

ROLAND PARK NEWS

Spring
2008
Volume
Twenty-Nine

This Issue's Highlights

KidsView

Page 4

Library
Dedication

Page 10

Energy Wise

Page 11

Word of Mouth
Recommended
Contractors

Page 12

Home Sales

Page 14

Teacher's First
Novel Published

Page 18

The Book Nook

Page 22

Fire Safety in
the Home

Page 28

The Woman's Club of Roland Park: 112 Years of Great Accomplishments

By Anne Stuzin

On any given Thursday, beginning around 10:30 in the morning, cars start to park along the western side of Roland Avenue below Oakdale and Kenwood roads. Soon, most of the spaces are filled. Their drivers, always smartly dressed, leave their cars and make their way south along the sidewalk.

They walk with purpose to the front doors of the elegant house at 4500 Roland Avenue. If you are stopped at a red light at the Cold Spring Lane intersection and see this phenomenon for the first time, you might assume the owner of the house is hosting a special event for lots of friends. Of course, if you are a neighbor, you are used to seeing all this. You know that Thursday morning marks the weekly meeting of the loyal and active members of The Woman's Club of Roland Park.

In their quiet, effective way, ladies of the Woman's Club have been coming together for 112 years to organize projects and programs that benefit the Baltimore community. In the process of outreach, the Club's activities have enriched the lives of its members.

The first official meeting of Woman's Club took place December 9, 1896, at the home of Mrs. C. Pinckney Brown on Woodlawn Road. The Club's first president, Mrs. Anna Heath, presided. The founding ladies numbered 28, all residents of Roland Park. Their mission was "to be a center for the promotion of cultural, educational and intellectual interests of members and to further such organized work as the Club may desire." As Gail Willin, current president of Woman's Club, notes "it was remarkable, in 1896, for

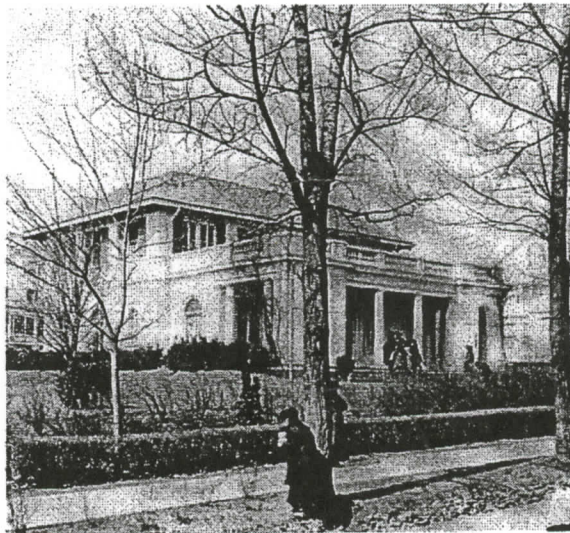
women to found an organization that emphasized self-improvement. It was not a time in history for women to step boldly forward, but the members of the Club have always been ahead of their time."

Early meetings of the Club rotated among the homes of Roland Park residents. Once membership outgrew this practice, meetings were moved to a room in the Town Hall at the Roland Park shopping center (now the home of Petit Louis, O'Malley Antiques and various banks). Annual dues for the ladies were \$2, with a 10-cent penalty for absence and a 5-cent penalty for late arrival!

Taking an even bolder step forward as the 19th century came to a close, the Woman's Club started to discuss plans to build their own clubhouse, because the Roland Park Company required the use of the Town Hall. Willin says it was "impressive," given the era, that a woman's group could pursue a project like this. After several suggestions by the Roland Park Company, a site at the

corner of Roland Avenue and Ridgewood Road was selected in 1902. Building the clubhouse was a labor of love. Mortgage bonds were sold to members and friends of the Club to cover most of the \$12,925 needed for construction. In addition to two mortgages, card parties and various sales covered the rest of the expenses. By 1951, both mortgages were paid off, thanks to monies raised by various Club events like weddings, receptions and charity events.

The architectural firm of Ellicott & Emmert of North Charles Street designed the original Italian Renaissance-style clubhouse building. It was built by Gus A. Stohr and opened in 1904. In 1935, the



Members of the Woman's Club of Roland Park arrive for a meeting, 1904.

