



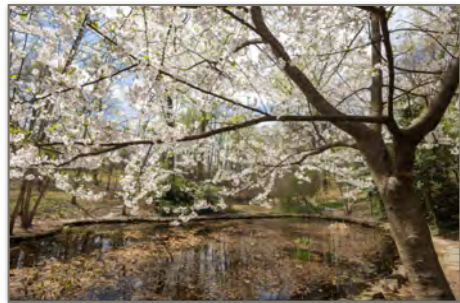
Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

An Interview with Lynn Parseghian, Executive Director of Tregaron Conservancy, on the Conservancy's 20th Anniversary

By Andrea Pedolsky

Congratulations to Tregaron on its twentieth anniversary. You've been Executive Director for 11 of those 20 years and must have experienced many highs and lows. Can you share a few of those with us?



Springtime in Tregaron. (Photograph by Jennifer Packard Photography.)

We are thrilled to reach this milestone, thanks to the dedication of our many supporters, volunteers, and partners in the community and beyond. It has been rewarding to see Tregaron evolve over the past 20 years into a beloved neighborhood greenspace and a resource for the broader community. I'm especially proud that we have transformed our parklands into not only a beautiful green oasis, but also a locus of learning, cultural engagement, and wellness for all ages. It takes a lot of planning and hard work behind the scenes year-round to make that happen.

On the landscape stewardship side of our work, one of the major highlights each year is working with our design team on the planting plans for our "wild gardens." The Conservancy has a dedicated group of volunteers who lead planting days every spring and fall. One of my proudest moments was establishing our new native meadows, beginning in 2017, in areas that had previously been covered 100 percent in invasives. In all our design work, we are inspired by Tregaron's original gardens designed and created over a century ago by Ellen Biddle Shipman, who was known in her time as the "dean of [American] women landscape architects."

While experts guide the Conservancy, there is always a certain amount of trial and error involved in planting on this scale in an urban setting. Deer browse and frequent droughts present challenges. Probably the biggest challenge we face is the increased intensity and frequency of storms. We are still dealing with the aftereffects of the summer 2023 storm that felled nine large trees on our property (and many others in the area). Gaps in the tree canopy create opportunities for

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Policy Corner

By Ellen Goldich

The Cleveland Park Historical Society (CPHS) is closely tracking proposed zoning changes affecting our neighborhood's commercial corridor within the historic district. Our goal is to keep our members and neighborhood residents informed and to support meaningful community engagement on issues shaping Cleveland Park's future.

We support thoughtful growth and the expansion of affordable housing and believe historic districts can contribute to a more diverse and inclusive city. However, CPHS has raised significant concerns about the Office of Planning's proposed rezoning in Zoning Commission Case 25-09.

That proposal would allow building heights of up to seven stories plus penthouses. At a December hearing, CPHS urged a more moderate approach, recommending a maximum of five stories—still allowing for additional housing, including affordable units, while better respecting the scale and character of the historic district.

We also emphasized the need for clear, enforceable zoning standards. The current proposal lacks elements such as setbacks and stepdowns to ensure appropriate transitions to nearby lower-scale buildings. While the Office of Planning suggests these issues could be addressed case by case through the Historic Preservation Review Board, we believe predictable, uniform zoning rules are essential.

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◆ VINTAGE VOICES ◆

Our fall 2025 fortieth anniversary issue included reprints of older *Voices* articles and was so well received, we're going to include one vintage article in all future issues. Because of space constraints, we do shorten some of the articles, using ellipses to indicate where cuts were made.

Volume 10, No. 2 Fall 1996

Our Neighborhood Shopkeepers G.C. Murphy Co.

By Rachel C. 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 a

quarter to get what you want there and the cast of characters has changed, but not entirely.

... 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 slim, serious African American with a lifter/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.

... 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. [He] 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 specialty is customer service.”

Continues on page 6

Save the Dates!

