



CPHS Forges Partnerships in Cleveland Park

By Eleni Constantine, *President*
and Sam Friedman, *Community
Projects Coordinator*
Cleveland Park Historical Society

In recent years, the Cleveland Park Historical Society has expanded the scope of its activities beyond its original focus of architectural preservation and zoning, in recognition of the fact that what makes Cleveland Park special goes beyond the built environment to include such things as trees and streetscape and commercial vitality and diversity. As we broadened the scope of the action, we've also tried to build partnerships. A new pattern has emerged, in which CPHS initiates a

project which is then taken over by its natural constituency in the community, while CPHS continues to provide support in various ways.

Cleveland Park Main Street Project
Perhaps the best examples of CPHS's work with other groups in the community come from the Main Street Project, which was initiated by CPHS last year and is now operating independently. On Wisconsin Avenue, merchants and commercial property owners, including Hal Lake of the Zebra Room, Janie Hulme of Cleveland Park Bookshop (a CPHS Board member), and representatives of GFS Realty, Inc. and the Holladay Corporation, are working

together to produce a brochure promoting the commercial area between Lowell Street and Idaho Avenue—to be titled *The Shops at Cathedral Heights on Wisconsin Avenue*.

On Connecticut, the completion of the Main Street Project fulfilled the original mission of the Connecticut Avenue Revitalization Committee chaired by CPHS Board member Ron Hoffer. Jemal's Park & Shop is almost fully tenanted and new businesses are moving onto the blocks between Macomb and Porter Streets, including a number of restaurants and "Wake Up Little Suzy," a clothes-and-gift store. Accordingly, the committee will be reconstituting itself and refocusing on streetscape improvement and other interests of the merchants and neighbors (call 363-6358 to participate).

Led by CPHS Board member Renata Jones, a working group of the committee (CPHS Board members Cathy Armington, Susan Hornbostel, and Susan Zusy) delivered in late August a complete streetscape plan for the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Newark Street to a group of interested merchants: Rob Landis of Artmaster

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Some crew members and a fire truck of Engine Company 28 pictured in front of Cleveland Park's historic firehouse, built in 1916 on Connecticut Avenue. See story, page 6.

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CPHS Forges Partnerships

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Printers, P.J. Walsh of Thos. B. Walsh Realtors, and Christy Hughes of Ireland's Four Provinces. The merchants are now seeking bids for construction. This project is made possible by a grant from Advisory Neighborhood Commission-3C. CPHS specially thanks former ANC Commissioner Roger Burns for his assistance in obtaining this grant.

Cleveland Park Day

The annual fall Cleveland Park Day, held this year on Sunday, October 3, was started two years ago by CPHS and the newly revitalized Cleveland Park Merchants Association. It is now under the leadership of the Cleveland Park Merchants Association, composed of Connecticut Avenue merchants. Rhonda Gilreath, manager of Supercuts, is Cleveland Park Day Chairperson, supported by merchants and staff people from Connecticut Avenue businesses, including Christy Hughes, Francis Devillers of Le Lavandou, Lisa Manikowski of Moto Photo, and Joni Kretzer of Uptown Bakers. The popular neighborhood flea market portion of Cleveland Park Day was managed this year by CPHS Board members Beth Pollard and Susan Zusy, with Pat Betts.

CPHS Presentation at D.C. Preservation Conference

CPHS President Eleni Constantine, Janie Hulme, and CPHS Community Projects Coordinator Sam Friedman spoke about the Main Street Project at the D.C. Preservation League's First Annual City-Wide Conference on Preservation on Saturday, May 15. Our presentations focused on the history of the Cleveland Park Main Street Project, the planning process, and the benefits of residents, merchants, and property owners working together to enhance neighborhood commercial areas. Feedback from an audience representing a range of neighborhood and city organizations and agencies indicated that our talk was well received.

