The Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) invites all neighbors to the March 20 General Membership Meeting. We will host a question and answer forum with United States Congressman Dwight Evans, who has served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from Pennsylvania’s 3rd congressional district since 2016.

Congressman Evans grew up in the Germantown and West Oak Lane sections of Philadelphia and is a graduate of the Community College of Philadelphia and La Salle University. After graduation, he became a teacher in the School District of Philadelphia and a community activist for the Urban League. He is currently a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus.

In addition, Hosts for Hospitals Outreach Coordinator Cathy Davis will share information about this local non-profit agency that offers lodging and support at volunteer host homes. Neighbors Dick and Margaret Ullman will speak about their personal experience with the program.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Simply arrive at Pennsylvania Hospital’s Zubrow Auditorium, located on the first floor inside the main entrance at 8th Street near Spruce, before 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be available.
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The views set forth in the opinion articles are the views of the authors and are not necessarily those of SHCA.

Submissions
If you have news that would be of interest to Society Hillers, email Sandra Rothman at sandra.rothman@aol.com. Materials must be submitted in writing and include the name of a contact person. Edited submissions will be considered for publication if space permits. Letters to the Editor must be signed, with contact information.

SHCA Mission Statement
The aims and purposes of SHCA are: to promote the improvement of the Society Hill area of Philadelphia, including its cultural, educational and civic activities, and the preservation and restoration of its historic buildings; to represent the residents of Society Hill in matters affecting the City of Philadelphia generally and Society Hill in particular; and to interpret the value and significance of Society Hill to the public.

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It has been my privilege to be your president for these past three years. A new president will take over as of June 1 after the membership votes at the General Membership Meeting mid-May. As I near the end of my last term, I am reflecting on the priorities I see for this neighborhood.

My biggest concern for Society Hill is that our city government has lost sight of the value and importance of preserving the scale and context of this historic neighborhood.

We are fortunate that the properties in much of Society Hill are subject to the oversight of the Historic Commission for repairs, alterations and any proposal for demolition of all or part of a structure. But where new buildings can be built, the scale (height and mass) is controlled largely by zoning, and, on that point, the City has failed to understand the height and mass appropriate to the original, historic plan for Society Hill.

One of the most important aspects of preserving the history of this neighborhood’s architecture is also preserving the low-rise scale surrounding its 18th- and 19th-century housing stock. Although it should be noted that SHCA has supported new development where appropriate. Prominent examples include our support for the St. James Tower at 8th and Walnut, the new highrise at 500 Walnut Street and the Toll Brothers condo at New Market.

Most of us are aware that part of Ed Bacon’s Redevelopment Plan of the last century added carefully positioned highrises in very specific areas: I.M. Pei’s three iconic towers along Front Street, and Independence Place and the Hopkinson House on Washington Square. The goal was to bring the needed density to attract the young pioneers of the era to live here and also to attract them to the possibility of buying and restoring the badly deteriorated, but still standing, 18th- and 19th-century housing. The plan was wildly successful, thereby transforming Society Hill into the first example, nationally, of an urban renewal plan based on historic preservation. It must also be noted that there were serious drawbacks to the plan, notably the displacement of marginalized people from this part of town.

Fast forward to today, the sweat equity of all the stakeholders of that period is being mined and exploited — with the help of an overly permissive zoning code — by developers eager to cash in on what has now become an extremely attractive and marketable environment. Of course, developers are only doing what market forces dictate, and often what they are legally entitled to do, although some push the envelope even further. What is most troublesome is that today’s city planners do not seem to value or attempt to preserve this beautifully scaled piece of Philadelphia history through the assignment of appropriate zoning.

Is this being driven by the temptation of extra tax dollars, even though, inexplicably, new construction gets the controversial 10-year tax abatement, or the pressures exerted by the development community? Philadelphia has more historically important, but, very sadly, un-inventoried, building stock than any other city in America. More importantly, it has swaths of intact neighborhoods that reflect the unique scale intrinsically bound to the architecture of these historic buildings.

Society Hill is the most notable example of a successful preservation effort of an entire neighborhood, but it should not be the last.

Rosanne Loesch is an attorney and former president of SHCA. She, her husband and two children have lived in a historic house on Spruce Street since 2002 and, before that, lived for 14 years in the Washington Square West neighborhood.

Incentives to Keep Society Hill Safe and Green

SHCA offers all neighbors substantial subsidies to encourage keeping our community beautiful and safe, with added discounts to members.

Plant a Tree SHCA offers property owners 50 percent of the cost of removing and replanting a tree, up to $500 for SHCA members and up to $400 for nonmembers.

Prune or Remove a Tree SHCA will reimburse a property owner up to 50 percent of the cost to hire professional services to prune their street tree, up to $300 for SHCA members and $200 for nonmembers, no more often than every two years.

Fix Your Bricks “Fix the Brix” provides an incentive for homeowners to make sidewalks safe for pedestrians: a subsidy of 40 percent of the total invoice for the leveling of their sidewalks, brick or cement. Current SHCA members receive up to $400; nonmembers receive up to $300. See Page 21 for details.
Experienced and Educated
Since 1958, McFarland Tree, Landscape and Hardscape Services has provided arboricultural service throughout Greater Philadelphia. Our comprehensive experience is augmented with continuing education and researched understanding of the practices of modern arboriculture along with our past experience. Staffed with a Board Certified Master Arborist and Certified Arborists, McFarland stays informed about current conditions and issues affecting your trees, shrubs and ornamentals.

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McFarland Blue trucks, uniformed personnel, attention to detail and thorough clean-up of your property help differentiate McFarland. Our management of your landscape can be total or selective, depending on your needs and budget. If we cannot immediately identify the cause of a landscape problem, we will research the issue until we have solid answers to report to you. As a second-generation business, we have been satisfying our clients with a lifelong-relationship approach to service.

