NOTES from SHCA President

Time really does fly when you’re having fun! By the time you read this, the tall ships will have set sail again and the fireworks of July 4th a pleasant memory. Midsummer feels like it’s here already! I’ve been impressed with the number of decorative plantings on the streets, in window boxes, and door baskets. I counted from Front Street to 7th Street last week. The total as I measured through was 114—not counting the perennials and shrubs. GOOD GOING, GANG! It’s an impressive and colorful display with the 600 bocchi of Addison, two blocks on Delancey, and Lawrence Court having as many as 20 miniature Edens. Please remember to water those stressed trees at least once a week, too. Maybe your inspiration will get the mostly unplanted blocks going next spring. It’s clear that where two or three people plant, others soon participate.

Waves a bad farewell to the lane of the street sweepers who moved out forever (or at least until the city finds a money tree) on June 30. That puts more pressure on all of us to pickup our sidewalks and curbs. Make sure the corner litter baskets are properly used; NO HOUSEHOLD TRASH, PLEASE.

Wednesday, July 15 at 7:30 PM, the board will meet at Old Pine Community Center. VP Maggie Schultz will update us on the concerns about the Three Bears Park. I’ll have the latest on the South Street traffic control, noise, and other proposed changes in city ordinances from Councillman Vignola, information about the South Street District and the meeting of the presidents of the five concerned associations. This pot will continue to bubble for some time.

Come to the OPEN meeting on the 15th and share your input. We’ll even try to finish our June agenda, which had to be delayed as the debate raged on these matters.

—Dick Ostrander

Wednesday, June 17, the heared battle flare back and forth in the overheated room at Old Pine Community Center that the Standing Rooms—Only crowded at the SHCA board of directors meeting. Neighbor insulted neighbor. The controversy swirled around the Department of Recreation’s installation of new playground equipment as the small Delancey Street park. Readers of the Society Hill Reporter may remember that the history of the hard work, fundraising, and maintenance of the park by the Friends of Three Bears was detailed last month’s issue.

The Friends of Three Bears maintain that the old equipment was dangerous and deceptive. This was not the debating point, but what most agreed would a playground that equipment did need to be replaced. The issue that raised the temperature in the room had more to do with the fact that most of the nearby neighborhoods feel the new equipment is visually out of scale for the setting. They claimed that the park, originally installed at the time of Society Hill renewal, was designed to be a green space connected to other areas walkways which would have some playground equipment in it. The park was not intended to be simply a playground, but to be a Society Hill sanctuary for people of all ages. The neighbors also argued that they were never informed about the park’s changes prior to the fact.

In addition to the “inappropriate” appearance of new equipment, some of the Delancey Street neighbors are now concerned that the new, large scale equipment will attract older, rowdy teenagers to the park. They presented to the board a petition protest testing the installation of the new equipment.

At the board meeting, Dick Ostrander appointed SHCA Vice-President Maggie Scholten to try to reach out and find kind of agreements with the warranting factions. Maggie will report back the association at the July 15 meeting.

Meanwhile, the city has spent $500,000 on the new equipment, and children in the neighborhood seem to be enjoying it, and some valuable lessons will have been learned by all. For instance, some of the volunteers at Project Street Trees (see article in this issue) represent both sides of the Three Bears debate. They stressed the need for communication as a critical success factor for any project.

So the flyer that will be stuffed in your mailbox is a direct result of the battle that the Three Bears are fighting.
**NEXT WORKSHOP ON SATURDAY**

**Project Street Trees Branches Out**

The SHCA is sponsoring Project Street Trees to help neighbors maintain, extend the life, or replace the trees growing on the sidewalks of this shady community. Sidewalk trees are the responsibility of the property owner. While the city would remove a dead stump in the past as a courtesy, they can no longer afford to do so.

At the organizational meeting last month, one neighbor reported spending $425 to have a root removed. Replacing a tree of a quality and size to survive urban life averages about $200. The normal life expectancy of a city tree is only seven to ten years.

Yet trees are lovely to look at, help energy bills in the summer by providing cooling shade, generally help the environment, and improve property values. For these reasons, Jean Bodine has organized Project Street Trees. She has enlisted the services of the Fairmount Park Commission and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to share their expertise with neighborhood volunteers.

