

CLEVELAND PARK



Voices

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 1989

CPHS Looks Ahead

By Tersh Boasberg

President

Cleveland Park Historical Society

The Cleveland Park Historical Society can be justly proud of its achievements over the past three years. We have created the third largest historic district in Washington, D.C. We have pioneered the successful rezoning of commercial areas on both Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues. The worst aspects of explosive development which threatened to overwhelm our neighborhood have been legally contained—for the present.

Mindful that "eternal vigilance is the price of neighborhood peace," the key to our success—past, present, future—has been and will continue to be *organization*. We urge you to become active in CPHS and work with us.

In the months ahead, there are any number of activities in which CPHS could use your help.

1. Architectural Review Committee. The ARC plays an important role not only in advising on proposed residential additions and alterations in the Cleveland Park Historic District but also in reviewing signs, additions, and new construction in the commercial areas, especially along Connecticut Avenue. Chaired by Whit Peters and assisted by architectural historian Kathy Wood, this committee of neighborhood volun-

Members and friends are invited to the
Annual Meeting of the CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
In the Pilgrim Observation Gallery of the WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL
7th floor, enter at the West front (or, if late, at the
northwest cloister opposite the carvers' shed)

Monday, April 24, 1989

7:30 refreshments; 8:00 meeting; 8:30, architectural
historian Nancy Witherell and architect Amy Weinstein
speaking on "New Designs in an Old Context"

The Washington Cathedral has invited CPHS to hold our annual meeting in its west-end, seventh-floor Pilgrim Observation Gallery, from which members can enjoy the spectacular night-time view of Washington during our pre-meeting reception, 7:30 to 8:00.

Featured are two speakers familiar with designing alterations and additions in Washington's historic districts.

Nancy Witherell, whose graduate studies include art history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and architectural history and related studies at Cornell, has worked with the D.C. Historic Preservation Office for three years. As staff person for Cleveland Park since its designation as an historic district in May 1987, she reviews all proposed alterations for Cleveland Park residences

and prepares reports of recommendations for the Historic Preservation Review Board, which must act on all requests for building permits within D.C. historic districts.

Ms. Witherell will show slides of compatible and incompatible alterations in other historic districts of the city and discuss the salient features of Cleveland Park streetscapes.

Amy Weinstein heads Weinstein Associates, Architects, of Washington, D.C. She has a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She has won several AIA design awards: in 1987 for a residence at 3600 Upton and in 1988 for a retail office building at 301 7th Street N.E. on Capitol Hill. Using slides of her own designs, Ms. Weinstein will discuss an architect's approach to new design in an old context.

teers meets once a month. We are looking for new members, to begin in May. Call Whit (363-3049) or Kathy (244-1276) for more information.

2. Park and Shop. This committee is involved in the negotiations with the Pedas brothers over the size and shape of any future development on

the Park and Shop site. It meets on an "as needed" basis and is chaired by Peggy Robin. Call Peggy (686-9132) for further information.

3. Gypsy Moth. A new committee under the leadership of John Poole is taking a look at how we can best pro-
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CPHS Looks Ahead

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tect and preserve our beautiful trees in Cleveland Park. It is also considering what to do about the gypsy moth infestation. Call John (966-8329) if you'd like to help.

4. **Connecticut and Wisconsin shops.** We would like to work more closely with the merchants on Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues to design a more positive shopping experience. Such ideas as street furniture, better lighting, more attractive signs, facade preservation, and better approaches to handling pedestrian and vehicular traffic come to mind. If you would like to help us here, call Executive Director Kathy Wood (244-1276).

5. **CPHS Board.** Finally, we are always looking for new and active Board members. If you'd like to be considered, please let us know (again, call Kathy, 244-1276). We can only keep up the good work with your help. Come join us.

Park and Shop Update

While at present (early April) there is no pending proposal for development of the Park and Shop site at Connecticut and Ordway, there has been lots of movement. The Pedas brothers, new owners of the Park and Shop, have met several times with CPHS's Park and Shop committee chaired by Peggy Robin to discuss possible development scenarios. CPHS has retained Cleveland Park architect Cal Bowie of Bowie, Gridley to assist us. Cal has done height, mass, and F.A.R. (density) studies of the site and those have been discussed with the Pedas brothers. CPHS's position is that we would like to retain as much of the old structure as possible, perhaps incorporated into a sensitive design of a new three- to four-story, 80,000-90,000-square-foot building. We are hopeful of working with the Pedas brothers to secure an attractive development which will respect the past and be sensitive to the low-rise, small-scale nature of Cleveland Park but also bring economic renewal to that site.

