



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

State Senator Fumo to Speak at SHCA Meeting



Senator Vincent J. Fumo

This will be your chance to meet and ask questions of one of the city's most important power-brokers.

Neighbors attending Society Hill Civic Association's (SHCA) March 19 General Membership Meeting will have the rare opportunity to meet one of Pennsylvania's and this city's most important power-brokers. State Senator Vincent J. Fumo, our featured speaker, has been representing the First District of Pennsylvania since 1978. He has compiled an imposing record of legislative achievements throughout his career in Harrisburg, e.g., by supporting state aid for cities; increased funding for schools and crime prevention; help for small businesses; and higher minimum wage for working people. As Democratic chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Fumo plays a key role in developing Pennsylvania's annual budget and establishing the state's spending priorities.

A member of the American Mensa Society, an organization of people with I.Q.s in the top two percent of the population, Fumo is a political problem-solver not easily characterized as liberal or conservative. He believes government can be effective in addressing social problems and in giving people the encouragement and resources they need to better their own lives.

Government is just one aspect of Fumo's multifaceted career. This quintessential "Philadelphia boy" is a 1964 graduate of Villanova University who completed graduate work in accounting and political science at St. Joseph's College. He then went on to the Temple University School of Law, earning a J.D. degree in 1972; and followed up at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, where he earned an M.B.A in 1984.

Senator Fumo is known for his extemporaneous talks, so this will be your chance to ask questions about subjects that concern you—whether they are current issues facing our immediate neighborhood or the community at large.

National Museum of American Jewish History Hosts Meeting

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located just a few blocks north of Society Hill at 55 North 5th Street, will host SHCA's March 19 meeting. This museum celebrates the history of Jews in America, offering countless exhibits that tell the story of Jewish immigration to the New World—beginning with the first Jewish settlers who arrived from Brazil in 1654 to the many thousands of immigrants still arriving today. The museum's current structure houses Congregation Mikveh Israel, "the synagogue of the American Revolution," founded in 1782 together with America's first Jewish cemetery at 8th and Spruce Streets, on land purchased from the William Penn family. The museum's exhibition space is now bursting at the seams, so this part of the building will be demolished and significantly expanded, thanks to the financial generosity of local philanthropist Sidney Kimmel. Groundbreaking for the museum's taller and wider structure will be held in 2004, the 350th anniversary of the arrival of the first Jews in America. The new museum is slated to open in 2006, but the synagogue will continue to serve its congregation during the construction period.

WED.

March
19

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, March 19, 2003

National Museum of American Jewish History
55 North 5th Street

Board Meeting

6:00 p.m.

All Society Hill Civic Association members are welcome to attend.

General Membership Meeting

7:00 p.m. Meet and Greet Your Neighbors

7:30 p.m. Business Meeting and Program

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Taking the Long View

This is unexpectedly a time when SHCA is grappling with many important issues that have long-term consequences.

Penn's Landing. First is Penn's Landing. As I noted in my last message, Penn's Landing is a gem and the keystone of our waterfront. It was planned as an urban waterfront park with a public investment in excess of \$100 million.

The problem is that we have for 20 years turned this over to developers to dictate its features. A developer's goal is to maximize profit. That is fine under many circumstances, but not if you view the site as a park or want to encourage an iconic location. We would never think of asking a commercial developer to design our use of Fairmount Park or Washington Square.

We have joined with nine neighboring civic associations in calling for a charrette to facilitate exploring the potential opportunities for Penn's Landing with a nationally recognized land planning/landscape firm. This is the same approach SHCA utilized in our reaching unanimous consensus for Foglietta Plaza. Imagine what we would have gotten if we had asked developers to do the planning for us!

Mayor John Street has said he supports and welcomes public input. Councilman Frank DiCicco has given us his assurance that he will support the wishes of the affected communities. We hope that the City will back a high quality charrette with appropriate representation by the neighboring communities.

Washington Square. We are making progress on having an Honorary Military Guard posted at the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier. The only permanent Honorary Military Guard is posted at Arlington National Cemetery. That honor originated in 1926 through an order of the Secretary of War for the unknown soldiers of World War I and by tradition thereafter. At our request, Senators Arlen Specter and Rick J. Santorum, Congressman Robert A. Brady, Governor Ed Rendell

and Mayor John Street have sent letters to Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld asking that the Department of Defense issue an order for an honor guard for those unknowns in Washington Square whose blood birthed our nation.

Steven Starr has posted a notice for a liquor license for a restaurant/bar on the northwest side of Washington Square. We welcome a Steven Starr restaurant so long as its presence does not compromise the solemnity of Washington Square. For 15 years, we have fought to have Washington Square, the largest burial site for our Revolutionary War soldiers, included into Independence National Historical Park. As you know, as of Veterans Day 2002, that mission was accomplished. We intend to be vigilant regarding future development on Washington Square to ensure that it comports with the ambience due one of our nation's most hallowed sites.

Contributions. I would be remiss in not again thanking State Representative Marie Lederer for the largest gift ever received by SHCA. Her check for \$100,000 for capital improvements provides the funding that will allow us to proceed with the Foglietta Plaza project. We are also grateful to Councilman Frank DiCicco for providing \$25,000, also targeted for this capital campaign. I believe Councilman DiCicco's grant is the second largest contribution we have received. With these donations we can proceed with the next steps for this proposed project, such as obtaining specifications and professional estimates and requesting funds from other potential sources. The total cost of improvements for Foglietta Plaza is anticipated to be between \$12 and \$15 million.

Last, but not least, is our community's gratitude for our neighbors who give of their talent and time, enhancing Society Hill through their work on behalf of the SHCA.

A happy Passover and Easter.

