



# SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

*Newsletter of the Society Hill Civic Association*

Issued July 1, 1995

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*by Mel Buckman*

**T**his is my first message to Society Hill as president of the Civic Association. I have undertaken this important job with both enthusiasm and trepidation. I have impressive support in the Association's other officers, directors, and committee chairs; and with their help I hope to carry on the good work that was accomplished in the past, as well as institute new programs for the future. (On page 8 of this issue is a directory listing their names and numbers. Please save it for future reference.)

Society Hill is especially lovely as I write this message. It is early June, and the leaves are out and the flowers are blooming. There are signs of growth and renewal. Homes are under construction on Addison Street and throughout the neighborhood houses are being painted and renovated.

This rejuvenation reflects the value of our beautiful and lively community. The purpose of the Civic Association is to keep it that way, and to improve it. We have a number of programs to that end: Historic Preservation—to maintain the essential character of the community. Zoning and Development—to assure compliance with land use laws and similar regulations. Community Maintenance—to keep up the streets, Franklin Lamps, and other public facilities, and to give the neighborhood a rigorous cleaning twice a year (much more pleasant than going to the dentist!). Project Street Trees—to keep and enhance William Penn's "greene country town."

To carry out these and other programs, we need as much help as we can get. Here is a message to all residents, old or new, members or not: Join us and become active in some aspect of our work. I can promise you this: You'll meet some wonderful people in the process.

We are constantly trying to improve our membership outreach. But we are an organization operated by volunteers, as a labor of love. There is only so much that we can do. Everyone wants a beautiful, harmonious and secure community, so it is everyone's obligation to seek out and participate in the activities of the organized community.

There is some attitude that the Civic Association is something of a closed club, controlled and operated by and for only those who have been here "forever." I can assure you that is not at all true. I perhaps am a good example—I moved here just six years ago! Both the board's treasurer and secretary followed several years later, and many other officers, directors, and committee chairs are also new residents. There are, to be sure, a number of "older" residents



on the list, too; and they are just as important in carrying out our aims.

I add this special message to new neighbors, particularly new property owners. You obviously believe in Society Hill as a place to live. Protect your investment, both financial and emotional. Join the Civic Association, and let your voice be heard. A membership coupon, if you need one, is on page 13. Mail it in with your check and indicate the activity that interests you. To learn about any committee, call

the chairperson to see if your interests and skills match the needs of that committee. Or, if you are not sure, feel free to call me.



**T**his "first message to the community" would be terribly deficient without some word about my predecessor, Dick Ostrander. Dick has—and deserves—the gratitude of the entire community for his excellent performance as president of SHCA for the past three-and-a-half years. Everyone in the neighborhood has benefited from Dick's tireless efforts. When I think about Dick, a number of adjectives come to mind: dedicated, effective, unpretentious, diplomatic, hard-working, and cool-under-fire. He leaves big shoes to fill.

### SHCA Calendar

#### Wednesday, July 19

Board meeting  
7:30 Old Pine Community Center  
(corner, 4th & Lombard)  
Agenda: Hyatt Hotel at Penn's Landing  
All SHCA members welcome to attend

#### Wednesday, September 20th

General Membership Meeting  
Pennsylvania Hospital, 8th St. entrance  
6:30 Board meeting (all members welcome)  
7:00 Membership reception with refreshments  
7:30 Membership meeting

# CONTROVERSY AT PENN'S LANDING: The Hyatt Hotel

by Bernice Hamel & Mary Sturdivant

Controversy over the proposed development of a 25-story Hyatt Regency high-rise hotel on Penn's Landing directly east of the Society Hill Towers brought residents out en masse to the SHCA General Membership and Election meeting on Wednesday, May 17th.

Chairman of the Penn's Landing Corporation, Stanhope Browne, presented a 30-year history of evolving master development plans for the Landing. A long-time Society Hill resident, Mr. Browne wore two hats in his presentation of the current master plan, which he supports.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel, in its current configuration, will be positioned immediately south of the now defunct Port of History Museum on the Delaware River's boat basin at the foot of Walnut Street. In its place is a newly renovated and enlarged museum building, designed by architects Bower-Lewis-Thrower, that now houses the Independence Seaport Museum (formerly the Maritime Museum located on Chestnut Street). The Hyatt Regency will be designed to complement the newly opened museum.

The most recent development plan for Penn's Landing, approved in 1990 by both the Penn's Land-

