

# Society Hill REPORTER

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March 1999

Newsletter of The Society Hill Civic Association

## Candidates Night McCall School Wednesday, March 24

All six candidates for mayor to take this city into the next century will speak to the community at the McCall School Auditorium beginning at 8:00 PM on Wednesday, March 24. Each candidate has been asked to present formally for ten minutes and then open the meeting to questions and answers for ten minutes. SHCA President, Norman Tissan, has asked that they focus on the following issues:

**Public Schools:** As mayor, what would you change about the School Board, funding and standards since our community loses so many young parents to the suburbs when their children become school age?

**Riverfront Casino Gambling:** If the decision is made to have a state-wide referendum on this issue, what are your thoughts on controls, casino locations, and use of revenue?

**Crime:** What are your ideas on the police department, superintendent, etc., and how they can get crime, particularly theft of and from autos in this neighborhood, under control?

**Center City/Philadelphia:** What are your thoughts on continuing the economic growth while maintaining the integrity and character of city neighborhoods like Society Hill?

If you have a particular concern, you will be able to ask about it directly to Dwight Evans, Happy Fernandez, Sam Katz, John Street, Martin Weinberg, or John White. Please take advantage of this evening's opportunity, sponsored by SHCA, South Street/Head House Special District, South Street Neighbors Association, and the McCall School Faculty and Home & School Association.

Dwight Evans  
Happy Fernandez  
Sam Katz  
John Street  
Martin Weinberg  
John White



Charles E. Peterson, the architectural historian who named "Society Hill," queried the Commissioners, "Does anyone doubt that this neighborhood deserves to be an historic district?" The story is on page 3.

### Save These Dates:

#### General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 24

McCall School Auditorium, 6th and Delancey Streets

6:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting

7:30 PM: Meet Your Neighbors

8:00 PM-10:00 PM Program

#### Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble

Friday, March 19, 8 PM • Sunday, March 21, 2:00 PM

Old Pine Street Church, 412 Pine Street

for information: 215-592-7840

#### The Book and The Cook

March 20 - March 28

See the article on page 2

for a brochure: 215-636-1666

#### Historic Churches Revisited

Tour of Old St. Mary's, Old St. Joseph's, Holy Trinity and

St. Augustine Roman Catholic Churches

Sunday, April 18, 1999, 1:30 PM

Old Saint Mary's, 252 South 4th Street

for information: 215-923-7930

#### Philadelphia Open House Tours

April 22 - May 16, 1999

Wednesday, April 28, 1 to 4 PM, Independence Park

Sunday, May 2, 1 to 5 PM, Society Hill

starting at The Powell House, 244 South 3rd Street

for information: 215-928-1188

#### The Physick House Plant Sale

321 S. 4th Street

Friday, April 30, 12-7

Saturday, May 1, 10-5

Sunday, May 2, 12-4

#### Clean Up Day

Saturday, May 1, 1999

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## New Law Authorizes Neighborhood Improvement Districts

After many revisions, the Pennsylvania House (Bill 2858) and Senate (Bill 4145) passed bills authorizing the creation of Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NIDs). The initial idea was to amend the Municipality Authorities Act of 1945 statewide.

The Act in its final form, however, affects only cities of the "first class" (Philadelphia is the only such city in Pennsylvania) and does not apply to or affect Business Improvement Districts ("BIDs") already in existence under the Municipality Authorities Act. Overall, the new Act provides a tool for residential neighborhoods to levy assessments on taxable properties according to a set of rules and procedures that are similar to, but also significantly different from, the laws that govern existing BIDs.

In essence, what has been created is a new system for forming residential improvement districts that appears to have no effect on existing business improvement districts, but which does establish an entirely new set of rules for any new business improvement district formed after the effective date.

### Definitions

#### ■ Neighborhood Improvement Districts

This is a new umbrella term that applies to new residential, industrial, institutional and commercial districts. All new business improvement districts formed after the effective date are governed by the new procedures under the Act.

■ **Management Association** The new law will permit an *existing* neighborhood association to act as the management entity (the current law requires the creation of a new municipal authority). Therefore, the entity that runs the district can be an existing non-profit corporation, a newly formed non-profit corporation, or a municipal authority.

■ **Services** The Act broadly defines "services" as all allowable services under the Municipality Authorities Act, providing for cleaning, security and promotion, but specifically adding street lighting and park and open space maintenance. It references "street cleaning" as opposed to "sidewalk" cleaning.

■ **Benefits** The Act states that there must be a "rational nexus" between fees paid and benefits, and adds that property owners "must benefit directly or indirectly - provided however, that property owners need not benefit equally."

Assessments are levied by the municipality although there is also a provision that the NID may contract out for the services it provides, including contracting out for billing and collection to another existing management organization. This means that newly formed NIDs could contract with existing BIDs.

The process for approval can be initiated

by business or residential groups, or by municipal government. Notice of plans and hearings (as well as the plan itself) are issued by the local government according to a calendar specified by the Act. This calendar of hearings is different than that specified under the Municipality Authorities Act. The threshold for objection to a plan has been raised to 51% of the affected owners or owners representing 51% percent of the assessed value of the affected property. (The current law requires only a 33% objection rate). The Act requires local government to maintain the base level of services.

Overall, the Act provides a tool to neighborhood organizations wishing to move from a system of voluntary contributions for neighborhood improvements to a system of mandatory charges to be determined by the neighborhood group. The ordinance should be read in its entirety by those planning to use it.

