

# SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

A newsletter of the Society Hill Civic Association

Issued May 1, 1995

## Elections Scheduled for May 17 Meeting

Meet the candidates your nominating committee chose...

The following slate of officers and directors was submitted to the board by its nominating committee at the February meeting. The membership will have a chance to vote on the slate and any new nominations submitted from the floor at the next membership meeting, which is scheduled for May 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Old Pine Community Center at 4th and Lombard.

The slate includes...

### ■ For president: Mel Buckman

Mr. Buckman is an attorney (a graduate of Penn and Harvard Law) with the Radnor firm of McCausland, Keen & Buckman. Its specialty: business law for venture capital and entrepreneurial firms. He lives near 7th and Addison. He has three sons, all grown and dispersed. His hobbies include opera (favorite: Rigoletto) and sailing on the Chesapeake. He was hoping to retire before taking on the SHCA presidency but was persuaded to run now by the promise of being assisted by multiple vice presidents. Which leads us to...

### ■ For vice presidents (three are to be chosen):

**Bernice Hamel** has been a neighborhood activist all of her nine years here, as a writer/editor for the SHCA newsletter, and most notably as the driving force in getting the Head House restoration financed after city neglect left the building in near ruins. As chair of the SHCA's Historic Preservation Committee she is helping prepare the neighborhood for historic district status. She lives with her husband and one of her two sons near 2nd and Spruce.

**Lorna Katz Lawson** is an architect with her husband in the firm of John Lawson Architects. She graduated from Penn's architectural school in 1969 and has been active in community development and preservation work and has consulted with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on zoning issues. She has been chairperson of the SHCA Zoning Committee since 1990 and co-chairperson since 1994. The Lawsons live in Society Hill Towers.

**Larry Meehan** [re-election] is a lawyer working in legal education. A graduate of Columbia Law, he is currently the operator of a satellite TV network offering educational training programs to lawyers and judges. A Delawarean, he is now a Philadelphia resident with digs in the Hop House. For relaxation he plays duffer golf and likes opera (Turandot is his favorite). He's been active in SHCA cleanup operations.

### ■ For secretary: Mary Sturdivant [re-election]:

Ms. Sturdivant has lived in the district since 1975. Originally a drama teacher in the suburbs, she changed careers, joining IBM and spent 20 years as a systems engineer. She became active in community affairs the hard way: After a burglary, she joined Town Watch and then the SHCA, serving most recently as secretary. For recreation she subscribes to a number of local theater groups and is particularly fond of the Wilma Company. She lives in Independence Place.

### ■ For treasurer: Martha Moore [re-election]:

Ms. Moore is a certified public accountant in the finance department of Sun Oil. She works in its Philadelphia office. She is a tennis player, but despite a stint working for Sun in England, has not yet played Wimbledon. She hails from Texas and currently lives near tumbleweedless 6th and Pine.

### ■ Quadrant directors nominated...

**Fran Kirchner** [Northeast quadrant] Ms. Kirchner, who has been in the neighborhood since 1988, is a financial executive with her husband in a manufacturing business. They live in Willings Alley mews.

**Scott Denman** [Northwest quadrant] Mr. Denman is an attorney who lives near 7th and Spruce. He represents the South St/Headhouse District.

**Margaret Munch** [Southeast quadrant] Ms. Munch works at Pennsylvania Hospital. She lives near 3rd and Pine.

**Nancy Hallman** [Southwest quadrant] Ms. Hallman is a former IBM executive who is now in marketing. She lives near 7th and Addison.

## Mark Your Calendar

### Wednesday, May 17

General membership meeting  
Old Pine Community Center, 4th & Lombard Sts.  
6:30 Board meeting  
7:00 Membership reception with refreshments  
7:30 Membership meeting. Election of officers

### Wednesday, June 21

Board meeting  
7:30 Old Pine Community Center

### Wednesday, August 16

Board meeting  
7:30 Old Pine Community Center

### Wednesday, September 20

General membership meeting  
Pennsylvania Hospital, 8th St. entrance  
6:30 Board meeting  
7:00 Membership reception with refreshments  
7:30 Membership meeting

## Notes from SHCA President

DICK OSTRANDER

### *Good-bye and all that stuff*

**K**nocking out this column has always been pretty easy. My main concern was leaving out something important. This time it's different...the final column.

