

Society Hill REPORTER

...Working Together
For a Better Place To Live

November 2000

Newsletter of The Society Hill Civic Association

Wednesday, November 15, 7:30 PM
SHCA General Membership Meeting
Society Hill Synagogue, 418 Spruce St.

Spotlighting Independence Mall

You won't want to miss SHCA's General Membership Meeting which will spotlight the new construction at Independence Mall and give you the "inside story" of what to expect during the process!

Our invited speakers representing the \$130 million National Constitution Center will be Executive Vice-president Laura Linton and Project Director Emily Bittenbender. The \$32 million Gateway Visitor Center will be represented by its President and CEO, William Moore.

The Gateway Center will replace the Visitor Center on 3rd Street, and will be an improved "first stop" orientation for visitors to Independence Park and the city. The National Constitution Center will be the first-ever, state-of-the-art museum and study center dedicated to the United States Constitution.

As you probably know, the National Park Service has partnered with both the public and private sectors to bring back to life the long dormant three city blocks directly north of Independence Hall, between 5th and 6th Streets. Currently under construction, these blocks that constitute Independence Mall will be completely transformed into a "people's park," welcoming visitors to Independence National Historical Park, as well as the entire metropolitan area.

The new buildings of the three-block Mall will all be oriented toward Independence Hall, and will include a newly designed and improved Liberty Bell Pavilion on Block 1, between Chestnut and Market Streets. Block 2, between Market and Arch Streets, will feature the new Gateway Visitor Center — with a renovated, underground parking garage connected directly to it. This 2nd block will also contain an educational facility for schoolchildren, called the Independence Park Institute.

The featured attraction for Block 3, between Arch and Race Streets, will be the National Constitution Center, which has already made "history" for its recent groundbreaking ceremony on September 17th. Many Society Hill residents and other guests were treated to a stirring program on that day—highlighted by President William Clinton who led the Pledge of Allegiance for everyone in attendance, including 72 new citizens from all over the world, who moments earlier, had been sworn in as naturalized American citizens.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Have a Great Holiday Season!

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Fall Clean-Up Day:

Saturday, November 18, 8 AM - 1:30 PM
Rain or Shine!



Cochairs Frank Hoban and Mark Valentine remind us that November 18th is Society Hill's annual Fall Clean-Up Day.

Here's what to expect:

■ Alternate side of the street parking to provide space for street sweepers.

■ A free community lunch at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Here's what you can do:

■ Organize your neighbors to sweep away trash and debris.

■ Pick up trash bags and borrow brooms at the 5th Street SuperFresh.

■ Sweep your yards, alleyways, sidewalks and gutters.

■ Place the trash in bags and put them at major intersections on Locust, Spruce, Pine, and Lombard as they are crossed by the numbered streets.

■ Do NOT put out household trash!

■ Return the brooms to SuperFresh.

Then please join us:

Lunch compliments of Pennsylvania Hospital at Hospital's cafeteria. Use the 8th Street entrance, through archway: 12:30 - 1:30 PM.

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To reach any of the officers or directors or send a letter or
contribution to *The Reporter*, call the SHCA office at
215-629-1288. Leave your name and number with the
Association's administrator, Day Murray. She will have your call
returned.

Letters to the Editor are welcome but will not be published unless signed.

You may also write to SHCA at P.O. Box 3,
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Next deadline for THE REPORTER:
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Neighborhood Improvement District Explored

A new state law, enacted last year, will make it possible for Society Hill to further enhance and preserve the quality of life in our community. This statute — the Neighborhood Improvement District Act — would potentially operate in a way similar to the Center City District or the South Street Headhouse District which determine and identify their own specific needs for supplementary services, usually related to sanitation and safety. These nonprofit districts give control of a variety of programs or services to their own local communities.

The new Pennsylvania law will give us the opportunity to determine our own future, specifically regarding what additional services or programs we determine are most needed to continue the well-being of our community. This article summarizes how such a Neighborhood Improvement District might work here — if we choose to have one — and the decision process that will follow — beginning now and most likely lasting until late winter.

SHCA's Board of Directors convened a special committee composed of property owners and residents from all Society Hill quadrants and segments to study the feasibility of a Neighborhood Improvement District. A decision to move forward or not will be put directly into the hands of Society Hillers through a public process consisting of three meetings. All residents will be given the opportunity to express their vision of our area's needs, decide whether or not to take advantage of this opportunity, and to set our own priorities. You will receive an invitation to these three meetings and will have an opportunity to express your views at each.

November 8th meeting

At the first November 8th meeting, there will be explanations of how the law works. (See the Calendar on back page.) You, as a participant, will have the opportunity to express your concerns and views of our neighborhood's current and prospective needs. You will also be asked to complete a questionnaire about what services or programs we, as residents, should determine are most wanted. The results of these completed questionnaires will guide our early decisions on service priorities. Sub-Committees will then be formed. The chairs of these groups will give reports at the second community meeting — most likely in December or early January — when everyone will again have the opportunity to raise questions and make additional suggestions.

A steering committee, working with experienced and professional consultants, will draft a Business Plan identifying the proposed elements to present to our community. Key elements of this plan will include:

- The exact area to be served — that is, we will determine the service area of our District and list each property within it
- The services required
- The costs to provide these services
- The formula for sharing costs among benefiting properties
- The way in which our nonprofit corporation would function, how the services would be managed, and how the District

would relate to the Society Hill Civic Association and other entities.

Draft Business Plan

This draft Business Plan will be presented at the third community meeting, and the entire decision phase should take about four months. Assuming our neighborhood wants an Improvement District, the final community-wide meeting will be devoted to review of its proposed operations and a financial plan. If there is widespread support for the plan, it will be taken to SHCA's Board. If the Board agrees with the plan, it will be presented to both the Mayor and City Council for review and adoption.

How would a District function in Society Hill?

First, a nonprofit corporation would be formed. In our decision process, the method for choosing Board members will be defined — composed of about eleven to fifteen residents. An employed, paid manager may be hired for full- or part-time work, depending on the amount of responsibility given to the manager, as determined in the Business Plan. An improved security program might include after-dark patrols on bikes or in vans — trained by the police and connected to them by radio. Cleaner sidewalks might include litter removal and the maintenance of street trees, and graffiti removal might also be desirable. A contract between our District and a qualified service provider could be arranged.

All services would be paid for on the basis of a small assessment of each property — so as to share costs and keep the cost per household low. Because property owners will make those decisions and pay their share of assessments, they will be cost-conscious. It should be possible to provide our chosen services for little more than a half-dollar a day on average. All of the assessments will be allocated to the District for use in our neighborhood only; none may be spent outside it. Moreover, state law prevents the City from reducing services in an area because it has supplementary assessment-financed services.

If the plan is adopted by City Council, the law provides an opportunity for property owners to register objections to it through the City Clerk. If more than half of the property owners within the proposed district register objections, the plan cannot be implemented. The law provides that any established Neighborhood Improvement District can be terminated if the residents are not satisfied. For more information, please see "Questions & Answers" on pages 12 through 17.