—MALCOLM LAZIN



Malcolm Lazin
President

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 Update: The Closure of Chestnut Street

Don't Fence Me In

As reported in the previous issue of this newsletter and also in several *Philadelphia Inquirer* articles, a growing group of civic leaders, politicians, businesses and citizens are concerned about the negative impact of the proposed permanent closure of Chestnut Street between 5th and 6th Streets. The unsightly and unwelcoming closure of the 500 block of Chestnut Street was based on a National Park Service report, prepared by a consultant and dated January 30, 2002, which claims that the closing of streets near Independence Hall is needed to prevent bomb-laden vehicles from getting close to the historic Hall and the nearby Liberty Bell Pavilion. Readers will recall that, following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Chestnut Street was cordoned off by crowd-control barriers as a "temporary" measure. By December 2002, when the City formally announced approval to close the street permanently, the financially harmed tourist industry—together with community leaders disturbed by the disruption to the flow of traffic and poor access to our neighborhoods—organized and created the ad-hoc "Coalition to Free Chestnut Street."

Led by prominent citizens, including Ken Kaiserman of the Bourse Building, John Keenan of the Omni Hotel, Ann Meredith of the Lights of Liberty show and Chief Judge Edward R. Becker of the Philadelphia-based U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the Coalition commissioned an independent analysis of the street closing. That report, dated February 4, 2003, was prepared by Chadwick Associates and was headed by a former top city prosecutor who served as inspector general for former Governor Tom Ridge, as well as employing the services of explosive experts and the former head of the FBI's Philadelphia Joint Terrorism Task Force. It reached a significantly different conclusion than the earlier National Park Service report.

The Chadwick report states the Chestnut Street closure does not adequately protect against a serious terrorist hit; rather it gives the "illusion of security." It says that protection against such a hit would "require closing streets for many blocks in every direction." Obviously such restrictions are inconsistent with city life and are neither feasible nor desirable in downtown Philadelphia. They thwart the very mission of the park they were designed to protect.

People from all political constituencies agree

with this assessment and believe that the street's pedestrian and traffic closures compromise the vitality, accessibility, beauty, livelihood and enterprise of historic Philadelphia, as well as the fabric of its surrounding neighborhoods. The closure—metaphorically similar to a band-aid applied to a bullet wound—also sends the wrong message, because the entire park and our surrounding neighborhoods would have to be barricaded to get realistic and adequate protection against a feared terrorist attack. In addition, there is considerable financial cost to the city. The Streets Department, for example, believes that the recommended closure of Chestnut Street should be reevaluated with respect to traffic flow. SEPTA bus riders have been seriously inconvenienced, while area businesses report at least a 30 percent decrease in sales.

The mayor of this city is charged with the ultimate decision to either keep Chestnut Street open to pedestrians and traffic or to keep it barricaded indefinitely. On January 18, Mayor Street met with the Coalition to Free Chestnut Street, at which time the group summarized its overall concerns. On February 4 they sent the Chadwick Report to him for his consideration. Meanwhile a special meeting was held on January 24 at Park Service headquarters. Illustrious participants who support opening the street include Governor Ed Rendell, Senator Arlen Specter and several Coalition members, including Society Hill's representative Carter Buller. Over 1,500 petitions were signed in support of the Coalition's call to free Chestnut Street. Among the signers were individual Society Hillers, the Chamber of Commerce, business firms and local civic groups. Rohm & Haas, which is located on the west side of Independence Mall, signed on behalf of its 1,600 employees. In addition, many civic groups have signed on, including the Old City Civic Association, the Old City District, Historic Philadelphia, Inc. and, of course, our own civic association, SHCA. According to Ann Meredith, the effort of this coalition is a "great example of grassroots democracy at work and at its very best."

To sign the petition to free Chestnut Street, either as an individual or as a representative of a group, you can do so electronically by going to the website: www.freechestnutstreet.com. At the website you can read both the Park Service report and the full text of the Chadwick report. You can also receive the mayor's final decision (which has not been made as the *Reporter* goes to press).



Over 1,500 petitions have been signed in support of the Coalition's call to free Chestnut Street. You can still add your name to the list.



Readers without Internet access who wish to sign the Coalition's petition to free Chestnut Street, please contact SHCA administrator Matt DeJulio at 215-629-1288 or by fax at 215-629-9914. He will send you a copy of the petition, which you can then fax to the Coalition at 215-733-0901.



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Mary Bomar to Head Independence Park

Mary Bomar, recently selected as Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park (INHP), comes to Philadelphia at an exciting time in the history of the park. The new National Constitution Center will be opening this summer, while construction continues for the Liberty Bell Center. Bomar will also be responsible for the integration of Washington Square into the park. At the same time she faces challenges in addressing INHP's interpretation of colonial slavery and the security of park facilities, issues which have generated considerable public interest.

The National Park Service (NPS) appointed Bomar to her new position, which she assumed on February 10, after duties as NPS State Coordinator for Oklahoma and the Superintendent of both the Oklahoma City National Memorial and the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site. She oversaw the NPS's assumption of stewardship for the Oklahoma City memorial, created after the 1995 terrorist bombing of the Murrah Federal Building.

"A consummate professional, Mary Bomar brings to Philadelphia tremendous capability and creativity. She clearly knows how to work in partnership with others," said NPS Northeast Regional Director Marie Rust. Of her new assignment, Bomar stated, "I feel honored to be selected for this position. It is a great privilege and tremendous opportunity to be the steward of one of America's great historical treasures. I look forward to working with the park's partners and the greater Philadelphia community to ensure the park's continuing prosperity."

Featuring both Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, Independence National Historical Park comprises a variety of buildings and historic treasures that figured prominently in America's struggle for independence. Stewardship of the park also includes responsibility for Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial and the affiliated areas Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church National Historic Site and Benjamin Franklin National Memorial.



