

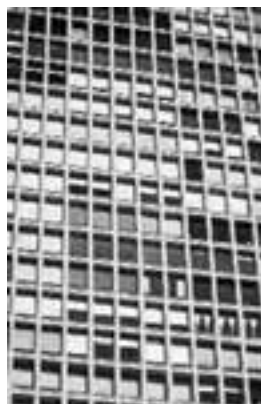


SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

Society Hill Towers Celebrates 40th Anniversary



“Waffles?” “Uniquely styled aluminum picture frames?” However they were characterized by architectural critics in the past, Society Hill Towers and architect I.M. Pei will be honored on July 30.

Architect Ioh Ming Pei to be Honored

You can't miss Society Hill Towers. As much a landmark on the Philadelphia skyline as the statue of William Penn atop City Hall, these three graceful high rises were among the projects cited when their architect, Chinese-born I. M. Pei, was named the 1983 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate, the profession's highest accolade.

On July 30, residents of the Towers and the 37 surrounding townhouses will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the groundbreaking for the Society Hill project with a small reception for the 85-year-old Mr. Pei in two of the apartments and at a poolside cocktail party. Among other tributes planned is a commemorative book detailing the Towers' history and the architect's life; a scholarship in Mr. Pei's name at Philadelphia's Charter High School of Architecture and Design; and, in honor of Mr. Pei's love of natural materials, a garden featuring an Italian marble bench and a sundial created by artist Jill Sablosky.

“Ioh Ming Pei has given this century some of its most beautiful interior spaces and exterior forms,” said the Pritzker jury in awarding the prize. It was not the first major award for the architect, known for his reliance on abstract form and use of stone, concrete, glass and steel. His firm, I. M. Pei & Partners (formed in 1958), was named 1968's Architectural Firm of

the Year by the American Institute of Architects and went on to build such icons as the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts, the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, the East Wing of the Smithsonian National Gallery in Washington, D.C. and the Pyramide de Louvre in Paris. The 37 Philadelphia townhouses in the Society Hill complex earned Mr. Pei a 1964 design award from the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Society Hill Towers owes its origin to a few visionary Philadelphians, among them Edmund Bacon, Charles Peterson, Joseph Clark and Richardson Dilworth, who in the 1940's and 50's vowed to stop the exodus of affluent city dwellers to the suburbs and save Philadelphia's commercial and residential buildings, over 30,000 of which were vacant at the time. Society Hill, then called Washington Square East, with its hundreds of historical but crumbling houses and its proximity to what would become Independence National Historical Park, was a natural place to begin.

Construction on the Towers began in 1963 after the Dock Street produce market, considered one of the worst commercial slums in the country, was moved to the Food Distribution Center in South Philadelphia. Thirty-one acres were purchased for urban renewal, with five of these set aside for a new apartment development. In 1963 the Aluminum Corporation of America (Alcoa) took over 90 percent of the project. Perhaps surprisingly, a London firm, the Second Covent Garden Property Company, held the remaining 10 percent.

The Towers officially debuted to mixed reviews at a widely attended dedication on October 21, 1964. One *Inquirer* reporter called the slim buildings “three...waffles poking into the Society Hill skyline.” Despite Pei's growing reputation, the amenities offered by Alcoa (underground parking, a planned outdoor pool, well lighted walkways and elegant landscaping), and the city's earnest efforts to renovate the neighborhood around the complex, the

continued on page 7

WED.

July

16

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, July 16, 2003, 7 p.m.

Old Pine Community Center
4th and Lombard Streets

All Society Hill Civic Association members are encouraged to attend.

If you will be driving to the SHCA Board meeting and plan to park in the lot on 5th Street, please DO NOT leave your car in the Fire Lane or in any “No Parking” zone. Vehicles illegally parked will be towed without warning.



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Editors (July/August Issue)

Vicki Chatley
Sandra Rothman

Editorial Board

Bernice Hamel
Carole LeFavre-Rochester

**Business Manager
and Photographer**

Matthew DeJulio

Contributors

Matthew DeJulio
Martha Levine
Liza Seltzer
Keri White
Linda Witt
David Woods

Graphic Design

judy@parallel-design.com

Submissions**See page 11 for details.**

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Send submissions to:
Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503
Philadelphia, PA 19147
tel: 215-629-1288
fax: 215-629-9914

September *Reporter* Editors:
Bernice Hamel
Carole LeFavre-Rochester

Visit our website:

www.societyhillcivic.com

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Noteworthy Neighbors:
John Allen + Sheila Paulos

Oops!

The May/June 2003 *Reporter* incorrectly stated that Bonnie Halda served for three years on the Board of Directors of the Society Hill Towers. It should have reported that Bonnie served on the SHCA Board as a representative of the Society Hill Towers. Bonnie has never served on the Management Council of Society Hill Towers.

In the last issue the *Reporter* also failed to acknowledge Linda Skale, the long-time co-chair of Society Hill Open House and Garden Tours. A special thanks is extended to Linda for her role in coordinating this successful program.

Caveat Emptor!

From time to time the *Reporter* will print articles about new commercial products or services available in our neighborhood. The purpose is to provide basic information to the reader. It does not signify endorsement of the product, service or business by the *Reporter* or SHCA. The reader should check references and conduct further investigation before making a purchase.

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Join Us!

One of the things I've enjoyed most during my nine years in Society Hill is working with my neighbors on projects that help our community remain one of the most desirable urban neighborhoods in the country. By taking on the role of president of the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA), I'm hoping to work closely with as many of you as possible.

I hope you agree that SHCA is an important forum for neighborhood communication and action. But it only serves the neighborhood well if the individuals who are served by the association participate in it. So I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you, my neighbor, to get involved to whatever degree you are able.

First and foremost, please join SHCA as a dues-paying member. We deliberately keep our dues low to ensure that financial barriers won't keep neighbors from joining. For just \$40 a year per household, our members benefit in many ways. Our streets are cleaner and better lit, we have a library, new neighbors get SHCA Welcome Baskets and, of course, we all get the *Reporter*, our outstanding community newsletter.

These are just some of the most tangible benefits, but there are others, too. For example, SHCA works closely with our elected officials on issues such as the future of Penn's Landing and the transfer of Washington Square to the National Park Service to ensure respect for our neighborhood's interests. SHCA is vigilant on zoning and historic preservation issues that have a direct impact on the character of our community. In addition, SHCA is pursuing an ambitious project to transform the underutilized Foglietta Plaza into a state-of-the-art public facility. Rest assured that your dues do make a big difference in the quality of life we enjoy in Society Hill.

I'd also love to see more neighbors actively participate in SHCA. Come to our Board meetings — they're open to all members of the association. It's a great place to share your ideas and concerns. Think about joining a committee, becoming a Block Coordinator or offering to help out in an *ad hoc* way. Even



At the May meeting Liza Seltzer, newly elected SHCA president, on behalf of the association presented a framed antique map of old Philadelphia to Malcolm Lazin, who completed his term as president of SHCA.

if you don't have the time or interest to get involved in a formal capacity, there are other things each of us can do to support the work of the association. You can:

- Call us at 215-629-1288 when you see graffiti so we can arrange for its removal;
- Take the time to sweep your block on Clean-up Day and pick up trash wherever you see it; and
- Call us when a new neighbor moves in so we can offer a Welcome Basket with gift certificates and products from various neighborhood businesses.

These may seem like small things, ones many of us — including myself — overlook. But if we remind ourselves that we are responsible for guaranteeing that Society Hill remains a place we're proud to live in, perhaps we can do a better job in the future. So for the sake of our community, please be active and aware. And let people know that the civic association is there to help make this a better neighborhood for everyone.