John Eaton Student Architects

By Kate Sawyer

Architecture is a new and special class being taught by Rives Carroll at John Eaton School. We have been studying different architectural units. First, the class walked around our school, noticing many different features that we were surprised to see, including balconies, gargoyles, blocked doorways, and beltcourses. The next unit we studied was Cleveland Park, 1911 and 1988. Our research included making a map from 1911, the year our school was built, and interviewing a former student, Miss Virginia Stephenson, who graduated in 1924 and has lived in this neighborhood most of her life. After taking a neighborhood walk to see different styles of houses, such as Romantic, Neo-classical, Victorian, Modern, and Neo-modern, we designed our own dream houses, using some architectural features we had observed.

Finally, we walked to the area of commercial building on Connecticut Avenue. We recorded the different kinds of buildings we saw. We then looked at the Park and Shop building which has been empty for three years. We started thinking about what we, children, want to have there, something better than the office building that the developers want.

From our records, we found that our design didn't need any more restaurants, because the blocks of Connecticut Avenue between Porter and Macomb Streets already have 17 of them. So we decided to design recreational facilities, such as a swimming pool, an ice/roller-skating rink, and a gym. This design had a community room where adults and children could meet.

First, the whole class made our plans and elevations, using a quarter of an inch on our rulers to equal one foot of building. We added one level to the existing building and architectural features, including Ionic columns, Palladian windows, and relief sculptures.

This design project taught us how architects go through many steps of designing a building. Our whole class thinks we should have something on that corner at Ordway and Connecticut, and we think our plans for a Neighborhood Center will improve our community.

Kate Sawyer is a sixth grader at John Eaton. She enjoys writing, reading, acting, and playing the piano. She is also a Spelling Bee winner.



John Eaton sixth graders study the Park and Shop before drawing plans for the neighborhood center they'd like to see there.

Our Neighborhood Shopkeepers

John Hatton

By Rives Carroll

John Hatton is "at home" surrounded by books. He wants to provide the same comfort for his customers. "If I had the space, I'd have a couch in the middle so people could sit down," says Hatton, who is owner, manager, and buyer at Calliope, a small and intimate literary bookstore on Connecticut Avenue next to the Uptown Theater. Named for the Greek muse of epic poetry, Calliope encourages both browsers and buyers with its warm welcome and living-room ambiance.

Opened in August 1980 by a former employee of the old Savile's of Georgetown, Calliope has grown slowly but steadily. Its propitious location next to the theater has introduced many people from other parts of the city to its careful selection and personal service. Moviegoers waiting for the next show provide a rush of customers. In fact, on a recent cold day, Hatton treated them to hot coffee.

Books have been a catalyst in Hatton's life at several stages. Frequent visits to the public library and voracious reading during his childhood in the 1950s caused him to outgrow his isolated farm community in Illinois. Every other Saturday, he and his mother flagged down the Greyhound bus traveling between Chicago and Evansville, Indiana. They rode to the nearest town library where Hatton selected a fresh supply of books which he read to his mother at home in the evenings.

When Hatton joined the army to see more of the country, he was posted in Washington, one of the top book markets in the country, after New York and Boston. Following jobs at the American Film Institute, the National Archives, and an attempt at a mailorder business of art and architecture books, he took a

summer position at the National Gallery shops, where he rose to head sales clerk. There his taste for selling quality books was whetted.

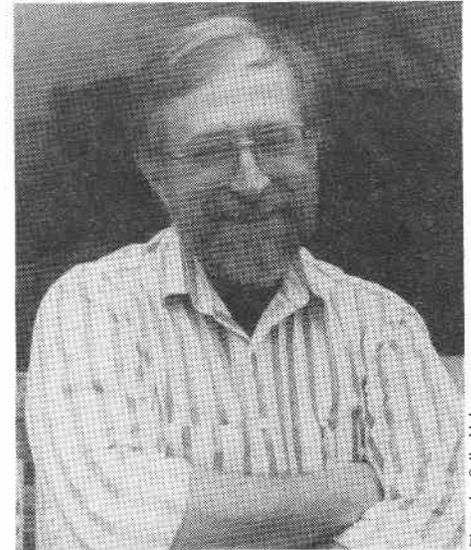
Hatton did not plan his future. Selling books came out of a natural narrowing of his interests. When he began as a part-time night clerk at Calliope, his work felt right. It also paid right, as it coincided with the birth of his now eight-year-old twins, two of his four children. His purchase of the store last July confirmed his commitment to retailing books.

