

CLEVELAND PARK



VOL. 10, NO. 2

NEWSLETTER OF THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 1996

CPHS Going for a ROMP

By Dick Jorgensen

President, Cleveland Park Historical Society

A ROMP? Yes indeed. This is—and will continue to be for some time—the ROMP in the heart of Cleveland Park. The idea for it materialized last June when the Cleveland Park Historical Society's leadership brought together several community activists—concerned Cleveland Parkers—to brainstorm ways to undertake a major new CPHS-inspired initiative: the REHABILITATION OF MACOMB STREET PLAYGROUND. An official city facility since 1950, located on the north side of Macomb just west of 34th Street, this jewel of a play area for toddlers, teens and even adults of Northwest Washington had fallen on hard times, seemingly symptomatic of a D.C. Recreation Dept. increasingly strapped for resources to maintain buildings and grounds and support quality programs and services as it once had.

What a shame, we felt, that this playground had begun to look more like something out of the Third World than a parkland smack in the center of

one of the most historic—and prosperous—neighborhoods of our nation's capital. Then and there, what we're now calling the ROMP became, in my view, the most significant of the new initiatives undertaken by the CPHS Executive Committee and formally endorsed by our Board of Directors at its September 16th meeting.

Some of us could not wait for that formal endorsement. Inspired by reports of well-organized activists' accomplishments elsewhere in Northwest Washington and similar efforts by neighbors of nearby Hearst and John Eaton schools, we grabbed rakes, shovels, pruning shears, paintbrushes and set about our beautification-cum-repair chores, every Saturday morning, rain or shine, commencing July 6, 1996. The "sweat equity" of the following ROMPers during the summer was particularly appreciated: *Sylvia Abrams*; the whole *Buchanan Family* (John, Denise, Grier, Ben, Luke, Will, and even the boys' grandmother from Arizona); *Michael Goldstein* and son *Eric*; *Ann Hodgdon*—bless her for tackling that prickly hedge; and longtime CPHS beautification volunteers *Peter Lande* and *Steve Turow*. Moral support came from John Gunion, RuthAnne Miller, Wilma Pechacek, Judy Sabella, Chris Stein and other immediate neighbors and friends of Macomb Playground. D.C. Recreation Dept. personnel—especially *Juanita Peterson*—provided welcome assistance on numerous occasions all summer long.

We accomplished a lot, but Phase I of ROMP will continue through November. The toddlers' play area has

had lawn care, removal of weeds and dead tree limbs, some modest landscaping and more to be done; yet to be achieved: bench repair and painting, sandbox repair, flood control, spreading of wood chips. The basketball court needs repair of surface and bench, more weeding and landscaping, repainting of court markings, basketball hoop backdrops, etc. Still on our list for completion in Phase I are cleaning/upgrading of the "practice" tennis court area and more weeding and lawn improvement around it; painting and modest renovation of the fieldhouse; dead tree removal; fence repair; sign restoration.

We see ROMP Phases II and III coming up in the year ahead. Phase II—roughly five months of intense activity, November 1996-March 1997—will consist of the development of a "grand vision" or master plan for Macomb Play-

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Teamed up to help rehabilitate Macomb Street Playground are John and Denise Buchanan and sons, from left, Grier, twin Will, Ben and twin Luke.

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ground (in cooperation with the Adopt-a-Park folks at the D.C. Recreation Dept.) and conclude with a major fundraising drive in the community. Phase III—April-October 1997—will constitute the critical execution-of-the-master-plan period. A committee is being formed.

As described by Maria Constantine in the fall 1994 issue of *Voices*, this playground has served young people—into adulthood—of Cleveland Park since early in this century. The property's then owner, Mr. Olmsted, allowed the neighborhood free access to the site even before the forest that stood there was cleared in the 1930s and, in the 1940s, he laid down a rubber mat for children to play baseball on. The last "transformation" of the area occurred in the early 1950s, after neighborhood women had persuaded the city to establish an official playground on the land, which it had bought. Now the D.C. Recreation Dept., with its Adopt-a-Park program, stands ready to assist us with our CPHS-inspired, but community-supported, ROMP.

Early one July Saturday morning as I was trimming between the playground and Macomb Street, a neighbor—and, I'm sure, friend—of Macomb breezed by in a station wagon, honked, waved—and drove on. I thought, "The least they might have done was to 'Break for

Macomb Playground' and signal a greeting and promise to help." WE BREAK FOR MACOMB PLAYGROUND may well become a bumper sticker contributing to this great effort in the months ahead. So it's on to Phase II of ROMP—the Rehabilitation of Macomb Playground—in the heart of Cleveland Park.