Actually, I guess the concern is the same. That and trying to avoid sounding lugubrious (like my mother — Liz cautions me). Well, here goes:

I'm sure to leave out a lot if I try to recall all the folks who have been so supportive in the past three-and-a-half years and try to thank them by name. So I won't. I just want to say the time has really flown. Most of it has been a lot of fun. Just about all of you have been wonderful. I've learned a lot and been invited to represent the neighborhood at many interesting functions. I've met many great people and hope to continue contacts with them.

Mel Buckman takes over the presidency after the Wednesday, May 17th election meeting at the 4th and Lombard Community Center. Make sure to attend as we need 50 members present to enact a couple of minor changes in the by-laws.

There will be refreshments served at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:30. You'll also hear an interesting presentation about the proposed National Constitution Center and have a chance to ask questions about it.

Good luck, Mel and all your fellow officers. Thanks again to everyone for all your support over the years!

Ciao,  
DICK



### SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

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

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOMED

Deadline for July issue:  
June 15th  
Mail to above address  
or fax to: (215) 925-1376  
or E-mail to ca\_gaz@aol.com

DESKTOP PUBLISHING  
Norman Kline

## SHCA Neighborhood Action Phone Numbers

Clip and save for reference.

<b>EMERGENCY</b> .....	911 (& pray!)
Sixth District Police Station .....	686-3060
South St. Police Mini Station .....	922-6706
S.A.V.E. (auto sticker protection) .....	686-3063
Resident Parking Permit .....	977-7200
Parking Authority Enforcement: (9 am-5 pm) .....	977-7221
(evenings & weekends) .....	977-7223
<b>City Hall</b> .....	686-1776
Streets Dept. Customer Service .....	686-5560
Street Repair & Potholes .....	686-5508
Recycling Hot Line .....	1-800-807-3292
Recycling Office .....	686-5504
Streets Dept. Sanitation Division .....	685-6062
Bulk Trash Pickup .....	592-6060
Illegal dumping & litter enforcement .....	686-3082
Street lights .....	685-9184
Water inlet cleaning (storm drains) .....	592-6300
Anti-Graffiti Network .....	686-1569
SPCA (animal control) .....	426-6300
Fairmount Park Commission (trees) .....	685-1835
Historical Commission (Dr. R. Tyler) .....	686-4543
Councilman Joseph Vignola .....	686-3458
<b>MISCELLANEOUS POLS</b>	
W. Curtis Thomas (State Rep.) .....	232-1210
Vincent J. Fumo (State Senate) .....	468-3866
Thomas M. Foglietta (U.S. Rep.) .....	925-6840
Robert Borski (U.S. Rep.) .....	335-3355
Arlen Specter (U.S. Senate) .....	597-7200
Rick Santorum (U.S. Senate) .....	412-882-3205
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>Society Hill Civic Association</b> .....	629-1288
Society Hill TownWatch .....	625-9255
South St./Headhouse District .....	413-3713

## Adopt-a-Cop

**New mini-station on South St. needs your support.**

It's nice to have police in the neighborhood. You never know when you need them. That's why our civic association pushed for the establishment of a nearby mini-station. It's located at 917A South Street — a lot closer than 11th and Winter. The station is open and operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The detail is assigned to work from Broad to Front, Lombard to Bainbridge as well as adjacent streets. This is a community-oriented detail, and it needs community (business and resident) support to continue its mission.

You can support the station in two ways — as a volunteer and as a donor. Your money goes to buy state-of-the-art communications equipment beyond the regular police budget and helps pay the rent. Hopefully, some of it also goes for donuts. The 1990 contribution is \$25. You can give more if you care to. All donations are tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to "Friends of the South St Mini-Station" and send your check with the coupon below to the address on the coupon. While the supply lasts, members will be given official Mini-Station window stickers and coffee mugs — probably the only time you'll be mugged by the cops.

The police encourage you to stop in and introduce yourself and to call when you need their assistance.

The station telephone — 922-6706 (nail it to your telephone table) — can and should be used to report *quality of life crimes* like boom box noise, incivilities, public drinking or urination, or loud parties that call for immediate and effective police action.

