

## Call Boxes Revisited: From Eyesores to Art

by Roz Beitler

Those eviscerated but still ornate cast iron call boxes dotting the neighborhood are about to be transformed from curbside eyesores to cultural icons, reminders of a time before cell phones.

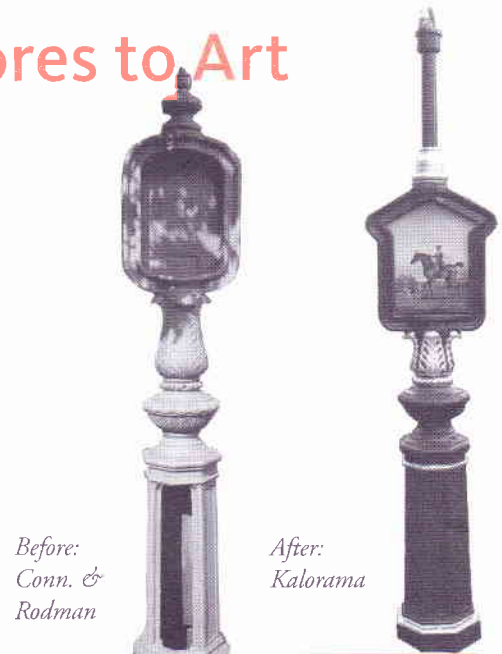
A CPHS committee, working with the city's "Cultural Tourism DC," is inviting neighbors to a meeting on Tuesday, Oct 16, 8 p.m. at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church, to help launch a call box revitalization project.

The city has made modest funds available to help with the facelift, which will include painting the call boxes a handsome midnight blue and filling the

empty frames with images of Cleveland Park and its social and cultural history.

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."



## Heads Up for Fall

By Joan Habib, CPHS President

The CPHS Annual Meeting in May drew more than 200 neighbors. The new documentary, "I Am Cleveland Park," despite technical glitches, was well received and DVDs are available from CPHS and Politics & Prose, Wake Up Little Suzie, and Transcendence-Perfection-Bliss of the Beyond. Five directors were added to the CPHS board: Tony Bullock, Anne Clark, Caroline Krass, Kay Kohl and Anne Hatfield Weir. And committee chairs are already at work planning events for the CPHS calendar (see page 4).

Many of you have expressed concern that several stores on Connecticut are standing empty. To seek solutions, we're putting together a committee to work with building and business owners, managers and DC officials. Streetscapes were among top interests cited by respondents to our recent questionnaire. Other issues were: the Giant project, library restoration, historic preservation, Yenching/Walgreens, fire house restoration, merchant relations, Tregaron and dog park.

### ON THE AVENUE

## Connecticut Avenue's Summer Show

By Trish Savage



Frank Hughes, of Ireland's Four Green Fields, with Sunflower

From the library at Macomb to the 7-Eleven at Porter, Connecticut Avenue this summer was an urban garden of towering sunflowers, roses, hibiscus, petunias, dark-green rubber plants and lanky hollyhocks.

Merchants and building owners planted and tended the floral displays in front of their properties. These included: Ireland's Four Green Fields, Byblos Deli, Washington Consignment, Supercuts, Starbucks, Uptown Vision, Transcendence-Perfection-Bliss of the Beyond, U.S. Post Office, Yanni's, Alero's, Cold Stone Creamery, Indique, Grosvenor Property, the Tsintolas family, Siam House and several residents of the Monterey.

Special credit for this year's greening of Connecticut goes to John Poole and the CPHS tree committee, and volunteers Linda Chipperfield, Debby Churchman, Janet Cyphers, Laura Graham, Maria Sgambati and Linda Greensfelder. Financial support was provided by CPHS, Friends of the Cleveland Park Library and the neighborhood Listserv.

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PO Box 4862, Washington, DC 20008

202-237-CLEV (2338)

email: CPHSPresident@aol.com

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS



# Handling Hydrangeas

By Chris Rose



### When should I prune my hydrangeas?

Hydrangeas are great shrubs for our Cleveland Park gardens. They like east and north aspects with a little afternoon shade. Varieties have wonderful and descriptive names, such as lacecap, oakleaf and climbing. Mopheads are the famous blue variety.

Most hydrangeas bloom on wood formed the previous year. They need only a little pruning to improve their shape and flowering. The time to prune is after flowering. Spring is OK if you prune selectively—a few weak, thin stems, one or two of the oldest shoots,

and a few inches of the previous year's flowered branches. Go easy on removing last year's wood—too much and you won't have flowers.

**How should I care for a young tree or get a new one?** Young trees should be watered once a week if there has been no rain. To request a new street tree, to have a dead one removed, or for a tree emergency, go to [www.dc.gov/](http://www.dc.gov/) and click through to Tree Maintenance, then fill in the service request.