Other CPHS Activities

As noted elsewhere in this issue of *Voices*, Outreach Coordinator Judy Hubbard Saul has produced a *Guide to Cleveland Park Merchants* (delivered or mailed to all paid-up CPHS members). We sponsored "A Taste of Cleveland Park" on Connecticut and Wisconsin on Saturday, September 28th. Our second annual House Tour of Saturday, October 5th, was another great success. Our *Guide to Cleveland Park House Styles* has received a matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and production is underway. Bill Newlon is our new liaison with John Eaton School and Peter Lande with the Cleveland Park Library, where the new CPHS-produced community news bulletin board now hangs prominently. We delivered "welcome packets" to over 40 new Cleveland Park households. Tree boxes and flower planters on Connecticut and Wisconsin, most established by CPHS, continue to be tended by CPHS volunteers. And our tree man, Gordon Sheridan, plans another tree-planting for November 16th. Stay tuned!

CPHS House Style Guide Funded

CPHS scored a hit in our application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Services Fund for a grant to produce a *Guide to Cleveland Park House Styles*. In August we got word that we'd been awarded \$2,500—which we must match—for "this worthwhile preservation activity," beating out "a large number of qualified applicants competing for very limited funds."

Past CPHS President Eleni Constantine is project coordinator and editor of what she reports will be a soft-bound book based on the dozen drawings of Cleveland Park house styles by architect John Wiebenson and accompanying text—most by interior designer Cherrie Anderson—appearing in the "Architectural Corner" of *Voices* since spring 1990. Architectural historian Kathy Wood, who initiated the series while serving as CPHS president, will write an introduction discussing the styles and their development in the unique environment of Cleveland Park. The book will also include a map of the Cleveland Park Historic District and possibly black and white photos from the CPHS

**CPHS at a Glance:
April-November 1996**

- House Style Guide funding approval.
- Welcome packets distributed to new neighbors.
- Publications committee forming.
- Guide to Cleveland Park Merchants published.
- Community news bulletin board put up at Cleveland Park Library.
- Liaisons appointed to library and John Eaton School.
- Bound volumes of *Voices* 1987-1996 distributed.
- Connecticut Avenue cleanup, Sept. 7th.
- A Taste of Cleveland Park, Sept. 28th.
- Modern House Tour, Oct. 5th.
- Supporting D.C. Preservation League conference: "Changing Times/New Challenges: Preservation through Neighborhood Activism and Citywide Cooperation," National Building Museum, Nov. 9th.
- Tree-planting, Nov. 16th.
- ROMP activities all summer long and continuing.

CPHS House Tour Highlights

On a sparkling Saturday afternoon, October 5th, the 1996 CPHS Walking Tour of Modern Houses in Cleveland Park, organized by CPHS Secretary Alison Steadman and guided by architect Winthrop Faulkner and architectural

historian Kathy Wood, led 50 participants from Rosedale, the neighborhood's oldest house (1794), to nine of its newest.

Highlights were an introduction to Rosedale by expert Louise Kenny, Faulkner's explanation of modern houses by him (see photo) and his architect father Waldron Faulkner on sites that were part of the Rosedale property when it was owned by his grandmother, a close-up look at the I.M. Pei house on Ordway Street, one of only two designed by the renowned architect, and refreshments at the Theresa Wernheimer-designed house on 35th Street.



CPHS Beautification Efforts: Laura Graham was one of several "younger community activists" helping in the Connecticut Avenue Cleanup of September 7th. CPHS beautification efforts continue apace on Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, at the library, and at Macomb Street Playground. CPHS Tree Chairman Gordon Sheridan plans another neighborhood tree-planting on Saturday, November 16th; volunteers are welcome (call 363-6358 for further information).

archives of houses in the various styles. The target publication date is early 1997.

Our Neighborhood Shopkeepers

G.C. Murphy Co.

By Rachel S. Cox

Many eulogies have been written of the American "five-and-dime"—that mainstay of old-fashioned Main Streets where you could get almost anything you needed and perhaps a gadget you didn't need, at reasonable prices and with a courteous, neatly smocked salesgirl to help you.

This is not a eulogy. At G.C. Murphy Co. on Wisconsin Avenue between Macomb and Newark Streets, the five-and-dime lives on, albeit—like everything else—slightly changed. Today you'll probably need at least quarters to get what you want there and the cast of characters has changed, but not entirely. The store resembles less a scaled-down department store than a mini-discount warehouse, since the stock varies to reflect promotional discounts offered by the parent corporation, the McCrory Company. And for the past few years Murphy's has shared some of the traits of a modern shopping mall, with seven independent businesses offering a wide range of additional services under its roof.

