

# WAGNER

## ROOFLINES



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1914-2004

SUMMER 2004

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## The Admiral's House Is in Good Hands Daughters of 1812 Restore Logan Circle Landmark

For almost 120 years, the Queen Anne-style house at 1461 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., stood solid and secure—a monument to the vision of Rear Admiral John H. Upshur, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and Civil War veteran who built the home for his family in 1884. But last winter's snows, followed by heavy, continuous rains, led to massive water leaks through the roof, threatening the structure—and the valuable memorabilia of its owners, the National Society of United States Daughters of 1812.

"After 21 days of rain in May 2003, the leaks had escalated to the point where either you fixed the roof or the house would fall down," says President National Peggy Doud Christie. Surveying water damage to the interior, she called in an expert—her husband, Bruce, a retired general contractor who has built houses, stores and banks. "In two hours, he walked all four floors and the roof, and then he asked, 'What do you want to do?' And I said, 'Well, we've got to save the building and save the collection, much of which is irreplaceable.'"

The Society purchased the brick building for its headquarters in 1928. The structure was

placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1997. It houses a collection of period furniture and artifacts, along with a library of approximately 1,000 volumes—"the only library on the planet devoted to the 1784-1815 period," according to Peggy Christie.

Bruce Christie interviewed three contractors to undertake roof repairs. He selected Wagner Roofing, Peggy Christie says, "because, one, Wagner had dealt with historic buildings and, two, they had dealt with historic buildings in the District of Columbia. In the District, you start out with two premises: Restoration will be twice as difficult and twice as expensive. We needed someone who could navigate that process."

With Wagner Roofing serving as general contractor and Jeff Wooldridge as project manager, the Wagner team went to work. The first priority was to replace the original slate and copper roof using those same materials and to repair the leaking skylight over the central staircase.

A carpentry "shop" was set up on scaffolding high on the front of the house to facilitate the rebuilding of dormers and replacement of rotting wood rafters and trim. Ornamental



CAROL HIGHSMITH

**Roof leaks threatened this 1880s house and its Americana.**

wrought-iron railings were removed from two half-round balconies on the top two stories for sand-blasting, repairs and paint. Wagner's Bob Wooldridge replaced the tapered wood sheathing on both balconies. To further secure the structure, exterior bricks were repointed.

In a top-floor bedroom, Peggy Christie points to recently

installed rafters, which Wagner had fabricated in a Pennsylvania mill. "These are made of Spanish cedar, which resists rot. During the rains, water was pouring in here; my husband reached into the old rafters and scooped out a handful of 'mulch.'"

The Society also owns the adjoining house at 1463 Rhode

*Continued on page 3*



# The Adirondacks in Rockville

## Clyde's Tower Oaks Lodge Evokes 'Great Camps' of Yesteryear

**W**hen did they move the Adirondacks to Rockville?

The scenic mountains are still in northeastern New York State, of course. But Clyde's Restaurant Group has created an astonishing replica of the rustic architecture and furnishings of the region's "Great Camps"—woodland vacation retreats built by financiers and industrialists at the turn of the 20th century.

Tower Oaks Lodge, which opened October 2002 at 2 Preserve Parkway, is a large (approximately 20,000 square feet) log, stone and shingle structure that seats 400 customers in four distinct dining rooms. Like a vacationing Vanderbilt, a visitor can dine in the hunt-country atmosphere of the wood-paneled Tack Room or beneath the timbered ceiling of the Great Room, a Vermont barn that was disassembled, shipped down to Maryland and reassembled on-site. The restaurant's Adirondacks-style architecture is enhanced by an extensive collection of art and antiques

reflecting American camp life and the "great outdoors."

Even the experienced contractors who built Tower Oaks find its authentic atmosphere a transporting experience. As one put it, "You could be anywhere up North, or even out West ... but you're certainly not in Rockville!"

You're a long way from Georgetown, too. That's where the original Clyde's, with its long oak bar, plank flooring, oil paintings and theme rooms, was launched in 1963. Forty years later, the restaurant group owns 11 establishments throughout the Washington, D.C., area. No two are alike, but each reflects Clyde's unique approach to architectural design and interior decorating.

The concept for each new restaurant originates with John Laytham, president of Clyde's, and Gregg Schipa, chief designer, explains Marvin Maizel of Maizel Construction, Inc., general contractor for Clyde's building and renovation projects. "Our job is to find a way to make what they see work. And Tower Oaks Lodge is a classic example of that."



Early on, Maizel project manager Tony Sinchak and on-site superintendent Gordon MacDonald saw that Tower Oaks was a special project, and they were able to convey that to the contractors. "The owners were committed to doing something special, they assembled a team that shared that commitment and we, in turn, brought in craftspeople who were equally committed," says Maizel.