Architectural Preservation Work with the City

CPHS has also continued its efforts to work closely with city agencies, including the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board, which must approve all building projects within the Cleveland

Park Historic District. CPHS supported the effort to increase staffing at the HPRB and to reinstate the system of assigning a particular staff person to each historic district. As a result, Cleveland Park now has an HPRB staff architectural historian responsible for the review of building permit applications in the Historic District: Steve Callcott (727-7360; interviewed in *Voices*, Spring 1993). Mr. Callcott's duties include meeting with homeowners and developers on projects during the conceptual stage, to develop an application that is likely to receive HPRB approval. The CPHS Architectural Review Committee, chaired by CPHS Board member Jim Bayley, continues to meet monthly to review those final applications for building permits that the HPRB (Mr. Callcott) sends to the ARC for neighborhood input. This has tremendously relieved the burden on the ARC and enabled it to focus on its core mission of providing nonbinding neighborhood comments on actual applications being considered by the Historic Preservation Review Board.

Also, in response to instances of construction initiated without a permit, the CPHS Board asked Sam Friedman to develop a memo answering common questions about the city enforcement and compliance process, to make the process more accessible to neighborhood residents and merchants concerned about a particular building project. Copies of this memo are available from CPHS (363-6358). Additionally, in June CPHS organized a meeting of Eleni Constantine and ANC-3C Commissioners Patricia Wamsley and Adam Vodraska with Hampton Cross, then Administrator of the Building and Land Regulation Administration and now Acting Director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and other senior staff in his office, to discuss the problem of construction without permits and ask for his assistance. The city's Inspection Division has pledged support in this area and CPHS supports efforts to reform and update the enforcement and compliance process.

Flower and Garden Lectures

Gordon Sheridan, General Manager of Johnson's Flower and Garden Centers and CPHS Board member, along with his Tree Committee co-chair John Poole, has organized CPHS's lecture series of this fall on "Flowers

24th Annual Cleveland Park Block Party

Saturday, October 16
11 am to 5 pm

Macomb Playground
(34th and Macomb Streets)

Craft booths, where local artisans will show and sell their wares are a new feature of this year's Cleveland Park Block Party. There will also be music, games and pony rides, fabulous food and home-baked treats, the opportunity shop and white elephant tables. Fun for all ages. (The regular silent auction will be held later in the school year, at John Eaton.)

All proceeds benefit John Eaton Public Elementary School. For further information, call Missy Riseling, 686-5540.

and Gardens." Plan to come and bring a neighbor to what promise to be four instructive and entertaining Monday evenings. (Details on the back page of the newsletter.)

Gordon, John and Board member Martha Sheridan continue to work with neighborhood groups interested in funding and organizing tree plantings on their blocks. Blocks wishing to join this tree planting effort can contact the Sheridans (966-8205) or John (966-8329).

Correction:

The firm of landscape architect Jim Sines, who generously donated his time and expertise to design the streetscape plan proposed for the corner of Connecticut and Newark, was incorrectly identified in the Spring 1993 issue of *Voices*. The correct name is Garden Gate Landscaping Inc., of Silver Spring.

Cleveland Park Personalities

Kathryn Schneider Smith

By Jean van der Tak

"I'm interested in community building, and I like challenges." These threads in her life help explain why Kathy Smith has become a leader in promoting the local history of Washington, D.C. When she got here in 1965, she found local history had been neglected in a city everybody thought of first as the federal capital.

Since then, Kathy has orchestrated the introduction of local history into the D.C. public schools, where it is now a ninth-grade course required for graduation. She has been on the Board of the Historical Society of Washington since 1978 and President since 1989. She edited the Society's 1988 award-winning publication, *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*, with its chapter on Cleveland Park by neighbor and former CPHS President Kathy Wood; started and was first editor of the Society's lively semi-annual journal, *Washington History*; and is now working on the Society's master plan for a citywide "getting to know our history" program. She is in constant demand as a teacher, lecturer, tour guide, and independent consultant on D.C. history. And along the way, she inspired the John Eaton Neighborhood History Project and helped found the Cleveland Park Historical Society after she, husband Sam, and their two sons moved here from Capitol Hill in 1972.

Born in Milwaukee, Kathy majored in journalism at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, but "took every possible course I could in history." In four years with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, she was able to combine this interest in history with writing and editing—"as I continue to do today."

