



# Voices

The Newsletter of the Cleveland Park Historical Society

**Eyes to the Ground, Part II: More About Cleveland Park's Geologic Foundations**

Page 1

**Engine Co. 28 Debuts Renovations**

Page 2

**Cathedral Commons Almost Ready**

Page 2

**Cleveland Park Branch Library: Doing Some Homework**

Page 3

**Celebrating Kathy Smith**

Page 4

**Art Deco in Cleveland Park**

Page 5

**CPHS's Architectural Review Committee**

Page 6

**The 82-Year-Old Book Club That Doesn't Meet**

Page 8

**2015 Membership Form**

Page 9

**Coming Events**

Back Cover

## Eyes to the Ground, Part II: More About Cleveland Park's Geologic Foundations

by Abigail Porter

The Spring 2014 issue of **Voices** featured an article about some of Cleveland Park's notable geological foundations. This second article describes a few more of Cleveland Park's geological features. Seek them out on a stroll around the neighborhood, and you may wonder why you never noticed them before, or wonder at the hidden tick of geologic timescales.

### THE JOHN EATON SCHOOL RETAINING WALL

The large retaining wall at John Eaton School facing 33rd Place, NW is a splendid example of the area's native rocks. The wall contains nearly every rock type found in the District, each quarried at a different location. You can see and touch several types of metamorphic rocks, such as gneiss and schist, as well as the major igneous rocks that occur in the region. Amazingly, these rocks formed in a volcanic island arc thousands of miles

Right: The John Eaton School retaining wall

(Continued on page 7)



# Construction and Restoration Updates

## Engine Co. 28 Debuts Renovations at Community Open House

by Myra Best

This June Fire Station #28 at 3522 Connecticut Avenue held a festive open house to celebrate the recently-completed renovation of its historic space. The Sunday event featured tours of the station, a barbecue prepared by the firemen themselves, music and fun for children—including pictures aboard some of the Station’s beautiful red engines. Station Captain Robert Leland welcomed the crowd, as DC Fire and Emergency Medical Service Assistant Fire Chief Eugene Jones stopped by for a visit with neighbors, firefighters and EMS employees.

The event marked the happy conclusion of several years of study, debate, and work to adapt the iconic 1916 Fire House to modern times. At the beginning of the process in 2010, there was general agreement over the need for updates because the station could not accommodate modern firefighting equipment, and its heating and cooling systems were failing. However, the first redesign plan was judged too radical a departure from the historic design of the building. A clever new design managed to preserve the façade by adjusting the beautiful, arched doorways to make them wide enough for modern engines, and resolved a controversy over additional onsite parking for firefighters.



Engine Co. 28 before (left) and after (right)

Having been deeply engaged in the redesign process from the very beginning, CPHS welcomed the chance to celebrate the official debut of the firehouse renovations on June 8 together with the Cleveland Park Citizens Association, which sponsored the event, the Cleveland Park Business Association, and the Cleveland and Woodley Park Villages. CPHS Board Members in attendance,

including Judy Levin, appreciated Captain Leland’s warm welcome and brief “history lesson” on the development of modern firefighting equipment (among which, the fact that firehouses have benefited from modern plastic hose upgrades). She and others took advantage of the Captain’s invitation to tour the entire site, including the renovated third floor living quarters and the station’s new exercise area. In her remarks, CPCA Chair Helen Chamberlain emphasized the community theme to the event, thanking CPHS its support, and recognizing the contributions of many CPHS Board volunteers.

## Cathedral Commons Almost Ready

by Lois Orr

The 56,000-square-foot Giant at Cathedral Commons will be open for business at the beginning of November. However, CVS will be the first retailer at the Commons to open its doors when it does so the first of October. Cathedral Commons is the two-block area bounded by Macomb Street, Wisconsin Avenue, and Idaho Avenue, which Newark Street cuts into two parcels (the North and South Blocks). Additionally, all 13 apartment units in the South Block will be ready for occupancy by mid-October.

Street paving, landscaping, and curbs on Newark Street and Idaho Avenue adjacent to the Commons buildings will be finished by the end of September. Idaho Avenue has been widened in anticipation of the street becoming two-way; a traffic light is scheduled for installation at the Idaho and Wisconsin intersection.

