, biking takes the same amount of time as driving, but I get the added benefit of parking close to the building where I work. It’s also a great stress reducer and fun.”

*John Kelly, Management Analyst with the Chief Administrative Officer*



“It’s great for my physical and mental health—I enjoy active transportation.”

*Eric Goodman, Supervisory Mechanical Engineer with the Design Services Division*

## Q: What are some of the challenges of biking to work?

**MJP:** Any kind of precipitation: rain, snow and ice.

**MG:** When it is very hot and humid outside, I need to take a shower when I get to work and that increases the time it takes me to commute.

**MS:** Sharing the road with cars and pedestrians can often be challenging, especially during rush hour. Both drivers, pedestrians and sometimes other bikers can be unpredictable, so I always need to stay alert to avoid having an accident.

**JK:** One of my challenges is biking up a big hill on my way home.

**EG:** Traffic and distracted drivers. Too many drivers are focused on their electronic devices or just getting to where they want to go as fast as they can. They don't see bicyclists unless you get their attention.

## Q: What are some of the positives of commuting by bike?

**MJP:** It's the quickest way for me to travel around Capitol Hill if I need to run an errand on my way home.

**MG:** It's like a morning coffee. It's empowering to know that I can physically power myself pollution-free to work. It also makes me physically active and happy.

**MS:** I enjoy seeing and exploring parts of D.C. that I would not typically see when driving. And if I want to stop somewhere, being on a bike offers more flexibility than driving because finding parking for cars is usually more difficult than finding a place to lock a bike.

**JK:** It's a great low-impact exercise that's also fun.

**EG:** I enjoy all I get to see along my trip. I go by the Potomac River, the Memorial Bridge, Lincoln Memorial, World War II Memorial, Washington Monument and many others.

## Q: What's some advice you'd share with other employees just starting to commute by bike?

**MJP:** Always wear a helmet and drive defensively—assume that cars cannot see you. Get a good rack or baskets to carry things easily.

**MG:** Smile and be friendly and courteous to drivers. Take a class to learn the rules of the road—it will help you ride confidently.

**MS:** It takes a bit of time to build up your strength and stamina. If you live far away from work, for the first few weeks you may want to break up the commute into shorter distances. For example, you can bike to a Metro or bus stop and take public transportation the rest of the way.

**JK:** Take the time to plan a safe route that uses paths and bike lanes.

**EG:** New riders may want to try using Capital Bikeshare if they do not already have a bike. It may be a good alternative on a day when wet weather is expected.

For more information about the AOC Bike Group and how you can become involved, email [biking@aoc.gov](mailto:biking@aoc.gov).

— *By Kristen Frederick*

### SHAUN ABELL'S BIKING TIPS

- Watch for people exiting their cars—they are not watching for bikers
- Keep a reasonable speed when biking on the street
- Stay as far to the right as possible
- Choose the right bike saddle
- Tires can last thousands of miles—make sure you inflate yours every week



Photo by: James Rosenthal

# AOC MOVES

## the House Office Buildings

### STOREROOMS



“When you open a door, you never know what you’re going to find. We have found stuffed wolves that scared the pants off a man. Right around the corner was a big canoe that we had to pull out,” says Vince Incitto.



Cordell Shields explained, “The wolf was just inside the door, facing me. When I opened the door, it looked like it was alive, and I jumped back about three feet.”

You might think that Incitto and Shields are describing enclosures at the National Zoo or attics at the Smithsonian, but they’re actually explaining some of the challenges of moving the storerooms of the House Office Buildings.



Photos by: Dewitt Roseborough

*House Office Buildings laborers like Keith Quick carefully move thousands of boxes and other items among member storerooms every election year.*

Every two years, citizens across the country elect or re-elect members of the House of Representatives, who then come to Washington to move into their offices. Many Hill denizens are familiar with the monumental effort that is required to move new and returning members into their offices in time for the new session of Congress.

However, even on the Hill, few people are aware that behind the scenes, the Architect of the Capitol also moves thousands of boxes and other items among the members’ storerooms — and it did so last year in a cost-saving way with no reduction in service. These rooms hold those items that members don’t have space for in their offices, such as excess stationery, artwork and other office supplies.

Incitto said, “We expect anything. One had a surfboard in it.”

As a result, the four-person crews of House laborers who move each storeroom come prepared, according to Shields. “We don’t let anything

*Vince Incitto, Labor Supervisor, ensures that each storeroom move occurs on schedule.*

stop us. We bring flat trucks for all the boxed items, boxes for the loose items, and rolling bins for anything that won't fit in those." Given the amount of correspondence each member transacts, it's not uncommon for the rooms to be full of stationery, which can be heavy, "So, we can bring a pallet jack, put all the boxes on a skid, shrink wrap them and move them faster that way," said Shields.

