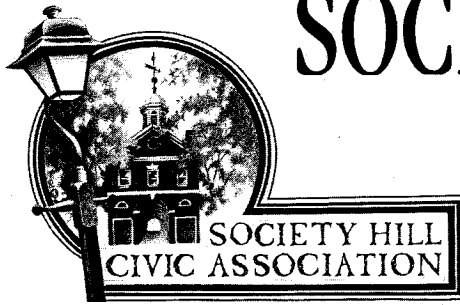


# SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

Newsletter of the Society Hill Civic Association  
Issued November 22, 1997



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Mel Buckman

### The Renewal of the South Street/Headhouse District

The South Street/Headhouse District is a public authority, chartered by City Council in 1992, to enhance the South Street business district and increase its business by bringing in more and higher caliber clientele. It is managed by a Board of Directors, almost exclusively business and property owners in the District.

Its president is Steve Kujolic, owner of J-Brite Cleaners at 5th and South. Dick Ostrander, my predecessor as president of this association, is its executive director. Its legal counsel is Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel, a Philadelphia law firm, of which Ann G. Verber, Esq., is a partner. She is the former president of Queen Village Neighbors Association but is now a resident of Society Hill. The District has extensive powers, most important the power to tax the commercial properties in its territory. Its budget is approximately \$325,000 per year.

#### South Street Improvement

South Street certainly has improved in the past five years; and surely, a good bit of this improvement has been through the work of the District. But much of the improvement was through the work of the City and the expenditure of City money. The bridge at Front and South Streets and the re-paving and re-lighting of South Street were both City projects.

The District's principal activity, so far as neighborhood improvement is concerned, has been to have the sidewalks cleaned under a contract with the Center City District (similar what SHCA is doing with our Project SweepStakes). Not everyone is satisfied with even this aspect of the District's work, although I believe there has been a distinct improvement.

#### Protection of residential neighbors

But much remains to be done. The District's aim is to bring more visitors to the South Street corridor, but it has not taken any action to protect its nearby residential neighbors from the additional noise, congestion,



clutter, or worse, that such crowds of additional visitors bring. Some of its efforts have indeed been antithetical to the best interests of our communities; in these cases, District programs that could heavily impact neighboring communities were not reviewed with these communities prior to the District's sponsorship of them.

For example, the District sought to relieve its parking problem by using the McCall School playground as a parking lot on weekends. Only an alert parents' organization and strong protests by them, supported by our Civic Association, prevented this from happening.

#### Cafe at the Shambles

More recently, without considering the effect on our community, the District decided to promote the Cafe at the Shambles on Second Street. In its original format, this would have been a 300-seat outdoor cafe, with Second Street closed to traffic on both its east and west sides for substantial periods of time. We all know the controversy that this project provoked, some of which still continues. But at least, through the efforts of the Civic Association, the scope of that project has been reduced, and the plan to close the west side of Second Street to traffic has apparently been shelved. (On page 2 you can see the results of our neighborhood survey regarding the cafe.)

Another example is that the District encouraged the development of the NewMarket property as a mega-supermarket for SuperFresh. SuperFresh was persuaded to give up this location only after neighbors lobbied against it based on the intolerable volume of

traffic such a store would demand.

#### Needs of neighbors

There are other examples of the conduct of the District in conflict with the needs of its neighbors. Most of these conflicts could have been avoided if the District had paid attention to the needs of its neighbors, or if they had shown concern for residents' quality-of-life issues before embarking on those projects.

The District, however, has a policy of not involving its neighbors in such matters. It was not always that way. When the District was first conceived, its organizers recognized that it would have an effect on surrounding neighborhoods, and community participation was part of the process through which the District was first authorized. Mr. Ostrander was then president of this Association and acted as our representative; while Ms. Verber acted as the representative of Queen Village as that community

*Continued on page 3*

## Mark Your Calendar

### December Board Meeting

Wed., December 17, 7:30 pm  
Old Pine Community Center  
4th & Lombard Streets

### January Board Meeting

Wed., January 21, 6:30 pm  
Refreshments, 7:30 pm

### General Membership Meeting, 8 pm

Special Slide Presentation by City's  
Planning Commission:  
"Preliminary Vision Plan for  
Historic Philadelphia"

#### Also Guest Speaker:

Don Meginley, Executive Director,  
Preservation Alliance

Tentatively scheduled at  
Sheraton Society Hill Hotel

See page 16 for details.

**\*\* Transmit Conf. Report \*\***

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WINNERS!!

## SHOW YOUR PANE FOR INSTANT GAIN

10-30-97

*Want an instant 5% GAIN in the value of your home?*



Our informal survey of City Paper home listings shows that homes on the market which display their historical worth by indicating when they were built and for whom, run approximately \$10-20K higher in value than similar homes on the same block which do not reveal their historical vintage. Maybe its just that these owners also take better care of their building's maintenance, but why not make your home a showcase for tourists and fellow neighbors to learn and appreciate history?

It costs nothing, and if you don't know the history of your home, just drop us a line and we will look it up in our historical register. A free window pane for you to display will be sent within 10 days. Drop a line with your request to Bernice Hamel, at..... Matt DeJulio will do the typesetting gratis.

## MEMBERSHIP

If you have not already received it, be on the lookout in your mail for a 1998 membership renewal letter and brochure. Just clip the perforated portion of the form and send along with a check for \$40 to SHCA, Box 3, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

There will be no dues increase this year. But we hope some of us with help underwrite the cost of Project Sweep Stakes, Tree Tenders, and Town Watch, with extra donations. Besides receiving the material in the mail, the entire neighborhood will be blanketed with a mail drop so that we can cover all non-members.

