

SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

A newsletter of the Society Hill Civic Association

Issued Nov. 10, 1994

SHCA Calendar

Tues., Nov. 15, 7:30 pm
Oversight Subcommittee
Historic Preservation
Physick House, 321 S. 4th St.
Cypress St. entrance

Wed., Nov. 16, 7:30 pm
SHCA Board Meeting
Old Pine Community Center
4th & Lombard Sts.

Sat., Nov. 19
Clean-Up Day!
Society Hill Sweep
See p. 3 for important details.

Tues., Nov. 29, 7:30 pm
Historic Preservation
Committee General Meeting
Physick House

Wed., Dec. 7, 7:30 pm
Holiday Safety Program
Hosted by Town Watch
Society Hill Towers
West Tower Community Room

Wed., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm
SHCA Board Meeting
Old Pine Community Center

Wed., Jan. 18, 8:00 pm
General Membership Meeting
Society Hill Sheraton
Board meeting 6:30 pm
Refreshments 7:30 pm

Society Hill Civic Association

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Larry Meehan, Vice-President
Martha Moore, Treasurer
Mary Sturdivant, Secretary

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HIGHRISE REPRESENTATIVES
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Hopkinson House
Helen Ann Comstock,
Independence Place
Terri Bartolozzi,
Society Hill Towers

Dear Neighbor:

1994 has been a busy year and a good one for SHCA! We've planted over 60 new trees in the neighborhood. We've written and published the first-ever tour book of the area, (*Chilton's Guidebook to Society Hill*) and we've renewed publishing our own community newsletter, *The Society Hill Reporter*.

As we approach 1995 we face another round of challenges to maintain and improve the quality of life we have established here. This is the year we will work toward making Society Hill a city-certified Historic District. We will, of course, continue to work with all appropriate organizations and city-wide offices to see that this is accomplished. We will continue being the voice of our neighborhood with all elected and administrative officials (both city and state), all neighboring civic groups, area police, the Zoning Board, and on and on!

The 1995 calendar begins with our first General Meeting—hosted by the Society Hill Sheraton on January 18th. In mid-February our annual "members-only social" will be hosted again by restaurateurs Bill Curry and Judy DeVicaris. In March we'll meet at McCall School, and in May our annual Board of Directors election meeting takes place at Old Pine Community Center. As you know, we hold our monthly Board meetings on the third Wednesday of every month at this 4th and Lombard Streets Center, and these meetings are always open to everyone.

Our SHCA memberships expire December 31st (except if you joined in the fourth quarter and are credited for 1995). Please fill out the enclosed membership envelope and send your check (\$25 for Household; \$50 for Business). Do it now, while you're thinking about it! We've been able to maintain the low cost of Household memberships for many years. In fact, with inflation and *The Reporter* now being mailed (bulk rate), the real cost of membership has decreased. Can you say this for anything else worthwhile?

Join us! We need your support to help make our voice even stronger. Volunteers are always welcome in our standing committees, such as Historic Preservation, Zoning, Project Street Trees, or Town Watch. Or, consider becoming a director at next year's election in May. We hope to see and hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
DICK OSTRANDER, President

Happy Holiday



New format, new team for *Reporter*

Let us know what you think about this new format.

The deadline for the next issue, due out in January, is December 30.

Mail material to the SHCA office (Box 3, Phila. 19105) or fax it to 925-0877.

The *Society Hill Reporter* is reinventing itself again! Expect to see six issues a year. **Matthew DeJulio** and **Alan Halpern** are new writer/editors, while **Lois Sigel** has rejoined the staff after a hiatus. **Dick Ostrander** continues his Notes from the President and **Bernice Hamel** is editor for this issue, probably rotating with other staff members for future issues.

Thanks to **Mary Sturdivant**, SHCA director who resigned last month as editor. We appreciate her dedication to the newsletter.

And while we're at it, we also want to thank several others for their honest and lively reporting in and about our neighborhood: **Nancy Frenze** and **Ruth Dugan**, co-editors of our community newsletter for many years. **Sherrill Joyner** and **Carolyn Mooney** were also members of their team, as were **Sigel** and **Hamel**—who are still at it!

Neighborhood artists **Charles Bangert**, **Sally Buell**, and **Pamela Sinkler Todd** also deserve recognition for their distinctive architectural and seasonal drawings.

Indeed, SHCA's logo was created by Ms. Todd, who incorporated two of Society Hill's most beloved icons—our Franklin Lamps and historic Head House—into the design.