Mary Bomar was recently selected as Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park



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Unlocking the Gates to Ben Franklin's Tomb

A treat awaits those who tour old Philadelphia this spring. A notable historic site long closed to visitors is reopening. Christ Church has announced that its cemetery, located on Arch Street between 4th and 5th Streets, will be reopened to the public on April 26. For the last 25 years people have been forced to peer through iron gates at the graves where some of our country's greatest lights were laid



to rest—unless they were lucky enough to visit on January 17, Benjamin Franklin's birthday and the only time when the Christ Church Burial Ground was open.

Christ Church was founded in 1695 on 2nd Street above Market. By 1719, thirteen years before George Washington was born, it had run out of room for burials. The church then purchased the present two-acre plot that was considered at that time to be "on the outskirts of town." Over the last three centuries more than 5,000 people have been buried here, with 1,400 markers remaining intact. About 80 percent of the interments occurred prior to 1840. But this is still an active burial ground for Christ Church, the most recent interment having taken place in 1994.

Tombstones mark the graves of common citizens as well as some of America's most prominent leaders. Besides Benjamin Franklin

and his wife, Deborah, other notables buried in Christ Church Burial Ground are four signers of the Declaration of Independence: Benjamin Rush, Francis Hopkinson, Joseph Hewes and George Ross. These last two, perhaps less well known than the others to the general public, were born and died in the same year (1730 and 1779 respectively). The Princeton-born Hewes was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention from North Carolina; and Ross, also a Convention delegate, was a Delaware-born Philadelphia lawyer and, later, a judge of the Admiralty Court of Pennsylvania. Also interred are the founders of the American Navy, some of America's great early medical pioneers such as Dr. Benjamin Rush and 10 mayors of Philadelphia.

The Old Christ Church Preservation Trust raised the funds to repair graves and markers, rebuild the wall around the cemetery and landscape the grounds. It also plans to create an interpretive program for visitors. The reopening events on the weekend of April 26-27 will commence with the official unlocking of the Burial Ground Gate and will feature free festivities including: a public dedication, tours of the grounds, historical re-enactments, music and family activities.

Check www.oldchristchurch.org for times of events or call the Church at 215-922-1695. The Burial Grounds will be open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. There is no admission fee.



Tombstones mark the graves of common citizens as well as some of America's most prominent leaders.

Photos: Tom Crane

Christ Church burial ground, which contains the graves of Franklin and four signers of the Declaration of Independence, will soon re-open.



The Old Christ Church Preservation Trust raised the funds to repair graves and markers, rebuild the wall around the cemetery and landscape the grounds



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Penn's Landing Debate Heats Up a Cold Winter

The future of Penn's Landing has been a hot topic during the cold winter months. Between mid-December and mid-January the City of Philadelphia held public meetings where citizens could express their views on the development of this key site. At the end of January the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the University of Pennsylvania jointly sponsored two public forums. The third public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2003, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Independence Seaport Museum. Individuals wishing to attend this session must pre-register with editor@phillynews.com or call 215-854-5956.

The Native American name for the Delaware, *Lenape Witik*, means "River of the Common People" (Chief Bob Red Hawk, Pennsylvania Lenape Nation). This designation reflects the wishes of the public who repeatedly expressed a desire for Penn's Landing to provide an open, public space with access to the river. This site is viewed as a gathering point for residents from all sections of the city, for suburbanites and for visitors from afar. It is especially valued as a venue for special events, such as the fireworks display on the Fourth of July, concerts and festivals throughout the year.

Representatives for the businesses located in Old City and in the South Street corridor spoke of the need to consider the effect development of Penn's Landing would have on the thriving commercial activity in these areas. Others expressed concern that large-scale commercial development of Penn's Landing was not viable without addressing the access problems created by I-95.

A recurrent theme was the need to acquire expert opinion to develop a comprehensive vision—not only for Penn's Landing, but also for the entire waterfront—that will be viable into the next century. SHCA has taken a leadership position in pressing the city to utilize a well-qualified land planning/landscape firm to explore opportunities for Penn's Landing. Neighboring civic associations have joined in this effort. [See the "President's Message" on page 3.] However, as the *Reporter* goes to press, the city is poised to proceed to the next step and issue a detailed request for proposal to seven of the nine developers who submitted information under the "Request for Qualifications" and have been qualified by the city as capable of completing this project. A residential

development and a world trade zone were proposed by the two groups that were eliminated. At press time the request for proposal was still being drafted by the city.

Penn's Landing is of particular importance to residents in Society Hill. It is our access point to the Delaware River. It is one of the few places in our densely populated community that offers public space. It is situated near Foglietta Plaza, a site that SCHA plans to turn into an outstanding park, complementing the nearby memorials to Korean and Vietnam War veterans.

Across the river Camden has developed its waterfront area into public space. There is Wiggins Waterfront Park and Marina, an area similar in size to Penn's Landing. The Tweeter Center, a venue for concerts, lies to its south. The U.S.S. *New Jersey*, an Iowa class battleship that saw action in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, is berthed close by and open to visitors. The New Jersey State Aquarium is located north of the park, as is Waterfront Park where fans enjoy watching the Trenton Thunder play baseball games.

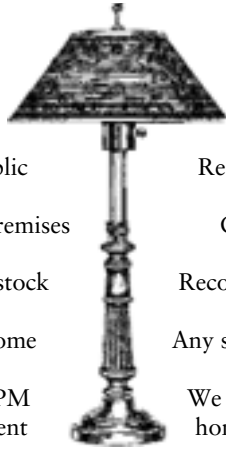
On the Philadelphia side, in addition to the already mentioned attractions, there is Independence Seaport Museum and the ships it maintains in the adjacent boat basin. The U.S.S. *Becuna* is a World War II Balao class submarine. The historic—and very interesting—cruiser *Olympia*, which was launched in 1892 and served as the flagship of Commodore George Dewey at the Battle of Manila Bay in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, is the oldest steel warship afloat today. Both have been designated National Historic Landmarks and can be boarded by visitors. The sailing ship *Moshulu* is also docked here. Nearby are the shops and restaurants of South Street and Old City and the clubs just north of the Ben Franklin Bridge. It is hoped the development of Penn's Landing will be compatible with, even enhance, these existing focal points—something that would surely happen with the assistance of professional guidance.