For major crimes like robbery, assault, rape and auto theft, you must call 911, but you can still call the mini-station number afterward for back-up.

And if you have time to be a community volunteer, the station can book hours and assignments for you.

For further information or to volunteer, call Bill Overton, chair, South St. Police District Advisory Council, 925-7418 or Judy Spielman, co-chair, at 922-1916

Send your check with \$25 or more to

Friends of the South Street Mini-Station  
Attn: J. Spielman  
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## School stuff, tasty medicine, street art & free appraisals...

**Mark your calendars:** Don't forget that Wednesday, May 17th is your chance to see some of your neighbors, duck others and meet some new ones over coffee and cookies at the social half-hour before the general membership meeting starts at 7:30.

A big night is scheduled with the election of officers for the '95-'96 year and a presentation about the proposed National Constitution Center which will likely be built in our neighborhood near Independence Park or below it. Also, wipe your spectacles to better see the slide show — before and after Society's last 40 years — with a sharp talk by our own preservation architect, Penny Batcheler. It will be the kickoff of the attempt to make Society Hill a designated historic district and prevent the erection of a Burger King or Texaco station right next door to your overtaxed domicile.

It's a very full agenda, and we need at least 50 members to keep the election from going to the supreme court. So come.

**Behind the green door:** Want to see how the other half really lives? You probably missed your chance to peek into your neighbors' houses on Saturday, May 6th — the date of the Society Hill House Tour sponsored as a fund-raiser by **The Friends of Independence National Historic Park**. But you can still take a great bus tour — on Wednesday, May 10th — to visit some wonderful **Bucks County homes and gardens** (cost: \$50 including "a delightful" lunch). Or travel to West Philadelphia to see **Woodlands and Bartram's Gardens** — two designated National Historic Landmarks on Sunday, May 14th (cost \$32 with refreshments).

The Friends are also holding some more neighborhood house tours — giving participants an opportunity to sample diverse communities and lifestyles, architecture and interior design: There are three on Saturday, May 13th — the **Fitler Square** area around 23rd and Pine (cost: \$17); eclectic **Queen Village**, where the homes range from teeny-weeny colonial to post-modern (\$17); and **Washington Square**, replete with mansions, row houses and artisans' mews (\$22). For more info, call 928-1188.

**The envelope, please:** In the last issue, a contest asked readers to correctly match up seven historical marketers with their location. Ten correct answers were received. The earliest (making him the winner) came from **Richard Bauer** of 313 Spruce Street. His prize was a copy of the book, *Old Philadelphia Houses on Society Hill*, which is now on sale at Barnes & Noble. Nice work Richard!

**Our no-prize brain twirler this issue:** Who is buried in Grant's Tomb? [Answer on page 5]

**Safe at Home:** As an innovative wrinkle of the Historic Preservation Committee — at the last membership meeting, the Chubb Insurance Company, represented by the Mather Company, offered to give members a no-obligation appraisal on the cost of rebuilding their homes (or condos) should a disaster strike. This appraisal, which includes the home's contents is also videotaped and the video given to the homeowner. In return, recipients would be expected to write a check for a minimum of \$75 to the Society Hill Fund (and mail it to David Stevens at 116 Delancey St.). The Fund is a non-profit fiduciary that invests in projects that benefit our community. This win-win program will be offered throughout 1995. For more information you can phone Chubb's **Gigi Felsner** at 981-8213, or Preservation Committee chair Bernice Hamel at 925-4363.

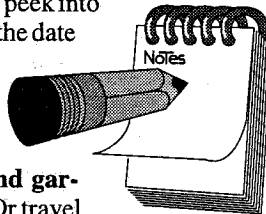
**Uncle SHCA wants you:** If you let your membership in the SCHCA lapse — or have never been a member — you're entitled to a **SLACKER** sticker to post in your window. It's guaranteed to make all the posies in your flower box wither and your shutters fall off. On the other hand, if you wish to escape such a wretched fate, you can fill out the membership coupon in this issue or call the SCHCA office for more details (629-1288). Membership is guaranteed to make the tax assessor cut his bite in half, give your children, if any, perfect 1600 SAT scores and make all your household pets infertile.

In other words, don't miss this opportunity to get a life and, at the same time, give the community more clout. Honestly, it's just not the same without you at our side.