MAN FULL OF TROUBLE TAVERN

The museum has been closed. It was deeded to the University of Pennsylvania by the Knauer Foundation, which originally saved the building from demolition in 1960.

The Political Advocacy Subcommittee of SHCA's Historic Preservation Committee intends to establish a means of communication with the current owner and all appropriate city-wide offices to assure that the fragile old building is well maintained. Its likely use—although not definite—will be as a residence for visiting scholars. We'll keep you posted.

Bourse Community Theater

A special cultural treat is right here in our own community! Born out of the Actors Center on Walnut St., this theater is nestled downstairs just south of the 5th St. entrance of the Bourse. It's been awarded Best of Philly Community Theater 94!

Founded in 1993, the Center trains professional and aspiring actors, voice-over specialists, and commercial performers. It has classes for children and adults.

Managing Director **Joseph Koroly** operates the theater and cabaret as a performance space for actors, musicians, comedians, storytellers, filmmakers, playwrights, and poets. Participating groups of diverse talent include The Philadelphia Area Repertory Theater, Urban Artists, Heads on Fire, Simply Classic Theater Co., and the Women's Ensemble. Entertainment scheduled for this year includes *Comedy for Kids*, *School for Scandal*, and *A Winter's Tale*.

Added attraction: Art exhibits at the studio with espresso, cappuccino and fine desserts. Call 925-6400 for information. Go enjoy!

—Lois S. Sigel

SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

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

EDITOR
Bernice T. Hamel

STAFF
Matthew J. DeJulio
Alan Halpern
Dick Ostrander
Lois S. Sigel

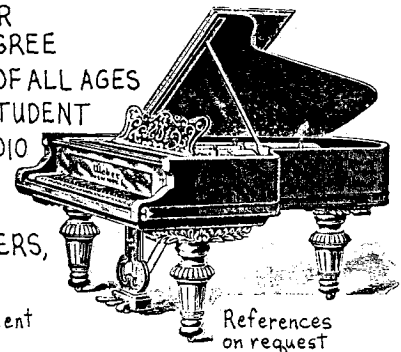
COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTORS
Jean Bodine, Project Street Trees
Mel Buckman, Legislative & Town Watch
Lorna Katz Lawson, Zoning
George Scarpulla, Historic Preservation
Mary Sturdivant, Clean-Up Day

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References
on request

Clean-Up Day: November 19, Rain or Shine!

Cooperating with SHCA and the Streets Dept. are the following

organizations:

- Citizens Alliance for Cleaner Neighborhoods
- Center City District
- Independence National Park Service
- PhilaPride
- Pennsylvania Hospital
- Thomas Jefferson Hospital

Once the spectacular color show folds, fall leaves clog storm sewers and, when wet, are as slippery as ice. So next Saturday, November 19, the Clean-Up Day Committee has arranged with the Streets Department and several other organizations for a special area sweeping on both sides of every street.

Residents are asked to sweep the sidewalk on their block. Please bag the leaves and take the bags to major intersections for Saturday afternoon pickup. The leaves will be recycled.

Coffee, bags, and brooms will be available at The Morning Cup on 2nd Street after 8 am. Brooms **MUST** be signed out and then returned either to the coffee shop or brought to Pennsylvania Hospital, 8th and Spruce Streets, just in time for the complimentary picnic the hospital is sponsoring, beginning at 1 pm.

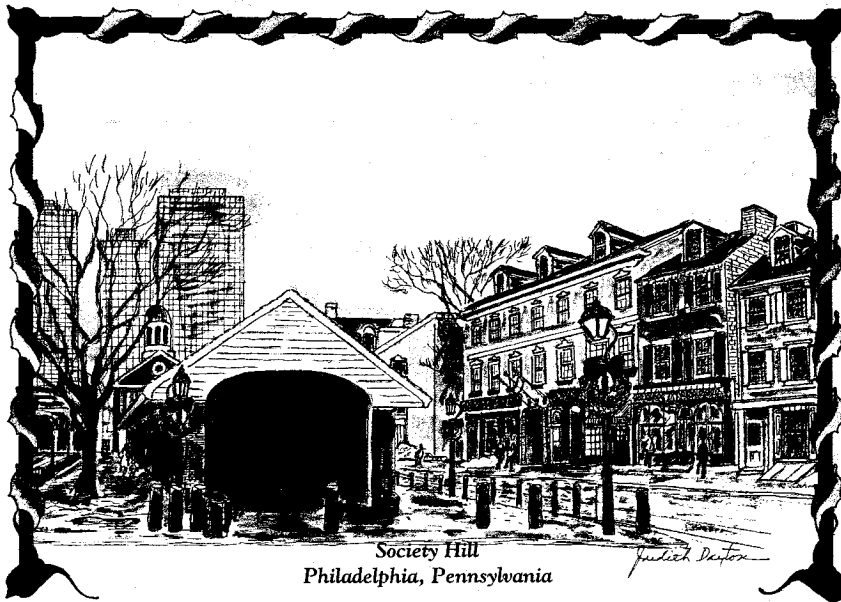
Volunteers needed for distribution of fliers and posting parking notices: Call SHCA office 629-1288 or Co-chair Mary Sturdivant at 928-1203. Miffy