For more information, or to express your vision for Penn's Landing, visit the city's website at www.pennslanding.phila.gov. Information can also be found at <http://gophilly.com/pennslanding>. If you wish to attend the March 13 forum at the Seaport Museum, you must pre-register with editor@phillynews.com or call 215-854-5956.

The Lenape name for the Delaware River, *Lenape Witik*, means "River of the Common People"



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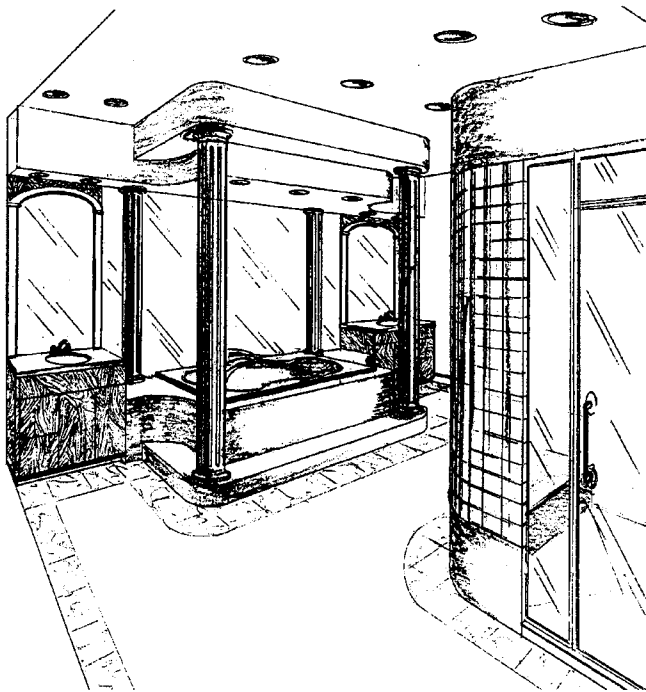


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Z O N I N G & H I S T O R I C P R E S E R V A T I O N

SHCA's Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee (ZHP) continues to work with property owners in the neighborhood. As always, the ZHP urges owners to present their plans to the Committee before seeking approvals from the Historical Commission or Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). Presentations can be arranged by contacting Paul Boni, ZHP chair, at paulboni@bonilaw.com, or Matt DeJulio, SHCA Administrator, at MattDeJulio@aol.com or 215-629-1288.

400-414 Walnut Street Update

The SHCA is currently in litigation with respect to the conversion of this commercial building at the corner of 4th and Walnut Streets into 67 residential apartments. The developer, Turchi, Inc., obtained a zoning variance for the construction of a penthouse unit; however, due to ZHP's advocacy, the ZBA conditioned the variance on Turchi obtaining offsite parking for 67 parking spots in an area garage. Both sides have appealed the variance to the Court of Common Pleas. SHCA's position is that the variance is not warranted (i.e., no hardship was demonstrated; the building is quite viable without the penthouse) and that, in any event, the variance's condition is too weak (i.e., there is no nearby garage and therefore an offsite garage is not an adequate solution). Turchi's position appears to be that the requirement for offsite garage parking is too harsh.

500 Delancey Street

The owner has installed a rather large piece of artwork on the exterior of this house facing 5th Street; overhanging lighting was also installed. All changes to the exterior facade of a house in Society Hill (no matter when the house was built) require prior approval by the Historical Commission – which does not appear to have been obtained. The Historical Commission has inspected the house and is currently considering a course of action. At this time, the ZHP Committee has taken no position on the artwork, as we have not had the benefit of having the homeowner make a presentation to us or nearby neighbors.

Testimony Before City Council

On February 5, 2003 the chair of the ZHP Committee testified before a City Council committee in support of proposed legislation, informally called "Don't Block the Box," introduced by Councilman Frank DiCicco. This legislation would authorize the police to levy a \$300 fine on any motorist whose car is stopped in the middle of a South Street intersection when the light turns red. Basically, the legislation is designed to deter those who cause gridlock. It is already a violation to cause gridlock and this legislation would simply increase the fines on a motorist. Keys to the legislation include clear signs and a public education campaign to achieve its main goal—deterrence. Gridlock on South Street causes traffic to back up onto 4th and 6th Streets, thereby causing a nuisance and an endangerment to the quality of life for Society Hill residents. We are pleased to report that on February 13, 2003 City Council unanimously adopted the bill.

Civic Associations Can Work Together

On January 24, 2003 the Coalition of Philadelphia Neighborhood Associations (CPNA) wrote to Mayor Street urging him to appoint a professional and a "community-oriented" person to chair the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment. The SHCA believes that we can maximize our influence for positive change in our city by banding together with other civic associations when appropriate. Therefore, we were pleased to lend SHCA's name and signature, along with about 20 other civic associations, to this CPNA letter sent to Mayor Street. The Zoning Board makes decisions that greatly affect our city and our neighborhood, and we feel that special interests can often hold too much sway. We thank CPNA (and its leader Colleen Puckett, who is also president of the Queen Village Neighbors Association) for the group's continued good work.

—PAUL BONI, CHAIR, ZHP COMMITTEE

**Ongoing
Property Tax
Issues**

On February 13 City Council passed legislation allowing homeowners who have filed appeals with the Board of Revision of Taxes to

pay their taxes after their appeal hearings have been heard. Those homeowners will have up to 60 days after receiving their "final" tax notice to pay their taxes and still be eligible for a 1 percent discount. If they do not pay within 60 days of the "final"

tax notice, they will have up to 90 days from receipt of the notice to pay without being hit with a penalty or fine. Many hard-pressed Philadelphians have not yet had their appeal hearings, and they may have to wait until sometime in April. If you have

questions, you can contact Councilman Frank DiCicco's office at 215-686-3458. The councilman supports measures that will make city property taxes more equitable. Meanwhile, as this issue goes to press, it is hoped that Mayor Street will sign the mea-

sure passed by Council. For updates on this long unresolved subject of property taxes and to learn about potential legislation that can be introduced at either the city or state level, check the website of the Coalition for Fair Taxes at: www.phillytaxes.org.