It's had its ups and downs since opening in Cleveland Park in 1953. But you can still get what you need there, as long as it's not expensive. The sales associates, some of whom have worked in the store nearly as long as it's existed, wear neat aprons and can still tell you where to find what you seek.

On a Monday morning in early October, the store's sidewalk display racks overflow with blue and purple pansies, maroon and yellow mums. Inside, manager Elmo Reeder is assisting customers. A trim, serious African American with a lifter's back brace dangling from his shoulders, he discusses the benefits of a hand cream with one shopper, confirms the price of a sale bottle of dishwashing detergent with another, and points out the location of salted—and unsalted—pretzels to a third. He directs a store associate with a cart of shiny wrapping paper to the aisle—now filled with Halloween costumes and decorations—that soon will

overflow with Christmas trappings. Why so early? "People are buying," he answers.

Mr. Reeder has managed this Murphy's and its 15 to 25 employees for about two years. He's worked for the McCrory Company for ten years, previously at the Murphy's in Hyattsville's Prince George's Plaza. (McCrory's also operates a Murphy's at Alexandria's Bradley Shopping Center.) Asked about speculation that the Cleveland Park store will close soon—Giant, which runs the neighboring supermarket, owns the building and is said to be eager to gain control of the entire property—Reeder replies that Murphy's is "here for the long term." Business is good, he says, and the lease is long-term.

"People come here because of how long it's been here. We have no real competition. It's a convenient neighborhood store where they can get anything and everything." The store is open every day of the year but Christmas, and for long hours—nine to nine Monday through Saturday and ten to six on Sunday. On Wednesdays, shoppers over age 60 who have signed up for the Senior Citizen Club receive a 10 percent discount on any item in the store.

Mr. Reeder prides himself on his salespeople's ability to meet customer needs. He cites their diversification along with that of customers, so that foreign-language speakers—whether a Russian diplomat or a recent immigrant from Central America—can find a salesperson to talk with them. "The clerks know most of the people who live in the area. Our speciality is customer service."

About eight years ago, McCrory's began seeking merchants to open smaller shops within the store—a common practice at similar variety stores like K-Mart, Kresge's and Ames, Reeder says. The concessionaires paid a percentage of their sales to the store in lieu of rent.

First to set up shop was H.B. Saeedi, the welcoming, Iranian-born proprietor of the rug department in the basement, which stocks a wide variety of "Oriental" carpets, from room-size,



machine-made floral designs to smaller, handmade tribal rugs from the Middle East.

In a corner nearby is the full-service shoe and luggage repair shop operated for six years by Carroll Trull for owner David Oliver. Trull cuts leather, stitches seams by machine or hand, glues on soles and heels, runs the polishing machines, and knows more about shoes than most people can imagine. "You bring in your shoes and they're all broken down, I'm going to fuss at you," he says. "You've got to take care of your shoes." He can teach you the virtues of shoe trees, tell you how to freshen up old suede, reveal the secrets of making high-quality leather shoes last a lifetime, and sell you what you'll need for all this. He repairs almost anything made of leather or soft plastic, but will tell you if he can't do it effectively. He also copies keys.

Mr. Trull's nearest neighbors in Murphy's basement—across from a selection of paints at 30 percent off, a shelf full of plastic toys, and the section where everything costs just 99 cents—are mostly of the four-footed variety. Today the gerbils, mice and hamsters of Capital Pets and Aquarium are tended by Nurei Erol, a young Macomb Street resident who has worked only two days for owner Mgdy M. Soliman. Yet he handles the lopeared, gray-and-white bunny, the pet room's star, with aplomb. Tanks lining the room teem with tropical fish—the shop's biggest seller—and shelves are crammed with pet supplies.

Upstairs, in a prime location at the front of the store, the Washington Plant Company has for six years offered in-

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Cleveland Park Personalities

Jim O'Donnell: Olympian Volunteer

By Jean van der Tak

When Jim O'Donnell, a Cleveland Park resident since 1954, retired at age 62 from nearly 40 years of private law practice, writing, and trade association management, he was "burned out," had "borderline high blood pressure," and "no game plan." Eleven years later, last June 20th, he ran the three-and-a-half pound Olympic torch half a mile up a "fairly steep" hill in Landover, one of 10,000 chosen to relay the Olympic flame across the U.S. on the basis of "outstanding volunteer work, community leadership," as role models, etc.