—Liza Seltzer, SHCA President

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Gambling in Philadelphia: Risky Business

SHCA officers testify at a City Council hearing on a bill intended to regulate gambling through zoning

As you may know, several gambling bills are now pending in both houses of the state legislature. About \$700 million in annual revenue is predicted for Pennsylvania if slot machines are permitted at racetracks or riverboat casinos are allowed in Philadelphia. City zoning ordinances do not address the subject of gambling establishments. Thus, if gambling becomes legalized statewide, casinos could be built anywhere in our city's commercial districts — without obtaining prior permission from the Zoning Board or any other city authority. Therefore, in an attempt to assert local control, Councilman-at-Large James F. Kenney introduced a bill before the Rules Committee that would give City Council the power over zoning with respect to any gambling venues within Philadelphia.

"It's not that Council would have control," Kenney says, "It's that the people Council represents would have control." Bill No. 030122 would require any developer of a potential gambling establishment to obtain zoning permission from City Council, which would ensure that individual taxpayers and communities have the opportunity to consider and debate whether gambling will benefit or harm their respective neighborhoods or the city as a whole. Should zoning be approved by City Council, the next step would be a series of citywide public hearings from communities and citizens at large — taking into account the needs and wishes of our city's citizens.

On May 1, 2003 the Rules Committee heard testimony from several Center City leaders and activists who support the bill. Liza Seltzer (at the time the nominee for SHCA president) spoke passionately in opposition to the very notion of gambling in the city, stating, "Gambling is neither harmless recreation nor an easy way to generate revenue. The gambling industry thrives on addiction, and the costs to the communities that invite it in far exceed the benefits when social factors are considered." Seltzer personally witnessed the results of gambling when she lived in Chicago and visited the Quad Cities — four cities that

come together on the Mississippi River in Iowa and Illinois. According to her testimony, riverboat gambling was introduced there in 1991 and "within a couple of years its impact was clear; while casino parking lots were full on a Saturday afternoon and businesses within a two-block radius were open, beyond that small circle of economic activity there were countless stores, restaurants, car dealerships and other businesses boarded up." She said she wouldn't want Philadelphia to become as unappealing a place to live as Atlantic City or New Orleans, which depend on gambling revenues to improve their schools and other city services.

Also speaking on behalf of Society Hill, SHCA's Vice President Bernice Hamel said that our civic association would need to debate the potential benefit or harm that gambling establishments could bring to our neighborhood and other communities situated along the Delaware River. According to Hamel, "Bill No.

030122 would surely provide a level of caution whereby the interests of taxpaying citizens would be heard and given consideration." Although Hamel recognizes the contradictory needs of city development versus sources of city revenue, she said "voters must become the ultimate decision-makers regarding what could potentially have major long-term consequences for us all."

As this issue goes to press, we're pleased to report that City Council Bill No. 030122 has become law. Mayor Street neither supported the legislation nor vetoed it. Meanwhile, the subject of gambling is currently being determined in both houses of the state legislature. We'll keep you informed, and should a statewide gambling bill supersede any local ordinance, we'll fight so that Philadelphia's citizens can have a say in its own future.



What Are the Opinions of City Council Candidates?

Philadelphia's City Council elections take place in November. Before the May primary the Coalition of Philadelphia Neighborhood Associations (CPNA) distributed questionnaires to candidates to determine their views on issues

facing Philadelphia. Responses, excellent both in quantity and quality, have been posted on the website www.Hallwatch.org. Look under "Other," select "Primary 2003" and then select "CPNA Questionnaire."



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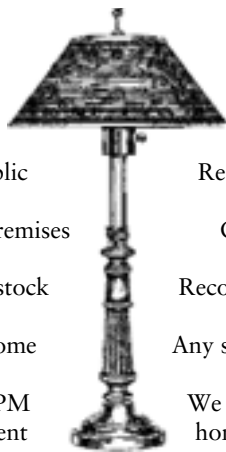
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The Land Value Tax: Boon or Bane?

The term “land value tax” (LVT) is finding its way into the conversations of Philadelphia property owners. For two years City Comptroller Jonathan A. Saidel, with support from some City Council members, has been promoting the LVT as an alternative to the onerous property taxes that have caused more than a few sleepless nights for city-dwellers this past year. What is the land value tax? And why should we have an interest in it?

Pennsylvania determines the assessed value of land and the buildings situated thereon separately. Currently in Philadelphia about 78 percent of the real estate tax is attributed to buildings and 22 percent to the land. Thus, if you have a row house and invest thousands of dollars for a new kitchen, a patio and a screened-in porch, your tax bill will rise substantially. Under the LVT, a larger portion of the property tax would be based on the value of the land and these same improvements to the building would increase taxes by a much lower amount.

Proponents of the LVT point to several benefits. It does not penalize owners who maintain and improve their property, including the many older historical structures that lie within Society Hill. It deters slumlords from holding on to substandard buildings; they must have sufficient revenue to pay the higher tax on land. It is likely they will either fix up commercial units or sell to someone who will develop the property, thus reducing blight. The land value tax is an alternative to the much-maligned property tax, which more often than not penalizes owners for the buildings them-

selves but even worse, levies additional taxes when owners make improvements.

A team of researchers at Drexel University, who completed an independent study this year, report that four out of five homeowners would see a savings in a switch from assessing structures on land to assessing taxes on the land itself. Additional advantages are that owners cannot evade or hide their assets and the cycle of high real estate speculation versus bust times — something we have all seen frequently in the last few decades — becomes inconsequential.

To learn how the LVT might affect your real estate taxes, visit www.Hallwatch.org. Each Philadelphia property is found by its street address. Listed among the advantages of the land value tax for Philadelphians:

- It has worked in other cities; for example, Pittsburgh, which is using the LVT and has some of the least expensive housing in the country.
- The tax can be controlled locally without interference from state or federal government.
- The tax is progressive; the more land you have, the more taxes you pay.
- The tax is easy to collect and difficult to avoid.

Discussion of this new taxing proposal is likely to continue for some time. We promise to keep you informed of the pros and cons of the land value tax — a new, bold proposal to fill the city’s coffers without penalizing the initiative and creativity of its citizens.

Society Hill Toweres Celebrates 40 Years; Architect Ioh Ming Pei Honored

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Towers’ 720 units were not fully occupied for several years. But rental prices were reasonable for the area — from \$130 a month for a studio up to \$245 for a two-bedroom unit. Each apartment’s floor-to-ceiling windows guaranteed a spectacular view of Philadelphia, which a *Daily News* article described as being seen through “5,400 uniquely styled aluminum picture frames.” When the townhouses went on the market, another pundit wisecracked, “A town house is what you call a row house when it costs \$45,000.”

In 1964 *Inquirer* Real Estate Editor Oscar Teller wrote that among new buildings in the city, the “brightest gem in the architectural crown is Society Hill Towers.” By 1979, the buildings had become so popular that the complex switched from rentals to condos with many residents choosing to make the Towers their permanent homes. In 1983, the Pritzker jury said Mr. Pei’s “versatility and skill in the use of material approached the level of poetry.” In 2003, the full glory of these seminal buildings can be seen at night when the brightly lighted units serve as a beacon for the homeward bound.