Wagner Roofing was selected to install three distinct types of roofing as well as wood shingled siding:

- Pressure-treated cedar shingles were installed on the highly visible main roof of the restaurant.
- A 20-year hot-fluid applied liquid membrane roof was installed in the center of the building, over the structural steel core topped with concrete to support the heating and air conditioning systems, exhaust fans and other infrastructure. "Wagner used this system in order to make the

roof as water-tight as possible," says Maizel. "I feel it's a safe, secure, long-lasting roof."

- White-cedar shingles were given two coats of green stain for a weathered appearance, then installed on 8,000 square feet of



exterior walls, as well as on interior roofs and interior walls. "This wasn't just stapling up shingles," explains Maizel. "Wagner's craftspeople cut these shingles in and out and around many obstacles. And they did an absolutely marvelous job."

As part of its roofing work, Wagner also placed all the copper gutters and downspouts.

"When asked to bid siding, we usually decline," says Chuck Wagner. "Two of Freddie Oltman's first jobs as a lead mechanic for Wagner were for Clyde's, so we knew we could handle the cedar roofing. But the exterior siding was a stretch for us. Freddie rose to the occasion with well-executed work finished ahead of schedule."

Jeff Wooldridge, Wagner's estimator and project manager for the job, worked closely with

### Remodeling Georgetown's 1789

Maizel Construction recently completed a remodel for Clyde's 1789 restaurant in Georgetown, and Wagner Roofing was also part of that project. The assignment: In one month, tear out and rebuild the kitchen and main dining room. To make the job even more challenging, the old building needed to be brought back up to standards, and multiple contractors were forced to work simultaneously in a tight space. Says general contractor Marvin Maizel: "Wagner and the other contractors all worked together to make it happen in a way that would make any coach proud of a total team effort."

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Maizel's Sinchak on the complex project—made even more challenging by multiple change orders, mostly for creative enhancements by the owner.

The Great Camps that inspired the restaurant's design were built and decorated with the Northeast's natural resources, and Clyde's brought in Vermont specialists to produce the interior logwork and twig filigree work.

Throughout the restaurant, paintings, statues, boats and canoes and other artifacts reflect the outdoors theme. Laytham and Tom Meyer, Clyde's executive vice president, are always on the lookout for decorating "finds," which they buy and store in anticipation of a new restaurant. When it came time to decorate Tower Oaks, they already had stashed away a number of boats and canoes, including an unusual

old Native American canoe made of animal skins.

As a result of their avid collecting, "every time you return to Tower Oaks, you see things you never saw before," says Tony Sinchak. "It's like a little museum—there's something around every corner."

Maizel emphasizes that Tower Oaks would not be the popular showplace it is without the contribution and cooperation of numerous specialty craftspeople, including Wagner Roofing's specialists. "Wagner's people took pride in their work and cooperated with the other trades to complete a project we're all proud of. Wagner Roofing did a great job, and they deserve to be congratulated." Adds Chuck Wagner: "You know a job is successful when the restaurant owner invites all the subcontractors in for an open bar and dinner." ●

### Admiral's House, from page 1

Island. Wagner Roofing was asked to seal that property to protect the interior from potential water leaks and damage. The Society is engaged in a capital campaign to raise \$2 million, which would enable it to combine the two houses, install an elevator to make the facilities more accessible and move the library from the basement to the more suitable ground floor. The Society could then open its house to the public and offer use of its library and other resources to researchers.

For now, the house remains a well-kept secret. With only 3,500 members, the Daughters of 1812 find it challenging to operate a membership organization and at the same time maintain their historic headquarters, a responsibility they take very

seriously. "We are stewards of the house, the memorabilia and the books," says Peggy Christie.

That's why she spearheaded the recent roof replacement and repairs at 1461 Rhode Island Ave. "Water is a powerful force," she emphasizes. "It doesn't give up, so it must be addressed. As a former general contractor, my husband is very happy with Wagner Roofing's work. And the National Society is happy." ●

*Founded in 1892, the National Society of United States Daughters of 1812 requires members to demonstrate lineal descent from an ancestor who rendered military, naval or civil service between the close of the American Revolutionary War in 1783 and the close of the War of 1812 in 1815. For more information, go to [usdaughters1812.org](http://usdaughters1812.org) or call 202/745/1812.*

## Serving the Community

As a member of the metropolitan Washington, D.C., community since 1914, Wagner Roofing is committed to supporting worthwhile causes and activities that enhance our community and improve all our lives.