Ready for bigger things and imbued with 1960s Kennedy spirit of public service, she decided to take a chance on Washington and landed a job as assistant press secretary to Wisconsin's

then Senator Gaylord Nelson in 1965. She met and married Sam within a year, and plunged into work on his new *Capital East Gazette* and the exciting community activism of the time on Capitol Hill. There were "emergency" committees to get play spaces, a pool, and better schools, spun off from the Friendship House "women's auxiliary," Circle-on-the-Hill, of which Kathy became President.

Pursuing that elusive local history, she also did research for Constance McLaughlin Green, then dean of urban history in Washington, and local history stories for Sam's paper. A key breakthrough came with the Two-W Project. Here she prepared enrichment materials and trained teachers on Washington history for feeder schools into Wilson and Western High Schools.

That led to the three-year, National Endowment for the Humanities-funded D.C. History Curriculum Project that Kathy initiated and co-directed, combining local academic historians and public high school teachers in researching, writing a text, and creating classroom activities for the teaching of Washington history. The idea was community building and "a whole new way of looking at local history," she says—not memorizing names of early Indian dwellers and prominent city forefathers, but learning about folk left out of the record—minorities, women, people of limited means—"because they didn't write books." That way, she explains as an example, an African American high schooler "east of the river" might see forebears "like me" whose happy, successful lives could be role models.

The idea also was to promote public use of Washington's "tremendous" resources—the Smithsonian, National Geographic, Library of Congress—and university research, "as I'm trying to do now at the Historical Society," says Kathy.

She coauthored the text used in that ninth-grade required course and wrote the accompanying *You in History*, to show young people how they too can use primary sources—interviewing the longtime resident next door, asking their mother about "this old thing here," looking up family birth certificates—for the detective work that is "the thrill of being an historian."

That approach inspired Rives Carroll's work with John Eaton stu-



Kathryn Schneider Smith

dents on the Cleveland Park Neighborhood History Project (see *Voices*, Fall 1992). Kathy's experience at the Historical Society also helped in the founding of the Cleveland Park Historical Society. But mostly, she insists modestly, "my role here has been cheering all the wonderful things others have done."

John Eaton and an ambiance "just like the neighborhood I grew up in in Milwaukee" were what drew Kathy and Sam to Cleveland Park and their graceful Queen Anne home on Newark Street. Son Nathaniel, now a Brown graduate and enrolled at Catholic University for a master's in social work, and Ben, still at Brown, both attended preschool at Lowell in the Congregational Church and then Eaton.

Feeling the need for more historical knowledge as well as credentials, Kathy herself went back to school and completed a master's in American civilization at George Washington University in 1986. Her master's thesis put into practice her emphasis on primary sources—census, tax and church records, city directories, oral history, old maps and photos. The resulting book, *Port Town to Urban Neighborhood: The Georgetown Waterfront of Washington, D.C.*, published in 1989, "is as much about using sources as the information I found," she says.

Kathy has been an independent historical consultant since 1980. Her latest commission is conducting oral histories and writing a 50th anniversary history for the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation.

But her heart lies in her volunteer
Continued on back page

Where Cleveland Park Voices Are Heard

By Susan Zusy

Actively in pursuit of happiness and other states of fulfillment, Cleveland Parkers use what spare time they have participating in citizen action groups, community development activities, book clubs, gardening associations, and other neighborly enterprises. Cleveland Park residents are good citizens with many interests. Chances are, if you are not already involved in some of these activities, you will want to be. These are some of the many reasons why we love living in Cleveland Park.

Cleveland Park Historical Society

The *Cleveland Park Historical Society* (CPHS) was founded in 1985 in an effort to make Cleveland Park an historic district and thereby protect the neighborhood from overdevelopment. CPHS continues to support and implement efforts that will enhance the community and its unique qualities. Active projects and committees include: the *Voices* newsletter, Lectures and Special Programs Committee, the Tree Committee, the Connecticut Avenue Streetscape Project and the Adopt-a-Tree Partnership Project, the Architectural Review Committee, and the Membership Committee. We welcome your participation and membership. For general information, to volunteer, or to become a member, phone Sam Friedman at 363-6358.