June 4 Come and gather with your neighbors at CPHS’s *Annual Members Meeting and Board Election* at 7:00 p.m., at the Cleveland Park Congregational UCC, 3400 Lowell Street

And mark your calendars for these upcoming fun and educational events:

April 19 *Children’s Architecture Walking Tour* with the Architectural Foundation of DC (for children and their parents or grandparents)

May 19 Yes, in Your Backyard! Everything You Need to Know about Accessory Dwelling Units—a panel discussion with the DC Preservation League on Zoom

June 7 *Cleveland Park Day*—come visit CPHS’s table and enjoy some giveaways while enjoying the outdoor vendor market, live music, dunk tank, and Kids Zone

August *Children’s End of Summer Celebration* at Cleveland Park Library—date TBD

October *Building & Designs for a D.C. Oasis: An Architectural Tour of the National Zoo*—for members only/date TBD

October *Contemporary Homes Walking Tour* with Phil Eagleburger—for members only/date TBD

November *Walking the Tree Canopy with Casey Trees*—for members only/date TBD

November *Historic Easements: What Homeowners Need to Know*—a panel discussion at the Cleveland Park Library—date TBD

December *Gingerbread House Festival*—date TBD

Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

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If you have any questions about, or would like to write an article for, *VOICES*, please contact Andrea Pedolsky at staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

The Roslyn Beitler Education & Outreach Fund

Roslyn (Roz) Beitler, a founding member of CPHS, died on September 5, 2024. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors, Roz was on the committee to restore the 15 police and fire call boxes around the neighborhood and led CPHS's Save the Uptown Committee, which was charged with developing creative alternative uses for the Uptown's space. After learning last year that Roz had gifted CPHS a generous sum of money, the board decided to create *in memoriam* the Roslyn Beitler Education & Outreach Fund. The fund will support our public education programs, community engagement, and outreach to help make Cleveland Park's history accessible to a wide and diverse audience. Members and Cleveland Park residents are welcome to contribute to the fund and help it grow: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org>.

Order a Historic Marker for Your Cleveland Park Home



CPHS offers historic house markers for buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District that were built before 1941 and for those individually

landmarked. These high-quality bronze plaques are forged to order by Franklin Bronze Plaques. Member price is \$170; nonmember price is \$225.

To order a marker, please email staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

It's All in the Details Georgian Revival on Lowell Street

By MaryAnn Nash



3507 Lowell Street.



3601 Lowell Street.



3414 Lowell Street.

For anyone who has walked the three-block stretch of Lowell Street NW between 34th Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the architecture is anything but uniform. Tudor revivals, bungalows, and foursquares sit comfortably alongside one another, reflecting the eclectic tastes of the developers who built out this section of Cleveland Park between roughly 1910 and 1930. But threaded through the mix is a recurring type that gives the block an air of formality: the Georgian Revival.

The style's defining characteristics are symmetry and restraint. Georgian Revival buildings are organized around a central axis, with symmetrical facades, evenly spaced sash windows, and front doors framed with classical elements such as pilasters, a pediment, and often a fanlight. Red brick with white-painted trim is the standard color palette. The effect is formal without being cold. In Washington, the Georgian Revival homes felt comfortable alongside the classical buildings of the Mall and the Capitol, bringing that same tradition down to the scale of a family residence.

Four houses on this stretch of Lowell Street show how the style could be interpreted in different ways.

Four white columns at 3507 frame a dark painted door, topped by a fanlight with a delicate sunburst pattern. The narrow windows flanking the door carry an unusual Gothic-influenced pattern in their glazing bars, an unexpected detail in an otherwise classical composition. Three dormers punctuate the roofline above, and a broad run of brick steps leads up from the street, giving the whole entrance a sense of formality.

At 3601, four columns frame the entrance beneath a flat roof edged with dentil molding. If you look closely at the brick above the second-floor windows, you will find diamond patterns pressed into the brickwork, an unassuming detail that highlights the care that went into the original construction. At the roofline, a wide dormer runs nearly the full width of the house, creating a distinctive profile against the sky.