The crews have to move fast. Each one has four moves scheduled each day of a six-day workweek over several weeks, which is necessary to ensure the members have the supplies they need to start the new session of Congress. In addition, Incitto has to ensure that the labor crews get all their regular work done — making deliveries, cleaning spills and so forth.

Last year, rather than keeping on a large group of temporary employees to assist with the storeroom moves as has been done in the past, the House Superintendent's office released the temporary employees after the office moves were done as a cost-saving measure. This meant that, for the first time, all of the storeroom moves had to be done by AOC employees, and this task tested them on many levels.

By all accounts, the House laborers passed with flying colors, completing the moves on time and at a lower cost than in past years — all while maintaining the daily services they



are relied on for. Doing so required coordination across the various shops of the House Superintendent's office. Each storeroom had to be rekeyed, for example, at the same time every House office was being rekeyed. If there was furniture to be moved or a member was leaving the House and needed their belongings shipped home, the laborers had to coordinate with the House Chief Administrative Officer to deliver those items. And the laborers had to coordinate their own efforts.

Shields explained that after doing this for many years, "We have a good little system. For example, the crew that's moving out cleans up — wipes down the shelves, cleans the floor — so that the crew that's coming in, the storeroom is clean for them already."

Thinking through details like that is what helped keep the laborers on schedule while saving the cost

"These rooms hold those items that members don't have space for in their offices, such as excess stationery, artwork and other office supplies."

of paying temporary employees. Their can-do attitude and work ethic also paved the way to their success, as well as their ability to take the unexpected in stride.

As Incitto said, "Variety is the spice of life."

Willing to overcome any challenge, the House Office Buildings laborers continuously improve service delivery and efficiency, even if they have to face down a wolf to do it.

— By Franklin Bradley

## DOING GOOD:

# Richard Edmonds



Photo by: Dewitt Roseborough



*Volunteers at the Riva Trace Baptist Church food pantry prepare items for families in need. Food pantry photos courtesy of Richard Edmonds.*

In today's world there is no shortage of articles, news segments and seminars on couponing, but few, if any, offer the return and success that Richard Edmonds and his church have found through their food pantry. As a member of Riva Trace Baptist Church and volunteer for their community projects, Edmonds has helped hundreds of families.

Employed by the AOC since 2004, Edmonds is an Industrial Engineering Technician at the Capitol Power Plant. He's in charge of scheduling equipment outages and oversees preventative maintenance. By ensuring that everything runs

smoothly and efficiently, Edmonds prevents issues before they happen — skills that have served him well as a volunteer in his Davidsonville, Maryland, community. "I'm always looking for ways to improve the food pantry," Edmonds said. He often finds

himself watching for any hiccups and works quickly to find solutions. He's realized the need for organization and structure are important in both his volunteer work and during his time on the Hill.

He attributes his time spent volunteering for increasing his awareness of those in need and his compassion for those that are hurting. But having been there himself, he also finds his volunteer work to be a way of giving back. "I was needy too. That's why my heart goes out to folks in need. I've been there," he said.

With approximately 500 members, Riva Trace has found ways to make a big impact in its small community. The food pantry is open on Fridays and the first Saturday of every month. Thanks to donations from members, government funding and grants, the church is able to give away 15,000 pounds of food a month and only spends approximately \$600. "Everyone is always surprised at how so little can feed so many," Edmonds said.

The success of the food pantry has not gone unnoticed. It was selected to be the 2013 partner of the Maryland Food Bank, which provided access to both state and grant funding. As a result, Riva Trace served more than 5,000 people in its community and distributed 225,339 pounds of food in 2013.

The food pantry is stocked with purchased food bought in bulk at the Maryland Food Bank and donated food from the Anne Arundel County Food Bank. The food is delivered, separated and sorted into categories. For families in need, the process resembles that of a grocery store — the only thing missing is the checkout line. Carts are provided and people are able to go up and down rows of food picking up meat, eggs,



The success of the food pantry has not gone unnoticed. It was selected to be the 2013 partner of the Maryland Food Bank, which provided access to both state and grant funding.

milk, vegetables, fruit and even the occasional bag of dog food.