Our first community-wide exploratory meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8th. It will be hosted at Old Pine Church, 412 Pine Street, at 7 PM. We look forward to seeing you.

President's Message



The Millennium Year has zoomed by at jet propulsion. As we approach the holiday season, there are two major undertakings that deserve your attention:

Independence Library Campaign:

Through the initiative of the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA)—at the time Mel Buckman was president and under the years-long advocacy and leadership of resident Liza

Seltzer—our dream of having a branch of The Free Library in our neighborhood is about to be fulfilled. As you know, the Independence Branch is set to open in early 2001 at the Balch Institute, on 7th Street near Chestnut Street. All the capital costs have been raised. The Independence Branch will offer over 50,000 books, special exhibits, plus state-of-the-art information technology. The total cost for all this is \$230,000. The good news is that to date, \$138,000 in donations and commitments have been secured. This means that funds to make up the \$92,000 deficit must be found.

In order to insure the quality of the library we all want, SHCA is coordinating a donor cocktail party at the Locks Art Gallery in Washington Square on Tuesday, December 5th — from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. We are pleased to have a stellar Host Committee for this event. Party-goers are invited at two tax-deductible levels, and each level represents one unit of either an individual with spouse, partner or guest. At the \$250 level gift, your name (or

names) will appear on a book plate at the new branch. For gifts of \$1,000 or more, your name (or names) will be listed on a permanent plaque at the Independence Branch. We hope you can join us for this fundraising reception that will be of direct benefit to our community. (See more about the party on page 6.)

Needless to say, we will be extremely grateful for your support, but if wish to make a tax-deductible donation at this time—of any amount—please fill out the coupon on page 19 and mail it to the Philadelphia Free Library Foundation—Independence Branch Campaign. If you have any questions, please call Liza Seltzer at 215-625-7995.

Neighborhood Improvement District

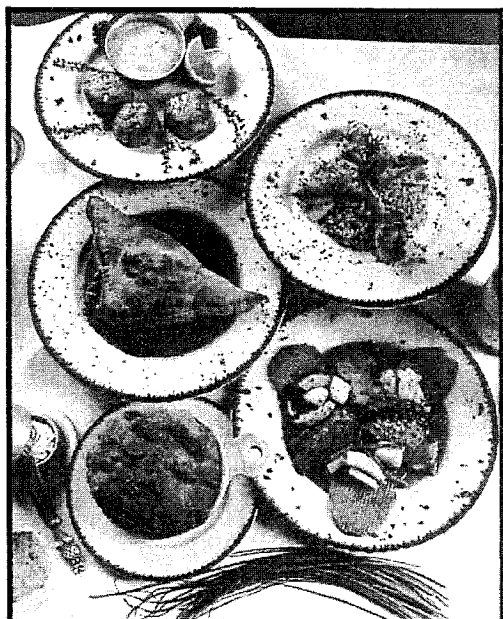
Between now and early 2001 we are scheduling community meetings regarding the possible creation of a Neighborhood Improvement District. Our first meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 8th at 7 PM at Old Pine Church.

SHCA's Board of Directors has reviewed a preliminary evaluation by our Neighborhood Improvement District Study Committee—under the capable leadership of resident, Mark Keener, AIA—and has authorized that we proceed to explore the desire for such a district among Society Hill neighbors. We will be holding three community meetings, and the second will likely take place in December or early January. In advance of these meetings, this issue of the newsletter will focus on the nature of Neighborhood Improvement Districts, with a "Q & A" of fre-

Continued on the next page

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President's Message, *continued*

quently asked questions. The Q & A will also be distributed at the community meetings. (See pages 12-17.)

Update on Washington Square

We continue to press on with our efforts for Washington Square so that Congress will enact legislation that would post an Honorary Military Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier in perpetuity. At our initiative 15 historic, business and community organizations have joined our coalition. Senator Arlen Specter has taken the lead, and we are working closely with his chief of staff and legislative office. We also enjoy the bipartisan support of Congressman Brady, and were pleased when Congressman Klink, who addressed SHCA's October General Meeting, expressed his enthusiasm and endorsement for this project. We also thank Comcast Corporation for its assistance in this effort.

Meetings with Community Hi-Rises

Regarding Hopkinson House, Independence Place, and Society Hill Towers, I have met with either their Board, their General Manager or attended a membership meeting to update these hi-rise communities and get their input on several local issues. I reviewed with them the concept of a Neighborhood Improvement District; discussed raising funds for our Independence Branch of the Public Library; summarized the Washington Square project; and responded to their concerns about our civic association. These meetings have been fruitful and I hope to continue the dialogue.

Finally, if you have any questions or comments, please know that your SHCA officers, Board and myself welcome your thoughts and advice. I hope you have an enjoyable Thanksgiving and a wonderful Holiday Season! — *Malcolm Lazin*

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SHCA Benefit To Help Stack The Shelves With Books For Independence Library

We gratefully thank all the following generous donors to the Independence Branch Fundraising Campaign who have made their gifts prior to October 15, 2000. If your name is not listed, please consider making this "one-time-only" year's end tax-deductible contribution today. (See page 19 for gift coupon.)

Please also consider attending SHCA's fabulous party to benefit the Independence Branch. SHCA members will soon receive invitations to this December 5th event, hosted by the Locks Gallery on Washington Square. Attend at one of two

levels, and bring along a spouse, friend, partner, or guest. Donations of \$250 will be recognized with a bookplate featuring your name in a new book for the collection. Gifts of \$1,000 will display your name on a permanent plaque in the library's lobby. Please join us at the party by noting on the invitation's reply card that you've already sent your gift of \$250 or more — although we won't discourage you from making another contribution!

Need more information? Call Liza Seltzer at 215-625-7995.

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Independence Branch Pre-Opening Celebration

On Tuesday, October 11, a pre-opening celebration was held for the Independence Branch of the Free Library. This event marked the hanging of a sign in anticipation of the Free Library of Philadelphia's newest branch — scheduled to open in early 2001 at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, 18 South 7th Street. Elliot Shelkrot, President and Director of the Free Library, led the ceremony.

Councilman Frank DiCicco, who was instrumental in bringing the library to East Philadelphia, announced donations totaling \$3,000 to the fundraising campaign for the branch's collection.

Independence Branch Fundraising Chair and SHCA member Barbara "Bobbie" Gohn updated the crowd on the status of that campaign: approximately \$138,000 in donations and pledges have been raised, leaving a deficit of \$92,000.

Liza Seltzer, SHCA Library Committee Chair, thanked the many leaders, community groups and neighbors who helped make the branch a reality.

The highlight of the event was a special performance by the Chinatown Learning Center, featuring children's songs in Mandarin and Cantonese.



