



Photo by David Jones Architects

1905 Queen Anne Home on West Kirke Street Is Setting for Gala

On Sunday May 6 the Chevy Chase Historical Society held its annual Spring Gala at the home of Megan Rupp and Dane Butswinkas at 7 West Kirke Street. Renovated in 2011, the charming Queen Anne house features architectural elements such as gables, a steep roofline, clapboard siding, and a wraparound porch, all popular in Chevy Chase at the turn of the 20th century. It is in Chevy Chase Village, the first neighborhood in Senator Francis M. Newlands' plan for the streetcar suburb of Chevy Chase.

Physician James Dudley Morgan built No. 7 in 1905. William D. and Susie Gideon Colt bought it in 1907, partly for proximity to the Connecticut Avenue streetcar line. Upon Mrs. Colt's death in 1934 daughters Alice and Katherine inherited the property, but were unable to retain ownership during the Great Depression.

Later residents include Charles and Ruth Seeger and Bernard and Joan Hollander. Charles Seeger was the Library of

Congress musicologist and Ruth was a composer recognized as a folklorist and the first woman to receive a Guggenheim fellowship in music composition. They were the father and stepmother of folk singer and environmentalist Pete Seeger. In the 1940s and 50s the den held two grand pianos and a steady stream of Ruth's piano pupils. The Seegers entertained frequently; the lovely house was filled with music.

During the Hollanders' occupancy the house was the location of CCHS' first fundraiser, a Victorian concert and tea. Joan Hollander and a fellow pianist played duets on the two grand pianos, continuing the tradition of musical entertainment.

CCHS is grateful to Ms. Rupp and Mr. Butswinkas for opening their home to the society and its guests. And we are proud of our Gala Chairs Susan Bollendorf and Natasha Saifee and their committee, whose diligent efforts created a sparkling occasion enjoyed by all. (Additional gala coverage pages 4 and 5)



CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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on Tuesday and by appointment.

The Chevy Chase Historical Society collects, records, interprets and shares materials relating to the history of Chevy Chase, Maryland, one of America's first streetcar suburbs. The organization provides resources for historical research and sponsors a variety of programs and activities to foster knowledge and appreciation of the community's history.

Recent Acquisitions

"Recent Acquisitions" is a regular feature in the newsletter, describing documents and other items acquired for the society's Archive and Research Center

Donations

1. A photograph of Scott Talbott and his family outside their new home at 33 Oxford Street. Mr. Talbott was the third generation in his family to grow up in their former home at 5096 Cedar Parkway. Donated by Scott Talbott.
2. A postcard of the Chevy Chase College and Seminary with a handwritten message from Louise Wendell to "Miss Eva Jones, 1327 St. Antoine, Detroit, Michigan," postmarked November 16, 1907. Donated by Tucker Harris.
3. Thirty-one photographs of the Seeger family at their 7 West Kirke Street home, taken between 1944 and 1953. Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, and their children Mike, Peggy, Barbara, and Penny appear in many of the photos. Included are several exterior and interior shots of the house. Donated by the Seeger family, and made available to CCHS by Sonya Cramer, Penny Seeger's daughter.



**The musical Seeger family at home, at 7 West Kirke Street.
L to R: Ruth, Barbara, Charles, Penny, Mike, and Peggy**

4. Research materials about Chevy Chase, including a folder of notes and exhibit materials created by former CCHS Photographic Archivist Eleanor Ford. Donated by Joan Marsh.
5. The April 1917 issue of *St. Nicholas Magazine*, which includes an article about the National Service School in Chevy Chase. Donated by Julie Rude Thomas.
6. A cardboard milk bottle cap from Chestnut Farms. Donated by Julie Rude Thomas.
7. The Chevy Chase School Alumnae Bulletin, 1930-31. Donated by Julie Rude Thomas.
8. A letter and two Montgomery County public service brochures originally sent to Helen V. Scheckel on Blackthorn Street in the 1980s. Donated by her granddaughter, Vicki Taylor, and Julie Rude Thomas.
9. Research notes on Chevy Chase College. Donated by Julie Rude Thomas.