Jim qualified on all these measures. He was nominated by IONA Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator Mary Teresa Gray for his extraordinary work with senior citizens—and youth too—in Northwest Washington and across the city, through IONA, Bodywise, the citywide fitness program for seniors pioneered at UDC, the U.S. Navy Memorial, where he has volunteered since it opened in 1991, and St. Thomas Apostle, his church across from the Sheraton Hotel.

Jim's retirement game plan has evolved—one thing leading to another—along with his energy. First, to get in shape, he joined the Bodywise demonstration program of one-hour, three-mornings-a-week, water aerobics and "stretch and walk" classes at UDC, though warned, "It's mostly women." It was mostly women, but "the people were nice" and Jim was impressed by the caliber of the instructors. Three weeks later he was conscripted for a funding appeal to the D.C. Office on Aging. Already, he testified, he'd found Bodywise "like a litany from Lourdes"—rise up and walk. That presentation drew him to the attention of IONA Senior Services, a pioneer and co-sponsor of the UDC program, and he soon found himself managing the luncheon program at St. Margaret's Church, one of several IONA runs in

Northwest Washington. In this staff job—supposedly temporary but he did it two-and-a-half years—he saw "a niche to let off creative steam." The budget was "miniscule" but Jim felt participants needed stimulation and "this city is loaded" with people who can give stimulating talks, for free. He started with neighbor Max Kampelman, who described his experiences as chief U.S. negotiator with the USSR to reduce nuclear arms. Jim made sure there was a good turnout and press coverage, including his own story in the Uptown Citizen. "We got the community involved," even street people who came in for lunch, some of them ex-Marines "with provocative questions." Later, as coordinator of IONA's neighborhood programs, he gathered St. Margaret's and other people at the Adas Israel luncheon site to hear Kampelman and other distinguished speakers. This also helped to get more men involved in IONA programs, e.g., his Bodywise pal Ray Sherer, retired NBC anchor and White House correspondent.

Also as IONA program coordinator, Jim dreamt up "Short Walks Toward Health," occasional walks by some 30 people (90 are on his mailing list) to places like Saint Sophia Cathedral, Maret School, Lou and Di Stovall's art gallery and Barbara and Dick Jorgensen's "Japanese apartment" in Cleveland Park, and the embassies of Egypt, Norway, and Finland, where sometimes the ambassador greets them. The walks used to be Saturdays but now are weekdays since Jim is busy weekends at the Navy Memorial, introducing the popular film "At Sea."

His Navy Memorial volunteer work stems from his interest as a World War II Navy veteran, of the Pacific amphibious forces, and meeting the memorial's artistic designer through his mother-in-law, a star in Jim's Bodywise class. Besides being a docent, Jim has coordinated such programs as bussing black senior citizens and youth to the memorial's Black History Forum last February. Fort Lincoln Extended School cited him for that, one of his many citations. He's touted the Navy Memorial in talks as far away as Boston and would like to do more marketing of "this class act; it's been a big secret."

At his church, Jim stepped in to shepherd the bus bringing seniors to Sunday services. Last year he got a regular bus rider, venerable White



Jim O'Donnell with his Olympic torch staff and IONA Senior Services Volunteer Coordinator Mary Teresa Gray, who nominated him to relay the Olympic flame. Photo by Eric Haefe.

House correspondent Sarah McClendon, to star in a fifth anniversary salute to Short Walks at her residence, the Kennedy-Warren. "We had 137 people for lunch," he recalls, and honored 93-year-old Porter Street resident Pat Merton as "Walker of the Year," presenting her with a pair of spike-heeled shoes and a sweatshirt from—what else?—the Navy Memorial. Jim also represents St. Thomas on the IONA board (his is one of 28 churches and synagogues sponsoring IONA).

At IONA, besides being a boardmember, Jim is on the Citizens Advisory Council and has served on countless committees, including strategic planning for the new headquarters going up at 42nd and Albemarle Streets, due to open in the spring. He's proud of that but hopes that "as we go forward into the new era," IONA's "satellite" lunch programs like St. Margaret's, where he's still an occasional speaker, won't languish.