Fix Your Bricks
Brick sidewalks in Society Hill and downtown Philly are being renovated to provide a smooth, safe walking surface for pedestrians. We have experience and have repaired many sidewalks and patios in the city. The upheaval caused by tree roots can often be carefully corrected without removing or killing trees. Call McFarland to inquire about fixing your bricks.

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SAVE THE DATE

41st Society Hill Open House and Garden Tour, Sunday, May 19

Come and support SHCA’s only annual fundraiser, one that attracts repeat visitors from all over the tri-state area.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for $35 each or at the door for $40 each. Student rate is $20 with school ID.

Information and ticket purchase options:
Phone: Matt deJulio 215-629-1288
Email: mattdejulio@aol.com
Website: www.societyhillcivic.org, click on “Open House Tour.” Checks, Visa, and MC accepted.

The Tour is a fundraiser with proceeds directed towards neighborhood improvement projects. It’s a collaborative neighborhood effort! Your help is needed in two ways:

Interesting houses: We show houses of all sizes and styles. If you have suggestions for houses for the tour, please contact co-chair Martha Levine at marthalev6@gmail.com or 215-629-0727.

Volunteers: We need volunteers. Opportunities include house and garden hosting and greeting visitors the day of the tour. All volunteers receive a complimentary tour ticket. Contact co-chair Linda Skale at lcskale@gmail.com or 215-238-1040.

Hope to see you there to support SHCA!

UPDATE ON 1 DOCK STREET TOWER

Residential Tower Proposal

Hearing on the Zoning Permit Appeal

As many Society Hill residents are aware, two slightly different zoning permits for a new 31-story residential tower were issued by the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Licenses and Inspections in August and December of 2018. The tower would be built on the small parcel at the southern end of the Society Hill Sheraton Hotel site that is bordered by Walnut, Dock and Front Streets. SHCA appealed both permits to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) for failure to comply with the Zoning Code in all respects. The Society Hill Towers similarly appealed both permits.

The developer for the tower, LCOR (with projects in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia), abandoned the first permit in January. The appeals of the second permit were heard by the ZBA on February 5. At the end of an almost two-hour hearing, ZBA denied both appeals and upheld the issuance of the permit. While ZBA decisions may be appealed to the Court of Common Pleas, SHCA has not yet decided whether to do so.

Report on the Civic Design Review Meeting

On another front, because of the proposed size of 1 Dock Street, its design is subject to the City’s Civic Design Review (CDR) process, in which the developer first presents to the community. That occurred on January 17, at which the project architects (Philadelphia-based BLT Architects) fielded over an hour’s worth of questions and comments. Prior to the CDR meeting on February 5th, SHCA submitted comments to the CDR panel.

SHCA’s comments can be found at www.societyhillcivic.org. The CDR panel heard various opinions about the design, some strongly in favor — for instance, from the Planning Commission — and others very critical of the design. The CDR panel requested the developer to consider the comments and come back for a second CDR meeting along with a traffic study. However, please note that the CDR process is only advisory, and the developer is not compelled to follow any recommendations of the panel. SHCA will keep the community advised of future developments on this project.

EXERCISE & SOCIALIZE

The Walkie/Talkies meet at Three Bears Park, Delancey Street between 3rd and 4th Streets, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:15 a.m. for a one-hour stroll through our historic community. Anyone is welcome to participate in this non-stressful, one-hour exercise and socialize program.

“Philly Is Walking In The Park!” meets at the fountain in the center of Washington Square, 6th and Locust Streets, at 8 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for a half-hour, self-paced walk through our historic, beautiful park led by neighbor Dr. Lisa Unger. All are invited to join us.
Did you know we had a manufacturing plant right on Washington Square? We might think of the Curtis Publishing Company’s headquarters as an office building, but it was also a giant factory. The company published *The Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal* and other magazines there. Many floors were devoted to the printing process, binding, cutting, warehousing giant rolls of paper and then shipping millions of finished magazines. The interior view card shows a section of one of the pressrooms. It is one in a series of some dozen post cards that show the company’s entire range of operations going on across the street from Washington Square Park. Both cards were published after 1906.

Every aspect of magazine production existed there. Other cards show executive offices, great halls full of clerks in the subscription departments and editorial offices, as well as the shipping department, paper warehouse and board room. It was all under one roof.

Founded in 1891 by publisher Cyrus H. K. Curtis, the company survived into the 1960s, when it sold its headquarters and various magazine titles before slipping away into insolvency and history. *The Saturday Evening Post* was revived in 1976 by another company.

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**Al Cavalari** is a certified member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides. For a day job, he operates the Flag Guys®, a flag business in upstate New York. Send comments to Al at flagguys@aol.com.

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**Nominations for Directors & Officers**

*continued from Page 1*

by 10 SHCA members. Nomination for quadrant director requires the signatures of 10 residents of that quadrant. The committee appreciates information about the nominee. Those being recommended for a position must live within the boundaries of Society Hill, be at least 21 years of age and be a member of SHCA. Visit www.societyhillcivic.org for more information about our civic association, its board and nominating process. Submissions must be received by March 30 in order to be considered. Nominations will be listed in the next issue of the *Reporter*. Send to SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio at mattdejulio@aol.com.

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**In Memory**

Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of Denise Floyd Walker, who passed away on Saturday, January 26. Denise was a constant presence in our community for nearly three decades, as she performed her duties as crossing guard for the students of St. Peter’s School.
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I’m starving!” How often have you found yourself uttering those words? Are you really starving? Probably not, since for most of us it means we’re late for a meal or trying to diet. It’s seldom due to lack of access. Yet for a surprisingly large number of our fellow citizens, it’s a sad reality. Food insecurity affects one in eight Pennsylvanians — a staggering number for the richest country in the world. Philadelphia, as the poorest large city in the nation, has its own hunger needs that are urgent and ongoing.