Cleveland Park Citizens Association

The *Cleveland Park Citizens Association* is an award-winning member of the D.C. Federation of Civic Associations. Founded in 1921, it is also one of the oldest in the city. At monthly meetings, the Association presents distinguished speakers who address contemporary issues, from traffic adjudication to issues about education. This season's speaker series begins Saturday, October 2, with Captain Barry McDevitt of the METRO Transit Police Department, who will give a slide presentation about the work of the MTP Patrol Division and answer questions about METRO. Meetings are held the first Saturday of every month at 10 a.m. in the Community Room of the Cleveland Park Library. For further information, phone Mrs. Gilpin Walker, President, 362-0221.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions

The Home Rule Act of 1973 established *Advisory Neighborhood Commissions* (ANC) to act as liaisons between the neighborhoods they represent and the D.C. govern-

ment. Under the Home Rule Act, the city government is instructed to provide "great weight" to ANC comments in its administration of city business. The ANCs make their opinions known to the D.C. Council, the Zoning Commission, the Board of Zoning Adjustment, and city government departments on issues that involve their communities. According to Pat Romsley, ANC (3C) Commissioner, such issues range widely, from the construction of new commercial buildings, traffic problems, liquor licenses, and the location of outdoor cafes, to noise complaints (from leaf blowers to commercial-size lawnmowers) and the construction of backyard decks. The ANC assists in mediating differences between neighbors.

ANC-3C, which includes Cleveland Park, Woodley Park, McLean Gardens, Cathedral Heights, and Massachusetts Avenue Heights, has nine single member districts; three of these—04, 05, and 09—specifically represent Cleveland Park. Adam Vodraska, Single Member District (04) Representative, is especially interested in the commercial areas and is looking into how property-owner business requirements that necessitate rent increases can be balanced with long-term merchants' requirements for affordable rent. Emilie Strand, Single Member District (05) Representative, is interested in improving the environment—trees, landscaping and sidewalks, around METRO stations in particular.

The ANC-3C meets at 8 p.m. the fourth Monday of every month at the 2nd District Police Headquarters, 3320 Idaho Avenue N.W. For more information, call 232-2232.

Cleveland Park House Tour

The Spring Cleveland Park House Tour, an important annual community event, benefits the National Child Research Center (NCRC), a nonprofit, independent school for children ages two to five. While highlighting the Cleveland Park community and showcasing its lovely homes, the house tour provides supplemental funding for this 60-year-old nursery and pre-kindergarten. NCRC was founded in 1928 as a research facility, under a three-year grant from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller will. When the grant ended, it was continued by the parents as an independent school. Today the Center continues under the direction of a Board of Trustees, selected primarily from parents of children attending the school. NCRC seeks to have a student body

reflecting the diverse makeup of our city. If you would like to help the school by opening your home for a Spring House Tour, please write or call the school: Janet Wintrol, Director, NCRC, 3209 Highland Place N.W., WDC 20008, 363-8777.

Book Clubs

Book clubs have been around as long as there have been avid readers. Cleveland Park is full of avid readers. Some of them participate in book clubs that are particularly suited to a community of busy, informed, and friendly neighbors. Barbara Jorgensen, Secretary for *Cleveland Park Book Club I*, reports that the first book club became active over 60 years ago and was based on an idea from Vermont. Being community-based, eligibility is confined to residents in the immediate neighborhood; from the beginning, books were to be passed on by foot. Because membership is necessarily limited by the number of weeks in a "reading season," *Cleveland Park Book Club II* was formed. In addition to their primary interest in access to contemporary books, Ann Hodgdon, President of Book Club II, described club interest in supporting neighborhood book merchants.

For each club, a committee purchases a set of books from the preceding year's publications. At reading season kickoff (after Labor Day), each book club member receives two books, one fiction and one nonfiction. Throughout fall and winter, books are walked from neighbor to neighbor—every week for Book Club I and every two weeks for Book Club II. At the end of the reading season, the book clubs auction off the season's books to members. Proceeds and nominal annual dues are used to buy the next season's books.

For consultation on starting up Book Club III, write to either Barbara Jorgensen or Ann Hodgdon, c/o CPHS, P.O. Box 4862, WDC 20008.