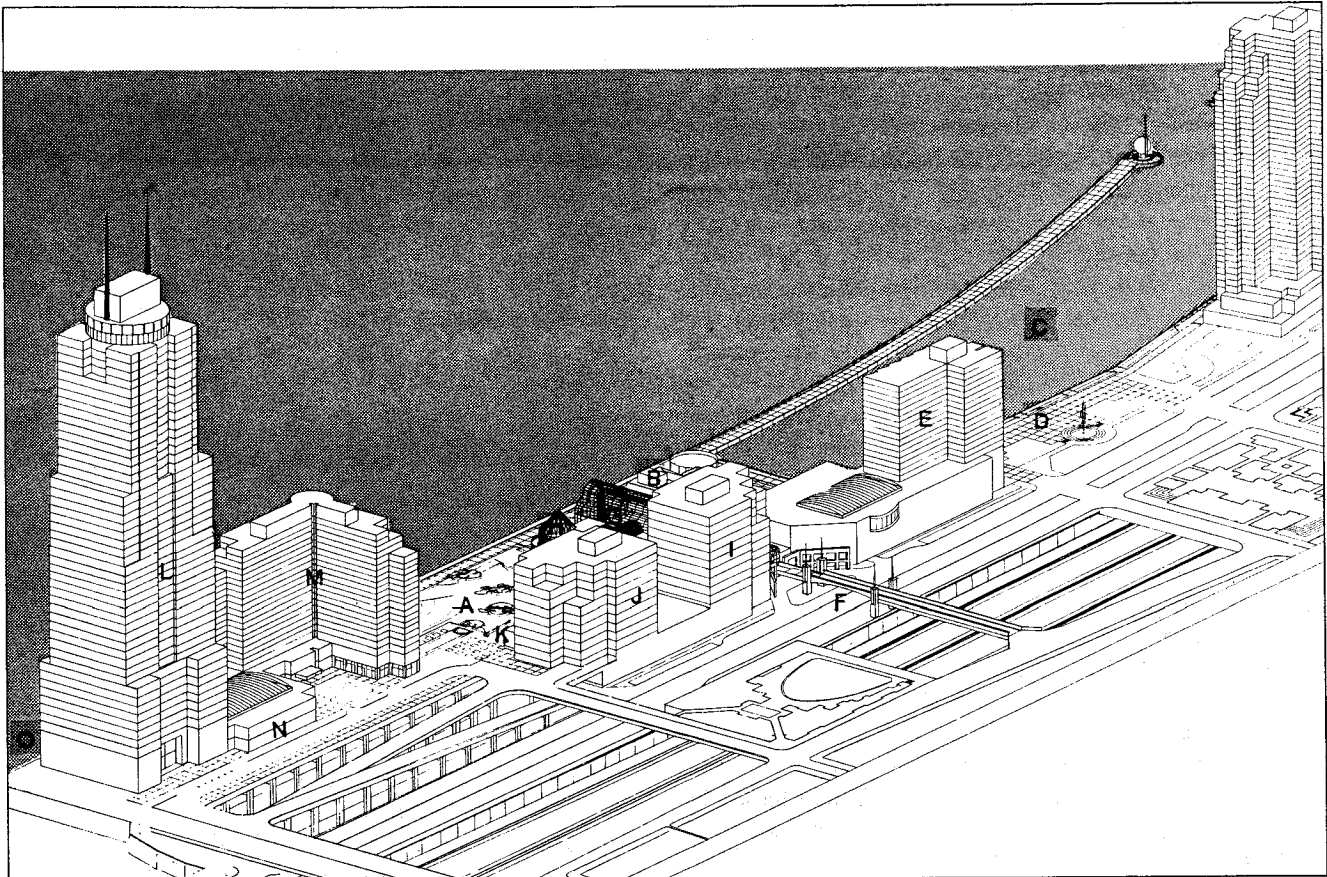
ing Corporation and the City's Planning Commission, was selected by a committee following a competition. It is a blueprint for private development of a hotel and other facilities, referred to as the Bower-Lewis-Thrower plan (also known as the Welcome Partnership). It was presented by Mr. Browne who promised that the proposed hotel was a private investment of the highest quality.

Mr. Browne's presentation was augmented by architectural drawings and computer-enhanced photographs illustrating how the proposed high-rise hotel tower would affect the views of various apartment units in the three Towers buildings. This presentation was made by Ted Brumleve, an architect in the firm of Brennan, Beer and Gorman, which has been chosen to design the hotel. (It's the same firm responsible for designing the Society Hill Sheraton.)

Many of the 200 or so neighbors at the SHCA meeting—a good number of whom were Towers' residents bused to the meeting—expressed their op-

**The hotel will be the main subject at SHCA's next Board meeting—Wednesday, July 19, 7:30 p.m. at Old Pine Community Center.**

*Continued on the next page*



**This schematic of the Welcome Partnership Plan provides an idea of the master plan. The hotel site is labeled E, although the hotel will be slightly smaller and thinner, with 350 instead of 500 rooms.**

# PENN'S LANDING: The Hyatt Hotel

position to the project. Their reasons were based primarily on the location and height of the hotel, which is directly in the line of sight between the Towers and the river, as well as because the hotel may encroach on existing park uses and pedestrian access ways and eliminate a portion of the existing sculpture garden.

## The Search for a Development Plan

As a recipient of almost \$70 million of city and state funds, the Penn's Landing Corporation has always been charged with developing the area. With the exception of the Chart House Restaurant, private investment portions of the plan never came to fruition because of the need to meet the double test of market feasibility and appropriate use. The previous master plans were: the Geddes-Brecher plan, 1963; the Murphy-Levy-Wurman plan, early 1970s; the Cope-Linder plan, 1982; and the current approved master plan by Bower-Lewis-Thrower, which was formally approved by the Philadelphia Planning Commission in an open public session on February 27, 1990.

The Bower master plan, based on the Welcome Partnership proposal, differs from the earlier philosophy of finding one comprehensive developer for the entire Penn's Landing area, which could be a mix of commercial and residential projects. With the Bower proposal, however, individual developers can develop different pieces of the property, assuming their proposals will be acceptable to the Penn's Landing Corporation. The co-developers for the Hyatt project are Somerset Holdings and the Keating Development Company. (John Keating is a well-known Philadelphia area developer. Somerset has two principals: John R. Noonan, who was previously a partner in charge of design & construction for Rouse's Hospitality Group which developed the Philadelphia Ritz Carlton and the Society Hill Sheraton, and John K. Desmond, Jr., who is the owner of the Desmond Hotel in Albany, NY.)

## The Condominiums at Penn's Landing

On Wednesday, June 21st, Stanhope Browne and the Hyatt developers and architects made a similar presentation at the Penn's Landing Square Condominiums, located on Spruce Street at Front between

Spruce and Delancey. According to Barbara Bagileo, SHCA's Penn's Landing Square representative, approximately one-third of the owner-residents (about 30 people) attended this meeting. After expressing concerns relating to issues of exterior design, pedestrian access ways, and appropriate security, one person expressed opposition to the project, while many said they were in favor of it. Ms. Bagileo said: "Since they know that something will be built on the site, they would rather it be a high-quality Hyatt Regency Hotel."

