

GSMT News

The Newsletter of The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen

Founded in 1785, The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen is dedicated to improving the educational and cultural opportunities for people in the City of New York • Spring 2015

GSMT Presents 2014 Craftsmanship and Civic Leadership Awards at November Gala Benefiting Mechanics Institute



Honorees Dan Garodnick and Frank Gibbons with Victoria Dengel, Gerard Drohan, Jr. and Gottfried Weissgerber

General Society President Weissgerber welcomed everyone to our annual benefit and thanked them for their support. He reported that this semester 383 students were enrolled in our eight 2-and-3-year programs and that many graduates are active in New York City's building industry and have gone on to attain prominent positions in major construction companies, or to open their own businesses, providing a huge economic value to New York City. He added that while The Society has financed our tuition-free courses for 158 years, we need financial support from the construction industry to meet the ever-expanding demand for our programs.

He then turned the podium over to Vice President Gerard Drohan, Jr. who introduced our 2014 Craftsmanship honoree, noting that Mr. Gibbons was both a General Society member and a former student at the Mechanics Institute. Mr. Drohan said that Mr. Gibbons is a wonderful example of how MI students have assumed critical leadership roles in New York's building and construction industry. Frank Gibbons is COO of Penguin, an EMCOR company. As COO, he guides the firm's immediate and long-term strategic direction, has established key organizational policies and processes and oversees all company lines of business, including mechanical, HVAC, electrical, building automation, and customized maintenance programs. Mr. Gibbons is also active in his company's philanthropic activities, having recently hosted EMCOR's 2014 Pink Hard Hat event for Memorial Sloan Kettering. He also serves on several boards in his Staten Island community. The General Society's 2014 Craftsmanship Award was then presented to Mr. Gibbons.

In accepting the award, Mr. Gibbons thanked The General Society, saying he was honored to be among the industry honor-

Mechanics Institute Classes Begin January 26, Four Nights Weekly

By January first, all 37 classes had scheduled classrooms and our 25 instructors had all received their class assignments and schedules. According to MI registrar, Meg Stanton, 70% of our students in the two-and-three-year programs had preregistered before leaving for the holiday and most classes will be filled to capacity by opening week. Our traditional programs in Electrical Technology, Plumbing Design, HVAC Systems and Design, Construction Project Management, Facilities Management, and Historic Preservation continue to be popular and Construction Project Management has a waiting list for a space in the program. Our AutoCAD I and II provide a background for the Revit classes and are taught in both Monday and Wednesday and Tuesday and Thursday segments. The school also welcomes non-program students for Blueprint Reading and Cost Estimating classes. Our school catalogue is available on the web at www.generalsociety.org; or you may telephone Meg Stanton at the Mechanics Institute office at 212-840-1840 Ext.1.

2015
The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen
of The City of New York

Celebrating 230 Years

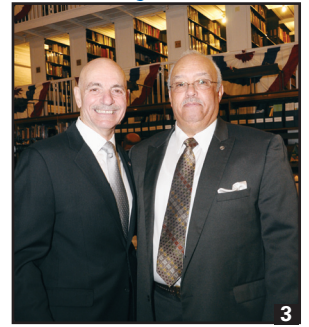
2015 Lecture Series Begin in January

The 2015 season will begin with our fourth "Artisan" Lecture in the series on January 13, with sculptor Thomas Donahue. The "Labor" lectures continue on February 3 with theatre projection designer Peter Nigrini, and on February 17, the "Landmark" lectures series is launched with architect Daniel Allen. Additional "Artisan" and "Literature" lectures will be added. Karin Taylor, Program Director commented "There will be seventeen lectures scheduled between January and June of 2015. Readers can continue to follow these on our web page: www.generalsociety.org." Please turn to page five for further information about scheduled programs.