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Kids' Beat

Neighborhood School Offers Advantages

With neighborhood support and parental involvement, we can make this good school truly great.

So here we are, enjoying the life of Society Hill parents. We stroll to the cafe, we pass lovely hours at Three Bears Park, we enjoy playgroups at Hall Mercer, and then BAM! It hits us: Where will this child go to school?

There are a few private school options in the city, but space is limited and getting worse as more families stay in the city. The alternative of driving 30-plus minutes to a suburban campus becomes reality as we frantically seek noteworthy alums to write recommendations for our precious 3-year-old: "She builds blocks nicely, loves finger-painting and swinging at the park." Next comes months of intense prayer, worry and anxiety over whether precious will be accepted by the school of choice. If he/she is one of the chosen ones, we then take out a second mortgage to finance pre-school...or do we? Can anyone say, "STOP THE INSANITY?"

The answer is yes. My family and I started out with the above scenario. After a week of misery for all of us, we quit. I was wretched spending three hours a day in the car, as was my 3-year-old daughter. My kindergartener was unhappy at this remote place, having had no experience with commuting by car and being dropped 35 minutes from home. We were all crazed trying to depart by 7:30 a.m. The stress on the family was making everyone sleep deprived, constantly rushed and cranky; so we just stopped.

We found a wonderful, nurturing, academically challenging, diverse and loving place: McCall School at 6th and Delancey Streets. My son entered a class of 15 children with two teachers and an aide. He has started reading and writing sentences, is learning to use punctuation marks, has mastered math and counting skills, has sharpened his computer abilities and has learned several words and songs in Chinese. He has art, music, computer, health and gym classes several times a week.

In October, his class visited a farm and pumpkin patch. For Thanksgiving the class hosted a "Sharing Luncheon" where each child brought his favorite food for the group to taste. The spread was amazing: pizza, lo mein, Bangladeshi vegetable fritters, fried chicken, English pudding, deviled eggs, to name a few.



In December the teachers walked the class to Lord & Taylor for the Holiday Light Show. In January they celebrated the Chinese New Year with a performance at the school by the Beijing Opera Troupe. February brought a trip to the Annenberg Center to hear music by the Tokyo Drum Ensemble.

The most impressive aspect of McCall, however, is the people who comprise the school. The student body is extremely polite, well behaved and kind. This is a reflection of the faculty, which is professional, warm, patient, supportive and perpetually positive. As a former teacher with a Masters in Education, I have some experience in this area. I can only say that we are truly lucky to have an institution like McCall in our midst. Living in the neighborhood guarantees admission—and there is no tuition.

In addition to all the great things the school has to offer my children, McCall has given back to us our cherished Society Hill life. We leave the house at a leisurely 8:15 a.m., walk a few blocks and say goodbye with no worries. I then stroll to the gym, cafe, market, bank, post office, etc. At 3 p.m. I walk back to 6th and Delancey; and we ramble home—maybe stopping at the park to play and meet friends, perhaps making a detour to the cafe for a hot chocolate or even managing a few last errands en route to the homestead. Isn't this why we live here?

With neighborhood support and parental involvement we can make this good school truly great.

—KERI WHITE

Kid's Quote

"Mom, I'm getting tired. Let's grab a cab."

Isabel, age 3
Society Hill Kid

Attention!

Parents Interested in McCall School

You are invited to a neighborhood meeting regarding the McCall School on Monday, March 24, at 7 p.m. in the Old Pine Community Center at the northwest corner of 4th and Lombard Streets. Meet parents and administrators of the school. Learn more about Society Hill's "Best Kept Secret" and why more families are choosing McCall. For information on the McCall School Initiative, please call Kelly Nelson 215-925-6799 or Keri White 215-592-9633. For information on admission to McCall School and tours of the facilities, please call Mrs. Rhea Force at 215-351-7350.

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Weekly 1/2 Price Tickets

Entertainment “On the Cheap”

Thursday is a great day to make your leisure plans. At precisely 11 a.m. the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance posts a list of the half-price tickets being offered by entertainment, art and cultural venues still having available space for certain events. Better to reach a larger audience at reduced rate than not at all—this is the generous spirit behind both the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and those organizations that provide the cut-rate tickets.


Here’s the scoop. You must register one time only, at no cost, to receive the Thursday postings by accessing the website, www.phillyfunguide.com. Click on the text in the upper right hand corner which reads “sign up for 1/2 price tickets,” fill in the requested information and be sure to click “submit” to complete the procedure. All postings are in alphabetical order with information at the bottom of each listing on exactly how to redeem your tickets. You

may easily remove your name if you decide the service is not something you want to continue.

Call The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance at 215-557-7811 or e-mail site_admin@phillyfunguide.com for responsive, friendly help if you have any questions or problems. Activities have been as diverse as the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, the Please Touch Museum and events at the Academy of Natural Sciences. And that is just a small sampling! Heartfelt thanks to the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and those contributing cultural organizations that consider our pleasure, education and pocketbooks.




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Don't Miss the Society Hill House Tour

The Friends of Independence Park has put out its welcome mat in anticipation of the 25th anniversary of its Philadelphia Open House program, the nation's most comprehensive series of tours of private homes and gardens. In honor of this notable milestone, the walking tours and motor coach excursions have been expanded and revitalized.