— Amy Foran

## The Book, The Cook, & Society Hill

You can learn, dine and wine all within walking distance of your home during The Food Network's annual Philadelphia eaters' paradise, The Book and The Cook.

This year the food fair runs from March 20th through the 28th. On Sunday, March 21, and Tuesday, March 23, afternoon family events will be held at The Atwater Kent Museum, 15 South 7th St., 215-922-3031.

Neighborhood restaurants participating:

Bohemian Bistro, 5th and Bainbridge, 215-923-7676

Buddakan, 325 Chestnut, 215-574-9440  
City Tavern, 138 South 2nd, 215-413-1443

DiPalma, 114 Market, 215-733-0545

Fork, 306 Market, 215-625-9425

Bridget Foy's, 200 South, 215-922-1813  
Philadelphia Fish & Co., 207 Chestnut, 215-625-8605

Plough and The Stars, 123 Chestnut, 215-733-0300

Rococo, 123 Chestnut, 215-629-1100

Tira Misu, 528 South 5th Street, 215-925-3335

La Veranda, Pier 3, 215-351-1898

— Ruth Brill

To be included on our e-mail list for future activities, send e-mail addresses to [joele@earthlink.net](mailto:joele@earthlink.net), or see the Society Hill Civic Association's web site: [www.wnwr.com/shca](http://www.wnwr.com/shca).

## Funding the New Library

The East Philadelphia Coalition for a Free Library Branch is pleased to announce that Mayor Edward Rendell included both capital and operating funds for the new East Philadelphia Branch of the Free Library in his budget request for FY2000. Increased funding for the Free Library to accommodate the new branch was announced in the Mayor's budget address on January 26 and fulfilled a promise made to the East Philadelphia Coalition one year ago.

Although hearings will take place before City Council regarding the allocation for our branch prior to final approval of the budget, City Budget Director Dean Kaplan does not foresee any problems with getting Council's approval for these line items. Councilman Frank DiCicco, an instrumental player in convincing the Mayor of the importance of this project, is also confident that the funding for the branch will be approved.

With funding all but secured, negotiations will proceed between the Free Library and the most promising site for the new branch, the Balch Institute. Once an agreement is reached with the Balch (or another site, if necessary), renovations can begin July 1st, and the branch could open as early as January, 2000.

The effort to establish a new branch of the Free Library to serve neighborhoods east of Broad Street was initiated by the Society Hill Civic Association several years ago. Less than two years ago, SHCA officially teamed up with several other neighborhoods — including Old City, Queen Village, Chinatown, and Washington Square West — to form the East Philadelphia Coalition for a Free Library Branch. The Coalition has worked closely with Councilman Frank DiCicco and, among other activities, elicited letters and signatures of support from hundreds of people in the community. Together these efforts have paid off — we could be checking out books just one year from now!

— Liza Seltzer

## Society Hill REPORTER

published by

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Next Editorial Deadline: April 16, 1999  
Mail contributions to above address.

# Two Public Hearings of The Philadelphia Historic Commission

Two public hearings, in consideration of Society Hill becoming a locally designated historic district under the city's preservation ordinance, were held by the Philadelphia Historic Commission (PHC). Many neighbors participated at both the morning hearing, held in the Commission's conference room on February 10, and the evening hearing at Pennsylvania Hospital on February 23.

At both hearings Chairman Wayne Spilove asked if there were any people in the audience opposed to becoming a historic district. No hands were raised. In fact, the Commission reported receiving a total of 233 postcards from the community, of which 226 respondents indicate that they are in favor of historic designation, four are opposed, and three are undecided.

## Society Hill's history and significance

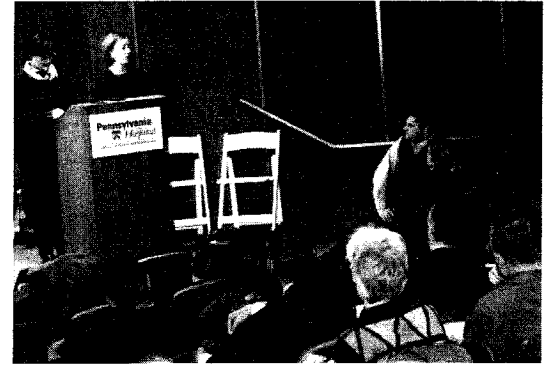
Laura Spina and Elizabeth Harvey, two dedicated Commission staff members, gave a slide and narrative presentation of Society Hill's history and significance. Councilman Frank DiCicco's letter of support was read by his Chief of Staff, Robin Schatz, at the first hearing, DiCicco, in person, offered a few words of support at the second hearing. Several neighbors in the audience read prepared statements or spoke about why they are in favor of historic designation, as did representatives of other organizations.

Stanhope Browne is co-chair of *Historic District Designation Now!*, an ad hoc organization that consists of Society Hill property owners and an impressive list of endorsing nonprofit organizations, schools, and religious institutions. Browne said: "Because history is important, because architecture is important, because tourism is important and because investment is important, the character of the neighborhood must be protected. Government policy in the form of redevelopment controls provided that protection from 1958 to 1988. Now, however, there are no controls. Various misguided forces could desecrate the facades which make Society Hill what it is today. This Commission can and should bring back such protection."