**Health care redux:** If you're old enough to remember **John Nance Garner** and **Henry Wallace**, you're over 55 and old enough to join the Pennsylvania Hospital's free Health Ways program (call **Elaine McCarthy** at the hospital, 829-8500). It offers seminars on medical problems of the post-babyboom generation, free preventive medicine screenings and a card that will get you discounts at the hospital's gift shop and cafeteria (best french fries and grilled cheese sandwiches in town — if you're willing to play Russian roulette with your arteries. But not to worry, super-vascular surgeon Carole Raviola can ream them for you). It's a good deal and the hospital is a good neighbor.


**Tiptoe through the tulips:** If you're a victim of hay fever, read no further. But if you're not, you'll be delighted to learn that McCall School parents revived the **McCall School plant sale**, an achievement not to be sneezed at. This year it was held on May 6th and 7th — presumably too late for unwary readers of this issue to take advantage of it. But it is scheduled to be an annual event — so next year you can brighten up your garden or window boxes with healthy annuals trucked in from a nursery in Chalfont.

The proceeds go to brighten up the exterior of the grammar school at 6th and Delancey, which is already abloom with daffodils and other perennials. McCall, incidentally, is another neighborhood treasure: The school specializes in teaching English to a host of children from Asia, Europe and South America as well as



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offering special courses to gifted kids — it even has a precocious French course for petites élèves.

For more info on next year's plant sale and to check if there are any unsold pots, or to volunteer for other school activities call **Karen Biddle** at 627-4954.

**Cyberkiddies wanted:** Speaking of McCall's, this fine public school reports it has a limited number of tiny desks for its two, full-day kindergarten classes — and for all other grades through eighth, starting in the fall. You can pick up EH-40 application forms at the school office. McCall is a magnet school for computer applications and technology (they start them younger and younger nowadays) and has classroom computers and the dudes who know how to run them on staff. Guided tours of the school are available through the spring term by appointment. Phone the principal, **Ms. Janet Samuels**, at 351-7350 for more info.

**Who needs Barnes?** On the way to the Italian Market we stumbled on two separate pieces of outdoor wall art that are definitely worth gawking at. The first glitters on Schell Street, between 8th and 9th, South and Bainbridge. The narrow alley has been covered on both sides with six-foot-high mosaics of broken mirrors and vari-colored ceramics. It's like walking through a giant kaleidoscope. The artist is our area's living treasure, **Isaiah Zagar**, whose wife, **Julia**, runs the Eyes Gallery on South Street.

The second treasure is a giant three-story full-color mural of a solemn **Frank Rizzo** giving the Italian Market a professional once-over. It faces a parking lot on the Montrose Street that is just below Christian Street, just to the east of 9th Street. The artist is **Dianne Keller**, who teaches painting at Penn. Old timers may remember her when she was a waitress at **Judy's** on Bainbridge Street. In death, the Big Bambino is still very much bigger than life.

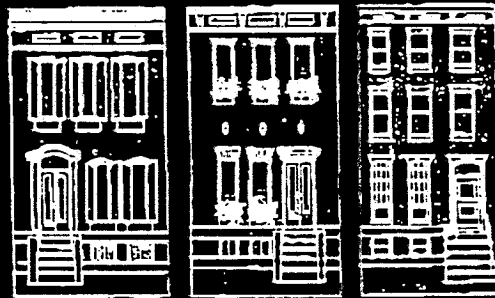
**Croak on this:** We encountered our first certified welfare queen in our favorite Italian market butcher shop right after we inspected the Rizzo mural. We were in there to buy three pounds of our custom-made no-salt \$3-a-pound hot-and-garlicky Italian pork sausages. Before the butcher could make them up, he waited on a regal, well-dressed woman who ordered a pound of the shop's plump \$12.75-a-pound frogs legs. "Make that two pounds," she imperiously added. The butcher obliged. She reached into her purse and paid for them...with food stamps.

**A wonderful Physick:** Talk about appropriate names. Charles Dickens couldn't have done better than to name the father of American surgery **Phil Physick**. Dr. Physick lived in the beautiful house and garden at 321 S. 4th Street. It was built in 1786 by Henry Hill, a well-to-do importer of Madeira wine — the blush zinfandel of the colonial era.