Free Library
OF PHILADELPHIA
Independence Branch
at the Balch Institute

From left: Liza Seltzer, SHCA Library Committee Chair; Elliot Shelkrot, President and Director, Free Library of Philadelphia; Councilman Frank DiCicco; Independence Branch Fundraising Chair and SHCA member Barbara "Bobbie" Gohn



Laurels



To **Roz Bratt, owner of Homemade Goodies by Roz, 510 South 5th Street**, for her continued generosity in donating baked goodies for Society Hill House Tours over the past two years. She's a neighbor with a heart of gold!

To **Joan Pileggi of Pileggi Salon, 717 Walnut Street**, who scrupulously maintains the sidewalk and facades of her shops with wonderful plants and who also generously donates gifts to our Welcome Basket campaign for new neighbors.

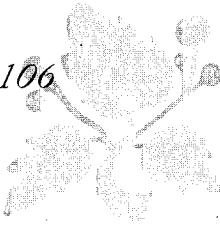
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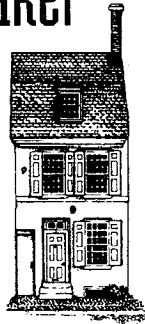


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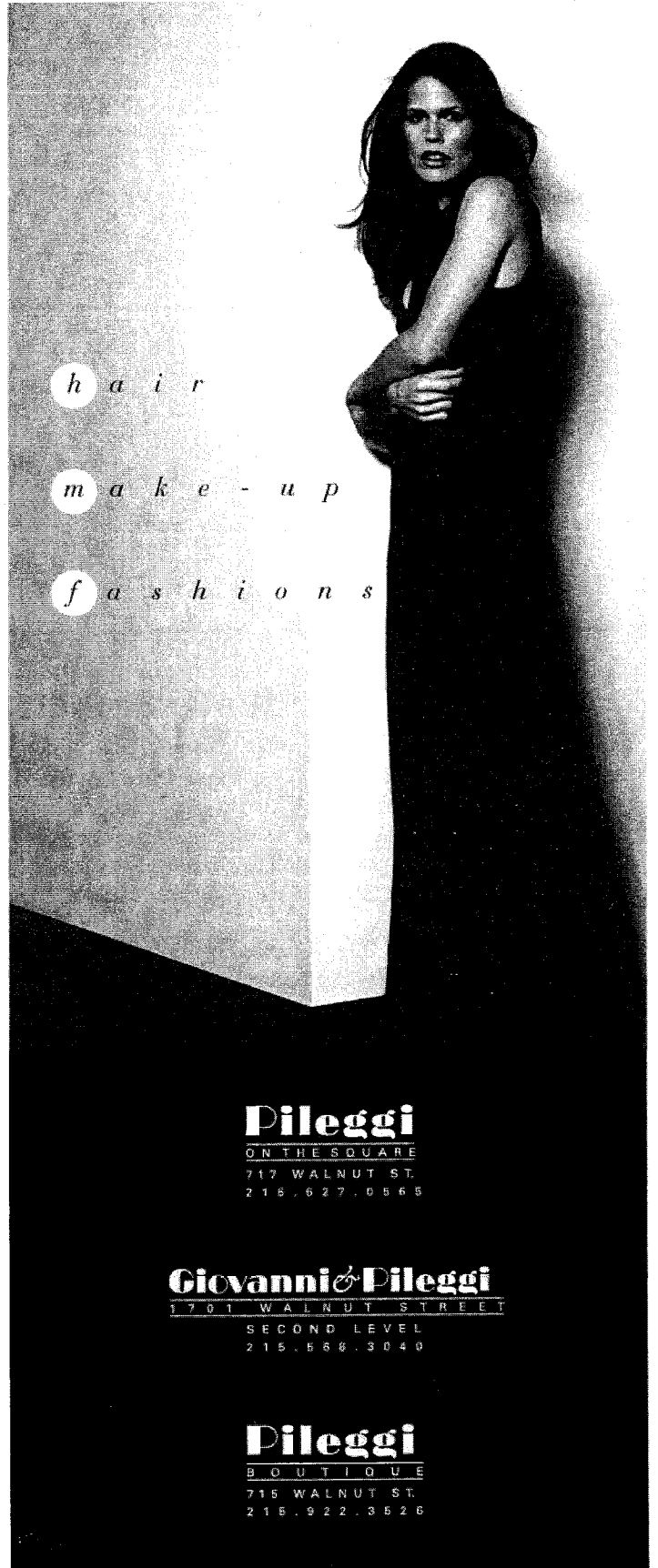
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Carter and Jo Ann Buller



"Mrs. Buller has a meeting, so could you come an hour earlier than we'd planned?" So, no time to don the intrepid reporter's flak jacket, I traverse the two blocks—and the almost two centuries—that separate my house from the Bullers' 1805 residence on the 200 block of Delancey Street, and am greeted affably.

Carter Buller is a labor lawyer with Montgomery, McCracken, Walker and Rhoads; Jo Ann Buller is a consultant with TravelAnywhere, a local travel agency. The couple demur at the suggestion that they are pioneers—yet they were among the original "gentrifiers" in the neighborhood, having bought and restored their house in the mid-1960s.

What's changed since then, I inquire. In those days, they recall, there was a sense of adventure, a buzz. Everybody, from former Mayor Richardson Dilworth to tourists passing through, was intrigued by what these trailblazers were up to. And what was taking place was nothing short of the transformation of a whole area of the city. With the metamorphosis completed there came a stronger sense of community and the area's attractiveness to more established folk occurred. Jo Ann remarked on the many friendships she has made here over the years—staying in touch with those who have left, and making new friends with "all the wonderful people who move in."

Sense of community fostered by SHCA

This sense of community was fostered, then as now, by the Society Hill Civic Association, and Carter served as its president in the 1970s. During that time he led our neighborhood's fight to prevent construction of a cross-town expressway on South Street.

Jo Ann, for her part, developed a passion for preserving and promoting the area's historic treasures; she formed walking tour groups and ran a training company for guides giving historical and architectural tours. Then and now they continue to provide community service in a variety of ways: Jo Ann sits on the board of directors of the Friends of Independence National Historical Park, the Landmarks Society (which owns and operates two house museums in Society Hill—the Powel House and Physick House), and the Historic St. Peter's Church Preservation Corpo-

ration. Carter is on the board of directors of the Jefferson Health System, and on the board of the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. He is the secretary of the Sunday Breakfast Club, and is former chair of the Methodist Hospital and past chair of the Committee of 70.

Collectors of American antiques

Not surprisingly, the couple are collectors of American antiques; and, a three-hour drive from the city, they are active in conservancy work at Eagles Mere where they have a weekend cottage and enjoy gardening—when, as Jo Ann says, "the deer don't eat the flowers."

Carter is currently president of the Eagles Mere Conservancy, an environmental protection group. Also, on the non-urban front, he is an equestrian sports enthusiast—going to horse shows in the region and to Dude ranches in the West.