Calliope is different from most book stores. Hatton tries "to have books that other stores don't have." His choices are determined by his tastes and those of the people who come into the store. He pays close attention to what they buy, talk about, and request. The neighbors help determine his selection, which does not include bestsellers. Hatton concentrates on literature, poetry, and quality remainders of all kinds. Partly due to its smallness, Hatton explains, "Calliope sells more books per square foot than just about any store in the country."

This success is due to the rapid sales of fiction and remainders, which account for less than 15 percent of Calliope's inventory. However, in other areas, Calliope has "one of the worst turnover ratios of sales to inventory." Poetry and art sell the least well, but Calliope is committed to carrying them. Calliope offers philosophy, history, religion, cooking, and children's books, and features local authors as well. Hatton plans to sell large-print books and to expand his travel and biography sections.

In fact, expanding is an immediate goal, especially his floor space. The store's size, which works for and against it, makes keeping books in stock a problem. So Hatton is in the process of remodeling to maximize the use of every foot. But don't let the unfinished look put you off. You are invited to browse through the hundreds of books crowded on shelves and piled to the ceiling.

To his dismay, assuming ownership has increased Hatton's desk work. He misses the daily contact with his customers, for as he says, "It's the people who come in here every day who are the most fun for me. Really, I have a lot of joy. I don't do this for the money."



John Hatton

Photo by Sally Halvorson

CPHS sponsors a
Spring Craft Show and Sale
Saturday, April 29: 10-5
Sunday, April 30: 12-5
Kathy and Joe Wood's
house
3101 Highland Place
Salt-glazed pottery by
Nan Rothwell
Hand-painted clothing by
Kate Rothwell
Pen and ink drawings by
Eleanor Oliver
Quilts by Judy Seaver
and an exhibit of
historic materials and
photos of Cleveland Park
Part of craft sales
proceeds will benefit CPHS

On Saturday, Kathy Wood will be present with her information about individual building permits for houses in the Cleveland Park Historic District. She will be glad to share what information she has about your house and suggest where to learn more about it.

On Sunday, the craft show will be open during the same hours as the National Child Research Center Cleveland Park House Tour.

NEEDED: Old photos, historic documents, and other memorabilia pertaining to Cleveland Park. To be displayed at the CPHS Craft Show and Sale, April 29 and 30. Please call Kathy Wood (244-1276).

Cleveland Park Personalities

Philip Stone

By Rives Carroll

Who is as old as the cathedral, has hair as white as snow, skin as un-wrinkled as a child's, and the memory of an elephant? Our neighbor Phil Stone, the father of Cleveland Park history. Born in his present house on Macomb Street 82 years ago, Stone, a retired general public librarian, takes for granted his ability to recall details. With the energy of a man 20 years his junior, he lists the names of his Eaton School teachers in chronological order, not forgetting those who taught him for only half a year.

Stone's memory and forthrightness contributed to his success as a troubleshooter for the D.C. Public Library. Fortunate to get a job as a part-time night page at the busy Mt. Pleasant branch during the Depression, Stone moved quickly from branch to branch and job to job. He earned a master's degree in library science and public administration at Berkeley and, by the end of his career, had done "almost everything in the library system" except work at a circulation desk. He created new divisions and, as a reference librarian, selected books on a wide range of topics, from religion to recreation. When Stone retired on June 3, 1972, he was the Coordinator of Adult Services.

Stone's family roots in Washington date from the day after President Garfield's 1881 assassination when his father, later the Assistant General Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service, arrived at the old Penn Station. While rooming in neighboring houses in Chevy Chase, Maryland, his parents met at the community meeting room. Following marriage, they rented a wing of the Sevier Mansion on Q Street in Georgetown until the Cleveland Park Company completed their Macomb Street house in May 1906.

At that time, the woods north of Twin Oaks had not been cut through to make the Macomb Street hill. If you wanted to get to 34th Street from

Connecticut Avenue, you had to go up Newark Street and cross the gully on a wooden footbridge. If you were traveling by carriage or automobile, you had to turn right onto Highland Place and circle back to Newark, bypassing the gully.