If we can get the total membership up from 664 to 800 we will be able to underwrite the full cost of Project Sweep Stakes (our special contracted weekly sidewalk cleaning) for the entire year. Don't delay in responding so that we do not have to waste postage on a reminder as we had to do with over 300 members last year.

--Mary Sturdivant, Matt DeJulio, Membership Co-Chairs

# Coalition Fights for New Library Branch

Five neighborhood associations have joined together to push for a branch of the Library of Philadelphia to serve communities east of Broad Street. The newly formed East Philadelphia Coalition for a Free Library Branch was created to address the needs of more than 25,000 residents in this area who do not have access to convenient library facilities.

The Coalition is comprised of members from the following organizations: the Society Hill Civic Association, Queen Village Neighbors Association, Washington Square West Civic Association, Old City Civic Association and South Street Neighbors Association

Although the Free Library has more than 50 branches, there has been no branch in East Central Philadelphia since the closing of the Mercantile branch some years ago. The Southwark branch at 7th and Carpenter Streets, located on the edge of the communi-

ties represented by the Coalition (and presently closed for repairs) is inadequate to meet the needs of neighboring communities in addition to those it already serves.

The Coalition believes that having access to library facilities is critical not only for the population in general, but especially for young families who often move away when their children reach school age because of the school and library facilities available in other communities

After studying the location of the nearest Free Library branches (Rittenhouse Square to the west, 4th and Girard to the north, and 7th and Carpenter to the south), the Coalition has set its sights on (or near) Washington Square as the most appropriate location for a new branch

Members of the Coalition have already met with Councilman Frank DiCicco (who is very supportive of this initiative) and represen-

tatives from the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The group aims to make this an important issue for these City officials, as well as for the Mayor. The Coalition is in the process of formulating its strategy for garnering the political support necessary to get an allocation in the City's capital and operating budgets within the next year or two. Here are two ways that you can help

1. Let your representatives know how you feel about this issue. Please call or write to Mayor Edward Rendell, Councilman Frank DiCicco, as well as Councilpersons at large Jim Kenney and Happy Fernandez. They need to know how important a library branch is to their constituents.
2. Join the Coalition. Call or e-mail Liza Seltzer at 625-7995/LizaNicker@aol.com if you' like to get involved.

## DARTS & LAURELS

**Bah, Humbug Dart** to the Fire Department for enforcing a ban on real Christmas trees in high-rises this holiday season. Come on guys, can it be more dangerous than all those dead ficus trees with twinkling lights in those apartments.

**Stop and Smell the Roses Dart** to the Philadelphia Carriage companies for those olfactory offenses committed by the equine employees in their duty. A regular bridle path down 4th Street was so foul the other evening we could not even stop to chat about Historic Preservation with committee members. Thank God, no one wants to preserve or restore 18th century smells in this neighborhood. Can't they add something to the horses' food like chlorophyll to eliminate some of the odor of the urine?

**You Light Up Our Life Laurels** to all our neighbors who keep the lamps and candles burning in their windows, especially now that it is getting darker earlier. It makes the place friendlier and helps discourage criminal activity.

**Come On, Baby, Light My Fire Dart** to the pyromaniac who set fire to the public toilets at the HeadHouse. However, those toilets were so foul that the South Street HeadHouse District was up for a Stop and Smell the Roses Dart, but we cannot encourage vandalism even if it results in a public service improvement.

## Updates

### Outdoor Cafe at The Head House Shambles

#### Results of Community Survey

The following limitations and guidelines about the cafe, as described in the last issue of *The Reporter*, include:

The cafe will be located between the Dickens Inn and the Shambles, necessitating the closure of the east side of Second Street. Seasonal operation from Memorial Day through September; Open Friday & Saturday from 4 to 11 pm & Sunday from 12 to 6 pm. Table Service only (no take-out or bar only); Glass & chinaware used to reduce litter; String Quartet music, no amplification.

Neighbors were requested to respond by mail or fax prior to November 8. They arrived as follows: In favor: 34; Opposed: 26

This was a poor response, considering that we have 664 household memberships in our civic association and hundreds more in the community. What we can infer from this minuscule showing is that only those people who felt passionately either in favor or opposed were willing to take the time to indicate their preference and go to the trouble of mailing or faxing their responses. Some, however, felt so strongly that they did both, though we counted them only once!

### Society Hill Club

Hal Wheeler of Wheeler Development Company attended the SHCA Board meeting held at The Down Town Club on October 15. He reported that he was in the process of taking title of the Society Hill Club and that he hoped a letter of support by our association would expedite a review by the City Zoning Board to remediate structural violations of the property.

According to Mr. Wheeler's optimistic timetable, his plan is to quickly take title of the property and immediately make these important repairs. Then he will lease the property to Town Sports International, the third largest health club operator in the country. Town Sports intends to spend \$2 million on a complete renovation of the facility, including the building, the tennis courts and the pool.

It plans to open in early spring of this year. Needless to say, the Board voted unanimously to support this project, and many directors have already promised to become members of this state-of-the-art health club situated in our own backyard!

## President's Message

*Continued*

association's president.

### Community representation

It was widely understood that neighboring communities would have continuing representation on its Board. The District, however, has not made such representation available. In fact, it has steadfastly refused to do so. In 1995, after my initial election as president of SHCA, I responded to a public notice from the District seeking Board nominees by submitting the names of three Society Hill residents.

The applications were not acknowledged, and, in fact, were ignored. Upon inquiry, I was told that a representative from a community would only be *considered* after some undefined period of service on District committees.

Of course, this was not in the cards! SHCA is a volunteer organization; our members are not paid, and it is unrealistic for someone to give substantial time and effort just for a chance to be *considered* by the District Board.