Retail tenants in the South Block at the Commons, in addition to Giant and CVS, will be Barcelona Restaurant and Wine Bar, Raku Asian Dining, Wells Fargo Bank, and a second floor suite of fitness boutiques. North Block retailers will include Starbucks, SunTrust Bank, iDoc Optical, Parks Fabricare, and a pet boutique. Retail space is still available in both Blocks.

Work continues on the 124 apartment units in the North Block building plus the eight townhouses. All are scheduled for completion by winter. Electrical work and repaving recently got underway in the alley between Two Amys and the Macomb Gardens apartment building. This work plus a major opening for a Macomb Street storm drain is expected to take several weeks.

As throughout the Cathedral Commons building project, the Construction Liaison Committee continues to meet monthly. Its minutes can be found at the ANC website, [anc3c.org](http://anc3c.org).

## Cleveland Park Branch Library: Doing Some Homework

by Phillip R. Eagleburger AIA

In anticipation of the planned-for replacement and/or renovation of the Cleveland Park Library (CPL), a small, unofficial group of individuals has been touring several of the already replaced/renovated branches of the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) system to glean what they can about what's working and what's not. What better laboratory could there be for this study than this remarkable array of recently constructed, full-scale, working models? In both function and architectural style the sampling of libraries ranges from the very traditional to the very contemporary, as well as hybrids straddling these extremes. We visited nine of the fifteen branch libraries labeled "completed" on the DC Library website [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org) Three are full renovations and six are all-new buildings.

The beauty of visiting a large sampling of working branch libraries, is that by osmosis one begins to absorb certain general characteristics. The recurring essential elements, in a nutshell, are:

- the big room or main reading room that has the reference and adult areas including related book stacks, and some also include the children's and teen areas
- the main circulation desk that is the essential point of orientation for any user
- the main meeting room that serves as just that and not only for library functions but also for community needs
- smaller support functions and spaces, e.g entrance amenities, smaller meeting rooms, study rooms, librarian stations, staff areas, public toilets (both adults' and children's)

The building that accommodates those essential elements may be renovated or new, and traditional or contemporary in style. Some library buildings are central large warehouse-type spaces, whereas some have dispersed smaller spaces connecting to a central core.

Without attempting to describe every library visited, it is still worth noting certain simple and memorable characteristics that we experienced. The Georgetown branch and the Northeast branch are quite comparable in that they are renovated, Georgian-styled, traditional, 2-3 story buildings with simple, rectangular footprints. They have simply been expertly modernized for both function (including accessibility) and aesthetics, but essentially retain their original primary layouts as well as their original historic visages. The Mt. Pleasant branch is also an historic renovation but is unusual in being a neo-classical inspired building that was fit snugly on its triangular site and features a grand central stair at the front entrance. The renovation maintained the integrity of the formal but inaccessible front, by changing the main entrance to the rear of the building. This challenging change was cleverly achieved by adding an inviting path along the side of the building that arrives at a contemporary entrance atrium formed where the rear of the existing building meets the front of a contemporary

addition. The result is one of the more exciting juxtapositions of new and old of all the libraries visited.

The Benning branch (Dorothy I. Height Library) and the Anacostia branch are new buildings that epitomize the warehouse type where all of the reading areas are housed essentially in one big room or under one roof. The effect is dramatic but for better or worse the experience is not dissimilar to that of an atrium or airport terminal. The Tenley-Friendship branch and the Francis A. Gregory branch (at Ft. Davis Park) are similar experiences to those except the reading areas are split over two levels, and yet are still quite open, giving the semblance of the single big-room experience. The Shaw branch (Watha T. Daniel Library) is like these to an extent, but its dramatic, tight, acute triangular footprint prevents it from actually being or feeling open to the other levels. It is well worth a look if you are in the neighborhood.

The Bellevue branch (William O. Lockridge Library) deserves individual mention for it is truly unique in the entire group. DCPL went out on a limb on this one, so to speak, in that the architectural metaphor for this new library is that of a "knowledge tree." One enters at the base or trunk and climbs or rides to the upper levels, from which one follows the limbs out to the various boughs which are all of the various reading areas, rooms, ancillary uses, etc. The spectacular array of materials and views reinforces this notion and the result is at the very least interesting and dramatic.