Dr. Physick moved in with his four children in 1815 and had an office in the house, still furnished with his medical instruments (he performed his operations at Pennsylvania Hospital). The home — probably the largest house from the period still standing — is administered by the Landmarks Society as a museum, with a teaching center run by Society Hill neighbor, **Janet Cooke**.

Ms. Cooke reports that show-and-tell tours of the house by third, fourth and fifth graders are now offered and give insights into the way children lived in Philadelphia almost 200 years ago, what a doctor's office looked like and how medicine was practiced back then. Parents or teachers who want a brochure with more information can call her at 925-7866.

*Answer to brain twirler: Gotcha! Both the general and his wife are buried there.*



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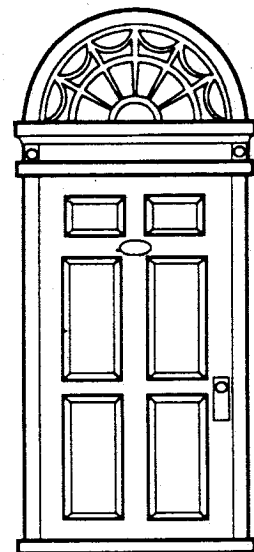
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# DARTS & LAURELS



**DART:** A beery barb to The Artful Dodger, the community earsore at 2nd and Pine, which artfully practices bad neighborliness Friday and Saturday nights with its noisy "entertainment," keeping much of the 100 block of Pine Street awake until 2 a.m. From then till 2:30 the noise comes from departing revelers slamming car doors, clinking empty or partially-empty beer bottles on local stoops, car hoods and flower pots and sometimes relieving themselves on sidewalks, building walls and into the aforesaid flower pots.

— Thomas Rutter

**LAUREL:** A languorous hug to The Artful Dodger for being a very good neighbor in other ways. They wrote the first check to restore the Head House. They've always advertised in the newsletter and been very accommodating in sponsoring other SHCA events. They've never said no.

— Bernice Hamel

**LAUREL:** To Sapphire, the magnificent little black cat that lives near 3rd and Pine. Thanks to the ministrations of Dr. Ted Yuhas of the Society Hill Vet Hospital, Sapphire has thrived in the area for over 23 years. (*Editor: That's certainly a better track record than any local restaurant.*)

— Ellen Trafford

**DART:** To Philly taxi drivers. As a recent arrival to the city, I am appalled by the sloppiness of the local cab drivers. Not only are most cabs dirty and smelly, but drivers are incredibly careless about turning their rooftop lights on when free and off when engaged, making it hard to figure out how to flag them down.

— Melissa McRaney

**LAUREL:** To Steve, the driver on the 90 bus, who knows almost every passenger by name and makes us all laugh. He's so helpful and kind, especially with the elderly. And it's fun to ride with him.

— Ellen Trafford

**LAUREL:** To the strikebreaking, purple gas guzzler, the Philly Flash that continued to take us to the Reading Terminal and home from the Academy of Music all through the last transit unpleasantness. The bad news is that they recently cut out the morning runs.

**LAUREL:** To loudmouth Harry Lombardo, the head of the SEPTA union, who reminded us every time he stridently sounded off during the late, unlamented transit strike how lucky we are not to have Frank Rizzo around anymore.

**DART:** To whatever ignoramus in City Hall thought of renaming venerable Delaware Avenue Columbus Boulevard. Can't they let well enough alone? Next they'll be renaming the Delaware River the Columbia River and sending salmon up it to spawn. (Actually, it could have been worse: They could have renamed Delaware Avenue John Street.)

**DART:** Talk about stabs in the back, a serious pox to the otherwise benign Penn's Landing Corp. for surreptitiously sneaking in that proposed elephantine 240-story hotel right between us and our beloved Columbia River when our back was turned. Et tu, Stanhope Brown?

**LAUREL:** To MacFarland Landscape Services, Inc., (which planted many of new street trees in our neighborhood) for donating a truck manned by Bryce Hoyland to mulch neighborhood street trees on Cleanup Day, May 6.

