



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

## THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

313 Pine Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

December, 1976

### GET OUT YOUR CALENDARS

First the bad news. There will be no regular membership meeting in December. (You say that isn't bad news? What are you, unpatriotic or something?) And now the good news. The next membership meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 19 at Old Pine at 8:00 p.m.

### HOLLY: GO HEAVILY

If you're decking your halls for Christmas, the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society would like to know about it. They're giving out ribbons to the best three Christmas-accented house facades, doorways, windows and other (i.e. lampposts, gardens). To get your holiday handiwork in the judging, hie thee to the PHS headquarters at 325 Walnut (WA 2-4801) by December 13th and fill out a free entry form. Yule be glad you did. And so will the rest of the world as they admire your Christmas cheer-up. There'll be an open house at PHS to salute the winners (and down some punch) on Thursday, December 16th starting at 5:30. Bring your own mistletoe.

### HALLELUJAH, A CONCERT

Acclaimed by critics as the best in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Pro Musica's epochal Handel's MESSIAH will be performed this year on Sunday December 12th, 2:30 p.m. at Old Pine Street Church. As in the past, musical director Franklin B. Zimmerman will conduct this authentic revival of the 1759 version, modelled after the last performance supervised by Handel. As always, the exacting baton of Dr. Zimmerman will charm his audience and transport his spellbound listeners into the harmonies of antiquity. Admission is \$4.75: half-price for students and senior citizens with I.D. In view of the enormous drawing-power of this timely performance and the limited number of tickets still available, enthusiasts are urged to arrive as early as possible.

### COME ALL YE FAITHFUL (Even if you sound like a frog)

It's carolling time again. Bundle up, bring the kids. Gather at Old St. Peter's and Old St. Joseph's at 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 19th for a musical stroll through the neighborhood and an hour of serenading. Afterward, from 7 to 8, the two churches will reward and warm up songsters with hot chocolate and cookies. If you need more information phone Bill Pindar 925-8051. See you there.

### HIGHWAY ROBBERS?

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom; it was the age of foolishness. It was the year 1951. It was

a time when express trucks still rumbled under the Chinese Wall and when the city planners planned two highways - the Schuylkill and the Delaware Expressways. Then the Feds decided to help build an interstate highway network and the Delaware River Expressway became a part of Interstate 95. Dubbed by planners as the "Main Street of the East Coast", I-95 would run from Maine to Florida for 1,866 miles without a traffic light. The Penna. portion was termed a major conduit of the Boston-Washington megalopolis and building it became the keystone of the Eisenhower administration.

Construction began in the mid-'50s. But by the mid'60s, environmentalists were pressuring the city to curtail traffic congestion, noise problems and catering to the automobile at the expense of neighborhoods of incalculable historic significance (portions of Queen Village and Pennsport date back to the late 1600s). Community organizations rallied to defeat the Crosstown Expressway proposed for the South St.-Bainbridge St. corridor and prevent I-95 damage to the Tinicum Wildlife preserve.

In 1965 Senator Joseph Clark went to Washington with a proposal for depressing I-95 as it ran past Philadelphia's (and the nation's) most historic mile. And covering it with a landscaped park. Vice President Hubert Humphrey and a Presidential Task Force put that proposal into a federal order. In the late '60s it was realized that a cover wasn't the only priority. Access ramps to I-95 could turn all of the Eastern portion of Queen Village, Society Hill and Pennsport into an automobile-choked nightmare. To prevent this the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition (NPC) was formed. NPC took the highway bureaucrats into federal court and got a consent order to complete the cover and eliminate the ramps.

Today, almost six years later, the state has not completed covering 760 feet of the 1,760-foot cover and city officials say there is no money available for landscaping the cover. At a Nov. 30 NPC meeting, a letter was sent to State Secretary of Transportation Sherlock informing him that NPC intends to go back to federal court to get the consent decree enforced if the state tries to back away from its commitment.

#### GET THEE TO THE (MARINER) CHURCH ON TIME

Last month the newsletter reported on the plans of Chart House Inc. to erect a huge, 300-seat restaurant in the Mariner Church property at Front and Delancey. There is no on-site parking and there are already 40 restaurants within half-mile radius of the site (two more, if you add in the Moshulu and Jamestown Ferry which opened on Penn's Landing last month)

The Chart House plan was opposed by the immediate neighbors and the SHCA in October. The Redevelopment Authority Advisory Board was supposed to rule on the new plan but has not yet done so. Its next meeting is scheduled for December 15th. We will try to notify you in advance so that you may attend that hearing. In the meantime the neighbors have been trying to come up with suggestions for alternate uses. One helpful development was that architects from the Coyne Chemical Co. volunteered to make a feasibility study for alternate proposals for the site. They came up with several possibilities, some residential, some residential combined with non-intensive commercial use. No new developer, though, is currently in sight. Note: If any

prospective developer is reading this, he can get a look at the Coyne feasibility study by calling David Stevens at WA 3-1349.

Incidental Intelligence: The SHCA has received the following letter on the subject from the mayor. It was dated November 1. We hope it will be helpful. But your participation at RDA hearings is also vital.



