WHAT'S NEW?
Since the announcement last month that I was the nominee to become President of the SHCA after the October special election a number of friends have asked me, 'What's new?' or words to that effect. Here is part of the answer:

I plan to report to you or comment in this space each month. I think Becky Stoeloff's area of this space in the Sun for a regular report to the neighborhood is great! (I think a lot of what Becky and several other of my predecessors has done is also great and I hope to follow their examples.) I plan to meet with every committee chair prior to the October SHCA meeting and work with them to develop a specific agenda for continued improvement of the quality of life in this area. I also plan to meet with the leaders of contiguous civic and neighborhood associations to assure continued cooperation with them for the same purpose.

Security and dirt are the two subjects which seem to concern most people. I strongly believe that we have an INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY to help in both areas!

On the subject of security we are fortunate to have an excellent help in 6th District Police Commander John Collins with whom we will continue to cooperate. Individually we must be the extended eyes and ears of the police and give them all the support possible.

Regarding dirt, each individual is either a planner or a minus. If you don't pick up (never mind throwing) down you're a minus! I hope to reactivitate the Block Captain system to improve the appearance of each block and raise the consciousness of every resident (your even renters) on this subject. Volunteers for Block Captains needed! Call 629-1288.

I'll try to lead a SHCA which is helpful and responsive. But don't forget, that means you have to be a leader and a responder! Thanks in advance for your support . . . and please don't expect an answer after 10 PM.

-Dick Ostrander

PRESERVATION RULING
PA Supreme Court Asked to Reconsider

By Ruth Dugan

Is Philadelphia at risk? Are wrecking crews waiting to swing away at a lot of our historic buildings? It looks that way.

The threat comes from a July 10th ruling of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (that the Philadelphia historic preservation ordinance was in violation of the state constitution. The ruling was a reversal of two lower court decisions appealed by United Artists Theatre Circuit, Inc., owners of the Boyd Theater (now the Sameric 4) on Chestnut near 19th Street, who challenged the landmark designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission of both the interior and exterior of the art deco theater. Justice Roll Larsen, writing for the majority of four members of the seven-judge court, concluded: "After review, we find that by designating the theater building as historic, over the objections of the owner, the City of Philadelphia through its Historical Commission has 'taken' the appellee's property for public use without just compensation in violation of article 1, section 10 of the Pennsylvania Constitution and we, therefore, reverse.' This decision contradicts a ruling in the case of New York's Grand Central Terminal in which the U.S. Supreme Court judged that the designations and regulations of individual landmark buildings do not amount to an unlawful taking without compensation. But since the Pennsylvania Supreme Court based its decision on Pennsylvania constitutional law, and appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is unlikely.

The City of Philadelphia has asked the court to reconsider its decision. Amicus curiae [friend of the court] briefs in support of the city's stance have been submitted by the National Trust, the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, the United States Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the PA Historical and Museum Commission, the Attorney General of PA, Congressman Thomas M. Foglietta and members of the Congressional Arts Caucus and several Pennsylvania preservation organizations.

Several responses are possible: the court could choose to rehear; it could choose not to rehear; it could rehear portions of the case, or it could issue a new opinion. It is recognized that the court does not often reconsider an opinion, and there is no deadline for its decision on reconsideration.

The Supreme Court's meaning is unclear, but it suggests that it applies only to individually designated structures, and that designation and regulation of historic districts or other comprehensive zoning devices may still be protected by state law. The Philadelphia Historical Commission voted on August 14th to stop certifying districts as historic on a case-by-case basis. Five districts (including Society Hill) have completed historic surveys and are waiting for the Commission to move on their applications. Society Hills extensive and expensive building inventory was accepted by the Commission in 1986. Richard Tyler, executive director of the Historical Preservation Commission, has appeared unwilling to test whether a single resident could block neighborhood historic designations.

Buildings with owner's consent to historic designation appear to be safe from the ruling, even if they change hands and the new owner objects to the designation. But there are examples at immediate risk: the Second Empire style Victory Building at Tenth and Chestnut Streets, the Danforth, the Scher and the Allen stores at 920-22, 926 and 930 Chestnut Street, fine examples of first-generation commercial architecture in mid-19th century Philadelphia, and the Jayne Estates Building at Delaware and Vine Street. Once the wreckers' balls get going, it could strike Samuel Rappaport's PSFS Building on Washington Square and the balance of the 730 block of Walnut Street.