Architect I. M. Pei

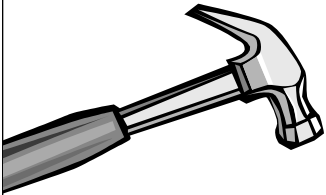
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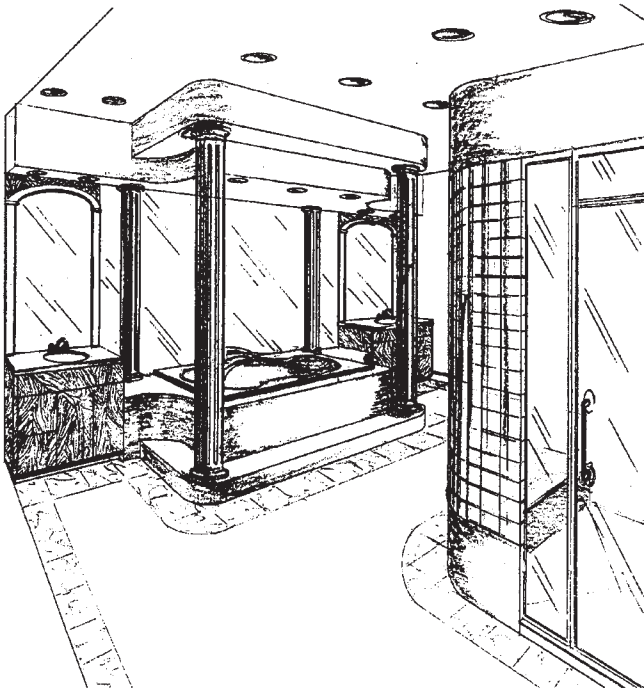
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Summer in the City

Keep Your Car and Its Contents Safe

An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 18, 2003, notes that crime has decreased in the Sixth Police District, which includes Society Hill, by 1.3 percent. But there is a disconcerting statement by a commander in this district that during the summer months officers are assigned to work elsewhere. We asked Lieutenant John Walker of the South Street Mini-Station to give our community some pointers on surviving the summer crime free. He sent these suggestions on how to frustrate car thieves.

Your auto is an "open display"!

Thieves tend to window shop and car owners frequently give them both opportunity and enticement by leaving valuables in full view. Thieves will weigh their chances of getting caught. Don't give them that chance.

How does the thief gain entrance?

It takes a few seconds to break a window and a handy rock or brick makes it easy. Sometimes a kick or elbow will do the trick. Thus car owners have to deal not only with the theft but also the cost of window repair.

What do thieves want?

Thieves don't necessarily want to take time to steal a sound system or the contents of the glove compartment. In most cases, valuables left in full view are the targets, and at the top of the list are cell phones!

How to prevent car thefts.

Since car break-ins can happen anywhere — on the street, in driveways, in open garages and in parking lots — a few minutes of thought on your part can prevent them. Park in lighted areas and always lock your valuables in the trunk, even if only for a few minutes. But, the lieutenant says, it is not a good idea to leave them there overnight.

A few obvious suggestions: never leave your children in the car unattended; never leave the car running when parked; never leave your keys in the ignition.

Lieutenant Walker notes that the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) has a stolen auto verification program that permits police to stop a vehicle after 11 p.m. to verify ownership. This program is conducted through the Community Relations Officers in the car owner's district. Owners who wish to register are issued a yellow sticker, which is placed on the rear window of the auto. For information, access the PPD website at www.PPDONLINE.org.

A side note: Lieutenant Walker reminds us that our Mini-Station has a fund that helps support the daily operations of the detail by providing uniforms, bikes and other supplies. The Police District Advisory Council maintains this fund. Send tax-deductible donations, made payable to the "Friends of the South Street Mini-Station," to 905 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.



Signs, posted on South, Lombard and Bainbridge Streets from Front to Broad informing the public of a maximum \$300 fine, will enable better enforcement of the ordinance prohibiting loud radios. The signs were hung in mid-May as a result of the efforts of Councilman Frank DiCicco.

Vandalism Strikes Society Hill

On the morning of June 1, neighbors found overturned and cracked planters, destroyed hanging baskets, new graffiti and one case of a pushed in front door in Society Hill. Shattered glass surrounded several cars. Vandalism appeared to be the cause of the damage.

The police were contacted and the officers assigned to the Sixth Police District offered suggestions to prevent these thoughtless acts from happening. Report ALL incidents of vandalism to the police, who will come to your home and take down the information. Be sure to get the officer's name and badge number so you can follow up to make sure a report has been filed. Also, call the police if you notice a suspicious person wandering around or acting

inappropriately. That person may be harmless, but he could be a potential vandal or burglar.

It is important to notify the police whenever an incident occurs so they are aware of the amount of criminal activity that is taking place in Society Hill. Nothing should be considered too insignificant to report. There is a car designated specifically for our neighborhood, so your call won't take an officer away from other duties.

Your first call should be to 911 to report the crime. Yes, vandalism is a crime. Then contact neighbor Marilyn Appel, chair of the Sixth Police District Advisory Council, at 215-922-2626 or harmara@juno.com. Help keep our neighborhood a safe place to live.

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Pride of Place

A Public Forum on Current Urban Design Topics

Recently a new *ad hoc*, informal and independent group conducted its first “Pride of Place” public forum, held on May 6 at Carpenters’ Hall. The mission of this organization, called the “Design Advocacy Group,” is to provide an informed public voice for quality in architecture and physical planning of the Philadelphia region. Drawn from a spectrum of disciplines and comprised of motivated individuals who are engaged in matters of design, development and planning — and who are not afraid to speak out — the goal is to be proactive as well as reactive; effective as well as thoughtful; critical as well as constructive.

This group cares about development of the waterfront, parking garages and transportation issues, and preserving our city’s treasures. They have engaged in advocacy on a variety of issues to date, including one close to our own hearts: the management of the Penn’s Landing design charrette in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Founders of

the Design Advocacy Group represent a virtual “Who’s Who” from our area’s most prestigious universities and corporations. Whether specializing in history, fine art, or architecture and design, their purpose is to consider recent developments in the city and region, hear presentations from prominent individuals, and vote to take advocacy positions.

The group’s May 6 “Pride of Place Forum” at Carpenters’ Hall resulted in a standing-room-only event, surprising even its organizers by the number and variety of people who showed up. Clearly many Philadelphians care about what happens in our city and region. Several Society Hill residents, including Bernice Hamel and Becky Stoloff, reported that the session offered a fascinating and engaging series of presentations on various planning issues that will shape our city for years to come. Based on discussions raised at the event, the group will prepare questions for the mayoral candidates at a follow-up forum in September.

Letter to the Editors:

Your readers may be interested to know that the 1980-81 SHCA Board of Directors pictured (SHCA *Reporter*, May/June 2003, “Remember When,” page 9) was the board that approved the proposal of one of its officers to upgrade *The Resident Newsletter*, a four-page typed and copied sheet, to a professionally printed newsletter with advertising to underwrite its cost. Members of this board also overcame many obstacles to make resident sticker parking a reality, at a time when many streets of Society Hill looked like a free parking lot for New Jersey commuters and others.

Thank you for publishing the photo. I expect that many of those in the photo who still live in Society Hill enjoyed looking back as much as I did. Maybe other presidents will have a similar photo taken that could appear in a future *Reporter*.


—Nancy Frenze

To Submit Copy to the *Reporter*

One of the goals of the *Reporter* is to print news of interest to Society Hill residents — especially happenings in and around our community. If your organization would like to have information about an event it is sponsoring included in this newsletter, copy should be submitted to the SHCA office by e-mail (MattDeJulio@aol.com), mail (Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147) or fax (215-629-9914). Material must be submitted in writing and include the name and phone number of a contact person. Promotional items may appear if there is space; otherwise, upcoming events will be listed in the calendar. Copy may be edited.