*Chris Rose is with the USDA Forest Service*

## The Foursquare: American as Apple Pie

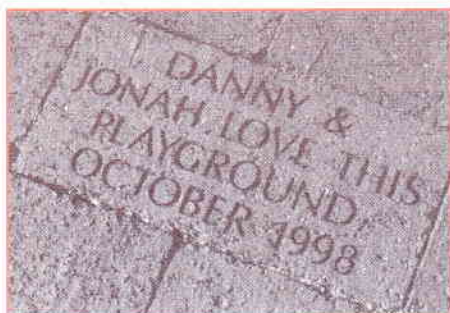
*This is the first in a series on the styles of the houses of Cleveland Park.*

## Macomb Playground: Order Your Bricks

Over the past year, ROMP has raised more than \$23,000, closing in on its goal of \$30,000. This fall, bricks and plaques will be available for donations of \$150 or more. If you order now, you'll help ROMP receive a bulk discount.

Once we've raised the remaining amount, we'll buy new equipment for the lower playground. We're awaiting Department of Parks and Recreation approval to buy a new seesaw, water sprayer and computers for the field house at the end of summer. DPR has purchased an air conditioning unit for the field house.

For details, go to [romp@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:romp@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) or the CPHS website at [clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/romp](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/romp). —Sabra Klein Maloney, ROMP Chair.



*John Wiebenson*

One of the most common house types in our neighborhood is the Foursquare. Popular throughout the nation in the early 20th century, it has a solid, comfortable shape and a wide, inviting front porch. This archetypical family home reflected the growing demand for economical, suburban housing.

Although the basic form is simple, it's often dressed up with materials and ornamental details, based on styles ranging from Colonial to Craftsman. The Foursquare and its many incarnations were built throughout Cleveland Park from 1908 to 1930. Some typical examples are at 2739 Macomb, 3431 Porter, and 3519 Lowell.

### Shape

The basic form includes: compact, boxlike, square shape; low-hipped roof, with dormers and broad, overhanging eaves; and off-center front entrance with asymmetrically placed windows. Some feature wraparound porches and second-story balconies.

### Construction

Materials include wood shingles, stucco, fieldstone, brick, narrow wood siding, or a combination. Original roofs were wood shingle, slate, or clay tile.

### Windows and Doors

These vary in detail. Windows, double-hung with one-over-one or six-over-one, are often paired and flanked by louvered shutters. Others are shallow bays and Palladian. Many feature diamond-shaped panes. Doors may be paneled, with the upper part of glass.

Supports include classical, especially Tuscan, columns; Craftsman piers with sides sloping outward at the base; and Spanish Revival arches. Handrails have square balusters. Ornamental brackets support wide eaves.

—Adapted from *Cleveland Park: A Guide to Architectural Styles and Building Types* by Cherrie Anderson and Kathleen Sinclair Wood. Available from CPHS.

# What Works at the “Cheers” of Fitness

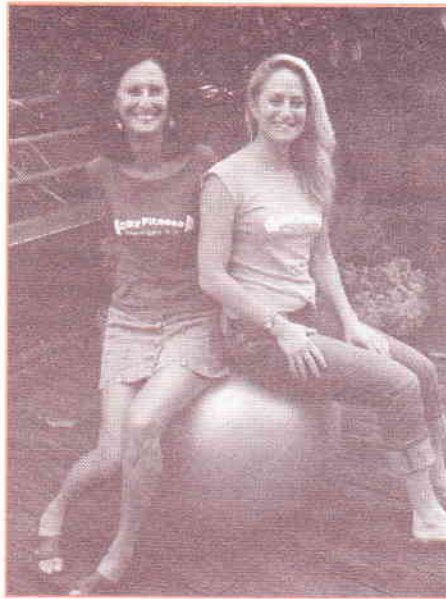
By Robin Berrington

City Fitness, the only gym in town owned by women, celebrates its 25th anniversary next year. And proprietors Lucinda LaRee and Dega Schembri aim to make their compact, second-storey health club in Cleveland Park even more family friendly than it already is.

“We want people of all ages and levels here,” said LaRee. They are eager to recruit more teenagers and offer a reduced teen membership rate in the afternoons. Some morning classes are geared for the over-55 crowd and there’s a 10 per cent discount for those over 65. They run a pre-natal class, too.

Instructors run 40 different classes and offer personal training to the gym’s 500 members. “We have something for everybody,” said Ellie Cossa, a 12-year staffer who keeps the books and runs the education programs.

Schembri and LaRee pay attention to the ambiance of their space. Clients can work out on a tranquil outdoor deck or indoors among Japanese paper lanterns



Owners Dega (left) and Lucinda on the ball at City Fitness.

and hand-painted murals. On the varied menu of workout offers are belly dancing, yoga and low-impact aerobics.

