



# ViewPoints

Winter, 2002

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AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## PROPOSED GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS TOWN HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTER

by Wayne Carlson

*In a January public meeting, discussions took place between community leaders and residents of Grandview concerning the planning of a new building to house the mayor, the council, fire and police operations, and to provide meeting space for various activities. The proposal was met with a mixture of support and opposition. Feelings were expressed that the community could make do both with what currently exists and moving some offices to existing public spaces. In an attempt to inform the public, architectural drawings were presented in the local media.*

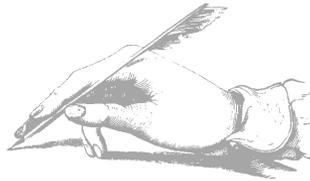
Although there may seem to be a familiar ring to this scenario, the year was 1922. The plans were printed in the February Norwester, the monthly publication of the villages of Grandview Heights, Marble Cliff and Upper Arlington. The project was called the Grandview Heights Town Hall and Community Center Project. The architectural rendering of the proposed building is shown below. The January meeting was a meeting of the Brotherhood, which was a group of community business, church and political leaders, and also featured a discussion of the architectural drawings of the proposed High School building.

This was a time of tremendous growth in the Grandview and Marble Cliff area. Homes were being built in the community at a rapid rate, the schools were in dire need of additional space, and the local church, First Community Church, was also planning a new building of its own. Because of this rate of growth and the number of added fire runs, the City of Columbus (which had been providing fire service to the villages) had begun charging Grandview for service. This prompted the village leaders to begin discussions of a local fire depart-



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Members and Friends,

Winter is officially here! Although there is a chill in the air, don't forget to enjoy the beauty. Our lovely historical community glistens with new fallen snow and makes these lovely old homes and buildings all the cozier with lamps aglow in the windows.

Your Board has been busy connecting with Grandview City Council, as well as Marble Cliff Village Council Members, in our goal to liaison with the community as a whole. This keeps us up on any historically related issues such as the Grandview City Building and the former Tarpy property.

We are continuing to organize, file and inventory our material collection for better access. Dr. Carlson continues to add new items to our website: [www.ghmchs.org](http://www.ghmchs.org). If you haven't visited lately, you will find many interesting new postings!

We have recently received abstracts from properties that are transferring ownership. If you are purchasing or selling an older home in Grandview or Marble Cliff, please consider letting us borrow your abstract for copying for our files. Abstracts provide so much insight into a property's history!

As always, I welcome any questions or comments at: [TPENNI@AOL.COM](mailto:TPENNI@AOL.COM).

Sincerely,  
Tracy P. Liberatore, President  
614-488-0425



This issue sponsored by

**Colleen Sexton, Mayor of Grandview Heights**





**PROPOSED GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS TOWN HALL ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

ment which would require equipment and a building to house it. The original idea was expanded to provide a space for the village government offices, the library, police offices and a jail, and space for all of the community organizations that couldn't be accommodated in other local buildings.

As proposed, the building was to be a two-story structure with a fully functional basement. In the front of the building were offices for the mayor, council, village clerk, the water and sewer department, the board of public affairs, and a library. Also in front were meeting rooms for the Boy Scouts, Masonic Lodge, Camp Fire Girls, womens' clubs, and other community organizations. In the rear of the building was space to hold two "fire apparatus," living space for a fireman and the building attendant, a large two story stage and several dressing rooms.

Sandwiched between the front and rear structures of the building was a 60x90 foot open space with a two story ceiling (18 feet to the trusses) to be used as a gymnasium, auditorium and banquet room. It had an associated kitchen and serving areas. The basement would house space for the police department, the jail, a billiard room, men's and women's locker rooms (each with 160 lockers and 12 showers), rest rooms and a five-lane bowling alley with a spectator gallery!

