

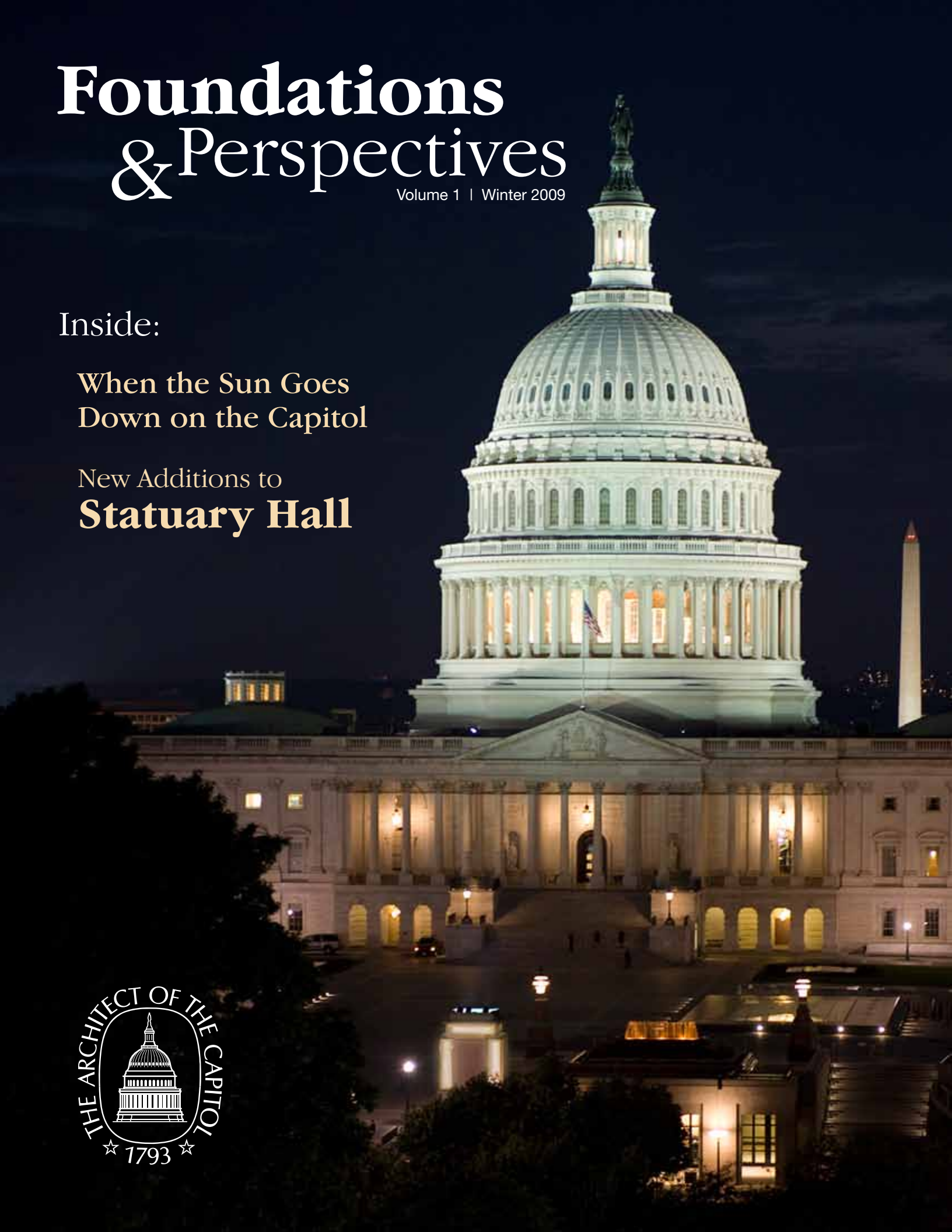
Foundations & Perspectives

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Inside:

