



Volume 36, Number 1

January 2014



107th Annual Meeting of The Cliff Dwellers

Although the by-laws were slightly altered, in keeping with tradition the Club gathered for the Annual Meeting, the 107th consecutive.

This year’s meeting was scheduled for Monday, January 6, contrary to the by-laws which read, “The annual meeting of the Club shall be held on the first Monday after the Twelfth Night (January the sixth) in each year...” Renting the Club on the usual date seemed more fiscally responsible. However, the proposed date was wisely ignored due to record-setting cold (-16F, wind chill -50F). And the 2014 meeting convened on Wednesday, January 8 with the relatively balmy outdoor temperature of 20F.

Gathering at 5:30 for cocktails and conversation, members were entertained by Arnie Lanza CD’09 on piano accompanied by Vince Buoncore.

Dinner was served at 6:30. Chef Victor Perez put together an outstanding meal:

THE DINNER MENU

Assorted Greens

with Cranberries, Pecans and Goat Cheese

--

Roast Filet Mignon

with Onion Mushroom Ragout and Tomato Butter

--

Grilled Salmon

with Shrimp Spinach Risotto Jumbo Asparagus

--

Mixed Fruit Tarte with Chantilly Cream

At 7:30 George Manning II CD’13 provided a musical interlude which included an up-tempo sing along of “The 12 Days of Christmas.”

President Leslie Recht called the meeting to order—as orderly as it gets—at 8:02 P.M. “Good we are here and carrying on like we did in the good old days.” She then noted that with our recent lease extension the Club is secure where it has been since 1996.

Recht recognized Charles Hasbrouck and the staff at Skidmore Owings & Merrill for their outstanding work on the renovation of the Kiva. She noted that 2013 was a good year for new members and that the Club is still working for financial stability. She encouraged members to remember the Club in estate planning.

Recht then recognized and thanked past presidents in the room: Wilbert Hasbrouck 1984-85, Walker Johnson 1990-92, William Bowe 2006-07, Larry Lund 2008-09, and Brian Bernardoni 2010-11.

Treasurer Virginia Harding said, “The Club survived. We are here!” She then thanked contributors to the renovation fund and the Foundation for the new piano.

Nominating Committee Chair Bill Bowe, in his usual solemn, formal manner presented David Chernoff CD’10, Michael Deines CD’03, and Robert Miller CD’10 as candidates for the Board. After the usual careful tally of votes, all three were allowed to suffer a 3-year term on the Board.

(Continued on page 2)

House Committee Chair Charles Hasbrouck began by recognizing his father Will Hasbrouck attending his 49th consecutive Annual Meeting.

Offering a brief summary of the 2013 renovation, Hasbrouck noted new sprinklers, new plumbing in the washrooms, new lounge furniture, and new paint all round. He then thanked his colleagues at SOM for his time and their expertise working on the project. He announced Paul Hamer CD'05 as the new chair of the House Committee. Hasbrouck then thanked Chef Victor for his continuing good work.

Membership Committee Chair Bill Drennan CD'02 reported that the Club roster increased by 52 members in 2013 for a total of 433. 123 of that number are non-residents. The large number of new members is due in large part to the Trial Membership incentive offered to contributors to the Renovation Fund. There are currently ten 3-month members and 3 nominees to be welcomed in the near future.

Members were then invited to stand and remember friends who passed on in 2013:

Joe DuCanto CD'65

Roger Ebert CD'76

Dawn Clark Netsch CD'85

Bob Thiebout 1970--2013

Communications Committee Chair Michael Deines CD'03 said that Club members, especially newer members need to hear the story of who we are as Cliff Dwellers. He encouraged members to use our newsletter *On and Off the Cliff* to continue telling the story.

For the Art Committee Chair Connie Hinkle CD'01 announced the next art opening will be on February 1.

Walker Johnson CD'84 reporting for the Foundation noted that the annual music competition has been reinstated.

For the History Committee Johnson noted the installation of many Club artifacts on the walls of the Sullivan Room.

President Recht said that the Club could not operate without our dedicated staff. Manager Don Santelli introduced the staff to a standing ovation by Club members.