CCHS “Caps” Season’s Programs With Tour of Clara Barton’s House Followed by Festive Luncheon

CCHS Welcomes Gail Sansbury, New Director of Its Archive and Research Center



College by Marey Forrest

Gail Sansbury, the new Director of our Archive & Research Center, comes to us from a decade of teaching in California. She has a B.A. and M.A. in American History from the University of Rhode Island, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Urban Planning from UCLA. She was a member of the planning faculty at Cal Poly Pomona, teaching planning history and urban design, taught in the American Studies program at San José State University, and was a senior lecturer in the Cultural Studies program at California College of the Arts and in the Women and Gender Studies program at San Francisco State University. She also has led or participated in local history projects, many involving oral histories.

Sansbury and her husband recently moved from San Francisco to Chevy Chase, DC. “We’re both originally from the East Coast,” she says. “After 10 years in Los Angeles and almost 12 in San Francisco, we were ready to move back, especially so we could be closer to our families.”

“Both the CCHS DVD *A Streetcar to Home* and the recent book *Placenames of Chevy Chase, Maryland* by Joan Marsh and Frances Stickles sparked my interest in the job as director,” relates Sansbury. “When I visited the Center, I had a chance to read one of the many CCHS oral histories. Board member Helen Secrest suggested I read the Edith Claude Jarvis history, and it was a great choice!” Sansbury already is working on a number of projects, including new online exhibitions, and plans to continue the Oral History Project.

This spring the society concluded its 2011-12 programs on Washington women who played significant roles in the Civil War. On March 18 the Spring Lecture featured Ranger Kevin Patti, Director of the Clara Barton National Historic Site in Glen Echo, Maryland. The attendees who filled the Lawton Community Center learned that Barton began her career as a teacher in Massachusetts, came to Washington to work as a government clerk, and became renowned as a nurse and a provider of food and medical supplies to civil war soldiers in the field. Actress Joy Nathan read Barton’s narrative poem, “Women Who Went to the Field,” lauding the valor of those who served with Barton in the war and in the Red Cross.

A week later, more than 30 people took CCHS’ March 24 History-Go-Round tour of Barton’s house led by Ranger Patti, and enjoyed a lively and delicious luncheon at the nearby Irish Inn. Both tour and luncheon are captured in a special photo collage, above, by society Vice President Marcy Forrest.



Gail Sansbury

“Although there are lots of administrative tasks at the Center, I love to open a box and find something special – like the Ladies Reading Club, a swimming cap from Chevy Chase Lake, or the series of short video interviews about the big 2010 snow storm! CCHS has wonderful collections, and I look forward to preserving and adding to them.”

Society's Spring Gala Sparkles On a Rare Day in ... May!

Mother Nature smiled on the CCHS Spring 2012 gala champagne supper, delivering a mild evening for the festive event held Sunday May 6. More than 150 society members and guests strolled the house and grounds at No. 7 West Kirke Street, the recently renovated 1905 Queen Anne home of hosts Megan Rupp and Dane Butswinkas. Most took advantage of the weather to have drinks and to dine by the pool, on the balcony, or on the lawn. Flower arranging by CCHS board member Helene Sacks further beautified a lovely setting, and the music of folk duo Karen Collins and Ira Gitlin, including an after dinner sing-a-long, struck the perfect note for the occasion. An exhibit on No. 7's history, created by CCHS Archive and Research Center Director Gail Sansbury, Treasurer Carolyn Greis, and volunteer Diane Riker, fascinated viewers. Our friend Alain Roussel, owner of La Ferme Restaurant, and his staff served up plentiful bubbly and a delectable dinner buffet in fine style. In a pre-supper ceremony board member Mary Sheehan thanked our hosts for their hospitality and our guests for their continued support.

(View more photos on the CCHS FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/ChevyChaseHistory.)