What did we learn? These were some recurring issues that came up:

**Sight-lines:** This was probably one of the bigger concerns. Closely related to safety and security, having direct views from the main desks to essentially all public areas of the library including observing who's coming and going, is an issue that has remained relevant over time. This may be impossible to achieve, but it is surprising how in even some of the newer facilities, this basic tenet of library design did not seem to be heeded. Certainly technology has advanced such that the cost and ease of use of closed-circuit TV has addressed security concerns (e.g. Bellevue). Still as one librarian put it, "even just the illusion of having direct, first-person views to a particular area goes a very long way towards discouraging unwanted activities." (I am reminded of the Library of Congress main reading room, where the circulation desk smack dab in the middle of a huge reading room and fully in the round, having 360 degree views, is a good example of decent sight-lines.) A further advantage of having good sight-lines is that it means that fewer staff are required for security, librarian outposts, and roving monitors, meaning the architecture supports a leaner and more sustainable, long-term, library budget.

**Children's areas:** Probably the more intensively used of all the areas in any branch library, there are particular concerns

- clear controllable perimeter (who's coming and going; the moat idea)
- assorted play & meeting areas

*(Continued next page)*

- acoustic controls
- avoidance of “stroller parking lot” issues during meetings or events;
- dedicated children’s toilet rooms.

**Special entrance:** The Tenley-Friendship branch has a separate air-lock entrance room that seems to work well as a cell-phone area, waiting room, inclement weather room, etc.

**Special collections:** The Georgetown branch has an entire floor dedicated to the Peabody Collection. Some in Cleveland Park are concerned about special Cleveland Park-related materials that might warrant a dedicated space.

**Individual glass-enclosed study rooms** seem universally successful. The question would be how many? Most branches have four but they are often over-booked. Conversely, some say that too many of these along with specially-dedicated glass conference rooms result in the loss of valuable square footage for other uses.

**Bookcases and furnishings:** There are a wide variety of these, all shapes and sizes, not all of which are universally liked. One variety is new, usually metal utilitarian bookcases with adjustable shelves, which are dressed up with new tops or sides to integrate the units into an architectural materials theme. Others have been custom made but then mass-produced so as to reappear in multiple branches. Differing opinions about size, adjustability, overall height, etc., dovetails with the claim made by some that good communication between the designers and the end-users did not take place in the process. At the Cleveland Park library there are very solid, older, bookcases and tables which may be worth refurbishing.

**Parking:** This is not a huge issue because with the exception of a few handicapped-accessible spaces, parking is not generally provided other than what is available on the street.

**Clear signage:** Seems lacking particularly in big-room settings, which provide a bigger challenge in this regard.

**Guardrail details:** Some of the newer glass guardrails are sharp-edged and not user-friendly.

For the Cleveland Park Library, the single most important question at this point is whether the existing library gets completely renovated or instead gets completely replaced with a new structure. Budget and feasibility loom large as factors and DCPL is working on this. For many it seems an emotional issue: some despise what they see as the current cold, hard-edged, broken down building while others see the same as a potential rejuvenated mid-century modern gem. Sustainability proponents will argue that recycling an existing structure is far preferable to disposing of it and starting from scratch. It will be interesting to see with what recommendations DCPL returns and from what I understand that will be very soon. So be prepared and get out there and visit some of these terrific branch libraries. It’s not just informative; the libraries are a delight to experience.

For the latest updates, see [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org)

## Celebrating Kathy Smith

by Mary Anderson Cooper

At its 120th Anniversary celebration, the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. granted its first Visionary Historian Award to long-time Cleveland Park resident Kathryn Schneider Smith. A video of Kathy’s speech at the event was funded in part by a \$1,000 grant from the Cleveland Park Historical Society, and is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Prx7IKNWZpM>.

In her remarks upon accepting the award, Kathy spoke of many aspects of her work in the Cleveland Park community, such as the project in which she worked with the DC Public Schools to teach children about the city’s history. A required part of the ninth grade curriculum, the program ran until 2010, when it was replaced by a shorter course. Kathy also worked with District churches to help them preserve their records, many of which are now stored with the DC Historical Society.

Kathy reflected on the Heritage Tourism program, designed to attract visitors to Washington to go beyond the monuments and museums and explore the neighborhoods in the city. The Heritage Trails program sponsors walking tours all over the city, partnering with hotels and museums. The first such tours were in the Shaw community, often bringing visitors to Ben’s Chili Bowl, where there is now a visitor’s center to help with the effort to publicize neighborhoods. Downtown tours are conducted in conjunction with the Downtown Business Improvement District. Kathy also described the Remembering U Street project at 13th and U Streets NW, where local artists created a display showing scenes from the life of the community, which taught both residents and visitors about the history and vibrant life of that area.

