

# SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

An independent newsletter published by the Society Hill Civic Association  
in cooperation with the East Philadelphia Sun

Vol. 2, No. 6 • Issued June 10, 1992

## NOTES from SHCA President

Let's start by taking time to say some heartfelt THANK YOU's. First, thanks to all the volunteers who made working in our kiosk at the Seven Arts Festival a lot of fun... profitable fun, too, as we added over \$300 to our coffers.

Special thanks to our retiring Vice-President, Steve Skale, and to the Board members who have completed their terms. Here's the new lineup. Maggie Schultz is the new Vice-President. The NE director is Judy Friedman, replacing George Scarpulla. The NW director is Howard Lander in Joel Chernock's chair. Miffy Bright Coonley will

serve the SE quadrant. Mel Buckman takes over from Sally Smith in the SW. Beverly Sherman will replace Maggie Schultz for the Society Hill Towers. Thanks to all who have served the SHCA. Nor can I forget to thank Zeke's on 5th Street that supplied the nifty cookies for the last meeting.

As president, I feel my job is not to advocate causes, but help forge the consensus about what we want our community to be. Several important issues are coming up and we need to know how you feel. At the next board meeting on June 17, we will review the committee assignments. But most importantly, Councilman Joe Vignola will review the ordinances he introduced on May 21st about vehicular traffic on and around the South Street corridor. Cruising and noise regulations are among the topics; and I

cannot think of anything that would affect the happiness and well being of those surrounding that area more than noise and traffic. Come, be part of the process, make yourself heard. It is far easier to get your voice heard in the planning process than to try and change a fait accompli. The Councilman has also introduced the enabling legislation for the creation of the South Street HeadHouse District which could have such positive implications for the corridor.

The Art Commission still has not approved the designs for the Korean War Memorial. Do they know how you feel?

Look for more details in July on a neighborhood spruce-up program called Project Pride.

Final note, our administrator, Fluffy Palmer, deserves special congratulations when you see her. Fluffy will be honored as Volunteer of the Month by the Bellevue!



## COMING TO NEWMARKET American Historical Theater

How would you like to meet George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abigail Adams, or Betsy Ross? Well you can, because a wonderful theatrical company that brings to life our nation's heroes and heroines is coming to NewMarket for the summer, beginning at the end of this month and extending to September 27. The American Historical Theater, formerly known as the Royal Pickwickians, is the country's foremost interpreters of our founding fathers and mothers, and they'll be performing nearby at the renovated Glass Pavilion at NewMarket, just across the street from Head House on South Second Street.

This accomplished repertory company, which prides itself on thorough research for all the people and events it recreates, hopes to lure both residents and visitors to these very delightful participatory programs. Each performance, which lasts approximately one hour, portrays three historical characters from a rotating cast of many—exploring the social, political and personal lives of the characters and their times. The characters relate events and

thoughts from their lives while interacting with the audience and each other. For example, the audience is invited to attend a "news conference, 1789," where audience participants are encouraged to ask any questions that come to mind.

Thematically, the programs are divided between two major areas: Program One explores the issues and ideas related to the Revolution and Constitution, and includes such luminaries as Patrick Henry, John Adams, Hyam Salomon, and even the proprietor of City Tavern, Mr. Smith. Program Two focuses on Philadelphia as the birthplace of the nation. This provides a look at the city from colonial times (mid-1600s) through the Constitutional Convention (1787). Some of "our neighbors" whom we meet in this program are Billy Penn, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and Charles Wilson Peale.

The techniques employed in these historic programs have been developed into a fine art by Pamela Sommerfield, the company's producing director. During the past ten years, the company has appeared at theaters and events around the world. Highlights of recent performances include: "The White House Years," a history

about the building of the Presidential mansion, written for the White House Curator and performed in January at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

"The Time Travellers," is a performance that consists of a group of twelve historical interpreters portraying characters from across time, including George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Alice Roosevelt and others. The Time Travellers has been presented each summer in Washington, DC for the past five years, and last year it was performed at the

White House before an audience of 5,000 staff members and their families. International projects have included "Franklin & Jefferson in Paris" and "The Trial of George Washington" a mock trial presented in London and filmed for a 90-minute BBC special in 1990. Another BBC special is being planned for this summer.

The actor/interpreters have been playing their characters for many years, enabling them to respond to questions with wit and accuracy and always in character.

