



VOICES

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY



www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 22 No. 1 Spring 2008



A Look At 2008

By Joan Habib, CPHS President

Leadership change and a varied program of activities promise to make 2008 a major year for CPHS. A search for retiring Board replacements is underway: please contact nominating chair Danna McCormick at Dannam@verizon.net with names of those interested in historic preservation and community life.

Coming up: the Third Annual Antiques Appraisal Day on March 8; Cleveland Park Garden Tour June 8; Call Box Conversion Project and revised architectural guidelines.

Glancing back at '07:

- CPHS DVD, "I Am Cleveland Park," on sale at Cleveland Park Valet, Wake Up Little Susie, Politics and Prose, and Transcendence Perfection Bliss Of The Beyond.
- The November House Tour was a sellout (below).
- Greenery planted along Connecticut Avenue.
- Architectural Review Committee review of dozens of renovation plans.
- Expansion of our website, clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org.
- Updated equipment at playground by ROMP (page 2).

Sincere thanks to home and garden owners, docents, donors, ARC, ROMP, board members and all those who make these things happen.



House Tour Displays Change Amid Tradition

By Barry Hillenbrand

On the last crisp fall Sunday in November, more than 300 people, clutching maps and guides for the annual Cleveland Park House Tour, traipsed through some of the nicest and most interesting houses in the neighborhood—and learned a little about our architectural heritage. High marks to Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford, who organized it all, and to the docents who kept traffic moving with aplomb and good humor. Making the day perfect, neighborhood restaurants Sabores and Byblos dished up tasty snacks at the Cleveland Park Club, the starting point for the tour.

This year six of the eight houses were west of Reno Road, five of them strung along Newark St. The brochure touted them as "Pretty Prospects around Rosedale" and pretty they were, clustered around Cleveland Park's village green. The selection highlighted the rich variety of architectural styles stretching over more than 100 years: a classic Foursquare (3454 Newark), a Queen Anne Victorian (3249 Newark), and a closely related

Shingle style (3319 Newark). The "copper house" at 3550 Newark, the creation of architect Travis Price, is so contemporary that construction work was still ongoing as we trekked through.

To some of us on the walkabout, another theme seemed to be that the historical houses of Cleveland Park are hardly tamper-proof. Nearly all were remodeled, redesigned and rebuilt. While facades retained unspoiled 1910-era glory, many interiors were modern and sleek, right down to soaring "great room" ceilings and granite counter tops.

And then there was 3542 Newark. President Grover Cleveland—for whom the neighborhood is named—bought it in 1885 and had it remodeled into a Victorian Queen Anne. It was torn down and replaced in 1927 by another classic of Northwest Washington: a brick Colonial Georgian River house. Truly, no house is forever.

Barry Hillenbrand is a resident of Chevy Chase DC, but that's OK.

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The Great Outdoors

Signs of Spring

By Chris Rose

If you're beginning to wonder if spring will ever arrive, visit the National Mall and check out the American elms—among the first trees to show signs of lengthening days. Their flower buds swell into little knots of burgundy all along the branches and will bloom three to four weeks before the leaves emerge.

From the Mall, head over to the National Botanic Garden and take in the orchid display. For other signs of spring, check out the National Arboretum website, www.usna.usda.gov/Education/horthotspots.html, which lists its plants that are ready for viewing.

In your own garden, rake out mulch and leaves from around bulbs. Tulips, daffodils, and crocuses can withstand swings of temperature, snow and cold rain, so no need to protect them from the elements.

Weed pulling is easy now as the ground thaws. Early pulling will prevent the weeds from seeding or spreading via

their rooting system. Some shrubs may have suffered from erratic temperatures and ice in late winter, but wait for signs of buds and leaves before pruning.

In my garden, over the next few weeks I'll be pruning sage bush and inkberry holly, mapping the tulips that actually come up following a marauding squirrel attack in the fall and scouting out replacement shrubs for overabundant forsythia.

Late March and April are good times to plant trees and shrubs. The National Arboretum is an excellent source to find varieties and to study their growth forms. Check out www.usna.usda.gov/Newintro/index.html to view the many new plants making their debut.

Chris Rose is with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

What Makes a Cleveland Park House Different?

Homeowners who are contemplating renovation often wonder what will meet historic guidelines—federal, city and Cleveland Park—and how to get through the approval process. Last fall, a meeting sponsored by the CP Citizens Association focused on guidelines. (Check www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org.)

Historic Preservation Review Board member Anne Lewis spoke about the neighborhood, built primarily from 1890 to 1930. A house built in this era—a peak period for construction quality—is likely to be stiffer and stronger than one built before 1890, she said, because materials were better understood and steel had come into use. In later years, the quality of some materials changed; for example, wallboard replaced plaster and certain hardwoods became less available.