When the Sun Goes
Down on the Capitol

New Additions to
Statuary Hall



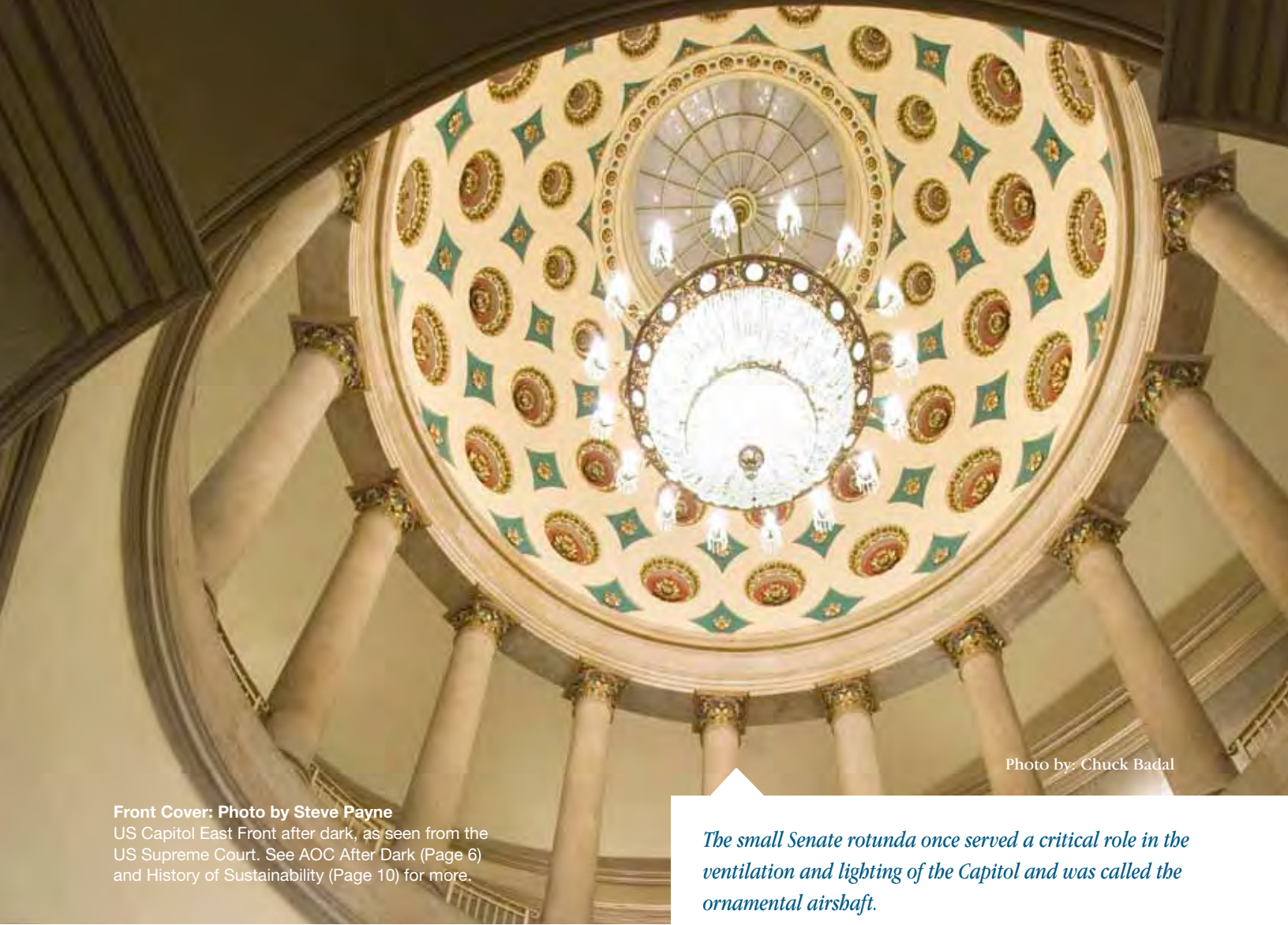


Photo by: Chuck Badal

Front Cover: Photo by Steve Payne

US Capitol East Front after dark, as seen from the US Supreme Court. See AOC After Dark (Page 6) and History of Sustainability (Page 10) for more.

The small Senate rotunda once served a critical role in the ventilation and lighting of the Capitol and was called the ornamental airshaft.



Photo by: Chuck Badal

Workers set more than 400,000 pieces of stone for the Capitol Visitor Center, some weighing as much as 500 pounds. See Sustaining History (page 10) for more.

In This Issue

- 1 Letter from the Acting Architect
- 2 Safety First is Safety Always
- 4 Curator Cares for New Capitol Statues
- 6 AOC After Dark
- 10 Sustaining History
- 14 AOC Core Value: Creativity
- 16 Around Campus: Updates from around the AOC
- 18 Benefiting People: AOC Assistance Program
- 20 Doing Good—Phelps School

Letter from the Acting Architect



On an evening in early September, I had the privilege of attending a joint session of Congress; that evening as I moved about the Capitol, it struck me that the AOC is an agency, like the city of New York, that *never sleeps*.

That day in September encapsulated in just 24 hours what AOC employees do 365 days a year. This ranges from supporting the Nation's stage including multiple event set-ups and tear-downs, to ensuring the cleanliness of the Capitol Campus buildings and grounds, to maintaining the reliability of the electrical, plumbing ventilation, and life safety systems, to ongoing preservation of the Nation's most iconic buildings and grounds.

Much like Estelle Wimbush, highlighted in this issue—who has been working on the night custodial crew for nearly 30 years—from the day it was founded, the AOC has a long and proud tradition of supporting Congress from behind the scenes and allowing our good work to speak for itself. However, due to our scope, size and simple limitations of time—it is often difficult for this good work to be known or shared across the organization and beyond.

This publication will highlight the talents of AOC employees that are the unsung, often unseen, heroes making the Capitol Campus operate efficiently and effectively. In this issue you will see the amazing diversity of skills applied by AOC employees every day and every night. These dedicated individuals include our night crews who ensure the cleanliness of every office on the campus every night, our House Woodcrafting Shop applying creative methods to their work, and employees who share their tradecrafts with youth in our community.

