

# The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

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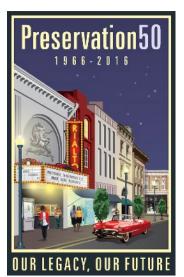
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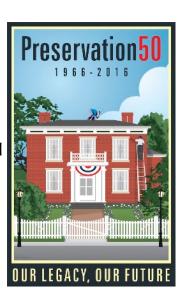
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# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER of HISTORIC PLACES



This spring we mark the 30th anniversary of Cleveland Park becoming a National Register Historic District. That status would not be possible without the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which created the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service has just concluded a yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. What did the 1966 Act do, and what is the National Register of Historic Places? Turn to page 4 to read more!



AND 30 YEARS OF THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

## Dates to Save: CPHS Events in Spring 2017

May 22nd CPHS Annual Meeting, with speaker Tom Moriarty, a specialist in historic

preservation and retail development

June 26th A talk by local historian Hayden Wetzel about his research into the history

of the Humane Movement in Washington

Mark your calendars and watch for more information by email and on our website.

## Call Box Restoration Update: Thank You!

A huge vote of thanks to the CPHS members and friends who contributed so generously to the restoration of our call boxes. The donors are:

Rhona Hartman Broadmoor Jim Mears & Clint Williams Queen Anne

Judy & Peter Levin Broadmoor Tina and David Mead Rosedale

William & Susan Geary Broadmoor Rives and Dickson Carroll Sherman Cottages

Sharon Walsh Broadmoor Lynn Parseghian & Nat Cohen Tregaron

Jeanne Van Vlandren Broadmoor Robert Welp Tregaron

Anne MacArthur Broadmoor Malvina Kalim Tregaron

Shannon Penberthy Cathedral John & Leslie Oberdorfer Any Box

Malcolm Byrne & Leila Afzal Commerce Leslie Dach & Mary Ann Dickie Any Box

Bill & Karen King Queen Anne John & Danna McCormick Any Box

The board has approved funding the cost of restoration for all the remaining boxes from reserves. Lois Orr, Roz Beitler, and Judy Hubbard will oversee the restoration. The restoration will be carried out in two phases: first the artwork and associated hardware will be restored and repaired as necessary, and then the boxes will be repainted. We will keep you informed of progress as the work gets under way.

# **Seeking Sponsors for Future Issues of** *Voices*

We are seeking sponsors for future issues of *Voices*, beginning with Fall 2017, to help cover the cost of printing and mailing. *Voices* is published twice a year and reaches approximately 350 households in the Cleveland Park Historic District. With sponsorship, we may be able to print and distribute a larger run. Sponsors will be acknowledged in the issue(s) they sponsor with graphics and other information in accordance with IRS regulations for nonprofit organizations.

For more information, please contact Carin Ruff at **staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org**. Members, please share this with any businesses or organizations you think might be interested. We can provide additional copies of this issue as samples.

# John Eaton Students Explore DC History with CPHS and the Historical Society of Washington

Last November, the Cleveland Park Historical Society sponsored local history workshops for third grade students at John Eaton Elementary School as part of the school's DC history curriculum. Each of the Eaton third grade classes visited the Rosedale grounds to explore historic architecture and landscapes, and then staff from the Historical Society of Washington, DC, came to the school to give workshops on researching history using materials from HSW's collections. The students wrote the following articles about what they did and learned. CPHS plans to sponsor these workshops for the Eaton third grade each year.

## Visiting Rosedale with CPHS

By Adelaide Hobert, Irene Maur, and Olivia Thompson, third graders at John Eaton Elementary School

Last fall the third graders at John Eaton Elementary School walked to nearby Rosedale one day. We met Carin Ruff, executive director of the Cleveland Park Historical Society. She showed us Rosedale, the oldest house in Washington, DC, which was built before the city was founded. Uriah Forrest built the house. He owned the land and was a general in George Washington's army during the Revolutionary War.



John Eaton third-graders with CPHS director Carin Ruff at Rosedale

Ms. Ruff had us walk to the yellow house and we saw two chimneys, one at each end, which shows that there were fireplaces in more than one room. We learned the house had no radiators so the way to get heat was from a fireplace. We also learned that it was a farmhouse with old-fashioned windows and a porch. The oldest part of it is in the back, but we couldn't go see it because it is now private property. The farmhouse is next to a new house and it is very different. For example, the windows on the new house are bigger and look like they don't open compared to the farmhouse.