Hosts Megan Rupp and Dane Butswinkas



Champagne is served on the balcony



Gala Chairs Susan Bollendorf and Natasha Saifee



Peggy and Jay Treadwell enjoy the exhibit



Michelle Brady, Melissa Brown, and Carolyn Greis



The buffet receives finishing touches



Carol Traywick and Susan and Jim Catlette



CCHS board member Mary Sheehan presents plaque for historic No. 7 to Megan Rupp



The assembled guests watch with delight



Dudley Brown and Burt Schorr



Bonnie Duffy, Carol Hogue, and Mary Anne Hoffman



Ira Gitlin and Karen Collins lead a folk music sing-a-long on the balcony



Diners on the lawn rise and join in song with the musicians and guests above



Bob Broeksmit flies high on the old rope swing

Chevy Chase Voices

“Chevy Chase Voices” is a regular feature in the newsletter, containing excerpts from the oral histories of Chevy Chase residents that the society has taken and transcribed as part of its Oral History Project. It highlights interesting aspects of the community’s history in order to educate readers and to encourage them to further explore the wealth of information contained in the oral history transcripts at the CCHS Archive and Research Center.

“I think Chevy Chase is a terrific community”

Athlete and coach, sports writer, Fulbright scholar, musician, Chief Political Correspondent for “Newsweek,” ABC News Political Director, volunteer firefighter, and Chair of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation – Harold R. (Hal) Bruno, Jr. led a life writ large. The following excerpts from CCHS’ 2007 oral history of the native Chicagoan, joined by his wife Margaret Christian (Meg) Bruno, describe the sustaining counterbalance of this beloved man’s life as a resident of Chevy Chase.

Hal Bruno: This is our home, for 35 years. We flew down from New York to go searching. I was with Newsweek then. And this house [3414 Cummings Lane] had just come up on the market, and it said, “Where peace is queen and tranquility is king.” And I walked in; I took one look out here [motions toward large backyard] at the yard and the basketball court, and I said, “Man, this is the house. We have two sons [Harold III and Danny] who were super athletes and I could just picture what it would be like”



Bruno coached younger son Danny’s Chevy Chase Boys Club football team in the mid-1970s

Coincidentally, the seller, Mrs. Schmidt, was the sister of Chicago Councilman and historian Robert E. Merriam, whom Bruno had covered for “Chicago American.”

[The boys went first] to Chevy Chase Elementary on Rosemary, then to Leland and then to B-CC. This is great place to raise kids. [Every time we looked out back] there were 10, 12 kids – all their friends.

Meg Bruno: We had lots of broken windows, I must admit.

HB: I could make it home for dinner most nights, from downtown, so Chevy Chase offers everything. [I drove] through the park . . . and I usually went at off hours. [Also, in] the course of a day . . . I did so much of the stuff around the house. I did my own gardening, because I enjoyed doing it on my day off, you know.

Bruno played guitar in “The Informed Sources,” a bluegrass band composed of newspeople that performed at The Red Fox Inn in Bethesda. He served as the only volunteer firefighter with the B-CC Rescue Squad, then remained on the squad’s board. He also served with the then-all volunteer Chevy Chase Fire Department (and on its board), and with the Friendship Fire Fighters Association. The musical and the firefighting parts of Bruno’s life unexpectedly came together at one of the Brunos’ large parties.

HB: When we used to have the band, and had an outdoor party, I would make sure to invite all the immediate neighbors [the Habers, the Kahns, the Swans, the Courtneys, the Jacobsens, and the Cummingses], so they could come and hear the music here. The fire department used to come over and park the engine – because they had no radio -- and they didn’t drink, but they would have supper with us. And one year somebody down the street, I guess, must have called the [Montgomery County] police. And the police came over, and first thing they see is a fire engine in front of the house. And they come in, there’s the firemen, all the neighbors, and we offer them a soft drink, and they said, “Well, somebody said you were playing rock and roll music here.” I said, “That’s not rock and roll music.” You know.

MB: Loud rock and roll.

HB: Yes. I said, “That’s bluegrass music. We don’t even have electric instruments.” So [the officer] just laughed.

MB: There’s a lot of respect [between the local police and firefighters]. And it’s nice.

Asked about the character of the neighborhood during his residency, Bruno cited the haven it continues to offer those with demanding careers, and the constancy of the demographic in the face of rising property values and larger houses.

HB: Something that's unique about this neighborhood -- many of the people who live here are involved in some pretty fascinating things. But it's all left at the office. And when you come home ... nobody's very impressed about what you do. I like that atmosphere about it.

