

Beginning the Second Century 1979-1994



THE COSMOS CLUB OF WASHINGTON: BEGINNING THE SECOND CENTURY, 1978-1994

OVERVIEW

INSTITUTIONS change over time, even institutions as solidly built and firmly embedded in tradition as the Cosmos Club. When the Cosmos Club celebrated its centennial in 1978, those foundations and traditions, while buffeted by occasional squalls, remained substantially unchanged. In the ten following years the Club went through what can be legitimately called “the turbulent years,” culminating in a radical change of Club policy in 1988. The six years since that time, in contrast, have been marked by a recovery and resurgence remarkable in character. This addendum to the Club History attempts to describe the most significant aspects of these changes.

In a fateful meeting on June 18, 1988, “the women issue” was settled, and women became eligible for membership in the Club. The change was immediately evident, not only in the timbre of the voices heard around the Club, but in the cheerier, more peaceful atmosphere. Women have moved easily and naturally into various aspects of Club life, such as participation in committee work. Judith Martin ('88), known for her “Miss Manners” column in the *Washington Post*, in a talk at the Club’s 113th birthday party, congratulated the Club on the way it took in women “wholeheartedly, in numbers rather than tokens, and with a special accelerated program that allowed us to participate right away in committee work.” Mrs. Martin also noted that some of the new friends she had made at the Club had been “vehemently opposed to admitting women to the Club,” but “were gracious enough to add that now they can’t remember or imagine why.”



Janet Norwood ('88) at the New Members' Reception, October 1988.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, 1972-1983

We may now review as history the issue that threatened the very existence of the Cosmos Club. A petition to admit women members was first circulated among Club members on March 10, 1971, by Professor Carl Bode of the University of Maryland. A "Steering Committee for the Admission of Women" was soon set up with Louis Joughin as secretary and with members such as David T. Stanley. After meeting with Club officials in 1972, the group decided to submit a proposed amendment at the annual meeting in January 1973 to substitute the words "men and women" for the word "men" in the bylaw governing membership. Votes in annual meetings in 1973 and again in 1975 turned down the proposal, though the requirement that women enter the Club by a separate entrance was removed.

The dilemma facing the Club was the product of several circumstances. In 1878, the scientific community from which the Cosmos Club drew its membership was almost exclusively male. The literary and artistic community from which the Club secondarily drew its membership was also virtually all male. In the hundred years after 1878, however, women gradually assumed roles of leadership and achievement first in those areas of knowledge where the Club drew its secondary membership, and ultimately in the sciences from which its principal membership derived. As other categories of potential membership – particularly from the ranks of government and professions such as medicine and the law – became more representative of the female as well as male population, the appropriateness of Club rules regarding membership came increasingly into question.

If one had the requisite scholarly or artistic background, should gender be cause for disqualification from membership in a club of scholars and artists? The answer, according to members opposed to any change, was that the original intent of the organizers was to limit membership to men, and that restriction should not be altered. Secondly, the Cosmos Club was a club, which meant that social compatibility was as important as scholarly achievement. That compatibility would, it was asserted, be challenged by the admission of women. The long tradition of gentlemen's clubs, in which men could enjoy each others' company without the intrusion of women or outsiders, was seen as justification enough for the continuation of the tradition. Traditionalists also felt justified by the belief that a majority of Club members were comfortable with the Club's character as a gentlemen's club, and saw no reason to change, indeed every reason not to change, at the instance of an aggressive minority.

Proponents of the admission of women asserted that not all the founding documents specified male gender as a necessary qualification for membership, and that had the Founders lived in an era when women were scientists as well as homemakers, they might well have been included. Further, they urged, the Cosmos Club, while a club, was "not just a social club" but a group organized in the form of a club to facilitate informal interaction of individuals with similar scholarly interests.

Despite the failure to admit women in 1973 and 1975 (by decisive margins of 57% to 42% and 66% to 33%) the issue did not die. An "Ad Hoc Committee of Concerned Members of the Cosmos Club" was formed in 1980 (the ad hoc designation was dropped on January 10, 1981, when Samuel P. Hayes succeeded Alan Campbell as chairman), to promote the cause of the admission of qualified women. In November 1980, the committee, after unsuccessfully pressing the Club to do a survey, conducted its own survey of the 3186 members then on the Club's mailing list. With an initial 62% response it reported that 40% favored admission and 58% were opposed. The younger and more recently elected members (post-1965) appeared to favor the admission of women, while those elected before 1965 tended to be opposed. On November 3, 1980, sixteen past presidents of the Club, organized as a group called "Past Presidents United to Preserve the Cosmos Club," released a statement actively opposing those challenging Club policy, and saw a "disturbing element of threat" in the "present assault" on Club policy. They cited, in arguing against change, the "costly and extensive alterations of the clubhouse, massive resignations . . . [and] the prospect of epic confusion of male-member and spouse, female-member and spouse, and their guests."