The Bullers have 31-year-old twins: Pierce, a local attorney; and Valerie, who directs alumni programs at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. If Carter and Jo Ann are reluctant to assume the rubric of "pioneers," they can certainly lay claim to being stewards of the area's history and heritage. I returned home to the 21st century knowing that its antecedents are in good hands.

— David Woods

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St. Peter's School Sponsors Holiday House Tour Saturday, December 2

A private tour of some of Society Hill's most wonderful homes — all decked out with seasonal finery — is being planned for the holiday season to benefit the St. Peter's School Scholar Fund. The tours will be given on Saturday, December 2, and you can choose either a morning or afternoon tour. Lunch is included.

For information regarding cost, where to meet, etc., please contact Shelby Sparrow at St. Peter's School: 215-925-3963. If you are willing to showcase your home or volunteer your time as a host or hostess, please be in touch with SHCA Board Director, Martha Levine at 215-629-0727.

Co-chairs for this Holiday House Tour are neighbors Martha Levine and Nula Thanhauser. They are working with the school to help coordinate this enjoyable and, hopefully, profitable program.



Annual St. Peter's Holiday Sale:

Friday, December 8 - Sunday, December 10

Every year St. Peter's School, Lombard and 3rd Streets, holds a holiday sale offering all kinds of seasonal items. Stop by at the school yard to purchase your holiday trees, greens, and plants. Inside, you'll find a choice selection of books and gifts.

Jot the times down on your calendar: Friday, December 8 - noon to 6 PM; Saturday, 9 AM to 6 PM; and Sunday, 9 AM to 4 PM.

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Society Hillers Honored As Volunteers of the Year



Two tireless and dedicated Philadelphia Open House volunteers — representing the Society Hill Civic Association — were recognized at the annual meeting of the Friends of Independence National Historical Park on September 18. We are proud to report that SHCA Board Director Martha Levine (at left) and longtime Society Hill resident Linda Skale were honored for their excellent work in coordinating Society Hill house and garden tours for the 1999 and 2000 seasons of the Philadelphia Open House Tour program, which is sponsored by The Friends of Independence.



In attendance at the annual meeting of The Friends of Independence were many Society Hill residents. In this photo, three presidents of the Society Hill Civic Association pose for the camera. They are, left to right: Malcolm Lazin, current SHCA president, and previous SHCA presidents Becky Stoloff and Steve Miller.

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Do We Want a Society Hill Neighl

Franklin Lamps



The first street lights in Philadelphia were installed in 1751, using glass globes imported from London. Benjamin Franklin criticized these lamps in his autobiography because they were smoky, fragile and draftless. He suggested composing them of "four flat panes, with a long funnel above to draw up the smoke and crevices admitting air below...."

These electrified versions of Franklin's street lamps are unique to Society Hill — installed during the area's redevelopment period about 40 years ago — are maintained by the city and currently being improved.

Question 1: What exactly is a Neighborhood Improvement District?

A Pennsylvania state law enacted last year enables the establishment of special services districts in residential neighborhoods. (The concept is similar to districts focused around business communities, such as Philadelphia's Center City District.) Through the establishment of such districts, a range of auxiliary services can be provided that are not already provided by municipal authorities (in our case, the City of Philadelphia). These services may include, for example, supplementary security (additional police protection); additional sanitation (trash, graffiti, leaf and snow removal); streetscape improvement or decor (better lighting); and any other measures that would contribute to a safer and more attractive, cleaner community. The types and regularity of these services are wholly dependent on the ambitions and criteria of any given district. The City of Philadelphia must approve the creation of any of these districts.

Question 2: Where does the money come from to service these local districts?

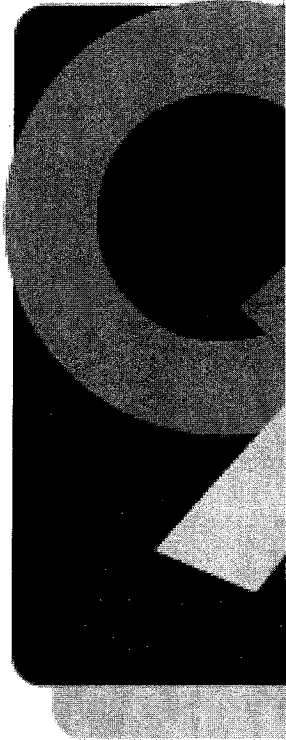
The funds to pay for these additional services come from assessment of each property within any defined district. These assessments may be based on a percentage of tax already being paid for any property, and are usually a very small percentage of that tax. This percentage is always determined by the district itself—often in the range of 1% to 4%—and is dependent on the size of the district's annual budget, which is also self-determined. For example, based on current assessments for each property in Society Hill, it is currently estimated that annual additional assessment for any household within the District would amount to numbers in the \$100-\$200 range. This is a very modest amount relative to what we already pay in City property taxes and relative to the kinds and quality of additional services our neighborhood could potentially enjoy.

Question 3: Why should households pay more money for services that the City provides?

We will not pay for services that the City already provides. New Improvement Districts choose their own criteria about what services they want, and how often they want them. Society Hill may decide that weekly sidewalk cleaning is one of the identified priorities. This is not now, nor ever likely to be, a City-provided service. If our community chooses to have supplementary security services, such as police on bicycle patrol, the police protection that the City already provides will not be lessened. By law, the City must continue to maintain its current police levels in our area. In short, any Neighborhood Improvement District provides an enhancement of services, which can be different from or in addition to the City's responsibilities.

Question 4: Is the new law similar to the one used by business districts, such as the nearby South Street Headhouse District?

In general, yes. Essentially the law gives local residential communities their own grassroots self-determination. Residential Improvement Districts are established as nonprofit corporations, operated by property owners within the defined district. In Society Hill's case, homeowners rather than business owners would be assessed the additional money each year. Residential Improvement Districts can choose their own boards of directors without action by the Mayor and City Council. The law provides that assessments (additional taxes) for these individual, self-determined Improvement Districts can be collected by the City together with a homeowner's real estate tax bill—if a District de-



Neighborhood Improvement District?

cides to handle tax collection in that way. For example, if we so choose, our Improvement District funds could be paid along with city taxes, and then those dollars would be transferred directly into Society Hill's Improvement District account.

Question 5: How would the boundaries of our Improvement District be defined?

The boundaries of our Society Hill Improvement District would be defined by our own community's wishes. For example, we could choose to use the same boundaries as established by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, which identifies our neighborhood as a city-certified historic district. (This designation, you may recall, is what we lobbied for—to preserve and protect our unique neighborhood.) Alternatively, we could decide to use different criteria when defining its boundaries. For example, some Society Hill high-rise complexes or condo associations already pay additional fees for grounds-keeping. The law provides for the possibility of different assessment rates for different levels of service, which these associations may want to consider. Ultimately, some properties, such as high-rise or condo associations may be excluded altogether.

Question 6: Has the establishment of a Neighborhood Improvement District for Society Hill already been decided?