The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger has been a leader in the battle to end hunger for over two decades. Founded in 1996, they “strive to build a community where all people have the food they need to lead healthy lives.” They do so with a three-pronged approach.

Immediate Relief provides hands-on support for food pantries and soup kitchens. Through a partnership with several area markets, they receive donated food each Wednesday and distribute it to 10 food pantries in the city — 200,000 pounds of food since 2002! These pantries are chosen because of the need in their communities, an agreement to stay open for an additional day and the ability to safely transport the food donation from pick-up site to pantry. This ensures that perishables are distributed quickly, and people have access to healthy options.

Their First Responders Program teams up veteran pantry coordinators with those who need done-on-one mentoring. These efforts have been successful in increasing the sustainability of the small, mostly volunteer-run pantries upon which many neighborhoods depend.

To ensure that people in crisis can connect quickly with pantries and soup kitchens, the Coalition operates the region’s Food Pantry Map on their website. This provides mobile-friendly access to emergency food along with referrals and bilingual hotline support.

Short-Term Relief includes helping nearly 5,000 people apply for benefits annually. Staff participate in over 100 community outreach events each year, connecting individuals and families with needed food and resources; it’s hard to keep perishables if you don’t have electricity or refrigeration. They educate those in need about how to access SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called food stamps). You may not know but despite propaganda to the contrary, most people rely on SNAP for an average of only nine months.

To combat childhood hunger, The Coalition is a lead partner in efforts to increase the number of schools offering breakfast to their students. Access to meals while in school is a priority, but many young people struggle during their summer break. The Coalition’s Summer Meals Campaign works to ensure that kids have access to free meals during those months. Unfortunately, only about half of the eligible children utilize the over 1,000 community sites for free meals when school is out. Similar to SNAP supports, they have a Summer Meals Hotline and Summer Meals Map on their website to offer assistance.

Long-term systemic change is made through the Coalition’s advocacy efforts. They center on educating elected officials about issues related to hunger in their districts and its effect on their constituents. They work to protect state and federal benefits programs that people rely upon to feed their families, ensuring that the benefits are administered effectively. The Coalition understands the tremendous value, limitations and overall need for better utilization of nutrition programs. They are able to perform data analysis of SNAP, school meals and summer meals to identify gaps and trends that prove useful for both the public and policy makers to understand.

Three Things You Can Do to Fight Hunger:
• Donate to a food drive.
• Make a monetary contribution.
• Register to walk for a food pantry, soup kitchen or anti-hunger organization.

Claudia Carabelli serves SHCA as a director at large.
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This enterprise was conceived by William Penn as a joint-venture stock company pivotal to his plans for the colonization of the land granted to his family in 1681 by King Charles II. Though short-lived, the Society contributed in many ways to the chaos, friction and rancor that defined Pennsylvania’s (and by association Philadelphia’s) first decade.

An Experienced Promoter

Penn was an experienced marketer, having been active in the affairs of the Quaker settlement of West New Jersey since 1675. He understood that the success of his “Holy Experiment” hinged on not only recruiting a robust flow of emigrants but, more importantly, securing a steady infusion of capital during the early years of settlement.

Therefore, Penn carefully crafted promotional material presenting Pennsylvania as an important opportunity for enterprising Quakers to build a religious refuge, while concurrently growing their personal wealth by being among the “First Purchasers.” He then set about using his considerable networking abilities to attract the support of wealthy Friends from England, Ireland and Scotland.

Finally, Penn encouraged this group of elite merchants, landowners and personal associates to form the Free Society of Traders in order to direct the economy of his fledgling colony. In return for its investments, he granted stockholders important concessions.

The City of Brotherly Love

One such consideration was the exclusive right to property in Philadelphia, the proposed center of government and commercial activity. The Society’s president Nicholas More, for instance, was granted most of the frontage on Spruce between Front and Second Streets as a bonus for his personal purchase of a 10,000-acre tract near where Temple University stands today. (Westmoreland Street is the remaining vestige of that transaction.) More built his own townhouse at the corner of Spruce and Second Streets. The fact that he spent little time there contributed to the organization’s eventual demise.

Penn also gave the wide swath of land between Spruce and Pine Streets, from Front Street to the Schuylkill River, to the Free Society of Traders. This decision would soon cause serious financial problems for Penn, because he agreed that the company should pay an annual tax of only one shilling, depriving himself of substantial income.

Positions of Power and Profit

Pennsylvania’s proprietor reserved the right to initially appoint all office holders for life. It was an enormous power and Penn put it to good use. He gave important positions almost unvaryingly to men with at least a five-thousand-acre investment in the colony. Most were also stockholders in the Free Society of Traders.

Wealth, however, did not assure competence. Nicholas More, a doctor by training, became the Society’s president because of his substantial investment in the company. It was a poor choice, since he had neither the interest nor the leadership skills needed to be an effective one. And as a reward for a considerable personal outlay in purchasing his 10,000-acre expanse, Penn installed More as chief justice of the provincial court, provincial secretary and clerk of the council, all positions of high influence. These decisions would come to plague Penn when More later abused this power in service to his own private interests.

Grand Designs

The Free Society of Traders had big plans to shape the economy of Pennsylvania. An agricultural labor force of 200 indentured servants was envisioned to work the Society’s land, producing continued on Page 13
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commodities for immediate export. In addition, strong revenues were expected from the manufacture of hemp and linen, as well as from mining enterprises, fisheries and whaling expeditions. Factories in Philadelphia and along the Delaware and Chesapeake Bay were expected to be the supply centers of the new colony and, as such, were projected to be the greatest source of profit.

Problems from the Start

The company quickly lost hope, however, that it might assume a controlling role in the economic development of Pennsylvania. The Free Society of Traders was defeated before it even entered the race.