On Sunday, May 4th from 1-5 p.m., our own neighborhood hosts the Society Hill Open House Tour, featuring some of the most beautiful historical and modern residences in the city. Prepare to be dazzled by the splendid variety of furnishings, art and antiques. The tour is also a significant source of revenue for the Society Hill Civic Association, generating \$8,500 last year for the association's neighborhood improvement projects.

This open house program encompasses the entire greater Philadelphia region, from the city to the Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware

suburbs. Whether your passion is beautiful interiors, incredible gardens or very special places not always open to the public, your expectations are sure to be surpassed. These rare glimpses into spectacular private homes, beautiful gardens and charming neighborhoods are complemented by trips to some of the area's most impressive cultural sites. The tours run from Monday, April 21, to Sunday, June 1. Call 215-928-1188 to request this year's brochure or to make a reservation.

Find out what's behind Door #1.



Need a Car for an Hour?

Philly-Car-Share is a new enterprise designed to expand the transportation options available to city residents. The basic premise is to provide access to environmentally friendly automobiles on an hourly, paid usage basis without the hassle of vehicle ownership. Nothing to wash, clean out, have inspected, license or supply with oil.

Most of the time transportation needs, especially for people in Center City, can be met through walking, SEPTA, the regional rail system, taxis and car rental services. However, lugging a bulky carton containing a folding table home from Staples on a hot summer day can bring about the fervent wish for another choice. Philly-Car-Share aims to fill the void.

This nonprofit organization is designed to make cars available to members on a short-term basis, although there is no minimum or maximum to the length of usage. (For longer rentals, members can take advantage of discounts with rental agency partners.) The vehicles, including a Toyota Prius and a Matrix hatchback, have hybrid gas/electric power and thus emit 84 percent less greenhouse gases. The cars are kept at a number of locations in

Philadelphia, including the garage over the Whole Foods market at 9th and South Streets, Queen Village, Rittenhouse Square and 1500 Locust Street. Tanya Seaman, Executive Director and a Founding Director, advises they are continuing to expand car locations. While comparable to a similar service in San Francisco, the Philadelphia operation is separate and has no other location.

The usage fees are \$3.90 per hour, plus \$.39 per mile and include insurance and gas. Philly-Car-Share is responsible for cleaning and maintenance. Vehicle reservations can be made online or by telephone and can even be arranged minutes before desired use.

Interested? Membership in Philly-Car-Share is required. There is an application process that includes submission of a non-refundable \$25 fee. Driving and credit records are checked for insurance and billing purposes. If accepted, a refundable deposit of \$350 is required, along with a monthly \$10 administrative fee. The driver must also attend a one-hour orientation session. Additional information is available at www.phillycarshare.org or by calling 215-386-0988.

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- 130 Spruce Street 2A
- 119 Lombard Street
- 333 South 6th Street
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- The vast majority of Top-producing Realtors have 2 things in common: an in-depth website and a team of full-time professionals assisting them
- A home with a virtual tour receives 40% more showings than one without

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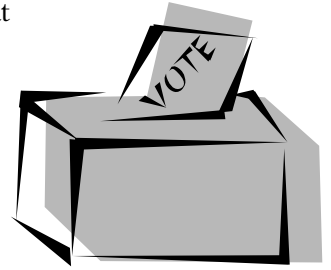
Nomination Time for Civic Association Elections

Now is your chance! Would you like to be part of a group of community leaders? Do you know someone who possesses leadership qualities? If so, now is the time to nominate this person as a candidate for the Society Hill Civic Association. Positions for which nominations will be accepted are: President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer; and Directors for each of the four quadrants (northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest). All nominees must be residents of Society Hill and members of the civic association. Officers are elected for one-year terms; directors are elected for three-year terms.

Quadrant directors may be nominated with a petition that is signed by at least 10 SHCA members from within the nominee's quadrant.

Officers may be nominated with a petition that is signed by at least 10 SHCA members from the general membership. All petitions must be submitted to the Nominating Committee. In addition, the Nominating Committee itself may propose candidates.

The Nominating Committee, composed of Committee Chair Kelly Nelson and members Mark Keener, Tania Rorke, Ann Verber, Jim Moss, Morris Chomitz and Michele Plachter, must receive all petitions before April 7. Send them to Matt DeJulio, administrator, Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147. The slate of candidates will be published in the May *Reporter* and elections will be held at the May 21 General Membership Meeting.



SHCA Has a Friendly Website

Do you know that more Society Hill residents get to work by walking than by any other method of transportation? That and other interesting and informative facts are found on SHCA's website. Best of all, the site is well organized and user friendly. Moving from one colorful page to another is unusually easy.

If you are new to the neighborhood, you may want to read about the history of the area and look at the map depicting the boundaries of Society Hill and the historical attractions within its borders. You can also learn about the "Welcome Baskets" that the civic association presents to newcomers. Find a travel agency, pharmacy, gallery or a host of other services from the list of businesses that are SHCA members. Excerpts from the 2000 census present information about your neighbors, including the fact that 33.3 percent walk to work, while 27.0 percent use public transportation and 28.8 percent drive family cars.

There are many resources listed on the website for help with problems. These include a list of useful contacts and telephone numbers and the name of your block coordinator.

Information about SHCA gives the dates of meetings and the names of neighbors serving as officers and directors. Become involved in the civic association by volunteering for one of

the committees; you will find a page listing them. Pie charts show the source of funds for SHCA and how the money is spent. You can even send comments and inquiries to the administrator of the association.

Enjoy your visit to www.societyhillcivic.com!



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 Virtual Tour# 3037395. Historic 3+BR Twbs, Circa 1810. 2.5 baths, gorg orig oak fir + lush privt garden.

502 Lombard Street \$575,000
 Virtual Tour# 4137869. Lovely 3BR, 3.5bch Twbs w/GARAGE, garden, deck, den/office, central air + fireplace.