A rousing chorus of *ZIVIO*
(May you live many a summer, Long Life!)
 rounded out a joyous evening.

The Annual Meeting adjourned at 8:34, but conversation continued all round.

--Respectfully submitted, William J. Drennan, Secretary

A Good Meeting with Good Friends



Leslie and Don recognize our Staff.



Chef Victor, Ms Washington and the rest of the Staff receive a well-earned round of applause and appreciation.



Arnie Lanza brings music to the Kiva.



On a cold Chicago evening, members enjoy warm comraderie in the renovated Kiva.

Special Thanks to Cliff Dwellers

- Larry Okrent
- Bill Bowe
- George Gabauer
- Eve Moran

for sharing their photos in this issue of *On and Off the Cliff*.



The Hasbroucks--Bill and Charlie--join Hamlin by the fireplace.

President's Speech to The Cliff Dwellers Jan 8, 2014

By Leslie Recht, CD'03



Leslie Recht
The Cliff Dwellers President
2012-2013

Thanks to everyone for braving this cold weather and coming out to celebrate The Cliff Dwellers. I am old enough to remember when we had below zero temperatures in Chicago for three months during the 1970's. I don't believe we are going back to that but it's good to know that we are all here and are carrying on, like we all did in those "olden" times.

I'm leaving office at the Board meeting this week, so this is my opportunity to reflect on my two years as President of The Cliff Dwellers. If you can remember, two years ago we had an annual meeting where we had just been informed we lost our lease. I took on the presidency during that period of great uncertainty, and I am most proud of the fact that I did not let the loss of the lease deter me from taking on the presidency. It turned out that we were ultimately offered a lease extension, just weeks before we were scheduled to move. The Cliff Dwellers stayed in this wonderful place, where we have been since 1996. We have a secure home for the next 18 years. We built on that victory by raising significant funds and renovating the Club, based on a plan that

remembers our past and looks towards the future. Charlie Hasbrouck led that effort, with pro bono help from SOM and a great team there. Please thank Charlie for his hard work. There is more to do to finish the plan, with sculpture and new furniture on the deck, improvements in lighting and sound. We bought new lights for performances with funds raised in memory of Bob Thieboult, a friend we lost this year. It's a fitting memorial to Bob to use these lights to support the great programs we have at The Cliff Dwellers.

I had several goals as President. The renovation was one. A second goal was to vastly increase our membership, with friends and associates of current members who share our love of the arts and good friends. We have made a good start this year, as Bill Drennan will tell you, with 60 new members. Please thank Bill for all his great efforts as Membership Committee Chair this year. I plan to continue to work on behalf of The Cliff Dwellers to find new members. It is the glory of this Club that we have so many fascinating and accomplished members. I look forward to expanding our membership in the coming years, with the help of every member bringing in friends that you would like to see enjoy the Club with us.

I also want to help create financial stability for the Club. We are still in the process of finding the right balance of programs and events that will allow us to make a profit. I believe that we can increase the programming and the events in ways that are consistent with requirements as a not for profit membership club. However, I believe that we can each do something to help. We can encourage each member to leave a bequest to The Cliff Dwellers and to The Cliff Dwellers Art Foundation as part of their estate plan. I have done this in my plan, and I will be talking to each of you about this way of helping to secure the future for this Club that we all love.

Soon, I will become a past president, joining the ranks of so many who have guided me, like Bill Bowe, Brian Bernardoni and Walker Johnson. I would like to end by thanking all of the past presidents of The Cliff Dwellers for your great service to the Club. Thank you and Zivio!

Past Presidents of The Cliff Dwellers

Front Row:

- **Walker Johnson CD'84** **1990-1992**
- **Wilbert R. Hasbrouck CD'64** **1984-1985**
- **Leslie Recht CD'03** **2012-2013**

Back Row:

- **Larry E. Lund CD'02** **2008-2009**
- **William J. Bowe CD'97** **2006-2007**
- **Brian A. Bernadoni CD'06** **2010-2011**



The Teaching Words of Roger Ebert

By Eve Moran CD'10

(Roger Ebert, the prominent film critic, newspaperman and author, died in Chicago on April 4, 2013. There was a huge outpouring of grief both in his home city and across the nation. At a Cliff Dweller event on April 5, 2013, we dispensed with the traditional moment of silence, and instead, paid tribute to our dear friend and fellow club member, with two minutes of standing applause).