Photo courtesy: The Woman's Club of Roland Park

The Woman's Club of Roland Park

Continued from page 1

architect Lucius R. White, Jr., applied the "finishing touches" to the clubhouse, completing the building that stands today. The original arched porch in the front of the building was enclosed, a roof was extended over the second-floor library, the auditorium was enlarged and a stage was built. Various rooms were also added to the back of the building. Outside, behind the Club, Beatrice Farrar designed a garden, and a lovely, decorative fountain (still standing today) was added to the back wall.

Less than 10 years after its founding, the Woman's Club was thriving. By 1915, membership numbered 200. By 1970, it was 1,000.

Much has been accomplished within the clubhouse walls since the doors first opened in 1904. True to the original mission, the Club stays focused on community outreach, "in-house" educational programs and camaraderie among members. "The Woman's Club strongly believes in supporting community organizations that uphold educational, cultural and intellectual traditions, as well as those who reach out in support of others," says Willin.

Among the annual community outreach projects supported by the Club is Food for the Needy. This program works with the Northern District Police Department to collect money and food that is then distributed to the needy by the Greater Homewood Association. In addition, the Woman's Club is involved in CAN TOO (Clothing Area's Needy—Thinking of Others), a group supported by clothing donations and financial assistance. They also donate to many other Baltimore non-profit organizations, including The Hampden Family Center, Maryland School for the blind, Maryland SPCA and The Maryland Zoo.

In support of cultural and educational initiatives, Woman's Club donates to the Baltimore Museum of Art, The Walters Art Museum, Maryland Historical Society and The Baltimore Symphony. It also endows a scholarship at Goucher College.

Most recently, the ladies of the Woman's Club donated to the Roland Park Library Initiative in support of its renovation.

Over the years, the Woman's Club has also risen to the occasion to meet community needs on other levels, both national and local. During World War II, clubhouse space was transformed into classrooms for first aid and nurses training, staffed by Red Cross volunteers. Members donated blood, rolled bandages and assembled care packages. They were also encouraged to invest in war bonds. Savings stamps were used as bridge prizes. Furniture

and supplies were donated to hospitals, reading rooms, libraries and recreational areas for service men at military facilities throughout Baltimore and Maryland. It is impressive to note that 181 members gave nearly 100,000 hours of volunteer service during the war effort.

In 1948, the Woman's Club extended the use of its rooms to Grace Methodist Church after a fire in a church building necessitated repairs.

In April of last year, members of the Club graciously opened their doors to provide the venue for the Roland Park Community Foundation's annual Spring Celebration. Based on the success of last year's event, the Woman's Club has agreed to again "play hostess" to this year's party, planned for April 25th.

When they are not planning their next community service initiative, the members of the Woman's Club enjoy an ever-changing program of speakers that has long been central to the Club's popularity. Programs on international affairs, drama, literature, education and health, finance, music, gardening and

metropolitan affairs are offered. Kathleen Brosi, a two-year member, raves about the amazing speakers the Club attracts, calling the experience "like college, without the exams." In the past, notable speakers have included H.L. Mencken, former First Lady Barbara Bush, Louis Rukeyser, Alger Hiss and Susan Eisenhower. Last fall, BSO Director Marin Alsop addressed members.

The 2007-2008 program reads like a

veritable college syllabus, with talks on a wide range of subjects, like "Melodies of Cole Porter," "Living Green and Loving It," "Julia Child—Queen of Cuisine," "Conquering Gotham," "The Art of Leonardo," "Understanding Islam Today" and "Preserving Maryland's Great Treasures" (by Roland Park's own Tyler Gearheart).

Members can also take advantage of a wide range of classes at the Club, which, over the years, has included ceramics, painting, cooking, French, flower arranging, public speaking, tennis and yoga. There are two book clubs and a group of very loyal bridge players. The Club is also a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland.

If they are not "in the classroom," members take advantage of excursions to Colonial Williamsburg, New York City, the museums of Washington, DC, and Mount Vernon.

Past president and 50-year member, Ann Thomas, calls the quality of the educational programs one of the key elements to the



Red Cross surgical dressings class, 1943.