The entrance at 3414 is the first thing you notice. Rather than the flat pediment found on most Georgian Revival houses, the portico here curves outward in a rounded hood supported by four columns, with a small iron-railed balcony directly above. It is an assured and unusual choice for the style.

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It Happened in...2000 A Cuban Refugee Is Housed at Rosedale

By Andrea Pedolsky

Among Rosedale’s many iterations over the decades, perhaps the most notable in its history was when it was the home to the organization Youth for Understanding (YFU), which housed Elian Gonzalez, the six-year-old Cuban refugee, in 2000. How did that come to be? It is a complex story—this is the short version, based on many reports in the press.



Elian Gonzalez, second from right, with his family. (Photograph provided by U.S. Government.)

On Thanksgiving 1999, a six-year-old Cuban child, Elian Gonzalez, floating in an inner tube in the Atlantic Ocean off Dania Beach, Florida, was rescued by two fishermen who handed him over to the U.S. Coast Guard. He had fled Cuba with his mother, who drowned during their escape. Elian’s Florida relatives took him in. His father, Juan Miguel Gomez, was still in Cuba and wanted

him back. But many in the exile community were anxious for him to stay.

A complex and emotional public battle commenced, which divided Elian’s family as well as the community—and was fought in state court, federal court, and the Justice Department, headed by Janet Reno. When negotiations with the Florida family failed, on the morning of April 22, 2000, federal agents raided Elian’s relatives’ home—the event was called “Operation Reunion”—and reunited Elian with his father, who in the meantime had traveled to the DC area to make his case.

According to an interview with YFU president, Sally Grooms Cowal, in *The Free Library* (<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/IN+OUR+OWN+BACKYARD.-a067412078>), this is when the organization became involved. Elian’s father’s attorney, Cowal’s DC neighbor, asked YFU to host Elian. While the idea was initially vetoed by U.S. Marshals, on May 25, Elian, his father, brother, ten-year-old cousin, four first-grade classmates, and their parents moved to YFU’s campus on the Rosedale estate. They stayed there until June 28, when Elian and his father finally returned to Cuba.

Fast forward to 2026: Elian is a 33-year-old engineer and a member of the National Assembly of People’s Power.

Invite a Neighbor to Join CPHS!

Do you have a neighbor who is interested in historic districts and historic preservation? Why not ask them to join us? Please share this link with them: <http://bit.ly/CPHSMembership>

Antiques Appraisal Day Returns... and Other Popular CPHS Events

By MaryAnn Nash

CPHS held its annual Gingerbread House Decorating event last December 13 at the Cleveland Park Club. Members decorated hand-baked gingerbread houses provided by CPHS member and master baker Robert Jenkins, with two family sessions in the afternoon. This year, the event introduced an adults-only evening session featuring festive drinks and music—it was a spirited addition to a beloved neighborhood favorite.

Returning by popular demand, the House Histories Workshop took place February 3 at the Cleveland Park Library. Local historian Jim Buchanan once again guided attendees through the process of uncovering their home’s history. It was a fun, interactive evening with attendees sharing their discoveries and experiences.



Appraiser Christopher Lancette from Orion’s Attic considers a work of abstract art.

(Photograph by Ellen Goldich.)

On March 21, we reprised our version of Antiques Roadshow at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church. Throughout the program, experts from Orion’s Attic and Paradigm Experts talked about antiques trends, offered selling tips, and advised about estate management, while appraising the many items attendees brought for evaluation. A long table was covered with such items as a silver tea set, gold coins, artwork, jewelry, books, and a music box. While there was no big “winner,” it was a lively and informative event, and we all left feeling much more armed to start dealing with our stuff!

Read *Save the Dates* on page 2 for information on upcoming programs and events.