We walked across the lawn and saw where President Cleveland's house "Oak View" once stood. It is not there but a big brick house replaces it. Ms. Ruff told us that people nicknamed President Cleveland's house "Red Top" because it had many red roofs and he really hated it. So, by now you might have guessed that our school's neighborhood, Cleveland Park, is named after President Cleveland.

## Solving a History Mystery

By Jami George, Tseion Shiferaw and Mare Valk, third graders at John Eaton Elementary School

Last fall we had an in-school field trip from the Historical Society of Washington (HSW), sponsored by the Cleveland Park Historical Society. Anne McDonough, library and collection director at HSW, came to our class to talk about history and Washington, DC.

Our class was studying monuments, memorials, and important DC buildings. The Historical Society has old pictures, maps, and city directories where you can find people's addresses from a long time ago. We even got to see an old picture of our school!

Next, we got to solve a history mystery. In table groups, we looked at a picture of a man. It looked old. It was black and white and the man was wearing an old fashion overcoat. We turned the photo over and there was old fashion cursive writing which was very hard to read because it's not the type of writing we see today.

Ms. McDonough wanted us to find dates and we did. We also got to look at old newspaper articles, website pages, and a copy of a book. Using these we were trying to figure out who was on the photo and what it was about. It turns out, the guy on the photo was Mr. Buckingham and the writing on back told us that he was the last person to talk to Booth before he shot the President. Booth asked Mr. Buckingham, the door keeper at Ford's Theater, "What time is it?" And he said "Look at the clock and you will see."

Do you know which President was killed?

# 50 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES 30 YEARS OF THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

(Continued from page 1)

By Carin Ruff

#### The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The National Register of Historic Places is a creation of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Johnson-era legislation reoriented of historic preservation in the United States from preserving landmarks associated with great men of American history, to saving whole neighborhoods and places representing significant aspects of American architecture, engineering, culture, and history. The new focus on ordinary and urban places was a reaction to the destruction of neighborhoods through urban renewal and the building of interstates in the 1950s and early 1960s. The writings and activism of Jane Jacobs helped mobilize interest in preserving historic urban neighborhoods, and the destruction of Penn Station in New York galvanized the movement. In early 1966, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the US Conference of Mayors delivered a book called With Heritage So Rich to every member of the House and Senate. The book featured a foreword by Lady Bird Johnson and a photo essay on historic buildings already lost, followed by a proposal for legislation. The National Historic Preservation Act was passed in October of that year.

#### The National Historic Preservation Act:

- Created "a National Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture" to be maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. (The National Park Service administers the National Register within the Department of the Interior.)
- Required each state to have a **State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)** to survey historic resources in that state, nominate properties to the National Register, and implement a statewide historic preservation plan. (In DC, the head of the Historic Preservation Office is the SHPO.)
- Created a federal **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**.
- Established a process ("Section 106 review") for reviewing the impact of federal projects on historic resources.
- Required federal agencies to establish historic preservation programs for appropriate stewardship of historic properties under their control.

## The National Register of Historic Places

#### The National Register:

- Recognizes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are **significant for their association with historic events or persons**, or because they "**embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction**, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values," or that are likely to yield archaeological evidence.
- Recognizes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects only if they "possess **integrity** of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association."
- Recognizes places that are significant at the local, state, or national levels.
- Serves as a planning tool for state and local governments.
- **Does NOT in itself provide protection against demolition**, or limit what the property owner may do to the property. **Only local historic preservation ordinances provide substantive protection against demolition or alteration.**
- **DOES** provide some procedural protection from "federal undertakings"—projects carried out by the federal government or using federal funds.
- Is the basis for eligibility for federal tax credits for rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties and federal preservation grants like the "Save America's Treasures" program.

#### Preservation in DC

The teeth of preservation enforcement are in local historic preservation laws, but local legislation was not possible in DC until Home Rule. (Georgetown is protected under a 1950 federal law.) DC's local historic preservation law was passed in 1978. It makes possible the designation of local landmarks and historic districts subject to the authority of the DC Historic Preservation Review Board.

DC being DC, of course there are differences from the way things are done in other jurisdictions. Our local preservation law defines a historic district as one listed in the National Register as of 1978, or eligible for listing as determined by our State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO—the head of the DC Historic Preservation Office). And by policy and practice, our SHPO forwards all local historic nominations to the National Register. So although National Register listing does not, by federal law, offer any substantive protection from demolition or alteration, in practice National Register listings in DC are protected under DC's historic preservation law.