Legend

1. Frank Gibbons, Victoria A. Dengel and Jay Badame
2. Gerard Drohan, Jr., Charles H. Thornton and Polly Guerin
3. Salvatore J. Cassano and Terrance C. Holliday
4. Rella Fogliano, Frank Gibbons and Charles Avolio
5. Daniel Garodnick, Victoria Dengel and Gottfried Weissgerber
6. Lenore Janis and Gottfried Weissgerber
7. Brandon Harihar, Cesar Flores, Joseph Tubiolo, Michelle Colon, Flamur Begu, Dibran Begu and Jason Gordon
8. Angelo Vigorito and Lou Blumengaraten
9. Margie Russell and Evelyn Mertens
10. Kent Buttler, Dean Speranza and Cindy Malinchak
11. Gerard Dengel and Brad Robertson
12. Frank Gibbons, Paul Shields, Brian McAuliffe and Thomas Tuckey
13. David Greenberg, Elenora Paulsen and Brad Robertson
14. The festive crowd in the Library
15. Meg Stanton, Cindy Malinchak, Don Velie, Dan Mial and Michael Battista
16. Matthew Dunn, Kenneth B. Klemens, Jr., Charlie Avolio, Edwin L. Christian, Timothy Brogan
17. Catherine Chadwick and James Hennelly
18. Karin Taylor and Camille Lalak
19. Andis Woodlief and Michael Apuzzo

2014 GSMT Award Ceremony



Photos: Daniel A. Luhmann

2014 Craftsmanship and Civic Leadership Awards

continued from Page 1

ees who had received the Craftsmanship award in previous years. After congratulating Councilman Garodnick on his Civic Leadership Award, he said he had started in the industry in 1985 as a “helper” at Penguin, which, under the leadership of CEO Paul Shields was a growth and family-oriented company with average employee longevity of 20 to 30 years. He was re-introduced to the Mechanics Institute by President Weissgerber when they were both bidding on a job and Mr. Weissgerber mentioned that he had just become President of The General Society. This caused him (Mr. Gibbons) to recall that he had enrolled here in 1992 in the HVAC Mechanics Course and then continued for four years, attending classes for 3 ½ nights a week to also graduate from the Plumbing and Electrical Design courses. He credited the Institute with being the foundation of his industry knowledge which he continued to build on for the 30 years he has been with Penguin. He said that two Penguin engineers are now enrolled in the Project Management course, both college graduates from Villanova and Manhattan College. They came to MI to learn the trade and better understand what Penguin does. He commended the present leadership of The Society which has maintained the Institute’s mission. Mr. Gibbons also said he was amazed when he recently visited the school to see all the new courses now offered, including BIM (Building Information Modeling). He then thanked all those present who had contributed to the Institute.

Victoria Dengel, GSMT Executive Director, then introduced our 2014 Civic Leadership Award winner, Daniel Garodnick, New York City’s District Four Council Member in this newly designed District which includes West 44th Street, saying that Councilman Garodnick, following his first election to the City Council in 2005 had been recognized by City Hall newspapers as one of the “Rising Stars in politics under the age of 40.” Ms. Dengel said that as a resident of the Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village complex that was part of Councilman Garodnick’s original district, she has personally witnessed how hard working and committed the Councilman is to the needs of his constituents. Mr. Garodnick is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Law Review*. Prior to entering New York’s political scene, he was a litigator at the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison and a law clerk for the Southern District of New York. Ms. Dengel then presented the 2014 Award and turned the podium over to the Councilman.

Councilman Garodnick thanked the General Society and its Board of Governors for the award and said he was happy to be back here tonight among people who can actually build something and actually fix things. He is always in awe of those who are building new subways and enormous buildings and modular housing which can be produced in one place and erected in another, and who have the technical ability to make these things happen. He thanked the Institute for its contribution in providing courses in Virtual Design and Construction, Project Management, and even Historic Preservation to provide individuals with the skills that are the key to well-paying, stable jobs that contribute to the economic growth of the City. He said that as the Chair of the City Council’s Economic Development Committee, he wanted the audience to know that he fully understood the importance of our Mechanics Institute to the City.

Manhattan Borough President Issues Proclamation honoring GSMT



Victoria Dengel, Gale A. Brewer and Frank Gibbons

At the Craftsmanship Benefit, GSMT Executive Director, Victoria Dengel, read the proclamation issued by Gale A. Brewer, President, Borough of Manhattan, in honor of the event. Among the proclamation’s seven reasons for this recognition,

the document read: “Whereas: The Society’s educational, philanthropic and cultural programs provided vocational guidance and professional development opportunities to New Yorkers from all backgrounds; and Whereas: the Society’s Mechanics Institute – one of the city’s first free schools ... continues to provide tuition-free evening instruction in trades-related content and a unique service to improve job opportunities for New Yorkers in the building and construction industry, ... Now Therefore, I Gale A. Brewer do hereby commend The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen on its contributions to New York City and proclaim Thursday, November 20, 2014, “General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen Appreciation Day” in the Borough of Manhattan.