— Jean Bodine

**LAUREL:** To the readers who sent in their pet peeves and/or plaudits (which we took the liberty of editing slightly for publication.) Keep them coming to Dart Vader, SHCA Reporter, P.O. Box 3, Phila., PA 19105. Or, for the computer hyperactive among you, E-mail them to: Ca gaz@aol.com

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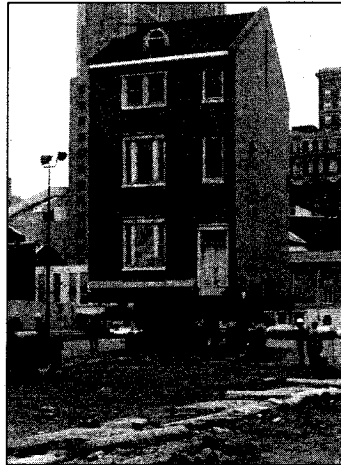
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# Saving Grace

**"Details, details":  
A preservationist's mantra.**



**THE SPIRIT OF '78:**  
*That was the year Wills Eye  
saved an old town house by  
carefully transplanting it.*

**D**o we still have the will that Wills Eye Hospital demonstrated in 1978? That was the year they removed the last remaining Franklin Row townhouse—they jacked it up off its foundation and wheeled it from 9th and Walnut Streets to a safe haven at 8th and Locust. (Note that the chimney was preserved from tumbling by a casing of boards.) This most historic house, designed by Robert Mills and built in 1808,

now houses the law offices of George E. Walker

Much of Society Hill consists of buildings this old—or older—and now in the care of its owner-occupants. Preserving the details—from cornices to boot-scrappers, from shutter dogs to fanlights—can be a costly and provoking task. But these details give the neighborhood its unique and irreplaceable flavor. And as the archi-

tect Mies van der Rohe observed, "God is in the details."

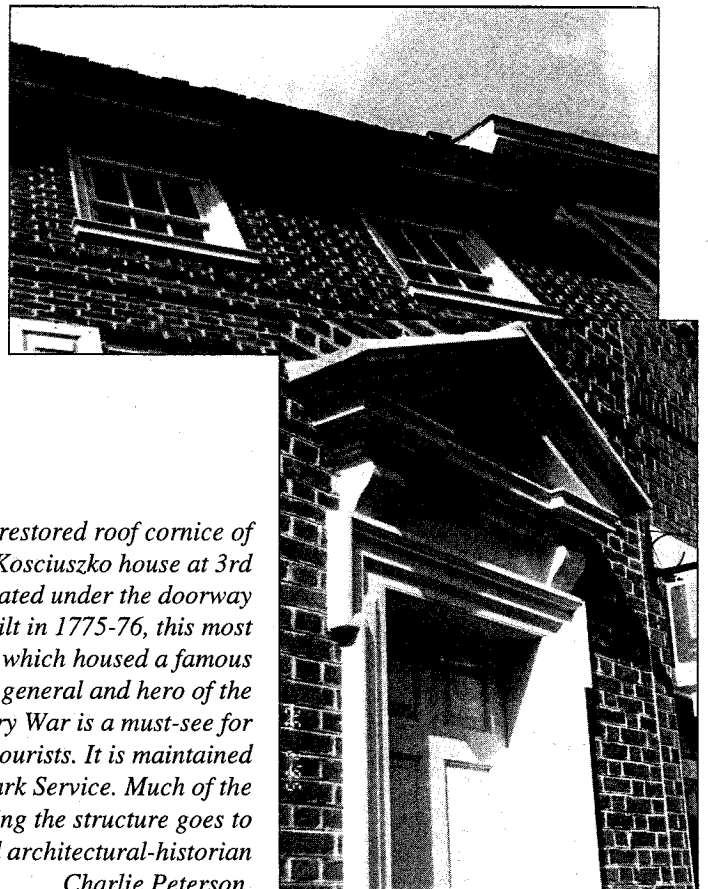
So if you live in one of these ancient heirlooms, guard your treasure, keep it in constant repair, in protective paint and polish so that it can be appreciated by our children and their children, well into the next millennium.

— Matt DeJulio



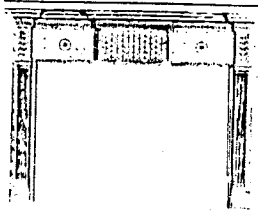
**CORNICES**, tucked into the eaves, are usually the most unaltered of features on historic townhouses. This one at 238 Spruce (built in 1782) is one of the most beautiful still surviving. Have you tended to your cornice lately?