## The Case for the Hotel

### Based on Discussions with Stanhope Browne

**Public Goals:** The hotel has the full support of the Rendell Administration because it will help make Penn's Landing a year-round attraction, adding 350 rooms to the city's hotel room supply—at a time when additional rooms are needed to serve the growing convention industry. It will also generate approximately 700 construction jobs, 300 to 350 new permanent jobs, and an estimated \$1.5 million in new tax revenues. For these reasons, the project is supported by the Waterfront Business Association, Historic East Market Street, Inc., and the Philadelphia Building Trades. It has also received the endorsement of the Old City Civic Association, although with well-articulated design reservations that will be seriously considered. In Mr. Browne's words, "The hotel will bring high-quality investment to Penn's Landing, fulfilling the original development goals while being sensitive to community concerns."

**The Chosen Location:** The boat basin at Walnut Street and the Delaware River is ideal from the standpoint of interaction with the new Independence Seaport Museum and Walnut Plaza. The adjacent landscaped 16-foot pedestrian walkway and the vehicle drop-off area at Dock Street will provide excellent access for both pedestrians to the waterfront and vehicles into the 500-car garage. The hotel can also take full advantage of its location at the water's edge by orienting its public space, (restaurants, cafes, meeting rooms) to the water.

Other sites have either operational or programmatic problems, and the area north

of the Great Plaza cannot be considered since it is reserved for a family entertainment center, "Project X," (not gaming!) [Editor's note: "Project X," may come as a surprise to readers, as it did to many at the meeting.]

The Sculpture Garden can be fully preserved. The space taken at the northern end can be added back at the southern end; in so doing, the "Costa Rican spheres" can be given a more appropriate setting—a possibility being seriously considered, but not promised at this time.

**Views from the S. H. Towers:** Actual photographs and computer-generated views (from a representative sample of apartments in all three towers) demonstrate that the hotel's impact on river views will not be overwhelming because it is two blocks east of the Towers and at a lower elevation. No views of the Benjamin Franklin bridge will be blocked, but moving the hotel north (as suggested by the Towers) would block that view. Properly designed, the hotel could add interest to the view.

**Safety:** The hotel will be a 24-hour-a-day, year-round operation. Its doormen and the pedestrian activity of its guests will make Penn's Landing and the adjacent, largely-unpeopled area of Society Hill safer.

## The Case Against the Plan

**Opposition by the S. H. Towers:** Any high-rise design blocking the river view is unacceptable. The Towers worked with the same architectural firm on modifying the design of the low-rise Society Hill Sheraton, and they propose a dialogue so as to redesign the Hyatt into a low-rise structure. Their position is that if it is economically feasible to build only a high-rise, then the only sites acceptable to them would be north of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge or south of South Street.

In a public letter to the mayor, City Council, *et al*, the Towers' management, Board, and Owners' Association stated its unanimous opposition to the development as currently constituted "...since it violates all the sound planning which came before it." They are considering several ways of resisting development, not excluding liti-

*Continued on the next page*

# PENN'S LANDING: The Hyatt Hotel

gation. [Editor's note: On June 20th, as we prepare for press, SHCA President, Mel Buckman, was informed by M. Melvin Shralow, of Shralow and Associates, that he has been retained by the Towers Owners Association to bring a lawsuit to prevent construction of the proposed hotel, which he said he would do promptly. The suit is to prevent the use of \$10 million of federal money for the project without public hearings, City Council approval, and formal application to HUD and its approval after full review, as the plaintiffs contend are required by law.]

CRITIQUE BY JOHN Q. LAWSON, FAIA: John Lawson is co-chair of the AIA's Urban Design Committee for Philadelphia and is a Society Hill Towers resident and representative on its Owners Council. An active member of SHCA, he is critical of the plan, expressing concern about "the public process, funding sources, environmental impact statements, alternate sites north of the museum, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation studies." He cautions that as currently designed this would be "a cookie-cutter hotel tacked onto an 'approved master plan.'"

Excerpted from "The Philadelphia Architect," March 1995, Lawson says:

"Unlike previous development plans, this plan was never presented to the Towers Board or the Society Hill Civic Association as a whole, and consequently has never received the community's input." He criticizes the "vague and incomplete drawings" with its "hotel tower, containing 350 rooms with 20 rooms per floor, [which] rises 19 stories above a six-story base of

ballrooms, meeting rooms, a health spa and pool."

He argues that "The 500-car parking garage is designed to serve the hotel, museum, and other activities. The seven-story garage (six floors above grade) is planned for the space north of the hotel and adjacent to the museum's new west wall, creating a narrow alley-like walkway between the hotel's entrance plaza and the stairs from the bridge at Walnut Street Plaza, which further reduces the access to and appeal of the river for residents."

**The community's response:** Negative reactions to the hotel plan, as expressed at the May meeting and at an earlier meeting in February, were in part out of surprise in seeing how far along the plans had come without the community's knowledge. For many, the Penn's Landing area in front of the Towers has been open space affording them unobstructed views of the riverscape and a public place to enjoy a park-like setting. They are used to it that way and resist the notion of change.

Specific opposition to the design, as expressed, for example, by Society Hill resident, **Penny Batcheler**, recently retired preservation architect at Independence National Historical Park, includes the following reasons: (1) It cuts pedestrians off from easy access to the river and has them walking through the drop-off traffic area. (2) The International Sculpture Garden's northernmost pedestrian walkways and planting area will have to be demolished to accommodate the new vehicular entrance to the hotel.

Ms. Batcheler has specific design recommendations for the hotel's developers. Praising the successful design of the I. M. Pei towers (Society Hill Towers) for its simplicity of materials, she suggests that the hotel be faced with concrete and glass so that it complements both the adjacent museum and the Pei towers. "Its glass would reflect the sky and thus reduce its monolithic potential."

Ms. Batcheler requests that "Project X" be defined and that public input be included for the remainder of the site planning.