### The Cleveland Park Historic District

The Cleveland Park Historic District was added to the DC Inventory of Historic Sites in 1986 and formally entered in the National Register on April 27, 1987.

The 1980s was prime time for recognizing the historic significance of pre-World-War-II neighborhoods. In the 1980s, architecture from the 1930s was just old enough to be regularly eligible for inclusion in the National Register, which has a guideline recommending limiting listings to 50 years old or older, except in cases where exceptional importance can be demonstrated. (Architecture of the 1960s is aging into eligibility today.) Of the 15,000+ historic districts listed in the National Register, almost a third were added during the 1980s, when the rate of nominations peaked. The effort to protect Cleveland Park reflects the values that animated the Jane Jacobs-inspired preservation movement, with its emphasis on the vitality of eclectic urban neighborhoods.

Cleveland Park is unlike many other historic districts listed in the

same period in that its domestic architecture was not in a state of decay and in need of rescuing at the time of the historic district nomination. The emphasis in the creation of the Cleveland Park Historic District was on saving the neighborhood-serving commercial area on Connecticut Avenue from redevelopment, and the single-family houses between the avenues came along for the ride. Now that we see the rate of teardowns in other DC neighborhoods formerly rich in late-19th and early 20th-century domestic architecture, like Palisades, we can be glad our historic district as a whole was listed.

Read Cleveland Park's National Register of Historic Places nomination at www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district

# By the Numbers: DC Historic Districts and Landmarks

33 neighborhood historic districts (including Cleveland Park)

15 government and institutional historic districts (including the Cathedral Close)

4 park and parkway historic districts (including Rock Creek Park)

500+ DC historic landmarks

23,600+ buildings included in historic districts

## By the Numbers: The Cleveland Park Historic District

1000 contributing properties (built before 1942)

75+ noncontributing properties (built in 1942 or later)

5 individual landmarks (Rosedale, Twin Oaks, Tregaron, Slayton House, Sedgwick Gardens)

1740s: Date of the oldest historic landmark (Rosedale's oldest section)

**1960:** Date of the youngest historic landmark (Slayton House by I. M. Pei)

## Behind the Screen: Running the Cleveland Park Listserv

By Rhona Hartman

Homeless Shelter ... Cleveland Park Library Rebuilding ... Giant on Newark Street ... Door-to-Door Solicitors .... Restaurants and Stores in Cleveland Park ... Service Lane ...

Many issues have appeared on the Cleveland Park Listserv on and off over the years. How does the conversation remain civil? What keeps the comments from being repetitive? Who are the brains behind one of the largest and longest running community forums? Readers of the listserv know that its editors are Bill Adler and Peggy Robin. I sat down with Peggy to learn what it's like to run the Cleveland Park Listserv.



Peggy Robin at the nerve center of the Cleveland Park Listserv

Growing up and to this day, Peggy Robin has been an activist, first in Bethesda, then as an adult living in two different Cleveland Park houses. She has been in the forefront of numerous local causes, and that is how she met her husband Bill Adler. Peggy served on ANC 3C in the 1980s, and was a founding member of the Cleveland Park Historical Society. In 1999 Peggy and Bill decided to create the Cleveland Park Listserv. Bill had observed a similar listserv in Adams Morgan. As Peggy put it during an interview, "We passed out flyers about the listserv at all the meetings we attended, and by the end of the first year we had 1,000 members!" Currently there are about 16,800 members.

According to Peggy, the Cleveland Park Listserv started out as an entirely volunteer effort. But as the membership grew over the years, the operation needed financial support to continue, and so about six years ago the listserv began accepting paid advertisements. The listserv now has over forty local

businesses that are regular sponsors.

Anyone can subscribe to the listserv and comment on local matters—membership is free—and there is no requirement to live in the neighborhood. Either Peggy or Bill reviews each message before posting it. They don't post anonymous messages or anything that strikes them as lacking in civility. Peggy will sometimes write to a poster to say that a message could be posted if rephrased to focus on the issue, rather than attacking the previous poster. Sometimes the off-list exchanges last longer than the on-list thread. Peggy also makes sure that queries start with "ISO" (for "In Search Of") and all replies begin with "Re:". If a recommendation comes in without any contact information, Peggy will often take the time to look up the company and add the website or phone number.

Yahoo handles all the mechanics of the distribution system, automatically maintaining the archives and files on the listserv's home page: https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/cleveland-park/info.\* Bill and Peggy maintain www.cleveland-park.com, a separate site which explains how the listserv works, how to join, how to advertise, and gives the listserv's rules. Subscribers can opt to receive each message as it is posted, or they can receive messages in batches of 15, called the "daily digest." On busy days, when a hot topic is under discussion, there can be as many as 45 or 50 messages a day, or three digests.