Apparently, no one had given much thought to the large group of entrepreneurs already in place, already familiar with the complexities of colonial trade and unwilling to give an inch to Penn’s elite group. These local merchants had by now provisioned successive waves of immigrants, selling supplies to hundreds of newcomers and capitalizing on the needs of those who arrived too late in the year to get crops in the ground.

Another immediate concern was access to cash. The necessity of buying provisions from other colonies had drained Pennsylvania of specie and the Free Society was forced to take credit where coin was unavailable. “We are forced to trust most what we sell, and People will not pay in 6 or 9 months,” the treasurer reported. Within a year his letters summarized the falling state of the company: “We have neither credit nor money, and now must sue people at law, or be forced to loose all.”

Compounding their financial difficulties was the refusal of English stockholders to honor their debts once reports of mismanagement trickled back to England. This was a crushing blow because it was apparent that the Free Society of Traders lacked sufficient capitalization to continue until Pennsylvania could develop an export trade.

Politics

Ultimately it was politics that brought the proprietary venture to its knees. William Penn had offended too many older settlers and new merchants by placing his company in a position of special advantage. When it came time to confirm the charter for the Free Society, it was voted down, and the venture remained without legal status as a corporate body.

Unable to collect its debts and inadequately financed, the Society found it impossible even to pay the wages of its employees. This, in turn, led to further embarrassments. A succession of suits brought against the Society from 1684 to 1686 caused its final collapse as a significant component in Pennsylvania's trade. Thereafter, the Society functioned only as a land company, gradually selling its extensive property to extinguish its debts.

Its Enduring Legacy

The Free Society of Traders slowly faded from memory. It accomplished little and left not much in the way of a paper trail. The company might be totally forgotten today except for an interaction that happened between esteemed historic preservationist (and former neighbor) Charles E. Peterson and a taxi driver, in the early days of our neighborhood’s renewal.

When giving the driver instructions, Charlie off-handedly directed him to the “Society’s Hill,” recalling the old nickname. The term stuck, and the rest is history.

Sandra Rothman, a retired educator for the school district of Philadelphia, is the Reporter’s editor in chief.
Like many people, I was introduced to Kenya by the movies Out of Africa and Born Free. I was not disappointed when I finally got there this past October. It was a place of huge skies and vast savannahs, of zebra, giraffe, elephants, lions and rhino.

I had seen countless documentaries on these African animals, but when I came close to them — as close as four feet away from a mother lion and her cubs, I felt a part of nature and the landscape in a way that is hard to describe. Being there makes all the difference.

However it was not the animals which compelled me to take this trip, but the unusual opportunity to meet and travel with the native Masai women of Kenya on a trip arranged by MADRE, a New York-based charitable foundation that was celebrating its 35th anniversary “fighting for feminist futures” in poor areas around the world.

For the past 20 years, MADRE has worked in Kenya alongside the Indigenous Information Network (IIN), its partner on the ground. Climate change has sorely affected this East African nation. Drought has devastated the people who depend on raising animals and farming for a living, while floods have wiped out entire villages. The MADRE and IIN groups were to meet in Nairobi in mid-October.

My friend Emily and I flew to Nairobi several days before the rest of the group. With arrangements made by the incomparable Elevate Destinations based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, we went first to Olerai House in Navaisha to relax and get acclimated. Driving through the Great Rift Valley, we arrived around 9 in the morning and were greeted by the friendly staff who showed us to our small cottage surrounded by flowers and zebra. Some 20 years ago, the owner, Oria Douglas Hamilton, had transformed her 300-acre home into a sanctuary for zebra and giraffe, who run free. While not domesticated, they won’t hurt you either. We quickly got used to walking all over the grounds surrounded by wildlife. We dined outdoors on fish from Lake Naivasha, which we toured by boat one morning. Colorful birds we had never seen before flew from tree to tree while hippos swam in the water.

We were sad to leave “paradise” but excited to meet the MADRE and IIN women at the old British Fairmount Hotel in Nairobi. There were nine of us guests and three MADRE staff women, along with IIN leaders Rosemary, Edna and Lucy. As they were fluent in English, like most Kenyans, we had no trouble communicating. The next day, we began the conference on climate change, discussing new ways of making a living — from beekeeping to raising chickens. In the afternoon, we visited Karen Blixen’s home not far away. We could all imagine Robert Redford sitting on the porch.

The next day, we set off in two Land Rovers for Kilgoris, a six-hour ride away toward the Massai Mara. We spent a few days visiting native villages and homes of the Masai. Native women from all over Kenya joined us. Together, we discussed everything, including female genital mutilation, which the IIN is trying to eradicate. We helped to plant seedlings and walked around Rosemary’s farm, where thin cattle grazed. We ate with the native Kenyan women and partied with them too. One night, they surprised us with a cake on Jenny’s birthday. Jenny, from San Diego, was overwhelmed, as were we all. Masai men in tribal finery danced and sang, and we all joined in. I’m sure none of us, least of all Jenny, will ever forget the night.

We MADRE women were sad to leave our new friends who waved to us as we set out for the famed Masai Mara Game Park. We spent three days in the reserve, where elephants became as familiar as street dogs at home. Large animals walked around our tents at night, while the screech of hyenas disturbed our sleep.

We flew back to Nairobi in a small plane; the normal way of traveling in Kenya is by air as so many of the roads are rough. After a farewell dinner, the group scattered. Emily and I then boarded a small plane to Lewa, also recommended by Elevate Destinations. About an hour’s flight north of Nairobi near the equator, the Lewa Conservancy is a bit smaller than the Masai Mara, but we liked it much better as the roads were quite smooth. We stayed at a marvelous place called Sirikoi Lodge, where all kinds of animals could be seen in the distance. Monkeys and baboons, as well as impala and antelopes were common on the grounds, where a beautiful, well-appointed tent was our home for the next five days. It was by far our most luxurious housing. We went on several game drives and also took

continued on Page 15
short safaris on horseback. We finally saw both black and white rhino, Grevy’s zebras with their distinctive round ears, common zebra and finally, a leopard. Every day we awoke to endless savannah and vast sunny skies.