## SHCA's Position

Several months ago, the Board of SHCA passed a resolution not to support any development without a comprehensive master plan for the entire waterfront. At this time, however, the Civic Association has taken no position in favor of or in opposition to the Bower plan, although some years ago it did approve the Welcome Partnership (upon which the Bower plan was based) to be the developer for Penn's Landing. The policy of the Board, in general, is to support the best interests of our community, and to consider most carefully the position of nearby neighbors, if a consensus can be reached among them. The hotel will be the main subject at SHCA's next Board meeting—Wednesday, July 19, 7:30 p.m., at the Old Pine Community Center. Interested community members are urged to attend.



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# HEAD HOUSE UPDATES

## First the good news!

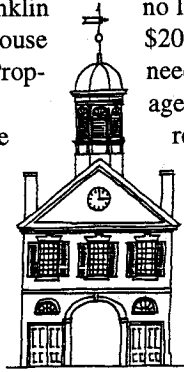
After five years of begging, nudging, and negotiating with “the powers that be,” The Head House Conservancy is happy to report that the missing and damaged Franklin Lamps at Head House Square have finally been replaced or fixed (the *street* lampposts, not the lanterns inside the arcade.)

You may recall the convoluted lighting situation over which city department is responsible for maintaining the lamps surrounding Head House and the Shambles: The Streets Department has been responsible for all the Franklin Lamps throughout Society Hill, with the exception of those at Head House Square, which were under the auspices of the Department of Public Property—DPP.

DPP had been barely maintaining the Head House lamps, so The Conservancy requested that the Streets Department begin to maintain them (replace broken fixtures, burned-out bulbs, etc.). The Streets Department agreed, contingent on DPP’s willingness to revamp the fixtures from incandescent light to brighter, sodium vapor lights—whereby they would become consistent with all the other Franklin Lamps in the neighborhood.

Well, the job was finally completed a couple of months ago, and our Head House lamps are no longer Society Hill’s orphans. The square is well lit, thanks to the perseverance of The Conservancy and the ponderous inter-office workings of City Hall.

(Editor’s note: Please see special thanks on this page to the Head House Merchants for conducting a doll-up party and a Franklin Lamp update on p 12.)



## Now for the bad news!

Anyone who has lived in this community for more than a few months probably knows that by the late 1980s, the Head House, America’s oldest remaining volunteer firehouse and our community’s important centerpiece, was in a seriously deteriorated condition that threatened its physical integrity.

The Head House Conservancy, a neighborhood grass-roots organization supported by the SHCA, has worked to restore and preserve historic Head House. With the gratifying response of grants matched by our generous neighbors, the Conservancy raised about \$250,000 and accomplished the comprehensive renovation and restoration of the historic structure, making it habitable and

desirable for a very worthwhile tenant—the South Street Headhouse District—which now occupies the building and helps contribute to our area’s general cleanliness and safety.

The job is all but done—with the exception of the exterior brick pointing! The Conservancy had expected to complete this final phase of the project no later than the fall of ’95. It has in its treasury \$20,000 which it hoped would pay for the much-needed brick work to protect against water damage. But the cost estimate for this final project recently came in at over \$50,000! The Conservancy is now forced to begin another fundraising campaign. It will seek grants again, but these grants are more likely to be won if matched by our community’s support.

Society Hill has always generously risen to the occasion. So consider this plea as a final cry for help, a last hurrah! Please join us in our efforts and help us complete the job we set out to do: Restore the Head House for now and for future generations.

For \$25, you can “purchase” a symbolic brick. A special rate of \$100 buys five bricks, and so on! Be as generous as your heart and pocketbook allow.

Please fill out the coupon on this page, and mail your tax-deductible donation.

## THE SQUARE DOLLS UP, THANKS TO HEAD HOUSE MERCHANTS

Have you noticed flower baskets hanging from the Franklin Lamps and the freshly painted lampposts and bollards (barrier posts) all around the Square?

Joe Misunas, owner of the Artful Dodger, spearheaded a general spruce-up campaign that involved all the merchants surrounding Head House, whether they got their hands dirty or just opened up their wallets.

Taking action to make the Square brighter and more attractive, as well as preparing for July 4th and Freedom Week, the merchants got out their paint brushes, donned their painting britches, and set to work on Monday, June 26.

Special thanks go also to Michael Harwood, Dickens Inn owner, and Al Teti, proprietor of the new jazz spot called Zoot, who helped rally support around the Square. Cohen’s Hardware, on South Street, contributed all the paint.

The merchants have also arranged to have the front of Head House lit up at night. So by the time you read this, you’ll be able to see the time by looking up at the newly illuminated clock after dark! Great job, guys!

### MAIL TO:

The Head House Conservancy  
302 South 2nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

Yes, I am proud of what we have accomplished, and I want to see Head House protected and restored!

Enclosed is my/our tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ which will purchase \_\_\_\_\_ brick(s).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# SHCA NEWS BITES

## SHCA ELECTION REPORT: NEW SECRETARY

The entire slate of nominated officers and directors was elected unanimously at the May 17th general membership meeting. For those who did not attend the meeting, please note the following change: In the previous issue of *The Reporter*, Mary Sturdivant was listed as being nominated for re-election as secretary. But she decided not to run—although she will continue to co-chair the Maintenance Committee, contribute to this newsletter, and be generally helpful whenever possible.

We are fortunate that Janet Cooke has agreed to fill the vacancy. She began her term at our June 21st Board meeting.

About Janet: Janet and her husband, Jim, moved here from Montclair, New Jersey, in August 1993. They chose Society Hill for the same reasons many other residents did, and they recognize the need to work to help keep it livable. Janet, a painter and consultant for arts and education, has developed a special school program for the Physick House, and is working on a similar program for the Powel House. She's also a volunteer guide for Historic Philadelphia, Inc. We're lucky to have her on board!

## TOWNHOUSE MAVEN

This summer you may see a tall fellow with a great mop of red hair and a moustache striding around our neighborhood, tape measure in one hand and field notes in the other, followed by a grad student or two. Say hi! He's Dr. Bernard Herman, professor in the Department of Art History at the University of Delaware.