## How the PHC will deal with certain issues

Questions about how the PHC will deal with the following issues were raised: (1) window air conditioners that jut out from townhouses; (2) the treatment of uneven and dangerous sidewalks caused by large tree roots; (3) whether or not the choice of appropriate paint colors could be monitored by the Commission.

The Commission answered these questions as follows: (1) because window air conditioners are non-permanent and removable, they are allowable; (2) sidewalks are the responsibility of property owners. If the sidewalk in front of your house is uneven and unsafe, this violation is YOUR responsibility. At someone else's property, talk to the owner or and/or report the violation to the Streets Department; (3) paint colors for wood trim (shutters, doors, cornices) are not under the jurisdiction of the ordinance, although paint for the facade of a building must be reviewed by the PHC.



*Elizabeth Harvey and Laura Spina making their presentation at the Philadelphia Historic Commission February 24th meeting at Pennsylvania Hospital.*

## Ritz Movie Theater

Raymond Posel, the owner of the Ritz Movie Theater at Walnut Street, requested changing the characterization of his buildings from "contributing" to "non-contributing." When a building is assigned "non-contributing" status, the PHC's criteria for altering its facade or considering its demolition is less stringent than if it is characterized as "contributing." Neighbors expressed their unhappiness at the thought that the Ritz 5 theater could be increased in scale or height.

Dr. Stephanie Wolf, the Commission's social historian, responded to a question about altering the historic district's boundaries to exclude the Ritz movie and facing restaurant complexes. She explained the historical significance of the now paved over Dock Creek site that gave Society Hill direct access to the river. "Changing the boundaries will not happen," Dr. Wolf said.

## Criteria for contributing, non-contributing status

Dr. Barbara Kaplan suggested that the Commissioners reconvene to insure that the three criteria for contributing and non-contributing status are being uniformly applied to all modern structures in the proposed Society Hill historic district.

Will historic designation please *all* the people *all* the time? Not likely! But becoming a historic district *will* provide a level of protection that our community can reasonably depend on. Almost unanimously our community seeks historic district designation as a tangible way to protect the majority of properties within the neighborhood

SHCA's Historic Preservation Committee will keep you informed about the results of the hearings and of the March 10th hearing. If any additional hearings are needed the Commissioners announced they would gladly convene them prior to the PHC vote. We can probably expect them to vote fairly soon.

— Bernice Hamel

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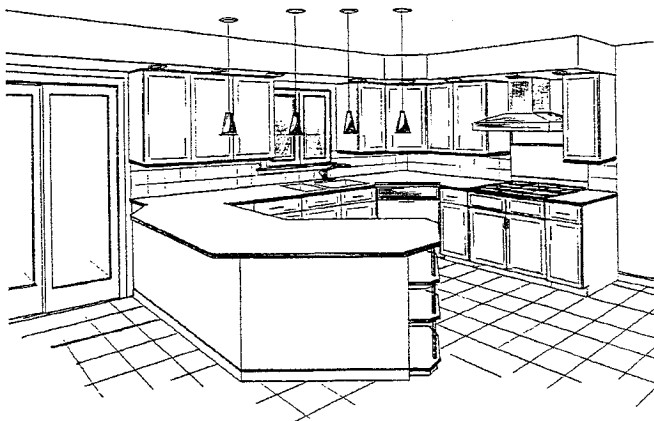
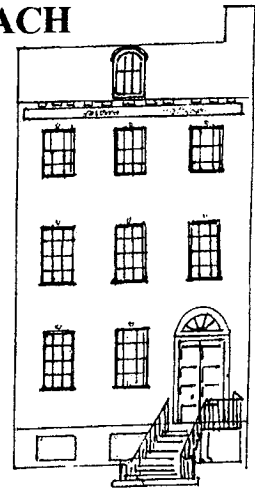
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## CityKids: Eating Out with the Wee Ones

If you're brave enough to eat out with your children or grandchildren, you want to be sure that you're welcome at your destination. So in this issue of *The Reporter*, we're going to share some excellent choices for dining *en famille*.

If you share the tastes of this mother, you probably are not as enamored of McDonald's as your children are. Kid-friendly as the golden arches may be, we prefer to patronize establishments that are just as happy to see your little ones rushing in, yet don't require you to eat from a plastic tray.

For example, one of the most fun and kid-friendly choices around is **Johnny Rockets at 5th and South**. Okay, so it's not exactly upscale, but they couldn't be better prepared with high chairs, a kid's menu, and live entertainment every half-hour or so when the cooks and wait staff take a break from their duties to sing and dance to oldies. And if that weren't enough to please the under-10 crowd, many tots get a balloon to take home. The menu is quite limited, but the burgers, sandwiches and other menu items we've tried are good, and you can't beat the value.

If you're in the mood for pizza and maybe a beer to go with it, there are two good highchair equipped choices. **Pietro's in the 100 block of South Street**, features delicious pizza and a full Italian menu. We've heard more than one person rave about their spaghetti a la Bolognese. Around the corner on **2nd Street**, **Pizzeria Uno** offers both thin crust and deep-dish pizza options, plus many other entrees. Uno's is an especially good value if you use one of the coupons that appear in the Sunday papers from time to time. Best of all, though, waiters bring crayons and something to color when you sit down, so you aren't stuck trying to pull something out of your purse or diaper bag to amuse the tykes until food arrives.