The deadline for submission of material is around the tenth of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December. The exact deadline for the next issue can be found on page 2 of the *Reporter*. The *Reporter* is distributed between the third and tenth day of January, March, May, July, September and November.





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Quick Hits

Penn's Landing

The 11 community groups in proximity to Penn's Landing have engaged the firm of Wallace, Roberts and Todd to analyze Penn's Landing and develop a charrette depicting the type of development which should take place at this important location. Wallace, Roberts and Todd is a land-planning firm that specializes in waterfront sites and was responsible for planning the successful Baltimore Inner Harbor. At the May meeting SHCA approved spending \$10,000 for this endeavor from the \$100,000 grant received from State Representative Marie Lederer to be used for capital projects. Councilman Frank DiCicco, in whose district Penn's Landing lies, supports the approach the local civic groups are taking. DiCicco will be instrumental in determining the type of development and the developer eventually selected for Penn's Landing.

Chestnut Street

The Coalition to Free Chestnut Street — a group formed to seek the reopening of Chestnut Street to traffic after barriers were placed at the entrances to the 500 block as a security measure for Independence Hall following the events of 9/11 — thought its work had been completed when Philadelphia Mayor John Street opened the block on April 1. In fact, the Coalition changed its name to The Independence Mall Business and Residents Commission and planned to concentrate on further improving the park — such as, hopefully, removing the “temporary” unsightly barriers from the sidewalks. However, in late May the Secretary of the U.S. Interior Department, Gale A. Norton, wrote a letter to Mayor Street once again advocating the closure of Chestnut Street in front of Independence Hall. And so the saga continues!

Foglietta Plaza

There is support for developing Foglietta Plaza, which already is the site of the Korean War Memorial, as the location of a tribute to police and firefighters. Congressman Robert A. Brady is pursuing funding from Washington to construct a memorial and associated renovations to this square. It is likely the name would be changed to “Heroes Plaza.”



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Thank you for a wonderful season, let us all welcome summer!

SHCA Members Greet Spring at City Tavern

On June 2, approximately 250 Society Hill Civic Association members gathered to enjoy beautiful weather and the wonderful hospitality of City Tavern. The large turn-out was

easily accommodated in the Tavern's spacious garden. The hors d'oeuvres were delicious, but the dessert table, with a tempting assortment of mouth-watering treats, was awesome!



Incoming Board Member Robin Komita (center) her husband, Mario Moussa, and SHCA Vice President and Membership Chair Kelly Nelson.



An actress in historical garb greets SHCA Vice President Martha Levine, her husband, Howard Sedran, and their daughter, Elizabeth.



Norm Wisler, Rosemary Weinberg, and Marcia Wisler.



Diana Anhart and Michael Erdos, incoming board member and head of Town Watch.



Holly and Greg Flanagan, Javad Parvizi, and Fabiba Kasemkhani.



Al and Joanne Di Santo, SHCA Past President Mel Buckman and Zoning Chair Paul Boni.

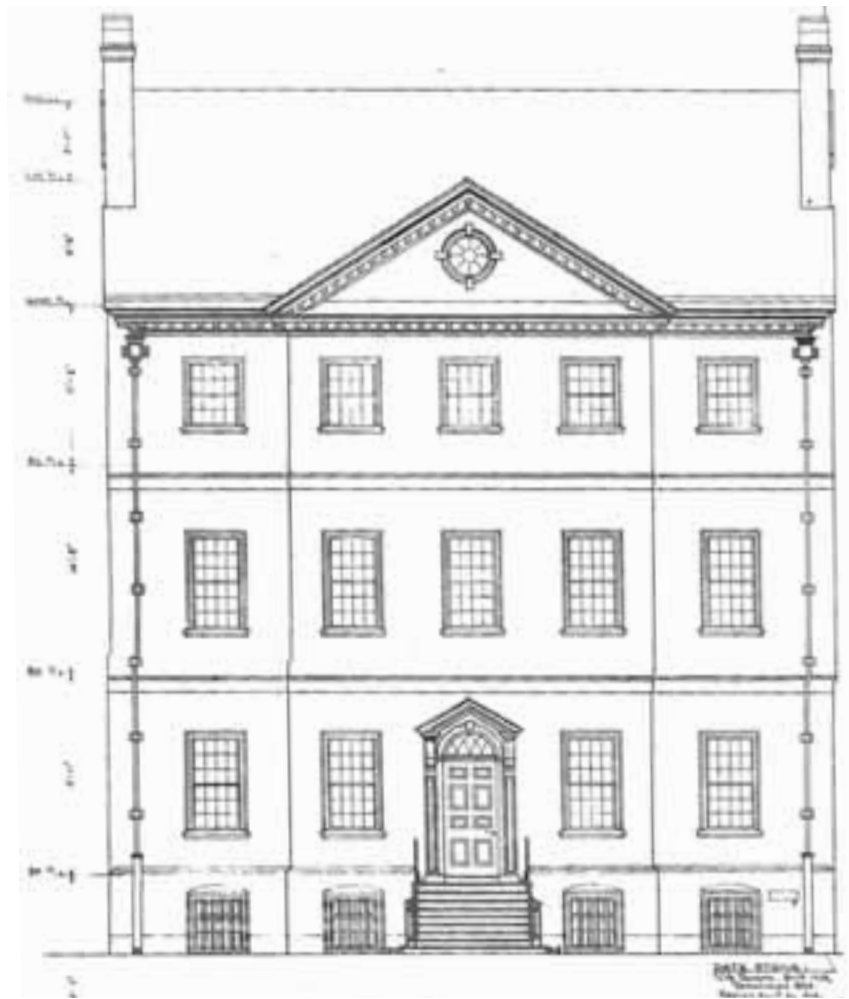
City Tavern: The Reconstruction of a Historic Building

Two hundred and thirty years ago this summer, at the corner of 2nd and what was then Gold (now Moravian) Street, carpenters and joiners, carvers and ironmongers, painters and bell hangers (who installed the pulleys and cranks which rang the bells that summoned servants) worked feverishly on the final touches for what Philadelphia investors hoped would be “the most convenient and elegant structure of its kind in America.”

Then, 30 years ago, a group of architectural historians, museum curators and experts on colonial era foodstuffs worked just as feverishly, sleuthing out old maps and engravings, all those carpenters’ and ironmongers’ invoices, as well as years of fire insurance surveys of interior details so they could replicate that very same building in time for our nation’s 200th birthday.

That building was City Tavern and Society Hill’s Penelope (Penny) Hartshorne Batcheler, a long-time American Street resident, was the National Park Service’s historical architect (now retired) in charge of getting City Tavern back up (it had been demolished in 1854 following deterioration after an 1834 fire damaged the structure) and authentically detailed. To be ready for the Bicentennial in 1976, the project to refurbish — and in some cases recreate — structures that played a role in the nation’s independence had started in the mid-1950’s and was going full bore by the early 1970’s. It was important to determine what City Tavern’s original “architraves” or window trims were, how the stair railing went from one floor to the next, and if the front of the building sported a sidewalk-wide canvas canopy in summer (it did), because so much of the drama in the founding of the country was played out here.

Penny imagined the new tavern being the stage for “modern social and cultural events, echoing those which took place then, as well as a living history facility” where a tourist or a long-time modern-day neighbor could step



back in time and toast the Founding Fathers with an ale they might have recognized.

“The Park Service knew City Tavern had to be a part of Independence National Historical Park,” she said. An inn as well as a restaurant, it had been patterned after the most fashionable English clubs in London, and “all the guys who signed the Declaration of Independence ended up at City Tavern after sessions. It was here that Paul Revere came in 1774 when he rode from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania to announce that the British had blockaded Boston’s port.... Nearly 300 citizens crowded into City Tavern to hear reactions of city leaders and out of that evening came the resolve to form the First Continental Congress.”