No. The Society Hill Civic Association has recently convened a Study Committee to explore whether property owners and residents believe our neighborhood would welcome additional services beyond those already provided by the City—that is, whether we believe that a proposed Improvement District would make our residential area safer, cleaner and more attractive.

Question 7: Who initiated this exploratory process?

SHCA asked members of the Study Committee—not all of whom are Civic Association members—to examine how and whether a Society Hill Improvement District would benefit our area in specific ways. The Study Committee is now scheduling a series of meetings to assess community interest.

Question 8: How would the Society Hill Improvement District operate?

The state law permits the establishment of Neighborhood Improvement Districts as nonprofit corporations, operated by its own constituents—i.e. property owners. In Society Hill's case, a plan would be developed over the next few months to reflect our community's preferences as to how this corporation would be constituted, structured and operated.

Question 9: How will Society Hill property owners be able to shape a plan resulting in our own local residential Improvement District?

The SHCA is scheduling three community meetings to which all property owners and residents are invited. Our Civic Association will keep you informed through the *Society Hill Reporter* and other notices about when and where these meetings will take place. (Our first meeting is scheduled for November 8th, and a second meeting will be held sometime in December or early January. See Calendar on the back page.) Participants of SHCA's Study Committee live in all sections of Society Hill. As the exploratory process proceeds, Study Committee members and SHCA Board Directors will be talking to

Continued on page 16

Decorative Firemarks

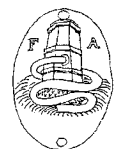
During colonial times, firemark plaques on the facades of buildings signified to Philadelphia's volunteer firefighters that they would be rewarded if they extinguished the fires of these insured buildings.



The "Hand-in-Hand" marker signifies the 1752 Philadelphia Contributionship Company — founded by Benjamin Franklin, and still in existence today, at 212 S. 4th Street.



The "Green Tree" or Mutual Assurance Company was founded in 1784 because the Contributionship at that time would not insure houses with trees on their property.



The "F.A." marker belonged to the Fire Association of Philadelphia. These colonial-era firemarks are essentially decorative today.



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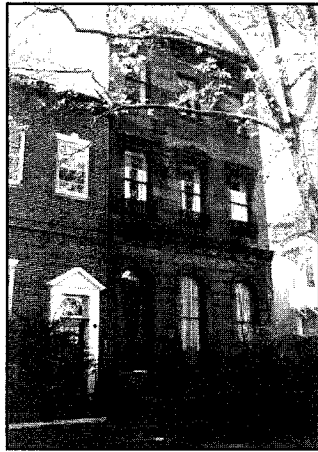
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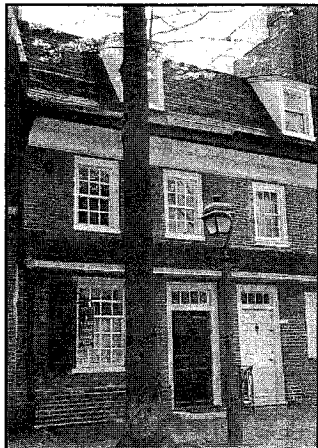
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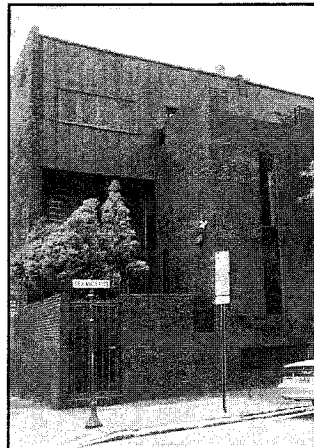
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Do We Want a Society Hill Neighborhood Improvement District? *continued*

neighbors and answering questions. Your participation in the Study Committee (or any of the identified sub-committees) is welcome. To shape the kind of services we deem would most benefit Society Hill, full participation is needed. All voices will be heard to explore this opportunity.

Question 10: When is this decision phase expected to be completed? And, what will happen then?

Hopefully, the decision phase will be completed about four months from now. Assuming Society Hill determines that it wants its own Neighborhood Improvement District, a well-publicized, third community-wide meeting will be held. This meeting will be devoted to public review of the proposed operations and a financial plan. If there is general agreement in favor of an Improvement District, this decision will be taken to the Society Hill Civic Association—which as a pro-active volunteer organization has been the “official” voice of Society Hill since our area was redeveloped beginning in the late 1950s. If SHCA’s Board of Directors agrees with the proposed plan, it will be presented to the Mayor and Council for adoption.

Question 11: Why will establishing an Improvement District take so long?

Until we have agreement on the specific details—such as our boundaries—a decision would be premature. We need to know what services property owners want (and don’t want); what these services would cost; how to share the costs equitably; how the

District would be operated—such as, would it contract for such services by hiring its own staff or would it subcontract? Given these many options, residents will need to know what it is they support and, alternatively, what they would oppose.

Question 12: Suppose some property owners object to the plan. What happens then?

The law provides an opportunity for property owners to register objections through the City Clerk after adoption by City Council. If more than half of the property owners’ (or property owners owning more than half the assessed value of properties within the proposed district) register their objections, the plan cannot be implemented.

Question 13: Once a District is established, can it be terminated?

Yes. The law provides a method for termination.

Question 14: How long would the Society Hill District be operating before it could it be evaluated and reconsidered?

The Business Plan of the Improvement District itself may propose an authorization period. This has been the standard practice for business districts.

Continued on the next page

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Do We Want a Society Hill Neighborhood Improvement District? *continued*

Question 15: How will the Board of Directors of Society Hill's Improvement District be selected?

Again, this will be determined by our own planning process. Options may include annual elections by property owners, election by the existing board, election by the Society Hill Civic Association, or some combination of these.

Question 16: In one potential scenario, couldn't the Society Hill Improvement District replace our Civic Association as we know it?

The idea for exploring a Neighborhood Improvement District for Society Hill originated within our own Civic Association. Therefore, we believe that any programs planned and financed by it would be different from and in addition to those provided by SHCA. How the two independent, nonprofit organizations would relate to each other must be worked out in the governance section of its Business Plan.

Question 17: Would the Improvement District duplicate services by the Civic Association? Or would its establishment make SHCA irrelevant or redundant? Also, could it subsume the purpose and duties of our Civic Association?

Because the Improvement District would have very clearly defined and limited purposes—specifically to choose and pay for extra community services—it is unlikely that its establishment would make SHCA irrelevant. Society Hillers will most likely want to continue using SHCA as the internal means of communication, as well as to serve as our “official public” voice—as it has operated in all these past years.

Question 18: How many of these Improvement Districts exist?

Nationwide there are more than a thousand similar entities that provide supplementary services to business districts. However, similar districts addressing the needs of residential communities are as yet few, as this is a relatively new concept for local neighborhoods.

Question 19: How will we be sure that the assessment rate is affordable now and in the future?