Since the ruling could affect more than a hundred municipalities throughout Pennsylvania which have historic districts or landmark programs, a state-wide umbrella organization of preservation and environmental groups has been formed. Called "Pennsylvania at Risk!" it is working to support a rehearing. The coalition urges everyone to write or call his state Representative and Senator (listed in "Easy Reference List Government and Other Public Services" in the Bell Yellow Pages). Ask them to make your concerns about saving important buildings known to the PA Supreme Court and to support Philadelphia's application for reconsideration. Send copies of your letters to the PA Supreme Court, 2801 Grant Building, 330 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

FLASH!!! As this issue was going to press it was announced that the state Supreme Court has agreed to rehear a portion of the case during their October session.
THE ATHENAEOUM OF PHILADELPHIA
Structural Conservation Begins

By Roger W. Moss, Executive Director
Washington Square has been a hive of construction activity this summer, giving sidewalk superintendents plenty to watch. Work at the Penn Mutual building entered its second year, and the Hopkinson House continued its carefully measured program of renovations. The most recent project is the structural conservation of the National Historic Landmark Athenaeanum of Philadelphia building on the east side of the Square, which will require approximately a year to complete.

The Athenaeanum of Philadelphia is an independent research library with museum collections founded in 1814 to collect materials "connected with the history and antiquities of America, and to be useful arts, and generally to disseminate useful knowledge." As the collection expanded over the past 176 years, the Athenaeum has refined its objectives. Today the 1,300 members support a not-for-profit institution that concentrates on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social and cultural history, particularly architecture and interior design, where the collections are nationally significant.

The library is freely open to serious investigators, and it annually attracts thousands of readers: graduate students and senior scholars, architects, interior designers, museum curators, and private owners of historic houses. While not publicly funded, the Athenaeum provides the region with a resource of its first resort on matters of architecture and interior design history, particularly for the period 1800 to 1945.

Declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977, the Athenaeanum building is considered one of the significant American structures of the nineteenth century. It was designed in 1845 by John Noram (1810-1865) following a celebrated architectural competition. Noram's Athenaeanum gave America its first urban structure in the soon-to-be-popular Italianate Revival Style and one of the earliest in Philadelphia to be constructed of brownstone. Severe plain on the exterior and deceptive in scale, the Athenaeanum contains richly-embellished reading rooms with 24-foot ceilings. In these spaces is a museum collection of American line and decorative art.

A structural survey sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission revealed last year that the roof framing and floor structures of the building did not meet Philadelphia codes for large cultural events, immediately became aware of the findings when all group uses of the building ceased. This summer and into the fall, steel I-beams are being introduced to reinforce the first and second floors. Next spring the roof will be reinforced and given a new copper covering.

Internally the building will also be reorganized to provide, for the first time, a public exhibition gallery where temperature, humidity, and light levels can be maintained at optimum levels for the display of the rich holdings of the Athenaeum, which are little known outside scholarly circles. (For example, the Athenaeum owns 13,000 architectural drawings, including the presentation drawings for the United States Capitol.) Other amenities—coat room and book store, for example—are also being provided, and research scholars will have a much expanded reading room named for the late Henry Paul Busch, President of the Welcome Society at the time Pennsbury was reconstructed. Because the third floor of the building can no longer be utilized for the storage of collections, thousands of pounds of books, manuscripts, and drawings are being stored on the site until additional storage space can be provided.

At the present, the Athenæum is closed for tours and research use because of the construction. The building will reopen to the public in April.
SWEEP
Meet Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith is a brown-uniformed, no-nonsense but soft-spoken officer of SWEEP! I first saw him at work about 7:30 AM on September 4th in the 400 block of South 6th Street. Mr. Smith was looking for dirt/trash/litter and the cats as to who put it there. He didn’t hesitate to tell me the sidewalk where we were standing (mine) could use some cleaning up and I told him I was sorry I hadn’t seen the mess the pickup crew left the night before until that very minute (and I started picking up right away as Mr. Smith sort of looked like he’d really like to write a warning ticket or worse). All of us living on or west of 6th Street will have a chance to welcome Mr. Smith and his coworkers to the area. Their presence will mean a cleaner neighborhood, and if you happen to be a person who uses the street corner waste basket for your daily garbage, it could mean some tickets. Glad to see you Mr. Smith! I’ll be even happier when SWEEP covers the entire area! —Dick Ostrander

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ZONING
Discussions being held concerning proposed additions at 317 S. American Street and 500 Pine Street. Investigation ongoing with Queen Village and South Street neighborhoods about store card readers.

MAINTENANCE
Graffiti has been on the rise this summer and efforts have been made to keep our walls clean. Property owners should paint out graffiti immediately. If help is needed, call our office at 629-1288. Efforts continue to rid our doors of the flyers deposited there. If you do not like the litter in our neighborhood or the security breach at your home, call the distributor and let them know. Our Legislative Committee is investigating a possible ordinance which would make doorstop dumping illegal.