**T.G.I. Fridays, at the corner of 2nd and Lombard**, also offers coupons as well as crayons to its younger clientele. Friday's has highchairs and a children's menu that is sure to please. Adults may enjoy the extensive menu, enormous portions and full bar. On the other hand, this popular restaurant is often very loud and service can be slow, so if your kids are starving, best to try it another time.

In addition to the kid-ready restaurants described above, there are a few others in our neighborhood that we'd like to mention. **Golden Empress, the Chinese restaurant on 5th Street just south of South**, more than makes up for the lack of a highchair with their warm welcome to the little ones. If your kids aren't sold on Chinese food, just tell them "lo mein" is Chinese for spaghetti and see what happens. And don't miss the vegetarian hot & sour soup while you're there (even if you're not a vegetarian) — it's divine.

**Italia, at 3rd and Gaskill**, also has a reputation for being patient with children who manage to get more of their delicious tomato sauce on the tablecloth than in their mouths. Finally, **Bridget Foy's at 2nd and South** has always been kind to us whenever a child has been part of our party. Even without a children's menu, we've been able to find things for the kids to eat, and the wait staff couldn't have been friendlier.

If we've missed any favorites, do let us know. Send an e-mail to LizaNicker@aol.com, or write to CityKids, c/o the Society Hill Reporter, P.O. Box 3, Philadelphia, PA, 19105.

— Liza Seltzer

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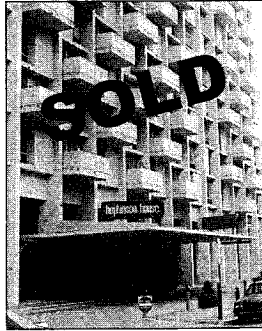
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## All Around Society Hill, Featuring...



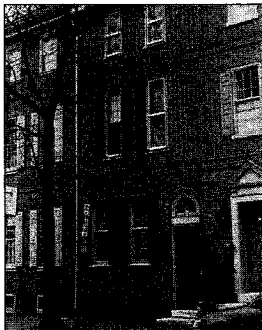
**525 Delancey Street**  
Exquisite renovation.  
New gourmet 2 story  
kitchen, 4BR, 3b. 3fps.  
\$550,000.



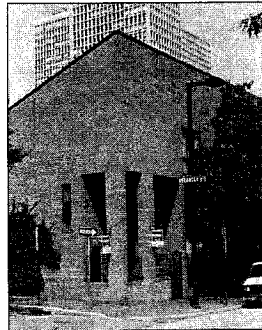
**Hopkinson House**  
Fab 3BR, 3b, EIK,  
3 exp, balcony.  
\$398,000.



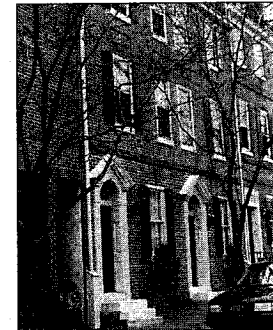
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## Chair Chat



### Neighborhood Pride

The January issue of *The Reporter* brought a large number of phone calls from neighbors requesting the Contractor List. As you may know, this is a useful resource for homeowners because it lists contractors of all sorts who have been highly recommended by Society Hill homeowners. The list includes contractors, carpenters, painting, floor finishing, masonry and brickwork, electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, ironwork, architectural salvage, retail lighting, locksmiths, tree care, gardening and more.

To have a list sent to you or to recommend a good contractor you have used, call Martha Levine, at 629-0727. Spring is just around the corner. Plan now for work anticipated in April, May or June.

### Spring Cleanup

The annual spring Clean-Up Day will be Saturday, May 1. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to help sweep your block, plant flowers and pick up debris. Then join your neighbors for a delicious buffet lunch donated by the South Street area restaurants and hosted by the Clean-up Day Committee at the Pennsylvania Hospital patio. Watch for a flyer with all the important details.

The new Clean-up Day Chairperson is Mark Valentine, a new member of the Society Hill Civic Association Board of Directors, and he is eager to begin work on this important neighborhood project.

If you are interested in becoming an active member of the Clean-up Day Committee, please call Mark at 215-923-9943. He would love to have your help!



### Think Flowers

A new special interest group called "Think Flowers" has been formed by some of the members of the Society Hill Civic Association. The goal of Think Flowers is to have a hanging flower basket on every Franklin Lamp this summer.

Think Flowers hosted a free workshop on March 13 at which neighbors were taught how to put together a hanging basket, where and how to order supplies, and where to purchase pre-made baskets. Plans are underway for a second workshop which will be held on Clean-up Day weekend.

If you would like flyers for the second workshop or if you would like to help with this effort, please call Janet Cooke: 215-413-0918 or Mary Sturdivant: 215-928-1203.

Even if you don't participate in the workshop, please help Think Flowers by hanging your own flowering basket!

### The Lighting Committee

In recent months, the Lighting Committee has been pursuing the improvement of street lighting in Society Hill. Currently, the majority of Franklin Lights in our neighborhood have 50 watts of light. We seek to upgrade all 50-watt lamps with the 70-watt version, which the city has used to replace damaged lamps over the last 5 years.

**The 200 block of Spruce Street will be used as a test block.** The Department of Street Lighting will install 70-watt Franklin Lamps on that block from mid to late March. We will then establish a method for neighbors to provide feedback after viewing and evaluating the quality of light on the test block.