Bodywise remains a prime interest. He's on its advisory board too, and as a founder of Bodywise Participants of D.C., Inc. has helped get up to 1500 seniors exercising two or three days a week in sites across the city. Some Bodywise sites don't have pools. At D.C. Village before it closed, there were chair exercises and Jim has proposed that ousted residents be tracked to the nursing homes where they now are to exercise to a video he hopes will soon be funded. He encouraged Bodywise to

"broaden its image" with an annual Frederick Douglass Memorial Award for students and teachers "who exhibit outstanding community leadership," like teaching illiterate seniors to read. He has led Bodywise demonstrations before a citywide pre-White House Conference on Aging and the D.C. City Council. And he hurried home a day early from a week at the Olympics—a gift for him and wife Jeanne from their son James—to do yet another fundraising appeal for Bodywise. There his witnesses included a 98-year-old male participant and a woman whose doctor said her Bodywise workouts had "doubled the life expectancy" of her \$12,000, Medicare-funded pacemaker.

Jeanne O'Donnell also works out with Bodywise, though not as often as Jim would like since she's still practicing law. She and Jim met in the ninth grade in Everett, Mass., near Boston, where both grew up. Jim attended public high school and joined the Navy in 1944 while still at Boston College. After the war, they dated while Jim got his law degree at Georgetown. Jeanne studied law at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and in Paris on a Fulbright scholarship. She was working at the State Department when they married and continued until their first child, Karen, was born. In Cleveland Park, they've lived on Ordway Street, Macomb and, since 1963, in their comfortable Newark Street home. Daughter Karen is a master electrician in Boston and a former Massachusetts state legislator; Jim campaigned for her. Susan is a costume designer in Paris. Artist daughter Jeanne lives in New York with her husband and "our only granddaughter." Son James is a business consultant and entrepreneur in San Francisco. All four attended John Eaton School.

The afternoon of the August day we met, Jim had a date to talk about his Olympics experiences at St. Mary's Court, the senior residence in Foggy Bottom, as he had already at IONA's Adult Day Health Center and would at Regency House. He talks all over Washington and elsewhere on the benefits of Bodywise and IONA Senior Services. He urges Cleveland Park seniors to sign up for Bodywise—classes reopened at UDC in September—or Short Walks. And look him up when IONA's new center opens, where he'd be pleased to introduce you to its services and opportunities for volunteers.

Jean van der Tak is outgoing editor of Voices.

New Voices Editor

With what may be called this tenth anniversary issue of CPHS's biannual newsletter, *Cleveland Park Voices*, Jean van der Tak retires as editor, to be succeeded by Rachel S. Cox (co-editor of this issue).

Jean van der Tak Departs

Jean has been a Cleveland Parker since 1962 when she, husband Herman and sons Steven and Derek (followed by Laurens, born six months later) moved into their 1921 Sears bungalow on Rodman Street. The van der Taks had lived in London, Switzerland and Bangkok; they still visit family frequently in Canada (where Jean was born—to American parents in a northern Ontario silver mining camp) and the Netherlands (Herman's origin; in Washington he joined the World Bank).

Clearly among the Who's Who of Northwest Washington, Jean is the quintessential editor. CPHS has been extraordinarily lucky to have her serve as editor of *Voices* from its first issue of spring 1987 to this of fall 1996—alas, her last. As a fellow historian (BA, University of Toronto) and demographer (MA, Georgetown), Jean, on retirement in 1987 as editor at the Population Reference Bureau, was in the right place at the right time to accept the new challenge of launching our newsletter. Looking back over the decade—and over the bound volume of *Voices* (copies of which have been placed in D.C. public libraries)—one can only conclude that we've had a master at work in these 20 issues, loving every minute of those ten years of service to CPHS and the community at large. Jean has been the glue that has held CPHS together and indefatigable champion of this neighborhood's best interests. Her enthusiasm for, and loyal support of, the programs and activities of CPHS have been an inspiration to us all. Many thanks, Jean!

Rachel Cox Takes Over
Rachel, with husband Glenn Berger and sons Aaron (nine) and Jonathan (seven), moved into



Cleveland Park and their Newark Street home just last year. Already she has made her mark on the neighborhood by taking on the District government and securing the successful resolution of such problems as potholes and broken water mains. She is a mover-and-shaker who doesn't know the meaning of "can't."

Rachel grew up in historic districts in New York City, went to college in New England, and has worked for the Department of the Interior and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she was associate editor of *Historic Preservation* magazine before becoming a mother and currently edits a bimonthly newsletter. Jean van der Tak is a tough act to follow, but we're not even holding our breath with Rachel around to fill those important shoes!

—Dick Jorgensen



Post Office Transformed

Our Cleveland Park/20008 post office on Connecticut Avenue, next to the Uptown Theatre, is now a "Postal Store of the Future." After more than six months of renovation (and limited services), the brand-new doors of this venerable facility swung open on June 11, 1996, to appreciative Cleveland Parkers.