Leaving Kenya after only two weeks was difficult. Emily and I have been writing to our new friends and are planning a return visit this year to what we now think of as our second home.

Jane Biberman, freelance writer and former editor of Inside Magazine, has contributed to a variety of publications.
Homeowners who are new to our neighborhood are in for a treat. This Welcome Basket is packed with goodies and gift certificates to area businesses, restaurants, theatres, shops, services and museums. This June marks the 20th anniversary of the Welcome Baskets Program. To date, we have presented over 880 baskets to new first-time owners in our neighborhood.

If you or someone you know is a first-time homeowner in Society Hill within the last year, call Program Chair Martha Levine to set up an appointment to receive this gift in your own home. Reach her at marthalev6@gmail.com or 215-629-0727.

Join us in welcoming these new families to our special community!
“This is much more than I expected!”

Will, Matisse and Maximus

Grant and Elizabeth Norris with Benji

Dell and Chris Williams

Stephen Klein

Catherine Glenn and Erin Galbally

Michael and Breanne

Guy and Beverly Hoffman

Thomas Lindbergh

Armando Llanes and Dennis Duffy
Aurora Grace is the latest addition to the South Street Headhouse Business District. Located midblock on South 5th, sandwiched between Lombard and South Street, Aurora Grace is both a bakery and an out-of-this-world chocolatier.

Aurora Wold, the founder of Aurora Grace, has created a magical world of fine chocolates and cakes. The first thing you notice when you step into the café/store is the treasure trove of beautiful, jewel-like bonbons. Just reading the names of Aurora’s confections will cause you to salivate!

The chocolates themselves are works of art; the current best seller is Dulce de Leche & Caramelized White Chocolate. The luminous colors and high-gloss effects are created by painting chocolate molds with colored cocoa paint. Recipes change to reflect the seasons. For the fall/winter season, the store is featuring Caramel Apple Crisp with White Chocolate (these beauties are green with a gold swirl), Pumpkin Caramel with a Gingersnap Crunch and my favorite, the Liquid Salted Caramel (these are recognizable by their copper splatter coloring). The store will soon be launching imaginative new flavors to reflect the advent of spring.

According to owner Aurora, the bakery is sensitive to the increasing demand for allergen-free products. She says, “We have some vegan chocolates and our French macarons are already gluten free. We are also working on making all our chocolates gluten free, trying to develop recipes, for example, that make the ‘crunch’ in our chocolates completely gluten free.”

The bakery’s popular French macarons are available both in standard size and as petit fours. Flavors include pistachio, coffee buttercream, lemon poppy seed and toasted coconut & chocolate ganache.

You may have spotted some of Aurora Grace’s hand-painted chocolate bars in a number of Philadelphia outlets, such as the Reading Terminal Market and Old City’s Art in the Age.

Refining Her Art

Aurora credits her interest in food to her early years living in a zero-carbon footprint, sustainable Eco-Village in Ithaca, New York. She started helping out in the communal kitchen at the age of three and went on to hone her skills by cooking as part of the community. She was then best known for her oatmeal-raisin cookies. She was also first port of call whenever there was a charity bake sale at her high school.

This master chocolatier started in the restaurant business from ground level in high school as dishwasher in a local restaurant. From there, Aurora rose through the ranks as a prep chef in Vermont and chef de garde-manger in a well-regarded Italian restaurant. She then trained as a pastry cook in some of the best kitchens in New York City. Aurora enjoyed her time at a Michelin one-star in Soho, The Musket Room, and then joined the team at Jean Georges, followed by Eleven Madison Park.

The next phase in her career fell into place quickly. She tells us, “My fiancé moved to Philadelphia to start work with Comcast, so we moved from New York to Center City Philadelphia. I’ve spent the last 18 months running my business via an online Etsy store and taking a stand at different farmers’ markets. I then thought, ‘Why not open my own café?’ I knew the timing was right when I saw this store, which had previously been a bakery. I thought South Street was a fantastic location. I’d been looking for the right place for over a year, then walked into this store and was immediately sold on the space.”

Aurora Grace can be found at 517 S. 5th Street. The store is open Wednesday to Sunday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Chocolates and macarons can also be bought online via Etsy. For more information, visit www.auroragracechocolates.com.
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It would be great if the City of Philadelphia helped neighborhoods keep their sidewalks in good condition, but they don’t provide that service. Therefore, it’s up to us to make sure our sidewalks are not “trip worthy” and also look good.

Since 2009, to provide an incentive to homeowners to maintain their sidewalks, SHCA has offered a subsidy program called “Fix the Brix.” We help you to maintain your property which extends to the curb.

Here’s how it works:
SHCA offers a 40 percent subsidy of the cost of repair, up to $400 for current members, and up to $300 for non-members. It pays to be a member!

• Take a before photo of your problem front sidewalk and email to me. See below for contact information.
• Hire a mason or tree-care expert (if it involves the tree or tree pit).
• We have a suggested list of contractors if needed.
• After the work is completed to your satisfaction, make a copy of the invoice (and cancelled check if possible) and mail it to us at: SHCA, PO Box 63503, Phila. PA 19147.
• You will receive a check from SHCA within a few weeks.