Of all the arts, movies are the most powerful aid to empathy,
and good ones make us into better people.

-Roger Ebert, 2002

His words are always with us. They creep into our conversations about literature, architecture, politics, education, travel, food, humor, music and, of course, the movies. The words matter. They are the words of a humorist, an activist, a pundit, a reader, a critic, a television celebrity and a deep thinker. Born of a curious mind and a high social conscience, the words inform, enlighten, entertain, inspire, and influence. And, yes, they are the words of a Cliff-Dweller. Roger Ebert became a member of our legendary club in 1976 and received Honorary status in 2011.

I delight in saying that Roger Ebert was my teacher. It all began in 1983, when I enrolled in his continuing education film class at the University of Chicago. In that moment, however, I failed to realize that the coursework would continue for more than 22 years. But, one semester invariably led to another. The class never repeated. And, the subject matter of the class was simply irrelevant. Roger's inimitable style and the multi-faceted substance of his instruction always left me hungry for more.

On Wednesday evenings, I would take my seat and prepare myself for a joyously bumpy ride. Roger personally selected the ten movies that we would view and consider in each semester. These films might be the work of a single director or reflective of a particular genre (e.g. film noir) or wedded to a certain theme (e.g. the Sight & Sound magazine poll of the greatest films). Over the years, Roger screened silent films, foreign films, documentaries, small independent and classic wide-release films. Some of the movies were themselves new to Roger, while he had seen others many times over. All, in their own ways, were good films.

Roger loved telling jokes or reciting limericks and frequently started class in this light fashion. But, he turned serious when providing historical background and other critical insight into the forces behind Bunuel, Bresson, Ozu, Herzog, Welles, Wilder, Scorsese or any of the other cinema greats at hand. Roger was an eloquent speaker and never stumbled for a word. Remarkably, he had no notes or even an outline for his lectures. Oftentimes, he would quote from a stack of reference books or articles that he brought into the room, carefully marked with tags. His lectures were exciting, expansive and seldom limited to the movie we were about to see. Being the standard Roger set for himself, he believed that our film education depended on growing an abundance of different competencies. Before a screening of Truffaut's *Green Room*, for example, Roger deemed it essential that we know more of the novelist Henry James and his philosopher/psychologist brother, William James (and so he graciously obliged). In one lecture, Roger introduced us to *A Pattern Language* by architect Christopher Alexander, a design book that had then captured his fancy. Another of Roger's lectures led us to the essays in Nairn's *London* (a book for which he had written an introduction) and to Waterstone's *Review of Books*. His love of reading, and the broad range of his interests, was infectious.

Roger understood the language of filmmaking and his shot-by-shot analysis of *Citizen Kane* caused us to marvel at the film's complex and supremely effective construction. Just as well, Roger guided us to appreciate how the music of a film, i.e. Quatuor en Sol Mineur Op. 25 de Brahms in *Monsieur Hire*, or the zither-based score in *The Third Man*, was itself an influential character in the story. But, Roger also left us free to regard and discuss each film according to our respective world views. I have vivid memories of the times when the class laughed heartily, but circumspectly, at a showing of *The Fireman's Ball*; was utterly charmed by the whimsy and wonderment of *Mr. Hulot's Holiday*; and widely debated the science-faith struggle depicted in the first installment of *The Decalogue*. In my memory bank, too, is the surprising range of emotions that were unleashed as the class confronted the depths of what we were actually witnessing when *Gates of Heaven* unfolded on the screen.

Movies are a complicated art form. They generally involve story, music, visual artistry and performance. They take us to new places and thrust us intimately into the lives of others. Roger challenged us to think deeply about the film we were viewing, to consider the history of the time and culture in which it was made; to uncover the ambitions of the filmmaker; to be mindful of the sounds in the film; and, to examine the wranglings of conscience and moral choices that the story and the actors put at issue. Good movies, he explained, spoke of universal truths and had the power to grow our intelligence and sensibilities. There was magic in these words.