Take Your Career To The Next Level

BUILD YOURSELF • BUILD NEW YORK

The Mechanics Institute, founded in 1858, provides tuition-free evening instruction in trades-related education and provides a critical service to improve job opportunities for New Yorkers in the building and construction industry. Without a tuition-free education, many of our students would be unable to get the technical education needed to advance in today’s environment. Each fall, over 350 students enroll in Mechanics Institute’s programs, including Virtual Design and Construction, Electrical Technology, HVAC Systems Design, Plumbing Design, Construction Project Management, Facilities Management and Historic Preservation.

MECHANICS INSTITUTE An Educational Program of

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen
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Mechanics Institute 2013 Project Management Graduate Working in Affordable Housing



John Napolitano graduated from Pratt Institute in 2001 with a degree in Urban Planning. He joined VIP Community Service in the Bronx shortly after graduation, and in 2010 moved to HANAC, Inc. as Director of Community Development and Planning where his focus is on affordable housing with social services. HANAC is a multiple-service

nonprofit organization in Astoria, Queens, founded in 1972, that serves a community of 30,000 individuals. In 2011, Mr. Napolitano registered at the Mechanics Institute in the Construction Project Management Program to enhance his skills in that area. He graduated from the two-year program in 2013. Our Mechanics Institute students usually come to the school while working in the construction industry and some then go on to more advanced education in their fields. The Mechanics Institute is happy to welcome students who can benefit from the technical education it provides.

Civil Engineering Graduate Enrolled in HVAC Program at Mechanics Institute



Jon Lusk, grew up in Reading, Massachusetts, graduated with an engineering degree from Villanova University, and then began a job search in New York City. He accepted his first job with Penguin, an EMCOR company, as a Junior Project Manager. On the job, he met Gottfried Weissgerber, then

President of The General Society, who told him about the great technical courses at The General Society's Mechanics Institute. He immediately took steps to explore the opportunities here and enrolled in the HVAC three-year-program. Now entering his second semester of classes, he is enthusiastic about what he is learning in Instructor Joseph Marciano's course.

Plumbing Student Heads for Second Year



Vania Lopes graduated from Monroe College with a business degree and has spent the last 14 years working at WDF, for the last year as a plumbing project manager on projects at the United Nations and a school for the NYC School Construction Authority. This spring, she will be taking Plumbing Code

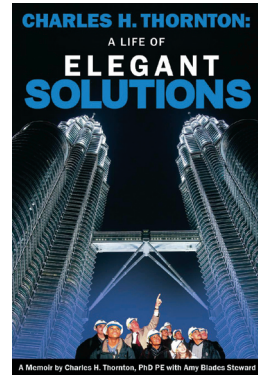
II and a class in Physics. Ms. Lopes says that in her work she has found the Code class most useful in her job as expeditor, working with government agencies in the five boroughs.

Mechanics Institute HVAC Instructor Enjoys Mentoring His Students



Joseph Marciano, P.E., joined the teaching staff at the Mechanics Institute in the Fall of 2014. He has found it most rewarding to work with all the people who "believe" and are willing to work hard to assure for themselves a better future. Mr. Marciano earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (BSME) from Cornell University. He also has a diploma in Construction Management and attended the Real Estate Institute at New York University, and is a LEED Accredited Professional. He has worked as a Construction Consultant, providing estimating, scheduling, and site evaluations. His responsibilities have included coordinating the mechanical, electrical and plumbing work at two primary schools for the New York City School System, maintaining project records and interfacing with the designers and the client. In Mr. Marciano's present position with the firm of Merritt & Harris, his responsibilities include design review services for adequacy and completeness of mechanical and electrical systems for new construction and renovation work. The work includes detailed reviews of the HVAC, plumbing, electrical, life safety and energy conservation systems of existing buildings. Mechanics Institute HVAC students are benefiting hugely from their exposure to Mr. Marciano's extensive construction background.