“The AOC has a long and proud tradition of supporting Congress from behind the scenes.”

In this issue, you will see how we meet modern demands for sustainability while maintaining a strong commitment to the history and preservation of the buildings entrusted to our care. For the AOC, sustainability is a core attribute—it is something all employees, no matter their job—contribute to everyday.

The best way we can improve ourselves and our organization is to listen and learn from each other. It is through this sharing of our experiences and knowledge that we grow—whether it is a 30 year AOC veteran providing invaluable insights into the inner-workings of a building system—or a new AOC employee bringing an original idea or fresh point of view to a job.

By sharing these stories I hope you will find, as I did, inspiration, knowledge, and strength in the people of the AOC. I am proud to lead an organization with such diverse talents and passions, which coupled with a strong commitment to service, is making and preserving history everyday.

Thank you for all you do,

Stephen T. Ayers, AIA, LEED AP
Acting Architect of the Capitol

Safety First is *Safety Always*

Photo by: Chuck Badal



Safety is an important practice in every job and is reflected in the work habits of the AOC across the Campus.

Safety doesn't
happen by accident.

There is no shortage of slogans touting the importance of workplace safety. But these slogans are just empty words if the messages aren't taken seriously.

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) takes workplace safety very seriously and over the past several years has seen great progress in reducing both its Injury and Illness (I & I) rate, and its Lost Time case rate. Since Fiscal Year 2000, the AOC's I & I rate has been reduced each year, resulting in an overall total reduction of 77 percent.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the AOC's total I & I rate was decreased 16.8 percent to 4.06. During the same time, its lost time case rate was decreased by 24.7 percent from the previous year to 2.38.

"Our success is attributable to our employees," said Susan Adams, Director of AOC's Safety, Fire, and Environmental Programs. "Employees are involved. They focus on working safely. They talk about safety in meetings and practice safety in the field. Safety committees and safety specialists add emphasis. It is because of their commitment to safety that we've made such great strides in reducing our I & I rate."

"We're also committed to providing our colleagues with the training they need. In 2007 and 2008,

Working safely may get old, but so do those who practice it.



Photo by Michael Dunn

we provided more than 26,000 hours of safety training to our employees,” noted Adams.

This included training in fall protection, asbestos awareness, confined space, lead paint abatement, use and care of personal protective equipment, and supervisors’ safety development.

“The level of safety throughout the Capitol complex has never been higher and it continues to improve every day. And, while we’re very proud of our accomplishments, we know we still have work to do,” said Adams. “Injuries are avoidable, even one injury is one injury too many.”

proactively pre-inspect offices and other areas throughout the Capitol complex and correct hazardous conditions. These efforts have netted great returns. During the 110th Congress, the number of hazards identified by the OOC was reduced by more than 30 percent from the 109th Congress.

With the help of AOC building inspectors, 37 Members of Congress achieved hazard-free offices and were recognized by the OOC with its 2008 Safe Office Awards. That number is expected to increase significantly as the AOC’s building inspection program matures, and more work

is done to correct issues such as tripping hazards and electrical issues in advance of the OOC’s inspections.

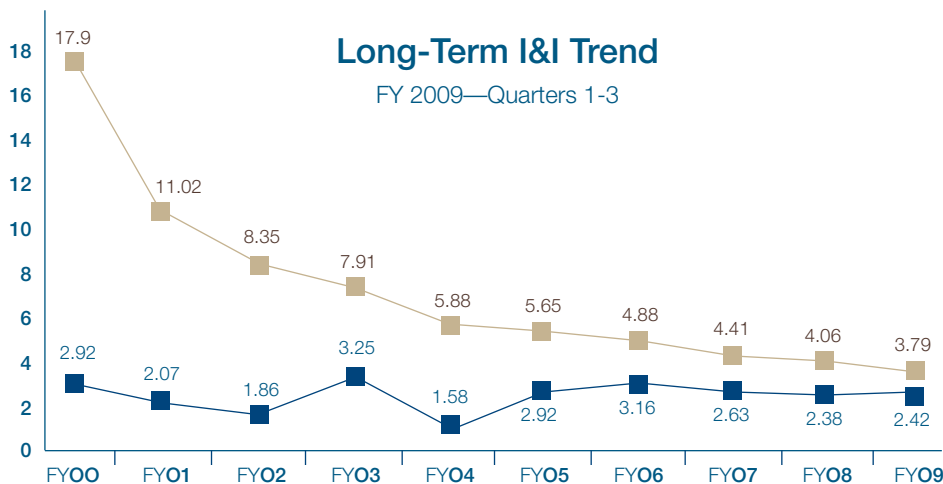
“The Architect of the Capitol is dedicated to providing a safe, healthy, and secure environment for all who work and visit here,” said Adams. “At the AOC, safety isn’t just a slogan; it’s a way of life.”

—by *Eva Malecki*

Collaboration

The AOC has also worked closely with the Office of Compliance (OOC) during its biennial inspections to

“At the AOC, safety isn’t just a slogan; it’s a way of life.”