Kathy also helped to pioneer the Call Box Project. There are more than 800 of the old call boxes all over the city, formerly used by residents to call for help from the police and fire department before there were phones in everyone’s home and pocket. The District government cleaned and stabilized all of them, and local artists have filled with art appropriate to each neighborhood.

Finally, Kathy reminded the audience of her book, *Washington at Home*, which describes and tells the history of dozens of neighborhoods within the Nation’s Capital. The book, which is now in its second edition, can be purchased at Politics and Prose and Kramerbooks and is available in D.C. public libraries. Originally published in 1988, the book was updated and re-released in 2010, adding six communities to the 20 originally covered. It includes maps, many pictures, and lots of stories about the neighborhoods and the characters who bring them to life.

---

VOICES is published twice a year by  
The Cleveland Park Historical Society.  
Contact VOICES editor Rhona Hartman at  
[rhona.hartman@gmail.com](mailto:rhona.hartman@gmail.com) or (202) 537-9575

---

# Art Deco in Cleveland Park

by Rhona Hartman

The lobby of Sedgwick Gardens — a rental apartment building at 3726 Connecticut Avenue — was the site of an architectural and historical tour in early August. The newly formed Historic Preservation Committee of the Sedgwick Gardens Tenants Association hosted a talk by Steve Knight of the Art Deco Society of Washington on Mihran Mesrobian's design.



Knight told us that Misrobian, who immigrated in 1921 from then war-torn Turkey, worked under Harry Wardman for a number of years before striking out on his own. The Sedgwick Gardens lobby, built in 1931, features an eclectic mix of Deco and Greco-Roman motifs. The geometric Art Deco designs are most prominent in the lighting fixtures and the skylight overlooking the central fountain with its streamlined female figure. The overwhelming features of the lobby, however, are the huge marble-like pillars and arches, niches, and period furniture. The wall and pillar "marble" is actually a plaster facsimile! Knight led the group outside to view the building's clearly Art Deco elements: entrance lighting, eye-catching rosettes, fountain-design brickwork, and geometric iron work near the roof.

The Sedgwick Gardens Historic Preservation Committee is currently concerned about the future of their lobby in light of the landlord's proposal to do work on the

building's mechanical systems, which may be installed within the pillars and under the marble-mosaic floor.

Sam Black, who is a CPHS member as well as a member of the Sedgwick Gardens Preservation Committee, is very interested in bringing awareness to Cleveland Park's Art Deco resources, which include a significant portion of the buildings on and near the Connecticut Avenue commercial strip that was the focus of CPHS's drive to preserve the neighborhood from redevelopment in the 1980s. He compiled the list below of selected other Art Deco buildings in and around the neighborhood.



## Selected buildings in and around Cleveland Park that are Art Deco in whole or in part:

- 2737 Devonshire Pl. (Woodley Park Towers), L. Rouleau, 1929
  - 2800-2824 Devonshire Pl., G. Santmyers, 1939
  - 3133 Connecticut Ave. (Kennedy-Warren), J. Younger, 1931
  - 3319 Connecticut Ave., I. Diamond, 1935
  - 3329 Connecticut Ave. (Firehook Bakery, formerly Roma), 1926
  - 3407 Connecticut Ave., Upman & Adams, 1930
  - 3409-3411 Connecticut Ave., Karl W. Hartig, 1932
  - 3413-3417 Connecticut Ave., 1935
  - 3412-3420 Connecticut Ave.
  - 3426 Connecticut Ave. (Uptown Theater), J. Zink, 1936
  - 3433-3435 Connecticut Ave., W.N. Denton Jr., 1936
  - 3430 Connecticut Ave. (Post Office), C. Meigs, 1940
  - 3524 Connecticut Ave. (Walgreen's, formerly Yenching Palace), 1925, addition R. Archer, Jr. 1945
  - 3601 Connecticut Ave. (Broadmoor, lobby), J. Abel, 1928
  - 3726 Connecticut Ave. (Sedgwick Gardens), M. Mesrobian, 1931
  - Klingle Valley Bridge, P. Cret, 1931
  - 2911 Newark St. (Macklin Apartments), M. Mesrobian, 1939
  - 3000 Tilden St. (Tilden Gardens), Parks & Baxter, 1927-1930
- Sources: Goode, Best Addresses; Wirz & Striner, Washington Deco. Visit the Art Deco Society of Washington at [adsw.org](http://adsw.org).