**NOTE HOW** the restored roof cornice of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko house at 3rd and Pine is repeated under the doorway mantel. Built in 1775-76, this most historic home which housed a famous Polish general and hero of the Revolutionary War is a must-see for knowledgeable tourists. It is maintained by the National Park Service. Much of the credit for preserving the structure goes to neighborhood architectural-historian Charlie Peterson.



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## Paper overload, restaurant chatter, classical notes...

**Litter Darlings:** We notice that the *East Philly Sun* is now clogging up our stoops and blowing down our sidewalks, along with something called *In* put out by the *City Paper* plus the weekly shoppers from Super Fresh, Caldor, Acme, et al, encased in plastic — plus, of course, the *Unwelcomat* sporting a new banner: The *Philadelphia Weekly*. The name's changed, the editorial content has gotten much, much, much better, but it still has page after page of sleazy sex ads to delight your kids. Question: What do you call a man who makes \$50,000 a year by having women sell sex for him. Answer: A pimp. Question: What do you call a man who makes \$500,000 a year by having women sell sex for him? Answer: A publisher.

**Napkin Alert:** Is Primavera still the best restaurant in the neighborhood or do you have another nomination? Let us know and we'll print your answer here. Runner-up for our lire is Tiramisu. Best looking spot is the new Tutto Misto. Don't nobody 'round here speak English?

**A Musical Summer:** The Historic Neighborhood Consortium is tuning up now for programs which start in mid-June and run through Labor Day Weekend. The concerts will feature such groups as The London Trio, Concerto Soloists, Chestnut Brass and the Mozart Orchestra. Their venues will be various historic sites and cultural institutions like the Athenaeum, Carpenters Hall, The Balch Institute, the Afro-American Museum and Franklin Court. Specific times and artists will be announced in the papers, at the Visitors Center and, hopefully, here.

**Best foot forward:** Get out your walking shoes and stroll through America's most historic mile in the second annual March for Independence on Saturday, May 20th. During the week of May 22, Independence Hall and Park will be celebrating itself — in its

sacred springtime rite of self-promotion and propitiation of the hostile and tight-fisted gods of Congress. (Two hundred odd years ago they were friendlier and more open-handed.) The hike, which kicks off the celebration, is sponsored by the Park and the Friends of the Park and they would be delighted if you participated (and even more delighted if you made a financial contribution to help preserve its leafy splendor).

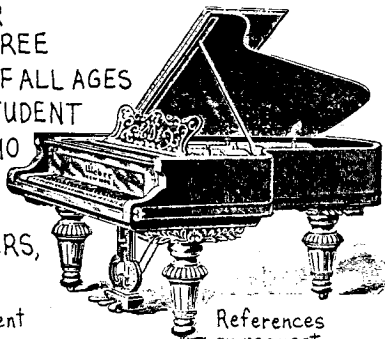
Both 1-mile and 3-mile treks are planned. They start at the Visitors Center at 3rd below Chestnut. Register there around noon. The march starts at 1:00. You'll be accompanied by a fife and drum, Ben Franklin and what passes for local TV personalities. Bring the kids if you have them. Or carry your cat. But come. All participants will receive a T-shirt commemorating the event. For more info, call 928-1188.

**Down and Dirty:** Spring clean-up weekend is behind us now, but that doesn't mean we can relax and enjoy all that spotlessness. Now summer is icummen in — ergo, can all those trash-flinging tourists be far behind? So smile, bend down and pick up all those Dove bar wrappers, Big Mac boxes and Yuengling bottles off your sidewalk and tuck them neatly out of sight in your trash can. Remember, if you merely kick them into your gutter you (and all your neighbors) will have to live with them festering away until next spring's clean-up.

**Auld Lang Syne:** When we moved into the neighborhood over 25 years ago one of the favorite pastimes of the natives was wandering into houses in the construction phase and wondering what sort of asses were sinking so much money into such a woebegone neighborhood. It's a long time since new homes were abuilding down here — they ran out of land — but you can recapture that feeling by meandering down the 600 block of Addison Street and seeing a couple of new megaliths going up. It sort of restores your faith in the future of our part of town.

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