Community Gardens

While laboring only a block or two from major thoroughfares, city gardeners feel transported when their hands are in the soil making things grow. Cleveland Park offers refuge to city gardeners at two locations: *Melvin Hazen Community Garden* on Sedgwick Street west of Connecticut Avenue and *Newark Street Community Garden* on Newark Street west of Wisconsin Avenue. These gardens make communities: romances develop, births are celebrated and funerals are attended by friends made here.

Melvin Hazen Community Garden is an original Victory Garden. During World War II, the National Park Service designated certain parcels of federal land as

gardens for growing vegetables to feed the community until the Allies achieved victory. Of the 92 current members, one Tilden Garden resident has been gardening at Melvin Hazen for these 50 years. Some of the original rules are also still active: still, only 5 percent of a garden plot may be planted with flowers.

William Hash, Director of Urban Gardens for the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks, describes Newark Street Community garden as one of the best organized and administered of the 20 gardens under his umbrella. While only 15 to 20 years old, this garden is established with 200 to 225 members. Excess produce is donated regularly to charities.

Both community gardens have waiting lists but both encourage applicants. Plots are distributed in order of receipt of application. For Melvin Hazen Community Garden, call Betsy Swearingen, Secretary, at 686-0083 to receive an applicant form. For Newark Street Community Garden, the membership drive begins February 1, 1994. Look for instructions on the garden bulletin board.

Cleveland Park Club

The nonprofit Cleveland Park Swimming and Social Club, incorporated in 1922, is the oldest continuously running community pool in the city. Located at the north end of 33rd Place, just off Highland Place, club facilities include a small swimming pool and an old house with a wraparound porch. A large open room on the first floor is available to rent for parties. With potluck dinners on Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day, and square dances, Christmas caroling, and ice skating parties at other times of the year, the Cleveland Park Club is a real old-style community center.

The club can accommodate up to 150 families, who must live within the John Eaton School boundaries. Members pay a \$300 initiation fee and \$275 annually. For information, phone Henry Little, President at 966-2847 or Tina Mead, Membership Coordinator, at 686-0654.

We know there are other community-based organizations and activities in Cleveland Park. This article will be the first of two reporting on "Where Cleveland Park Voices Are Heard." Do you need new members, volunteers, or community input? Do you teach your interests? Send information about who you are and what you do to: Susan Zusy, c/o CPHS, P.O. Box 4862, WDC 20008.

Susan Zusy, a CPHS Board member, manages the Affirmative Action program and various community relations projects—currently, Arts on Foot—for the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation.



With their barnlike silhouettes, Dutch Colonial Revivals are more informal and picturesque than other Colonial Revivals. Most Cleveland Park examples were built in the early 1920s. Drawing by John Wiebenson.

Architectural Corner

By Cherrie Anderson

Dutch Colonial Revival

This is the eighth example to appear in Voices of the house styles featured in a planned CPHS Guide to Cleveland Park House Styles. Author Cherrie Anderson is an interior designer. Illustrator John Wiebenson is an architect.

Dutch Colonial Revival houses are easily recognizable by their distinctive gambrel rooflines—two slopes on each side, the lower of which is steeper. They are less formal and more picturesque than most other Colonial Revivals. Their barnlike silhouettes are embellished with simplified classical details. Most Dutch Colonial Revivals in Cleveland Park were built during the early 1920s. Examples are the houses at 3409 Woodley Road and 3412 Lowell Street.

Basic Form

- Rectangular, symmetrical massing;
- Front or end gable gambrel roof with flared eaves, often with shed some-

times gabled dormers;

- Central or off-center front or side entrance, with fairly symmetrically placed windows;
- Small front porch or portico; often a corner porch covered by the main roof.

Materials

- Wood shingle, pebble-dash stucco, narrow wood clapboard, or fieldstone siding, or a combination thereof;
- Originally wood shingle or sometimes slate roof;
- Wood windows, doors, and trim;
- Sometimes concrete porches.

Details

- Double-hung windows, with six-over-one (six panes above; one below) or six-over-six sash;
- Sometimes Palladian windows;
- Half-round windows, often in gable of gambrel;
- Louvered shutters;
- Classical columns on some porches;
- Arched porch opening cut out of front facade.