C I T Y   O F   P H I L A D E L P H I A

FRANK L. RIZZO  
MAYOR

November 1, 1976

Dear Mr. Robb:

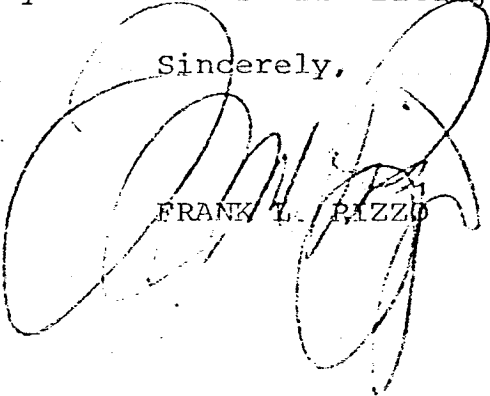
Thank you for voicing the concern of the Society Hill Civic Association regarding the disposition of the Mariner Church site.

This Administration has not, and will not, condone development of an area unless it has the full support of the residents.

It has been our firm policy to consider the views of those who will be most closely affected. You have my assurance that this case will be considered in the same manner and I have so notified the officials of the Redevelopment Authority.

I appreciate your interest in writing to me.

Sincerely,



FRANK L. RIZZO

FLR:zmd

CRAFTS, SCHMAFTS (Continued)

Last month the newsletter noted that a lot of members of the Southeast quadrant objected to the litter, noise, and traffic congestion caused by the weekend Crafts Fair at Head House impacting with the litter

noise and traffic caused by NewMarket. It was suggested that an alternative site for the Fair, perhaps at Independence Mall or Penn's Landing be used.

The following letter was received from craftsperson Margery Niblock. In order to reproduce it in its entirety, we have had to photostat it down. Read it, though. It's another point of view. The SHCA will be making a telephone poll of residents to sound out their feelings about next spring and summer.

I feel relieved that the negative article on the Head House Crafts Fair in November's Newsletter didn't blame us for higher taxes, unemployment, and the closing of the Bellevue Stratford.

In regard to moving the fair to another location, we have no desire to move. The Crafts Fair has been located at Head House for eight summers. Historically, Head House was an open air market and it is a very exciting space to work with. I feel it is very unrealistic to think that such a space would or should remain vacant during the summer months.

The purposes of the Head House Craftsmen Association, as stated in our by-laws are as follows:

1. To exhibit high quality handmade items.
2. To provide educational information to the public.
3. To provide free craft workshops for children.
4. To provide an environment for selected musicians to entertain the public free of charge.
5. To provide free craft demonstrations to the public.
6. To stimulate the interest of Philadelphia public school children in crafts and arts through the provision of funds, i.e. awards.
7. To create an interesting outdoor crafts environment for Delaware Valley residents to attend during summer weekends.

We fulfill these purposes, and have maintained a reputation for having extremely high quality craft shows, named by some as the best on the East Coast. Aside from being covered by the local media each year, even The New York Times devoted an article to the unique aspects of the Crafts Fair.

This fall we presented a check for \$1,000 to the Philadelphia School District's Art Department, which was used as cash awards to prizewinners in their school art show held at Gimbel's. We also donated several hundred dollars worth of our Head House T-shirts to the children. We are also initiating a program in cooperation with the Police Athletic League (which we will absorb the costs of) which will have craftsmen working with children in various PAL centers throughout the city. We plan to begin the program this winter.

Due to the Bicentennial and our arrangements with Phila. 76 the fair was expanded to 44 days instead of our normal 24 days. It was

too much for everyone, including us. If you recall, Phila. 76 wanted to have a fair running 7 days a week, which we opposed.

We had a long trash strike last summer. There was also more food being sold within the Head House area than just our food booths in the fair. As a matter of fact, in the spring of 1975, we were about to eliminate the sale of food in the fair. At the May 14, SHCA meeting, a vote was taken to support the Crafts Fair at Head House in 1976, provided that we have food vendors at the fair. Now you are using food as a major argument for wanting us to leave.

Numerous parking spaces were removed on Second St. last summer due to the mobile toilets and the information "bumble". The parking lot at 2nd and Lombard was closed since construction was about to begin on the garage. None of this was our doing and it did create parking problems above and beyond the normal aggravations of owning a car in a downtown area. Second St. is now back to normal and the garage should be completed well before next summer.

Any problems which you may have with NewMarket or the Tavern should not be blamed on us. Don't try to make us the scapegoat for all of the ills in the neighborhood because you feel that we will give you the least amount of resistance.

When you discuss the elimination of the fair in such a light handed manner, you are talking about removing a large portion of many people's livelihood. Craftsmen have little enough opportunity to pursue earning a living through their talents as it is. Many of the craftsmen who participate in the fair are people who live within walking distance of Head House. Two of our members reside in Society Hill itself, while many of the others make their homes in Queen Village. You cry about your unfinished highway cover, but would you shed a tear while trying to destroy something which so many people have invested eight years to build up?