There to welcome admiring customers were Manager Claudette Lewis and regular staffers Gail Brown, Allene Cogswell (both survivors of the infamous May 15th robbery of the interim trailer office on the sidewalk), Ronald Talbert and James Winston. The expanded space houses many more rental boxes, a greater variety of packaging supplies, new equipment (e.g., scales, self-service stamp machines, a copier), and a wonderful store of posters and philatelic collector's items, including autographed sheets of stamps. A beautiful transformation for us all to enjoy!

—Dick Jorgensen



A Taste of Cleveland Park: Boardmember Steve Turow and Membership Chair Barbara Jorgensen preside at a CPHS information table during "A Taste of Cleveland Park" on Saturday, September 28th, sponsored by CPHS. Participating merchants on Connecticut and Wisconsin, identified by green balloons, offered samples of their wares to passersby and deemed the event a success, despite drizzly weather.

G.C. Murphy Co.

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door and outdoor plants, garden supplies and accessories. In winter they sell Christmas trees and wreaths, salt and snow shovels. Owner Harry Millstein has been in the garden business for 18 years, including a similar shop at the Prince George's Murphy's. His Columbia, Md.-based wholesale company supplies plants to the McCrory Corp. and is a source of strength for his Cleveland Park shop. "We have a lot of variety, pots in copper and brass, more weed killers and insecticides than you can find anywhere else. If anybody asks for something, I bring it in."

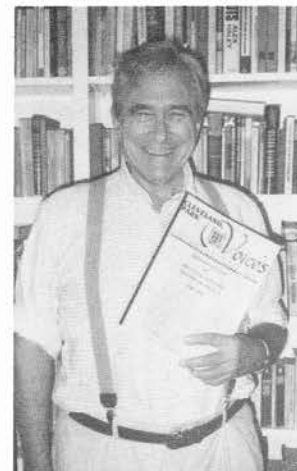
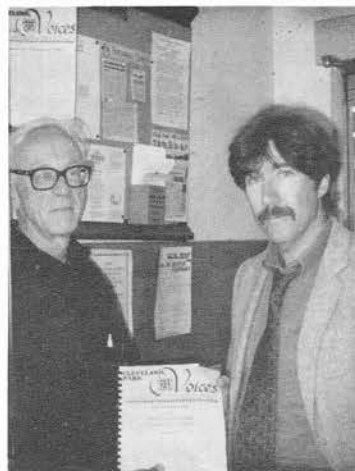
He is equally forthright about the recent change in leasing arrangements for Murphy's independent shopkeepers from a concession basis to a monthly rent—a change that could weigh heavily on a seasonal business like his. But he says, "I'm going to stay because I have an established business here. About half of my customers know it's privately owned; they look for it."

At the other end of the front wall, behind display cases glittering with gold and silver chains, brooches and watches, Sok Hwa Hyon, Korean-born owner of H & P Jewelry and Watch Repair, works a tiny screwdriver

CPHS Outreach

Left photo: Peter Lande (left), new CPHS liaison to the Cleveland Park Library, joins Head Librarian Brian Brown at the library's new CPHS-produced community news bulletin board.

Right photo: Bill Newlon, new CPHS liaison to John Eaton School, contributes a bound volume of *Voices* to Eaton's library.



around a stainless steel Rolex. A quiet, pleasant man, he shared a jewelry shop with his brother in Alexandria till persuaded by a McCrory representative to risk opening his own shop at Murphy's some four years ago. At first attracting business was difficult, he recalls, because people hesitated to leave their valuables with a concessionaire who theoretically could close up shop any time. But gradually he's built up a steady clientele and business is better.

Near Murphy's back entrance, in an office little bigger than a large closet, retired attorney Richard A. Micheel, proprietor of Creative Cruises & Travel Ltd. for five years, sits surrounded by evidence that he enjoys his new vocation. The walls are plastered with alluring travel posters, postcards and photos, many showing Mr. Micheel himself enjoying exotic vacation spots. "I travel a lot; that's why I wanted to do it," he says. "It's fun. It's no bonanza by a long shot, but it keeps a retired guy busy. I'm my own boss and I enjoy people; that helps a lot."

Besides selling train and plane tickets, tours and cruises, he takes passport photos, does laminations, and sells moving supplies. He also operated a Ryder truck franchise out of his tiny office until Giant told him he could no longer keep his trucks on the parking lot. That helped him appreciate the market potential of the site, however. "It's a great area for business and living. I don't have much room here, but it's location, location, location."