The first task is to conduct a tree census. Chris Lessing, neighborhood landscape designer, will conduct two workshops for volunteers to learn how to take a tree census.

Tree Census Workshop
- **Wednesday, July 8** 7:30 to 10:00 PM
- **Saturday, July 11** 10:00 to 12:00 AM
- Old Pine Community Center
- New Corner 4th and Lombard Streets
- Call 629-1288 to confirm attendance.

This drawing of the Philadelphia Vireo, done by Sally Buell, was found in our files. Project Street Trees wants to make sure the birds don’t join the homeless population of our city.

### OBITUARY

Elizabeth “Tillie” Speck, a past president of the Society of Hill Civic Association, passed away recently. She lived on 3rd Street near Lombard, and was well-known and loved in this neighborhood.

### TREE WORK

HAROLD M. ROSNER

**CABLING FERTILIZING**

**19 Years Experience**

**483-1377**

The Garden RECycles for$NCA recently received a cash payoff of $168 from a aluminum collections from 1991. A similar amount is due June 2 but will probably not arrive late summer. The site collects two to two-and-a-half 44-gallon barrels each week. That’s even a street people regularly “mining” our site. (One man’s garbage!) The site also collects tons of paper weekly. The glass fill up every three now that we have extra clear glass. There are tare for clear glass to one green and brown glass.

Site maintenance would be easier if all users bagged or bundled newspapers and crushed num. Newspapers in bundles brown grocery bags are easier to handle. Each bag must be handle at least once, if not more, keep the shred in order and pickup on Saturday morning. Ostrander could use helps the week—just fifteen or minutes would suffice. The AM Saturday morning chores done by Dick, Ted, and Ken Kluss could use one two more hands. If you can help call 922-6179 or 629-1288.

More recycling notes: food and vegetable are NOT aluminum and NOT be deposited at the site. Ties are NOT collected here.

Household trash or garbage be deposited here. If such continue to mess up the area, Department of Recreation invite us OUt. They have problems keeping the park and reasonably clean without the recycling violations.

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**THE SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

If you didn’t receive a 1992 membership renewal letter, it means, normally, that you were not a SHCA member last year.

**NOTES**

Associated Services for the Blind at 919 Walnut has asked for volunteers to transcribe educational materials into braille for children and adults. Training will start in the Fall this coming week for eight months to learn how. To volunteer, call 627-0950 extension 330 Monday through Thursday.

Philadelphia Trivia, a board game based on Trivial Pursuit, is only a few months away from distribution, but it is not too late to submit questions for inclusion in the game. Send entries to: Jim Gallagher Pro-Spec Incentives 4302 Sheep Street Harrisburg, PA 17111.

Questions should be in a category of Entertainment, General, Arts, History, or Sports with the question then the answer. Examples: What railroad company had its headquarters at the present site of The Willings at Fourth and Washington? Answer: The Reading Railroad.

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**SHCA Calendar**

*next week in the paper*

Saturday, July 11, 10 AM
**Project Street Trees**
Tree Census Workshop
Old Pine Community Center
NW corner 4th & Lombard

Wednesday, July 17, 7:30
**SHCA Board Meeting**
Old Pine Community Center
Board Meetings are open to all.

Runs until Jan 293
10-4 Mon-Sat
**“Rites of Passage in America: Traditions of the Life Cycle”**
The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies
185 S. 7th Street
A great rate on a great GM car.

That's special!

Good noon Thursday through Monday. Just pay for gas used and return car to renting location.

Discounts do not apply.

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SOCIETY HILL REPORTER • PAGE 3

July 14, 1992

HEN AND NOW Washington Square

since this is the month we celebrate independence from England, we ought we would give you the back

round for many who fought in the era's conflicts. This information

is excerpted from a speech by bwat Marie Marshall, president of

Washington Square Association.