His specialty is vernacular architecture, and he's researching groups of 18th and early 19th century houses in Society Hill, Old City, and Queen Village to compare the architectural and social history of old surviving enclaves in Philadelphia and other American cities (from Charleston to Portsmouth) with those in London and English port towns.

The professor would be delighted to discover additional houses possessing their original plans and interior finishes. If you would be willing to add your old house to this worthwhile research project, please contact Society Hill neighbor, Ellen Miller at 922-1273. We hope to share the results with you when available.

## ANY FICTION FANS OUT THERE?

Rita Whitlock, a writer and recent arrival on Spruce Street, is interested in forming a literary group that would meet once every other month to discuss primarily fiction (Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, Katherine Anne Porter, Ursula Le Guin) but she's open to nonfiction (John Edgar Wideman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, etc.).

She suggests holding meetings on weekday evenings, at a neighborhood restaurant over dinner. If response is greater than eight or ten people and people's preferences are diverse, two groups could be organized, with crossover between the two.

Contact Rita at 413-2052 if the prospect of a bi-monthly literary club beckons.

## McCALL PLAYLOT TO BECOME PARKING LOT?

Not if the neighbors can help it!

We've recently learned that the Philadelphia School District has given permission to turn over the McCall school yard for public parking at nights and on weekends for the South Street corridor.

For five years our neighbors have worked to beautify the school grounds, and the yard now is a working asset for community kids for skating, ball playing, rope jumping, etc. The yard should stay that way, according to parents of McCall kids.

In a letter to the Superintendent of Schools, Tony Biddle said, "We oppose the use of the school yard as a parking lot for transient clientele when there are full-time parking lots and garages nearby."

SHCA voted unanimously to support our neighbors.

*Editor's Note: St. Peter's School is providing its play yard for South Street's valet parking needs, but this is an independent school whose community has decided to benefit from the revenue it will bring.*

## PUMPING UP A HEALTH CLUB

Remember the defunct Society Hill Club—on South 5th Street between Locust Walk and Spruce Street? The building, once a part of the Independence Place high and low-rise development, has been vacant for years, but there's new hope for its revitalization. Eric Blumenfeld, principal at Abbots Square, (and a young man with muscle!) is considering a major investment to make this now abandoned site once again a happy, healthy community club. We'll keep you posted on this exciting possibility.

## SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

Society Hill Civic Association  
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### EDITOR

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or E-mail to cagaz@aol.com

### DESKTOP PUBLISHER

Norman Kline

### PRINTER

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## Letters to the Editors

### Queen for a day?

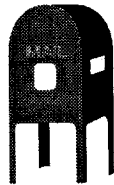
As much as I enjoyed the May 1995 issue of the *Society Hill Reporter*, I must take issue with one of the items. It seems to me there is no need to be reporting on the purchase of individuals using food stamps; certainly there is no need for the reporter to indulge his/her biases in a neighborhood newsletter by invoking stereotypes of "certified welfare queens." Given the nasty turn our political climate has taken recently and the particular problems faced by those who must rely on public assistance, the *Society Hill Reporter* risks reinforcing another stereotype—that of elitism and snobbery among the residents of Society Hill.

Public debate and social commentary are important features of American society. Snide comments of questionable substantive value should not be—especially not in a "friendly" neighborhood publication.

—Lesley Fredericks

*The elitist reporter apologizes for characterizing a woman he saw at a South Philly butcher shop who bought two pounds of frogs legs at \$12.75 a pound and paid for them in food stamps as "a certified welfare queen." That was certifiably politically incorrect. It was also an illegal abuse of food stamps by both the woman and the butcher, although you have to admire her style.*

—A.H.



### The Kosciuszko Story (continued)

I like the flavor you are adding to *The Reporter*. But I hope you will make a correction to the last issue:

The Kosciuszko House [at 3rd and Pine] was a promotion by Ed Pizak of Mrs. Paul's Kitchen fame, and the restoration was done well after I retired from the Park Service (1962) so I had nothing to do with its architectural restoration—which I think was a real success.

I believe the professional credit belongs to Penny Batcheler. The house is important because it still has its original fret cornice, more or less unique in this area.

The other unique cornice is the original one with carved wooden garlands on the west end of Holy Trinity RC church at Sixth and Spruce. Remarkably, it remained after a big fire in Victorian times that took off the rest of the roof.

—Charles E. Peterson

*We regretfully report that just a few weeks ago the Holy Trinity Church (built for the German Catholic community in 1789) has suffered a severe architectural setback: A portion of the interior ceiling has completely collapsed. Its congregation of only 100 members may welcome your support. Call our neighbor Eugene DiRe at 925-0544 to offer your help.*

—B.H.

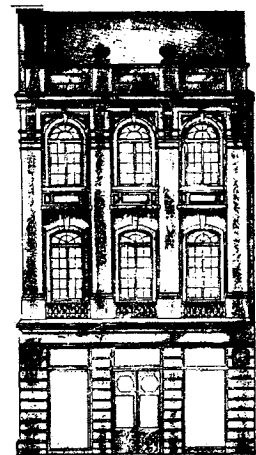
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# SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

**Office Phone: 629-1288. Judy Friedman, Administrative Assistant**

Name, Address	Work	Home	Fax
<b>OFFICERS</b>			
1996: Mel Buckman, President 641 Addison Street, 19147 .....	610-341-1000	925-2167	610-341-1099
1996: Larry Meehan, Vice President 602 S. Washington Sq., #2603, 19106 .....	925-8464		
1996: Lorna Katz Lawson, Vice President 200 Locust Street, #20B, 19106 .....	351-0560	922-0155	351-0565
1996: Bernice Hamel, Vice President 302 S. 2nd Street, 19106 .....	925-4363		925-0877
1996: Martha Moore, Treasurer 613 Addison Street, 19147 .....	977-6586	574-9025	
1996: Janet Cooke, Secretary 247 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....		413-0918	
1996: Richard Ostrander, Immediate Past President 408 S. 6th Street, 19147 .....	922-6179		