A few years later, on July 4, 1777, City Tavern hosted a grand dinner for the

first anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. A band composed of Hessians who had been captured at Trenton by General George Washington provided the musical accompaniment.

Invaluable clues to what the building and its original setting had been came from diverse sources. An early Charles Willson Peale portrait of one of the founders of the Philadelphia Dancing Assembly revealed an archway in the probable entrance hall. A London political cartoon from the era showed a period tavern’s glassed-in serving bar, which suggested that City Tavern might have had a similar one. Then Penny’s team found a 1796 newspaper ad in which City Tavern boasted, “for convenience (sic) the Bill of Fare is to be had at the bar” which cinched the case. A bar “keep” now is a feature of the main floor reception suite.



Architect Benjamin Henry LaTrobe's 1798 watercolor of the proposed Bank of Pennsylvania — with City Tavern as its neighbor on the south — and a drawing from the mid-1800's of the inn, after it had become an auction house, both precisely rendered the exterior. Archeological digs were ruled out because several later buildings with deep basements had been built on the site, but clues to pottery and cooking implements were available from other nearby sites.

Penny originally imagined the lower level kitchen as a learning experience complete with authentic cooking for the thousands who annually tour Philadelphia. "But right from the start the space was needed for dining and we never outfitted it as a colonial era kitchen." While "the visitor's experience in the structure should be enhanced by an appeal to his sense of smell and

taste," she noted in her official report in 1973, there were numerous restaurants in the immediate area and "it is not the intention of the National Park Service to place itself in competition." Instead, her report suggested City Tavern should "serve a historic menu at a reasonable price." Hence, Thomas Jefferson's sweet potato biscuits and tavern turkey stew with fried oysters (inspired by a dish in *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery*) are both staples of the menu currently served by Walter Staib, chef/proprietor and author of *City Tavern Cookbook - 200 Years of Classic Recipes from America's First Gourmet Restaurant*.

Her report also quotes Dr. Samuel Johnson on the subject of taverns to suggest what City Tavern's ambiance might aspire to, a "general freedom from anxiety. You know you are welcome, the more noise you make, the

Butterhead Lettuce with Raspberry Shrub Vinaigrette

Makes 2 cups vinaigrette; Serves 6

1/2 cup raspberry shrub
[available for purchase at City Tavern]
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 1/2 cups olive oil
Salt and freshly ground white pepper
3 heads butterhead (Boston/Bibb) lettuce or mixed greens, rinsed & torn

1. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the raspberry shrub, balsamic vinegar, sugar and mustard.
2. Slowly add the olive oil, whisking constantly.
3. Season with salt & pepper to taste.
4. Cover and refrigerate for 10 minutes, until chilled.
5. When ready to serve, whisk the dressing. Pour over the lettuce or mixed greens and toss to coat.

From the *City Tavern Cookbook* © 1999 by Walter Staib. Running Press Book Publishers, Philadelphia and London. Signed copies of the book are available at City Tavern.

more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the more welcomer (sic) you are."

How would its architect rate this modern day version of the "Cheers" of 1776? Penny and George Batcheler take out-of-town guests there, but she wishes it were a bit quieter. "I now think they may well have had a lot of carpets; after all, it wasn't a country tavern." The historian in her laments the non-authentic glass doors inside the entry. "They were losing too much heat out the front door and, because it was rebuilt before the energy crisis, the building isn't very well insulated."

One fact turned up in her research that was not "architectural data" and therefore did not make her original report, but still it delights her: "We know that Martha Washington slept here. We don't know about George."



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South Street, Reinventing Itself Once Again

The South Street Headhouse District, under the leadership of executive director Barry Cassidy, believes that it's time to update the image of South Street, a neighborhood that has experienced a myriad of transformations since its birth as Cedar Street, the southernmost boundary of William Penn's "faire country town." An ambitious streetscape initiative, which will start this year, promises many exciting changes, including fire engine red lampposts!

Work on the 2nd Street Plaza between Pine and South Streets has already begun. Thanks to a generous grant obtained by State Representative Marie Lederer, water is again flowing in the fountain at 2nd and Lombard Streets. Next, the elevated median strip and individual meters will be removed and replaced with a state of the art parking meter system at either end of the plaza. Once the square is resurfaced and utilities relocated, the resulting large, open space will be used for street festivals and family-style entertainment.

Phase I of the Streetscape Program is scheduled to start in several months. South Street, from Front to 8th, will get all new lighting, sidewalks, curbs and trees. The street itself will be completely re-paved. Bike racks will be installed and parking meters will be double headed to reduce clutter. The project will take 10 months to complete, during which time the Streets Department is committed to maintaining access to businesses. Phase II, according to Planning Chair Ann Verber, will eventually extend the streetscape renovations to the remainder of the businesses and properties that are within the district's boundaries.

South Street is as old as the city of Philadelphia. And while hundreds of tenements, many still standing, always housed working class men and women drawn to the area by its proximity to the Delaware River docks and to New Market, the makeup of these laborers changed with time.

Home to almost every immigrant group, the last big wave of refugees was Eastern European Jews who started arriving in Philadelphia in 1881 to escape the pogroms of their native countries. They left an indelible mark on the street, first with their peddler carts and sweatshops, then as Philadelphia's unofficial garment district. Today, historic Fabric Row, offering an unparalleled textile resource, is virtually all that's left of the clothing trade.

The neighborhood reinvented itself once again in the mid-1960's as suburban malls changed the retail industry. Shoppers dwindled, property values plummeted and the street went into decline. These problems were exacerbated when the city toyed with the idea of demolishing South Street to build a cross-town expressway. Struggling artists and ethnic restaurateurs seized the economic moment and set up shop. In doing so they changed the look and spirit of the street forever. It became Philadelphia's trendy melting pot, the place where, as the Ortons sang in 1963, "all the hippest meet."

Society Hill's gritty neighbor to the south is once again poised for change. And those bright red street posts suggest that it's a change worth waiting for!

Meet me on
South Street,
(oh yeah)
hurry on down!
(oh baby)
Meet me
on South
Street, It's the
hippest street
in town!

St. Peter's Churchyard Restoration Continues

On Wednesday, June 11 Historic St. Peter's Church Preservation Corporation (HSPCPC) held its first open-to-the-public annual meeting in the churchyard at 3rd and Pine Streets. The cemetery began interring parishioners in 1760 and now displays over 230 years of American burial iconography, but time has taken its toll on the gravestones. John Carr, a conservationist retained by HSPCPC, demonstrated how he and his staff will restore broken headstones. Rob Cox, manuscript librarian for the American Philosophical Society, talked about the botanical significance of the Osage orange trees in the southwest corner, which arrived either

as seedlings or cuttings from the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1803-1806.

While the iron gates, brick wall and stone finials have been restored, much work remains including gravestone restoration, landscaping, brick walkways and lighting.

HSPCPC was founded in 1991 to preserve this unique site — often referred to as an oasis in this old city — or the green lung of this brick neighborhood. If you would like to contribute, send donations to HSPCPC at 313 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106 or call 215-925-5968 for volunteer opportunities such as tour guide or gardener.



John Carr and Kristin Cardi discuss gravestone damage with Roy Bernat of HSPCPC.