Thank you to the over 200 households who have participated in the Fix the Brix program and made Society Hill a safer and more attractive place. For more information, contact me at marthalev6@gmail.com or 215-629-0727.
Recently Sold by Allan Domb Real Estate at Independence Place

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It's March, and here on the East Coast we're in the “dog days” of winter. We're mostly trapped inside, and the days take on an unreal quality, as if we’re watching life and not always participating in it. Sound at all familiar? If so, it may be time to grab a cup of hot cocoa and lean into that feeling by reading Kate Hope Day's new novel, *If, Then*. The characters are stuck in their own kind of dog days, as they struggle with inaction or decision. Ginny questions her marriage. Mark is frustrated by career stagnancy. Leah struggles to find herself in motherhood. Samara mourns her mother's passing. They are all flirting with the kind of magical thinking that makes us wonder “would things be different if…?”

Most of us eventually realize the futility of this kind of thinking, but what makes this novel an interesting one is that the “if, then” hypotheticals for these characters begin to manifest. They catch glances of different versions of themselves, are visited by people who have already passed. One morning Ginny watches as another version of herself plays out nearly her same routine, but there's a feeling of warmth she doesn't recall, a sense of affection. Who is this other Ginny, and what choices did she make that improved the relationship she has with her son?

The characters think they know what is real and what is vision, but they all start to wonder if they're losing their minds. For readers, it becomes less and less clear what reality actually means in this novel. Further, the visions are somehow linked to activity within the local, supposedly dormant, volcano. A volcano which Mark suspects is on the brink of disaster for the residents of their Oregon mountain town. By linking the characters' existential visions with volcanic activity, the novel weaves together ecology and metaphysics. This emphasis on interconnectedness is one of the most thought-provoking aspects of the novel and one that will make amateur philosophers out of the best of us.

This novel excels in the abstract. Readers will sense that something foreboding is coming without quite knowing why or what. They will sense the intentional discrepancies in the plot without quite being able to pinpoint what's going on. It is a good book to get lost in, to make you think outside whatever room you’re stuck in this March. It is not a perfect novel. You could pick apart little pieces of the plot that feel either over or under-examined. You could question the frequent point of view switches. But for readers looking to transport themselves, to suspend their reality for an afternoon and wonder “what if?” — it may be just the thing.

**Richard De Wyngaert** is the proprietor of Society Hill’s only local, independently owned bookstore, Head House Books, located at 619 S. 2nd Street. Events Coordinator Vivienne Woodward wrote this article.

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**ON OUR SHELF**

**BY VIVIENNE WOODWORD**

**Emphasis on Interconnectiveness**

It's March, and here on the East Coast we’re in the “dog days” of winter. We’re mostly trapped inside, and the days take on an unreal quality, as if we’re watching life and not always participating in it. Sound at all familiar? If so, it may be time to grab a cup of hot cocoa and lean into that feeling by reading Kate Hope Day's new novel, *If, Then*. The characters are stuck in their own kind of dog days, as they struggle with inaction or decision. Ginny questions her marriage. Mark is frustrated by career stagnancy. Leah struggles to find herself in motherhood. Samara mourns her mother's passing. They are all flirting with the kind of magical thinking that makes us wonder “would things be different if…?”

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**EARLY MUSIC SERIES**

**Authentic 18th-Century Salon Experience**

For the second consecutive season, PhilaLandmarks invites neighbors to an authentic 18th-century salon experience, complete with period instruments and period music in two historic homes. All events are Pay-What-You-Wish, $25 suggested donation, that includes the concert with educational commentary by the artists and a wine and cheese reception to follow. Reserve your seats at www.philalandmarks.org/events to guarantee a spot. For information, call Kayla Anthony, 215-925-2251x201.

**New Beginnings by the Franklin Quartet**
Thursday, March 14, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Powel House, 244 S. 3rd Street

The Franklin Quartet takes you behind the scenes as five celebrated composers first explore the quartet genre. The works by Mozart, Winkmanson, Haydn, Boccherini and Arriaga make for highly pleasurable listening.

**Dialogue of the Graces by Kleine Kammermusik**
Thursday, April 11, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Hill-Physick House, 321 S. 4th Street

An evening of French Baroque with Geoffrey Burgess and Meg Owens, oboes and recorders; Rebecca Humphrey, viola da gamba and cello; Stephanie Corwin, bassoon, and Leon Schelhase, harpsichord.

**Metamorphoses: Musical Transformations by Night Music**
Thursday, May 9, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Powel House, 244 S. 3rd Street

One of the most common stories told in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century music is that of transformation. In this program, we explore this theme through works spanning the late Baroque and Classical eras, from Corelli and Couperin through Haydn and Hummel.
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The historic Cadwalader House offers the opportunity to create a custom mansion in the heart of Society Hill by restoring this historic property to its original splendor. The home spans five stories and will offer grand entertaining space and large bedroom suites. There is a private garden and space for two parking spots.

Built in 1829 by Joseph Norris, this historic home became known as The Cadwalader house thanks to Judge John Cadwalader who both resided in and had his legal office there. Cadwalader was best known for serving one term in the US House of Representatives and then later becoming a United States District court judge, an appointment made by his good friend President James Buchanan. Over the years the residence has served as the home of the Mutual Assurance Company and offices for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

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Early Spring at the Headhouse Market

As winter wanes and spring approaches, new produce begins to appear at the Headhouse Farmers’ Market. We anticipate a good crop of spring escarole, arugula, kale and peas to be harvested in late March and early April. We will also continue to see apples, which have been stored well to ensure freshness and crispness, as well as potatoes, radishes, carrots, squashes, hardy late winter greens and greenhouse lettuce.

In honor of spring’s arrival, several Headhouse merchants have shared some of their favorite seasonal recipes. The dishes below showcase produce and other items sold in the Sunday market.