Coonley and Larry Meehan co-chair with Mary. To report on problems during Clean-Up Day, call the Logistic Dispatch Center at 545-3260.

The use of professional equipment provides efficient disposal of the leaves. But keeping our streets neat is a process that requires individual householders to do their part on a continuing basis.

VERY IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE THESE TIMES: On Friday, November 18, neighbors will be asked to park their cars on the opposite side of the street after 6 pm. The Philadelphia Parking Authority will begin ticketing after 8 am Saturday morning. Cars must move back by 1 pm so that the alternative side of the street can be cleaned by 1:30 pm Saturday. Ticketing will resume at 3 pm for cars not returned to the usual parking side. (One idea: Arrange with a neighbor to move your car, if you can't!)

—Mary Sturdivant



LOCAL SITES HOLIDAY CARDS!

The card at the left is one of a series (shown at reduced size) depicting Philadelphia scenes, including Head House and Elfreth's Alley now on sale at Strawbridge & Clothier and John Wanamaker's. Original drawings by Judith Dayton.



BIRD LOVERS!

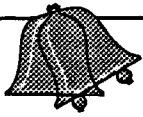
Delaware Valley Ornithological Club is conducting a bird census at Independence Park. Interested birders should contact Bernice J. Koplin at 981-0630 (day) or 922-7803 (eve).

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Deck the Halls — A Holiday Agenda



It's Christmas in October as we compile this partial list of holiday activities, so it's a good idea to double-check dates and times before venturing outdoors to celebrate.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCHES & SYNAGOGUE

Christ Church (Episcopal) 20 N. American St., 922-1695
Holy Trinity (Roman Catholic) 6th & Spruce, 923-7930
Mother Bethel (A.M.E.) 419 S. 6th St., 925-0616
Old First Reformed (U.C.C.) 4th & Race Sts., 922-4566
Old Pine St. (Presbyterian) 412 Pine St., 925-8051
Old St. Joseph's (Catholic) 321 Willings Alley, 923-1733
Old St. Mary's (Catholic) 252 S. 4th St., 923-7930
Society Hill Synagogue (Jewish) 418 Spruce St., 922-6590
St. Andrew's (Ukrainian Catholic) 427 Pine St., 925-7024
St. Peter's (Episcopal) 313 Pine St., 925-5968

SCHOOLS, MUSEUMS & INSTITUTIONS

Bourse, 111 S. 5th St., 625-0300
Atwater Kent Museum 15 S. 7th St., 686-3630
Museum of Jewish History 55 N. 5th St., 923-3814
Physick House, 321 S. 4th St., 925-7866
Powell House, 244 S 3rd St., 627-0364 or 925-2251
St. Peter's School, 4th & Lombard Sts., 925-3963

Oct. 29-Dec. 31

10-4 pm Atwater Kent Museum, Enchanted Colonial Village. Original exhibits from Lit Brothers Christmas Village have been restored and put on display over the holiday season. Admission \$2 adults, \$1 children.

Tuesday, Nov. 22

8:00 pm Old First Reformed: Thanksgiving Candlelight Service with Philadelphia Boys Choir. Free.

Sunday, Nov. 27

11:00 am Old First Reformed: Advent Communion Service.
12:30-2:00 Society Hill Synagogue: Hanukkah celebration for children with Theater Ariel, refreshments, music. Call 922-6590 for \$3 tickets.

5:00 pm Christ Church: Advent lessons and carols.

Wednesday, Nov. 30

8:45 am St. Peter's School. Hanukkah play by students.

Sunday, Dec. 4

11:00 am Old First Reformed: Advent Communion Service, followed by Family Advent Workshop.