Photos courtesy:

The Woman's Club of Roland Park



WCRP morning meeting, December 1946, Mrs. John J. Ghingher presiding.

longevity of the Woman's Club. She notes, "there is something for everybody...the Club always keeps it relevant."

An active social program keeps members (and their spouses, who are always welcome) further entertained. There are coffees and luncheons, evening socials, fashion shows, concerts, dancing and potluck dinners to enjoy (clearly, these Woman's Club members are to be admired for their stamina!). Many of the evening events are popular with junior (under 40) members, who can't always make Thursday meetings due to family or work commitments.

Of course, the Woman's Club would not be the successful organization it is today without the dedication of its members and the vision of its leaders, past and present. Willin calls the members "the lifeblood of the Club. Their vitality, dedication and inspiration keep the Club exciting." Women have been drawn to the Club through the experiences of family members, friends and neighbors. There are many three and four generation members, now celebrated annually with a "Generations Luncheon." Forty-four ladies have been at the Club for 50 years, an achievement that has

been more the norm, not the exception, in Club history.

As a newer member, Kathleen Brosi appreciates the Club's "very comfortable, welcoming atmosphere." She became involved after giving a talk on the Walters Art Museum "Art Blooms" event. Ann Thomas recalls the early days of her membership fondly, when she "enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and work with friends on special projects."

The Woman's Club of Roland Park has come a long way since 1896, but its progress is actually defined more by what hasn't changed. Ever proud, the ladies of this dynamic organization keep walking in the footsteps of their founders along Roland Avenue. ❖

The Woman's Club of Roland Park always welcomes new members. Roland Park neighbors are invited to join a Thursday lecture and luncheon or any other program. If you are interested in learning more the Club, contact President Gail Willin (410-828-6591) or Ellen Pinto, Executive Assistant (410-889-0760). ❖

Spring Recipe: Grilled Asparagus with Sherry Mushroom Vinaigrette

By Chef Stan, Eddie's of Roland Park

Serves four to six.

3 bunches fresh asparagus

10 white button mushrooms

3/8 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/8 cup sherry vinegar

1/16 cup grainy Dijon mustard

2 T extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

Sea salt and black peppercorns to be ground

Heat the grill using wood or charcoal for best flavor. Clean asparagus, discarding the woody ends. Put the asparagus in a shallow pan and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil (EVOO), ground black pepper and ground sea salt. Using metal tongs, lay six to eight pieces at a time on the grill for 30 seconds. Turn and grill them for 30 more seconds, then turn and grill them for 20 to 30 seconds more. Remove them from the grill and place them on a serving platter. Continue until all the asparagus is grilled.

Thinly slice the button mushrooms. Sauté them quickly in a sauté pan drizzled with a bit of EVOO. Remove the mushrooms from the heat and put them on paper towels to drain the excess juices.

In a bowl, whisk together 3/8 cup EVOO, the sherry vinegar and the grainy Dijon mustard. Add sea salt and ground black pepper to taste. To serve hot, put the hot mushrooms in the vinaigrette mixture and pour it over the just-grilled asparagus. You can also chill the dish and serve it cold at a later time.

This is a great way to use up leftover chicken or turkey!

2 cups cooked chicken (or turkey)

1 large yellow onion, julienned

1 red pepper, julienned

1 green pepper, julienned

4 medium stalks celery, cut on bias 1/8 inch thick

14 oz can tomatoes

2 to 3 cups cooked rice

1/2 to 1 cup chicken stock

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced

2 T extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp garlic powder

1 bay leaf

1 tsp dried thyme

1 tsp hot sauce

1 1/2 tsp Worcestershire sauce

salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil. Add red and green peppers and onion, browning them slightly while keeping crisp. Add the salt, pepper, thyme, garlic powder and bay leaf, and sauté for one minute. Add tomatoes, and reduce heat and simmer for five minutes. Add the hot sauce and Worcestershire sauce, and stir well. Add chicken (turkey) pieces and as much of the cooked rice as you like, stirring well while gradually adding the chicken broth until the dish has reached the desired consistency. Simmer for 10 minutes. Garnish with chopped scallions and serve. For added flavor and interest, you can also add cooked shrimp, crabmeat and/or pieces of ham. ❖