According to the Philadelphia Street Lighting Department, Society Hill is below national standards for street illumination in an urban residential setting. Adequate lighting not only helps prevent crime, but also allows better visibility for navigating our uneven brick sidewalks.

Did you know that when a Franklin light bulb is flickering or burned out, you can help by reporting it? Call 215-697-8844 anytime day or night and someone will check it within 24 hours.

### Neighbor Wins Free Security Timer!

As the 100th household to participate in the Lighting Project, Society Hill resident Rita Goldberg won a free security timer for her front door light. Surprised and delighted, she said, "This is the first time I ever won anything!" Who knows what awaits the 200th household?

To date, 130 Society Hill households have participated in the Lighting Project, whose goal is to promote security by increasing our house and sidewalk lighting. Every Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Archer Electric provides an electrician to install timers for front and back door lights. Lighting Project Coordinator, Martha Levine, schedules 12 to 16 installments for interested neighbors at their convenience.

How about your front door light? How about your entire block? Many people leave their homes through rear doors and rarely view how dark their front facade area is after dark. Although lighting has increased since this project began, many households continue to

keep their lights off or have no light fixture at all.

Timers are effective because:

1. They provide consistency of lighting in the neighborhood. We are only human and subject to forgetting to turn lights on and off.

2. Your light will automatically light your way if you return home after dark.

3. When you are out of town, your timers turn your lights on and off on schedule, making it appear that you are home. Leaving exterior lights on all day and night is a signal to potential intruders that no one is home.

Tip: If your light fixture allows, use a 75-watt bulb. Harry Horn Electrical Supplies on South Street carries a "survivor" bulb guaranteed to last 3000 hours — over a year's worth of light.

To find out more about The Lighting Project, or to schedule an appointment for a timer or installation, call Martha Levine at 215-629-0727. Lights on for safety!

### Welcome Committee

The Welcome Committee has presented Welcome Baskets to 50 new homeowners in Society Hill since July 1998. This is an effort to welcome neighbors to our great and unique community with the hope that they will become members of the Society Hill Civic Association.

We thank the many neighbors who recently joined the Association, thereby showing their commitment to our neighborhood. The success of the Welcome Baskets is dependent on the generous donations of foods and services by local merchants and we applaud their support.

They are: Baker Street, Zeke's Deli, Riff Cleaners, Super Fresh, Chef's Market, Old City Coffee, Starbucks Coffee, Lore's Chocolates, and Dicken's Curiosity Shop.

**If you have a new neighbor please phone Martha Levine at: 215-626-0727 so that she can bring them a welcome basket.**

### Dear Editor:

I would like to extend a laurel to Society Hill residents and Board members who supported my petition to erect "No Turn on Red" signs at the intersection of 7th and Lombard Streets. Prompted by Councilmen DiCicco and Kenney, the Streets Department placed signs on Friday, January 22. There is a marked decrease in pedestrian scurrying, horn blowing and brakes squeaking! Thanks again.

*Jean Broadley*

## Membership Report: Society Hill Civic Association

1999 Goal: 1,000 Members

Shaded areas indicate below average participation of potential households.

(As of 2-1-99)

Territory	Total Households	1995 Membership	1998 Membership	1999 Renewals YTD
Addison (500-700)	51	16	34	19
So. American	29	8	10	9
Phillip Street/Place (200-300)	15	7	7	6
Blackwell Place	8	4	5	4
Bradford Alley	2	0	2	1
Cypress (300-500)	77	10	13	8
Delancey (100-300)	74	29	40	30
Delancey (500)	38	7	15	9
Lawrence Court	11	4	10	6
Society Hill Towers East (200 Locust)	230	20	25	14
Society Hill Towers North (210 Locust)	230	18	13	12
Society Hill Towers South (220 Locust)	230	16	18	13
Locust (222-293)	36	5	15	7
Lombard Street (100-400)	43	9	21	7
Lombard Street (500-700)	75	9	15	13
Manning Street (700)	38	0	3	2
Manning Walk (500)	12	1	1	0
Panama Street (600)	3	0	1	0
Perth Street (400)	5	1	2	2
Pine Street (100)	25	11	11	7
Pine Street (200)	45	9	13	7
Pine Street (300)	41	2	5	3
Pine Street (400)	17	5	7	6
Pine Street (500)	62	12	17	13
Pine Street (600)	59	10	18	11
Pine Street (700)	51	7	12	7
So. Front Street (300)	9	7	4	4
So. 2ns Street (300)	28	11	21	11
So. 3rd Street (200)	64	18	27	18
So. 3rd Street (300)	33	10	10	5
So. 3rd Street (400)	18	4	3	3
So. 4th Street (200)	42	6	13	8
So. 4th Street (300)	20	3	4	3
So. 5th Street (200-300)	5	1	4	3
Two Independence Place (233 So. 6th)	235	26	32	30
One Independence Place (241 So. 6th)	230	34	40	25
So. 6th Street (300-400)	14	5	12	9
So. 7th Street (200)	11	4	8	6
So. 7th Street (300-400)	12	2	4	4
Hopkinson House (602-604 So. Wash. Sq)	536	44	36	27



## A Message from the President

I am continually amazed by the misconceptions that many of our neighborhood residents have about what the Society Hill Civic Association is and what it does.

First and foremost the community must understand that the SHCA has no inherent power.