Engine Company 28

By Jeffrey Itell

My earliest childhood memory (Note to Freud: Keep an eye on this guy) was an incident late at night, standing in my pajamas in our backyard. I was watching our neighbor's house being devoured by flames. I was about three years old, about the same age as the victimized children. My fascination and awe of firefighting continued while attending Oak Drive Elementary School. Whenever the neighborhood siren sounded, we'd see Mr. Robbie, the avuncular school janitor, turn into this heroic figure racing off to the volunteer firehouse in full fireman regalia. I didn't need movies like "Backdraft" to spark (sorry) my interest in firefighting.

Needless to say, I was excited to be assigned this piece on Engine Company 28. I imagined sliding down the fire poles, riding on the fire trucks, and racing down Connecticut Avenue while drivers struggled to get out of our way. Then I got real.

I wandered over to the firehouse at 7 a.m., about five hours before my synapses usually start firing. I met my tour guide, Rex Schroyer, a 19-year veteran of the D.C. Fire Department, virtually all of them spent at 3522 Connecticut Avenue. Accustomed to 24-hour shifts, Rex is apparently not synaptically challenged in the early morning.

Rex fit my image of a firefighter—a little bit cocky, direct in speech—and a little impatient with someone who knows

nothing about practical things (I'm a policy analyst) and can't remember anything that's told to him before 9 o'clock in the morning. Knowing that I was overmatched, I struggled hard to absorb what Rex told me about Engine Company 28.

He told me—about three times—that the firehouse contains two companies: a ladder truck company (the large truck with ladders) and an engine company (a shorter truck containing water and hoses). The companies frequently work together but for many emergency calls, only one is necessary. The firehouse has four platoons that work 24-hour shifts. Engine Company 28 covers a wide territory on both sides of Rock Creek Park, from Western Avenue down to Calvert Street.

Rex added that the company responds to seven to 10 calls during an average shift, mostly medical or emergency calls. Each shift also usually brings one or two fire calls, which often amount to nothing more than short circuits or kitchen accidents. (Though potentially dangerous, these calls can also be embarrassing—like when our family called the fire department because of a smoldering smell, which turned out to be a balloon melting on a light bulb. Why embarrassing? Because the fire engines arrived on Sunday at 8 a.m. with all the sirens wailing. We got to see what all the neighbors wore to bed that night.)

Naturally, some of the fire calls provide memorable moments. Rex said his most memorable experience occurred in April 1991, when a private home at 3219 Cathedral Avenue went up like a tinderbox. The heat melted the fire truck's plastic and blistered the paint. It took over 90 minutes to subdue that fire.

All this activity takes place in a historically significant firehouse. For particulars, I am paraphrasing from historical research conducted by Sally Berk. (See, *The Historic Context Report on D.C.'s Pre-World War II Firehouses*, prepared by Sally Berk, funded by the D.C. Historic Preservation Fund.)

The firehouse was constructed in 1916, when the area was sparsely developed. Only a few rows of brick townhouses and a few small apartment buildings stood nearby. The city lavished detail and expense on Engine Company 28 because it was located on Connecticut Avenue, which was designed to serve as an elegant boulevard connecting the city and its suburbs.

Engine Company 28 is a transitional building bridging two periods of

firehouse design. The last Eclectic Revival firehouse built in D.C., it is also the first to exhibit the influence of Colonial Revivalism, a characteristic of all firefighting buildings constructed in Washington between the two World Wars.

According to Sally, Engine Company 28 is more urbane than the Colonial Revival firehouses that followed, with an elaborately detailed facade executed in rich materials. Its rusticated-limestone base is comprised of two round-arched door openings and a small center window. The second floor facade is brick highlighted by limestone cornering. Intended to serve as headquarters for a battalion chief, it is one of few D.C. firehouses to have a third-floor attic.

Engine Company 28 was certainly a jewel of its time, but time has taken its toll. Even before I had my cup of coffee I could see that the building's interior looked like a ramshackle sleep-away camp. The bedding was donated by the Sheraton Park Hotel in the mid 1970s, the ping-pong table by Quebec House, and the rest must have been picked up at yard sales. The District government can't be accused of throwing money down a rat hole furnishing this place. Furthermore, the building has suffered water damage from roof leaks. Rex showed me a number of places where the plaster walls have deteriorated.