GSMT Member Writes Inspiring Book: A Lifetime of Elegant Solutions



Charles H. Thornton, P.E., Ph.D has engineered some of the world's tallest buildings and innovative structures, including the Petronas Towers in Malaysia. His drive for excellence began as a child while sailing small boats and pushed him through a rigorous study of structural engineering which continued even beyond earning a Ph.D. The book relates details of many unique projects where his

skills were honed over 30 years with the prestigious firm of ThorntonTomasetti. During that time, he founded the ACE Mentor Program, a highly successful national mentoring program committed to educating the next generation of architects, engineers and construction professionals. The book is a most enjoyable and instructive read for anyone planning a career, or active in, the construction business. The closing chapters describe new companies he founded to promote innovative engineering as well as 15 points needed to ensure a successful career.

An Introduction to Our Spring Artisans



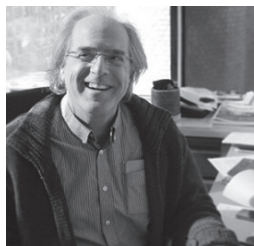
Curator Camille Wiart has continued to find fascinating artisans to speak about their unique skills. Following is a sampling of our Spring 2015 presenters, Additional artisans will be added to complete our twelve programs scheduled through June. Please visit

www.generalsociety.org for additional programming.



On Tuesday – March 10 – Kate Ottavino, a third-generation partner in her family's stoneworks, A. Ottavino Corporation, will discuss *Stone-carving and Restoration, Fine Art Stone Conservation and Stone Fabrication*. Ms. Ottavino completed her graduate degrees

in Historic Preservation and Architecture at Columbia University and later studied stone conservation in England, Italy and France. She has worked on buildings and monuments across the nation and received numerous preservation awards.



On Tuesday – April 14 – Jeff Greene will relate his company's experience in forensic archaeology as Evergreene Architectural Arts discovers and restores works of art long hidden by repeated coats of paint or tucked away in storage. Over the last three decades, Mr.

Greene has led large-scale interior conservation, restoration, and new design work for public and sacred spaces in every historic architectural style from coast to coast.



On Tuesday – May 12 – Alain Desgorces, of Tiffany & Co., is their behind-the-scenes master watchmaker. His skills were honed in Switzerland in the prestigious workrooms at Rolex, Patek Philippe and Blancpain, where he became their Foreign Technician,

which brought him to Tiffany where he serves as Technical Advisor and is in charge of all collectible items.



On Tuesday, June 9 – François Damide has had a long career in representing European fashion houses. In 2010 he established his own company, *Crafting Beauty, Inc.*, to open the world of individually designed perfumes to lesser-known names in the New York fashion world. His company produces small production runs and made-in-France-manufacturing to provide "Haute Couture" perfumes.

2015 Labor and Landmark Lectures



Beverly Miller is now serving her fifth term as President of United Scenic Artists Local USA829 IATSE and her second year as curator of The General Society's **Labor lectures**. The popularity of last year's lectures, *BEHIND THE SCENES WITH...* which gave attendees inside information on creative jobs in the New York theater, motivated us to present other workers in the field.

On Tuesday – February 3, Peter Nigrini, Theater Projection Designer, will talk about recent productions he has designed on Broadway. These include *The Best Man, Fela!, 9 to 5 and Say Goodnight Gracie*, as well as Public Theater's *Here Lies Love* for which he won the 2013 Drama Desk Award for outstanding Projection Design.

On Tuesday – March 3, Abe Jacob, Sound Designer, considered to be one of Broadway's most influential sound designers, will describe his work. His iconic sound design credits include the original productions of *Hair, Evita, Chicago, A Chorus Line* and *The Rocky Horror Show*.

On Tuesday – April 7 Jeff Davis, Lighting Designer will discuss his work in providing lighting designs for theater, television, opera, dance and special events. His design work has included the Broadway productions of the musical *Play On!, Born Yesterday, I Never Sang for My Father, The Man Who Came to Dinner* and *Death of a Salesman*.



Architect Lisa Easton, who specializes in Historic Preservation, is also serving a second year as curator of the **Landmark Lectures**, Ms. Easton's success in restoring some of New York City's most significant landmarks has led to developing her reputation as an expert architect, planner and historian. She teaches at Pratt Institute, lectures extensively and has received multiple awards from national, state and local grant programs.