Events outside the Club, although only indirectly related to the Club, began to throw their shadow on Club policy. In March 1980, the Judicial Conference of the United States endorsed "the principle that it is inappropriate for a judge to hold membership in an organization that practices invidious discrimination," a ruling that caused the Senate Judiciary Committee, before acting on presidential nominations for judgeships, to ascertain whether nominees belonged to clubs that excluded women from membership.

The battle over membership in the Club, thus rejoined in 1980, raged for several years with increasing irritation on both sides. In the 1982 election to the Board of Management, two petition candidates were proposed by the Committee of Concerned Members of the Cosmos Club to contend with six regularly nominated candidates for three Board vacancies. The Committee supporters concentrated their

votes on the two petition candidates, who received 40% of the votes cast and were duly elected. The sixteen Past Presidents described the action as "surreptitiously promoted by a minority of members," and as part of a "secret plan" to alter the character of the Club. In the 1983 elections, the Committee on Nominations proposed only three candidates for the three open positions as at-large members of the Board. This time the three opposing candidates nominated by the Committee of Concerned Members received 38% of the votes cast and were defeated.

An attempt at a rapprochement, early in 1983, between the Board of Management and the Concerned Members, to avoid an unseemly contest at the 1984 election, failed. Indeed, the lines seemed to become more clearly drawn after a group – "Members for the Cosmos Club (To uphold its precepts and traditions)" formed in 1982 under the leadership of A. F. Spilhaus, Jr. – on November 22, 1983, wrote all the candidates, asking for their views on membership policy with a view to disseminating their answers widely to the electorate prior to the election.

By this time women as well as men, members and non-members, were debating the Club's membership policy, and the debate could not be contained within the walls of the Club despite the Club's policy that all Club matters were private and off limits to the press. Barbara W. Tuchman, winner of the Cosmos Club Award for 1983 (the Club's premier award, which was never limited to members of the Club or of the male sex), inadvertently allowed her acceptance remarks, which spoke of the Club's "ridiculous bias against half the human race," to be published in the *Washington Post*, further fanning the flames.

During this period, men's clubs were coming under attack in other cities as well, most notably in New York and London, initially as a result of internal divisions within clubs such as the Century Club of New York and the Garrick Club of London. The internal debates in American clubs soon acquired an external dimension as activists – both within and outside of the clubs – urged action by local governments effectively to redefine most private clubs as places of public accommodation, and thereby subject them to a wide range of

civil rights requirements. In the Washington area and nationally, the Cosmos Club was seen as a particularly inviting target because of the unique element of merit and achievement in the Club's nomination and election process. For this reason, and because of a vocal group of dissidents pressing the issue from within, journalists began to treat the Club as "Ground Zero" in the war. Other clubs, such as the Metropolitan Club (all male) and the Sulgrave Club (all female), could remain aloof and uninvolved while the public debate focused on the Cosmos Club's membership policy.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN: CRISIS, 1984-1987

The crisis at the Cosmos Club intensified in late 1984 and early 1985. A memorandum to the membership of November 30, 1984 reported on the efforts of the Board of Management to resolve the differences between opposing factions. It first of all noted that an Ad Hoc Committee, appointed on April 4, 1984, "to consider a course of action to defuse the issue," and which had received over 250 letters from members, had submitted separate majority and minority reports. The letters from members were forceful alternatively in their expressions of approval or dismay at the traditional policy of the Club. One Club member warned that "The object of a democratic society is not to 'defuse' opinion but to ensure its free expression." Others felt that a club could not be a club without some degree of unity of purpose and self-restraint.

The Board, disconcerted by references in a mailing of the Concerned Members in which its supporters were urged "not to resign yet" but to wait until after a vote on the women question had been taken, stated, in the November 30 memorandum, that "men who cannot in good conscience accept membership in a men's social club, or who would be (or are) embarrassed by such membership, should not become (or remain) members of the Cosmos Club," a conclusion that, in its turn, disconcerted some who considered it

condescending and felt it ignored the right of members of an organization to change its character. The Board's view that "discussion of this issue in Club publications would serve only to heighten debate and increase divisiveness" further irritated those who opposed existing Club policy.

The Board of Management decided to take a step beyond merely expressing its views on the controversy. In a May 10, 1985, Memorandum on Cosmos Club Membership Policy, it announced a new policy on admissions by which any nominee for membership in the Cosmos Club would be asked to sign a statement "affirming that he is aware that the Cosmos Club is a men's club, that such fact will not embarrass him, and that he has no present intention to work actively to change it." (The latter clause was withdrawn by the Board on August 6, 1985.)

The May 10 Memorandum enabled the dissidents to transform the membership debate into something more: indeed, despite the Board's denial of any such intention or meaning, they now raised the issue of free speech within the Club and the imposition of what some characterized as a "loyalty oath" for members or potential members.

Against a background of increasingly sharp exchanges between the Concerned Members and the Board of Management, the Board on August 6, 1985 addressed a disciplinary letter to Samuel Hayes. Hayes defended, resorting at this point to the use of legal counsel. The Board subsequently passed a resolution officially cautioning him.