Lewis suggested that renovators “plan tightly” to use existing space, such as basements and attics, in order to reduce new construction. She noted that the HPRB pays special attention to fenestration: windows in Cleveland Park



houses are generally higher than they are wide, and are double hung. Casement-style windows and those with a horizontal look are unlikely to be sympathetic to the original style. Other factors, she said, are the arrangements of mutins (strips that hold window panes together), the ganging of windows on a façade, and the use of original materials—although there is increasing sensitivity to energy conservation and modern materials.

HPRB chair Tersh Boasberg suggested that homeowners meet with board staff to determine whether their plans are “within the ballpark” before investing in design fees.

Call Boxes Call Out for Artists

By Roz Beitler

Slow down and take what hopefully will be a last rueful look the next time you pass your nearest call box. That drab and gutted hunk of cast iron is about to be transformed into a thing of beauty.

Following passage of a CPHS Board resolution, the Call Box Art Project is up and running. CPHS will help provide funding to recycle the neighborhood's 15 antique police and fire call boxes. Additional contributions from Council Member Mary Cheh's Constituent Fund, the ANC and an anonymous private donor also will help pay for repairs and replacement parts.

The CPHS project committee is meeting with a color expert, to select a paint shade appropriate to the historic district. A search for artists interested in creating original works based on the social and cultural history of Cleveland



Roz Beitler with needy friend. The notice inside appeals for assistance from artists. Check a call box near you.

Park has been posted on several listservs. The art will be housed inside the iron frames that once contained the electric emergency call boxes.

DC is one of a handful of locations in the country that still has at least the skeletons of its old call boxes (Cleveland Park has 15, Cathedral Heights 6 and McLean Gardens 2). Some other neighborhoods have already raised additional funds and renovated theirs.

Erected in 1848 as bases for gas street lamps, the elaborate castings were converted in 1923 to support electric-powered fire and police emergency alarm boxes. The last were deactivated in 1976, with the advent of "911."

More details about the Call Box Art Project, including box locations and how to make tax-deductible contributions can be found on the CPHS website.

What's New At Macomb Playground

By Sabra Klein Maloney, ROMP Chair

Good news for ROMP: the DC Department of Parks and Recreation has a new director, Clark Ray, who is committed to improving relations between the city and local community groups like ours. Melissa McKnight, director of the department's Office of Partnerships and Development, is working closely with ROMP to finalize a partnership proposal that's been in the works for two years.

Happening now:

- Negotiations to install bricks purchased during latest fund raising campaign.
- Wood chips and mats placed under swings to reduce mud puddles.
- New equipment, renovation of basketball courts (spring).
- Removal of rotted storage boxes and field netting. (ROMP welcomes ideas for a suitable replacement.)

Questions? Suggestions? Please email me at ROMP@clevelandparkdc.org.

ON THE AVENUE



Local Pub Collects For Foodbank

By Cissie Coy

Ireland's Four Fields restaurant (formerly known as the 4 Ps) is collecting contributions of food and other items for some of the district's neediest residents.

Frank Hughes, the owner of the Connecticut Avenue pub, started the project in December after reading about food banks running out of supplies. "I decided we should do something," he said.

The Washington Post reported that donations to area food banks were projected to fall roughly 6 percent, according to the Capital Area Food Bank, while calls to its Hunger Lifeline were up about 37 percent.

Since then, Hughes estimated, the restaurant has delivered nearly 700 pounds of supplies to the food bank.

Contributions may be dropped off at Four Fields any day after 5 pm. The most-wanted list includes canned items like tuna, peanut butter, fruit and juice; also, cereal, diapers, soap and other hygiene items.

Four Fields has remained an active neighborhood presence in various ways since Frank Hughes bought the 4 Ps from brother Chris three years ago. There's Irish folk singing with live music three nights a week and a pub quiz on Wednesdays, when teams have 90 minutes to fill out a quiz sheet. Prizes include cash, drinks and movie tickets.

Theology on Tap, a happy hour and a speaker sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington, drew a few hundred young people on six Tuesday evenings in February and March.

CPHS WANTS YOU!

For membership, go to
www.clevelandparkhistorical society.org



Sign Up For “Antiques Road Show,” Spring Garden Tour

Register now and bring your paintings, carpets, silver and other treasures to the Washington International School on **Saturday, March 8, for Cleveland Park's third annual Antiques Appraisal Day.** Experts from The Potomack Company, a fine arts auction gallery in Alexandria, will be on hand at Davis Hall on the Tregaron campus, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Appraisal spots are limited and drop-ins cannot be accommodated.

Call 202-537-CLEV (2538), or go to cphspresident@aol.com for tickets (\$20, members; \$25, non-members) and registration form.

Sunday, June 8, is Garden Tour time, featuring 10 or more outstanding Cleveland Park residential gardens. Docents are needed to watch each garden in shifts, 1-3 and 3-5. Volunteers get a free ticket. Please call Barbara Goff at 244-6867.



**MARK
YOUR
CALENDAR!**

ANTIQUES APPRAISAL DAY

Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.,
Washington International School

GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, June 8, 1-5 p.m.

**“I AM CLEVELAND PARK”
DVD ON SALE AT
NEIGHBORHOOD
SHOPS (SEE PAGE 1).**



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