Against Murphy's rear wall, in a freestanding booth of bright plastic laminate, Mary Vincent operates the world's only Mini Office—a trade-

marked name that seems ripe for franchising. She's been selling office support services for 30 years—at first, typing term papers; now, in addition to the Mini Office, operating a conventional storefront business in Georgetown specializing in computer rentals and another on Capitol Hill that provides telephone answering services.

At Murphy's she performs the gamut of office services. She faxes, duplicates and word processes, posts letters by U.S. Mail, UPS and Federal Express, and rents out computers. She also is a notary public, which takes her often to local hospitals and nursing homes. A regular core of customers depends on her as a home office away from home. "You can get something notarized, copied, then I can send it for you FedEx. Like a real office. What's special about us is, we do it all."

Rachel Cox is incoming editor of Voices.

CPHS Merchants Guide Published

Thanks to the hard work of Outreach Coordinator Judy Hubbard Saul, with help from Eleanor Oliver and Ellie Sachse, CPHS's latest publication—the *Guide to Cleveland Park Merchants*, Fall 1996—has just appeared. Copies will go to all paid-up CPHS members; others are available at \$1 each, plus \$1 postage (call 202-363-6358 to place your order). The guide lists all our neighborhood merchants on Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, with addresses, business hours, phone numbers, and brief descriptions of services. There are maps to identify merchants by street. A useful reference to keep near the phone, the guide can be easily updated every six months or so.

John Eaton Elementary School: P.S. 160

By Alice Leccese Powers

"When you grow older, remember me, the school where you spent so many happy days. Make John Eaton proud of you and your career."

—Eaton Echo, John Eaton's school paper, June 1930

John Eaton Elementary School is the heart of Cleveland Park. Located at the corner of Lowell and 34th Streets, it was built in 1911 to serve a relatively new community that still had vestiges of country life. When John Eaton opened, there was a stable on Reno Road for rental horses and for lodging children's ponies. Baked goods, laundry, dairy products and ice were delivered to Cleveland Park families—by horse-drawn wagon. Even the fire engines were horsepowered, stabled at the nearest station in Tenleytown. John Eaton was the starting point for young sledders who began at the top of Macomb Street hill and slid clear through Connecticut Avenue. School children posted guards at the bottom of the hill to halt any oncoming trolleys making their way up the avenue.

Much has changed, including John Eaton, but the school has remained a fixture in the lives of generations of residents. It is the namesake of a preacher, soldier and educator. The original John Eaton was born in 1829 and earned his PhD in philosophy from Rutgers University. He enlisted on the Union Side in the Civil War, was a colonel of the 63rd U.S. Colored Infantry, and came out a Brigadier General. After the war, he was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau for Maryland and Virginia, responsible for the education of thousands of ex-slaves. "General" Eaton continued his work in education, working with African Americans, Indians in the American West, and eventually organizing the public schools in Puerto Rico. He retired to Washington, D.C., and ended his career as an author, his commitment to public education unwavering.

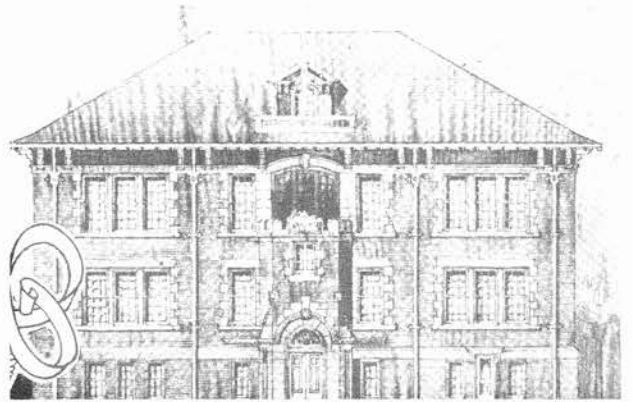
John Eaton set a high standard for

the tiny school that bore his name. The original building is now the west wing. It was designed by Appleton P. Clark Jr. in the Jacobean architectural style. D.C. Municipal Architect Snowden Ashford was also listed on the title block. The school was overcrowded almost from the day it opened. A former student recalled:

"They put portable buildings up around the outskirts, one classroom to a building, each with a potbelly stove ... The children in my classes at Eaton came from as far as Rockville and down in Georgetown. The kids came in on the Wisconsin Avenue trolley. We [in Cleveland Park] had to walk to school. But in winter, when it snowed, we'd take out sleds and just zip down the hill."