■ Lost Time Injury Rate
■ Total Injury Rate

AOC FY 2009 Goals:
 Total Case Rate = 3.94
 Lost Time Case Rate = 2.31



Photo by: Chuck Badal

Curator *Cares* for New **Capitol Statues**

Goodbye,
Thomas, Francis,
Jabez, and Zachariah.

Hello, Helen,
Harry, Gerry, and
Ronnie!



Yes, there's some turnover in the AOC's Office of the Curator, but it's not staff—it's statues.

Among the many responsibilities the Curator's Office has is to care for and preserve many of the works of art in the Capitol Building. This includes the 100 statues in the National Statuary Hall Collection.

The National Statuary Hall Collection was created by Congress in July 1864 when they passed a law inviting "each and all the States to provide and furnish statues, in marble or bronze, not exceeding two in number for each State" to be "placed in the Old Hall of the House of Representatives, in the Capitol of the United States."

It took more than 140 years to complete the Collection, with the

100th statue entering the Capitol in 2005. However, it was in 2000 that Congress made the Curator's work even more interesting. They passed a law that allowed states to "swap out" one of their statues at a time.

The first statue swap took place in 2003 when Kansas replaced Governor George Washington Glick, which was originally given in 1914, with President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Other states are following suit. In June 2009, California swapped Thomas Starr King (1931) for President Ronald Reagan, and in October 2009, Alabama replaced Jabez Lamar Monroe Curry (1908) with Helen Keller. Waiting in the wings are new statues from Michigan (President Gerald Ford replacing Zachariah Chandler) and

Photo by: Susanne Bledsoe

“The addition of new statues to the Collection is an exciting challenge for our office.”

Missouri (President Harry Truman replacing Francis Blair, Jr.). Ohio is looking to swap its statue of William Allen with one of a notable native who is yet to be named.

“The addition of new statues to the Collection is an exciting challenge for our office,” noted AOC Curator Dr. Barbara Wolanin. “Moving the statues in and out of the Capitol Building takes special skills, and the Capitol Superintendent’s staff has provided us with invaluable assistance in ensuring that these moves are executed smoothly and without a scratch.”

“These changes keep the Collection vibrant as figures from our more recent history join the statues of those who helped found our country,” added Dr. Wolanin. “Just as we preserve the Capitol Building to ensure that it stands for another 200 years, we are committed to preserving all the statues donated by the states—new and old.”

—by *Eva Malecki*



National Statuary Hall Collection By the Numbers

100 Number of **Statues in the Collection**

2 Number of statues **each state is allowed to have** in the Collection at one time

9 Number of **women represented** in the Collection

1864 Year Collection was **established by Law**

1933 Year that Congress first allowed the Collection to be rearranged to **address overcrowding** in Statuary Hall

2000 Year Congress passed a law allowing states to **swap out a statue**

2005 Year the **Collection reached 100 statues** (New Mexico donated Po'pay)



Photos by: Chuck Badal

AOC

New York may be the city that never sleeps, but the AOC is an agency that never rests—a look behind the scenes at side of the AOC staff many have never seen.

After Dark

Photos by: Chuck Badal





Close watch—Greg Meyer keeps a close eye on the operations of the Power Plant while most of Capitol Hill is asleep.

“I wouldn’t go back to days for anything.”

The sun is setting, casting a colorful backdrop for the Capitol dome as you look westward. The streets are nearly empty and a general sense of calm and peace settles on the campus. As the tourists are leaving the Capitol Building having finished the last tour for the day, a select group of AOC employees are just arriving to begin their work for the day.

Time with Children

“I wouldn’t go back to days for anything,” says Robin Gould, an AOC supervisory electrician who has worked the night shift for nearly a decade. Sitting in a windowless room in the Madison Building that provides no clue as to the time of day, Robin is joined by Brian Costello and Kevin Ross, who are discussing the projects to be undertaken that night throughout the Library of Congress buildings.

Fewer Distractions

Walking through the book stacks of the Adams Building, we meet Scott Jones and Kenneth Roy who are installing pipe for a new fire alarm system. The book stack they are

Shorter Commutes

working in is lit brightly but those around them are dark—the low ceiling (to accommodate additional floors for book storage) and the rows of books make the scene reminiscent of a scary movie. But Scott and Kenneth are happily at work; both joined the AOC within the past few months and are pleased to be on the night shift.

As I was touring the buildings, stopping to talk to the teams hard at work that evening, two things become evident. First, they each seem to enjoy the night shift. The reasons are numerous: more time with children, fewer distractions conducting their work absent visitors and staff, and shorter commutes, are among them.

“The night shift is the way to go,” says Craig McCoy, who along with Anthony Fleming, can be found at work deep in the cellar of the Adams Building.

Second, it is evident they are committed to their crafts, proud of their work, and have a reverence for the buildings, their history, and national significance. Brian Costello is particularly proud of the work he and the other AOC teams did to install



Sacrifice—It takes round-the-clock dedication of the Capitol Power Plant employees such as Roland Wright, to provide heating and cooling to the Capitol Campus without interruption.