Wednesday, Dec. 7

5:15 pm Old St. Mary's: Vigil Mass Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Thursday, Dec. 8

7:25 am, 7:00 pm Old St. Mary's: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

12:05 pm Holy Trinity: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Dec. 9, 10, 11
9 am-4 pm St. Peter's School: Sale of Christmas trees, wreaths, trim and gifts in the school yard and school.

Friday, Dec. 9-Dec. 30 Old First Reformed. Nativity scene with outdoor crèche & live animals. Open around the clock.
Sunday, Dec. 11-31 Powell House: This colonial-era great house will be decorated for Christmas with ceremony and refreshments. Call for \$12 tickets.

Sunday, Dec. 11

7:25-12:05 Old St. Joseph's: Holy Day Masses.
4:00 pm Old First Reformed: Advent Vespers featuring choirs.

Dec. 15-24

12-1:30 pm Bourse: Christmas music, instrumentals, choirs.

Friday, Dec. 16

11 am-5 pm Old First Reformed: Holiday Food Festival. Buffet, flea market, baked goods sale.

Saturday, Dec. 17

1:00-4 pm Old First Reformed: Children's Christmas workshop with stories, crafts, gift-making. \$2 fee.

Sunday, Dec. 18

5:00 pm St. Peter's: Candlelight Christmas lessons & carols.
10:30 am Old Pine Street: Lessons & carols.

Tuesday, Dec. 20

7:00 pm St. Peter's School: Celebration of Light. A multi-cultural celebration of the Holiday season at Old Pine Church.

Wednesday, Dec. 21

7:30 pm Old First Reformed: Caroling in Old City.

Complete dinners and cooked food items available for pick-up at the following times:

Wednesday, November 23:

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 24:

8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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Monday, November 21



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Deck the Halls — A Holiday Agenda

Saturday, Dec. 24

Old St. Joseph's: 5:30 pm Christmas Mass. 8:00 pm Carols & readings, 8:30 pm Solemn Mass.
 Old St. Mary's: 5:00 pm Vigil Mass. Midnight First Mass of Christmas.
 Christ Church: 5:30 pm Holy Communion. 10:30 pm Concert. 11:00 pm Holy Communion.
 Old Pine: 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service.
 St. Peter's: 6:00 pm Children's Service. 10:30 pm Musical program. 6 & 11 pm Holy Eucharist
 Old First Reformed: 6:30 pm Live tableau at outdoor crèche. 7:30 pm Candlelight service.

Sunday, Dec 25

Old Pine St.: 10:30 am Morning Worship Service.
 Old St. Joseph's: 7:30-11:30 am Christmas Day Masses.
 Old St. Mary's: 9-10:30 am Christmas Masses.
 Holy Trinity: Noon Christmas Mass.
 Christ Church: 10:00 am Holy Communion and carols.
 St. Peter's: 11:00 am Holy Eucharist. Hymns.
 Old First Reformed: 11:00 am Christmas worship with the homeless, Christmas dinner.
 Mother Bethel: Call for Christmas schedule.
 St. Andrew's: Call for Christmas schedule.
 Museum of Jewish History: Being Jewish at Christmas. Adults \$2, kids under 6 free.

Saturday, Dec. 31

Old Pine St.: 7:00 pm-7:00 am New Year's Eve all-night vigil.
 Old St. Mary's: 5:00 pm New Year's Day Vigil Mass.
 Old St. Joseph's: 7:30 pm Solemn Latin Vigil Mass.
 Mother Bethel: 10:30 pm New Year's Eve Night Watch Service.

Sunday, Jan. 1

Holy Trinity: Noon New Year's Day Mass.
 Old St. Joseph's: 7:30, 11:30 am New Year's Day Masses.
 Old St. Mary's: 9, 10:30 am New Year's Day Masses.
 St. Peter's: 8:00, 10:30 am Holy Eucharist.



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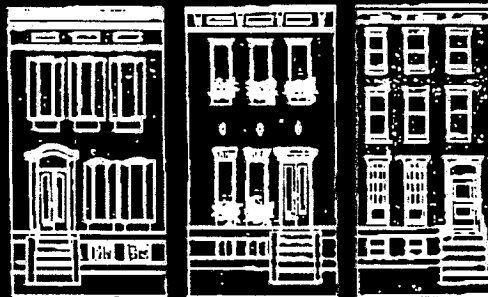
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Notes from SHCA President

DICK OSTRANDER

Fall has fallen...or something like that. It's a chilly day as this is being written, and the airwaves and newspapers are full of misinformation from a host of political aspirants. We'll be thankfully past that stage when *The Reporter* gets to you.