There's a little enclave here where we're older. But everybody else is younger, which is as it should be. This is a neighborhood that's meant to have young families and young children, except for the prices ... you wonder how, at their age, these kids can afford to live here in some cases. We could not have afforded to live in Chevy Chase as it is today. But, you know, it's exceeded all expectations. Especially for somebody in the [demanding] kind of work I was in.

MB: We have a lot of young families coming in with their young children, and you see strollers here -- which is lovely.

The schools, the neighborliness, the short commute, not to mention the nearness of a firehouse and the creation of a firefighting museum in his basement, led Bruno to observe that -- despite the occasional loss of a tree to bad weather --

HB: I think Chevy Chase is a terrific community ... the people who come here, for the most part, are the kind of people who want to be involved. You feel like you belong to a community here.

Our thanks to Bruno's sons Harold and Danny and their families for contributing both photographs and memories to the creation of this feature. Thanks also to "Informed Sources" member Alan Jabbour and his wife Karen for helping to identify the band members pictured during a special jam session, above.



The Informed Sources jam in the Brunos' basement. L to R: Sen. Jim Abourezk, Hank Trehwitt (*The Baltimore Sun*, *Newsweek*), country musician Roy Acuff, Alan Jabbour (Dir., American Folklife Center, LOC) behind Ralph Rinzler (Dir., American Folklife Festival), Bruno, and unidentified man

And thanks to another "Chevy Chase voice," CCHS board member Helene Sacks, for the story idea and for sharing her own recollections. "Chevy Chase was lucky to have Hal Bruno as part of our community," says Sacks. "I knew him through Temple Shalom, a neighborhood Jewish Reform Congregation where he was a valued member. Every winter he presided over a popular brunch at which he gave his 'take' on the political scene with great insight and humor. When he ushered during High Holy Days, he regaled me with stories of his life as a newsman and his passion for firefighting," she remembers. "He passed away in November 2011, and those who spoke at his funeral and at the B-CC Rescue Squad reception described a man of integrity, devoted to his family, and a wonderful newsperson and colleague.

"Chief Dennis Compton, Chair of the NFFF, represented the firefighting community of which Hal had been a part since childhood when his heroes at his local firehouse in Chicago took him under their wing," Sacks continues. "Chief Compton said that, 'In his heart Hal was a great firefighter who just happened to have a side job as a journalist covering the political scene in Washington.' He asked, 'Who else do you know who would spend part of his night handing out coffee to firefighters battling a multiple alarm fire, and a few hours later be at his desk preparing to moderate a debate between three men running for Vice President?'"

For further information on Bruno's career, one need only visit the library or the internet. The family has donated his journalistic papers to his alma mater, the University of Illinois, where the collection will be accessible online. They also have donated parts of Bruno's firefighting museum to NFFF Headquarters in Emmitsburg, PA, for inclusion in its own museum, to the DC Fire Department, and to the Chevy Chase Fire Department. CCFD on Connecticut Avenue has a display case dedicated to Bruno.

"You may have seen the sign at the CCFD that read, 'We remember our brother Hal Bruno.'" notes Sacks. "A tribute to him was written into the Congressional Record on November 30, 2011. He truly was a special part of our community."



Volunteer firefighter Bruno on the job with the Friendship Firefighters Association, "somewhere in Washington, DC"

Joan Marsh Receives Award For Outstanding Service To the Society



At the CCHS Spring Lecture, President Angela Lancaster (R) presented a Lifetime Achievement Award to society charter member, 31 year board member, and past president Joan Marsh (L) for her extraordinary service. Among other contributions, Marsh, who is retiring from the board, has chaired the Archive Committee for many years. (She housed the archive and kept it accessible to the public in her attic before CCHS built its Archive and Research Center). She also has chaired the Nomination Committee numerous times, has hosted the Spring Gala twice, and has co-authored our book, *Placenames of Chevy Chase, Maryland*, with member Frances Stickles. She and Stickles are making presentations about *Placenames* and Chevy Chase's history at diverse venues. We gratefully recognize Marsh's three decades of tireless dedication to preserving the unique history of Chevy Chase.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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