Despite these problems, the building is most likely not suffering from significant structural damage. Mark Wilson, an engineer from Cleveland Park, cursorily assessed the firehouse recently and found both the roof and brickwork to be sound. He thought a roofer could fix the leakage in a day, by cleaning the gutters, caulking, and resealing the joints. Then, once the plaster dried (a good indication that the leaking has stopped), some plaster work, a new coat of paint, perhaps a nice floral arrangement here and there, and the place would look like a ... like a firehouse is supposed to look. Of course, if the building crumbles tomorrow, remember the word cursory.

As I completed my tour with Rex, I was yearning to slide down a fire pole. I asked Rex if he uses the pole when the alarm sounds. He said at 43 he was too old to get downstairs that way; he took the stairs and left the athletics to the younger firefighters. Alas, so did I.

Jeffrey Itell is the publisher, editor, writer, and chief schlepper of the new monthly newsletter, CLEVELAND PARK 20008.

Our Neighborhood Shopkeepers

Priscilla Doyle of Encore

By Jennifer O'Keefe

Why travel to the fashion capitals of the world or drive to boutiques in your favorite mall when, if you live in Cleveland Park, you can walk to Encore for great fashions at bargain prices? If you don't already know of Encore, it is the resale dress shop located upstairs at 3715 Macomb Street, just west of Wisconsin Avenue. Priscilla Doyle established this business at its present location in 1967 and has since seen it through continuous annual growth.

Mrs. Doyle had just arrived back from a family gathering in Paris to celebrate the christening of her fifth grandchild and first grandson, Gregory, when we met at Encore to talk about her 26-year career in Cleveland Park.

Priscilla chose Cleveland Park as the site for her new business because of its easy accessibility from downtown and the suburbs, as well as for the ample parking and the convenience of many other commercial shops and services in the neighborhood. It also allowed her to be close to her daughters, Nancy (then 12) and Diane (15), who were attending National Cathedral School at that time. Her youngest child, Robert was 10.

The concept for Encore originated with Priscilla's friend Florence Barry, whom she had met while working at ABC in New York. Mrs. Barry had opened Encore in Manhattan 15 years earlier (1952). When Priscilla decided to try to implement the Encore model in Washington, Florence sent a supply of dresses from her New York shop to help her get started. Jacqueline Kennedy was one of Florence's more renowned consignors at Encore for many years.

When Encore opened in Washington, the Junior League ran the only other store of its kind in the city. Many other spin-offs have developed over the years and one need only check the yellow pages or published guides to

see the outcropping of consignment shops specializing in women's and/or children's clothing throughout the greater metropolitan area. None of the newer shops, however, seem to provide serious competition for Encore, which has been steadfast in its reputation for selecting better design labels, contemporary styles, and classic accessory items.

Over the quarter century spent carving its niche in this market, Encore has witnessed far-reaching changes in attitudes about consignment clothing. Television, the fashion magazines, and other media regularly remind the consumer nowadays that consignment shopping, if not an economic necessity, is a fashion trend of the 1990s. Encore fashions have been featured on local television.

If you wish to check out the fall and winter stock at Encore, look for the unassuming doorway with the red and white awning between Sharp Image Hair Salon and the Modern Shoe Shop. Take the stairs to the second floor and allow an hour or two to peruse the suits and dresses, evening wear, sportswear, exercise outfits, lingerie, and coats from rainwear to furs. You will find all kinds of accessories, including jewelry, scarves, belts, hats, shoes, and the occasional frivolous piece such as a natural color feather boa. As I was wrapping up my interview with Priscilla, a customer was extolling the beauty of a classic wool paisley coat scarf. With much encouragement from other customers, she decided to purchase it. It was clear that several others might have jumped at the opportunity if she had left it behind.

Priscilla spends her days mostly behind the scenes handling appointments with consignors and management oversight. Many regular consignors continue to ship clothing to her from New York, Florida, and California. She is always looking for new consignors to keep their stock lively and appealing to a broad range of customers. If you have clothing or other items to consign, Priscilla asks that you call to schedule an appointment. As a general rule, the Encore price is set at approximately one third of the original purchase price. When sold at Encore, the resale amount is split 50/50 with the consignor.