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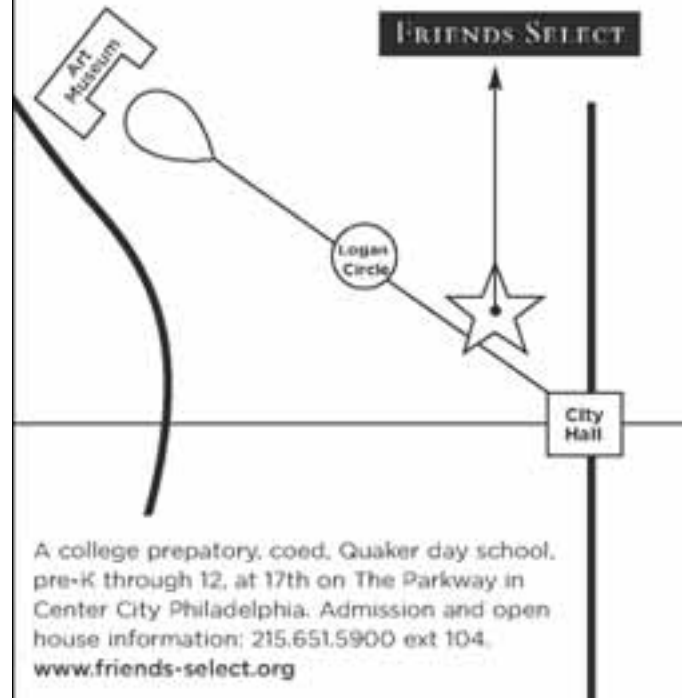
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Kids' Beat a column by Keri White

Family Friendly Businesses

We've all been there. Walk into a boutique with a stroller and see the grimace. Bring an infant to the salon and hear "maybe it's time to wean your baby." Or my personal favorite, "Ever hear of a sitter?" Lucky for us, there are lots of family friendly businesses in and around Society Hill. The following is a subjective assortment of a few of the many local merchants who go beyond common courtesy to accommodate children.

Philadelphia Java Co. • 518 South 4th Street
A haven for both parents and children. Adults can acquire their lifeblood (aka caffeine) in the form of La Colombe coffees, cappuccinos and a variety of teas. There are plenty of kid friendly snacks (bagels, muffins, pastry, panini) not to mention hot chocolate topped with whipped cream. The staff is attentive enough to craft mom-approved cocoa (not too hot, not too chocolatey) and to remember which kid must have whipped cream and which recoils at the stuff. In addition, there are two large bins of toys in the back seating area and a spacious, clean bathroom for frequent emergency trips. Owners Alia Banna and Jerry Roseman provide a hip and friendly cafe for one and all. Long may they brew!

Salon@5th • 316 South 5th Street
Salon@5th provides hair and nail services to adults while accommodating haphazard school and childcare schedules. Tina Mai, the manicurist, opens the shop an hour early to pamper the moms who have early preschool pickup. Stylists are always willing to adjust their schedules to comply with parental duties. Owner Steven Chernekoff even provided me with a supply of his adorable miniature white shopping bags when my daughter refused to eat lunch from any other satchel. (We have since moved on to a pink monogrammed lunchbox.) On Halloween, the shop was festively decorated and gave obscene amounts of candy to trick-or-treaters. While Salon@5th does not provide services to children, there is no dirty look when a stroller enters the premises.

American Pie • 327 South Street
A beautiful, but breakable collection of merchandise. Its selection of gifts, jewelry, housewares, and arts and crafts is oh-so-fragile. However, owners Peter and Kirsten Ebert, along with their daughter Kira, have created an

environment that openly (and bravely) accommodates families. They even hang a sign in the window with a list of things they welcome — kids with sippy cups and strollers included!

Abode • 718 South Street
The newest edition to American Pie Crafts, Abode features family friendly furniture. It encourages families to visit and lounge on the pieces. According to Kira, "if they are not comfortable around the furniture in our store, they won't be comfortable in their home." Recognizing the importance and magnitude of furniture selection, Abode encourages participation by the entire family. Bring the Gameboys and coloring books and try out the sofas and tables. Now that's customer awareness!

House of Tea • 720 South 4th Street
Another favorite of ours and an essential stop on my errand circuit. Owner Jessica Litt always has a friendly hello for the little ones and, more importantly, a generous bowl of candy for their gluttonous pleasure. Like American Pie, House of Tea stocks a large selection of lovely, fragile items, but Jessica never restricts the exploring eyes and hands of my curious companions.

TLA • 517 South 4th Street
A great, friendly locale. Day Manager Kennie Bowen makes the effort to say hello to my kids, remembers them by name, and takes the time to rap with a neighbor's son about superheroes. TLA's staff never fusses when my daughter sits on the counter and draws pictures on their notepaper while we negotiate which films to rent. And they are understanding and matter of fact about the inevitable late fee. We still have to pay it, of course, but they are not judgmental tyrants about it!

Kid's Quote

"Zocalo? No way!
I want to go to
Cafe Spice!"

Kelsey, age 4
Society Hill Kid



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Block Coordinators in Action

Block Coordinators are ready to help out when needed. They assist SHCA in communicating with you, as well as giving you a contact person on your own block to address your concerns. This spring Block Coordinators provided a neighborhood-wide mass distribution of fliers for two major events — the Society Hill Open House and Garden Tours and Clean-up Day. Each Block Coordinator delivered fliers to his or her respective block. Some also posted “Move your car” signs on poles and trees to allow proper street cleaning. Open House posters were displayed in many Block Coordinators’ windows. The civic association thanks you. We couldn’t have done it without your assistance.

Many Coordinators also initiate projects on their blocks. Several obtained contributions from neighbors to purchase plants and place them in hanging the baskets. Neighbors take turns watering the colorful flowers. Organizers

who participated in this endeavor include the following Block Coordinators: Laura Temple for the 200 block of South American Street; Sandra Williams, 200 South Philip; Hans and Cherry Bombeck, 500 Spruce; Elizabeth Armour, 200 Delancey, and Kevin Yoder (with neighbor Janet Cook), 200 South 3rd. Kelly Nelson, with Blackwell Place neighbors, did an amazing job removing dead plants and revitalizing communal garden space. Adrianna von Pein, with financial support from neighbors, tends to Lawrence Walkway and St. Peter’s Way by planting containers, placing hanging baskets and keeping the area clean. She also enticed Super Fresh’s Manager, Joe Black, to provide complimentary mulch, which she placed around tree pits outside the store on 5th Street.

Roseann Loesch, although not a Block Coordinator, organized the pruning of trees on the 400 block of Spruce, allowing more light to penetrate the street.

Keeping Society Hill a “Greene Countrie Towne”



The SHCA has received a grant from the Green Tree Perpetual Assurance Company to match, dollar for dollar (up to a maximum of \$2,500 per year), the civic association’s subsidy for planting street trees.

You may have noticed the Green Tree medallion on some of the historical houses in our neighborhood. The company was founded over 200 years ago as an offshoot of the Philadelphia Contributionship, which refused to grant fire insurance for houses that had trees in front. Green Tree, aware that new fire pumps made this restriction antiquated, began to provide fire insurance for homes with trees on the property. Thus, the tree symbol became its mark. Green Tree, which currently has its corporate headquarters at One Liberty Place,

wants to relocate in the Society Hill area and re-establish its identity. We enthusiastically welcome its participation in our Project Street Trees program.

SHCA will reimburse homeowners \$150 for planting a street tree. With the matching funds from Green Tree, the subsidy rises to \$300. Trees not only improve the look of our neighborhood, but also provide welcoming shade from the heat of the summer sun. We hope many residents will take advantage of this opportunity to add greenery to our streetscape.

If you would like to have a new tree in front of your house, please contact the SHCA office at 215-629-1288.