SHCA is a neighborhood advocacy group and its strength — or weakness — is entirely derived from its ability to speak and act on behalf of its members.

It is my hope, and belief, that the attitudes and desires of our community are reflected in the SHCA Board of Directors. There are 23 Board positions. No one can serve more than 3 continuous one-year terms. The Board consists of 7 officers, 3 members from each quadrant and 4 members — one each appointed by major condos in Society Hill. We meet as a group monthly. We all serve on committees and many of us talk daily.

I've been President for less than six months, and in that short period, 4 Board members have stepped down for various reasons and we have found volunteers for two of the slots.

Two Board positions remain open — NE quadrant and Penn's Landing Square. At present, 10 Board members are residents of condo complexes.

Last week, I asked a 30-year resident of our community why he wasn't a member, and I quote — "16 or 17 years ago there was some disagreement with the Civic Association, I can't remember what, and that's why I don't belong."

I know this man cares about our community and yet his attitude is to let someone else deal with the current issues facing us on a daily basis.

What annoyed him 16 years ago is not relevant today! (Even if he could remember.)

I also received an e-mail message from a resident of Society Hill Towers. He accused the Civic Association of every perceived negative

in his mind. We were against Fresh Fields on South Street (**not true**) and had allowed the park over I-95 to be named "Foglietta Park." (We were not asked permission.) Primarily his anger focused on the Civic Association's neutral stance on hotel construction on Penn's Landing.

If there had been as many Society Hill Towers residents on the SHCA board when the hotel vote had been taken some years ago, as there are now, the decision might have been different.

The Society Hill Civic Association is different today than we were yesterday and we will be different again tomorrow.

We are an organization dependent upon a large and committed membership that can faithfully articulate and address the needs and concerns of our community.

In 1998 we had 700 members from a potential of 3,259. The good news is that as of February 28, 1999, we already have 548 members, of whom 56 are new members. We should have 1,500 members.

True — there are no large issues facing us today.

We continue to plant trees, paint lampposts, clean sidewalks, improve street lighting, write and distribute, door-to-door, a newsletter, actively support preservation, testify at government hearings, fight unnecessary commercial encroachment and much more.

But, as I write this column, we again face riverboat casinos. Or, a developer could propose a 10-story hotel in New Market. Or Pennsylvania Hospital might want another 6-story parking lot. Who knows?

If you don't like the job the SHCA is doing or believe it is not representing your interest, the solution is simple!

**JOIN, SPEAK UP, GET INVOLVED!**

— Norman Tissian

### If The Society Hill Civic Association Doesn't Deliver What You Want ...

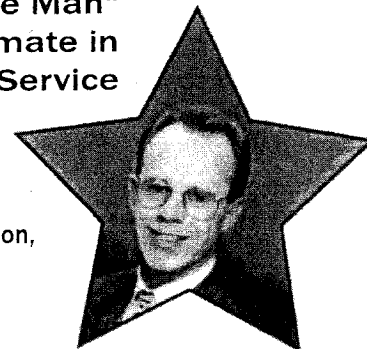
### ... It Might Be Your Fault

Territory	Total Households	1995 Membership	1998 Membership	(As of 2-1-99) 1999 Renewals YTD
Penn's Landing Condos (130 Spruce)	75	7	8	4
Spruce Street (100)	13	2	4	3
Spruce Street (200)	37	16	23	18
Spruce Street (300)	52	10	17	10
Spruce Street (400)	38	3	10	6
Spruce Street (500)	71	9	21	13
Spruce Street (600)	47	11	18	12
Spruce Street (700)	51	3	8	5
St. James Court	42	9	14	13
St. James Place	18	3	9	7
St. Joseph's Way	13	4	3	4
St. Peter's Way	1	1	1	1
Stamper Street	7	1	1	0
West Washington Sq. (including 700 Locust)	16	2	6	3
Willings Alley	2	2	2	2
Willings Alley Mews	12	1	4	1
Outside Area				10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3259</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>474</b>

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#207\*\*

247 S. Hutchinson  
210 Locust Unit 12F\*  
114 Lombard  
502 Lombard\*\*  
106 Pine  
415 Pine\*  
503 Pine\*  
1038 Waverly  
#4 Willings Alley\*\*

728 S. 2nd  
\* Brought the Buyers  
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## Donald and Margarita Montanaro

The living room of the Pine Street house they moved into when it was new in 1969 is dwarfed by two imposing harps; the book shelves lined with scores of long playing records and CDs.

For Margarita Montanaro, the Philadelphia Orchestra's co-principal harpist, and her husband Donald, its acting principal clarinetist, music is indeed the food of love: They met through the Orchestra more than three decades ago, and have worked, and played, and practiced together ever since.

Both are graduates of the renowned Curtis Institute of Music. Margarita entered the Institute shortly after leaving her native Cuba in 1958; Donald spends five hours a week teaching there today.

The couple's schedule is in perfect harmony. They play in four concerts a week, with rehearsal time from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm, and rest in the afternoon to tune up for the performance between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm. They walk together from Society Hill to the Academy of Music, and they practice continuously. For professional musicians, like professional athletes, staying in shape with constant practice is vital. Donald quotes Arthur Rubinstein as having said, "If I don't practice one day, I



notice it; if I don't practice for two days, my wife notices it; if I don't practice for three days, everyone notices it."