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Inevitably, in each semester, a class member would moan or otherwise express dislike about the subject matter of a particular film that we were scheduled to watch that night. Time and again, Roger answered the objection by reminding us that:

It's not what the film is about, but how it goes about it.

Roger had it exactly right. How Scorsese went about it, is what made *Raging Bull* a powerful reveal of a man who just happened to be a boxer. How Morris went about it, is what showed *Gates of Heaven* to be much more than a documentary about pet cemeteries. How Bresson went about it, is what made *Au Hasard Balthazar* less the story of a donkey and more a reflection of our own life struggles. In short, Roger made us see the importance of setting aside our preconceptions and unthinking preferences. Instead, and through the depth and direction of his words, we would find and embrace new ways of seeing, understanding, relating and being.

Outside of film class, Roger's words also had influence. His book *Two Weeks in the Midday Sun* became a charming and welcome companion when, in 1987, I was enveloped by the gray winter skies of then-communist Poland. On a trip to England in 1985, I dutifully followed the instructions in Roger's *A Perfect London Walk* and congratulated myself on locating a certain gnarled tree. Here, at home, I eagerly awaited each new installment of *Behind the Phantom's Mask* as it was rolled out in the Chicago Sun-Times.

Over the years, my bookshelf grew heavy with the many volumes Roger had so imaginatively and expertly crafted, stretching his talents across many different genres. Today, I am grateful for the weight and the words in these books and articles. Thankful too, that his early and steady embrace of new technologies leaves us with still another record of his brilliance. The words in his blogs - witty, insightful, instructive, and increasingly wise - seem to capture for me some of the voice of his film class lectures.

Roger wrote about the movies in ways that brought to the forefront our common humanity. Indeed, what I relished most in his film reviews and what I always sought out, was that one telling sentence, that one riveting turn-of-phrase, that one deep and meaningful observation on the human condition that would embed itself forever in my mind. Roger rarely disappointed. A personal favorite that I have repeated many times in conversations is a line that appears in a film review of *Dances With Wolves*, where Roger wrote that:

A civilized man is a person whose curiosity outweighs his prejudices.

Roger was himself, above all else, a curious man. It was a ceaseless curiosity that moved him to travel widely, to read broadly, to think deeply, to challenge mediocrity and to inspire others to follow the same route. And, in his final book, *Life Itself*, Roger tells us exactly how that curiosity ultimately led him to a basic truth. He writes that:

Kindness covers all of my political beliefs. No need to spell them out. I believe that if, at the end, according to our abilities, we have done something to make others a little happier, and something to make ourselves a little happier, that is about the best we can do. To make others less happy is a crime. To make ourselves unhappy is where all crime starts. We must try to contribute joy to the world. That is true no matter what our problems, our health, our circumstances. We must try. I didn't always know this and am happy I lived long enough to find it out.

There are sadly, far too few philosophers among us. Thank you, Roger, for these final teaching words. As always, you have it right.



Riding on the City of New Orleans

By Bill Bowe CD '97

Over Labor Day weekend in 2013, my son Andy and I traveled to New Orleans and back in newly reconditioned Pullman cars attached to the rear of the regularly scheduled Amtrak train. We took advantage of a one-time promotional fare of Pullman Rail Journeys <http://www.travelpullman.com/>, which started this business last March. Being in these beautiful antique cars brought to mind the nostalgic Steve Goodman lyrics associated with this important 20th Century American passenger train route.

We travelled in the Adirondack, a flat-end Pullman observation car with lounge chairs, a dining area, a kitchen and bedroom suites. Although originally built in 1950 for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, it is now painted with a yellow stripe in the traditional brown and orange colors of the Illinois Central Railroad.

Departing Chicago on Friday evening after work, we were served dinner soon after leaving Union Station.

Having slept peacefully through most of southern Illinois and all of Kentucky, we awoke on Saturday north of Memphis, Tennessee. We spent the rest of the morning rolling through Mississippi, before crossing Louisiana's Lake Pontchartrain on a trestle in the wetlands just north of New Orleans.