Many items which are not sold are moved to a "\$35-and-under" rack in the back of the store. And finally, un-



Priscilla Doyle

sold items move to a \$1-a-piece bin, the proceeds of which go to the Boys and Girls Club of Washington and the Salvation Army.

It would be hard to find a commercial establishment in Cleveland Park or beyond that has as loyal or long-term a customer base as Encore. The staff of seven also has considerable longevity. They have clothed customers for decades and are now clothing the next generation of daughters and daughters-in-law. André, Trina, and Julie often know their customers by name and likely their families, friends, and the major events of their lives. They are ready to assist, if need be, in the communal dressing room to advise about fit, color, etc., but mostly they are dedicated to efficiency, informed about current fashion, and naturally create a friendly ambiance for browsing and shopping.

Many an Encore regular has a short list of out-of-town friends and relatives whose favorite stop after the monuments and galleries is a visit to Encore. What better memento of a trip to D.C. than a bargain outfit! Encore is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday; phone 966-8122.

Jennifer O'Keefe, a New Englander by birth, settled in Cleveland Park in 1983. She luxuriates in having more time recently to write and put deeper roots down in the Cleveland Park community. Some of the treasured items in her wardrobe are from Encore.

Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society

The Cleveland Park Historical Society, founded in 1985, achieved its initial aims to have our neighborhood declared a historic district and protect the low-rise commercial sections along Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues.

Now we are focusing on increasing neighborhood interest in historic preservation and community projects like helping to revitalize our shopping areas and replanting trees.

If you are not a current member, please join us now. Membership includes our newsletter, *Cleveland Park Voices*, and invitations to special programs. Send your check for \$25, payable to Cleveland Park Historical Society, to:

Judy Hubbard Saul
CPHS Membership Chair
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Sam Friedman, CPHS Community Projects Coordinator and Acting Director of the Cleveland Park Merchants Association, has an office above the American Security Bank at 3401 Connecticut Avenue. He is usually there mornings, Monday-Thursday, and Friday afternoon.

For a recording on CPHS activities, call 202-363-6358. For further information, leave a message for a callback.

Kathryn Schneider Smith *Continued from page 3*

work at the Historical Society of Washington—the name she had a hand in changing from the now-confusing Columbia Historical Society it had been since 1894. She announced it, as editor, in the first issue of the Society's new journal, *Washington History*, in 1989. Just before that, in "a crash course on editing," she worked with 19 local architectural and social historians who had done disparate, unpublished neighborhood research to produce the Society's handsome 21-chapter, illustrated *Washington at Home*.

In the same way, as President in her fifth year, Kathy is now working with others at the Society on how it can be a catalyst to pull together scattered papers, artifacts, and existing research on Washington's history, encourage much more research, and get it all into the public eye. Programs for children, neighborhoods, churches, and, eventually, a downtown Washington History Center to house programs and displays are also in the planning or already launched. Thus Kathy and the Society hope to help Washington catch up on the civic culture it largely failed to develop during its first 100 years when it lacked self government.

It's another big challenge. But Kathy already has gone a long way in putting local history to work in building Washington's sense of community.

Jean van der Tak is Editor of Voices.

CPHS's Fall 1993 Lecture Series

FLOWERS AND GARDENS

Monday evenings at 8 pm
Cleveland Park Congregational Church
34th and Lowell Streets N.W.

Monday, October 4, 1993
Garden questions perennially growing on your mind?

Come and ask the "foliage doctor":
Gordon Sheridan, General Manager of Johnson's Flower and Garden Centers

Monday, October 18, 1993
Gardening in the Shade
Sarah S. Boasberg, Garden Designer and Chairman of the Board of the American Horticultural Society

Monday, November 15, 1993
History of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta
Dr. Marc Cathey, President of the American Horticultural Society

Monday, November 29, 1993
Decorating for the Holidays
Leslie Saum, Floral Designer

CPHS Members: \$3.00 Guests: \$5.00
Entire series \$10.00 Entire series: \$17.50

For more information, call 363-6358.

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