Bill Barker, who portrayed Thomas Jefferson at numerous Philadelphia events, and most recently at the opening ceremonies of the 7 Arts Festival, says that he has been put to the test as an interpreter when he was cross-examined at the impromptu "Trial of George Washington," by the lawyer who defended Stephen Biko in South Africa.

Michael Alan Buckley, manager of the American Historical Theater has a long-term goal for the company that will involve assembling all the programs together end-to-end so as to form an interactive epic that chronicles a great stretch of United States history on the scale of Wagner's Ring Cycle. No lack of ambition, here!

Meanwhile, the company's more immediate plans include finding a permanent home in the historic district of Philadelphia—ASAP! The search is on, and coincides nicely (we believe) with why it would be ideal for the Drama Guild to decide to locate at NewMarket. (The smaller of the two theaters, as described in the May issue of the Sun would accommodate this company beautifully.)

Artistic Director William Sommerfield believes that these historical performances help

Continued on SHCA page 3



William Sommerfield  
as Geo. Washington

## SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

Society Hill Civic Association  
P.O. Box 3  
Philadelphia, PA 19105  
(215) 629-1288

### STAFF FOR THIS ISSUE

Editor, Mary E. Sturdivant

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Nancy Hallman

Bernice Hamel

Nelle Kcilpet

Dick Ostrander

Maddy Stewart

### PHOTOGRAPHER:

Marian Darlington

Deadline for July issue: July 1

### SUN MAILING ADDRESS:

East Philadelphia Sun

518 S. 5th St., #60,

Philadelphia, PA 19147

(215) 625-2846

Bruce Anthony, Publisher

Format and concept © 1992 Sun Community

Papers, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**SHCA Calendar**  
(clip & save)

Friday, June 12, 8 AM  
Saturday, June 20, 10 AM  
**Project Street Trees**  
Identical organizational meetings—call 627-8393 for details

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

Friday, June 19, 5-8 PM  
**Grand Opening of the New Improved Starr Garden**  
BYOP (Picnic)  
Refreshments, Bake Sale, Toy Sale, Entertainment  
Welcome to Gail Hauptfuhrer, new president. Rain Date:

Saturday, June 20, 1-3 PM  
Thursday, June 18, 7:30 PM  
**Head House Conservancy Town Meeting**  
Issue: The use of the Head House for a Police Mini-Station for the South Street Detail  
Glass Pavilion at NewMarket  
Tuesday, June 23, 7:30 PM  
**Elections—Friends of Starr Garden**  
Starr Garden Building  
600 Lombard Street  
Monday, July 6, 8-9 PM  
**Town Watch**  
Planning meeting for National Night Out  
Old Pine Community Center  
June 17, 7:30 PM  
**Summer Concert**  
Louis Kahn Park  
11th & Pine

**THREE BEARS PARK**  
**New Playground Equipment Installed**

Perhaps it is due to another baby boom, but more and more young people seem to be living in our neighborhood. To the children of our community, Three Bears Park on Delancey Street between 3rd and 4th Streets has always been a very special place, nestled among the trees and historic homes. We are delighted that despite the City's well known budget problems, the Friends of Three Bears Park has been able to address the safety and recreational needs of our children. As the happy young voices at the Park will attest, the soon-to-be-completed improvements to the Park are much appreciated.

Amid the clamor of children's voices, workers contracted by the City's Department of Recreation are entering the final phase of long-awaited improvements. New playground equipment has been installed, along with seven new Franklin Lamps. A new resilient surface will be installed under the playground equipment, and much needed repairs will be made to loose bricks and broken benches.

The latest improvements are the culmination of a concerted three-year effort by a dedicated group of Society Hill neighbors. In the fall of 1989, a group of frequent users of the Park began to study its needs. A professional playground consultant was called in, who verified their concerns about the safety of the playground equipment, which

was twenty-five years old. A black tar-like substance was oozing out from the padding under the equipment; swings were placed too close together for current safety standards; some of the metal legs were loose; the design of the slide posed entrapment risks; and the monkey bars were not appropriate for the



Jim Kenney, Jimmy Tayoun, David Pingree and Ann Spector lent their support to get the City to approve the appropriation to the Park. Once approved, the City's Department of Recreation moved quickly to design the improvements.

The equipment now being installed represents the latest in playground technology. Numerous safety features are built-in, i.e. bright orange alerts for all handrails and steps. The colors of forest green and sand were selected to harmonize with the Park setting. The equipment is durable and virtually maintenance free. Best of all, the equipment can easily accommodate many more children and the youngest of toddlers can master the steps to play areas.