We had booked an economical lodging for our Saturday night in New Orleans with Pullman's Hilton partner. Our room overlooked the Mississippi River, so we had a chance to watch the never ending river traffic near the twin Crescent City Connection Bridges. Then it was off to the French Quarter for Saturday night dinner at Arnaud's Jazz Bistro and the Sunday jazz brunch at the Court of the Two Sisters. Sunday afternoon, Andy and I boarded the northbound City of New Orleans for our complimentary return to Chicago.

Monday dawn on Labor Day we flew by Champaign-Urbana and stopped at Kankakee. Shortly after that we climbed westbound onto the Air Line elevated tracks over the Metra commuter and Amtrak tracks just south of the Loop. We then had a spectacular view of Chicago's South Loop from the train yard as we backed into Union Station. Not a bad Labor Day weekend all in all.



New Opportunities with the Arts

Bill Barranco, CD'13 with Megan Wildebour, Managing Director, Hypocrites Theater Company

Last year The Cliff Dwellers were very successful in recruiting new members. I should know, I'm one of them. I was drawn to the Club for several reasons: a welcoming environment with friendly people, a place near my office to escape the daily grind for an hour or two, and a place to share my interest in the arts with other like-minded individuals. It is this last point that ties into one of my other passions--live theater. I discovered the Chicago theater scene shortly after I moved back to Chicago from Los Angeles about 8 years ago. My interest eventually led me into becoming a board member of the Hypocrites Theater Company--a group which I think we can foster into a mutually beneficial relationship with The Cliff Dwellers.

About The Hypocrites Theater Company

Founding Artistic Director Sean Graney created The Hypocrites in 1997. It is currently run by Artistic Director Halena Kays and Managing Director Megan Wildebour. The Hypocrites are recognized as groundbreakers that defy the audience's expectations. The company has grown significantly in the past few years, receiving acclaim for productions at Steppenwolf Garage, Goodman Theatre, Museum of Contemporary Art, DCA Storefront and Chopin Theater. The company's smash-hit production of *Our Town*, directed by David Cromer, transferred in 2009 to Off-Broadway, Los Angeles and Boston. *Pirates of Penzance* has appeared at American Repertory Theatre twice and is currently enjoying another run at Actors Theatre of Louisville through February 5th, 2014. American Theatre Wing, best known as the creator of the Tony Awards, presented The Hypocrites with one of the 2013 National Theatre Company awards.

View Hypocrites Theater on Chicago Tonight **Ctrl+Click to follow link**

(<http://chicagotonight.wttw.com/2013/01/08/hypocrites>)

As a first step towards a partnership, the company's Managing Director, Megan Wildebour, has offered to provide a discount code for all members of the Cliff Dwellers for our upcoming productions: (*\$5 off with code "cliff5" at www.the-hypocrites.com*)

Jan 15 - Mar 2: Tennessee Williams Project at Chopin Theater

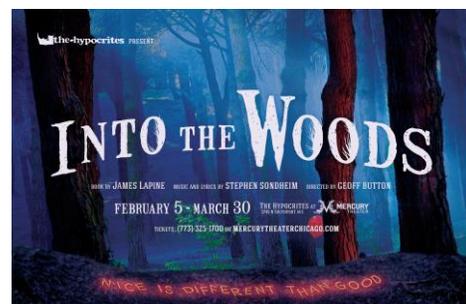
The Tennessee Williams Project directed by Matt Hawkins (Jeff Award winner for Best Director and Musical for The Hypocrites' Cabaret, 2010) is an evening of one-act plays written by Tennessee Williams. These rarely produced plays are about the aching need for love and connection and the isolation and loneliness that come from rejection. They contain many of the familiar themes explored in his well-known plays, but they reveal a side of the author that many may have never seen before.



Feb 5 - Mar 30: Into the Woods at Mercury Theater

The Hypocrites bring their heightened and playful sense of theatricality to this beloved musical. The fact is that there is no narrator to come in and tell our stories for us and that at the end of the day we are set adrift to try to make a life. We find people, we lose people, we find new people and every time we make a connection we are faced with the potential for loss.