The many vacant lots in Cleveland Park provided the children with fields for ball games, nooks and crannies for hide-and-seek, and hills for sledding. During the world wars, many of the lots were cultivated as victory gardens. Stone, who "first went to the zoo in a baby carriage," remembers picnics in Rock Creek Park and walks with his father.

Perhaps these outings planted the seed for his love of nature and the outdoors. Although his entire career required working with books, Stone is not primarily a reader. "I always wanted to go outdoors when I had free time rather than stay home and do something indoors." Even to this day, Stone adds, "My brother says that all I read is outdoor stuff." Included in his "to-read" pile are an EPA manual on lakes and books on migratory workers, agriculture, and natural preserves.

His 68 years with the Boy Scouts, which ended last December, expanded Stone's experience with the environment and camping. From the role of assistant scoutmaster which he assumed at 18, he became scout commissioner of the Cathedral Division. He still remembers the troop and pack numbers and their leaders' names.

While he was at Cornell, where he majored in government, Stone's mother wrote him about some men who were making a trail from Harper's Ferry down into Virginia. At spring vacation, wasting no time, he took a train to Harper's Ferry where he located and followed the trail. When he lost the trail, he hitched a ride in a horse-drawn buggy back to Round Hill, Virginia, where "I knew the trolley line had a train at 5:10 pm. I got there a little before five."

Stone also recalls that he joined these trail-makers, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, in April 1936. For the first few years, before his marriage, he was especially active with hikes and camping trips. His late wife Katherine, a second cousin he met at a family reunion, was less enthusiastic but enjoyed the bird and



Philip Stone

Photo by Sally Halvorsen

flower trips. Twenty years ago, Stone initiated the club's educational feature: monthly half-day hikes within 40 miles of Washington for people who want interpretation of the geography, geology, history, flowers, and birds. By the time Stone resigned in November 1987, he had written three hiking books and led 192 hikes.

"I never thought I'd ever be a teacher, but I learned a good deal of information," says Stone. "The Potomac Valley most interests me—the river, its rocks, its falls and rapids. It's the premier feature of the Washington area. Going up the river on both sides is where you find the most birds, wildflowers, and rocks." Navigating this water in his canoe, Stone, an early member of the Canoe Cruisers Association, came to know the river well.

Stone claims to be slowing down but it's hard to tell. This former Cornell chimemaster still plays the piano. He still leads tours of his church. He still walks wherever he goes. And he still wears glasses for reading only. But I did detect one sign of age; last year, for the first time, Phil Stone did not put his canoe in the water.

Rives Carroll, editor of Cleveland Park Voices: A Social History 1890-1984, is currently leading walking tours of Cleveland Park for the Smithsonian, developing educational materials for the Museum of American History, and teaching architecture at John Eaton School.

Architectural Corner

By Kathy Wood

The Park and Shop

The United States is recognized worldwide for originating and developing two bold, socially-responsive 20th century building types: the vertical urban skyscraper and the sprawling suburban shopping center/mall. Strange as it may now seem, the Park and Shop at Connecticut Avenue and Ordway Street in Cleveland Park was a prototype for the neighborhood shopping center that later proliferated by the hundreds along the East coast and evolved into the Tysons Corners and White Flints of the 1970s and 1980s.

"New Stores Opened: Unique in Capital; Connecticut Avenue Novelty Stars Business in Brilliant Fashion." *The Washington Post*, December 7, 1930.

The Park and Shop's significance may escape today's passerby. But when it was opened in 1930, this prototype shopping center introduced a new building type to a society that was becoming more and more dependent on the automobile and more sophisticated in responding to customers' needs. With a neighborhood shopping center catering specifically to motorists, real estate developers Shannon and Luchs and Washington architect Arthur B. Heaton had come up with an innovative solution to two major urban problems that were apparent by the late 1920s and typified by what was happening in Cleveland Park. Heaton abandoned the traditional concept of urban shops oriented to pedestrian traffic with large street-flush show windows. Instead, his design for an L-shaped complex of coordinated shops set back from Connecticut Avenue behind a large parking lot offered the modern customer easy, convenient "one-stop shopping," as the name Park and Shop implied. The building itself, with its copper-covered cupola visible for blocks to north-bound motorists, became its own advertisement.



The pioneering Park and Shop center is shown shortly after its much-touted opening in 1930.