These events stimulated a new "Coalition to Uphold the Bylaws and Free Speech in the Cosmos Club," which, on October 29, 1985, called for a meeting on November 26 to discuss a possible counter move. The Past Presidents United to Preserve the Cosmos Club (this time thirteen in number), came forward in support of the Board's action with a communication of November 20, 1985 attacking a "small band of militant members" as "in effect an outside activist group operating within the Club, performing like a club within a club for hostile purposes."

The antagonisms evident in the debate at this time were reflected in the contested elections of January 21, 1985 and January

21, 1986, in which candidates reflecting the sentiments of those favoring the admission of women and opposing the actions taken by the Board challenged the official slate. Some members now complained that the Board was attempting to change the Club's admissions process without amending the applicable Bylaws, and, at the same time, suppressing freedom of opinion and expression. Although the official candidates triumphed by roughly a 54% to 46% margin in both elections, the margin was noticeably smaller than the roughly 62% to 38% margin in the elections of 1983 and 1984. The election of January 21, 1986, in which 1070 ballots were cast (almost double the number cast in 1985), strikingly revealed the divisions within the Club. The members entrusted control of the Board to the official slate at the 1986 annual meeting, but voted to reverse the cautionary resolution against Hayes and to overturn the May 10, 1985 "loyalty oath" Memorandum.

A new voice in support of the Club's membership policy emerged in the fall of 1986 in a series of six newsletters entitled "The Cosmos Club Papers," written by a member under the pen name "Gandalf," a reference to the Wizard Gandalf in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The first issue of the "Gandalf Papers," as they came to be known informally, quoted extensively from James Madison's argument in *The Federalist Papers* on the problem of factions. "Are we the 'faction' or are they the faction?" Gandalf mused. "Are we dividing the Club or are they dividing the Club?" Throughout the six issues of the Gandalf Papers the central issue was presented not as membership but rather "the preservation or destruction of the Club's character." Gandalf insisted on the "necessity of one and only one definition" and that was of a social club for men. When some urged allowance of absentee balloting on the membership question, Gandalf declined to take a position on the subject, but proposed that the subject be debated at a one-day meeting of members, which was, in fact, held in April 1987. Gandalf's own view was evident in his assertion that the Cosmos Club was a "Washington Club" and its "governance should be in the hands of those who bear the burden of its maintenance and character."

The tone of the Gandalf Papers was generally one of graceful and often humorous literary allusions to Sophocles, Pirandello, Mark Twain, and others, but occasionally it was spiked with allusions to "subversion," "the blood of innocents," and other references to the "underground war" being carried on by those agitating for the admission of women. Gandalf's examples were sometimes colorful, as when, in arguing that in a Bridge Club one does not constantly lobby for poker, he went on to add that "you shouldn't join a club for horses if you are a jackass," and vice versa. Gandalf defended his decision to remain anonymous as governed by the desire to "divorce our arguments from personalities."

Local attacks on the Club intensified in the summer of 1986, apparently abetted in some instances by members: renewal of the Club's liquor license was blocked on challenges by several groups, and a complaint was filed in the D.C. Office of Human Rights by two local professors citing a "source who wishes to remain anonymous" for detailed non-public information about the Club. In August the Office of Human Rights initiated a proceeding directed at the Club under provisions of the Human Rights Act proscribing discriminatory practices on the basis of sex. In September a zoning variance was denied that would have allowed the Club to lease the former French Military Mission building pending Club utilization, as had been planned when the property was acquired the previous year.

Then, in March 1987 the "Nathanson Bill" (introduced by D. C. Council member James E. Nathanson), modelled on a recent New York ordinance, was introduced as an amendment to the D.C. Human Rights Act which narrowly limited the exemption from the Act for private clubs. It was adopted by the District in December 1987 after public hearings in which a member's statement was submitted opposing the Club's official position.

In November 1987 the D. C. Office of Human Rights ruled that the Club was in probable violation of the Human Rights Act because of its single-sex membership policy. While acknowledging that the Cosmos Club was a private club, it concluded that the Club was not distinctly private, and therefore not exempted from the regulations

governing public accommodations. The ruling asserted that even if there was an infringement upon Cosmos Club members' right to intimate and expressive association it was justified because it served a "compelling interest" of the District of Columbia to eliminate discrimination against women.

In the conciliation process that followed, in accordance with the procedures of the Human Rights Act, the complainants aggressively sought to extract quick and harsh penalties from the Club. The Club's representatives were ultimately successful in enabling the Club to take, at its own time and in its own way, actions that would satisfy the Office of Human Rights.

The continuing legal challenges to Club policy during this period clearly threatened the Club's future. The legal fees of outside counsel to defend against the multiple challenges were high, as much as \$10,000 a month in the initial stages. In the later stages legal advice was given *gratis* when Lee Loevinger, who spent untold hours dealing with an unending flurry of motions and counter motions, became the Club's principal representative in this arduous work. In addition to the legal burden, the Club was being denied the rental income it might have obtained from the former French Military Mission had the exception to the zoning restrictions not been thwarted.