House and Garden Tours Successful



Co-chairs Linda Skale and Martha Levine report that this year’s Society Hill Open House Tour attracted a record-breaking 350 visitors on Sunday, May 4. It was a lovely spring day, perfect for enjoying the eight beautiful private homes on the tour, as well as St. Peter’s Church, Society Hill Synagogue and the Powell House. With two-thirds of the net proceeds benefiting SHCA, it was a great day.

Inclement weather on Sunday, June 1 decreased garden tour participation from last year’s 265 visitors; but the 160 brave souls who did tour the 19 gardens, many of which are located in private courtyards or behind the walls of enclosed patios, marveled at their beauty. Linda and Martha appreciate the assistance of the many neighbors who volunteered for these events.

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- 119 Lombard Street
- 333 South 6th Street
- 200 Lombard Street # 748
- 521 'A' S. Randolph Ct.
- 331 S. 6th Street
- 534 Cypress Street



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According to the National Association of Realtors:

- Almost 50% of all people interested in buying or selling real estate search the Internet. The use is significantly higher in urban areas, like Philadelphia
- 92% of Home Sellers want a virtual tour of their property on the internet
- 63% of Internet users found that the Internet helped reduce their search
- 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

Did you know that most real estate agents in Center City:

- DO NOT have an internet presence or provide virtual tours
- DO NOT have assistants or buyers agents to help sell their listings
- DO NOT advertise or market their own listings
- Some DO NOT even use the Multiple Listing Service

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The following are a few features on my site CenterCityRealEstate.com

- Access to the entire Center City Multiple Listing Service, updated DAILY!
- Get information on EVERY MLS home for sale in Society Hill & Center City
- View a virtual tour & pictures of all of my listings in Society Hill & Center City
- View all MLS homes that have sold in Center City for the past 2 years

Receive a FREE Phone or E-mail analysis of your home's Current Market Value

As a seasoned professional who lives in and sells Society Hill, I am extending my services and expertise to you by offering a **free, no obligation market analysis of your home** so that you can find out what your home is worth, learn more about my services and find out what makes the Atacan Group so different from all the others hundreds of Realtors in Philadelphia. **I think you will find, like all my other satisfied clients, that there is no comparison.**

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Let's join Membership Cheerleader Kelly Nelson as she rallies the troops to try a little harder. "Ninety-five more is what it takes; ninety-five more is a piece of cake!" We're so close to our record-breaking goal of 1,000 members that we can taste it! And why, you ask, is membership so important? It's because 60 percent of our revenue comes from SHCA dues. We use this money to fund weekly sidewalk cleaning, remove graffiti, subsidize tree planting and support our volunteer committees. Look for our newest service in the crevices and crannies nearest you, as the association is adding a vacuum to enhance sidewalk cleaning.

We welcome four new business members: The Green Tree Perpetual Assurance Company (which we also thank for its major contribution to Project Street Trees), Alma Bove Interiors, Great Beginnings Child Development Center and St. James Associates. We also thank all the neighbors who joined the association this year. To the at least 95 others out there who teeter on the verge: don't delay. Fill in the membership form found on this page and mail it, with your check, today.

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:

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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.

Planning to Repaint Your House?

Tips for the Fussy Homeowner

The Society Hill Preferred List of Contractors has served us well by providing an extensive list of contractors of all types recommended by neighbors. Typical comments by users are "It's like gold" or "It's our bible."

Painting contractor Charlie Gallagher, of Gallagher & Sons Master Painters, who has 40 years of experience, offers a few suggestions on how to achieve satisfactory exterior house painting. The best time to paint the exterior of your home is between April and November, because air temperature should be over 50 degrees. Hire a contractor with good references and one who usually works in this area, as working on old wood requires special skill. Use the best quality paint you can afford. Cheaper paints may change color or fade.

Thorough preparation is paramount. The wood surfaces should be hand washed with TSP (trisodium phosphate) to remove dirt, mildew, exhaust from cars/buses, acid rain and salt that collect on the surface. Sanding and repair

are essential to get rid of rough spots. When wood is exposed, it must be primed before paint is applied. Cracked paint around windowpanes must be removed. Use caulk to seal windows to keep water out. Preparatory work is time consuming; if a painter gives you a very low estimate, you may be getting a quick, but not thorough job that will need repainting in two years. A good job will last five or more years.

Every year following exterior painting, have the painter return to wash the painted surfaces again with TSP to loosen accumulated dirt, etc. Just as you wash your car periodically, you should wash the painted surfaces of your home to prevent oxidation and peeling paint.

Brass hardware, such as knockers, knobs and mail slots, should be removed and cleaned, polished and lacquered to revive their finishes.

For more information, call Charlie Gallagher at 610-532-6904. To receive a contractor list contact Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@aol.com. Sorry, we cannot fax or e-mail the list to you. This is a service available to all SHCA members or prospective members.



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THE BOOKSHELF

The Scourge of Pestilence

With the threat of West Nile Virus, SARS and bio-terrorism lurking in our contemporary world, it is easy to imagine the scenario of a deadly disease appearing without warning in our nation's capital. The best doctors disagree about the origin and treatment of the illness. As the death toll mounts, a growing number of residents flee for their lives.

This is exactly what happened during Philadelphia's yellow fever epidemic of 1793. During a period of four months, nearly 10 percent of the city's population of approximately 55,000 perished, making it one of the deadliest epidemics in U.S. history. The impact of this disaster was compounded by Philadelphia's status at the time as the capital of the United States.

In late summer, as the number of deaths began to climb, 20,000 citizens, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and other members of the federal government, fled to the countryside.

In an effort to prove themselves morally superior to those who reviled them, Philadelphia's black community dedicated itself to tending the sick and dying as nurses and also serving as cart drivers and gravediggers. Despite the popular belief that blacks could not contract the disease, 240 died of the fever.

After the epidemic, a street-by-street, alley-by-alley count of fever deaths was compiled. Today we can find that list in the 1795 Federal Census at the National Archives, 9th and Chestnut Streets.

Fever 1793

Laurie Halse Anderson
Aladdin Library; Reprint edition (March, 2002)
Ages 9-12

In *Fever 1793*, author Laurie Anderson takes a Philadelphia teenager through this devastating epidemic. Mattie's story turns into one of survival and growth as she overcomes the terrible scourge herself, then must search for other survivors, battle both terrified neighbors and looters, and attempt to restore her family and fortunes while her former cook, a freed slave, works with the African Free Society to visit and assist the sick. Anderson makes Mattie's story believable — and in the process builds a picture of Philadelphia in the days when it was the nation's largest city and capital.

Introducing "The Bookshelf"

Living in an historic neighborhood brings out the armchair historian in most of us. With this in mind, the *Reporter* introduces a new column, "The Book Shelf," which features publications, for adults and children, that are certain to feed our need to explore Philadelphia's past.



**Bring Out Your Dead:
The Great Plague of Yellow
Fever in Philadelphia in 1793**

(Studies in Health, Illness and Care-giving)
John H. Powell, et al
Paperback, The University of Pennsylvania, 1993

During the hot, mosquito-infested summer of 1793, the dreaded yellow fever spread like wildfire, killing people overnight. Like specters from the Middle Ages, gravediggers drew carts through the streets crying, "Bring out your dead!" Historian John Harvey Powell presents a penetrating study of human nature revealing itself in his psychological portrait of a city in terror. *Bring Out Your Dead* is his absorbing account, from the original sources, of an infamous tragedy that left its mark on all it touched.

Both books are available at the Independence Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, 13 South 7th Street.