### Legal life ends in a few months

The District's legal life ends in a few months; *City Council is in the process of considering a bill that would extend the District's authority for an additional 20 years.* There is no provision for community representation in this bill and there are no stated compelling reasons for the requested 20-year term.

Last June Fluffy Palmer, president of South Street Neighbors, Alan Hunter, president of Queen Village Neighbors, and I met with Councilman Frank DiCicco and requested that each surrounding community be allowed two dedicated seats on the District's Board—to total 25% of the Board's membership. We wanted a substantial voice, but nothing close to control. We felt this would be an effective arrangement from everyone's point of view. At Mr. DiCicco's recommendation, we confirmed our request by letter.

### Testimony before City Council

No action had been taken on that request; and on October 28 the bill came before a Council committee consisting of Mr. DiCicco, Councilman at Large James F. Kenney, and Councilwoman Anna Verna. Fluffy Palmer, Alan Hunter and I all testified in support of the renewal of the District, but with dedicated Board representation for our neighboring communities and for a renewal term limited to five years, as in the original authorization.

Other witnesses also testified with regard to these issues. Unfortunately, the three-member Council committee announced that it would support the District's request for a renewal of 20 years and would recommend this to City Council.

### Another meeting scheduled

What next? At press time, another meeting with participants from all three involved communities has been scheduled with Mr. DiCicco, who assures us that the legislative process is not yet over, and that he will try to satisfy community concern regarding these two issues—that there be official representation on the Board by adjacent neighborhoods, and that a compromise term, shorter than 20 years, be authorized.

We'll let you know the results. Stay tuned!

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#### SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

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Next Deadline: December 15  
Mail contributions to above address  
Fax to (215) 925-0877  
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# Committee Reports

## Historic Preservation Committee

### 1. Show Your Pane For Instant Gain

**W**ant an instant 5% GAIN in the value of your home? Our informal survey of *City Paper* home listings shows that homes on the market which display historical information by indicating when they were built and for whom, run approximately \$10-20K higher in value than similar homes on the same block which do not reveal their vintage. Maybe it's just that these owners also take better care of their building's maintenance, but why not make your home a showcase for tourists and fellow neighbors to learn about and better appreciate the history of the community?

It costs nothing, but if you don't know the history of your home, contact us and we will look it up in our register. Just call Bernice Hamel at 925-3285 —giving your name, address and phone number. Or fax her at 925-0877. She'll get back to you and then pass the information on to Matt DeJulio who will do the typesetting. You'll receive a free window "pane" to display within about 10 days, gratis.

### 2. Man Full Of Trouble Tavern—Still In Trouble

**B**elieve it or not! The 18th century tavern building at the northeast corner of 2nd and Spruce is not abandoned. It is owned by the University of Pennsylvania, which acquired it as a gift from the previous owner, the Knauer Foundation, which closed the museum's doors in 1994.

Recently we spoke with the University staff person responsible for the building's maintenance. Here's the scoop: We've been assured that before winter sets in, the building's exterior will receive much-needed emergency repairs—including carpentry, roofing, and a fresh coat of paint.

The spalling bricks and interior renovation of the building, however, is another story: the costs are roughly twice what was expected, and the University has been unable to find a donor who will kick in the necessary dollars to make the building habitable. But they're still searching.

Eventually, the University hopes the building will provide convenient housing for visiting scholars associated with the University's Center for Judaic Studies located in our corner of the world at Walnut Street between 5th and 6th Streets.

### 3. Donation to the Preservation Alliance

**A**t the October Board meeting, SHCA unanimously voted to make a \$500 donation to the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia—the only grassroots, advocacy group that works on behalf of all preservation efforts in the region. It's the least we could do, since the Alliance will soon be working closely with Society Hill to assist in the process of becoming a city-certified historic district.

## Membership Committee

**T**he good news! There will be no dues increase for 1998. Meanwhile, if you have not already received our materials, be on the lookout for the SHCA 1998 membership renewal letter and brochure. Just clip the perforated portion of the form and send it along with your check of \$40 to SHCA, Box 3, Philadelphia, PA, 19106. Please respond promptly. Last year we needed to send renewal reminder letters to over 300 members—a sad waste of postage!

The bad news! We also ask that you help underwrite the cost of

Project SweepStakes, Tree Tenders and Town Watch with a donation above-and-beyond the call of membership dues. Please be generous and kick in an extra \$10, or, better still, consider doubling your \$40 renewal check. . . . Of course, if we can increase our total membership number for 1997 from 664 households to 800, we would be able to fully underwrite, for the entire year of 1998, the total cost of Project SweepStakes (our special contracted weekly sidewalk cleaning program).

## Town Watch

### Why We Need Town Watch!

**R**ecently at the corner of 2nd & Spruce Streets, at 6:45 p.m., a woman was mugged at gun-point, her handbag stolen. This was the third mugging incident in a one-week period in that immediate area. We must demand better police protection.

But meanwhile, a visible and vigorous Town Watch program can be an excellent deterrent to opportunistic crime. Although some people feel that the program will not help, we are certain that the more foot traffic in an area will decrease the likelihood of crime, and Town Watch creates a greater presence in the neighborhood.

Please join your Town Watch team (and meet some nice neighbors, while you're at it!) Remember: the main point of Town Watch efforts is to report to the police anything we see or hear that alarms or could potentially harm us—such as vagrants, suspicious activity, illegal dumping or any quality-of-life disturbances.