Given the volume of comments, how do one or two people keep on top of it all? Peggy said, "It has become almost a full-time job. There have been a few additional editors over time, but right now, I'm the one on it most of the time."

As owner/editors Peggy and Bill are the primary arbiters of the comments. One or the other will determine when to wind down or end a message thread. The goal is to keep the conversation fresh and lively, discouraging a rehash of the same topics.

Peggy explained that most members of the listserv are current residents of Cleveland Park, although some folks who move away remain as members just to keep in touch. Apparently folks from all over the Washington area monitor the Cleveland Park Listserv just to see what people here are thinking about. "I think the listserv often serves a purpose —to help people organize an effort to make changes in the community," said Peggy.

A note on terminology: "The Cleveland Park listserv" or "list" is an electronic mailing list powered by the Yahoo! Groups platform, which is the format for most neighborhood email lists in DC. Yahoo! Groups are like message boards on the internet—users can go to their group's page and read all the messages there—but they also send out messages to all users. "Listserv" is the brand name of one kind of software for running such lists. The Cleveland Park listserv does not run on Listserv software, but since Listserv has been around since the very early days of the internet (the mid-1980s), it has become the generic term for electronic mailing lists like our modern neighborhood lists and groups.

## Board and ARC News: What's Happening Behind the Scenes at CPHS

#### 2017 Budget

At its March meeting, the CPHS board approved a budget for 2017 of \$33,662. This budget assumes \$25,000 in membership income, with the rest coming from program revenue including tours, house marker sales, the annual gingerbread house decorating party, and non-member tickets to our regular program of talks. The board also approved \$5500 from the reserve fund to be used for call box restoration, in addition to the funds raised from contributors. (See page 2.)

**CPHS** is in a healthy financial position, with close to three times its annual operating expenses in a reserve fund. The reserve fund has grown substantially over the past six years, thanks to conservative spending and a very healthy stock market.

We aim to fund all current operations, including the executive director's salary, from current income. For 2017, the ED position is funded at an average of 40 hours per month—less than last year, because membership income for 2016 was lower than expected. That is sufficient to cover the ordinary administration of CPHS but it provides less time for special projects and responding to members' historical queries. You can help by keeping your membership current and giving generously. Thank you to everyone who has already renewed for 2017!

We plan to seek additional income from two sources this year. The Oral History Committee is applying for a DC Humanities Council grant under the new DC Oral History Collaborative program. That would cover recording equipment costs and training for interviewers, as well as funding some additional hours each month for the ED to serve as project director beyond the time already allotted to the essential administration of CPHS. Secondly, the board has agreed to seek sponsorship to cover the cost of printing and mailing *Voices*, beginning with the fall issue. Read more about that on page 2.

#### **ARC Operating Guidelines**

The board, in consultation with the ARC (Architectural Review Committee), has adopted revised guidelines for the ARC. These include a policy on term limits for ARC members to balance the importance of bringing new perspectives to the ARC on a regular basis with continuity within the committee. The policy recognizes the difficulty in finding ARC members with appropriate expertise who are willing to make the necessary commitment of time. Under the new guidelines, ARC members may serve two successive three-year terms, and then must be off the ARC for at least a year before being reappointed.

#### **Preservation Issues Committee**

A new standing committee of the board will be tasked with working on preservation matters that fall outside the design review scope of the ARC, such as advocacy with the Council, ongoing problems like demolition by neglect, and formulating policy on involvement in matters outside our historic district.

#### **Design Guidelines**

Three years ago, in response to requests from the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO), CPHS undertook a project to create design guidelines for the Cleveland Park Historic District. The guidelines would join neighborhood-specific design guidelines that have been or are being created for other DC historic districts by HPO and neighborhood groups. They are designed to supplement HPO's general guidelines by addressing issues specific to the historic context of our neighborhood. This is particularly necessary—but also particularly challenging—for a historic district as eclectic in its architecture as Cleveland Park.

At the outset of the project, we hired a nationally-known consultant with experience in design guidelines to create the guidelines, in consultation with a committee of board and ARC members and the DC Historic Preservation Office. The Guidelines Committee found that the first draft was not what either they or the Historic Preservation Office had in mind. So the committee—Ana Evans, Phil Eagleburger, and Win Brown—went back to the drawing board and began drafting guidelines themselves.