Several items of interest from the October Board meeting:

1. Sixth District Police Commander, Captain Joe O'Donnell, presented a proposal to start a Bike Patrol covering four neighborhoods, including ours, and the Association has agreed to provide some of the funding for the equipment.

2. We decided that for the next Board meeting—on November 16—we will discuss the loss of green space when zoning variances allow alterations that increase lot coverage. Bring your opinions to the meeting, as we'll probably take action to be reported to the Zoning Board.

CALENDAR ITEMS: To avoid the December holiday rush, the Board meeting has been changed to 12/14. We've decided to devote most of January's General Meeting (1/18) to the issue of riverboat gambling. Also on this agenda, there will be another update on Franklin Lamps, as Andrew Miller of the Spring City Foundry has enlightening (!) information for us which may help to expedite the repair or replacement of missing or damaged ones.

Alan Halpern has joined the Board, representing the SE Quadrant, to replace the unexpired term (through May 96) of Liz Engelman, who left the area. Please see the membership letter, in this issue, for the names of all directors and contact them to bring your views to monthly meetings. Or, you can join us and speak for yourself.

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, November 16, 7:30 pm, Old Pine Community Center (4th & Lombard Streets). Make a note of it.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Ciao!



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GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD

Profile of Matthew J. DeJulio, representing the Southwest Quadrant

Matthew serves as Co-chair of the Education Subcommittee of the Historic Preservation Committee, spearheading the development of the first pocket-sized guidebook to Society Hill. He is now also a staff member of this newsletter.



A native of Mount Vernon, NY, Matthew received a magna cum laude degree in 1970 from Fordham University (journalism) and subsequently an MA from the Annenberg School of Communications at Penn in 1972. He first visited Philadelphia in 1963 during a Valley Forge Foundation pilgrimage. He said of his recollection of that time: "One could not help but get a sense of the great history that took shape in our neighborhood less than 200 years before."

He now thinks that he must have known, down deep even then, that this would be his adopted city. He has been a resident of Pine Street since 1973.

Matthew is currently employed at the Chilton Publishing Co. in Radnor, where he is an advertising director and general business manager. Working with advertising agencies, he implements promotions for clients and organizes, as well as hosts, large events and sales meetings. He threw a gala at the Water Tower Museum in Chicago, another at an historic warehouse in New Orleans, and a special evening at Philadelphia's University Museum. His "crowning achievement" to date, he says, was held in our backyard, last spring, at Carpenters Hall.

One of four children, Matthew keeps in close touch with his siblings and 80-year-old widowed mother. He proudly boasts of his heritage: all of his grandparents emigrated from the hillsides overlooking Naples during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

He remains a fervent history buff and also has a keen interest in astronomy, geography, Broadway musicals and fine dining. He manages to find time for other responsibilities, such as serving as treasurer for the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Delaware Valley.

A parishioner at Old St. Joseph's Church, Matthew is a fan of Fr. Casciotti's sermons and leadership.

Hats off to this treasured Society Hill denizen!

—Lois S. Sigel

**The Artful Dodger
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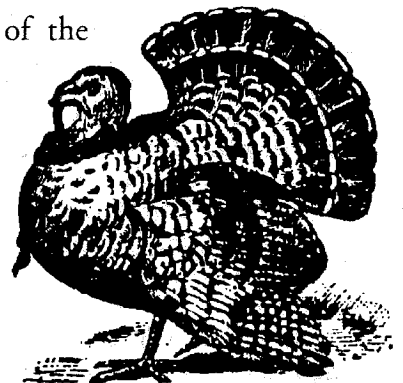


The Artful Dodger
Beef and Ale House

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

*"I'd rather go
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than Grandma's"*

I'm proud to be one of the fresh Lancaster County turkeys chosen to be served at Cafe Nola's annual Thanksgiving Feast in the Grand Tradition." The \$26 a person homestyle dinner is better than grandma's -- plus you don't have to do the dishes. Nola's chefs don't miss a thing -- from the relish tray to the brandied pumpkin pie. And you get ALL the wonderful vegetables -- from corn pudding to Cointreau - flavored sweet potatoes *and* real mashed potatoes. Thanksgiving Dinner is served from 1 to 9 p.m. Reserve now to avoid disappointment: 627-2590



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Zoning

- *Proposed gaming arcade on South Street:* Totally rejected by the Zoning Board (ZBA). All area civic associations testified in opposition.
- *Chasers on S. 5th St.:* The restaurant will not be allowed to expand operations to the 2nd level unless it significantly improves the way it conducts business—e.g., refuse liquor service to minors, clean up trash.
- *216 Spruce Street:* With prompting from the local L & I inspector, appearance has been somewhat improved, but the ironwork at the cellar accessway still seems to belong more on a prison cell than on the exterior of a historic house.
- *Penn Mutual facade on Walnut St.:* SHCA informed Penn Mutual that it has no objections to the proposed modifications.
- *302 Delancey Street:* Proposal to add 2-story and deck additions at rear. This would increase building depth by four feet, reducing lot's open space to less than 15% vs. required 30%. SHCA supports compromise between applicant and protestant. ZBA will approve variance if agreement can be reached.