Town Watch now has a new Chairperson—Board Director Barbara Gelman. Our previous chair, Barbara Bagilio, has retired after several years. We thank Barbara B. for her efforts, and hope that Society Hill's Town Watch program can be newly re-invigorated under Barbara G.'s direction. Please join Town Watch. The bi-weekly schedule through January is as follows:

Saturday, December 6	8- 9:30 pm
Tuesday, December 16	7 - 8:30 pm
Wednesday, January 7	7:30 - 9 pm
Tuesday, January 20	7:30-9 pm

Meet your team under the Shambles at 2nd & Pine Streets. For more information, please call Barbara G. at 574-5708, and leave a message. She'll get back to you to answer any of your questions.

## Project Sweepstakes

### Sidewalk Sweep Program Fully Funded To End Of Year!

**I**n October the SHCA Board of Directors voted to cover the cost of the sidewalk sweep program for the remainder of 1997. (This program substantially improves our streetscape when on Tuesdays, following each Monday night trash pickup, the Center City District cleans up street debris resulting from the Sanitation Department's less than thorough clean-up.)

To recap the year, the increase in 1997 dues covered the cleanup for five months. Additional contributions from members paid for two months, and the Society Hill Fund matched those two months. A contribution from the Society Hill Towers paid for the month of October and the SHCA treasury paid for two months.

Since the last newsletter was published, additional contributions to this program were made by the following generous neighbors: George &

*Continued on page 6*

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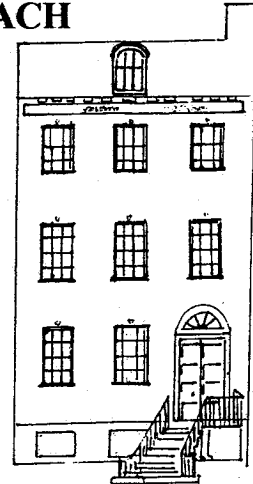
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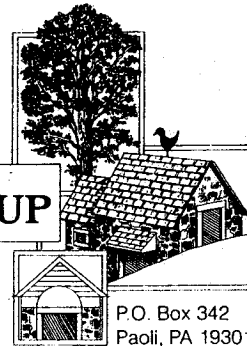
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## Committee Reports

*Continued*

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The challenge now is to reach the goal of 800 dues paying SHCA members for 1998. That will assure a successful year-long SweepStakes Program while requiring no special appeals for additional funds. So, if you appreciate the cleaner streets, please renew or join now, and urge your neighbors to do the same.

*Late Flash! \$800 was just received from the One Independence Place Owners Association. This donation will cover 2/3 of December expenses (thus saving SHCA treasury funds). Thank you!*

### Homeless Intervention Committee

Joan Less, Chairperson of SHCA's Homeless Intervention Committee, reports that the committee is conducting a special Holiday glove collecting project to benefit participants of the Hall Mercer Dual-Diagnosis Program. If you have warm gloves that you do not use, they surely would benefit these folks. So please call Joan at 625-9849 and she will tell you where the drop-off point will be or will make arrangements to collect them. Thank you.



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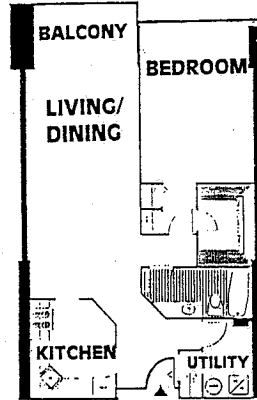
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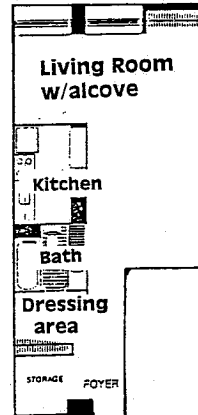
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Large Studio with alcove.

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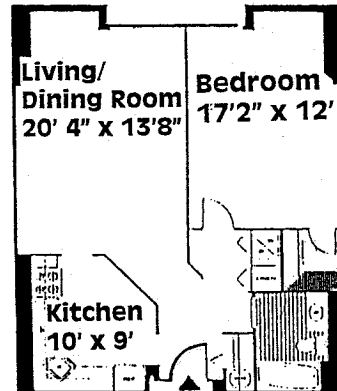
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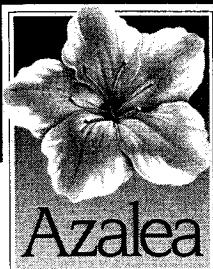
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# SUNDAY BRUNCH

Relax and enjoy a spectacular Sunday Brunch at our award-winning Azalea Restaurant.

Begin with an assortment of international cheeses, select fresh fruit and berries. Our smoked Norwegian salmon, whitefish salad and an assortment of freshly baked breads are outstanding. Or, select a three-egg omelette prepared specifically to your order by our attending chef. Azalea always features regional foods—Lancaster Brand breakfast meats and local seasonal vegetables. Top it all off with a tempting selection of pastries, cakes and tarts from our distinctive Dessert Buffet.

In addition, Azalea offers an À La Carte Brunch menu, which includes the full Buffet and your entree selection.

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By the time you read this, the SHCA benefit performance of "Family Secrets" will be over. If you didn't join us then, be sure to see Alice Manning in this hilarious one-woman show at the Cabaret Theater at NewMarket. Call the box office at 627-9801 for tickets (\$30-35, Tuesday-Sunday evenings, matinees Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday).

### Correction

The Reporter's Editorial Board regrets the error made in publishing the "Ingres Outre" Dart in the previous issue. This newsletter's policy regarding Darts & Laurels is that Darts, unless directed toward politicians or other public figures, must be general or at least anonymous. Our apologies to Captain Robinson.

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RENEWAL MATERIALS  
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**PAINT IT YOURSELF!  
ON SOUTH STREET**

Philadelphia's ultimate paint-your-own pottery store has opened its doors at 223 South Street. Artists @ Work is owned by Queen Village resident Brad Huberman, who was amazed by a platter painted by his 3 year old nephew at a paint-your-own pottery store in California, and decided to open his own studio. "I loved the idea that anyone could paint pottery--whether they had an artistic background or no artistic experience at all."