On Tuesday – February 17th, Daniel Allen, AIA, a principal of CTA Architects P.C., and his firm's historic preservation specialist, will lecture on *Terracotta Preservation*.

On Tuesday – March 17, Amanda Trienens, owner and principal Conservator, Cultural Heritage Conservation, will discuss *Conservation Goals and Methodologies for Landmarks*.

On Tuesday – April 21, Peg Breen, President of the New York Landmarks Conservancy will celebrate the *50th Anniversary of the New York City Landmarks Law* and provide an overview of the work.

On Tuesday – May 19, Architect Anne Walker of Peter Pennoyer Architects will elaborate on *New York Transformed: The Architecture of Cross & Cross*.

FOR RESERVATIONS: 212-840-1840 – ext 2

United War Veterans Council Again Holds Inspiring Veterans Week Programs in General Society Library



Each year, the November 11 Veterans Day Parade, produced by the United War Veterans Council, is always one of New York City's most spectacular annual events, enjoyed by thousands. The United War Veterans Council produced other exciting

events during Veterans' Week in the days leading up to the parade. This year's program began with an event hosted by The Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President, recognizing the contributions of women in the military. Weekend events were focused on honoring our veterans of the Vietnam and Korean Wars. A spectacular Friday evening event celebrated a Salute to the Star Spangled Banner, our national anthem, written during the War of 1812 by Francis Scott Key. It also related the history of all of our flags on display, starting with the British Union Jack and continuing with the "Don't Tread on Me Flag" of the colonies and the Betsy Ross flag, through to our present standard with stars honoring all 50 states. The evening also featured art produced by veterans that depicted their feelings about their time in service. Catherine Chadwick, film, TV and theater actress, was master of ceremonies for the evening; and Michelle DellaFave, veterans advocate who performed in Vietnam with Bob Hope's USO show, entertained with patriotic songs throughout the evening.

Our Lecture Sponsors



Our lecture programs are supported in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council. Additional generous support is also provided for the Artisan Lecture series by the following sponsors: The MacQuesten Companies, Peter Penoyer Architects and Bauer and Dean Publishers.

Facilities Chair Honored as "Developer of the Year"



Rella Fogliano, Board of Governors member, is entering her second term as chair of the General Society's Facilities Committee. Her career accomplishments were recognized recently when she was named Private Developer of the Year by the New York and National Housing Conference at a packed ballroom at New York's Hilton Hotel on December 10. Ms. Fogliano was introduced to construction at a very young age by her father, a highly successful contractor in the Mt. Vernon area. After graduating from Fordham University, she joined the company full time, and in 1988, upon her father's retirement, she formed the MacQuesten Companies which specialize in financing, design, and construction management of affordable housing. Over the next five years, the company, under her direction, will have over \$200 million in construction projects and developments throughout the five boroughs and Westchester County. In announcing the award, the Executive Director of the New York Housing Conference noted Ms. Fogliano's passion for creating transformative affordable housing and her commitment to improving the lives of her residents. The General Society is honored that she is devoting her talents to the improvement and maintenance of our historic building.

2015 Literature Lectures

On Wednesday, March 18 – Charles H. Thornton will discuss his new book, *A Lifetime of Elegant Solutions*, a memoir covering his 30 years as a structural engineer at Thornton Tomasetti. (See story on page 4) This lecture will start at 6:00pm. Advance registration is required.

For additional Artisan and Literature lectures, please go to:

www.generalsociety.org

Lectures start at 6:30 -- Reception to follow

General Society Library, 20 West 44th Street, NYC

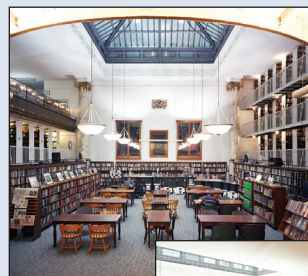
Advance Registration is suggested: 212-840-1840 – ext 2

Please Help the General Society Support Our Programs

The historic GSMT building has space to rent for programs and special events.

- Our grand three-story library
- Balcony/Museum
- The Assembly Hall
- Conference Rooms for smaller meetings
- Classrooms available for regular day time use or evening lectures, classes, receptions and more

For more information, call The General Society office, (212) 840-1840 ext. 2, or visit our website at www.generalsociety.org and click Rent Space.