# Protecting Our Neighborhood's Historic Character: CPHS's Architectural Review Committee

by Gwen Wright

We all know that Cleveland Park is a very special and beautiful neighborhood, but many people do not know about the efforts of the CPHS Architectural Review Committee to preserve this unique community. The Committee has been functioning for 26 years and reviews proposed projects throughout the Cleveland Park Historic District. The city-designated Cleveland Park Historic District is the mechanism that not only celebrates the heritage and architecture of this wonderful neighborhood, but also provides protections to maintain its historic character. The district was designated in November 1986 after extensive research by CPHS and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in April 1987.

CPHS knew from the beginning that it was essential to have a way for historic district residents to provide substantive input into the review process. It therefore formed the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) in 1987. The ARC consists of Cleveland Park neighbors, including architects, architectural historians, real estate professionals, and residents with an interest in history and preservation. Together, they represent the community's view. The group still meets monthly to review applications for alterations, additions, and new construction in the district. The ARC has reviewed changes to century-old homes, recent new construction projects, and everything in between. Neighbors are encouraged to attend meetings, particularly when they have an interest in a nearby project.

Briefly, here's how the system works: applications for exterior alterations and new construction within a city-designated historic district (like Cleveland Park) are reviewed by staff in the DC Historic Preservation Office ([preservation.dc.gov](http://preservation.dc.gov)). The DC preservation office staff can help with questions of compatibility, zoning, design, and process. They should be your first point of contact when you are planning a project. They can sign off "over the counter" for minor work in historic districts such as fences, window and door replacements, and landscape work. (Call 202-442-7600 to speak with Historic Preservation Office staff.)

Larger projects, such as additions, must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) — a city board with members appointed by the Mayor and City Council. DC Historic Preservation Office staff can tell you whether your project needs to be reviewed by HPRB. The HPRB solicits input on projects in the Cleveland Park Historic District from the ARC on matters of design and compatibility. The ARC meets the second Monday of the month and may recommend the concept as presented, make recommendations for changes, or recommend that the project should not be approved. CPHS staff forward the ARC's recommendations to HPRB in time for their end-of-the-month meeting. The suggestions of the ARC are advisory only; they do not have the force of law. However, over the past 26 years of working with the HPRB, the ARC has generally found that the preservation staff and Board members are sensitive to the ARC's advice.

A good example of a project that was reviewed by the ARC is the recent outstanding renovation of the Cleveland Park Fire Station on Connecticut Avenue. The ARC provided comments and guidance that led to a sensitively-implemented widening of the front engine bays and a simple but effective parking strategy for the rear of the building. (See the article and photos in this issue.) The Fire Station is again occupied and protecting our neighborhood, while still serving as an important part of the historic Connecticut Avenue streetscape.

Over the course of the past two decades, the ARC process has been very effective in balancing demands for change with the need to preserve. The ARC helps neighbors to understand and navigate the City historic preservation process, while playing a very important role in making sure that the features of the neighborhood that we value most are preserved for future generations of residents.

If you have an upcoming project, please visit our website for more details on the process and what materials to provide to the ARC. Go to [clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) and look under [Historic District > Doing Work on your Historic District Home](#) for all the contacts and procedural information you will need.

*(Continued from page 1)* east of North America. Driven by plate tectonics, the arc drifted westward until it collided with the North American continent about 475 million years ago, eventually forming a large part of the mid-Atlantic's terrain.

### THE CLEVELAND PARK SPRING

A large, productive spring exists just to the east of Macomb Street playground, visible from the sidewalk along the west side of the 34th Street, NW, or from the lower part of the playground. This is one of numerous hillside springs that rise to the surface along the flanks of Wisconsin Avenue, and which provided a water supply for residents during the early years of the city. Cleveland Park Spring is the source of the north branch of Klinge Creek, whose valley defines Macomb Street, NW. Other springs exist in the vicinity of Hearst playground and the National Cathedral grounds, although the springs on the Cathedral grounds are no longer visible due to landscape alterations.



*The Macomb Street spring*

### THE CLEVELAND PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Cleveland Park Congregational Church is an outstanding example of the use of local building stone. It consists of Rock Creek granite and Potomac bluestone, the main types of rock quarried in the area from 1700 to 1938. The arches and keystones are Indiana limestone. The relatively level "bench" in the hillside visible along the 3400 block of Lowell Street, NW is an old river terrace that was made by the Potomac River sometime after its ancient channel ran along Wisconsin Avenue 2 to 5 million years ago. This "bench" is one of several that descend from Wisconsin Avenue to the modern floodplain of Rock Creek, each marking a stable but short-lived position of the stream through the Ice Age.

