

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### Off to a Good Start

By John Poole

I begin my term as president of CPHS with deep appreciation for the remarkable achievements of my predecessor, Joan Habib, which gives us a good start for a new season.

Thanks to Joan's vision and energy, we now have an office in the Broadmoor where, finally, our files and collection of historical materials are organized and accessible. We also have an executive director, Lou Ann May, whose skills and understanding of an organization like ours is proving invaluable—ideas and information can now flow more quickly. Credit, too, to Danna McCormick, for developing our website and database which, at the touch of a key, involves us all in the Cleveland Park experience.

On this page, you'll find a story about our most exciting current project, Call Boxes. While the District has made a substantial financial contribution, the ultimate responsibility to carry out this historic preservation project rests with CPHS. Inevitably, there are costs in restoring these ancient street corner fixtures. So, if you have not already contributed to Call Boxes, please consider doing so now.

Another significant project is our continuing effort to find ways to preserve and enhance the historical vitality and attractiveness of the Connecticut Avenue commercial area. Our Merchants' Outreach Committee is following up on its recently conducted merchant opinion survey and we will be developing proposals to involve everyone—merchants, the District and the neighborhood—in programs to make the Avenue even livelier and more attractive.

I consider the Architectural Review Committee the single-most important continuing activity of CPHS. Jane Treacy, a board member and architect, is working on a brief manual to help homeowners and their architects better

## Callboxes Get Fresh Paint, Art Comes Next

Over the summer, while many of us were on vacation, Frank Arkwright was making the rounds of the neighborhood's antiquated emergency call boxes, paint can and brush in hand. The first step in the transformation of the boxes from eyesore to artifact—is now on view.

Mr. Arkwright, a semi-retired sign painter, spruced up the ornate cast-iron boxes and bases in the CPHS color scheme of reddish mahogany with polished brass highlights. (You may see other city call boxes in maroon, royal blue, and black.)

Various works of art commemorating Cleveland Park's social and cultural history will now be inserted into the

frames that once housed the devices used to summon police or fire fighters to neighborhood emergencies.

A number of other northwest DC neighborhoods—including Cathedral Heights, Dupont, Glover Park, McLean Gardens, Forest Hills and the Smithsonian area—also are in the process of recycling their call boxes.

Look for Frank Arkwright's work on your street and consider joining with your neighbors to sponsor a call box. Refurbishing one costs \$750 and an engraved plaque will credit the sponsors. For details and to contribute to this project, please go to the CPHS website, [www.clevelandparkdc.org/callboxes.htm](http://www.clevelandparkdc.org/callboxes.htm).

understand the procedures of the ARC and the City's Historic Preservation Review Board. We are looking for at least one new ARC member with historic preservation and/or architectural credentials. Also being considered is a publication on architectural guidelines for the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Our affiliate, ROMP, raises money and enlists volunteers to maintain and improve the public playground on Macomb Street. I hope that many of you saw John Kelly's September 15 column in the Post about the reunion of people who played there in the 1960s—see just a few of them on page 3.

Our Tree/Beautification and Program committees are seeking volunteers. I invite you to join CPHS but, whether you're a member or not, I urge you to help with tree plantings and programs like the house and garden tours. And let us have your suggestions about events, lectures or programs—email [CPHSPresident@aol.com](mailto:CPHSPresident@aol.com).

Cleveland Park is a grand place in the fall. Enjoy!



TOP BRASS Painter Frank Arkwright transforms a rusty callbox into a mahogany and brass mini-monument to the past. Artwork will be installed in each box.



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## CPHS WANTS YOU!

For membership, go to  
[clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org)

## ON THE AVENUE



# Gas Station Retrospective

by Rhona Hartman

"He ran a beautiful station, says Ethel Kelly, a long time resident of the Broadmoor and the widow of James Kelly, a popular Cleveland Park figure who, for more than 35 years, owned and operated what is now the Exxon Gas Station on Connecticut Avenue and Porter Street.

The station opened in the 1920s, beneath the trademark white, red and blue oval Esso sign that hung over all the nation's Standard Oil stations. James Kelly, a bookkeeper for the proprietor, E.C. Moyer, bought the business after World War II. In those days, gas costs 21 cents a gallon, and the station pumped a million gallons a year. Motorists could pay with cash or company-issued Esso credit cards. James loved all mechanical things, not just automobiles, and was a graduate of the General Motors School. He used the space that is now the Tiger Mart as a repair shop.

Mrs. Kelly recalled that during the gas shortages of the 1970s, long lines of cars snaked out onto Connecticut Ave., with drivers waiting, some not too patiently,

to fill their tanks. James Kelly frequently had to turn drivers away in order to have enough gas available to open for business the next morning.

In 1986, Kelly sold the station to an auto repair service known as Call Carl. There have been several owners since then.

Ethel Kelly retired from the Federal Highway Administration in 1973. During the Johnson administration, First Lady Lady Bird Johnson was encouraging roadside beautification. Mrs. Kelly pitched in, planting tidy flowerbeds around the station, which drew a personal visit by Mrs. Johnson, an occasion duly covered by Channel 7, as well as an invitation to the White House.