Estelle Wimbush and the Senate Russell Office Building are intertwined after nearly 30 years of service all of it at night.

“Working the night shift gives me time to be with my kids.”

the kiosks within the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building. He even brought his young children in to see his completed handiwork.

Over in the Senate Office Buildings, Estelle Wimbush has been working on the night custodial crew for nearly 30 years, starting with the AOC before the Hart Building was even completed. She has spent most of her time working in the Russell Building,

In fact, she has remained in the Russell Building even when some Senators’ offices have specifically requested that she move with them when they changed buildings. Today she is responsible for cleaning 14 restrooms every night; completing her work well before sunrise.

Together with the floor cleaning crew, the Senate night custodial staff cleans every level of all three office buildings every night—a total of 18 floors that includes 2.4 million square feet (slightly less than the Empire State Building). Of those millions, 12,261 square feet falls to the responsibility of Renay Douglas, a mother of two who has worked the night shift for nine years. Working independently every night doesn’t seem to bother Renay, “It’s just you by yourself,” she noted, adding, “Working the night shift gives me time to be with my kids.”

The custodial crew must pull all trash and recyclables from every office by 2 a.m.—thousands of receptacles in all—in order for Recycling Supervisor Ronald LeGrand’s team to transport it all to the basement for sorting, compacting, and readying for pick-up.

At the Capitol Power Plant, AOC employees have kept the Plant running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, for nearly 100 years.

“At the Capitol Power Plant, AOC employees have kept the Plant running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, for nearly 100 years.”

Today, that responsibility falls to the operations watch working both days and night each month, making them a bit different from some of the other AOC night crews.

Working the night crew is not without its challenges, say Plant supervisors Jim Burch and Barry (Toby) Virts, both with more than 30 years of experience—much of it on swing shifts—now they work only the day shift.

“It is hard on your family life,” says Jim. “It takes a very strong relationship,” adds Toby. “A lot of credit needs to be given to the spouses of shift workers.”

The Power Plant operations watch includes the duo of Greg Meyer and Larry Keefe, both of whom have young children and have been with the AOC for about five years. They agree that working days and nights take sacrifice, especially from their families. However, despite the challenges, they hope the AOC is the place they can serve out their careers.

Power Plant operator and supervisor Roland Wright, who has been with the AOC for 22 years, provides

an example of the sacrifice made working nights, “I was down in South Carolina. My wife’s aunt brought out a film of when my daughter was in seventh grade [now grown]. I never had seen the film until now. I wasn’t in it. The whole family was sitting around talking, laughing, joking. Where was I? Probably working.”

“I do it for my grandkids,” says William Sanford, assistant supervisor for the Senate Night Custodial staff (pictured lower right). While his career has spanned generations, the Phelps High School graduate and former minor league baseball player, is a relative rookie to the AOC night shift, having joined six years ago.

While often unseen, these custodians, painters, electricians, plumbers, laborers, and the many others responsible for ensuring that the garbage is emptied, the offices are cleaned, the air is cooled or heated, and the buildings are maintained, should take great pride in the fact that their work is critical to the operations of the Capitol Campus.

For they are like characters in a Grimm Brothers’ fairytale—working unseen in the darkness of night,

Clean sweep—Every night Patricia Bellamy dusts, vacuums and polishes, ensuring that Senate Hart building is ready for business by morning.



and who are only visible in the light of day by their finished work.

“...and on they went, till the job was quite done... This was long before daybreak; and then they bustled away as quick as lightning.”

—by Matt Guilfoyle



For more than 200 years the AOC, and its predecessors, have incorporated techniques, large and small, ensuring the sustainability of the Capitol Campus.

Sustaining History

Photo by: Steve Payne



A Nation's Stage—Workers construct the platform on the West Front for the Presidential Inauguration.



Photo by: Chuck Badal

March
1861

Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated President, the South has succeeded, and a new Dome is taking shape on the Capitol. In removing the Bulfinch Dome that preceded the new construction, the wood would be preserved (measuring well into the tons) to use in powering the steam engine housed in a shack on the Capitol roof in order to hoist the iron for the new dome.

January
2009

Barack Obama is inaugurated President and the platform upon which he stands to address the Nation is designed and constructed under the direction of the AOC. Following the inauguration, the platform is carefully deconstructed. The wood is donated to a number of charities for their use as building materials.

“George Washington never would have recognized the word—but building for permanence has sustainability. It’s good ol’ American practicality.”

A Nation Sustained—Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated President underneath the dome under construction. Lincoln asked that work go on despite the Civil War, to demonstrate the Union would go on.



Library of Congress Archive

Separated by 148 years, these stories are emblematic of many practices throughout the history of the AOC, and its predecessors, that by modern standards could be considered “sustainable.” A term that wasn’t commonly used before 1983, when a United Nations Commission was convened to address concerns about the deterioration of the human environment and natural resources.