Another attempt to resolve Club differences on the membership question, "in the interest of harmony," at a Special Meeting of the Club on April 25, 1987, was unsuccessful. Although several resolutions relating to the issues dividing the Club were debated and voted upon, few minds were changed and the gap between the two sides remained.

A chance remained that the Club, if it so desired, could retain its single-sex membership policy despite the efforts of forces inside and outside the Club demanding change. Some officers of the Club held onto that possibility. Their thought was that the Supreme Court, in the case of *New York State Club Association v. City of New York*, might uphold a right of free association or a right of privacy for single-sex private clubs, as asserted by the New York State Club Association. Oral arguments in the case were scheduled for February

23, 1988, and a decision was expected in the summer of 1988.

In the months prior to the accession of Tedson J. Meyers to the presidency of the Club in May 1988 it was clear that the Club was hopelessly deadlocked. Efforts to keep the "women issue" a "family matter," to be solved without rancor, had clearly failed. The press feasted on the debate. Repeated publication of private Club information in the *Washington Post* seemed to be *prima facie* evidence of the validity of the charge that at least some who opposed the Club's membership policy were responsible for the "leaks." Although clearly due in part to the physical disruption of the Club's ongoing renovation project, Club income was falling with a decline in new members and an increase in resignations. Tedson Meyers concluded that the Club was not warring against some outside force; it was warring against itself, and in the process was unwittingly tearing itself apart. Though the Board had adopted a resolution on May 27, 1986, to permit the editor of the *Cosmos Club Bulletin* to publish a Supplement in which discussion of matters of interest to Club members could be aired, some still felt that the discussion was bottled up. Four communications were published at that time, one being the Club's official statement on the Nathanson bill amending the D. C. Human Rights law, passage of which would have heightened the Club's vulnerability to being classified as a public accommodation.

But the Board of Management was not as adamant as it might have seemed. By the fall of 1987 more than one Board member had concluded that a change in the membership rules was needed. This may have "broken the ice," as one member put it, and the conditions for a reconsideration of the issue were thus laid. The Board, under President John B. Farmakides, appointed a Committee on Options chaired by Meyers, which, after considering various alternatives, such as moving the Club to Virginia, recommended the admission of women as the most appropriate alternative. The prospect of continued warfare, both internal and external, and the difficulty of overcoming a likely adverse determination of the District's Office of Human Rights were clearly influencing the Board members, as they

pondered alternatives. They were also influenced by oral arguments on February 23, 1988, before the Supreme Court, when the case of *New York State Club Association v. City of New York* was heard. After listening to the questions asked by the justices of those arguing the case, one of the Board members attending noted that the "feeling hit both of us at the same time, and with a real sense of certainty," that the Cosmos Club needed to settle the membership question as soon as possible and before the Supreme Court decided the New York case.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN;
RESOLUTION, 1988

About a month before he became president in May of 1988, Meyers called 40 influential members of the Club, one after the other, saying that he proposed, when he became president, to bring the women membership issue to a resolution in a way that he hoped would heal rather than allow the wounds to continue to fester. He had reached the judgment in his own mind, as had most of the Club's leadership, that the Club should admit women. Emphasizing that he was not insisting on a particular result, Meyers asked each of these members whether he could count on his support if Meyers pursued an approach to lay out the issue for decision and begin a healing process, and virtually all agreed.

Helping Meyers was the fact that, like many members known as conservatives on the issue, he was not hostile to the aspirations of women to join the Club, although he accepted the validity of a men's club. But he had seen that the way in which various partisans had dealt with the issue had created ill will, and believed that explication of the realities facing the Club would enable the Club, for its own reasons, to come to a resolution one way or another. In his remarks on assuming the presidency at the end of the May 7, 1988, annual meeting, he stated that the issue was not whether the Cosmos Club might remain a club for men, but whether it should remain a club for men. Meyers asserted that the decision should be made in the

clubhouse, after full and open debate, in the light of all the circumstances, and not in a courthouse. Whatever the outcome, he promised to support it.

As part of the plan for the Club to keep the decision in its own hands, Club officials sought to neutralize the increasingly intrusive outside interference with the decision process. They met with officials of the Human Rights office of the District of Columbia and persuaded that office to withhold any action while the Club thrashed out the matter. Otherwise, they pointed out, the Club would seem to be yielding to pressure, which would negate the possibility of the Club considering and deciding the issue on its merits. An agreement was spelled out in a "Memo of Conciliation" of May 8, 1988, which noted that a series of meetings between May 10 and June 14 to discuss the issue had been scheduled, along with a culminating special meeting of the Club, on June 18, 1988, to vote on the women membership question.

Meyers also met with the dissidents, working behind the scenes, as well as openly, to convince both sides of his sincerity. Most members understood that it was necessary to staunch the Club's self-inflicted wounds, and that establishing a different framework for discussion of the issue was essential.