*Abigail Porter would like to acknowledge the assistance of Tony Fleming, a professional geologist and Cleveland Park native, for sharing his wealth of knowledge about Cleveland Park's geology for this article. Mr. Fleming is the author of the modern geological map of the District, and an expert on the area's geology. He will be back in Cleveland Park later this fall to give another of his popular tours of the neighborhood's geology; watch your email and our website for details.*



*Cleveland Park Congregational Church*

### FRIENDSHIP STATION/UPTON STREET

Slightly north of Cleveland Park, the small, mounded bank on Upton Street next to the Friendship Station post office is worth a detour. The bank has exposures of ancient river gravel from the Potomac. If you look carefully at some of the cobbles, you might find cylindrical structures up to an inch in diameter in some of them. These structures are trace fossils made by the sandworm *Skolithus* 500 million years ago. The cobbles came from Antietam sandstone in the Blue Ridge miles away, and were subsequently transported here by the ancient Potomac 2 to 5 million years ago. Going back in time, building excavations for Broadcast House across the street (at 4100 Wisconsin Avenue) uncovered microscopic fossils that show that the Atlantic Coast was here 16 to 17 millions years ago!



*The Upton Street formation*

# The Cleveland Park Book Club

## The 82-Year Old Book Club That Doesn't Meet

by Sue Ruff and Carin Ruff

Cleveland Park is home to a very special kind of book club: one that never meets to discuss books! Perhaps that is the secret to its longevity: how many book clubs do you know that have been in existence for more than 80 years?

The Cleveland Park Book Club is a circulating book club. Instead of meeting to discuss books, the club passes books from member to member throughout the fall, winter, and early spring. The books are selected in the fall and are auctioned off in the spring. Proceeds from the auction and modest dues provide the money for the following year's books.

The Cleveland Park Book Club was founded in 1932 and consists of 32 member households. 64 books circulate during the book club season — 32 fiction and 32 non-fiction — so each household gets two books each week. Every Monday, members pass books to the next household in the rotation and receive two new ones. The order of passing is arranged geographically, so there is never very far to walk to pass books. Failure to pass books promptly is grounds for being dropped from the Club! People either love the format or find it frustrating. "It's like Christmas every Monday," one woman gushed. Another called it the "touchy-feely" book club, because she had time to handle the books but not to read them.

Because the number of member households is fixed and geographically constrained, neighbors started a second book club, now known as Cleveland Park Book Club II. CPBC II was founded by Newark Street residents Kathe McDaniel and Alison Steadman in the 1970s. Kathe explained, "at that time we could not get into the old book club because no one left and it was always 'full up'." The newer club modified the formula: it passes books to its 18 members every two weeks. A small contretemps occurred in 1991 when a batch of books meant for one group was delivered to the other, but the two groups are on good terms today.

The archives of the original Cleveland Park Book Club include minutes, correspondence, and book and membership lists going back to the early 1950s. They offer a fascinating window into neighborhood history as well as reading tastes, book prices, and local bookstores over the years. The book that raised the most money at the 1952 auction was *The Caine Mutiny*, which went for \$3.55. Small changes in social mores emerge from the year-by-year record as well: 1975-76 was the first year that officers and members were referred to by their first names rather than "Mr." and "Mrs."

It would be wonderful to find records of the founding and the first 20 years, but in their absence, we can glean some information from the minutes we do have. According to the tradition passed down in Book Club documents, the first meeting of the Club was held on October 3, 1932 at the home of Mrs. Joseph Fairbanks, 3319 Newark Street.