Drawing by Eleanor Oliver

Interview with Lynn Parseghian, continued from page 1

*Springtime in Tregaron.
(Photograph by Kevin Spence Kelso.)*

invasives to spread more rapidly. We have increased the pace of our invasives removal and native plant additions, as a result.

On the events/programs side, it has been incredibly rewarding to see the impact of the Conservancy's work with students. We host a variety of programs—including volunteer cleanup days, story time, and nature learning—with many schools, including Washington International School (WIS), Maret, John Eaton, Oyster Bilingual, and Parkmont. Every summer, we host first through ninth grade campers from Horizons Greater Washington, a summer enrichment

academy attended largely by students who live in Columbia Heights. We love hearing from the students that they've discovered that "all trees are beautiful" or that they've found their own "secret spot" at Tregaron. We're fortunate to have a phenomenal team of volunteer educators leading most of these programs.

How are you celebrating Tregaron's anniversary?

We kicked off our anniversary at the end of last year with a talk by Dr. Bruce Stein, Chief Scientist Emeritus of the National Wildlife Federation, about climate adaptation and the challenges our world, our region, and Tregaron itself are facing. After the talk, we led small-group field tours to highlight the work we are undertaking to adapt to the changing climate.

We commissioned a new map and inventory of over 800 trees last year, including many of the hundreds we have planted since our founding. (All of the trees bear a numbered tag.) In honor of our anniversary, we will soon be debuting a webpage featuring the tree map and a searchable list, so everyone can learn about our diverse, largely native canopy and find their favorite trees at Tregaron.

We will be heralding our anniversary throughout 2026, while also highlighting our achievements during annual events such as our Easter Egg Hunt and concert series, and perhaps a special celebratory event in the fall. Stay tuned!

While anniversaries often compel us to look back, we'd like to know what you are looking forward to.

Agreed, twenty years is certainly a time to celebrate our accomplishments, but we are always forward focused! We have an ambitious list of goals and projects as we continue to restore historic stone features, enhance and expand our wild gardens, and improve our fields and meadows, all while adapting to the changing climate. We continually strive to improve our visitors' experience as well, while maintaining the overall tranquility of the setting. We are currently working on improvements and updates to our signage.

We are always looking for ways to deepen our engagement with the community. We have strong partnerships with DC Public Schools that we are looking to expand. If any of your members are public school parents/guardians and would like to arrange a field trip or community service project, we would love to hear from them.

We are grateful for the community's strong commitment to Tregaron!

Some Interesting Facts About Tregaron

- The Conservancy is the owner and steward of its parklands in perpetuity. It is solely responsible for maintaining and improving the 13-acre landscape and relies entirely on private donations for everything it does.
- Tregaron is both a national landmark and a community-powered organization. The board of directors includes both community members and representatives of local organizations (CPHS, CPCA, the ANC commissioner, and WIS) as co-stewards of the 20-acre estate. They work with many partner organizations, including the Cleveland & Woodley Park Village and Washington Performing Arts. They host volunteer service days with local businesses as well.
- They offer many free programs, including tai chi, bird walks, and a variety of tours. They fill up quickly—you can learn about them by signing up for their e-news on their website home page at Tregaron.org.
- They host small-scale wedding ceremonies, professional photo sessions, and other life-cycle events. (To apply for a permit, email info@tregaron.org.)
- They offer opportunities to get involved! While they currently have a wait list for their landscape volunteer group, they are looking for event greeters and individuals with expertise in DC cultural history or historic landscapes who might like to help out on their tours.

Tregaron has a complex and fascinating history. Lynn encourages anyone who is interested in learning more to visit the History page on Tregaron's website.

Policy Corner, continued from page 1

In addition, we raised concerns about infrastructure, including utilities, sewage, and parking. These issues should be addressed upfront through zoning, not left to individual developers.

In February, CPHS testified at a DC Council oversight hearing, questioning whether the proposal aligns with the District's Comprehensive Plan, which emphasizes that maximum density is not always appropriate and that zoning should reflect neighborhood context. We have also called for greater transparency, including clearer data on expected affordable housing outcomes.