These sustainable practices include, among others, the use of low-impact materials, energy efficiency, quality and durability, renewability, reuse, and recycling. From its very beginning in 1793, choices made in the design, construction, and maintenance of the U.S. Capitol and the surrounding facilities fit within many of the modern standards defining sustainable practices.

One such example was the choice of stone for the Capitol—unique in its day and nearly unheard of in America as many iconic American structures of the time were built of brick, such as Independence Hall and the Maryland



Photo by: Chuck Badal

Sandstone, which was the principal material in the original Capitol, is the dominant stone in the Visitor Center, with nearly 200,000 square feet of coverage on interior walls and columns.

Statehouse. However, George Washington and others involved in planning the Capitol envisioned a building that would be both grand and sustainable.

“George Washington never would have recognized the word—but building for permanence has sustainability. It’s good ol’ American practicality,” says Bill Allen, AOC Historic Preservation Officer. “Building for the ages means you don’t have to redo it.”

Most of the buildings under the AOC’s jurisdiction have been designed and built with materials that have been planned to last 100 years or more, and construction materials are recycled. The most recent example is the construction of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC). Materials used

there, such as sandstone, dolomite limestone, and marble, were chosen for their quality and durability and 50% of the construction waste was recycled.

The CVC is sustainable in other ways such as being a redevelopment site of an urban area (built below an existing parking lot) and low-emitting construction materials were used throughout the facility (products that do not release significant pollutants into the indoor environment). Additionally, the CVC uses low-flow bathroom fixtures and systems use outside air for cooling in lieu of chilled water when outdoor temperatures are 60 degrees and below.

“Relying on nature versus manmade mechanics is something the AOC has

“Building for the ages means you don’t have to redo it.”



been doing for a long time,” says Allen.

Examples of sustainable practices abound in the early days of the Capitol. In the period before modern mechanical lights and air, in its era, the small Senate rotunda was designed specifically with skylights that were operable, putting a hole in the middle of the north wing that encouraged breezes. In its era, the rotunda was called the “ornamental air shaft.”

Throughout the Capitol today, vestiges of the use of natural air and light can be found, from louvered doors lining many hallways and white shutters hanging on windows that, before modern air conditioning, were used to keep out the sun when closed, and would promote air flow when opened.



Photo by: Chuck Badal

Built below an existing parking lot, the Capitol Visitor Center is a “redevelopment” of an urban site which has not increased the amount of hard surfaces relative to run-off.

resilient flooring, sheet rock, doors, and medium density fiberboard. Whenever possible, construction materials were purchased from within a 500 mile radius.

“Our mission is to preserve and protect the national treasures entrusted to our care. It just makes perfect sense to fulfill our mission using sustainable practices. Not only is it the right thing to do to preserve the U.S. Capitol, it will also help protect our planet for future generations,” noted Stephen Ayers, Acting Architect of the Capitol.

While George Washington might not have recognized the term “sustainability,” he certainly would recognize the building materials and processes in use at the Capitol today. And, he might think that the AOC’s “good ol’ American practicality” was sustaining history well into the future.

—by Matt Guilfoyle

“Relying on nature versus manmade mechanics is something the AOC has been doing for a long time.”

Today, the AOC applies modern sustainability standards and techniques that in many ways mimic these historical practices. However, they maintain modern expectations of comfort and practicality, while preserving the heritage of the buildings.

This includes such work as installing daylight harvesting systems in Member and Committee Offices that use electronic sensors to lower artificial lighting levels when enough natural light is available. In other words—the more sunlight that comes

in the windows—the more the ceiling lights can dim, thereby saving energy.

Major projects, such as the House Committee on Science and Technology renovation, incorporate sustainable design features. In the Committee suite, the AOC installed lighting control systems where the electricity is metered, we used rapidly renewable materials and certified wood, and we recycled more than 12 tons of construction waste. Materials containing recycled content were installed wherever possible such as acoustical ceiling tiles,



Photos by: Dewitt Roseborough

Teamwork—Jerry Rhodes and Joe Buckler work together to fill a mold evenly before it sets.

AOC Value:

Creativity



With the eye of a skilled woodcrafter, the creativity of a Hollywood set designer, and the ingenuity of a Discovery Channel show; a small band of AOC employees is saving taxpayers thousands of dollars and improving the aesthetics of Capitol Hill one mold at a time.

Like a proud parent, Doug Morey, assistant supervisor (and CH-47 helicopter pilot for the U.S. Army Reserve), showcases the amazing work of his talented team, as he points to a delicate and intricate seal

found on the front of a Chairman's dais. The seal has small details such as imperfections in the wood and the marks of a chisel used to carve the eagle's feathers. Only it isn't wood—it is a resin replica developed by his team in minutes (and setting overnight). Until you pick it up and actually feel that it weighs mere ounces instead of pounds; you would never know the difference.