The school was renovated in three stages. The first produced the school's east wing in 1923. For the first time the school had a "kindergarten" (now a first grade classroom occupied by Mrs. Margaret Delorme). The room was specially designed to look like home. The architect even included a fireplace; it was inoperable but was intended to make children away from home for the first time more comfortable. A connecting corridor joined the new wing and the old and provided an entrance court on Lowell Street. The second renovation took place in 1931 and included an auditorium and a second-floor corridor, used as a library. This phase was probably done by a Municipal Architect, Albert L. Harris.

During World War II, John Eaton almost closed. Many of the surrounding large Victorian houses were converted into rooming houses for government workers. The remaining long-time residents were often elderly, living in their large homes after their children were grown and gone. There were so few children at Eaton that unused classrooms were used for offices of the War Rationing Board and a D.C. Public School reading clinic. In the 1950s and



Architect's "prospective drawing" for the original building of John Eaton, built in 1911, now the school's west wing.

1960s, Cleveland Park had a resurgence and John Eaton was again filled with children. By the 1970s, it was overflowing with over 400 children from kindergarten through eighth grade.

The final and most extensive renovation was completed in 1983. The remodeling, a collaborative effort between the school and the community, was many years in the making. In 1976 a parent/community advisory board, the "Committee of 21," began screening architects to supervise the school's modernization and expansion. The work included renovating the 47,000 square feet of existing space and adding 20,000 square feet, which included a new gymnasium, middle school, library and administration area. The architects, The Cooper-Lecky Partnership, met not only with administrators but also teachers, parents and members of the community. It was decided that the main entrance added in 1931, the link between the 1911 building and the 1923 addition, had the least architectural merit. It was covered by a triangular projection that now houses the library. This created a landscaped terrace at the front of the building (the mini-park), a gathering place for students and parents. The exterior of the east and west wings remained unchanged, but their interiors were completely redesigned to create grade clusters—classrooms arranged around a central hallway.

One thing that has remained constant through Eaton's history is the level of parent involvement. In 1984 long-time Cleveland Park resident and Eaton

Continued on back page

Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society

The Cleveland Park Historical Society, founded in 1985, achieved its initial aims to have our neighborhood declared an 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, raising Cleveland Park's "Livability Quotient" through new initiatives in programming and publications, and undertaking community beautification and tree planting.

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

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Newsletter Co-editors: Jean van der Tak (966-4441)
and Rachel Cox (364-3247)
Designs by Eleanor Oliver
Photos by Dick Jorgensen and Jean van der Tak
Desktop Publishing by Kathryn Murray
Printing by Artmaster Printers

John Eaton School *Continued from page 7*

parent from 1954 to 1967 Betty Miles recalled: "We counted as many as 30 women a day working at the school in various capacities. We ran the art program, began and operated the library, conducted a tutoring program, put on the Toy and Book Sale, and on cold mornings, we made cocoa for the patrol boys; there were no girls on the squad in those days."

Although they no longer make cocoa, parents are still heavily involved at Eaton, raising money to supplement the District's budget. Fundraisers include the John Eaton Block Party in the fall, a plant and rummage sale, and a Silent Auction. The Home and School Association supports instructional aides in all grades, buys books and materials, awards teacher grants, and sustains many of Eaton's programs.

Today John Eaton is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse schools in the city. It serves 435 children from kindergarten through grade

six. Principal Jean Tate sees its mission as a combination of respecting tradition and embracing innovation. Mrs. Tate has been at Eaton since 1994 when she succeeded Pat Greer. Mrs. Greer, like many Eaton teachers, stayed until she retired; she had come as a teacher and became principal in 1975. Mrs. Tate sees that kind of continuity as one of Eaton's strengths. However, she is also preparing the school for its second century. "I think we will be fully wired for the Internet soon and integration of technology into instruction will reach its maximum potential."

When John Eaton was re-dedicated in 1983, the architects and Mrs. Greer wrote: "The classrooms have been renovated, some old walls taken down, new walls built; old rooms altered into new spaces; new facilities created out of old. Yet it is still the same building that students have known and loved since 1911."

Alice Powers has been an Eaton parent for 17 years. She is a freelance writer.

For Information on the Cleveland Park Historical Society

For information on CPHS activities, membership, or the architectural review process, please call 202-363-6358. Judy Hubbard Saul, CPHS Outreach Coordinator, will be happy to assist you. Leave your name, phone number, the date you called and a message for her at this number. Your call will be promptly returned.

CPHS gratefully acknowledges NationsBank at 3401 Connecticut Avenue N.W. for providing office space.

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