**Blooming Glen Farms Spring Tonic Soup**

Serves 4  
**Ingredients:**
- 2-3 tablespoons butter
- 1 large leek, chopped
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 quarts chicken broth, vegetable broth or water
- 1 large colander of nettle tops* (see note)
- 1 large handful of dandelion greens
- 1 cup oat flakes or 1 cup diced potatoes
- 1 splash of heavy cream, if desired
- Salt and pepper to taste

**Instructions:**
Melt butter in a medium-sized soup pot and add leek, carrots and garlic. Sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the broth and bring to a simmer. Add the potatoes or oats, and stir until cooked, about 20 minutes. Add the greens and stir until wilted. Add cream, if using, adjust seasonings and enjoy.

*Raw nettle tops can sting the skin; wear gloves when handling. You can snip them with scissors, rinse well, and drop them into the soup. Once cooked, they are harmless.

**Otolith Seafood**

**Smoked Coho Salmon with Tapenade**

(Serves 4-6 as a first course, or more as part of a cocktail buffet)

Serves 2  
**Ingredients:**
- ½ lb smoked Coho salmon strips cut into ½ inch pieces
- Salt and pepper
- Heat oven to 400 degrees.

**Instructions:**
With a sharp knife, score the fat side of the duck breasts in a crisscross pattern. Season duck generously with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy, oven-proof skillet over medium heat. Place duck breasts, fat side down, in skillet and render the fat. This takes about 6 minutes. (Save fat for another use.) Turn duck breasts over to lean side down, and sear for 1 minute. Flip breasts over again, fat side down, and place pan in oven to roast for 7-9 minutes for medium rare. Let duck rest 5 minutes and slice thinly to serve.

**Three Springs Farm Apple Sauce**

Makes about 6 servings  
**Ingredients:**
- 7 apples
- ½ cup water or apple juice
- ½ cup sugar, if desired
- Sprinkle of cinnamon, if desired
- Rinse, peel and core apples. Cut each apple into 8 pieces.

**Instructions:**
Rinse, peel and core apples. Cut each apple into 8 pieces.
Place in 3-qt saucepan with juice or water and simmer until apples are tender, about 20 minutes. Watch carefully to avoid burning.

Press apples through a food mill or sieve. Add sugar and cinnamon if desired.

Founded in Philadelphia in 1992, The Food Trust is a nationally recognized non-profit dedicated to helping make sure everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy choices. The Trust partners with Philadelphia’s Department of Public Health on the Department’s Get Healthy Philly initiative to create a comprehensive solution to the issue of food access, improving the health of families and communities through nutrition education, improved school food environments and farmers’ markets, such as the weekly Headhouse Square market. To donate to The Food Trust and further the Trust’s work in Philadelphia, or at a national level, visit www.thefoodtrust.org.
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ABR, ALHS, SRES, ASP

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Plumer
Since the 1980s, Bill and Nancy Jantsch have had six dogs. Three, including their current pup, have been Standard Poodles. Three were lovable mutts.

Poodles are best known for their intelligence and ease of training. A lively, active and fun-loving breed, they don’t shed and tend to be good with children. While they may appear “fancy” at first glance, perhaps due to their regular grooming requirements, these dogs are actually impressive athletes. Originally used by the French for duck hunting, they’re quite skilled at water retrieving. If you’ve ever seen a standard poodle in motion, you will notice they have a pronounced bounce to their step.

Seven years ago, the Jantsch’s acquired their Paris — named for the perfume, not the city or the celebrity. She was the largest in a litter of nine, with an apricot-colored father and a white mother who hailed from Doylestown. As the last puppy adopted, at four months of age, she came to her new home completely trained. What could possibly go wrong?

Well... things looked to be ideal until one dark, rainy, cold December night soon after she was adopted. Who knew that would be the date when they almost lost both Paris and Nancy? Heading out from their condo in Independence Place for a walk in Washington Square, Nancy was using a retractable lead with a harness that was just a little too big. Coming from Bucks County, and this being only the dog’s second night in Philadelphia, Paris was still acclimating to the sounds of the city. As they walked down the driveway, something evidently spooked her, and she panicked. With the lead pulled out to its maximum length, she ran around Nancy’s legs, binding her ankles and pulling her over. On the way down, Nancy hit her head on the concrete step and was knocked unconscious. Fortunately, neighbors heard the dog barking, saw her handler prone and not moving, and immediately called 911, while rushing to render aid. The condo concierge quickly called Bill. Help was on the way. Then, as if things weren’t difficult enough, the ambulance pulled up just as Paris wriggled free of her harness and took off running through the park.

At this point Nancy had regained consciousness and was in the capable hands of EMTs. As they rushed her to the trauma bay at Jefferson University Hospital, Bill ran after their dog. He spotted her at the north end of the Square, but she quickly bolted north up 6th Street, past Independence Hall and up to the Constitution Center. Despite running as fast as he could in the cold pelting rain, Bill lost track of Paris in the Constitution Center gardens, gave up the chase and headed to the hospital to see about his wife.

Poor Nancy. That rainy dog walk turned into what would be a three-day hospital stay with a concussion, fractured ribs and shoulder blade, and a collapsed lung. Certainly, more than she’d bargained for.

The next morning, with Nancy on the mend, Bill set out to locate their missing pup. As luck would have it, when he contacted the animal shelter, they had just received a call for a “pick up” from the National Park Service for a dog matching her description. There was Paris sitting in a patrol car at 5th and Market! Wet, cold and terrified, she had spent the entire night in a small sheltered area near the Constitution Center. Luckily, she was unharmed.

Happily, Nancy made a full recovery, and Paris developed into a wonderful companion, loyal and playful. The Jantsch’s were taken aback by some people who wondered why they’d kept the dog after that fateful night. Smart though the breed may be, it’s doubtful that she cunningly planned it as an assault on her new family. They know it was an accident and have forgiven her completely.

National Park Service workers still recognize Paris from her runaway adventure. One even keeps doggie treats on hand for her. If you’re lucky, you may spot her with Bill or Nancy, beautifully coiffed, prancing through Washington Square, not a care in the world.

Claudia Carabelli serves SHCA as a director at large.