A critical aspect of Meyers' tactical plan was to set up a series of six preliminary forums, at which the arguments for and against the women issue could be discussed in advance of a more formal vote at a later general meeting. A seventh forum was added for wives and widows of members. Earlier efforts to deal with the women question had attempted to combine at a single meeting both the desire of many members to speak and the process of voting itself, with the result that tempers were exacerbated, bodies exhausted, and time for reflection limited.

To implement this idea the Board created an "Ad Hoc Committee on Article I Forums" in April 1988 and appointed Scott R. Schoenfeld to head the committee. The committee prepared and issued a confidential "Resource Paper for Forum Topics" on May 4, 1988. It envisioned four categories of issues to be addressed at each

forum: history, legalistics, options, and the future. Points and data were provided to those addressing the forums and a format for presentation was carefully laid out. Co-chairmen – some of whom previously had represented opposing points of view – and, in some cases, respondents and rapporteurs, were appointed. Each forum was limited to two hours, the bulk of the time to be devoted to discussion and commentary from the floor. The perception of the purpose of the forums varied with the members and their views as to whether the Club would (in the case of those convinced that the change would come) or should (in the case of those still in doubt) admit women: those closest to the leadership saw the purpose to provide convincing arguments to those already persuaded and to persuade those still reluctant to accept change.

On May 26, 1988, while the forums were underway, the Board of Management issued a dramatic memorandum to Club members declaring its unanimous support for the proposed change in Article I, Section 1, of the Club Bylaws so that it would read “This Club shall be composed of individuals of distinction, character and sociability (a) who . . .” The proposed change had been announced at the May 7, 1988 Annual Meeting as the subject of the June 18 special meeting. The Members for the Cosmos Club, which had come to see the change to admit women as necessary to the Club’s survival, weighed in with its powerful support in a mailing to all members on June 10.

The 1988 vote on the women issue was held on June 18, because John Wesley Powell, the Club’s founder, recorded in his diary that on June 18, 1869 he found himself trapped perilously on a ledge high in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River unable to go up or down. In order to save himself, Powell, who had lost an arm in the Civil War, had to shift his only hand to catch the trousers of a companion dangled from the ledge above him. Meyers saw Powell’s predicament as analogous to that of the Cosmos Club in that, trapped in a situation where it was almost impossible to go forward or backward, it had to take decisive action to resolve the dilemma.

When, at the June 18th meeting, the vote (a standing vote) to amend the membership clause was called for from the floor by Walter E.

Washington, former mayor of Washington, the results were overwhelming: 774 for the admission of women, 14 opposed, and 12 abstentions, a better than 98% affirmative vote in favor of an action that had been consistently turned down in the past. Although the result was expected, its near unanimity stunned the members.

The historic vote on Saturday, June 18, 1988 was followed by a second innovation: a press conference outside the Garden Dining Room to announce the results of the meeting to the press. Meyers recognized that in Washington there are no secrets and no privacy, even in the White House. Rather than standing on the private character of Club business, he attempted to put the Club in the best possible light with the media by explaining its decision frankly, authoritatively, and in a timely manner. In this press conference he reiterated his belief that the Club's membership policy should be decided in the clubhouse and not in the courthouse.

The Cosmos Club's decision preceded the announcement of another vote: that of the Supreme Court on Monday, June 20, in the New York Club case. The Supreme Court's unanimous vote rejecting the New York State Club Association's facial challenge to the constitutionality of the New York club law would, in all likelihood, have made the Cosmos Club's debate on the issue superfluous had it preceded, rather than followed, the Cosmos Club vote. By issuing its decision when it did, the Supreme Court seemed to give greater significance to the Cosmos Club decision as the product of the Club's own internal debate rather than of outside coercion.

Some members expressed regret that the era of gentlemen's clubs, as they had known them, seemed now at an end. But whether they saw the change as caused by the changing character of the membership (too many lawyers and administrators and not enough scientists, in the opinion of more than one) or of coercive forces in the world around them, virtually all accepted the change with grace and credited the presidents, John Farmakides and Tedson Meyers, who had guided the Club through the difficult period of change.

RESURGENCE AND REVITALIZATION, 1988-1994

Since the resolution of "the women issue" and the end of the contentiousness associated with that debate, there has been a surge in activities at the Club. The annual report for 1989 did not exaggerate when it described the 111th year of the Club as one of "unprecedented vitality." Both sides in the debate had seen the need to "revitalize" the Club, although they differed on the means by which it should be brought about. The Club has seen sharp increases in the use of its dining facilities, in part because of the resolution of the women question, and in part because of the upgrading of physical facilities that was completed in early 1991.