Still, on many afternoons, the class area reverberates with the thud-and-groan of Brazilian jujitsu, Thai kickboxing and step aerobics.

The two women feel very much a part of Cleveland Park. They have reached out to local merchants and say they would like to build more neighborhood camaraderie. They encourage members to get to know each other and have been so successful that over the years that some of their members who walked in as singles walked out as couples. The club sponsors fundraisers for an array of causes: a sports team in Uganda; toys for low-income children in Anacostia; “Grandma’s House,” the foster-care program; the “Help the Homeless Walkathon” and for Hurricane Katrina victims.

City Fitness is small, with a 15-member staff, but to many that’s its appeal—a neighborhood gym with a culture of friendliness. Said Schembri, “We like to think of ourselves as the ‘Cheers’ of fitness.”

## Makeover for CP Club

Membership at the Cleveland Park Club was full for 2007 and the waiting list long, following the recent renovation of the clubhouse and pool.

Steps were added to the pool, replacing the ladder, and a new pipe system brought the infrastructure up to code. An in-ground baby pool was built—no more blow-up plastic ones. New fencing opens up the deck area, and additional lounging and “watching” space was added next to the pool for parents and caregivers. The clubhouse’s hardwood floors were repaired and refinished and its walls painted yellow. Gone is the old, dingy look. The kitchen has new cabinets and appliances.

Among those who worked on the clubhouse renovation are Laine Shakerdge, Sarah Mathias, Minturn Wright and Honora Precourt.

For information, check the website ([clevelandparkclub.org](http://clevelandparkclub.org)), which was recently re-designed and is now hosted by neighbor Herb Caudill of Caudill Web.

## Congress Allows Easements But Tightens Regulations

Under recent congressional legislation, you can still preserve your house and help retain the ambience of the Cleveland Park neighborhood by donating a qualified conservation easement.

But, specialists urge caution. “There are new restrictions and there may be tax pitfalls,” said one expert. “Homeowners should consult their accountants or lawyers.”

New rules were passed in response to a controversy over easement program abuses. They include:

- Disallowing deductions for easements that fail to protect the *entire* exterior of a property. It’s

no longer enough to protect only the façade.

- Requiring homeowners to certify, *under penalty of perjury*, that the easement-holding organization is qualified and has the resources and commitment to manage and enforce the easement.
- Requiring more detailed proof for the IRS of the value of the deduction and a filing fee of \$500 for deductions over \$10,000.

For more information, visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation at [www.nationaltrust.org/easements](http://www.nationaltrust.org/easements).

**CPHS WANTS YOU!**  
For membership, go to  
[www.clevelandparkhistorical society.org](http://www.clevelandparkhistorical society.org)

## Pretty Prospects Pretty Soon

Once upon a tyme...the area around Rosedale was known as "Pretty Prospects" and that's where the 2007 CPHS Fall House Tour is heading. Scheduled for 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, November 4, the walking tour will feature seven distinctive houses clustered around Rosedale.

This year's tour is organized by the CPHS Program Committee. Tickets will cost \$25 in advance; \$30 on tour day at the Cleveland Park Club and proceeds will benefit CPHS. Those interested in volunteering as docents should contact [CPHSPresident@aol.com](mailto:CPHSPresident@aol.com), call 237-2538, or check the website at [www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org).  
—Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford, Chair

## Got Antiques? Dust 'em Off and Polish 'em Up

With the temperature dropping, it's safe to head for the attic to check out those dusty treasures for the third annual CPHS Antiques Appraisal Day. The neighborhood's version of the Antiques Road Show is scheduled for 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday, February 9, 2008, at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church.

Once again, experts from The Potomack Company, an antiques and fine arts auction gallery in



Alexandria, will be on hand to appraise your heirlooms and your flea market finds. Last February, more than 40 hopefuls trooped in with everything from chess sets and crazy quilts to crystal and carpets.

Additional information and a sign-up sheet will be available and circulated closer to Antiques Appraisal Day. Call 202-537-CLEV (2538) or write [cphspresident@aol.com](mailto:cphspresident@aol.com). —Amanda Ohlke



**MARK  
YOUR  
CALENDAR!**

### CALL BOX MEETING

Tues., Oct. 16. 8 p.m.  
CP Congregational Church

### HOUSE TOUR

Sun., Nov. 4. 1-4 p.m.

### ANTIQUES APPRAISAL DAY

Sat., Feb. 9. Cleveland Park Congregational Church

### GARDEN TOUR, SPRING, Sun., June 8.

To volunteer for all events, check website at:  
[www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) or call 237-2538.



Cleveland Park Historical Society  
PO Box 4862  
Washington, DC 20008  
202.363.6358

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