<http://mercurytheaterchicago.com/into-the-woods/>



With enough interest we could choose an evening performance as The Cliff Dwellers "pack the house" night and fill the theater with members and friends. It might be a nice way for members to socialize and spend an evening with both old and new friends.

Supporting the Arts at the Top of the Cliff

By Dominic Johnson CD'12 and P.K. Vander Beke CD'96

The Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation "Third Tuesdays" series continues to bring quality arts events to the Club as evidenced by recent evenings featuring Theatre Y, Synapse Arts, and Storycatchers Theatre. These organizations are all recipients of grants from our Foundation and were invited to show their work and introduce their patrons to the Club.

Theatre Y presented a staged rehearsal of scenes from their production, *The Binding*, an original play based on the story of Abraham, a seminal figure in three of the world's major religions. Artistic Director Mellissa Lorraine shared insights into the company's creative process, including their work with two French-Serbian choreographers brought in to guide the actors in forging the play's physical vocabulary. A group of Cliff Dwellers were treated to a sneak preview of a production that had been featured on the cover of the previous week's Reader and were encouraged to attend their production at Theater Y's new home in a church in Logan Square.

Synapse Arts, an interdisciplinary dance company headed by Artistic Director Rachel Damon, performed excerpts from their original evening-length work *Swath*. Projections and soundscapes augmented the artistry on display, where themes of natural law and farm town savagery were explored through coded movement. A large portion of the sizable audience stayed under the Kiva to enjoy dinner and drinks afterward.

Storycatchers Theatre brought excerpts from their work *what it means to fly*, performed by incarcerated young women from Warrenville Correctional Facility. Original songs and scenes culled from real life experiences were powerfully evocative, enthraling a capacity crowd. Reporters and a camera crew from Channel 7, Tribune, and Sun-Times attended as the theater had recently been chosen as one of thirteen arts organizations nationwide selected to receive an award from the President's Counsel on Arts and Humanities. Meade Palidofsky, Storycatcher Theatre's founder, was due to travel to Washington, DC the following week to accept the award from Michelle Obama.



Synapse dancers perform at the Cliff.

Further highlights of the foundation's year were detailed in the letter you all received in December; we thank all those who were moved to support our collective efforts through their year-end giving.

The "Third Tuesday" program for January 21 features a presentation by Pentacle, an organization that provides administrative assistance to emerging dance companies through their "Help Desk" program. They will be bringing dancers from Khecari Dance and RE| Dance to the Kiva.

Cliff Notes

- Congratulations to our newly elected officers: Charles Hasbrouck, President; Virginia Harding, Vice-President; David Chernoff, Treasurer; William Drennan, Secretary.
- Leslie Recht will be honored by Friends of the Parks for "30 years of advancing the design and improvements of Fosco, Rockwell, Bartelme, Women's and Anderson Parks" at the Chicago Cultural Center on Thursday, February 6, 2014 noon luncheon.
- The first meeting of The Cliff Dwellers Book Club will be Saturday, January 25 from 11:30—2:00 in conjunction with the Midland Authors and the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame. The first book is *The Cliff Dwellers* by Henry Blake Fuller. Discussions will be led by Richard Reeder CD'13 and special guests.
- Repairs on the Sullivan mural in the elevator entry will begin January 28. The Conservation Center whose conservators cleaned and repaired the Club's Norton *Navajo* mural will perform similar services on the Sullivan piece.
- In early spring 2014, and with honor to Roger Ebert, The Cliff Dwellers will launch a "Movie Nights" program. Details to follow. Contact Eve Moran for additional information and ideas.
- International Women's Day will be marked at the Cliff Dwellers on March 4. Erin McCarthy CD'13 along with Eve Moran CD'10 will head the luncheon event for students and professional working women.
- A reminder, especially to new members: see Don Santelli for the application to receive CD discount parking in the underground garage located on Michigan Avenue. New guest parking arrangements are also available at the garage located at 17 E. Adams. See Don for discount tickets (\$10 for up to 12 hours after 4 PM and on weekends).