Architect George E. Hartman, Jr., when Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee in 1986, outlined the ambitious plans that culminated, five years later, in the physical re-creation of the Club. First order of business was the need to relocate the kitchen from the northeast corner of the building, where the ancient floor supports had been rotted by decades of seepage, to a more serviceable position adjacent to the dining rooms and auditorium. The Heroy Room and fountain area were projected to be relocated and combined to create an enhanced new Heroy Room. Improved acoustics and a new skylight were planned for the Garden Dining Room, and the Smith Room was built to anchor the east end of the dining area. A proper First Floor Bar was envisioned, adjacent to the East Garden, patterned on that in the Old Members' Dining Room on the second floor. Undergirding these immediately noticeable changes were provisions for enlarging the kitchen areas, improving access for members and service from the rear parking areas, and incorporating new lavatories for women.

The renovations to the kitchen were completed early in March 1988. An "Open House" to celebrate completion of the entire project was held on March 2, 1991. As the Cosmos Club *Bulletin* put it, the sculpted fountain that formerly graced the downstairs dining room "now . . . stands reincarnated in all its bubbling glory as the main feature of the new Heroy Room." The most striking features of the

new installation were the sense of light and openness, extending from the West to the East Gardens, the elegance of the columned corridors leading to the several entrances to the dining room, and the general air of refinement, highlighted by the re-encased Spode china originally loaned by the late Rudolf E. Schoenfeld ('52).

Enthusiasm for continuing the work carried through to the renovation of the Powell Auditorium, now more easily served from the revamped kitchen, although the auditorium had not been included in the original plans. Complementing the enhanced elegance of the downstairs dining room, the upstairs dining room, benefiting from a remodeled second-floor kitchen, and following a trend among clubs with two dining rooms, was set aside as a grill room, devoted to informal dining for those in a greater hurry.

The cases that previously had contained the Spode china were removed in December 1992 from the two large doorways between the Warne Lounge and the newspaper room. The opened doorways recreated the dramatic vistas and perspectives of the original design, and the doorways now may be closed during concerts or private functions. The refurnishing of the Warne Lounge was completed in April 1992.

Major credit for the building renovation must go to two previous presidents, architect George Hartman, who chaired the original Planning Committee, and saw much of the renovation through during his period as president, and John Farmakides, who, on assuming the role of president of the Club in 1987, listed the rebuilding and renovation project as his principal objective. The "Clerk of the Works," Thomas B. Owen, bore the heavy burden of seeing the actual construction through to its successful completion, working with project architect David H. Condon and the Club General Manager. Overall cost of the renovation excluding the Powell Auditorium was approximately \$7.2 million, of which \$5.4 million was funded by long term bank financing and the remainder by Club and related sources including the Capital Campaign.

With the reconstitution and improvement of the Club's physical character, there has been an increased focus upon the quality of the

food, and a greater willingness to express opinions about it. The Club's gustatory offerings have seen an extraordinary renewal.

The educational offerings of the Club, through its meetings of associated groups, publications, and lectures, provide an intellectual feast for all who wish to take advantage of it. Indeed, President John Farmakides was justified in claiming in his President's Report in April 1987 that "our Club has more programs and activities than any other such club in the world." Especially since the reconstruction of the Club and resolution of the membership debate, there has been a sharp increase in attendance at Club programs, such as the Tuesday Noon Forums and Thursday Evening Lectures, with speakers drawn from the Club's array of talented members. Other activities, such as the Book Discussion Group, Book-and-Author Suppers, Great Issues Roundtable, and concerts, reflect this expanded interest. New activities have developed, including the Cosmos Club Travel Group, which began its successful excursions by retracing part of John Wesley Powell's trip down the Colorado River; the Computer Group, which has caused the room in which the Club's venerable television set is located to be ringed on all sides by computers; a Chess Group, and a revitalized Bridge Group. This increased activity has been reflected in the growing bulk of the Cosmos Club *Bulletin*, which is bursting with the multifaceted activities of the Club. Anyone familiar with the previous slim character of the *Bulletin* will note the great difference.

One of the most daring projects of the Club, introduced as a Club project during the 1989 Board of Management offsite retreat, took shape in 1991 with the publication of a Club journal entitled *Cosmos, A Journal of Emerging Issues*. Lester Tanzer devoted his extraordinary editorial skills to bringing the project to fruition. The journal is able to tap the rich harvest of lectures by Club members and others as a source for its articles. One article, suggesting a more cautious approach toward greenhouse warming, created a storm when a proponent of the opposing view asserted that the late Roger Revelle, one of the authors of the article, had been pressured by his co-author to join in a more cautious and moderate position than he really felt on

the subject of global warming. Vice President Albert Gore had invoked Revelle – his former teacher at Harvard – in support of his more apocalyptic views on the subject. While the issue was in litigation in a Massachusetts court, the co-author won retraction and an apology from the critic.

The second number of *Cosmos* was issued in May 1992, the third in 1993, and the fourth in 1994. The publication has met with a continuing favorable reaction.

The articles of incorporation of the Cosmos Club in 1878 provided for “the acquisition and maintenance of a library,” and 47 volumes and a few periodicals were assembled by the end of the first year. Today, the library contains more than 7,000 volumes and 150 periodicals, and is maintained in good order by an efficient staff librarian, Mrs. Lura Young. The Club has boasted among its members, since its founding in 1878, every Librarian of Congress except one, an individual who died in 1897 after serving for only a year and a half. The quality of the Cosmos Club library is not to be wondered at, considering the oversight provided by some of the Club’s distinguished members, past and present, several of whom are at present classified as “librarians.”