### DIRECTORS

<b>NORTHEAST QUADRANT</b>			
1997: Drew Stephan 237 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....	751-4244	922-4277	
1996: Constantine Stephano 233 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....	925-5218	923-4921	
1998: Fran Kirschner 2 Willings Alley Mews, 19106 .....	928-9066		

### NORTHWEST QUADRANT

1997: Joel Chernock 719 Spruce Street, 19106 .....	625-9852		
1996: George Compton 602 S. Washington Sq., #1202, 19106 .....	923-4912		
1998—Scott Denman 700 Locust Street, #3A, 19106 .....	665-3120	922-0315	

### SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

1997: Matt DeJulio 709 Pine Street, 19106 .....	610-964-4401	925-1909	
1996: Bernie Cleff 715 Pine Street, 19106 .....		922-4246	
1998—Nancy Hallman 720 Addison Street, 19147 .....		928-0889	

### SOUTHEAST QUADRANT

1997—Peter Whitehouse 413 S. 3rd Street, 19147 .....	413-3713	923-1532	627-7035
1996—Alan Halpern 113 Pine Street, 19106 .....	925-3431	925-1376	
1998—Margaret Munsch 411 S. 3rd Street, 19147 .....	829-3551	925-9847	

### CONDOMINIUM REPRESENTATIVES

<b>HOPKINSON HOUSE</b>			
Larry Meehan 602 S. Washington Sq. #2603, 19106 .....	925-8464		

### INDEPENDENCE PLACE

Helen-Ann Comstock 241 S. 6th Street, 19106 .....	925-6882		
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### SOCIETY HILL TOWERS

Terri Bartolozzi 210 Locust Street, #20B, 19106 .....			
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### PENNS LANDING SQUARE

Barbara Bagileo 130 Spruce Street, #14A, 19106 .....	592-9820		
1998—Scott Denman 700 Locust Street, #3A, 19106 .....	665-3120	922-0315	

Name, Address	Work	Home	Fax
<b>1995-1996 SHCA COMMITTEE CHAIRS</b>			
<b>HISTORIC PRESERVATION (HP)</b>			
Bernice Hamel 302 S. 2nd Street, 19106 .....		925-4363	925-0877
<b>POLITICAL ADVOCACY (HP Sub-committee)</b>			
Bernice Hamel (as above)			
Becky Stoloff 234 Spruce Street, 19106 .....		627-4910	627-4031
<b>EDUCATION (HP Sub-committee)</b>			
Rosemarie Scarpulla 240 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....		925-3003	
Matt DeJulio 709 Pine Street, 19106 .....	610-964-4401	925-1909	
<b>OVERSIGHT (HP Sub-committee)</b>			
George Scarpulla 240 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....		935-3003	
JoAnne Buller 241 Delancey Street, 19106 .....		925-4784	
<b>LEGISLATIVE</b>			
Scott Denman 700 Spruce Street, #3A, 19106 .....	665-3120	922-0315	
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>			
Matt DeJulio 709 Pine Street, 19106 .....	610-964-4401	925-1909	
Mary Sturdivant 241 S. 6th Street, #1111, 19106 .....		928-1203	
<b>SOCIETY HILL REPORTER</b>			
Bernice Hamel 302 S. 2nd Street, 19106 .....		925-4363	925-0877
Alan Halpern 113 Pine Street, 19106 .....		925-3431	925-1376
Richard Ostrander 408 S. 6th Street, 19147 .....		922-6179	
<b>TOWN WATCH</b>			
Barbara Bagileo 130 Spruce Street, 19106 .....	923-780	592-9820	
<b>TV &amp; MOVIE PRODUCTION LIAISON</b>			
Joy Lindy 124 Delancey Street, 19106 .....		922-4042	
<b>ZONING</b>			
Lorna Katz Lawson 200 Locust Street, #20B, 19106 .....	351-0560	922-0155	351-0565
George Compton 602 S. Washington Sq., #1202, 19106 .....		923-4912	
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD MAINTENANCE</b>			
Harris Nadley 325 S. 3rd Street, 19106 .....		925-4282	
Mary Sturdivant 241 S. 6th Street, #1111, 19106 .....		928-1203	
<b>STREET TREES</b>			
Jean Bodine 401 Cypress Street, 19106 .....		627-8393	
<b>RIVERBOAT GAMBLING</b>			
1996: Richard Ostrander 408 S. 6th Street, 19147 .....		922-6179	
1996: Larry Meehan 602 S. Washington Sq., #2603, 19106 .....		925-8464	



# BIDDLEMANIA!

## Setting the Record Straight

Every once in a while published material contains a major blooper. When the printer flipped over the picture of the "Biddle House" at 715 Spruce Street in *Chilton's Guide To Historic Society Hill*, (No. 42), we were more than a little embarrassed. The photo on the right (this time, right side up—we hope!) does justice to one of the most aesthetically pleasing, as well as historically significant townhouses in our neighborhood.

Here's the story about the Biddle House, from the guidebook:

*This large Greek Revival home was completed in 1820 for Whitton Evens, a merchant and ship owner in Far Eastern trade, a lucrative but risky occupation. Impulsively, he directed one of his captains to bring him an elephant he named Columbus, along with its Hindu trainer, and a giant tortoise. These "pets" were kept in the backyard, much to the delight of his young relatives and neighborhood children. (Evens was a bachelor.) When Evens went bankrupt and gave up the house, the elephant went to the Menagerie at 8th and Walnut where elephant rides cost 5 cents. The elephant went berserk one day, killed its trainer, was shot, stuffed and featured at Peale's Museum, then located at 6th and Chestnut Streets.*

*The most widely known occupant of the house, from 1828-1839, was Nicholas Biddle, diplomat, who later became director of the Second Bank of the United States. His controversy with President Andrew Jackson who refused to renew the Bank's charter was the stumbling block of his career and three years later he left Spruce Street and retired to his estate, Andalusia, north of the City.*

Incidentally, the estate at Andalusia is still occupied by Nicholas Biddle's descendant, James Biddle, a board member and recently retired chairman of The Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. His cousin, Tony Biddle, is a Society Hill resident who lives in our community with his wife, Karen, and their three young children, including two-year-old Nicholas Biddle!