The founding of the book club was inspired by a similar organization founded in Vermont in the 1890s, which would put the concept squarely in the realm of Victorian-era organizations for self-improvement through reading. Indeed, the phenomenon was already at least a century old by the time the Cleveland Park Book Club was founded. In an 1831 letter, the Rev. Edward Smedley of Dulwich, England, mentioned such a club in a letter to a friend: "Are you at all able to keep pace with contemporary literature? I almost give up in despair...Thanks however to that lucky invention, a village circulating book-club, which compels me, out of regard to an annual guinea, to read against time, I do now and then run through [an occasional volume]."<sup>1</sup>

An article in *Macmillan's Magazine* from 1881 shows that this type of book club was well known by that date, including the rule that members must buy books at the end-of-year auction to support the club: "Any one who has belonged to a circulating book club in the country knows well the unsatisfactory end of the year, when the books are put up for sale, and a member buys volumes which either he did not care to read as they came round, or which he did read, and whose value to him therefore is greatly diminished."<sup>2</sup>

These quandaries — so many books, so little time — will be familiar to any current Book Club member, as will Betsy Rowe Costle's memories of the club from Highland Place in the 1950s: "Every week two books would arrive...One was fiction and one was non-fiction. The books were delivered by near neighbors every week, and passed on to other near neighbors. I believe that we got our books from Nancy Blanchet across the street, read them, and then passed them over to Kate Marshall, who was also across the street...My brother and I would deliver the books that had been read...I believe that my mother was one of the people that made the yearly list of books because she loved to read...There was a list of members that I remember and it was of course a list of people who loved to read and lived near us."

We would love to hear from anyone who has more information about the Book Club's earliest years. If you can add to the Club's history, email Carin Ruff at [ruffresearch@gmail.com](mailto:ruffresearch@gmail.com).

1. W. Odell, Jr., "Free Libraries and their Working," *Macmillan's Magazine* 43 (1881): 439-451, at 445.

2. *Poems by the Late Rev. Edwards Smedley, A.M., with a Selection from his Correspondence and a Memoir of his Life* (London, 1837), p. 372.



2 0 1 5 M E M B E R S H I P

Join online at [ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/membership](http://ClevelandParkHistoricalSociety.org/membership)

or complete the following form and send it with a check payable to C.P.H.S. to:

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

*Memberships received now are good through the end of 2015!*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note!** Please be sure we have your current email address so that you do not miss important announcements. We will not spam you with too many emails, but we are now conducting most of our routine communication electronically, which saves us money and allows your membership dollars to go further.

Membership level:

- \$50 Household   
  \$100 Sponsor   
  \$250 Patron   
  \$500 Angel  
 Please send me a copy of *Cleveland Park: A Guide to Architectural Styles and Building Types* at the \$8 member rate

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would be interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- House and garden tours   
  Tree planting, beautification   
  Membership, mailings  
 Event planning   
  Historic Preservation, Architectural Review Committee  
 Oral histories, local history research   
  Writing for the newsletter or website  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*CPHS is a member-supported, 501c3 not-for-profit organization. Membership dues are fully tax deductible. Members receive priority registration for public events, invitations to member-only events, and discounts on event fees, house markers, note cards, and CPHS publications.*

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

NON-PROFIT  
 ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
 PERMIT NO. 1415

VOICES

FALL 2014

## COMING EVENTS BY JUDY LEVIN, PROGRAM CHAIR, CPHS BOARD

**TONY FLEMING RETURNS FOR ANOTHER WALKING TOUR:** Tony Fleming, hydrologist, geologist, and Cleveland Park native, will return to the area in November for a walking tour on the waterways of Cleveland Park and Tregaron. Watch your email and check the CPHS website, [clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org), for details later in the fall.

**GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATING PARTY:** Our annual holiday gingerbread house decorating party will be **Sunday, December 7th**. Watch your email for the invitation and check our website for details.

**HELP NEEDED FOR SPRING GARDEN TOUR:** CPHS is exploring the possibility of a garden tour for Spring 2015, focusing on the Springland Farm Community area. (See the **Voices** Spring 2013 issue.) Chuck Ludlam, a former Peace Corp volunteer and very active community organizer who has worked with CPHS in the past, has expressed interest in working with us for such an event, but we need interested and energetic members to help make the tour happen. If you can help put this together, or have any other ideas for lectures or events, please **contact Events Chair Judy Levin (202-360-5792)**.

**IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP TO DATE?** If you join or renew now, your membership is good through the end of 2015 and you will be sure to receive notices, discounts, and priority registration for all events, including those coming up this fall. Use the membership form on the back of this page or join online at our website: [clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/membership](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/membership). Thank you for your support!



Want to keep track of CPHS events and historic preservation news in Cleveland Park and all around D.C.? We post news throughout the month at [Facebook.com/ClevelandParkHistory](https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandParkHistory).

Big news! ALL past issues of VOICES back to 1987 are now available to download from our website. Go to [clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/about-cphs/voices](http://clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/about-cphs/voices).