Not the least significant sign of the expanding vitality of the Club is the recently installed exercise facility in the Clubhouse annex. Long a will-o’-the-wisp of Club planning, it has now become a reality.

A measure of the love of members for the Club and its clubhouse is the extraordinary extent to which they have contributed to several funds associated with the Club. The Cosmos Club Historic Preservation Foundation was granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service on February 10, 1987. As of November 30, 1994 the Foundation had collected more than \$516,000, which has been used to repair the building structure and facade, to repair the Fontana del Tacca fountain in the East Garden, to prepare a historic structures report of the Townsend Mansion, to collect copies of original architectural plans and drawings of the house, and for other worthy purposes. John Farmakides and Seymour Alpert played key roles in ensuring the success of the Foundation.

The Capital Campaign Fund, designed to assure the continued health of the Club and its home, was initiated in 1989 under the leadership of J. Patrick Hayes. Through November 30, 1994, it had raised the extraordinary total of \$1,248,000, with 6 gifts in the \$20,000 and over range. These funds, together with a \$332,000 contribution from the Cosmos Club Historic Preservation Foundation, have been applied to construction or reduction of the Club's renovation debt.

Support for the Cosmos Club Foundation, established in 1967 and dedicated to the advancement of the arts, literature, humanities and sciences, has also been strong. A tax-exempt organization, it encourages college seniors to continue scholarly work through its annual Young Scholars Award in cooperation with the 12 universities and colleges in the Washington area. Its annual McGovern Award Lecture program recognizes leaders in art, science, the humanities and literature.

A benefit of Club membership that is sometimes overlooked by members is the extensive network of reciprocal relationships with clubs around the world. The earliest relationship, begun in 1933 and still going strong, was with the St. Botolph Club, located in Boston's Back Bay. Suitable clubs are spotted by the energetic Committee on Reciprocity, and now exceed 90 in number. A Cosmos Club member can now travel around the world and rarely be far from his or her "club."

THE CHANGING MEMBERSHIP

Among the most notable changes in Club life has been the changing proportion of certain professional groups represented in the Club membership. As the Ad Hoc Committee on Goals noted in 1986, the percentage of new members admitted in engineering and the physical, life, and medical sciences dropped from 73% in 1964 to 33% in 1984, but rose again to 52% in 1985. At the same time the categories of public service, law, the humanities and literature reflected a converse change. Most notable among the individual

professions has been the increase in the number of lawyers. Occurring in an era in which the proportion of lawyers, particularly in Washington, has been multiplying at an extraordinary rate, this might seem unexceptional for that reason, but it is certainly suggestive of a changing *zeitgeist* in a club founded by scientists and scholars. While the Club does not keep periodic records of the proportions of members of the different professions, a computer check of the number of lawyers in January 1993 revealed the presence of more than 300, of whom 121 were elected in the decade of the 1980s, 105 in the 1970s, and 41 in the first two years of the 1990s. Surviving lawyers from earlier decades (probably reflecting their smaller numbers as well as higher mortality) numbered 20 from the decade of the 1960s, 15 from the 1950s and one each from the 1940s and 1930s.

As for the changing geographical dispersal of members throughout the Washington Metropolitan area, the number of members from the Capitol Hill area (virtually non-existent in the 1978 Centennial History's listing of members' ZIP codes) has shown an increase in numbers, to 10 in 20003 and 10 in 20002. There has also been a movement to the Maryland and Virginia suburbs. Because addresses provided to the Club by members sometimes report office locations rather than residential locations it is not always possible to say with certainty how many members live in a particular area, but it is clear that the Club is no longer oriented entirely to Washington's northwest quadrant, though it is still predominantly so, as the figures for members from 20007 (144), 20008 (166) and 20016 (188) suggest.

As for age, the paucity of youthful members, and the increasing age of older members have remained problems in the years since the centennial history was written. In that book we noted the youthful character of the Club in its early formative years; when, as one Club president put it, you rarely saw any white hairs. Increasingly, as the lifespan of all members (and of scholars in particular) has lengthened, the number of white-haired members has increased. Combined with the traditional requirement that candidates for membership demonstrate scholarly achievement, the number of youthful

members as a proportion of Club membership has been small in recent years despite the efforts of many Club presidents to encourage their nomination. As President Albert H. Bowker pointed out in a talk at the Club in 1992, the average age of new members stood at 39 at the beginning of the twentieth century. From 1908 to 1947 it moved into the 40s. From 1978 to 1987, it was 54. Despite the election of members such as Michael Beschloss and Dinesh D'Souza while in their 20s, the number of young members is still a small fraction of that of older members.

As a way of attracting more younger members to the Club, the annual membership meeting in May 1992 voted overwhelmingly to raise from 40 to 45 the age below which members are defined as "junior members" and thus eligible to pay lower dues and initiation fees – 50 percent of regular charges.