Town Watch

A holiday safety program will be presented on Wednesday, December 7, at 7:30 pm, in the Community Room of the West building of Society Hill Towers. Speakers and a video will feature crime prevention, emphasizing the holiday season. Captain O'Donnell of the Sixth District Police, a representative of SEPTA and another speaker from the Center City Services District will participate in what should be an informational discussion. Come, learn, and enjoy some light refreshments.

Legislative

This committee is urging members of the State Legislature to support the bill authorizing police to disable any automobile whose driver lacks proper identification or proof of insurance. (Currently neither is required and violators are simply given a citation.) The House bill, #3117, is expected to be introduced sometime during November or December by W. Curtis Thomas, our district representative, who is primary sponsor.

Parks & Playgrounds

Three Bears Park: By the time this paper is distributed, we can expect to see some changes.

In mid-October, the Department of Recreation authorized its contractor to change the orange-colored playground equipment to a deep red, a color more compatible with our neighborhood.

The tan equipment will be repainted with graffiti-washable paint, some noisy equipment will be removed, and a sign recommending appropriate hours of playground use will be installed.

Project Street Trees

With the help of a \$5,000 Legislative Initiative Grant through Senator Vincent Fumo's office, 65 new trees have been planted in our community. By providing property owners with the last \$100 for the cost of a new tree, we were able to leverage the grant money into \$15,450 worth of tree plantings throughout our neighborhood.

This fall we expect to plant at least ten

Laurie Phillips

Laurie Phillips

Laurie Phillips

Laurie Phillips

Call Laurie Phillips



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SHCA COMMITTEE REPORTS

more trees, and with an additional grant, we'll be able to continue the subsidy.

Wonderful news! Fairmount Park has reinstated its tree removal program this fall. Nine people have attended the PA Horticultural Society's "Tree-Tender Training" program and are on the street improving tree pits and doing minor pruning.

For a new tree this fall or next spring, or if you have a dead tree you want removed, please call either **Jean Bodine (627-8393)** or **Dick Ostrander (922-6179)** no later than **November 24**. Or call if you'd like to become a tree-tender.

Don't forget to water your new trees!

TV Cables on house facades: A no-no

Greater Media Cable Company has begun to re-lay cables installed for TV service that are visible on house facades—in violation of city code and visual violation of our historic neighborhood. Required: Your cooperation—because installation crews may need access to your building.

To arrange for rerouting of your TV cable, call Greater Media's Dominick D'Aurizio at 952-4934.

Historic Preservation Reports

OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

To encourage residents to maintain their building facades and brick walkways, the Oversight Subcommittee conducted a Pilot Program consisting of one block in each of four quadrants (77 homes). A "gentle reminder letter" was sent to each of these households with a check list recommending work needed, as well as a list of contractors that have performed satisfactorily in Society Hill. The most notable problem areas were: uneven bricks on walkways—the responsibility of the homeowner, not the city; paint and repairs needed on woodwork.

Results are already beginning to appear. On one of the blocks, a homeowner painted the entire facade—improving the appearance of an important historic group of houses. In another example, correction was made to a damaged planting area. Another resident has taken steps to have on-going litter removed. Thanks, responsive homeowners!

The Subcommittee is currently reviewing the overall results of the Pilot Program, taking suggestions from resi-

dents prior to starting a full-blown program for the entire community.

Meetings monthly on the third Tuesday at 7:30 pm at the Physick House. Next: November 15th.

POLITICAL ADVOCACY SUBCOMMITTEE

The Political Advocacy Subcommittee is working with the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia and the city Historical Commission to begin the legal process to designate several of Philadelphia's neighborhoods as Registered Historic Districts. Proceeding one district at a time, the first neighborhood to enter the pipeline is Rittenhouse Square/Fitler Square. Society Hill will be next, with a series of hearings expected to begin in the spring of 1995.