THANKS FOR THE FLOWERS
Thank you to all the Society Hill green thumbs who planted flowers and hung door baskets and made our neighborhood look especially pretty this summer.

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

The Hospice program of Pennsylvania Hospital, 8th & Spruce, is seeking volunteers to work with terminally ill patients and families, in the home. Hospice volunteers are an integral part of the team approach to help enhance the quality of life for the terminally ill. They might offer companionship, assistance with patient management, run errands or provide transportation.

A training program, conducted by Hospice staff, will be offered in October for those who qualify for this highly selective volunteer program. In addition, there will be training offered for those people interested in giving emotional support to the bereaved family after the patient's death.

For more information, please call the Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, at 826-5335, during business hours.

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BACK FROM SUMMER PICNIC

Sunday, Sept. 22 (rain date Sept. 29) • 1-5 PM, Starr Gardens, 6th & Lombard Streets
Bring your picnic basket and blanket, guitar, baseball mitt, family and friends.

DRINKS PROVIDED FREE!

ADMISSION: $10 per family, $5 per individual
ENTERTAINMENT! Folksinger Betsy Mason, storyteller Charlotte Alson, Sparks the Clown, John Colgan-Davis of Dukes of Destiny! GAMES! ANNUAL TUG-O-WARS! SOFTBALL! BASKETBALL!

FABULOUS AUCTION (3:00)
Sheraton Society Hill
Cafe Nova
Bistro Romano
Downey's
Pennsport Athletic Club
Philadelphia Savings Fund Society
Montserrat
Tower Records/Tower Classical Annex
John Romano Hairstylist
Pizzi's
Copabanana
Albouette
Thrift Drugs
Planters
Cohen's Hardware
Pierrot & Carlo Hair Salon
Always in Season

Room for two nights (Fri & Sat) Dinner for two ($75 max)
Weekend boarding of pet Dinner for two
$25 gift certificate One month membership
$100 gift cert w/ new passbook account
A selection of CG's (2 items)
Men's hairstyling and manicure
Branch for two
Lunch for family of four+ ($50 max)
$20 lunch certificate
$40 gift certificate
One dozen roses
$15 gift certificate
Woman's haircut by Dan AND
Woman's makeup by Jean

GOOD NEIGHBORS: SHERATON SOCIETY HILL

Everyone knows what GOOD NEIGHBORS means. Those are the folks who keep the sidewalks clean, greet you cheerfully and are ready to help when you need help.

We usually think about individuals or couples as Good Neighbor, but the Sheraton Society Hill Residents with Fairly Long memories will recall that the Sheraton started being a good neighbor before ground was actually broken on Dock Street. Plans were brought to SHCA for review and approval and were subsequently followed through even to final landscaping to give us the handsome block we now take for granted.

The Sheraton meets all the Good Neighbor criteria, they definitely keep the sidewalks clean, anyone who visits or attends a meeting is given the chance to be cheerfully greeted and, very often, when ICA has needed help the Sheraton has given it generously.

For three specific examples consider these: First, the Sheraton has undertaken an innovative recycling program and is considering ways in which Society Hill neighbors can participate in it. Secondly, the hotel has adopted the park on Dock Street at Delaware Avenue and provides volunteers to clean it each Thursday afternoon. (You can join this crew by calling Paule Buckley, Sheraton PR Director for details at 238-6628.) Third, SHCA has been invited to schedule a full membership meeting at the Sheraton this fall. Details are being worked out and will be announced. Finally, Ms. Buckley has offered to host one or more of our planned meetings to salute Society Hill businesses. Gee, that's four examples isn't it! well that's typical of what really Good Neighbors do!! —Dick Ostrander

SHCA CALENDAR
(clip & save)

September 12
BLOCK REPRESENTATIVE MEETING
Open to anyone interested in being a Block representative. 7:30 PM, Old Pine Community Center, 4th & Lombard.

September 22
SHCA FIRST ANNUAL BACK FROM SUMMER PICNIC
1-5 PM, Starr Gardens, 6th & Lombard. See article for details.

September 24
MEET THE CANDIDATES
For City Council, First District, 7:15 PM, Old Pine Community Center. Sponsored by SNSA.

October 2
MEET THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES
Joe Edgar, Ed Rendell at 8:30 PM, McCall School, 6th & Delancey

October 12
HPK HOUSE BULB SALE

October 16
SHCA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
7:30 PM Sheraton Society Hill. Look for details in the next issue of the News.

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BREAK THE FAST ORDER FOR YOM KIPPUR

Our fresh trays feature Mitchell's Smoked Fish packed under Kosher Certification and the U.S. Dept. of Commerce. Our exclusive fish trays can include the following:

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□ New Member □ Membership Renewal

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