The Park has had two other improvements. The fountain, which was being abused by vagrants, was turned into a beautiful planted area. The twenty-six locust trees were pruned of their deadwood. The \$6,212 cost for these im-

provements was paid by the Friends from money raised in two Fall Festivals and tee shirt and juice box sales. The Friends, currently led by Kate Wilcox, Maddie Stewart, Sue Sherman, Karen Nakahara and Tom Williams, will continue these efforts.

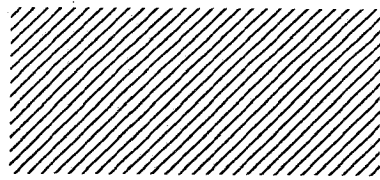
The children have expressed enthusiastic interest in the progress of the work. Four-year old future builders and architects peppered the workers with questions on a daily basis. A local preschool took a field trip to examine the work in process. Hats off to the men who answered the young neighbors questions so patiently.

preschool children for whom the park is intended. Because of these safety issues, it was decided that the existing equipment and padding would have to be replaced. The estimated cost of the needed work was more than \$50,000.

In March of 1990, the Friends of Three Bears Park was formally organized under the able leadership of Stephanie Badulak, Betsy Fiebach, Jo and Jim Butler, Carroll Roberts and Jan Felman. Realizing the difficulty of raising such a sum of money privately, the Friends decided to focus on persuading the City to replace the equipment and raise funds themselves for less costly improvements. Vince Fumo,

**WELCOME TO NEW SHCA MEMBERS**

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:  
Joen and Gustav Seliger



**THE SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

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

**WE WANT YOU TO JOIN US THIS YEAR!**

Your membership and your voice will make a difference in our neighborhood.

Tear off and mail to:

Society Hill Civic Association  
P.O. Box 3, Philadelphia, PA 19105

Attention: Treasurer

- New Member
- Household \$25
- Membership Renewal
- Business/Corporate \$50
- Corporate Sponsor \$100

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (eve) \_\_\_\_\_

I(We) would be interested in working with the following committees:

- Membership
- Liquor Control
- Neighborhood Maintenance
- Town Watch
- Recycling
- Reporter/Sun newspaper
- Zoning
- Legislative
- Preservation
- Other (please specify)

YOUR HOME IS YOUR PRIMARY INVESTMENT. PROTECT IT!

**OLD PINE COMMUNITY CENTER**

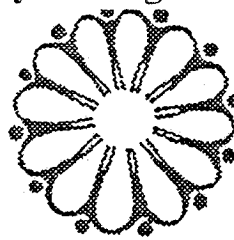
ANNOUNCES:

**SUMMERCITY DAY CAMP & PLAY CAMP**

July 6 - August 28

**BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAMS**

**ENROLL NOW**



**ART • CLUBS • SNACKS  
SWIMMING • DAY TRIPS  
ATHLETICS • CRAFTS  
GYMNASTICS  
MUCH MUCH MORE!**

**OLD PINE COMMUNITY CENTER**

401 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147 • (215) 627-2493

## TREE PROJECT Keep Penn's Promise

William Penn planned Philadelphia to be a "green country." Today, some of our streets are lined with stumps, empty spots, and endangered trees instead of flourishing arbors that help the environment. While the sidewalks and the trees on them are the responsibility of the property owners, the removal of dead or diseased trees and replanting can be a very expensive undertaking.

That is why James Donaghy and Walt Stankus of the Fairmount Park Commission and longtime Philadelphia gardener and SHCA member Jean Bodine have joined forces in a public/private initiative for a project to replant the street trees. They need your help. Two identical organizational meetings for volunteers are scheduled to accommodate you on the following dates: Friday, June 12 at 8:00 AM or Saturday, June 20 at 10:00 AM. Call Jean Bodine at 627-8393 for the location and to confirm your attendance.

The program needs volunteers to enter the neighborhood block by block for a tree census. Then we need to determine the mix of trees appropriate for replacements and the costs for removal and replanting.

Another important area is working with neighbors and store owners to get their co-operation, consent, and support. Finally, we will need help in applying for grants, fund raising, and collecting money. By doing it as a comprehensive project, we gain cost advantages in the removal, purchasing, and replanting of new trees.

Come out now. Don't plan to sit back and enjoy the shade of other people's efforts.