The store is user-friendly for the "artistic" and "artistically challenged". It features personalized instruction, and illustrated step-by-step guide books to make painting easier. Once guests personalize their own masterpiece in this clean and friendly studio, Artists @ Work will glaze it and fire it in their kilns to make a functional work of art.

This contemporary studio offers artistic fun that comes in over 300 shapes, ranging from entire sets of dishes to coffee mugs, vases, piggy banks and platters--everything is functional and food safe.

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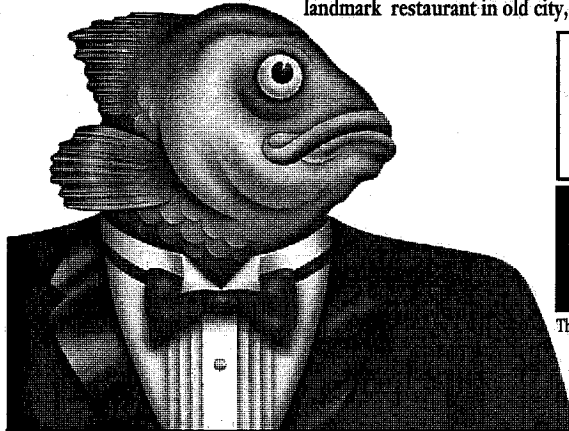
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# Society Hill 1997 Holiday Agenda

**November 30**

4:00 pm Old Christ Church. I Advent - Lessons and carols

**December 2**

12:30 pm The Bourse. Salvation Army Quartet - in the Grand Court

**December 5**

8:00 pm Old Christ Church. First Friday Organ Concert (Ken Cowan, Asst. Organist Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City)

12:30 pm The Bourse. Creighton Elementary School Choir - in the Grand Court

1- 7:00 pm St. Peter's. Holiday Sale - Trees, wreaths, greens, gifts, books

**December 6**

9 am- 7 pm St. Peter's. Holiday Sale - Trees, wreaths, greens, gifts, books

**December 7**

9 am- 4 pm St. Peter's. Holiday Sale - Trees, wreaths, greens, gifts, books

3:30 pm St. George's Church. Seventeenth Annual Christmas Musical - Choral, brass, organ, piano, chimes, carols

5-8:00 pm Powel House. Christmas Party

**December 9**

12:30 pm The Bourse. Philadelphia Postal Employees Choir - in the Grand Court

**December 10**

12:30 pm The Bourse. J.R. Masterman School Choir - in the Grand Court

**December 11**

12:30-1:30 pm The Bourse. Abraham Lincoln High School Choir & Band - in the Grand Court.

**December 12**

6-9:00 pm Elfreth's Alley. A Colonial Holiday on Elfreth's Alley.

**December 14**

11:00 am Old Christ Church. III Advent - Bach's Cantata 140.

**December 15**

12:00 noon. The Bourse. Spruce Hill Christian School - in the Grand Court. December 16

12:30 pm The Bourse. East Bradford Choir & Orchestra and Glen Acres Elementary - in the Grand Court.

**December 18**

12:30 pm The Bourse. Central High School Choir - in the Grand Court.

5:15 pm St. Augustine's Church. Novena Mass.

**December 19**

12:30 pm The Bourse. St. Maria Goretti High School Choir - in the Grand Court.

5:15 pm St. Augustine's Church. Novena Mass.

**December 20**

5:15 pm St. Augustine's Church. Novena Mass

**December 21**

10:30 am Old Pine Street Church. Lessons and Carols.

5:00 pm St. Peter's Church. Lessons and Carols. Reception to follow.

**December 24**

5:00 pm Old St. Mary's Church. Mass.

5:15 pm St. Augustine's Church. Vigil Mass.

5:30 pm Old Christ Church. Family Service.

6:00 pm Old Pine Street Church. Soup & Salad Supper.

7:00 pm St. Augustine's Church. Caroling.

7:15 pm Old Pine Street Church. Caroling on the Porch

7:30 pm Old Pine Street Church. Worship with an Impromptu Pageant (come dressed as your favorite Christmas story character).

7:30-8:00 pm St. Augustine's Church. Panaluiun - Filipino choral, music & drama.

8:00 pm St. Augustine's Church. Solemn Mass.

10:30 pm Old Christ Church. Bach's Christmas Oratorio with brass & timpani.

11:00 pm Old Christ Church. Festival Eucharist - Christ Church Choir & Soloists.

Midnight. Old St. Mary's Church. Midnight Mass.

Midnight. St. Augustine's Church. Midnight Mass.

**December 25**

9:00 am Old St. Mary's Church. Services.

10:00 am Old Christ Church. The Holy Communion with Carols.

10:00 am Old St. Mary's Church. Services.

11:00 am St. Augustine's Church. Christmas Mass.

12:00 noon Old St. Mary's Church. Services.

12-4:00 pm National Museum of American Jewish History. Being Jewish at Christmas - features the Sally Mitlas Ensemble (Klesmer, Israeli, Sephardic and traditional music), Larry "The Hatman" Oxenberg, the Segal Puppet Theater & Company. Call for details.