The people who will vote on the annual budget will share the interest in cost containment because they themselves will be paying the extra dollars. A primary issue in our Improvement District plan will concern its annual budget and how that budget is developed. One option would be a community-wide open meeting focused completely on drafting the budget. When everyone has had his or her say, the proposed budget could be modified and adopted.

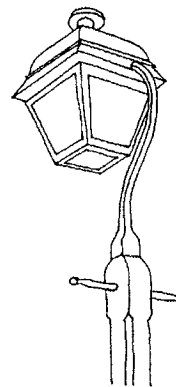
Question 20: I keep my property clean. Why should I pay for cleaning someone else's?

Chronic trash and litter contributes to the impression that neighborhoods are out of control, and ultimately may depress property values. The objective of Improvement Districts is to assure that the totality of any defined area is clean, reflecting positively on

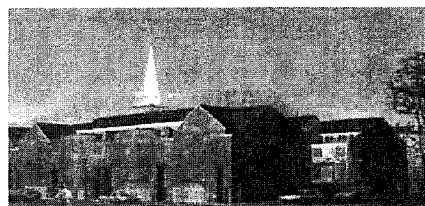
all properties.

Question 21: How long would our Improvement District be operating before it can be evaluated and reconsidered?

The Business Plan may propose an authorization period. Five years has been standard practice for the business districts.



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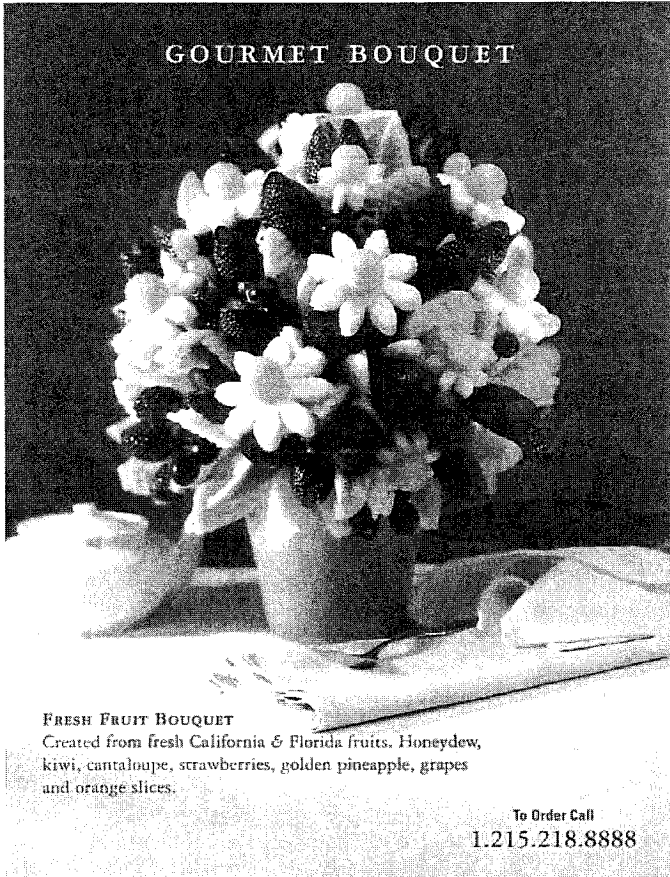
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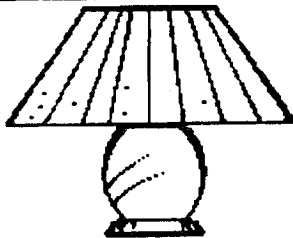
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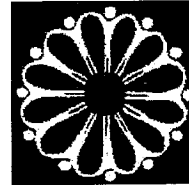
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Society Hill Pioneer: Faith Lemmer

Faith Lemmer, who lived at 236 Pine Street, died on October 10, 2000. She and her husband, Ralph, restored a grand Federal house — previously owned and used by Pennsylvania Hospital — to its period splendor during Society Hill's redevelopment era. Faith was responsible for originating Society Hill's "Window Panes" program, which exemplifies our neighborhood's sense of pride. Today when you see in the windows of historic homes descriptions of when they were built and by whom, we can thank her for coming up with the idea for this on-going program. She is survived by a son and daughter-in-law.

Window Pane Project Continues

If your period home does not have a little window plaque that describes the age of the house and who built it, SHCA is still offering this free service. Please call Matt DeJulio at 215-574-0372 or send him an e-mail (matthew.dejulio@gte.net), and he'll look up the history of your house. Within about a week you'll receive an 8 1/2 x 11 historical placard you can install in a window that passersby can enjoy.



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Candlelight

New Year's Eve
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Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

How-To Workshop For Your Historical Home

A half-day workshop focused on "how-to" find and hire the right professional(s) for specific preservation projects is being offered by Preservation Pennsylvania at the Franklin Institute Museum of Science, 220 N. 20th Street.

Scheduled for Thursday, December 7, this workshop will be led by a panel of three experts to help you decide which professional does what and how different players (architects, contractors, engineers, etc.) relate to each other. The three participating panelists are George E. Thomas, Ph.D., Samuel Y. Harris, a registered architect, engineer and attorney, and Randy Cotton, Senior Vice President at the Preservation Alliance. Bring your specific situations and questions for these distinguished panelists.

Registration begins at 8:45 AM, and the program runs from 9 AM through 12:30 PM, with an optional lunch presentation.

If you're a member of either Preservation Pennsylvania or the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, the cost for this workshop is only \$25; for nonmembers, \$35. This bargain rate is made possible because the workshop is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts through Preservation Pennsylvania's Philadelphia Intervention Fund. Registration deadline is December 1. Send your check made payable to Preservation Pennsylvania, 257 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 with your name, address and phone number.

Questions? Contact Susan Shearer at Preservation Pennsylvania: phone: 717-234-2310; fax: 234-2522; e-mail: sshearer@preservationpa.org.

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Committee Reports

Historic Preservation & Zoning

Within appropriate design guidelines and preservation standards, Society Hill's Committee for Historic Preservation & Zoning monitors community-wide building alterations (additions, demolitions, new structures); represents the neighborhood in City Hall at monthly preservation and zoning hearings; works with neighbors, developers and architects to ensure that our historic district will be protected and preserved.

The following current projects are under consideration and being followed by this committee:

- 100 Delancey Street: revision of drawings for external elevator
- Vacant lot at 7th & Pine Street: preliminary proposal for a new housing development, a private venture, at this long owned but unused Pennsylvania Hospital property
- 232 S. 3rd Street, near Willings Alley: Several windows were installed along the building's historic brick wall without approval by the Historical Commission or Zoning Board. Our committee notified the Commission for enforcement of Society Hill's historical ordinance, and now both the Zoning Board and L&I have been alerted to this situation.

Please remember to be in touch with the Committee's Co-chairs if you are planning to do any facade alterations to your home.

We can work with you to prevent any problems that might occur.