1682. Washington Square, then known as Southeast Square in accordance with the Quaker tradition of using names after people, was one of the five original squares laid out in James Ptomaine's plan for the city. It was a spacious place, measuring five and one-quarter acres. It had a deep fly through which a creek flowed and in which crawfish abounded. A rocky place, it was surrounded by a high wall and enclosed by a post and rail fence. By 1700, the city decided to use the space as a burial place for strangers or others who might not be conveniently laid in any of the several churches because of religious societies for that purpose.

Joshua Carpenter leased a part of the Square as a pasture. When his daughter committed suicide, she was buried in the square. When Joshua died, he was buried beside her under an apple tree at the corner. This was a gentle, peaceful time for the square.

It was soon 1776, and the gentle peaceful times had come to an end. The square now stood on the corner of the Walnut Street Prison which was built across from the elegant Pennsylvania State House. From there the colonists declared their independence. Sadly, not long after, the pastures of Southeast Square would be opened to receive those who were among the first to give their lives for their country. On January 1, 1777, Sally Winer wrote in her journal, "You can scarcely walk a square without seeing the shocking sight of a cart with five or six coffins... large piles are dug in the square... forty to fifty coffins are put in the same hole." John Adams wrote in a letter on April 13, 1777, "the disease has destroyed ten men for use where the sword of enemy has killed one." This was before the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, and the British occupation of Philadelphia... a decade later, mass burials would resume as those who survived the war of the revolution were filled by the yellow fever epidemic.

Well, the century turned. It was now the beginning of the 1800s and the people of Philadelphia seemed to want to forget the war, the fever and the past of the past decade. The Square was closed to burials. The stream was covered over. A white picket fence was erected, gravel walks forty feet wide were laid in a circular configuration, one within the other. George Vanx ordered trees from Sarazen Gardens... the ground was covered in clover and John Haviland designed benches and lamps... even replaced the white picket fence with an iron with grand gates at the entrances supported by large blocks of marble topped by marble urns.

On February 22, 1833, a cornerstone was laid at the center of the renamed square... an elegant residential community grew around the square... with churches, the First Presbyterian and Friends Meeting House, then a bank...Philadelphia Savings Fund Society, and a library—the Athenaeum. It was now the end of the 1800s... the north had fought the south—freedom vs. enslavement again... was erected a monument of the Washington Grey—the Pennsylvania militia which mustered at the southeast corner of Washington Square and had distinguished itself during the Civil War. The Daughters of the American Revolution set a monument at the north entrance... the promenades of the Square were reconfigured and paved with flagstone. The Haviland fencing and gates were removed.

Washington Square lost its residential character as it became the crossroads of Philadelphia's publishing community which grew and flourished. The Pennsylvania Bible Society started in 1806; Lea and Feiger in 1785; J.B. Lippincott in 1872; celebrating 200th anniversary; The Farm Journal, 1877; W.B. Saunders, medical books; Curtis publishing with the Saturday Evening Post and the Ladies Home Journal, N.W. Ayer, Penn Mutual, and Rothen and Haas joined together to form the Washington Square Association and planted the cupidal Gingko trees...

G. Edwin Brambaugh, an architect noted for his knowledge of colonial design, added new trees to the surviving one hundred year old trees, the brick wall, Franklin lamps, the fountain, flags of the thirteen colonies and as last, the monument. The state restored the body of an unknown revolutionary soldier from the northeast corner of the Square...

The Pennsylvania flag used belonged to the Philadelphia Light Horse troop that escorted Washington to New York... The statue of George Washington is a bronze casting of the standing statue of him done from life. It was by the famous French sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon. His granite background carries the words of John Pullen, an employee of N.W. Ayer Company. "Freedom is a light, for which men have died in darkness."...Continental Bank contributed the eternal flame. One hundred years after the Civil War, the character of the Square had changed again. Hopkins House and Independence Place have added 1... residences to the Square. N.W. Ayer, Curtis Publishing, and Penn Mutual have merged into the Curtis Center. The fate of the PSFS building which is currently owned by Samuel Rappaport remains to be seen. The Square needs several millions of dollars for repair to bring it up to a standard that the National Park Service can take over its maintenance.

A place that was a burial ground for strangers or others who might not be conveniently laid in any of the several churches because of religious societies for that purpose.