The pair, who were heading off to Carnegie Hall following our interview to play in a performance of Beethoven's *First Piano Concerto* and Liszt's *Dante*, have played under conductors Eugene Ormandy, Leopold Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir John Barbiroli and, a few weeks ago, Sir Simon Rattle. Why, I asked them, are so many top conductors foreign-born? Their response: there are lots of good conductors around, but few great ones; getting a conductor to match the calibre of a world class orchestra is a real challenge.

The Montanaros are big fans of Society Hill. Their two sons attended St. Peter's School. The couple take part in six concerts a year with the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble at Old Pine Street Church. Says Margarita, "We are enormously lucky to live here ... such an interesting mix of people."

Next to music, travel is their passion. Their house is filled with mementos of trips to China and several European countries ... and they are eagerly anticipating the Orchestra's three-week spring tour of Asia.

While both Montanaros are soloists in the Orchestra, their life together in music makes them a remarkable duet.

You can hear Margarita and Donald Montanaro perform at the next Chamber Ensemble Concerts, Friday, March 19, at 8 PM and Sunday, March 21, at 2 PM at Old Pine Church, 412 Pine Street.

— David Woods

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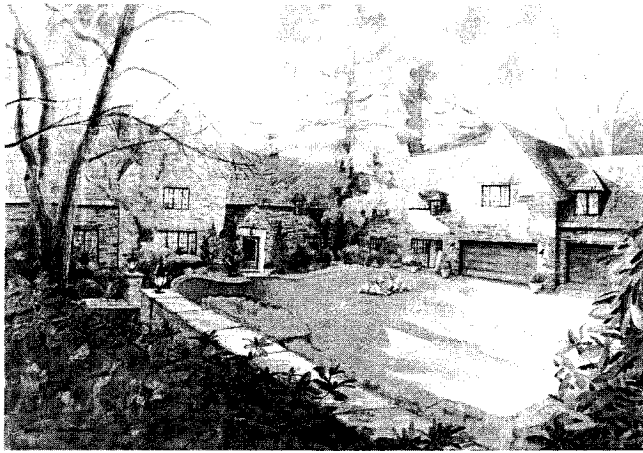
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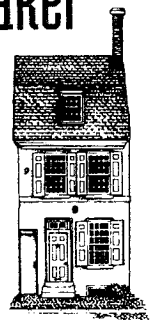


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## River Boat Gambling Again a Hot Issue

The Pennsylvania House voted on February 9 to approve a non-binding statewide referendum on legalizing slot machines at racetracks, video poker machines in bars, and casinos on riverboats. If the Senate votes to approve the measure no later than March 8, the referendum will appear on the May 18 primary ballot.

Victory in a statewide referendum would help the gaming industry persuade legislators to create the enabling legislation that would institute new forms of legalized gambling. Defeat would effectively prevent the legislature from considering the issue again until 2001.

At the SHCA board meeting on February 17, the directors voted to oppose the expansion of gambling in Pennsylvania. They also voted to support efforts to persuade the Senate to vote against holding the proposed referendum.

SHCA opposition to gambling expansion is nothing new. The board took a similar stand in 1997 after a survey of SHCA members indicated that only 10 percent of the respondents would support riverboat gambling in Philadelphia. Indeed, only 19 percent responded affirmatively when asked, "Would you support any gambling expansion if the revenues were earmarked for schools, community development, or other social programs?"

SHCA also became a founding member of the Coalition of Philadelphia Neighborhood Associations (CPNA), a group of 11 neighborhood associations that oppose riverboat gambling. On March 1, CPNA representatives participated in a statewide press conference coordinated by the League of Women Voters and Citizens for a Greater Pennsylvania in front of the Liberty Bell.

Both Mayor Rendell and mayoral candidate Rep. Dwight Evans believe that riverboat casinos would contribute to economic development and provide significant funding for the public schools. These possible benefits are more than offset, however, after considering the almost certain jump in crime, increasing consumer bankruptcies, and the following concerns.

• The Philadelphia Inquirer has warned about "the visual and psychological pollution" that widespread gambling would cause. Why, at a

time when we are trying so hard to attract visitors to our historic districts and artistic attractions, should we risk damaging our local culture and national image?

• Casinos contribute to local economic development only when the vast majority of bettors come from outside the community. Otherwise, they drain the financial resources of local residents — particularly those who can least afford it — and take customers away from local commercial establishments. Experience with riverboat casinos in New Orleans and a study of the potential effect of legalizing casinos in Chicago indicate that Philadelphia would be ill served by tying its fate to legalized gambling.

• Studies of funding sources for public education in 12 other states support the contention that dedicating gambling revenue to education will simply replace already existing sources over time.

• State lottery revenues will probably drop dramatically when faced with competition from the other gambling options and will no longer be sufficient to fund many current programs for senior citizens.

• The enormous influx of money from gambling interests will further corrupt the political process. The \$85M spent in the last election by the gaming industry is comparable to the total spent on President Clinton's reelection campaign. Video poker interests have been accused of buying the last gubernatorial election in South Carolina.

• With its easy accessibility and instantaneous response features, video poker is the "crack cocaine" of gambling. Imagine the benefits of having up to 65,000 machines in our bars and restaurants.

• Installing slots at race tracks is probably the least offensive of the three proposals, but horse racing experts in other states say that it is foolish to try to save tracks merely by propping up a declining industry with a new form of gambling.