Contact:

Richard Bost (215-963-9517; or bostrick@aol.com)

Bernice Hamel (215-925-4363; or hamelbt@aol.com)

Becky Stoloff (215-627-4910; or rtstoloff@aol.com)

Join the Society Hill Civic Association!

Name(s) _____

Address: _____ Zip _____

Phones: _____

Work (_____) _____

Home (_____) _____

E-mail _____

New Membership Renewal

Household Membership: . . \$40

Business Membership: . . . \$100

*Additional Contribution: \$ _____

- *Earmarked for: Project Sweep Stakes
 Library Campaign
 Street Trees/Tenders

I/We would like to work on the following committees:

- Clean-Up Day
- Historic Preservation/Zoning Development
- Library
- Liquor Control
- Society Hill Reporter
- Street Trees/Tree Tenders

Make your check payable to: Society Hill Civic Association
Mail to SHCA, Box 3, Philadelphia, PA 19105

Questions? 215-629-1288

Membership Committee Report

The Society Hill Civic Association has recently begun a membership drive focusing on local businesses, associations and professional offices. You can assist this effort by asking area merchants or professionals you know or patronize to become SHCA members.

Considering how many local stores, businesses and offices we enjoy in our neighborhood (dentists, lawyers, groceries and dry-cleaners, etc.), we are disappointed that only a handful are members of our pro-active, volunteer organization. If you've never joined the SHCA or have allowed your membership to lapse, please fill out and mail us the Membership Coupon, applicable for both Society Hill businesses and households, on page 20. Or, you can respond directly to the letter we sent to non-residents last month.

We now proudly identify the following businesses, associations and religious institutions that are current members of the Society Hill Civic Association, as of October 14, 2000. In future editions of *The Reporter*, we plan to publicly recognize additional non-residential members.

Associations, Businesses & Institutions

Creative Collective Gallery
The Down Town Club Catering and Conference Center
Gannon Coyne Agency Insurance
Hopkinson House Owners Association
Independence Place Owners Association
Lamberti's Cucina
Mark Wade Real Estate
Mather & Company Insurance
Old Original Bookbinder's Restaurant
Pennsylvania Hospital
Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks
Philadelphia Sports Club
Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors
Sheraton Society Hill
Society Hill Veterinary Hospital, Inc.
New Market Ventures
Travel Anywhere

Houses of Worship

Episcopal Church Diocese of Pennsylvania
Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church
Old St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church
Old St. Mary's Church
Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church
Society Hill Synagogue
St. Mary's Convent
St. Mary's Interparochial School
St. Peter's Church

Welcome Baskets

Martha Levine, chair of our Neighborhood Pride Committee, asks that we thank the following businesses for participating in our Welcome Basket Campaign, whereby newcomers to Society Hill are welcomed with gift baskets from local merchants:

Arden Theatre Company, 40 North 2nd Street
Bridget Foy's South Street Grill, 200 South Street
Chef's Market, 231 South Street
Dickens Old Curiosity Shop, 417 South 2nd Street
Fork, 306 Market Street
Homemade Goodies by Roz, 510 South 5th Street
Italia Ristorante, 318 South 3rd Street
Judy's Cafe, 3rd & Bainbridge Streets
Knave of Hearts, 230 South Street
Metropolitan Bakery, 1114 Pine Street
The Mann Center for the Performing Arts,
52nd & Parkside Avenue
Mom's Bake at Home Pizza, 241 South 6th Street
Mums and Pops Confectionery, 932 Locust Street
Old City Coffee, 221 Church Street and
Reading Terminal Market
Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble, Old Pine Church,
400 Pine Street
Philadelphia Sports Clubs, 220-250 South 5th Street
Pileggi on the Square, 717 Walnut Street
Riff Cleaners, 314 South 5th Street
Rita's Water Ice, 239 South Street
Ritz Theaters, 214 Walnut Street, 4th & Ranstead Street
Sfizzio Restaurant, Society Hill Towers,
237 St. James Place
Shop Rite, 29 Snyder Avenue
Show of Hands Gallery 1006 Pine Street,
Soapbox, 1216 Locust Street
Society Hill Playhouse, 507 South 8th Street
Starbuck's Coffee, Inc., 347 South Street
Super Fresh Food Markets, 5th and Pine Streets
TLA Video, 517 South 4th Street
Wilma Theater, 265 South Broad Street
XandO Coffee and Bar, 215 Lombard Street
Zeke's Deli, 318 South 5th Street

If you know of any new residents who moved into the community as of last January, please notify Martha so that these neighbors can be welcomed with Gift Baskets: 215-629-0727.

Recommended Contractors

Martha Levine reminds you that SHCA maintains a 10-page list of Society Hill Preferred Contractors, which is updated monthly. This resource can help you find a contractor with a good track record—everything from roofers, painters, marble experts, as well as dealers for antique mantels, lighting and hardware. The list is free for the asking. **Call Martha Levine at 215-629-0727.**

**New SuperFresh Now Open
Daily, 6 AM - Midnight**

Welcome to what is probably Philadelphia's largest and most complete supermarket—located off Columbus Blvd. on Pier 70, just across from Home Depot. It's not a place you'll want to pop in on for only a quart of milk, but if you want to do a major shop that includes everything from Apples to Zebras (of the stuffed toy variety), this is definitely the place to go—although getting from one end of the store to the other may require roller skates.

The market has within it several "mini" shops, including a cafe, toy shop, flower shop, book shop, and pharmacy. Needless to say, the market offers prepared foods of all kinds, a pasta selection the size of Italy, and everything for your kitchen except the sink. (That you can get at Home Depot!)

Beware of "Town Watch" Fraud:

Some neighbors have reported that a man posing as a representative from Society Hill's Town Watch has been ringing their doorbells and collecting money to supplement our community's Town Watch project. Please remember that Society Hill's Town Watch has been essentially subsumed under our civic association, and that its street patrolling activities have been inactive for quite some time.

Do not give any money to this smooth-talking impostor, who usually appears in the early evening and flashes some kind of badge. Described as African-American and of medium height and build, he usually makes second and third visits to households who have previously given him cash for "Town Watch's basic needs."

This fellow's scam is, ironically, just what the Town Watch is supposed to protect us from—illegal or potentially dangerous street activity. If he appears at your house, please try to get a good description of him, then shut the door and call the police immediately. Also, please do let us know if he comes around, so we can continue to keep our neighbors on alert. (SHCA phone: 215-6291288; SHCA e-mail: shcivica@aol.com)

St. Peter's Church



an Episcopal Church at 3rd and Pine Streets
(215) 925-5968

www.stpetersphila.org

Please join us for services

All are welcome at God's table

Sunday - 9:00 & 11:00 AM

Wednesday - 6:30 PM

Christian Education for all ages - 10:00 AM

Nursery care available

New Round of Utility Graffiti Defaces Society Hill Sidewalks

Our sidewalks have recently been blitzed with brightly painted ugly arrows and markings. If you're offended by these unsightly colored markers all over our streets and sidewalks, you should know who is responsible. Here are the color codes that utility companies use to "communicate" with their workers.