Wagner is pleased to contribute goods, services and/or funds to these organizations:

- Arts for the Aging, Inc.
- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington, Jelleff Branch
- Capital Area Food Bank "Good Neighbor" Corporate Campaign
- City Museum of Washington, D.C.
- D.C. Preservation League
- Gallaudet University
- Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Poor Robert's Charities
- Tudor Place
- YMCA (Washington, D.C.)

## News & Notes

A dilapidated Georgetown garage transformed into a glass-walled art studio won a **Washingtonian Residential Design Award**. Wagner Roofing installed a copper roof on the award-winning project. "This is an example of how something that's not expensive, and doesn't need to be expensive, can be much more than average," the award jury said.

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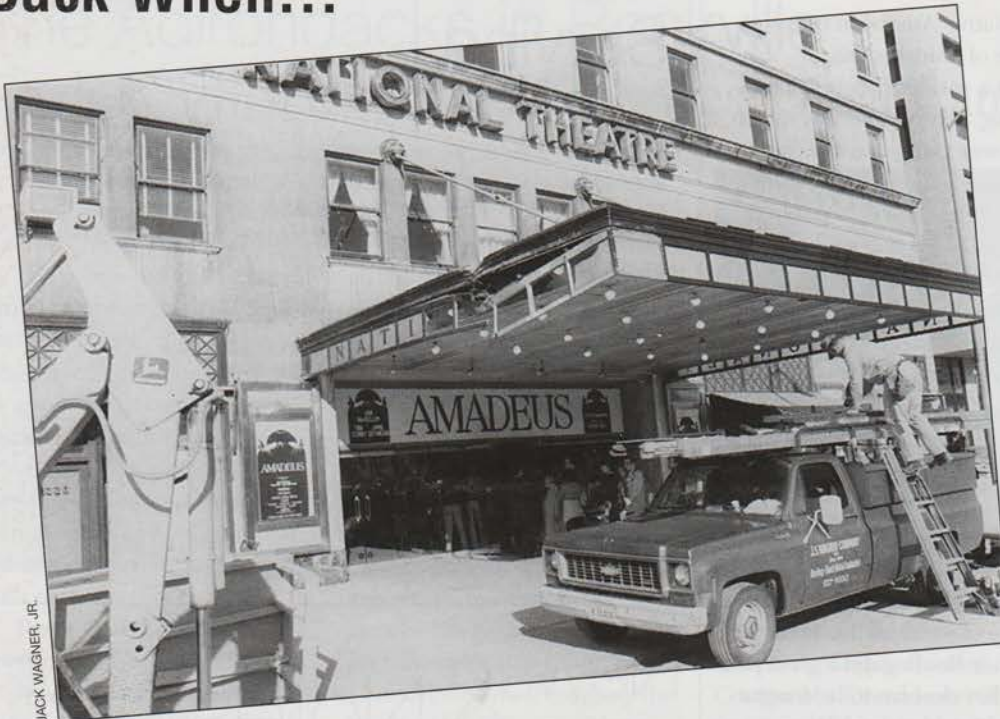
When the 30,000-square-foot **Bradley Boulevard Shopping Center** in Bethesda, Md., recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, no one was more pleased than the people at Wagner Roofing. The center is one of Wagner's oldest clients—dating to 1953, when developers Sam Barrow, Sr., and Henry J. Robb called on Chuck Wagner's dad, Jack, to install the roof on the new structure. Because commercial, or flat, roofs have an expected lifespan of 15 to 20 years, Wagner replaced the original roof with rubber in the 1980s. But the most recent roofing job has been the biggest challenge: During renovation of the neighborhood icon's façade, Wagner roofed the new cupola and installed roofs and soffit over the entrance canopies—while the center remained open to shoppers. "The personal and professional relationship that Mr. Barrow and Mr. Robb forged with Jack Wagner has lasted for a half-century and is still going strong," says Paul Ringling of Strosnider's Hardware, who handles on-site maintenance. "As the center's long-time roof custodian, Wagner continues to do a great job."

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A Victorian townhouse that Wagner Roofing helped restore has received the **Mayor's Award for Excellence in Residential Preservation**. Tania Shand's home at 1901 Vermont Avenue, N.W., was the subject of the cover story in the Summer 2001 issue of *Wagner Rooflines*. Wagner installed a new Vermont slate mansard roof, copper roof, gutters and downspouts.



# Back When...



**Amadeus was playing at Washington's National Theatre when "Doctor" Kenny Howell (now deceased) set up equipment to remove parts of a damaged metal canopy for repairs at Wagner's shop. The American premiere of Amadeus opened at the National in November 1980, shortly before this photo was taken.**

## Who We Are

**Chuck Wagner, Sheila Wagner**  
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Lee Simon, Jeff Wooldridge**  
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**Denise Berti**  
Project Manager/General Contracting

**Barbara Demarest**  
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