Paris is named after the perfume, not the city.
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By early February, 904 Society Hill residents had already renewed their association membership, about 10 percent ahead of the same time last year. Winners of the restaurant certificates for those who had renewed by December 31, 2018 were Mark & Marie Powers and Leslie Herman. Congratulations to these lucky folks.

So far 67 new members have signed up this fiscal year — down 12 percent from 87 last year at this time — and 344 residents have not yet responded to two mailings, slightly up from last year, which saw a record membership total of 1,206. If you have delayed in sending in your renewal, or wish to join, please do so today.

We welcome each of the over 3,600 households in our neighborhood to join SHCA. Your civic association helps protect your real estate investment by funding many of our improvement projects, as well as providing subsidies to neighbors who plant trees and fix their sidewalks. We help enhance your quality of life when we advocate on your behalf regarding zoning changes, real estate taxes, crime problems and traffic issues. All of this is accomplished through the hard work of our dedicated board of directors, committee members, block coordinators and, most importantly, your membership dues.

Without member dues, SHCA would cease to function. Protect your neighborhood and your real estate investment. Sign up today!

Email Mattdejulio@aol.com with questions or comments which will be shared with our board members representing every quadrant in our unique, historic neighborhood.

Matt DeJulio is a retired publishing executive. He has served SHCA as its administrator since 2001.

Monthly Parking

A limited number of monthly parking spaces are still available at the renovated lot at 511 S. Front Street, between South and Lombard Streets. If interested, contact Ed Sullivan with Park America at 610-637-6832.
Richard De Wyngaert  

The Man Who Loves Books

From the time he was a young kid, Richard has had his head buried in books. “I’ve always been a reader, and I’ve always loved books,” he says. “My mother was a profound influence on me because she was a real reader. I always marveled at the deep relationship she could form with fictional characters. I loved to talk to her about books. She cultivated and nurtured my literary sensibilities. Needless to say, she was thrilled when I decided to open an independent bookshop in 2004.”

Before that, Richard was involved, and still is, in less public interests and projects. He spent years in the auction business. “When I left, I knew I wanted to create something: A restaurant? An art gallery? A bookstore!” Like so many others, he lamented the absence of bookstores in our community.

“After much due diligence, I decided that market conditions were favorable. I concluded that the time to open an independent bookstore had never been more favorable. I must have had a faulty crystal ball! The ensuing years spawned an online behemoth committed to swallowing market share. Borders and other chain bookstores went bankrupt. The world economy collapsed and the consequent brick-and-mortar retail scene was forever changed. But we took a deep breath and moved forward.”

Richard understands the business is challenging: the demands many, the margins slim and the costs high. “You must really love books, and the community has to appreciate their value,” he notes. “Head House Books has a wonderful, loyal clientele. I consider it a vital participant in the cultural fabric of our community. What is painfully clear is that without a community wholly committed to supporting its local bookstore, it cannot survive.

To promote Head Houses Books’ relationship with SHCA, Richard created an online coupon code that provides the reader who finishes this article a one-time 35 percent discount on an order from his website www.HeadHouseBooks.com for in-store pickup or local free delivery. “Orders must be received by April 10th and they will be quizzed rigorously about this article,” he jokes.

What Richard reads depends on his mood and his emotional state. “I usually have fiction and non-fiction stacked next to my bed and piled on my desk,” he relates. “I like social and behavioral economics, history and biographies. Fiction is obviously so much more visceral: it’s my real love.” Some of his early favorites were Steppenwolf by Hermann Hesse and Dostoyevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov. Richard is currently reading The Travelers by Regina Porter; Robert Rauschenberg, an oral history; and The Odyssey, translated by Emily Wilson.

Fortunately, his family shares Richard’s passion. “I have a great family,” he declares happily. “I am so very lucky and fortunate. I have five brothers, one of whom is my twin. We are very close and very different. Perhaps that’s why I am comfortable with multiple perspectives. My wife, Susan, and I have raised our three daughters here in Society Hill. They all went to St. Peter’s School and are very much a part of the neighborhood. Most importantly, they are all readers and know how to work a cash register and recommend a good read.”

He believes children need to read and imagine. “And it is well accepted that reading as a child develops our capacity for empathy. Kobe Bryant, the Philadelphia basketball legend, recently talked about the fundamental importance of reading while explaining why he’s launched a publishing company: books represent an opportunity for kids to begin and end a finite process — to succeed while delaying gratification. Reading builds the capacity for commitment. Finishing a book, for many kids, is like scaling a mountain, and this sense of accomplishment positions kids for success.”

One of Richard’s favorite things is hearing children storm enthusiastically through the front door of his shop and race to the back, plop into a chair and start reading. Often, they ask to stay when their parents are ready to leave. “It all starts when parents encourage their kids to read at home.” He has recently launched a Book of the Month subscription, HHB to You, ensuring a new book every month for the hungry or reluctant reader, and quite a number of families have already subscribed. “Obviously, reading to your child provides bonding opportunities and contributes to language skills. Studies also show that reading feeds children’s brain development, enhances concentration and contributes to their overall health. It can reduce stress and ease anxiety.”

Richard is not exclusively a bookworm. “I enjoy creating art, particularly painting. I love playing with, or just walking, my dog. I eagerly await baseball season. “I follow college basketball. I’ve always enjoyed skiing and hanging out in the ocean, riding my bike, spending time with my family. And perhaps above all else, I cherish my afternoon nap — in summer on a rope hammock with a book in my lap.” About Society Hill, he is an enthusiast. A former president of SHCA, he says: “I love the history, the architecture, the small streets. I love the palpable community, my friends, the intimacy that exists here within the larger city. Almost anything I need is a short walk away — particularly a great book!”

Jane Biberman, freelance writer and former editor of Inside Magazine, has contributed to a variety of publications.
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