To all our Biddle neighbors and friends: Sorry we turned "your" house upside down!

**Guidebooks still available!** If you don't have your own personal copy of this one-of-a-kind overview of Society Hill, please call the SHCA office at 629-1288. Copies are available at \$1.50 each, payable to the "Society Hill Fund."

—Matt DeJulio



—Photo by Matt DeJulio



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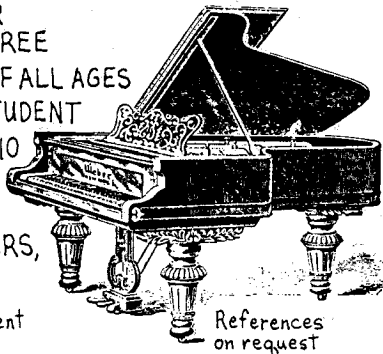
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## POSIES...

**For Dishing the Dirt.** Our nominee for the greenest thumb in Society Hill goes to Amanda Mott, who tends the minuscule surround under the tree in front of St. Peter's House at 313 Pine. She's put in about a dozen varieties of flowers on the micro-plot and comes around daily with her watering can to keep them from getting parched. It looks like an English country garden, but after all, Amanda was born in merry, old.



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## THE GRAPEVINE

**Local Boy Makes Good.** We recently received in the mail a copy of the latest edition of the St. Peter's School Bulletin which cheerfully burred about its students and its alumni and the skills they developed while at St. Peter's. One of their best boys—judging by the amount of space they gave him—was John G. Bennett, Jr. (Jack) from the class of '52.

What is Jack doing now, you ask? He is president and founder of an international organization which functions as consultants and managers to foundations, corporations, bank trust departments, affluent individuals and other members of the philanthropic community. His organization? You may have heard of it. It's called the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy.

Happily, he never was given the opportunity to invest any of St. Peter's funds.

**Local Boy Makes Good II.** Jack Bennett moved to Radnor, but he never forgot the neighborhood where he went to school. He was made a director of *We the People*, The National Constitution Center that proposes to build a structure near the Liberty Bell "to engage all Americans in understanding the Constitution, its relevance to our daily lives...so we can understand our rights and responsibilities." Long after New Era was portrayed as a Ponzi-like devourer of up to a quarter billion dollars of charitable contributions, *We the People* was sending out press releases with Bennett's name still gracing its stationery as a director. Now that's thrift. Ben Franklin would have been proud.

—Alan Halpern

## We Don't Have Dick Ostrander to Kick Around Anymore

Saying hello to new SHCA president Mel Buckman, as comforting as it is, also means saying good-bye to former president Dick Ostrander, as discomfiting as that is. Dick had probably been president of the Civic Association longer than any previous office holder. The official term limits are three years, but Dick took over the last half-year term of his predecessor, Becky Stoloff, in October 1991, and held the office until his term expired this past May.

Asked to recap the accomplishments of his administration, Dick was quick to mention:

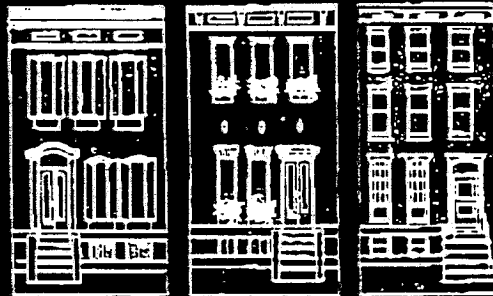
His role as mediator in the resolution of the Three Bears Park controversy (whereby the garishly colored playground equipment was repainted with more appropriate colors);

His role in the creation of the HeadHouse/South Street District and as a Board member (where \$1/4 million was spent on sanitation, traffic control, and significantly, the establishment of a 24-hour police mini-station at 917 South Street);

The ever-growing accomplishment of SHCA'S "Project Street Trees," which resulted in 100 newly planted trees and the removal of dead ones (whereby residents received \$100 subsidies acquired through SHCA's State legislative grant funds);

The efforts of the Zoning Committee which works to keep the neighborhood both contemporary and historic.

Dick will continue to work with the Association on projects he began—among them, getting enough advertising to keep this newsletter healthy. The issues he predicts will cause the most furor for the current Association officers are the proposed riverfront hotel on Penn's Landing and, of course, the issue of riverboat gambling. You can bet the farm on that one!



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# STREETSCAPES

## LET THERE BE LIGHT!

After two years of negotiations between the Civic Association and the Streets Department, missing and damaged Franklin Lamps throughout the neighborhood are scheduled to be replaced beginning in September. (See related Head House article, on page 5.) The lamps, based on sketches drawn by Benjamin Franklin, have served as a distinctive and unifying element in the overall design of our community since they were first installed by the Redevelopment Authority at the time of Society Hill's rebirth in 1965!

At first, the Department's lighting engineer, Joe Doyle, had proposed replacing the lamps with fiber-glass poles which would alter their appearance. But SHCA's Historical Preservation Committee rejected that proposal and worked with the Department to come up with a solution we could all live with (and love!). Thus, the "new" Franklin lamps will look the same as the ones we have now, and will be made of the same material—cast aluminum. But the bulbs will be about twenty percent brighter!

## PATCHWORK HIGHWAYS

Numerous streets in Society Hill, such as 2nd and Delancey, are constructed of granite Belgian blocks, which gives our community much of its historical charm. Over the years, however, many of these blocks have been replaced by unsightly asphalt patches.