**Directory**

The Bourse - 5th Street, between Chestnut and Market Streets (625-0300)

Elfreth's Alley - 126 Elfreth's Alley (574-0560)

National Museum of American Jewish History - 55 N. 5th Street, Independence Mall East (923-3811)

Old Christ Church - 2nd and Market Streets (922-1695)

Old Pine Street Church - 412 Pine Street (925-8051)

Old St. Mary's Church - 5th and Locust Streets (923-7930)

Powel House - 244 South 3rd Street. Christmas Tours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday 12-5 pm; Sunday 1-5 pm (for details call 627-0364)

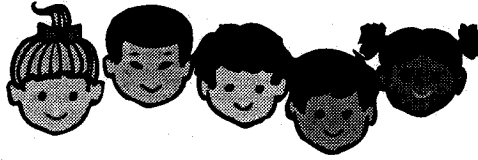
St. Augustine's Church - 4th and Vine Streets (627-1838)

St. Peter's - 3rd and Lombard Streets

St. George's Church - 235 N. 4th Street (925-7788)

## City Kids

Even though the weather is finally turning chilly and it's tempting to stay home with a cup of cocoa, don't. December offers some of the best ways to enjoy this city with children. With Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa just around the corner, there are several holiday events for children coming up that you should know about. Bundle those kiddies up and take them to one or more of the following exhibits and events.



The Please Touch Museum (210 N. 21st St., 963-0667) will have an ongoing exhibit throughout the month called "Holidays with Our Friends," featuring giant, interactive boxes in which children can learn about the holiday celebrations of six different countries. Children up to about age seven will have fun hearing the music, seeing the foods, and trying on holiday clothes from the various countries. In addition, there are special events, only a sampling of which are listed below; call the museum for more information:

Wednesday, December 3, 10:00 a.m., Storyteller Irma sings songs and tells stories about Kwanzaa

Saturday, December 6, 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m., Magician Al Angelo will delight and amaze visitors with his juggling skills and classic magic tricks

Sunday, December 14, 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m., History of the Holidays. Learn about the winter solstice celebration and the first Christmas tree.

Sunday, December 21, 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m., Watch the young dancers of Fusion 2 perform a winter show, including selections from the Nutcracker.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, December 26-28, 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m., Sing along with Kidz N' Company as they present a special Christmas performance.

Monday, December 29, 11:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m., Mama Omi performs an interactive dance program celebrating Hanukkah, the Festival of lights.

If you're a fan of carols mixed with either animals or art, you're in luck. "Caroling to the Animals" at The Philadelphia Zoo (34th St. & Girard, 243-1100) will give you and your little ones the chance to sing your hearts out to the lions, tigers and bears, oh my! Caroling will be lead by various ensembles and choirs scattered throughout the zoo on Sunday, December 14, between 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. Any age and any singing ability are welcome. The Philadelphia Museum of Art (26th St. & the Parkway, 763-8100) will host a 45-minute children's concert geared for the under ten set on Saturday, December 13th, 11:30 a.m. This "Sounds of the Season" concert will feature a sing-along and a brief introduction to opera.

For older children, The Academy of Music (Broad & Locust, 893-1999), will hold its annual Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 7th at 4:00 p.m., and Sunday, December 8 at 8:00 p.m. This concert is nearly two hours long, so the Academy recommends the event for children over the age of seven. Tickets range in price from \$10 to \$53.

In our own neighborhood, the Independence Seaport Museum

(Penn's Landing, 925-5439) will host two events for children. On Saturday, December 6, a Holiday Open House will take place beginning at 1:00 p.m. The arts and crafts activities will include making decorations out of shells, and cartoons will be shown on a big screen (popcorn, too!). The "Learning Beat Holiday Show," Tuesday, December 30, 1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m., will feature the zany antics of Ms. Wondercrack, Betty the Bum, Nancy the Nerd and more. Songs about grammar, spelling and math combine with festive songs as the holiday spirit is woven throughout the entire show.

For Jewish families, there's a special event held by the National Museum of American Jewish History (55 N. 5th St., 923-3812) called "Being Jewish at Christmas," Thursday, December 25, noon until 4:00 p.m. The event features a wide variety of Jewish music, including Klezmer, Israeli, Sephardic and traditional. Admission is \$3 for adults; children under five are free.

Unless noted, admission to all the events listed above is included in the museum admission price. As always, comments about the CityKids column will reach us if you call 629-1288 or e-mail us at LizaNicker@aol.com. In the meantime, Happy Holidays!



### Benvenuta, Bella Bianca

For those of you who love gourmet hoagies and other Italian specialty sandwiches but haven't found a convenient place to indulge yourself, you now have to go no further than Head House Square. Bella Bianca, located at 406 South 2nd Street, is now open. In addition to an extensive menu of sandwiches and salads, Bella Bianca offers a bountiful selection of fresh and packaged Italian specialty products, prepared foods for take-out, and frozen delicacies such as lobster ravioli.

Owners Joe D'Adamo, Frank Cilberto and Billy Mason chose their new location because they liked Society Hill's well-kept atmosphere, and they felt immediately welcomed by the neighbors. In fact, they especially appreciated our community association's intervention on their behalf by SHCA's Liquor Control Committee when confusion arose regarding the space that formerly housed Tancredi's Pharmacy. The SHCA backed Bella Bianca's fight to retain rights to the space when the Artful Dodger claimed that the space had been designated for expansion of its bar.

Co-owner Joe D'Adamo expects that lunch time delivery of sandwiches to downtown businesses will be their main market, but he's quick to say that Bella Bianca is dedicated to catering to the immediate neighborhood's tastes and needs. In fact, if there's an Italian specialty product you want that you don't see in the store, let him know and he'll try to get it for you. Stop by (they're open 9-7, Monday through Saturday, 10-5 Sunday) or call the store at 574-1611.

## For Eleanor Gesensway Our Belated Condolences

We send belated condolences to our neighbor Eleanor Gesensway who lost two family members last spring:

Eleanor's daughter, Ellen Gesensway, a 32-year-old vibrant artist, environmentalist and entrepreneur, died of a brain tumor at home in Society Hill after several years of travel, which included a five-month expedition in Antarctica. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Ellen Sue lived in Montana for eight years where she made a living with needlework and hand-knit sweaters that were featured in craft shows and catalogs. She also worked tirelessly on behalf of environmental causes.

