



illuminations

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

Old copper aids coffers of HSUC *City Hall roof recycled—at a profit*

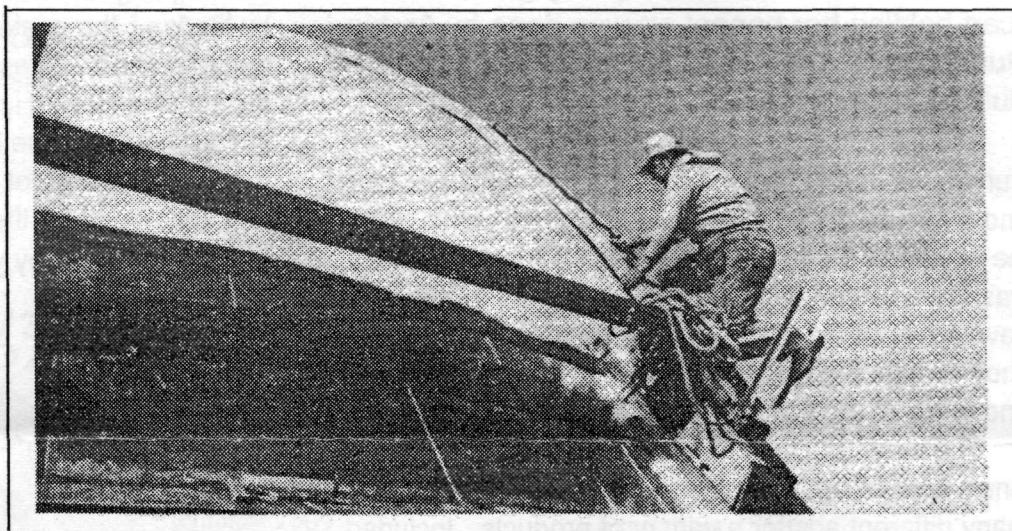
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Books published by the
Historical Society and gift items
can be purchased year round
at the University City Library.



A worker removing the original copper from the City Hall roof in October 1982.

by Sigrid Renner

In the early 1980s the copper roof of the University City City Hall was replaced. Thanks to the efforts of Board President Julius Giebler, some of the original sheets of copper roofing were given to the Historical Society of University City.

The copper sheets were stripped of their rubber coating and were taken to Judy Little's house for storage. Using tin snips, Board member Marilyn Merritt hand-cut dozens of ornaments in the shape of the University City lions logo from the copper sheets. Other Board members cleaned, sanded and prepared the ornaments for sale.

Later, more of the copper

sheets were sent to a foundry where they were made into a brass alloy and cast into replicas of the City Hall door knobs and door plates. The ornaments and brass reproductions have all been sold.

For over twenty years, a hefty stack of copper roof sheets remained stored in Judy and Bob Little's basement. Judy suggested that the Historical Society take advantage of the current value of copper and sell the remains of our supply. So, early one August morning Judy and Bob Little and Sigrid and Ed Renner loaded a pickup truck with 600

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**A Message from the President
by Ed Nickels**

This past spring the Board selected three covers of *The Woman's Magazine* to reprint and make available for sale to all members of the Society as well as to non-members. The three covers chosen were the March 1908, the January 1909 and the September 1910 issues. The *Woman's Magazine* that Lewis founded, like many other women's magazines of the late 1800s and early 1900s, were adorned with beautiful woman artwork by leading illustrators of that era. In fact, the 1910 issue's illustration of a pretty girl in a red scarf holding her bonnet on was done by Archie Gunn who was, at that time, one of the leading illustrators in America.

During this period the issues sold for 3 cents per copy and 25 cents per year, or a savings of 11 cents. While the covers of these later issues were in color the inside was still only printed in black. The inside, for those who have never seen an issue of the magazine, contained short romance articles, updates on the latest fashion and fancy of the times, articles on poultry, pets and flowers and other articles primarily addressed to the magazine's woman audience. Also, all issues contained many different ads for a variety of products. Included with each issue was a short "talk" by the Editor, Lewis himself.