As for the educational institutions attended by Club members, for the period 1979-1988, Harvard, Columbia, and Yale were the top three followed by Princeton, George Washington, University of California at Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Pennsylvania, Stanford, and Michigan. Those interested in the figures for earlier years are referred to the appendix in the original edition of the centennial history.

The Cosmos Club has always had numerous judges, a number of whom have served on the Supreme Court of the United States. An article in the *Cosmos Club Bulletin* in March of 1992 listed a number, with additional names being supplied in the April issue. During the 1970s and 80s, when membership in private clubs was closely scrutinized in judicial and other appointments, the number of Cosmos Club judges was affected, either by a refusal on the part of some to seek membership or by resignation of others; with that issue behind us, judges are enjoying membership in the Club. In comments from two judges printed in the March 1992 *Bulletin*, the ability to find, even on casual visits to the Club, stimulating individuals from entirely different fields with whom to talk, is one of the most enjoyable aspects of Club membership.

As of November 1994 the oldest member was Earle S. Draper, who was elected to membership in 1933 and in 1994 was 101 years of age. On October 28, 1994, another milestone was passed – Amy Glasmeier became the first active Cosmos Club member reported to give birth to a child: Graham Foster Bell weighed in at 8 pounds, 15 ounces (3.77 kg), 21 1/2 inches (54.6 cm).

Joan Williams Hoover, then Chairman of the Cosmos Club Singles Group and widow of a member, addressed the question “What does the Cosmos Club mean to me?” at a March 1990 reception for Club widows. Answering her own question as to why she “hangs around” and why she continued to be devoted to the Club after her husband Linn Hoover died, Mrs. Hoover noted that “The Club is not only a place to bring friends, it’s a place where friends are already gathered, and where new friends are waiting to be met. That’s very important when you’re learning the difficult task of living alone. Linn would have been grateful to know how much the Club has helped me during these stressful times.” “Where else,” she also noted, “do they invite an entomologist to choose the upholstery, so that the lovely Scalandre silk is embroidered with little black bugs?”

OMISSIONS AND ERRATA

One of the omissions from the centennial history, for which the author was gently chided, was the lack of reference to geologists in the Club’s formation. With the help of a paper by Priestley Toulmin, III, prepared in 1992, and now in print as “Geological Society of Washington and the Cosmos Club,” pp. 24-27 in Robertson, E. C., ed., *Centennial History of the Geological Society of Washington, 1893-1993* (Washington, D. C.: Geological Society of Washington, 1993), the oversight can be remedied. Toulmin notes that the Geological Society of Washington and the Cosmos Club have been “closely, almost symbiotically, intertwined throughout the history of the two organizations.” Both sprang, Toulmin notes, “from the loins of the Philosophical Society; the Cosmos in search of a broader perspective

than the parent's, the Geological Society of Washington seeking a more focused milieu than the parent could provide." Most of the Charter Members of the Geological Society (79 out of 109) were or later became members of the Cosmos Club. Ten founders of the Geological Society had also been Founders of the Cosmos Club seventeen years before. The first meeting of the Society took place at the Club, as have most subsequent meetings. Strains occasionally occurred in the relationship, leading to a discussion in 1924 of whether the Society should continue to meet at the Cosmos Club or switch to the Interior Department Auditorium, where several meetings had been held the previous year. Although the Auditorium was free while the Cosmos Club charged \$13.50 per meeting, "a rising vote [at a meeting held in the Department of the Interior] showed 24 in favor of meeting at the Cosmos Club; no one voted to continue to use the Auditorium of the Department of the Interior." The vote was confirmed in a mail ballot. While some Society members, following the move to the Massachusetts Avenue clubhouse, occasionally "chafed under the restrictions of the Club's dress code" and, before the Club voted to accept women as full members, "objected to its membership policies," relations have generally been smooth. Of the 94 Presidents of the Geological Society in its first century, 72 have been Cosmos members and one the spouse of a member. Six presidents of the Geological Society have also been presidents of the Cosmos Club. The moves to the suburbs of the Geological Survey, the (former) Bureau of Standards, and other scientific agencies "have weakened somewhat the active involvement of earth scientists in the affairs of the Cosmos Club, but the associations, traditions, and commonality of interests and values remain strong."

While making amends for omissions and errors in the *Centennial History*, the author acknowledges his falling into the error of reporting that Franklin D. Roosevelt lived at the present clubhouse as the guest of Sumner Welles prior to moving into the White House. Daniel B. Kinsley pointed out that Welles invited Roosevelt to stay with him, but Roosevelt did not. As a professional historian, the author is aware of how easy it is to perpetuate error by

accepting “common knowledge.” He should have been more skeptical. Similarly, the author apologizes for omitting the name of Dumas Malone, an historian he admires inordinately, from the list of Pulitzer Prize winners in the original volume. Malone received the Pulitzer Prize in 1975 for his 5-volume *Jefferson and His Time*.

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