### TREE WORK

HAROLD M. ROSNER  
CARING FOR CITY TREES

- PRUNING
- PLANTING
- REMOVALS
- CABLING
- FERTILIZING
- 19 Years Experience
- 483-1377

*Continued from SHCA page 1*  
us remember our past—so important to a free and diverse society—through the eyes and mouths of those that experienced it. "Our purpose is to strip away the marble images revealing the real men and women, creating a bond with our modern day audiences," says Sommerfield.

The programs this summer at

NewMarket promise to be exciting, fun, and informative for young and old alike.

Performance times are as follows: Every day, from Tuesday through Sunday at 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 2 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. Admission: \$8 adults; \$7 seniors/students; \$6 children. Group sales available. Call Michael Buckley at 232-2690.

## ZONING MATTERS

### City Ordinance #167 Re: Downey's

This bill was introduced in City Council by Councilman Joseph Vignola on behalf of Jack Downey's restaurant which requests permission to build a second story above the existing sidewalk cafe on South Street near the corner of Front Street. This would utilize the roof of the enclosed sidewalk cafe.

SHCA testified in opposition of the bill at the hearing, voted upon it at the May 20 General Meeting, for the following reasons: (1) The addition would exacerbate the already overbuilt and congested condition of the sidewalk. Inside the restaurant the addition would not even comply with L & I rules for entering and exiting. (2) The bill, as it is written, is not specific regarding general rules for sidewalk ordinances and would allow the property owner too much leeway in managing the cafe.

This bill was heard before the Rules Committee of Council on May 28 and a decision is still pending.

### 507 Pine Street Variance

An application to create a fourth apartment in the basement of a three-apartment building, originally a one-family dwelling, was withdrawn due to unfavorable response from the community. Lawyers representing the property owner asked that the application be withdrawn "without prejudice," based on opposition by SHCA.

### Letter to Mayor re: Delaware Avenue Traffic

A letter will be sent to Mayor Rendell about June 12th regarding the need for a comprehensive plan for the waterfront area, particularly as it regards to traffic and parking problems. This letter will be signed by a coalition of area civic associations and also by the proposed South Street/Head House Special Services District and the Waterfront Development Council. The letter will be sent to all appropriate city and state agencies asking that both a long-range and short-term plan be developed because traffic conditions are becoming hazardous in the Penn's Landing area of Delaware Avenue.

Robert M. Solomon D.M.D.  
General Dentistry  
519 South Fifth Street  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19147  
215-625-0888

by appointment

## 25 ARTISTS AT NEWMARKET Trash Inspires Art

Virginia Baltzell started giving her friends gifts of very attractive marbled trash cans. Maybe because of her real estate background, this evolved to getting artists gallery space in a warehouse in West Philadelphia, then to another project in a barn; and now she has twenty-five artists displaying their creations in the Glass Pavilion at NewMarket all through June. You can see the same wonderful trash cans that started it all displayed in the first exhibit space.

At the opening June 4, art lovers gasped at the dramatic black and white nude photographs near the entrance. Thank goodness Senator Helms is not a neighbor. For neighborhood gardeners, there are charming cast concrete benches, frogs and rabbits. For the whimsically inclined, wonderful animals adorn furniture. What would a child be like who grew up in an Indian rocker, or had a monkey at their back, or played tea party on a table with a sleeping pig or mother fox?

Bright bold floor cloths, placemats, and napkins compete for attention with hanging umbrellas. There is something for the artist in everyone from marvelous metal hat bands to magnets made from picture frames. Also stop by Remo Saraceni's space to see his entry for the Columbus monument. It will be built in Venice, but if you are not planning a vacation in Italy, take a look at the model here. The children will enjoy dancing on the walking piano that you might remember from the movie "Big." Our "child" was a bit into middle age, but did a fair boogie woogie on it. Call 928-9767 for hours. Thank Virginia for donating 10% of the proceeds from the opening to the Head House Conservancy.

**A great rate on  
a great GM car.**

**That's special!**



**\$34<sup>87</sup>**

a day. Unlimited mileage. Based on Availability.

Chevrolet Lumina

**Good noon Thursday  
through Monday. Just pay  
for gas used and return  
car to renting location.  
Discounts do not apply.**

Taxes and optional refueling service. LDW, PAI/PEO, ALI are extra. If rental conditions are not met, higher rates apply. Call Avis for details.

**AVIS**

**We try harder.**

**249 S. 6th St.  
Under Independence  
Place at 6th & Locust Sts.**

**928-1082**

**T.G.I.F.**  
Avis makes  
weekends special.

Avis features GM cars and trucks.