823 Cypress Street \$475,000
 Virtual Tour# 4044835. Beautiful detached 3BR Townhouse with 1.5 baths, finished basement + family room, rear yard, French doors and southern exposure.

Independence Place #304 \$359,900
 Virtual Tour# 4158008. E2 living 1BR Condo with 1.5 baths, Indry rm + large balcony. Wall of floor to ceiling sliding glass doors provide lots of natural light.


430 Gaskill Street \$339,900
 Virtual Tour# 4121981. Charming 3Sty Twbs w/3BR, 1.5 baths, C/A, hrdwd fir, mod kit and fin FamRm.

317 South 2nd Street \$279,900
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508 S Hancock Street \$199,900
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**Goal of 1,000 Members
Can Be Reached**

**Membership Renewals
Off to a Good Start**

Thanks to our caring and committed community, SHCA's goal of reaching 1,000 members for the year 2003 appears to be attainable. The Membership Committee, chaired by Kelly Nelson, is pleased to report that membership stands at 776 to date—well ahead of the renewal pace this time last year: 77 new members have joined, including 16 new businesses. Special efforts are also being made to recruit high-rise/condo residents.

For those who forgot to return their renewal form in November or December, a second notice was mailed on January 27. Misplaced it again? Just fill out the form below and send it, along with your check. Membership dues are the primary source of funding for SHCA and enable the civic association to provide services to the community.

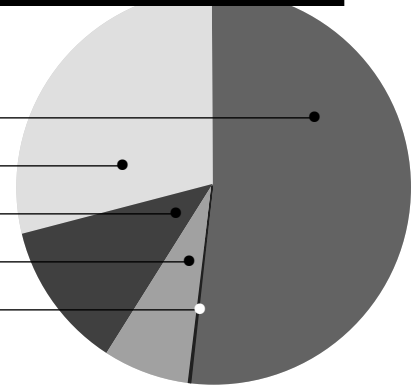
With your help, we can attain the 1,000 mark this year, which would be an all-time high.

MID-YEAR TREASURER'S REPORT

June 1, 2002 - December 31, 2002

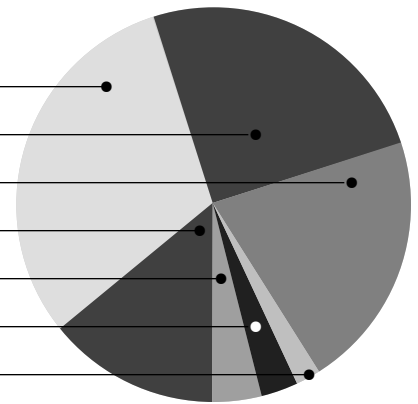
Income

\$ 34,776	Membership
\$ 19,188	Reporter Advertising
\$ 8,070	Historic House Tours
\$ 5,000	State Grant
\$ 69	Other
\$ 67,103	Total Income



Expenses

\$ 21,465	Reporter
\$ 16,682	Unspent
\$ 13,789	Administrative & Other
\$ 9,100	Sidewalk Project/Graffiti
\$ 2,874	Membership Drive
\$ 1,943	Charrette
\$ 1,250	Mini Station
\$ 67,103	Total Expenses



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SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Membership Application/Renewal

Renewal New

\$40 Family
 \$100 business
 \$60 businesses with under 5 employees \$

Additional contribution for
 Anti-Graffiti/ \$
 Tree Tending Lighting Litter Control

Check if you wish to receive
 Guide for Property Owners Historic Windowpane Plaque

Total enclosed \$

I/We would be interested in working with one of SHCA's committees. My/Our interests include:

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

E-mail _____

Mail to Society Hill Civic Assoc., P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147

If you cannot afford membership dues, please donate what you can.

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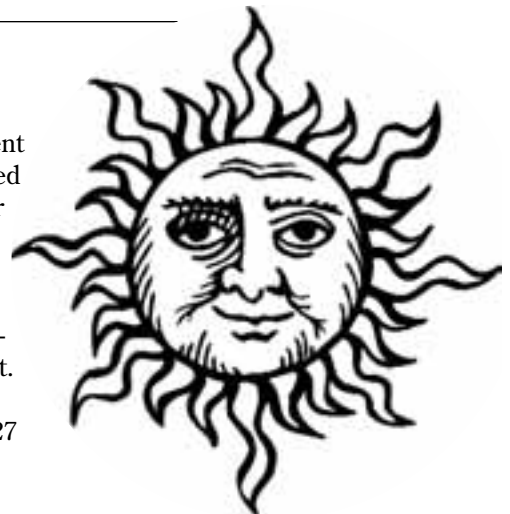
Tips for Homeowners

Get Ready for Summer Heat

This winter has been so cold that air conditioning is but a distant thought. However, the heat and humidity of the summer will soon be here. As a service to our readers, we asked one of the contractors from our "Preferred List" for tips on how to get air conditioning systems ready for spring. JMM Mechanical recommends having a certified air conditioning contractor check out the system to be certain it is operating properly. The contractor will make sure the refrigerant is charged; oil the motors of the indoor and outdoor units; replace the filter if it is dirty or clean it if it is the electrostatic type; clean the outdoor unit coil and contacts, if necessary; and check the thermostat for accuracy. Proper maintenance will avoid problems during a heat wave and extend the life of the unit.

The SHCA provides a Preferred List of Contractors to members upon request. All contractors on the list have been highly recommended by Society Hill residents. It is important to note the list does not represent an endorsement by the SHCA; it is always prudent

to ask the contractor for recent references. This list is updated monthly. If you have an older copy, we will be happy to send you a new one. This service is unique to Society Hill although other neighborhoods are trying to emulate it. For a copy, please contact Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@aol.com.