The proposal for the project was never put on the ballot, most

likely because of the higher priority for the new school (plans for which also included space for a public library). Also, the Masons had proposed a new building (which had community meeting space) for their lodge which was built on the NW corner of First and Grandview. Instead, Grandview decided to contract with Columbus for fire services at \$250 (\$2,626 in 2002 dollars) per run.

Later that year they also proposed a new community park at Grandview Avenue and Goodale. The park was originally proposed to encompass 14 acres from the top of the hill to Goodale. It was expanded to 22 acres south to the railroad tracks. The space between Goodale and the tracks was to be a recreation area which was accessible by way of a "subway" tunnel under the trolley tracks on Goodale. Plans for the park were submitted in September, the bonds were sold in July of the next year, and the park was dedicated in June of 1924.

Early in 1923, Mayor Thomas of Columbus issued an order to halt all fire service to Grandview. This became a very controversial and contentious fight between the two municipalities. Columbus had proposed a new rate of \$1.87 per \$1000 tax valuation for the new fire services contract. That meant a flat rate of \$4200 for Grandview, and Mayor Ryder refused. Instead he proposed that Grandview estab-

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## SLIPPERY SLOPES

Sledging, or coasting, as it once was known, has no doubt been an occasional winter activity since the Walcutt, Miller, Slyh, Salzgeber, Willard, Thomas and other early families first were tempted by the wooded bluffs dropping steeply down into the Scioto Valley bottom lands. Stories abound, from those of two-years-olds initiated during our most recent sufficient snowfall, to the memories of our "oldest living inhabitants". We know a lady who admits, as a girl, to being chased off the hilly lawns of the Urlin Mansion (Summit Chase) by George C. Urlin himself on the grounds that coasting would "ruin his grass".

Favored locations of the past have been Cardigan Avenue, "Stone's Hill" (the lawn of what is now Stonegate), Westwood and Elmwood ("Elmwood is steeper!"), Broadview ("Careful of the trolley tracks!"), Mulford Hill ("Go look!"), and sometimes even the "flivver" traffic on Grandview Avenue itself had to make way for that long run all the way across Goodale Boulevard toward the railroad tracks!

Does anyone have photos or stories to share for the GHMCHS collection?



Children of the Merkle family, circa 1910. Their barn was on the site of Our Lady of Victory School.



Mayor Joseph Wyman and city secretary Kitty Bangham get set to try out the newly lighted sled and ski slope through woods below City Hall. (late 1960s)



Grandview Avenue, circa 1920. It was a long way back for the next run! Note the Flexible Flyer and the "sledge".

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Immediate past-president Win Keller was also the first president and co-founder of Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society. She is a long-time resident of Grandview Heights, and has been active in civic and school affairs for over 35 years. She is the mother of six Grandview Heights High School graduates and has two grandchildren in Stevenson Elementary School. Win is currently serving on the membership committee and is GHMCHS liaison to Grandview Heights City Council.

# NEW DISCOVERIES: FAIRVIEW AVENUE CIRCA 1901 TO 1908

by Tom DeMaria

This column, which debuted last issue, is designed to share new or previously unpublished photos, recent research and to simply fill in the “blanks.” The three homes featured this month are all on Fairview south of First Ave.



Depicted above is the home and grounds of the J. Upton Gribben estate named “Cairn Muir,” and described as an “architectural marvel” in the November 17, 1901 issue of the *Columbus Evening Press*. Mr. Gribben was an architect and former protégé of Frank Packard. His three-acre estate included the main residence (currently the Cabot home at 1122 Fairview) shown above at top as well as a magnificent English garden shown above. The photo of the garden and arbor is looking straight south on Fairview and is currently the site of the Nick Panzera home. Note the Urlin mansion water tower in the distance. The estate was split into three lots approximately 20 years ago. The home of former GH councilman Keith Dufrane occupies a lot south of the main house. Ruth Weinman Herndon, Mr Gribben’s niece, whose family built the present Lachey house on Roxbury in 1914, recently gave these photos to the GHMCHS.