The corner of 2nd Street, near Spruce, acquired another sloppy patch just last month. We've been promised that 2nd from Spruce to Lombard is on the Streets Department's "official list" to

be completely reconstructed, but this project is scheduled for the unforeseen future. Reason: They have no employees on payroll qualified to replace Belgian blocks, so they hire outside contractors for this task. With no money in their current budget, they hope to get the job done with Federal Improvement Contract funds, Newt willing, but this is not expected to begin for at least two to three years. Meanwhile the ugly encroachment of asphalt continues.

## POLICE PATROLS

Society Hill now has four officers patrolling its streets on bikes. One bike was a donation by the SHCA! In addition to our neighborhood, the officers patrol Old City, Washington Square West, and sections of Northern Liberties. The bicycle police work in teams of two, seven days a week—with shifts from either 9 am-5 pm or 5 pm-1 am.

Captain Joseph O'Donnell, commander of the 6th Police District, said that the bicycles will complement other patrols in Society Hill, which include a sector car and two foot-beat officers. In addition to these regular 6th District patrols, units from the Delaware Avenue Detail are supposed to patrol Society Hill from Delaware Avenue to 5th Street. However, the anti-crime team (ACT), a plain clothes detail, is no longer operating in Society Hill because of a decrease in auto-theft, according to O'Donnell.

Commander Lt. Robert McCarthy, of the South Street Detail, said that foot-beat officers on South St. walk as far north as Spruce St., from Front to 4th Streets. Its bicycle patrol recently expanded from two officers to four and travels north to Spruce St.

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- Legislative/Liquor Control     Town Watch
- Membership                         Tree Tenders
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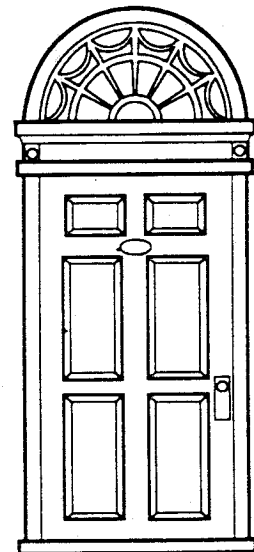
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## ZONING MATTERS

by Lorna Katz Lawson, Zoning Co-Chair

### Mother Bethel Church Parking Lot

**M**other Bethel Church, at 6th and Lombard Sts., had applied for a use variance to legalize the commercial parking which has been ongoing at their existing parking lot along Lombard St., extending to the back of the church and across to Addison St. Rental of the space raises funds for the church, and serves both neighbors and the restaurant TiraMisu's valet parking operation.

After testimony from two church members, Pastor Leath, SHCA and a neighbor, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) approved a 3-year temporary use variance with the following conditions: The sidewalk must be repaired; adequate lighting must be provided for safe operation of the facility; no signs will be allowed.

Hopefully, revenue from the rentals will be able to offset the costs to improve the sidewalk to the quality level of the 6th Street side of the property.

### Pearl Harbor Memorial

*Proposed for Front St., just south and contiguous to the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial*

A special public meeting for neighbors was called in April to review early architectural plans for this memorial to sailors killed in the sneak attack which precipitated America's entrance into World War II. Plans were presented by the group's architect, Howard Lichtman.

Concerns of neighbors included: how the memorial would be maintained; the height of the wall, which could provide a harbor for muggers or vagrants; and fear of losing a well-used dog-walking venue.

A suggestion to integrate the memorial walls with the retaining wall of I-95, as a means of eliminating hiding space for unsavory characters, will be investigated by the architect with PennDot. Alternatively, he will look into lowering the walls. In any case, there will be no design development until sufficient funds have been raised to build the memorial and endow a fund for its maintenance in perpetuity.

### Baker Street Bakery

Hopefully by September, this wonderful bread bakery, which has successful shops in Chestnut Hill and Ardmore (formerly known as Breadsmith), may open its doors on 5th Street, next to Zeke's Deli and across from the SuperFresh. In anticipation of signing a lease for the vacant space, the owner, Tim Ivory, called SHCA to inquire whether there might be special design restrictions concerning the facade.

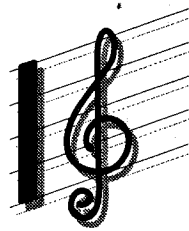
### Addison Street

Zoning Committee co-chair George Compton asked Licenses and Inspection's District Inspector about the conversion of an accessory building on the south side of a Pine Street property that had been proceeding without zoning or building permits. We hope that L & I has been successful in halting the work until reviews and permits have been put in place.

### 234 S. 3rd Street

Despite the owner's March filing (3/23/95) of an application to increase the number of apartment units from two to three, no posting has been observed at the site.

## Free Afternoon Concerts



From colonial songs to jazz, sponsored by the *Historic Neighborhood Consortium*—for summer Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 2 pm, beginning July 7 to August 27.

The London Trio, a group featuring music of the 18th century, will perform pieces written by a friend of Benjamin Franklin, Madame Brillouin, as well as music favored by Thomas Jefferson, who was an accomplished violinist. The group will perform on Fridays at 2 pm: July 7 at Carpenters' Hall; July 14 at Judge Lewis Quadrangle (Independence Mall); July 21 at the American Philosophical Society and July 28 at the Betsy Ross House.

**Sundays in our neighborhood:** July 16th, colonial songs will be performed by Rebecca Field at St. Peter's Church. On August 6th, organist Peter Stukane performs at Old Pine Church, and Old St. Joseph's Church is the site for organist Eugene Viscuzzi on August 20th. Other Society Hill sites for these free afternoon concerts are the Powel House and Mother Bethel Church.

**Other sites** include the National Museum of American Jewish History, where on Sunday, July 16, the Medina Klezzmer Band will perform *Klezzmer*, music of Eastern Europe.

For more information about these concerts and other historic district events, call Historic Philadelphia Inc. (HPI) at **1-800-76-HISTORY**, which is generously supporting the series of concerts.

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