Two months later, in May, Eleanor's husband of 40 years, Daniel B. Gesensway, M.D., a psychiatrist, died at home after a three-year battle with cancer. Dr. Gesensway, 64, practiced psychoanalysis from his Society Hill home and was a clinical professor at Jefferson University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

A man of many talents, he was an accomplished musician (flute, piano, cello, banjo) who enjoyed painting and working in his dark-room. He was a great tinkerer who mastered many skills when he restored his 1806 Spruce Street townhouse and helped pioneer Society Hill's rebirth during the 1960s and 70s. During the last decade of his life he personally designed, engineered and built a retirement home on the banks of the Rancocas Creek in New Jersey.

Private memorial services were held for both. Contributions in their memory can be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, 225 City Ave., Suite 208, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

Eleanor is back to work as the assistant manager at the bookstores of Independence Park. She is an active historic preservationist who was largely responsible for preserving the Spruce Street facades of "Preservation Row"—which are now part of the Duncan Building of Pennsylvania Hospital at 700-714 Spruce Street. She also led the fight to save from demolition the Lits Building on Market Street.

Eleanor is survived by daughter, Deborah and son-in-law, Russell Kazal; son, David and daughter-in-law, Katie, three grandchildren and her father, Irving Lewis Horowitz. This community will continue to depend on Ellie's energy, enthusiasm and dedication to historic preservation efforts, while our hearts reach out to her for her incalculable loss.

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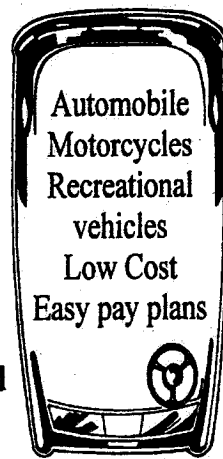
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## This Old Neighborhood

Many people are surprised when they learn that Society Hill is NOT a historic district. "How can that be?" they ask, since Society Hill contains more important 18th-century buildings than any other city in America.

Here's the situation. Our community is, of course, listed in the National Register of Historic Districts, but this recognition does not offer the protection against inappropriate additions, alterations or unnecessary demolitions that being on the "Philadelphia Register" would provide. Society Hill has been seeking this local designation for about a decade, and we are hopeful that the complex process of public hearings will occur soon.

Some people are concerned about what it would mean to become a "city-certified historic district." They fear that such designation would mean that Big Brother will be looking over their shoulder or that they would live in a "museum" or place where nothing could change.

This is not so. Historic designation means that certain changes, primarily to the exterior of a building, will be reviewed by the Philadelphia Historical Commission so that the unique character of our neighborhood will be maintained, protected and preserved.

### Can you tell fact from fiction? Here is a True or False Test. See how you score!

1. The Streets Department is responsible for the sidewalk in front of your home.
2. Exterior storm windows are not permitted on historic houses.
3. Choice of exterior colors must be approved for historic houses.

Answers on page 18



### Candlelight "Wassail Walk"

There's still time to enjoy a spirited look at what the holidays were like in the taverns and homes of 18th-century Philadelphia with the "Wassail Walk," a guided walking tour of Society Hill sponsored by Historic Philadelphia, Inc.

Running every Friday through December 19, the tours start at 4:45 p.m. at the INHP Visitor Center at 3rd & Chestnut and at 5:30 p.m. at the Powel House, 244 South 3rd.

The fee is \$20 per person and includes samplings of "wassail" and other 18th-century "strong beverages" at each of the three stops on the candlelit tour. For reservations or information on Historic Philadelphia's other tours, call 629-5801 or 1-800- 76 HISTORY

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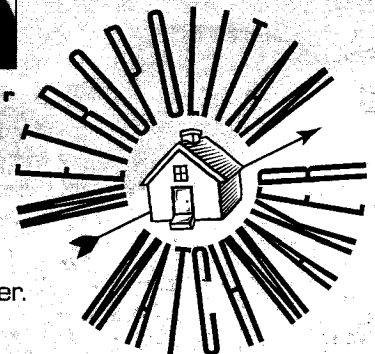
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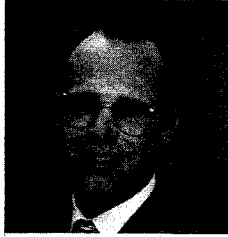
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## Slide Show at January Meeting

### Preliminary Vision Plan For Historic Philadelphia

We are very fortunate that the City's Planning Commission has agreed to present to our community association its important preliminary plans about the historic district. This vision links the streets of Old City to Society Hill in a very positive way.

Its themes focus on efforts to preserve architecture, enhance green spaces and create clusters of interesting sights whereby the entire historic district is tied together in a comprehensive whole, rather than by its disparate attractions. Since great streets are well known destinations in all the world's great tourist cities, and there exist many wonderful streets and walkways in Old Philadelphia, the vision is to build on the district's strengths—for example, to direct people to take the most scenic routes from place to place by improving dull and insecure areas.

This comprehensive development strategy is vital—because our area of the city has an incomparable potential for further development of its assets as an urban neighborhood and as a visitor destination.

Come see the slide presentation at our next General Membership Meeting. When? Our meeting is definitely scheduled for Jan. 21 at 8 pm. At press time we are waiting for confirmation to meet at the Sheraton.

At that time we will also have an opportunity to meet Don Meginley, the new president of the recently reorganized Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. He'll brief us on the organization's mission and its role to help Society Hill become a city-certified historic district. And he'll take questions from the floor. You won't want to miss this exciting program.