Another Cure for the Winter Blahs

Physick House Plant Sale Set for May 2-4
The annual Physick House Plant Sale is just what the doctor ordered to banish winter doldrums and usher in a welcomed spring. Select from a wide variety of blooms suitable for hanging baskets, shady or sunny spots or even a rooftop deck while enjoying the splendid 19th-century garden. The Plant Sale runs from Friday, May 2, through Sunday, May 4, at the historic Physick House, 321 South 4th Street. Call the Landmark office at 215-925-2251 for more information.





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NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

Peggy Duckett and George Drach

Sometimes, life does offer us a second chance.

“Out of darkness cometh light” goes the expression. Peggy Duckett and George Drach are living examples. Peggy’s late husband, John, was a renowned pediatric urologist. George is also a distinguished urologist. The two men were widely published and board members of the American Urological Association. Peggy and John and George and his late wife, Paula, were friends who socialized and traveled together. Each of their first spouses, in both cases a high school sweetheart, died within 18 months of each other.

In 1998 George was ending a 26-year career as chief of urology at the University of Arizona and agreed to accept a professorship of urology at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. He moved to Philadelphia, settling in Society Hill where he met up again with Peggy, whose husband had died the previous year. The two were married in 1999.

George graduated in medicine at Western Reserve (1961) and served in the Navy in Vietnam for two years. His particular interest is kidney stones. But in the great tradition of the famed clinician Sir William Osler’s dictum that physicians should strive to eliminate the reason for their professional existence, he found that a German invention called the lithotripter, which pulverizes the stones and therefore does away with the need for surgery, essentially put him out of that aspect of his work. He had been invited by the FDA to monitor the importation of the lithotripter into the United States ... and extolled its capabilities even while it extinguished some of his own.

Peggy is a Texan who still retains a trace of Southern lilt. A graduate of Smith with a master’s degree in history from Tufts, she has a stellar resume that includes serving on the board of the National Endowment for the Humanities for 13 years. In 1989, she was chair of the Constitutional Bicentennial Exhibition at Independence Park and has also served with the Philadelphia Museum of Art Guides, the National Constitution Center, the Abraham Lincoln Foundation, the World Affairs Council and the Preservation Alliance For Greater Philadelphia. She was president of Philadelphia’s prestigious Cosmopolitan Club in 1990-91. In 1994, Peggy was selected for the Mayor’s Task Force of Historic Philadelphia. She has two sons from her first marriage.

Peggy and George find the neighborhood and community aspect of Society Hill appealing and especially its camaraderie and “walkability”—the latter enhanced when accompanied by their dog. In fact, in good weather, George walks to work at Penn.

This pair of relative newlyweds brings together art and science and a love of history manifested by their tastefully furnished 1820 house at 3rd and Delancey Streets and their even older (1768) farm on the Chesapeake. But what they bring more than anything else is proof that sometimes life does offer second chances. *Light from darkness.*

— DAVID WOODS



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100% Commitment Leads to 100% Satisfaction

A little trust gave these homebuyers exactly what they wanted... a new home in just 16 days!

Roland and Susan Garramone were relocating from Los Angeles to Philadelphia so that Roland could take a new and better position within his company. From the beginning, they knew they wanted a different kind of home buying experience—better than the difficult real estate situations they had encountered in the past. They wanted to pick the right agent—one who would be honest with them, put their interests first, and be a professional.

When we first met, I explained to them the benefits of signing a contract to work with a Buyers' Agent—making a 100% commitment to one agent who will make a 100% commitment to find them a new home. The Garramones were skeptical, but since they were referred to me by a satisfied client, they agreed. Next, I got them pre-approved for a mortgage. Being pre-approved not only helped them to focus on

a price range, it strengthened their offer by letting the seller know they were serious and could afford the home.

As the Garramones Exclusive Buyers' Agent, I devoted my full energy and attention to finding them a home that would meet their needs. I gave them frequent phone and e-mail updates, and in *just 16 days* we found a condo which was EXACTLY what they wanted. They put in an offer with their pre-approval that was accepted.

Buyers looking for a new home sometimes feel it is better to have 4 or 5 agents working for them, but fail to realize that not one of those agents is giving them 100%.

IF YOU FIND AN AGENT YOU TRUST AND COMMIT TO THEM 100%, your home purchase will be much smoother, and you will get what you want and need.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

March

Thursday, March 13, 6 p.m.
Penn's Landing Forum
 Independence Seaport Museum
 see page 11

Wednesday, March 19, 7 p.m.
Society Hill Civic Association
 General Membership Meeting
 see page 1

Monday, March 24, 7 p.m.
McCall School Initiative Forum
 Old Pine Community Center
 see page 15

April

Sunday, April 6, 6:30 p.m.
Model Seder with Old Pine Church
 Society Hill Synagogue

Wednesday, April 9, 7 p.m.
Society Hill Civic Association
 Board Meeting

Sunday, April 20, 12:30-3 p.m.
South Street Easter Promenade

Sunday, April 20, 4 p.m.
Klezmer/Yiddish Concert
 Society Hill Synagogue

Saturday, April 26
Christ Church Burial Ground
Opening
 call 215- 922-1695 for times
 see page 9

May

Friday, May 2 - Sunday, May 4
Physick House Plant Sale
 call 215- 925- 2251 for times
 see page 25

Sunday, May 4, 1-5 p.m.
Society Hill Open House Tour
 see page 19

Sunday, May 4, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Spring Fair
 Society Hill Synagogue

Wednesday, May 21, 7 p.m.
Society Hill Civic Association
General Membership Meeting,
Elections
 see page 21



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

**Have Broom,
 Will Sweep**

**Neighborhood Clean-Up
 Scheduled for May 3**

Residents of Society Hill will band together on Saturday, May 3, to clear away the dust and debris that have accumulated during winter. Many thanks to Frank Hoban and Tania Rorke,

who have graciously volunteered to lead this project and are busily making plans for this community endeavor. Mark your calendar. Details will be forthcoming closer to the event.

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