Red Electric Company

Yellow Gas Company

Orange Cable Company

Blue Water

Green Sewer

Hot Pink Temporary survey markings

These markings wash off after about a year's worth of rain. Some neighbors have tried scrubbing with solvents, but to little avail. By the time these markings are completely gone, another utility signifies underground work by defacing our sidewalks with another coat of freshly painted arrows and tribal markings. Let's call specific utility providers and have them keep our historic city streets clean of their graffiti!

Society Hill Historic District Manual

Approximately 1,200 Society Hill property owners have received this free Manual in the mail. Recently published and distributed by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, the 48-page handbook provides sound technical advice on maintenance, repair, remodeling and restoration. It also de-mystifies the regulatory process, explaining Philadelphia's historical preservation ordinance and the process of obtaining necessary approvals, including procedures for maintaining and renovating structures within our historic district.

If you, as a Society Hill homeowner, did not receive this valuable guide describing Society Hill's history, with a synopsis of architectural styles and a glossary of terms, please call the Alliance at 215-546-1146. The Manual can also be quite useful for real estate professionals, contractors, architects and owners of historic properties throughout Philadelphia. It can be purchased, at \$10 per copy (includes postage and handling) by calling the Alliance or visiting the Web site at: www.libertynet.org/historic.

What The Police Actually Do in Our Area!

Many neighbors have recently been complaining that the police don't do enough to contain quality-of-life problems. Well, we have some surprising facts for you. The recent spring through summer seasons (April 1 - September 30) have been the calmest in police memory. The following statistics indicate how well the police are actually doing:

Vehicle impoundments:	466
Motorcycle impoundments:	150
Pedestrian stops	3,554
Vehicular stops:	3,225
"Boom Box" tickets:	804
Narcotic Arrests:	32

Many of these police actions, such as "boom box" tickets and impoundments are all but unheard of in other parts of the City. So while there is surely room for improvement, let's give the police the recognition (and appreciation) they deserve.

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■ Offering No. 51 Mansion Row, Society Hill

Magnificent, well-positioned historic home on Mansion Row in Society Hill. Stately, expansive main residence, plus a two story tenant home. Grand interior spaces, with many original architectural elements, incl random floors, plaster moldings, marble, hearthstones, exposed brick cellar, pvt garden, more. 21 rms w 8 fireplaces, 13' ceilings. Wonderful historic charm and character, with a coveted Mansion Row address. On the National Register, and one of the city's most distinguished and well-located privately-owned historic mansions. Potential tax writeoff available to a qualified purchaser. \$ 1.25 million. Contact Steve DiFrancesco.

■ Offering No. 52 Fairmount Park Estate

Historic 1800s country estate on over 5 acs in Fairmount Park, surrounded by deep, mature woodlands. Charming manse, set on a knoll overlooking a beautiful rock-strewn stream and waterfall. Exceptionally tranquil and private, with wonderful views. Dependencies incl a small barn, paddock, riding ring, studio, and stone spring house. Ideal as primary residence or weekend retreat. Surrounded by perpetually protected lands. Offers immediate entry to the vast network of walking paths and bridle trails which quietly traverse Fairmount Park lands. Well-positioned within 20 minutes of Center City. Potential tax writeoff available to a qualified purchaser. \$ 1.25 million. Contact Steve DiFrancesco.

■ Offering No. 53 Gated Private Compound

Magnificent, private, gated eighteenth century compound in Society Hill. Stately, expansive, historically significant main residence, plus a separate brick tenant house. Trophy calibre. Impressively private, w wonderful historic feel and character. Many orig architectural elements, incl 9 fireplaces, random-width pine floors, hearthstones, marble, moldings, wainscot, iron and brass hardware, more. Mature grounds with large shade trees, private gardens, manicured lawn and shrubbery. Parking inside the compound for four cars - a very rare find. On the National Register, one of Philadelphia's largest and most uniquely valuable privately-owned historic mansions. Potential tax writeoff available to a qualified purchaser. \$ 2.25 million. Contact Steve DiFrancesco.

Call for More Information.

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220 West Washington Square

A historic piece of Philadelphia's fine architectural style located on West Washington Square is being recreated into an exclusive condominium residence consisting of full floor homes. This is an opportunity to create your own estate home on West Washington Square. Each full floor shell of 3,100 square feet of open space is being offered at prices starting at \$600,000. Private parking spaces available. For an exclusive appointment to preview this exciting residence, please call today.

Society Hill Towers - corner 1 bedroom, high floor - \$189,900
Pier 3 - 2 bedroom, 2 bath, terrace, available immediately \$240,000
Pier 3 - 2 bedroom, 2 bath, terrace, eat-in-kitchen - \$249,900
Pier 3 - 2 bedroom, terrace, customized kitchen and bath \$259,900
Independence Place-1 bedroom, 1.5 bath, alcove, balcony-\$290,000
Hopkinson House - 2 bedroom, high floor, balcony - \$315,000
Independence Place- corner junior 2 bedroom, balcony - \$319,900
Hopkinson House - 1 bedroom & studio can be combined to form a 3 bedroom, balcony, high floor, southern exposure - \$369,900
Pier 5 - 3 bedroom, 3 bath, deck, fireplace, 1 car parking included, river view - \$469,900
Pier 3 - 3 bedroom and den, 2 terraces with river view, highly customized, 1 car parking included - \$575,000
Independence Place - 2 bedroom & den, balcony, panoramic southern views - \$675,000



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Save These Dates

Wednesday, November 8, 7 PM

First Community Meeting:

Neighborhood Improvement District

Old Pine Church, 412 Pine Street

See pages 2 & 12-17 for more information

Wednesday, November 15

SHCA Board Meeting: 6-7 PM,

Old Pine Community Center, 4th & Lombard Streets

SHCA General Membership Meeting: 7:30 PM

Society Hill Synagogue, 418 Spruce Street

(Reception & Tour of Synagogue: 7 PM)

Meeting begins at 7:30 PM

Topic:

"The Renaissance of Independence Mall"

Featured Speakers:

William Moore:

Gateway Visitor Center

Laura Linton & Emily Bittenbender:

National Constitution Center

Saturday, November 18, 8 AM - 1:30 PM

Society Hill Fall Clean-Up Day

See page 1 for more information

Saturday, December 2

Society Hill Holiday House Tour

Morning tour: 10 AM-1 PM

Afternoon tour: 1 PM-4 PM

See page 10 for information.

Tuesday, December 5, 6 - 8 PM

Society Hill Benefit for Independence Branch Library

Locks Art Gallery, Washington Square

See page 6 for details

Thursday, December 7, 9 AM - 12:30 PM

Preservation How-To Workshop

See page 19 for details

Friday, December 8 - Sunday, December 10

St. Peter's School Annual Holiday Sale

3rd & Lombard Streets

See page 10 for information