In the March 1908 issue, Lewis' column addresses the issue of the assassination of the People's Bank. In his

column Lewis states, "we (meaning the bank officers and directors) were to have been so completely destroyed and silenced that the world would never know the truth." As many of you who attended our yearly banquet in September may remember this was the topic of our speaker, David L. Straight. Just maybe David has unearthed the truth some 100 years later?

For those of you who missed this outstanding program I can assure you that the programs for 2009 will be just as intriguing and ones you will not want to miss. And, by the way, the poster cover of the March 1908 can be purchased as well as the other historic covers from your historical society. Have a part of University City's history in your home for the holiday season and while you're at it, they make a great gift. See how to order in this issue and stay tuned for the 2009 line-up of fascinating programs presented by your historical society.



**New members join HSUC
Board of Directors**

The Board of the Directors of the Historical Society of University City welcomes newly-elected members Roger Davenport, Hardy Ware, and Dorothy Ervin, and thanks retiring members Evelyn Stacy, Sigrid Renner and Judy Little for their service.

**Christmas shopping advice
from E. G. Lewis**

"Do not wait until the last moment to select and purchase such Xmas gifts as you intend giving. Nothing takes away from a present so much of its real value as the impression that 'any old thing' was hastily purchased."

from Lewis's regular column, "A Heart-to-Heart Talk with the Editor,"
The Women's Magazine
December 1905

Roof Copper...continued from page 1

plus pounds of copper sheets. The Renners then sold the copper to a recycler. The effort produced \$1603.25 for the Historical Society treasury.

A couple of choice pieces of 105 year-old copper have been saved for the archives. An unconfirmed rumor hints that additional original copper sheeting may be in the attic of City Hall, but all the Historical Society copper has been recycled.



Left to Right: Sigrid and Ed Renner and Bob Little with a vanload of copper headed for recycling.

The Annual Dinner

Contemporary defenders of E.G. Lewis argued passionately that the magazine publisher and University City founder was a friend of the people, victimized by a conspiracy of "the moneyed interests." They were right, David L. Straight of Washington University told a large and fascinated audience at the Historical Society annual dinner Sept. 23. In the early 1900s, banks were few and far between in rural America, but post offices were much more common. So Lewis started the People's Bank, where his subscribers and others could bank by mail. Accusing Lewis of fraud, Postmaster General George B. Cortelyou banned the bank from using the mails. The bank had to close, but David Straight pointed out that depositors got their money back and shareholders recovered most of their investment. Lewis was acquitted at his trial for fraud. But Cortelyou continued his persecution, denying Lewis low mail rates for his magazines, a mortal blow to the publisher. David noted that Lewis's postal bank, though a boon to the people, would have cut into the profits of the express companies, which moved gold and currency from bank to bank to meet demand. They were behind Cortelyou's campaign against Lewis. David Straight's research provides a fresh and sympathetic perspective on Lewis.

Still roaring after 100 years: in 2009, University City will celebrate the Lions' centennial.

On Oct.23, Julie Feier, City Manager of University City, announced: "Next year will be the 100-year birthday of our famed Lions atop pylons at the Civic Plaza. The Lions were designed by architects Eames & Young and created by sculptor George Julian Zolnay. The "Gates of Opportunity" were the brainchild of University City's founder E.G. Lewis and were meant to mark the entrance to the residential portion of the new city. The Historical Society of University City initiated a Committee to plan a series of celebratory events in 2009 to mark this important milestone. The Committee is cochaired by Historical Society Board Members Ed Nickels and Petree Eastman. On September 12, 2009, a Big Birthday Bash is planned for the community in the Civic Plaza." But the celebration will last all year, with a lion theme being added to regular local events, starting with the Loop Ice Carnival in January.