Finally, CPHS objected to the Zoning Commission's decision to close the public record before it had received—and shared—new information it had requested from the Office of Planning, in the form of a Supplemental Report. Along with others—including Ward 3 Councilmember Matt Frumin, but not, unfortunately, our local ANC3C, who insisted that the case not be reopened—we urged the Commission to reopen the case. The Commission did so, giving the public two weeks to read, consider, and respond to a 14+ page report. CPHS submitted written testimony to the reopened record just a few days before this issue went to press. As of that time, the Commission had not announced when it would make a final decision.

To read CPHS testimony, visit: www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/posts

You can sign up for case updates here: https://app.dcoz.dc.gov/Home/ViewCase?case_id=25-09 (click "Get Notifications").

Vintage Voices: G.C. Murphy, continued from page 2

“The clerks know most of the people who live in the area. Our specialty 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, Hechinger's, and Ames, Reeder says.

... 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.

... 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 Magdy M. Soliman. Yet he handles the lop-eared, gray-and-white bunny, the pet room's star, with aplomb.

Upstairs... the Washington Plant Company has for six years offered indoor and outdoor plants, garden supplies and accessories. In winter they sell Christmas trees and wreaths, salt and snow shovels.

... 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 around a stainless-steel Rolex... At first attracting business was difficult, he recalls, because people hesitated to leave their valuables with a concessionaire... But gradually he's built up a steady clientele and business is better.

[I]n 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... “I travel a lot; that's why I wanted to do it,” he says... Besides selling train and plane tickets, tours and cruises, he takes passport photos, does laminations, and sells moving supplies.

... Against Murphy's rear wall, in a freestanding booth of bright plastic laminate, Mary Vincent operates the world's only Mini Office—a trademarked name that seems ripe for franchising. She's been selling office support services for 30 years... At Murphy's 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... “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.”



Planning Work on Your Home in the Cleveland Park Historic District?

Owners of homes and other buildings in the Cleveland Park Historic District share responsibility for helping preserve the historic fabric of the neighborhood, the properties themselves, and their relationship to the whole streetscape and natural environment.

Visit our website, ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org, or cphsdc.org, for guidance on the design review process in Cleveland Park and the permitting process in DC.

It's All in the Details, continued from page 3



Interestingly, the approach to the house at 3515 is part of the architecture. A long flight of rough granite steps climbs from the street alongside a low stone retaining wall, lifting the house well above the sidewalk. The facade is classical Georgian: symmetrical brick, evenly spaced windows, and a fanlit entrance. But the elevation and the stone approach are what give 3515 its particular character, a reminder that where a building sits can be as important as how it is built.

3515 Lowell Street.

The historic district designation protects all these facades. Next time you walk the block, look for these details. They are easy to walk by but worth stopping for.

Photographs by MaryAnn Nash.

Cool Merch for You and Yours!



CPHS's online store (<https://www.bonfire.com/store/cleveland-park-historical-society/>) is open for business with our first collection of tees, sweatshirts, mugs, bags, and more! All offerings feature original artwork by CPHS Member Eleanor Oliver and John Wiebenson, and showcase beloved landmarks like the Uptown Theater and the Fire Station, as well as a delightful range of classic architectural home styles from Queen Annes and bungalows to Sherman Cottages.

These items make wonderful gifts for family, friends, and neighbors— and of course, for yourself! Every purchase supports CPHS's educational programs and events.

Happy shopping!

ARC's Work

The ARC meets the second Monday of every month, except in August, and the public and neighbors are encouraged to attend and participate. Deliberations on individual projects are limited



CPHS LINKS

CPHS Website: clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org and/or cphsdc.org

Staff Email: staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

Membership: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/membership/>

Voices Archive: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/newsletters/>

Historic Preservation: <https://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/preservation/>

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Voices 2026

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