Photos by
Amiaga Photography

Hammering On...

NYARM Honors GSMT Educational Activities

The New York Association of Realty Managers (NYARM) will present its 2015 Industry Education Award to GSMT Executive Director, Victoria Dengel and the Mechanics Institute. The Award will recognize our educational accomplishments and programs. The presentation ceremony will take place on January 24, 2015, at NYARM's annual gala to be held at Leonard's of Great Neck, Long Island.

Improvements Throughout our Facility



There are many exciting new things to report about The General Society's Historic Building. The scaffolding which hid our beautiful façade was removed in early November. All mandated work under Local Law 10/11 Cycle 7 repairs have been completed. On the inside, in our beautiful Members' Assembly Room, the ragged 100-year old, taped together carpeting has been replaced and new blinds installed. The new patterned red and gold carpeting has a period feeling and retains the original look of this 1891 room. And we are now focused on updating the bathrooms throughout the building, starting with the fourth floor. The restored balustrades on the roof, facing the street, as they look once again with their copper covering reflected in the sunlight (pictured above).

General Society Mounts New Website

A new GSMT website will be launched in early 2015. The improved site will be easy to navigate and will carry the full catalogue of the Mechanics Institute, provide current information on our Artisan and Labor, Literature and Landmarks Lecture Series, and provide an updated list of new books purchased for the Library. It will also relate historical information about our 230-year-old organization. We hope visitors will refer to it often to learn about our current programs and activities.

Book Discussion Group's Spring Titles Announced

Meetings of our Book Group are held on the first Thursday of each month at twelve, noon, and run about an hour. All Library members are welcome. We do not read current best sellers, but focus on books of importance that have weathered the test of time. The first spring meeting will be on February 5 and will cover Russell Shorto's *The Island at the Center of the World*. On March 5, Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* will be discussed. For the April 2 meeting we will talk about Sarah Ome Jewett's *Tree Country of the Pointed Firs*. And on May 7, the Anton Chekov play, *Three Sisters* will be discussed. The June 4 book is to be selected.

Polly's Book is Now on Press

Polly Guerin has been diligently sifting through The General Society archives along with other projects for eighteen months, extracting many delicious facts to include in her book: "The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen: A History." The book covers not only the early days of our 230-year-old organization, but its current activities right up to our November 2014 Craftsmanship Fundraiser for the Mechanics Institute and our 2014-15 lecture series. It's a delightful read in Ms. Guerin's unique style that makes the GSMT history so compelling. The General Society's archivist, Angelo Vigorito, worked diligently with Ms. Guerin to guide her through our historic documents and locate photos that tell our story through the years. Publication date is scheduled for April, 2015.

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York

*"By Hammer and Hand
All Arts Do Stand"*

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The General Society Newsletter Spring, 2015

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News, photos and editorial suggestions from members are welcome and can be sent to pennspec@aol.com

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen

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*For GSMT Event Calendar, visit the
General Society website at
www.generalsociety.org*



The General Society of
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20 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036

Check our web site for current updates on General Society Events and send us your e-mail to receive event information: www.generalsociety.org



The original Society Flag

A Segment of the General Society's Original Flag

Throughout The General Society Building are wonderful bits of history dating back to the days following the Revolutionary War. High on a wall, preserved in a glass-enclosed frame on the balcony, which houses our Mossman Lock Collection, are the tattered remains of the original 6 ft. by 8 ft. flag of The General Society. This flag was the standard carried in many patriotic parades in the city during the early days of the Republic. Our members were ardently civic minded and unabashedly patriotic. Marking the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the trades represented in The General Society's membership celebrated with great pageantry and each mounted an elaborate float representing their trade. As the second oldest organization in the city, our Society marched in the #2 spot in the parade. Also positioned throughout our historic building are later banners and flags of the Society. They include a Civil War banner given by The Society to the volunteer Engineering Squadron drawn from GSMT members. After being carried in battle, this flag was returned to The Society following the war's end and now hangs in the Library. Our present flag was redesigned in 2006 but still carries our original motto: *By Hammer and Hand, All Arts do Stand*. After flying from the building through sun and storms for eight years, the 2006 flag was replaced in 2014, when the apparatus holding the flag was also updated.