Volunteers will be needed prior to that time to survey the area, noting any exterior changes to structures since Society Hill's inventory was assembled in August 1989. Structures lost and new ones built must be so noted.

We will be participating in a series of meetings at City Hall in support of Rittenhouse's designation and testifying on the importance of historic designation.

Back by popular request



DARTS & LAURELS



DART: To whoever is responsible for letting the Head House Shambles be taken over by your worst nightmare. The October 29th contingent included a cockamamie collection of vendors — a pretzel stand, a Gypsy fortune teller, and assorted vendors who put the flea in flea market. Coming next: A thieves market?

LAUREL: To Chef's Market for upgrading its produce department. When South Street Produce shuttered, it looked like a disaster for fresh fruit and vegetable lovers. But Chef's Market more than filled the gap with a stunning array of fresh goodies. Maybe next year we can get a farmer's market at the shambles. Does this have the makings of a trade war?

DART: To the smoky ghost of Boslover Hall (which once occupied the northwest corner of Seventh and Pine) now a vacant lot festooned with wildflowers. It may be this vindictive specter which has kept some neighbors and Pennsylvania Hospital, its

current owner, at loggerheads over developing the ground. The Hospital, unable to do anything architectural with it, is using the lot as an occasional training ground for its firefighters whose smoky learning curve is upsetting some of these neighbors. Poetic justice?

LAUREL: To Mother Nature for making the neighborhood so breathtakingly beautiful this fall... and to Jean Bodine, our tree lady, who is doing the heavy lifting landscapewise.

DART: To the Welcomat, whose content is getting increasingly steamy. We don't enjoy getting ten pages of sex-oriented ads shoved through our gate. We called the paper's circulation

manager to get out of the loop. He told us he couldn't give us special treatment unless we got the whole block to sign a petition. I didn't subscribe to this rag so don't give me any First Amendment argument. Just get off my block!

—Alan Halpern

Have a dart or laurel? Or disagree with ours? Drop us a line.

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Head House occupied at last!

The SSHD needs an attractive work and meeting environment, and the Conservancy hopes the office will be outfitted in a manner appropriate to the building's age and dignity.

Please call either the Conservancy (925-3285) or the District (413-3713) with suggestions or donations.

The South Street/Headhouse District (SSHD) has finally moved into the renovated interior office space on the second floor of historic Head House. The building, designed 200 years ago for volunteer firefighters, is once again providing public service as the home office to the District—whose mission is to provide a cleaner, safer and well-managed local business district. The SSHD is a municipal authority funded through assessments on properties in the District.

Recent flea markets and events at the Shambles left many neighbors frustrated by a lack of quality-control. Now that the SSHD has a lease with the City, it will begin scheduling and monitoring the quality of events held there. Expect improved standards.

FURNISHINGS NEEDED!

Peter Whitehouse, the District's executive director, (and SE Quadrant SHCA Board member) is settling in, but the office needs furniture to make the space fully functional. Most needed are the following items: two desks; a conference table; chairs; bookcases; any appropriate prints, pictures, or reproductions of maps.

Donations are welcome—but please do not offer that beat-up, metal desk. Instead, the Head House Conservancy, the nonprofit organization which restored the structure, has an idea that is worth pursuing:

You could make a tax-deductible donation to the Conservancy for the cost of a desk or chair, for example. The Conservancy will then purchase the item which will have a plaque with your name on it. Alternatively, you can donate quality used furnishings to be given to the Conservancy for a tax-deductible donation.

The District needs an attractive work and meeting environment, and the Conservancy hopes the office will be outfitted in a manner appropriate to the building's age and dignity. Together we can get this program off and running. Please call either the Conservancy (925-3285) or the District (413-3713) with your suggestions or donations.

—Bernice Hamel

My Night Chez LaBelle

The specter of failure that has haunted many enterprises in NewMarket was given a reprieve this season with the opening of Chez LaBelle cabaret theater—nine months after the cabaret musical, *Forever Plaid*, folded. The venue for LaBelle is the space off Second St. once tenanted by The Limited.

Plaid's impresario was Shelly Gross, who founded several successful tent theater enterprises in the Mid-Atlantic region. In the early 90s, Gross became entranced with the possibilities of NewMarket as a theatrical and arts center, featuring a 400-seat cabaret theater—playing to Philadelphians and pre-sold theater groups bussed in from other areas—a marketing technique successful at his Valley Forge Music Fair.