Look for the January issue of THE REPORTER for the place of this important General Membership Meeting or call SHCA office, 629-1288.

See you there.

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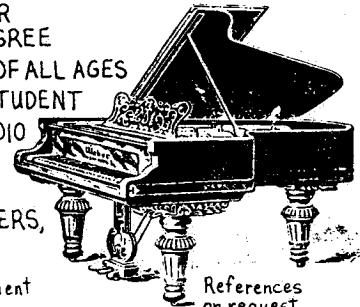


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## Noteworthy Neighbors

### Pamela Sinkler Todd and Roswell Weidner

Recent award-winning artists Pamela Sinkler Todd and Roswell Weidner have much more in common than living and working within three blocks of each other—and their demonstrable and durable talent. Both Society Hill artists were named as “Pennsylvania’s Artists of the Month” on the World Wide Web for the month of October 1997 (<http://www.philly-art-world.com>).



Roswell’s powerful impressionistic paintings of the Pine Barrens and Pamela’s delicate trademark renderings of cut flowers are testament to the poet John Dryden’s notion that art is the handmaiden of nature.

Like Claude Monet, with whom his work has been compared, Roswell fled the comforts of his urban studio to paint the landscape from nature—a process that he describes as quite different, because “the light out-of-doors is constantly changing. The trees blend with the

wind, your easel blows over, the pastel falls into the water...”

During the latter part of a career that has spanned more than six decades and included teaching for 58 years at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, Roswell has devoted his efforts (also, shades of Monet!) to the painting of light, air, color, space, movement, water, reflections and patterns. He says that he has found these elements only in the unspoiled wilderness of New Jersey’s Pine Barrens.

Roswell has pretty much hung up his brushes now, because of failing eyesight; but, asked how he remains spry at 86, he points, without hesitation or words, to his wife of 40 years, Marilyn, an art restorer and conservationist (and member of SHCA’s Historic Preservation Committee).

Interestingly, the homes of these two artists reflect their work: Roswell’s rambling, spacious townhouse on busy Spruce Street mirrors his large and expansive renditions of sweeping landscapes, while Pamela’s tiny and exquisite home on quiet American Street has all the delicate detail of her floral work.

Both houses date from the first decade of the 19th century, and both have been lovingly restored by their owners. The basement of the Weidner house (an address that Roswell puckishly informs us was once a bordello), serves as a temperature- and humidity-controlled repository of the prolific artist’s works, all of which he has framed himself. Elsewhere the walls are covered with the couple’s collection of Japanese art, Hogarth prints and portraits of family members.



In her home a short walk away, Pamela Sinkler Todd tells of her own preference for painting from life and nature. Of her floral paintings that have been exhibited around the US and overseas, she says she is just as interested in the arrangement of a flower’s stems inside a glass vase as she is in the blossoms themselves.

“The colors, reflections, refractions, water and shapes within transparent containers,” she says, “are integral to the overall design and effect.” After graduating with an art history

degree from Bryn Mawr, where she studied imbroglío etching with noted Austrian print maker Fritz Janschka, Pamela concentrated on etchings herself—mainly depictions of food, which she sold to restaurants, clubs and galleries. Divorced and now remarried to management consultant, Donn Todd, Pamela was able to support four children (in the mid-1970s) through her art—literally putting food on the table by portraying it on paper or canvas.

From her floral paintings, Pamela has blossomed out into producing cityscapes, line drawing illustrations for books, and horse racing scenes, much influenced by the work of Edgar Degas. She has exhibited in many juried and invitational shows where her work has won several prizes, and while she is a Signature member of the Philadelphia Water Color Club, she is now experimenting with oils. Currently she also plans a series of portraits of historic buildings and houses—especially those that, like her own, have been restored.

*Editor’s Note:* Incidentally, Pamela, another member of SHCA’s Historic Preservation Committee, designed our Society Hill Civic Association logo—originally a beautiful watercolor—which graces the cover of the *Reporter* and appears on all our stationery. And, if you are interested in a portrait of your house, please leave a message for Pamela at her studio: 925-4625.

#### Answers to True or False Quiz on page 14

1. FALSE. You are responsible for the sidewalk in front of your house. If there are loose bricks that could cause a person to trip and fall, you must repair it. If the roots of a planted tree cause the bricks to be raised or slanted, creating a potential hazard, it is you, the home-owner who must make the appropriate repair. Remember: If someone trips and gets hurt in front of your house, you are liable and could be sued. So maintain your sidewalks and sleep well at night.
2. FALSE. Storm windows are permitted on historic houses. However owners are encouraged to paint their storm windows the same color as window frames.
3. FALSE. Unlike other historic cities which have a list of approved colors choices, Philadelphia’s Historic Commission makes no such recommendations. (Charleston, South Carolina, for example, “limits” homeowners to about 150 color options.) In Philadelphia, colors are strictly a matter of personal choice, but Society Hill neighbors should note that many paint manufacturers have lines of “American” colors suitable for our harmonious historic area. Check out Finnaren & Haley’s “Colors of Historic Philadelphia,” Benjamin Moore’s “Historical Color Selection,” Buten’s “Historic Newport Colours,” MAB’s “Historic Smithville Selection,” as well as historic paint options by Martin-Senour, Sherwin Williams and others. Just ask to see their color palates.

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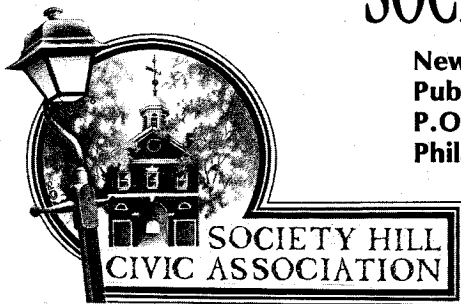
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