We would welcome the formation of a joint committee composed of residents and craftsmen to discuss and work on problems related to the fair. If that doesn't seem like an equitable solution, then put on your boxing gloves, because you have a fight on hand!

*Margery Niblock*

## CHILD'S PLAY

If you're interested in finding an alternative location for the Bicentennial-supplied playground stuff now sitting in Washington Square, a committee is being formed presently consisting of Mrs. Peter Haines, Jack Albert and Bart Lippincott. Contact chairperson Mary Jane McEntee at WA 5-4773; office: 854-5213.

## THE LAST BIG CHUNK OF LAND LEFT....

The giant weed arboretum on the southwest corner of Third and Spruce has had its last proposed developer default and is up for grabs again. The latest rumor about it's use was that Grace Kelly was going to buy it. Actually the RDA has offered to work out development plans with the community through the SHCA. There will be a working lunch to discuss it (bring your own brown bag) at the office of RDA architect, Russ Milner, 1234 Market at 12:15 on Thursday, Dec. 9th. Plans are now being considered for single-family homes and duplexes. For details call Dick Ostrander, WA 2-6179.

## A NEW LEAF FOR NEWMARKET?

The SCHA NewMarket Committee chaired by Chris Day met with merchants on the west side of Second St. and NewMarket manager Larry Byrne to discuss

trash pick-up and general cleanliness. The rap was put on the Bicentennial and the Crafts Fair people. And indeed, this winter, the problem seems to have abated.

J. EDGAR HOOVER, WHEREVER YOU ARE, HEAR THIS

The SHCA is now developing its own "10 MOST WANTED" list. It will contain the addresses of public projects which need the attention of the Redevelopment Authorities, that have had developers default or need repair or what have you. As soon as a problem has been corrected it will be removed from the list and replaced with another. It's a pretty Sisyphean burden we are placing on the RDA, but we are assured co-operation. Ms. Donna Smith is the RDA's new project manager for this area and she seems a most competent and agreeable lady.

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

A new liquor store is opening at 8th and Market. The area's state representative, Sam Rappaport, spoke to the Liquor Control Board and initiated the removal of bulk sales of liquor to bars and restaurants from the Fifth and Pine State Store to the new location. It means less trucks loading in the neighborhood. Good news. Good boy.

HELP

We wish we could say there were dozens of volunteers, but not a single one of you phoned in to work on this issue. We need you for our next one. If you'd like a cram course in yellow journalism and are willing to give up one evening a month to work on the newsletter, call Jan Stephano at WA 3-4921 or Alan Halpern at WA 5-3431.

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DARTS AND LAURELS

Laurel-- To Bob and Ann Burnham who have taken over the Society Hill Club (in back of Cobblestones), put in a nifty tennis court, kept the swimming pool toasty, and warmed up the clubhouse with their cheerful, competent presence. Having a country club in the middle of a city is a rare treat. If you're not a member, or have dropped out because of problems with the old regime, go over and take a gander.

Dart-- To Central Penn for keeping all the green inside their branch at Second and Pine. How about a few trees on the sidewalk, gentlemen, and some shrubbery to brighten up your barren parking lot?

Laurel-- To two new nautical but nice restaurants just opened on Penn's Landing. The Moshulu literally on the Delaware at Walnut, and the Jamestown Ferry at Market Street.

Dart-- To the fireplug on the corner of 2nd and Pine in front of Head House Tavern. It used to be a favorite watering spot for area canines, but it's been taken over by a lot of hot dogs who use it as home base for sidewalk drinking, pot smoking, motorcycle parking and flirting. Maybe we can get Captain Fireplug to come down with his wrench and recapture the plug for the neighborhood.

Laurel--And a pair of red flannels to the heroic crew at the A&P who stayed at their stations when the heat went off on December 3rd and risked pneumonia to keep the neighborhood well-vic-tualled. Another laurel to the A&P for adding more refrigerated shelf space. If this keeps up we'll begin to believe that Price and Pride aren't a couple of ringers.

Dart-- To the Ben Franklin Carriage Company for trying to expand service in this area. Don't they know this is a one-horse neighborhood? If they want to do everyone but the sparrows a favor, they ought to expand their shovelling service. Delancey Street has been smelling like the set of Equus.

Laurel--To the Living History Museum. The IMAX film is sensational and a lot of the smaller exhibits much more diverting than you might expect. It's well worth a visit.

Dart-- To us for inappropriately and inaccurately including an article about Joe Ottaviano in last month's issue. Our apologies.

Laurel--A little belated but still fresh, to Liz Ostrander who labored mightily to make the Athenaeum SHCA get-together the treat it was.

Laurel: To Penn Mutual for housing the SHCA membership telethon. We're close to the 1,000 mark. If you're not now a member and would like to be, call Ruth Dugan at WA 2-3195. Say Rhadamanthus sent you.

--Rhadamanthus

(If you have a suggestion for next month's column, mail it to the Resident Newsletter, 313 Pine St., Phila., PA 19106).

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

To those who have inquired about specific items in this newsletter, our current policy is to help bind the community together with style and grace, to report on issues and not personalities.

Ted Robb, President, SHCA