Woodcrafters Jerry Rhodes and Joe Buckler, working carefully and quickly together, remove the seal

Modern Technology and ancient tradecrafts are both employed by Reggie Lashley and his colleagues in their stewardship of the House Office Buildings.

from its mold, laying it on the table—it is an exact replica of the original, developed at minimal cost (less than \$20). It is flexible enough to be integrated into the design of cabinetry or around a curved podium, and is beautiful enough to be simply hung on a wall.

Necessity being the mother of invention, this group of employees recognized the need of the House of Representatives to have a flexible solution to its signage—both Member placards and wayfinding signage (restrooms, room numbers, etc.). The contracted solution provided the necessary uniformity and appealing aesthetics, however it was more expensive and it was often difficult to maintain and update the signs.

This innovative process was developed following a suggestion from a House colleague who has seen the technique. On their own initiative, the carpentry shop team received two days of training and developed in-house techniques to replicate the signs through experimentation and their own craftsmanship skills.

Reggie Lashley, woodcrafter leader, (and dedicated Cowboy fan despite his teammate’s ribbings) learned the techniques to replicate exact fonts, Braille, and other features that are then laser carved into the materials that complete the final touches on signage and other features.



“Thanks to the creativity of a small band of AOC employees, national assets are coming back to life.”

Working together on this process, the team has reproduced well over 1,000 signs. Their efforts have resulted in savings over previous solutions that are likely well into tens of thousands of dollars and have achieved great customer satisfaction.

Ultimately, this work may help preserve the heritage pieces of the House of Representatives both in the near term and into perpetuity, and may be replicated in other AOC jurisdictions. There has been discussion about keeping the molds in a secure, off-site facility in order to reuse them in case of a catastrophe. In keeping with the AOC’s mission to preserve the heritage assets across the Capitol complex, by using these techniques, the team can restore stars on committee doors and



eagles roosting on stairwell lights, which have been damaged or have “disappeared” over the years.

Thanks to the creativity of a small band of AOC employees, national assets are coming back to life, long after the original artisans have departed.

—by Matt Guilfoyle



Around Campus:

Photo: Courtesy USBG

Updates from Around the AOC

AOC Chief Administrative Office

The AOC is leading the way in the Legislative Branch in encouraging small disadvantaged and women-owned businesses to effectively compete for AOC contracts. The AOC entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Small Business Administration for three years as part of a broader effort to encourage small business participation in the AOC procurement process.

Other AOC initiatives include: a Small Business Subcontracting Program for construction contracts greater than \$1 million; a Small Business Outreach Program, and a Small Business set-aside for procurements between \$5,000 and \$100,000. This increased competition ensures we receive the best value for taxpayers' dollars while supporting employment opportunities and businesses in our community.

Senate Office Buildings

The Senate Superintendent's Office has installed main electric meters, main chilled water meters and city water meters. The data collected by the meters will be used to trend our energy consumption from year to year in order to measure our compliance with the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.



Photo by: Chuck Badal

“In the first nine months of operation, the CVC welcomed two million visitors.”

Capitol Visitor Center

In the first nine months of operation, the CVC welcomed two million visitors. This is more than double the number of visitors which came to the Capitol last year, during the same period.

In October, the third rotation of historic documents was installed in the CVC Exhibition Hall. As with past rotations, the new set of 40-50 documents will highlight the themes of Exploration, Common Defense, Unity, Freedom, General Welfare, and Knowledge.

U.S. Botanic Garden

The U.S. Botanic Garden’s National Mall and fanciful garden-train exhibits have become a beloved Washington tradition, and this year we’re serving up even more magic with larger and more amazing displays made of plant-based natural materials. Again this year, one of Washington’s largest indoor holiday trees will tower over pools of colorful poinsettias and other holiday plants. (Opening November 26, 2009 through January 10, 2010)

Capitol Building

The Capitol Superintendent Office is actively implementing energy savings initiatives to achieve a 35% energy savings by 2015. Efforts such as, the installation of a new Smoke Control System in the four Grand Stairwells, roof fall protection upgrades, and the coordination and partnership with an Energy Savings Performance Contractor are underway to maintain, enhance and protect the Capitol and its historic assets.

Safety, Fire and Environmental Programs Office

Jurisdiction/Office Emergency Action and Response Plans have been distributed. The plans provide specific information to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Additionally, we continue to update the Pandemic Flu Plan as information about the H1N1 virus becomes available. Learn more about the flu at: http://aochome.aoc.gov/emergency_preparedness/Pandemic-Flu.cfm or by calling Deana Platt on x6-5929.

—Compiled by A. Sean Bailey, Shalley Kim

Benefiting People:

AOC Assistance Program Provides Counseling and Support to Employees



Photos by: Steve Payne

“Money and the economy top the list of stressors for eight out of 10 Americans.”

Working on Capitol Hill doesn't make AOC employees immune from the stress most Americans are facing as talk of housing costs, health care, and the state of the nation's economy continue to make headlines at the U.S. Capitol.

According to a fall 2008 survey by the American Psychology Association, money and the economy top the list of stressors for eight out of 10 Americans. According to Jerry Ciango, AOC Employee Assistance Program Specialist, he has seen a direct relationship to the economy and the level of support requested by AOC staff.