Visitors must provide proof of their residency, then they are interviewed and their information is entered into a database, which helps the food pantry track visitors and their families. Volunteers consider themselves to be the eyes and ears of the community. They help push carts, load food in cars, listen to those that want to talk and are always ready to encourage those who might need more than food.

A volunteer with Riva Trace since 2006, Edmonds has learned that there are many aspects to volunteering and summarized the best way to approach volunteer work. "While there will always be those that take advantage of the goodness of others, I have learned to treat each person as an individual. All have their own story and I'm eager to listen to those that choose to share theirs with me," he said.

Edmonds, originally from Washington, D.C., was raised by a single mom and was the oldest of six kids. He left home at a young age, marrying when he was only in eleventh grade. "I was 18, a senior in high school with a family to feed, and I couldn't have done it without support from the community," he said.

Edmonds has come a long way since his years as a struggling teen. His community service has touched hundreds of lives, but it's the lives of his family he wants to influence the most. With four daughters and six grandchildren, Edmonds hopes to leave behind a legacy that exemplifies how important it is to take time to recognize those in need and make a difference.

For more information on the Riva Trace food pantry visit [www.rtbc.org](http://www.rtbc.org).

— By Erin Nelson

# Dome UPDATE

The Capitol Dome Restoration Project got into full swing in 2014 with safety preparations and scaffolding in support of the first major restoration of the Dome since 1960. For the latest updates visit [www.aoc.gov/Dome](http://www.aoc.gov/Dome).



**1** Construction staging area on the West Front - March 2014.



**2** Workers prepare Rotunda for safety canopy - April 2014.



**3** Safety canopy prepares to rise in Rotunda - April 2014.



**4** Safety canopy rising in Rotunda - April 2014.



**5** Stephen Ayers, Kristy Long, and Eugene Poole address the media following placement of safety canopy - April 2014.



**6** Scaffolding preparations on Peristyle of Dome - June 2014.



**10** Peristyle of the Dome is covered in scaffolding - September 2014.



**7**

**Exterior scaffolding** begins placement on Peristyle of Dome - July 2014.



**8**

**Scaffold** access tower constructed on roof - July 2014.



**9**

**Inside the Rotunda** with safety canopy in place - Summer 2014.

# CRUMBLING DOWN *AND* BUILDING UP



*Juan Sandoval and Jose Hernandez use a lewis to remove stones from the Olmsted Terrace.*

Photos by: James Rosenthal

## “The Madison Building is taking on water,” said AOC’s Historic Preservation Officer Mary Oehrlein.

And the Madison Building isn’t alone. Viewed from a distance, the buildings of Capitol Hill are inspiring and impressive, but as with an impressionist painting, it’s best to focus on the subject and not on the details. Up close, the buildings are more depressing than impressing, as weather, age and deferred maintenance are destroying many of the finer details of these awe-inspiring stone edifices.

Stone preservation across Capitol Hill is a top priority for the Architect of the Capitol as nearly every building is enveloped in stone and all have problems. To address this stone pandemic across the Capitol campus takes a team of historic preservationists, structural engineers and stonemasons, among others. The men and women of AOC are in a race against time as the infrastructure rapidly crumbles and deferred maintenance projects accumulate.

Meanwhile, the potential loss of historic artwork and architectural features, and significant safety threats from falling stone are compounded. Instances of cracking and spalling stone grow more serious and more costly to repair. The temporary fixes that the AOC undertakes to prevent catastrophic failures are not enough to prevent conditions from worsening.

This was evident in October 2013 when a large piece of stone broke away from the Cannon House Office Building and fell several stories to the ground. Fortunately, it was in an area where there is no pedestrian traffic. The piece was large enough that if it had fallen in a public area, it would have caused great damage to anything or anyone below it.

To get a complete picture of the problem, Oehrlein and AOC Architect Marty Shore have been conducting a series of exterior stone surveys. The results of these condition assessments confirm that the exterior stone on most, if not all, of the buildings on Capitol Hill are rapidly deteriorating, including those of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and the U.S. Botanic Garden.

“There is a long history of surveying the conditions, but not repairing,” said Oehrlein. “In 1960, a lightning strike to the southwest corner of the Capitol knocked a large piece of the cornice off. As a result of this, Owen Ramsburg, an AOC employee, did a survey of the whole building, and without exception, the damage he documented is still there.”