The process of drafting and revising the guidelines has been laborious, but it has also been tremendously helpful in clarifying the ARC's approach to issues that present themselves again and again in project review. The ARC has been continually testing its reasoning in making recommendations on the projects it hears against the principles articulated in the draft guidelines, testing one against the other to be sure the guidelines present coherent and consistent positions.

We are now at the point where we have a complete draft of the guidelines *almost* ready to share with the membership and the neighborhood for your feedback. The current draft has been read and revised by the all the ARC and board members and is currently being lightly edited by the executive director. The next step is to consult with Steve Callcott of the Historic Preservation Office to be sure the draft guidelines are consonant with HPO regulations. And then we will put the document out for public comment. After we have received and incorporated comments from the neighborhood, the final steps will be to have the document fully illustrated, so it can be a visual as well as a verbal reference guide, and then present the guidelines to the Historic Preservation Review Board for formal adoption.

The guidelines will not constitute a new set of binding rules. They are designed to articulate preservation priorities for Cleveland Park and provide a common point of reference for everyone involved in preserving Cleveland Park's buildings and landscapes —owners, architects, the ARC, the ANC, HPO staff, and the Historic Preservation Review Board. We look forward to sharing them with you and getting your feedback in the coming months.

If you would like to see a copy of the budget or ARC guidelines, email Carin Ruff at **staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org**. See overleaf for a listing of board and ARC members.

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## Happy Hundredth!

Happy Hundredth Birthday to these Cleveland Park houses whose original building permits date to 1917:

3434 34th Street3405 Lowell Street3409 Lowell Street3508 Lowell Street3401 Macomb Street3500 35th Street3407 Lowell Street3504 Lowell Street3515 Lowell Street3403 Macomb Street3501 36th Street3408 Lowell Street3506 Lowell Street3306 Macomb Street3445 Ordway Street

as well as the Cleveland Park Congregational Church and Whitby Hall at National Cathedral School.

## Order a Historic House Marker for Your House

CPHS offers historic house markers for contributing buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District—those built in 1941 or earlier, and those individually landmarked. Email Carin Ruff at staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org to check on the date of your house and get an application.

Markers are \$175 for CPHS members and \$225 for non-members. (The difference is the price of a one-year household membership.) The markers are forged to order for us by the Erie Landmark Company. We send in orders in batches two or three times a year in order to save on shipping, and it takes several weeks for the markers to be manufactured. We are aiming to send in an order within a month of the publication of this issue, so get in touch right away if you would like to place an order this spring.

## **Board and ARC Members**

#### **Board Members**

The 2016-2017 board members are:

Hadley Debevoise Allen, Treasurer

Myra Best, Vice-President

John Buchanan

Ana Evans

Mary Jane Glass

Christine Hobbs

Tom Hester

Stefan Hurray

Shaun Jones

Roberta Mathews

Nick Netchvolodoff, President

Shannon Penberthy, Secretary

Abigail Porter

Frank Swain

Gwen Wright

#### **Retiring Board Members**

John Buchanan, Ana Evans, and Gwen Wright are ending their second terms on the board. Enormous thanks to all of them for their service! The slate of nominees to the board proposed for election at the annual meeting will be emailed to members and posted on our website by about the time you receive this issue.

#### **Architectural Review Committee Members**

Win Brown (former board member)

Phil Eagleburger, co-chair (architect)

Ana Evans (retiring board member)

Christine Hobbs, co-chair (current board member)

Stefan Hurray (architect, current board member)

Danny Ince (immediate past president of the board)

David Kay (architect)

Tina Mead (former board member)

Ron Ngiam (architect)

Lois Orr (former president of the board)

Anne Hatfield Weir (former board member)

### **Contact Us**

Voices is edited by Abigail Porter, easporter16@gmail.com

Carin Ruff, CPHS's Executive Director, can be reached at staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Nick Netchvolodoff, CPHS's President, can be reached at president@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Find us on Facebook at Facebook.com/ClevelandParkHistory

## Is Your Membership Up To Date?

## Check the mailing label on the reverse of this page.

If you renewed in Fall 2016 or later, your membership is good till the end of 2017. Thank you for renewing! If you haven't renewed since the first half of 2016, it's time to renew.

We send *Voices* to all our recently-expired members to remind you how much you value CPHS, but we need your support to meet our budget for this year. You can renew using the form below or online at **ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/Membership**.

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CPHS is a member-supported, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you for your support!

Total enclosed: \$

CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY P.O. BOX 4862 WASHINGTON, DC 20008

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VOICES SPRING 2017



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