“What we are seeing in our workforce is definitely a reflection of what is going on in the general populace,” said Ciango. “But our Employee Assistance Program can provide our employees with a safe harbor during stressful times.”

The AOC's Employee Assistance Program was launched in 1987, and was the first of its kind offered on Capitol Hill. Ciango, who has been with the AOC since 1976, has headed up the Program since its inception in 1987.

“The AOC created its program originally focused on substance abuse,” noted Ciango. “By 1990, we broadened the program to include other issues.”

Today, the Employee Assistance Program can provide help and support to employees with marriage or family concerns; grief and loss issues; health management issues such as cancer or diabetes; financial and legal concerns, and job-related stress.

“The program is completely confidential,” said Ciango. “All AOC employees may utilize our free services. However, employees are responsible for the cost of any community-based services, if necessary, although most are covered by an individual's health insurance plan.”

“Over the years, we've worked closely with the AOC's Senior Leadership, the Employee Advisory Council, and the unions to make the program

stronger and more responsive to our coworkers' needs," explained Ciango.

Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, in Room 325A in the Ford House Office Building. AOC employees also may make special arrangements to accommodate their specific needs by calling a confidential voicemail system anytime—day or night—(202) 226-2546.

"These are challenging times, but no one has to face these challenges alone," Ciango emphatically notes. "It is in everyone's best interest to help one another engage in healthy ways to manage our stress, and the AOC's Employee Assistance Program is here to help."

—by *Eva Malecki*



“These are challenging times,
but no one has to face these
challenges alone.”

Doing Good:

Phelps School

Photos by: Chuck Badal

To provide Congress and the public a wide range of professional expertise and services to preserve and enhance the Capitol complex and related facilities.

This has been the **mission** of the AOC for more than 200 years.

From Brumidi to Olmsted, our agency has a storied history of recruiting highly skilled engineers, members of the tradecrafts and administrators to preserve and enhance what the world sees as an icon of democracy and what we simply call home.

A lot has changed on Capitol Hill, and the workforce, since the 1700s. In the modern era, when federal employees have the opportunity to work on projects as high profile as the Space Shuttle, or as historically significant as restoring pre-civil war White House furniture; the AOC must be innovative and forward thinking when it comes to promoting itself as the employer of choice for those soon to enter the workforce. One possible source of new talent is right here in our own backyard at the Phelps Architecture, Construction and Engineering High School in Northeast Washington, D.C.

Next Great Architects—may walk through these doors in-part due to AOC efforts.



Founded in 1912, and named after Seth L. Phelps, civil war naval officer and commissioner of the District of Columbia, the school offered African-American students the opportunity to take courses in horticulture, upholstery, masonry and plumbing. Over the years, the curriculum expanded to include architectural drafting and general shop. In 2002, the Phelps School closed due to declining funding and enrollment.

“The AOC has played an integral role in the education of these future architects, engineers and construction professionals.”

In 2008, after a \$63 million renovation and a retooled curriculum, Phelps re-opened its doors as the Phelps Architecture, Construction and Engineering High School, the first public high school in the nation to offer both college-preparatory and vocational education programs exclusively dedicated to the design professions and construction trades.

The AOC has played an integral role in the education of these future architects, engineers and construction

professionals from day one. Engineers from the AOC’s Planning and Project Management Division have taught classes at the school on the principles of engineering as well as architectural history such as ancient Greek society.

Some of the students found the class so inspiring, that they sent thank you letters expressing their gratitude. Chieu-Ly Vo, one of the students, wrote, “I never realized there

were nice columns in places like the U.S. Capitol and the Union Station. But now, I pay attention to every column that I see, even on residential buildings.”

The class also required students to complete a project on what they had learned, with the best project receiving an award. The winner, Keami Grimes, wrote the AOC, “I would like to say thank you for choosing me for the Five Orders of Architecture Column Project Award.

What a great surprise! I couldn’t believe I won such an award! I will never forget that day; I will keep that memory forever.”

Students from Phelps have also visited the Capitol to see first hand how what they learn in class is applied in the real world. Plans are in the works to expand AOC’s involvement with Phelps by providing internships for students and having AOC employees teach classes on a regular basis. “When our students graduate from Phelps they will be college ready or work ready and our relationship with the AOC will play a critical role in the preparation,” said Phelps principal Michael Johnson.

“Everyone wins,” said Acting Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers. “We hope that Phelps graduates will give employment at AOC serious consideration when they are ready to enter the workforce.”



The partnership with Phelps is the perfect union of old and new. Students trained on the latest technology preparing to maintain and enhance the Capitol, one of the oldest symbols of democracy.

—by A. Sean Bailey



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AOC Stone Mason, Medoro Romero, repairs a decorative mosaic border element on the second floor of the United States Capitol, outside the Old Senate Chamber at 5 a.m. on a Sunday morning. See AOC After Dark (Page 6) and History of Sustainability (Page 10) for more.



Photo by: Dewitt Roseborough