*Top: Left to Right – Kevin Long, Mary Oehrlein, Franco Divalentin and Henry Coffrey confer on restoration plans for the Olmsted Terrace.*

*Center: Stonemason Juan Sandoval works on the Olmsted Terrace.*

*Bottom: Owen Ramsburg surveys stone damage at the Capitol in 1960. Photo courtesy of: AOC archives.*



Photos courtesy of: AOC archives

*Top: Large stone piece fallen from the Capitol Building onto the terrace.*

*Center: Stone crumbling on the Cannon Building.*

*Bottom: Piece of stone removed from the Russell Building.*

In fact, Owen Ramsburg served as general engineer for the AOC from 1959 until his retirement in 1978. In his retirement letter to Architect of the Capitol George Stewart he said, “For me it has been a time of most interesting work in a most interesting building, and I assure you I shall continue to have a sincere concern for it.”

Shore adds, “The good news is that there are a number of assessments underway, and they lead to projects to make the necessary repairs.”

To make the necessary repairs, a number of methods are used, starting with the least invasive, gentlest materials and methods possible to clean the stone. For example, high-pressure power washing is destructive to stone, as it removes top layers on the face of the rock and allows water to penetrate further into the stone. Preferred methods include steam, low-pressure warm water, low-pressure micro-abrasion and laser cleaning, alone or in combination with detergents and other cleaning agents.

**When repairs and replacement are needed, skilled stonemasons are called in. “AOC has some wonderful and talented stonemasons,” said Oehrlein.**

A project currently being tackled by AOC stonemasons, from both the Construction Division and the Capitol Jurisdiction, is that of the Olmsted Terrace. The terrace surrounding the Capitol’s base on the west, north and south was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his team of designers between 1874 and 1890, and was completed by 1894. The terrace was designed to provide a strong visible architectural base to the Capitol and heighten the grandeur of the building. It extends approximately 1,600 linear feet and rises about 20 feet in height at its highest point.

The walls are constructed largely of Lee, Massachusetts, marble with a granite foundation. The center west portion is constructed of Vermont marble. During the last 120 years, there has been little maintenance performed on the stone and the condition of the terrace has deteriorated over this time. A recent condition survey found that the marble and granite are stained and damaged, requiring a number of different types of maintenance and repairs.

To restore the Olmsted Terrace, the AOC is starting a five-phase project that will clean and repair the terrace walls. Repairs include dismantling and rebuilding some of the walls, repointing, patching

holes, Dutchman repairs (using a wedge or small piece to conceal a flaw in construction), cleaning the stone, and trimming and removing trees and bushes along the terrace walls.

The project is planned to occur between spring and early winter for the next five years. Work has begun on the first phase that includes the northeast approach walls, stairs and eastern portion of the north terrace wall.

AOC stonemasons may be making repairs in the 21st century, but the stones they are lifting were quarried and set in place more than 100 years ago (the stone itself is several million years old) and the techniques they use are thousands of years old. Stonemasonry was one of the earliest trades in the history of civilization, from the pyramids of Egypt to the buildings of the Roman Empire.

One technique developed by the Romans was the “lewis,” a system used to lift stones that cannot be otherwise lifted or placed with straps or other devices. The system works by inserting a lewis pin or bolt into holes drilled in stone, the pin or bolt is then connected to a crane or block and tackle to hoist the stones out of, or into, place.

Today’s AOC stonemasons are using the lewis holes placed into the Olmsted Terrace stones by their mason brethren nearly 140 years ago, but have the advantage of forklifts and mechanical winches to lift the stones rather than using a block and tackle and brute strength.

“I enjoy the job. It is important to us — we feel we are part of history and we know where we are working,” said AOC Construction Division Stonemason Juan Sandoval, standing amidst the granite and marble stones he is repairing at the foot of the Senate side of the Capitol.

Beyond the work on the Olmsted Terrace, scaffolding will soon cover many buildings across the campus in support of critical stone repairs. These include planned work on the first phases of the Capitol Building and Russell Senate Office Building, the Cannon Building Renewal and the U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory.

As Architect of the Capitol Stephen T. Ayers recently testified to the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch: “There is much work to be done, but we believe that preserving the historic fabric of our nation is well worth the effort.”

— By Matt Guilfoyle



Photos by: James Rosenthal

*Top: Medaro Romero removes stairs to be repaired near the Senate entrance of the Capitol.*

*Center: AOC stonemasons place stone atop the Olmsted Terrace.*

*Bottom: AOC stonemasons remove stone for restoration from the Olmsted Terrace.*



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## [www.aoc.gov/magazine](http://www.aoc.gov/magazine)

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*#CapitolMorning - on a beautiful September morning, a group of Instagrammers came together to explore and celebrate the U.S. Capitol during AOC's second InstaMeet. Follow AOC on social media at the sites listed above.*