Photo by Rives Carroll

Since the advent of the electric streetcar in the 1890s, residents had been fleeing crowded, noisy, urban centers for the sylvan quiet of spacious suburbs. The streetcar suburb of Cleveland Park, founded at the turn of the century, had no nearby shops until the first were opened in the early 1920s on Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues. Nearby Connecticut Avenue had no grocery shops in 1924; by 1926 there were six. The fierce competition and subsequent business failures often generated by this proliferation in the 1920s sparked the idea of coordinated management of merchandising, one of Park and Shop's innovative features. One-stop shopping was a reality in the complex, which included two grocery stores, a drug store, hardware store, bakery, Dutch chocolate shop, laundry, delicatessen/restaurant, and a barber and beauty shop. When an automobile laundry and full-service gas station were added in the second phase of building, most daily needs could indeed be met with a morning spent at the Park and Shop.

During the 1920s, Cleveland Parkers could walk to Connecticut Avenue shops but climbing the hill laden with groceries was a disincentive to shopping by foot. Like Americans everywhere, more and more resorted to automobiles to do their weekly shopping and errands. And as everywhere, each year as the number of motor vehicles multiplied, the traf-

fic jams between the streetcars running down the middle of Connecticut and cars parked on the side grew worse and the demand for limited parking space more acute. Heaton addressed these problems directly in his design for the Park and Shop; his solution of a parking lot in front on private, rather than public, land was highly praised.

Heaton devoted much of his half-century career to improving the design of everyday buildings like parking garages, warehouses, housing projects, furniture stores, and shopping centers. He selected the Colonial Revival style for the Park and Shop just as all eyes were turned toward the rebuilding of Colonial Williamsburg. But he drew inspiration from rather than mimicking the past. The massing of the Park and Shop building, proceeding from the lower one-story sections to the two-story portions with higher roofs capped by a cupola at the intersection of the L-shaped structure, echoed the progress of the automobile traveling out Connecticut Avenue. The streamlined effect of the massing, punctuated with the cupola that signaled the arrival at the Park and Shop as the destination of all motorists, was not a copy of any past structure but Heaton's fresh approach to a new building type generated by the automobile. He designed the continuous canopy that covers the walkway from which all shops were

Continued on next page

Architectural Corner

Continued from preceding page

entered to allow customers to pass from shop to shop protected from the weather and thus promote the complex's overall promise of "one-stop shopping."

Through the 1930s, professional journals repeatedly cited the Park and Shop as a model. By providing parking and a coordinated grouping of mutually supportive stores, it had solved two problems and consequently served customers' needs and enhanced business. Others were encouraged to follow this successful example, and they did. Richard Longstreth, Professor in the American Studies program at The George Washington University, has identified and documented 32 neighborhood shopping centers built from 1935 to 1941 in the Washington area.

The Park and Shop today is badly in need of repair and refurbishing. In the last several decades, many such buildings have been revived to be centerpieces in commercially successful preservation projects. The Cleveland Park Historical Society is working diligently to accomplish another such visual and commercial preservation success at the Park and Shop so that future generations will be reminded that a creative solution to major urban problems was first introduced in Cleveland Park.

Architectural historian and CPHS Executive Director Kathy Wood played a key role in Cleveland Park's designation as an historic district and the successful drive to protect its commercial areas. She is grateful to Richard Longstreth for providing much of the information for this article on the Park and Shop.

CPHS Tackles Gypsy Moths

John Poole heads a new CPHS tree program formed to try to save Cleveland Park's beautiful trees from the threat of the gypsy moth. Gypsy moths can completely defoliate and eventually kill many trees, particularly oaks. Serious infestations have been found in our neighborhood.

Defenses against this threat include destroying egg masses (best done in March), applying sticky barrier bands and burlap bands to catch caterpillars (in April and later), and spraying.

Phone John (966-8329), Ruth Hunsberger (362-5191), or Monnie Peters (363-3049) for information on what you can do to protect your trees.

Join the Cleveland Park Historical Society

The Cleveland Park Historical Society has been successful in its three-year battle to preserve our neighborhood and protect the low-rise commercial sections along Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues.

Now we need to turn our attention to consolidating our position, monitoring the design of new development, especially at the Park and Shop site, and increasing neighborhood interest in historic preservation and other community projects, such as saving our trees from the gypsy moth.

If you are not a current member, please join us now. Send your check for \$25, or more, payable to Cleveland Park Historical Society, along with your name and address, to:

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Many thanks!

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