Ethel Kelly, from the Hagerstown, MD area, and James were married for 45 years. They lived at 3701 Connecticut Avenue until 1972, when they moved next door to the Broadmoor, said Mrs. Kelley, "so James could keep an eye on the station."



TIGER IN THE TANK. Frank Kelly, left, with an employee, at the corner station decades ago.

# ROMP: The Big Kids on the Block

by Leah Thayer, ROMP Chair

Cleveland Park history came rushing back on waves of laughter and memories September 13, when Macomb Park time-traveled to the mid-1960s. The kids of those days, many of whom have stayed in touch with each other, flocked together from as far away as France, England and California for a remarkable reunion on the old CP playing fields.

The reunion showcased the vital resource Macomb Park has long been—and remains—for neighborhood kids. Organized by former Newark street resident Adam Stern, now of Berkeley, Calif., the gathering attracted 120 people, including a batch of children now older than their parents were when they were playing in the park.

Reporters from The Washington Post and the Northwest Current covered the reunion, and a website created by Stern's 13-year-old daughter, [sites.google.com/site/macombreunion/](http://sites.google.com/site/macombreunion/), offers photos and memories from a time when Cleveland Park's kids enjoyed a degree of freedom unimaginable today.

Renovations of Macomb Park (ROMP), the CPHS subcommittee that is dedicated to the upkeep and maintenance of the park, is hopeful that



SEE ANYONE YOU KNOW? More than 100 "old" playmates gathered for a Macomb Playground reunion in September.

the reunion—and the \$1,000 raised by returnees—symbolized yet another turning point for the park, which relies heavily on individual donations. Its last major renovation was in 1998, when ROMP raised more than \$300,000.

For those who ordered engraved bricks, the latest batch was installed in July, and a plaque honoring ROMP's bigger

donors was installed on the rec center wall this summer as well.

More fundraising activities will be announced shortly. To learn more about ROMP and to link to the reunion website, visit [www.clevelandparkdc.org/romp.htm](http://www.clevelandparkdc.org/romp.htm). Or contact [leah.thayer@gmail.com](mailto:leah.thayer@gmail.com). We welcome your involvement at ROMP!

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS



# A Good Year for Trees

By Chris Rose

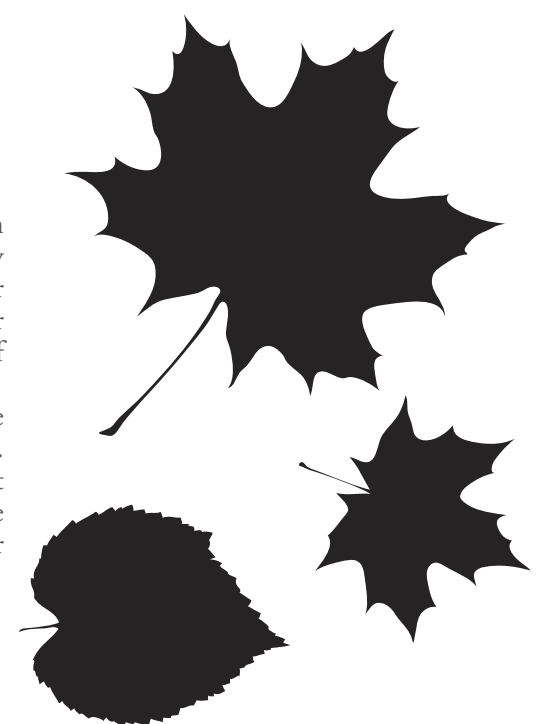
The weather is gradually turning—mild days and cool nights—conditions that send a signal to trees and plants: prepare for winter.

The abundant rain through the past winter, spring and summer recharged the soil. Trees planted over the last 5 years grew taller, filled out and, best of all, "put on wood," as foresters say—gained girth. Decades from now, someone will look at the rings from 2008 and see that it was a very good year for trees.

Many garden plants also did well this year, though many did not. The long, cool spring was good for blooming shrubs and trees. The tomatoes in our garden were very slow at flowering, with a blast of

fruit in early September. Still growing in October is an annual hibiscus. Ordinarily a small shrub in dry areas, it is now over 12 feet tall. The flower petals only last for a few hours but the remaining parts of the flower are good for tea.

If you haven't already done so, remove gater bags from young trees for winter. Unless we enter a long drought, most trees that were planted 2-5 years ago have established themselves and no longer need gater bags to provide water.



# YES! I want to join the Cleveland Park Historical Society

☐ \$50 household   ☐ \$100 sponsor   ☐ \$250 patron   ☐ \$500 angel   ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to CPHS. Send to: Cleveland Park Historical Society, PO BOX 4862, Washington, DC 20008

Interests:   ☐ Architectural Review   ☐ Historic Preservation   ☐ House & Garden Tours   ☐ Membership  
☐ Merchants   ☐ Tree Planning   ☐ Newsletter



**MARK  
YOUR  
CALENDAR!**



**HALLOWEEN PARADE,  
OCT. 31**

Macomb Playground

**MACOMB PLAYGROUND  
CLEAN-UP DAY**

early November



Check website for details: [www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org)



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