• The commonwealth already permits gambling through the state lottery, bingo, betting on horse races, off-track betting, and telephone wagering. Permitting slots, video poker, and casinos would give Pennsylvania the dubious distinction of giving its citizens more ways to empty their wallets than any other state.

— Lawrence Meehan



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## Civic Association Elections May 19

Elections for board members of the Society Hill Civic Association will take place Wednesday, May 19, at the General Membership meeting. If you or someone you know is interested in running for office, you need only obtain 10 signatures of SHCA members on a petition, which must be received by the Association office (Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 3, Philadelphia, PA 19105) by April 1.

State your name, address, telephone number, and the position you are seeking — quadrant representative (N/E, N/W, S/E, S/W), or Officer.

Terms are generally for three years. The slate of candidates will be published in the May issue of *The Reporter*, and voted at the May meeting. Candidates are expected to attend all monthly board meetings (usually the third Wednesday, at 7:30 PM) and to actively participate on one or more committees.

Our goal is simple: We are working together to make Society Hill an even better place to live. We would like you to be a part of helping achieve that goal.

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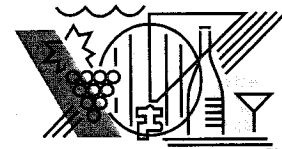
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226 South St.

*There will be a cocktail party  
 on Wednesday, April 7,  
 6:00 to 7:30 pm for 1999  
 members of SHCA  
 at Bohemian Bistro,  
 5th &  
 Bainbridge Streets.*

*Please reply to  
 215-923-7676.*



## The Sidewalk Cleaning Program: Two Sides of the Street!

### Sidewalk Cleaning Program — Pro

The sidewalk cleaning program began in September of 1996 with a start-up grant of \$5,000 from the Fund for Philadelphia obtained with the help of Councilman DiCicco. It was the first expansion of the Center City District's cleaning program into a residential neighborhood. Since then, the Center City Resident Association has started a similar program, funded by members who are asked to contribute \$50 in excess of their annual dues.

Remembering what our sidewalks looked like before the program started, I urge that the program be continued and offer the following reasons:

- 1 By ridding the area of trash after the weekly trash collection, the program improves our property values as well as our attitudes. On a typical Tuesday, there are seven workers and one supervisor working three to four hours in our neighborhood. An extra plus is that the program benefits people who are going from welfare to work.
- 2 The program has helped increase membership by giving people an additional reason to join the Civic Association (no one is against clean sidewalks). In 1996, membership was about 400. At the end of 1998 it was 700 and the goal for 1999 is 1,000.
- 3 The program is strongly supported by our members. Voluntary contributions to the SHCA fund to keep the program going were solicited and \$3,250 was donated in 1997 from over 40 people and an additional \$1,200 in 1998 from more than 20 people. Beginning in 1998, as part of the membership drive, people were asked to add a contribution for sidewalks, trees, or Town Watch. The sidewalk donation for 1998 was \$2,488 from 76 people, and is \$2,770 from 152 people to date in 1999.

Trash tends to multiply. Without this program it will quickly get ahead of those of us who do pick up trash when we see it. It is important for our neighborhood to continue the once-per-week sidewalk cleaning program.

— Amy Foran

### Sidewalk Cleaning Program — Con

It is time we forego the task of keeping our sidewalks clean with paid, non-volunteer help because our Civic Association cannot afford it. The \$1200 per month cost (\$14,400 annually) eats up about one fourth of the Civic Association's annual budget. This is far too much to devote to any one project, particularly one that directly impacts less than half of our residents.

Most SHCA members do not realize that our high rise households represent over half the total households within our neighborhood boundaries. The 172 condo owners who are also members of SHCA pay a significant monthly charge to have their grounds kept clean. If we ever hope to gain additional high rise residents as members,

we need to show that the SHCA supports projects that are more beneficial to the neighborhood as a whole. Extra street lighting, new trees, a local library branch, paint maintenance, and similar projects all should have a higher priority.

I spend a great deal of time walking through the neighborhood and I am not opposed to clean sidewalks. As a former New Yorker who came to this neighborhood in the early 70s, I cringe when unknowledgeable friends from outside the area use the term "Philthydelphia" and I understand that reputations die hard because images linger. Therefore, as a pseudo-advocacy group, SHCA should devote some funds to lobbying officials in city government to clean the sidewalks for us. After all, we are one of the premier historic neighborhoods in the nation and our current government seems more determined than ever to increase tourism. We should get on the backs of our city fathers to expand center city sidewalk cleaning to our neighborhood.

Until such enlightened actions are taken, we should develop an alternative approach. We should demand more corner trash bins with extra scheduled pick-ups and develop more of an attitude of community spirit in picking up trash ourselves. We should also get after our paid trash collectors to do the job correctly. Finally, we should establish a phone bank for neighbors who are too elderly to clean their own sidewalks. A crew of volunteers could help them periodically.

The community spirit these voluntary efforts would engender would go a long way toward making the problem disappear. Let's move on to bigger and better things to elevate our neighborhood's stature.

— Matthew J. DeJulio, Jr.

**Please let us know what you think.**

Phone 215-629-1288

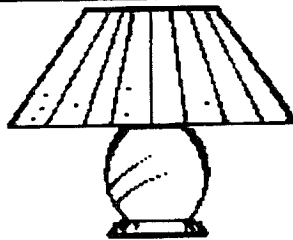
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