The next new acquisition is the earliest known photograph of the Smith-Kosnik house directly north of “Cairn Muir” at 1176 Fairview. As stated in the GHMCHS “Sheltering a Heritage” publication, this home was built in 1905 for G. Edwin Smith, owner of G. Edwin Smith Shoe Company. It has undergone many additions. It is currently home to the Kosnik family. This photograph taken from the July 2, 1905 *Ohio State Journal* shows the original structure. The caption also establishes that the home

was designed by Frank Packard, the noted Columbus architect who designed many homes in the area (see Frank Packard on our web page). We recently acquired the abstract for this home and research is ongoing.

The final “new discovery” is the home of Alan Leamy, which was featured in the 1908 Ohio Realty Company promotional brochure entitled “The Home Builder.” This home occupied the lot on the southwest corner of Fairview and First Avenues that is currently a parking lot. The stone column in the foreground still exists. The water tower from the Urlin mansion and other early homes in the area along Merrick, Oakland, and Ashland Avenues are visible. Mr. Leamy, shown in the caricature, was the manager of the Welsbach



Company in Columbus. This company manufactured mantles for gas light fixtures and lanterns. Mr Leamy’s other claim to fame was the invention of a one stringed instrument which he apparently played with enthusiasm for he has been immortalized playing it in the 1911 edition of “The Club Men of Columbus in Caricature,” published by Roycrofters Guild of East Aurora, New York.

It is of interest that, despite the pedigree of these estates and their owners, Fairview Avenue was not paved until 1956. Mrs. Giesy, who lived in the home currently occupied by Mayor Sexton and her family, established that fact in the 1976 GHMCHS publication *Sheltering a Heritage*. For additional information or pictures of J. Upton Gribben or Frank Packard please visit our web page at [www.ghmchs.org](http://www.ghmchs.org).





## BECOME A MEMBER

*of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society!*

Please complete the information below and send with your check made out to: **GH/MC Historical Society** Mail or drop off at the **Grandview Heights Library, 1685 West First Avenue, Columbus, OH 43212**

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*Steve Allen, superintendent of Grandview Heights City Schools, receives flowers in recognition of the district's perfect grade card from Tracy Liberatore, president of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society, and Wayne Carlson, a member of the society board and its liaison to Grandview schools. Grandview was one of only five school districts in central Ohio to meet 27 of 27 Ohio Department of Education standards for 2001.*



## PROPOSED GRANDVIEW ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



lish their own fire department at an unspecified location. He was attempting to join with Marble Cliff and Upper Arlington and would put the building in a location central to the three communities.

In May Mayor Ryder proposed a \$30,000 bond issue which included \$15,000 for a building "of brick construction and artistic design in keeping with the other architecture of the village," and \$15,000 for two "medium weight" trucks and equipment. The bond issue was placed on the June ballot and passed with a vote of 321-19. After a public discussion it was decided to place the building (which included village offices) in the new community park. The new building was completed in August of 1924. The fire department hired a chief and two firefighters, one of whom lived in the new building. On August 20th the Village Council met in the new building, and the residents visited it in an open house on August 22nd (Mayor Thomas from Columbus also attended!) In the mid-1930s the building was renovated to add new equipment bays for the fire department and again in 1963 to add office space and expanded police facilities.

*Eighty years later, in a public meeting, discussions took place between community leaders and residents of Grandview concerning the planning of a new building to house the mayor, the council, fire and police operations...*

*ViewPoints* is an occasional publication of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society.

1685 West First Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43212  
EDITOR DESIGN/PRODUCTION  
Patrick Mooney Melissa Rady

Contact Editor Patrick Mooney  
(279-6665) for any interesting article ideas or to discuss photo contributions.

1685 WEST FIRST AVENUE  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43212

The Grandview  
Heights/Marble Cliff  
Historical Society