Several civic associations announced their opposition to the granting of liquor and theater licenses unless Gross stipulated specific, limited hours of operation, agreed to keep noise to a minimum and provide adequate space for parking cars and busses. Gross promised not to book rock concerts or other neighborhood-unfriendly events.

Forever Plaid was supposed to appeal to a large, suburban Philadelphia audience. When it laid a large Society Hill egg, Gross's son, Rick, came up with another idea—a cabaret to be hosted by Patti LaBelle, a nationally acclaimed gospel-rock singer.

Although the cabaret was renamed Chez LaBelle, the singer was on hand only on opening night. Audiences for subsequent performances who thought they would be seeing and hearing LaBelle were disappointed. But not disappointing was the theater. It looks like a top Atlantic City casino showroom with good sight lines. Most tables seat eight with many in the crowd (the night we were there) bussed in from Southern churches, all elegantly dressed and groomed.

Unfortunately, what was on the bill was a listless, draggy, two-hour play, *Chance's Champion*. It's about a boastful but ineffectual talent agent—played by Dee Lee, who has a tendency to mumble—trying to book a gold-digging singer into a Mafia-owned night club. An attempt at comedy was a comparison of ghetto roaches with suburban roaches. The last ten minutes was the only time the evening came alive—when Lee did some comic turns and a cast member, Crystal Belle, who plays a mousy secretary, took off her glasses and belted out a stirring, soulful number.

Chez LaBelle is expensive. Two tickets cost \$40 on Thursdays and Fridays, \$50 on Saturdays, and there is a \$7 surcharge if you order tickets by phone. Drinks are small. "Top shelf fancy drinks" (as a table card lists them) cost \$6, a bottle of Heineken \$5. The pretzels are on the house.

—Alan Halpern

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TLC FOR Washington Square: \$2.6 Million!



Like giants on the earth, the roots of many of the nearly 200-year-old trees make their presence known.
(Photo by Matthew J. DeJulio)

The Square is featured in Chilton's Guide to Historic Society Hill, available now at a super discount rate to residents: \$1 each; non-residents \$2.

Call the SHCA office (629-1288) to order.

While Alice Faye, the "Rose of Washington Square" (New York, that is) may have immortalized the place name in her film and song of 1939, our very own Washington Square in Philadelphia was here first! William Penn created it in his 1680 plan for Philadelphia, although most of the extant trees in this scenic retreat date from the early 19th century.

Unfortunately, being there first also means battle fatigue from the elements—wind, rain, snow, sleet, animals—and people! This year, through the auspices of Congressman Tom Foglietta and a \$2.6 million appropriation, the People have decided to refurbish this venerable 5.75-acre green space. The funds will be used to provide the TLC that all properties can use from time to time.

The Square's prime attraction is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, watched over by a statue of George Washington. But the eternal flame in front of the sarcophagus has not flickered for quite some time, and a major improvement will include installation of a new gas pipeline to rectify this sorry situation.

According to a spokesman in Congressman Foglietta's office, an appropriation has definitely been made part of law, and he will work with the Defense Department to release the funds soon—although a specific date could not be set. Besides restoration of the Tomb, flagstone, and fountain, attention will be paid to the numerous slate pathway slabs that have crumbled, and, in some cases, disappeared.

As horse-carriage-tour historians are fond of pointing out, the Square is the burial ground for about 2,000 Revolutionary War soldiers. Less well known is the fact that it is also the resting place for some of our earliest colonists. In 1706, twenty-four years after the City's founding, it was designated as a burial ground for strangers or those not affiliated with any local churches.

Anna Marie Marshall, president of the Washington Square Civic Association and area resident since 1979, has been one of the prime movers and shakers of this improvement project. The City now has an agreement with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior that if the Square is restored to a condition comparable to that of Independence Square, it will be made part of the National Park Service which will take over the maintenance. Currently the Fairmount Park Commission handles it and has coughed up \$500,000 to begin the improvements, according to William Mifflin, director.

The Square is the only one of the four original squares laid out by Penn within the boundaries of Society Hill. As such, it was featured in *Chilton's Guide to Historic Society Hill*, available now at a super discount rate to residents: \$1 each; non-residents \$2. For 100 or more copies the price drops to 50¢ per copy. Call the SHCA office (629-1288) to order. The history of the Square and of the many noteworthy buildings surrounding it are discussed in detail in this 62-page, pocket-sized guidebook.

—Matthew J. DeJulio



SHCA will be taking a new approach to the renewal and preservation of our Franklin lamps which are the most defining visual link of our community.

Photo by Matthew J. DeJulio

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