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S U M M E R A C T I V I T I E S

Fun for Kids at Atwater Kent

The Atwater Kent Museum of Philadelphia will again be sponsoring Phil-A-Kid Summer History Camp for children ages 8-13. Now in its 20th year, this program is designed to explore Philadelphia's history during the Colonial, Victorian and 20th Century time periods. During the week of August 4-8, campers will learn about communication, transportation and multiculturalism in the early 20th century with visits to the Ben Franklin Bridge, the Independence Seaport Museum, the National Liberty Museum and the Paul Robeson House. During August 11-15 the focus will be on the 19th century with visits to City Hall, Eastern State Penitentiary, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Mutter Museum.

Registration is underway and will continue until available space is filled. There is a fee. For more information contact Caren Cronin at 215-685-4832 or carenann@aol.com.

New Exhibit at Atwater Kent Museum

"The Living Landmark: Philadelphia's Independence Hall," an exhibit of images and objects tracing the evolution of this unique building as a symbol of American Liberty, is the Atwater Kent Museum's current feature. "The Living Landmark" explores how each era in our country's history interpreted Independence Hall and used it as an icon of American freedom. Independence Hall has been the site of the Pennsylvania State House, Federal Court rooms and City Council Chambers, as well as a focal point for demonstrations for causes as diverse as the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage and gay rights.

The exhibition runs through December 29. The Atwater Kent Museum, located at 15 South 7th Street, is open every day except Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 215-685-4830.

Arts and Crafts Fair Also Features Workshops

The summer "Crafts & Fine Arts Fair" sponsored by The Creative Collective has returned to the historic Head House Shambles market place at 2nd and Pine Streets for its 35th year. Every weekend through September artists and crafts persons will exhibit jewelry, ceramics, clothing and other wares. In addition, every Sunday between 1 and 3 p.m. there will be workshops for children ages 3 to 10. For more information, please call 215-790-0782.



Liz Eaby at the helm of another season for the Creative Collective Crafts & Fine Arts Fair at historic Head House Square.

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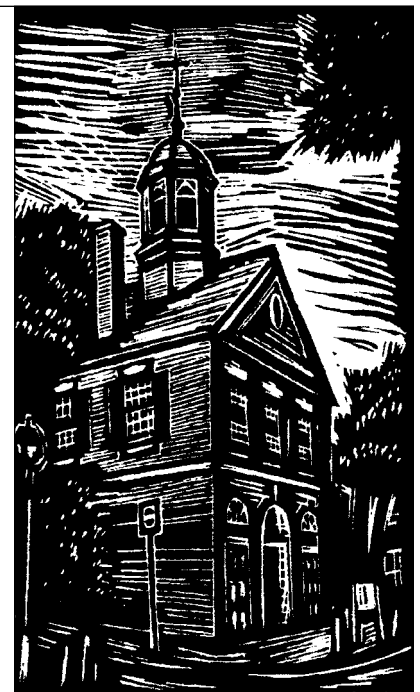
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NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

A COLUMN BY DAVID WOODS

John Allen Paulos + Sheila Paulos

“Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty – a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture.”

—Bertrand Russell

Like his idol Bertrand Russell, John Allen Paulos is both a mathematician and a philosopher; and like Lewis Carroll, who not only created *Alice in Wonderland* but also the less fanciful *Euclid and His Modern Rivals*, he combines mathematics with whimsy. He is the author of such popular works as *Innumeracy*, *I Think Therefore I Laugh*, *Mathematics and Humor* and his just-published seventh book, *A Mathematician Plays the Stock Market*.

A professor at Temple University, Paulos describes mathematics as “elegant, ethereal, and playful” but too often presented and taught with a narrow focus. And in his *A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper*, he takes the press to task for playing fast and loose with numbers. He has communicated his fascination with — and expertise in — risk and probability in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* and on the Larry King and David Letterman shows. He also served for two years on the editorial board of the *Philadelphia Daily News* trying, as he puts it, “to straddle the disparate realms of Pythagoras and Pulitzer.”



Paulos’ wife Sheila is not only a major fan, pointing out that *Innumeracy* graced the *New York Times* bestseller list for 18 weeks, sold half a million copies and was translated into 13 languages, but she is also an accomplished writer. The author of nine romance novels, including *Champagne and Red Roses*, which she describes as “a surprise bestseller,” she recently completed a mainstream novel. In addition, Sheila teaches writing at the University of the Arts and a course on intellectual heritage at Temple.

The pair, who met at the University of Wisconsin, lived in the Philadelphia suburbs before moving to Society Hill seven years ago when their two children went off to college. With their cat Puffin, they inhabit a charming circa 1810 house on the 600 block of Pine Street. They describe the area as vibrant and ideal for walking to theatres, bookstores and historic sites. When not at home, John and Sheila are either at their summer home in Acadia National Park in Maine or traveling in Europe.

It’s no simple matter to calculate the odds — the probability — that husband and wife would both meet at one university, teach at another and be prolific, popular authors. But that’s the mathematical truth — and indeed the beauty of it.

A THANK-YOU TO OUR NEIGHBORS



The Society Hill Civic Association Clean-Up Day Committee thanks all neighborhood residents who volunteered their time and talents to help make Clean-up Day successful.

Special mention goes to the Doe Fund of Philadelphia and its volunteer group, “Ready, Willing and Able,” for assisting us with this project.

The Green Tree Perpetual Assurance Company

Under the headline, “A New Society for Ensuring Houses from Loss by Fire,” readers of the Philadelphia paper *The Independent Gazetteer; or the Chronicle of Freedom* for Saturday, August 21 of 1784 were informed of the following:

A great number of the citizens of Philadelphia, who are proprietors of houses in the city, and its suburbs... have found it convenient and agreeable to them, to have trees planted in the streets before their houses, which... is expressly permitted by a law of the state; ... who signified their willingness, that a new addition should be made to the premium of their insurance, for the supposed risque, attending trees in cases of fire, as is now done with respect to bake-houses, coopers, apothecaries, and oilmen's shops; stores containing pitch, tar, brimstone, &c.; ... wherefore a number of persons, desirous of having their houses ensured from loss by fire, and feeling themselves precluded from the advantages of the present institution, have judged it necessary to form another Society for the purpose aforesaid, and have entered into an agreement, that as soon as so many persons as have property in houses, to the value of one hundred thousand pounds collectively, shall have signed the said agreement, a meeting of the subscribers should be called, to form a place for the management of the intended Society.

With this grand one-sentence paragraph, the intention to found a second fire insurance company in the city was announced to the Philadelphia public.

The idea of a group of citizens banding together for their mutual protection should one of their number suffer a financial loss due to fire originated in London in 1696 with the formation of a society known as the Amicable Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses against Fire. Each property insured by the Amicable Contributionship was marked by a lead emblem of two clasped hands, signifying the mutual nature of the insuring company. This fire mark

certified that the property must be protected by the company's private fire brigade.

Benjamin Franklin, whose many civic interests included fire protection, joined with other prominent citizens of Philadelphia in 1736 to form a volunteer fire-fighting association called the Union Fire Company. This company proved to be so successful that it stimulated the formation of many other such companies. Effective as many of them were in putting out fires, however, fire and its attendant financial losses were inescapable threats in a city built largely of brick and wood.

In March of 1752 Franklin and other like-minded residents of Philadelphia joined together to form the city's first fire insurance company, The Philadelphia Contributionship, and took as its fire mark the image of four hands crossed and clasped in a pattern resembling a fireman's chair. In Philadelphia a fire mark was more a matter of advertisement than a demand for fire-fighting assistance. Here, when a fire broke out, everyone who could was expected to pitch in and join the bucket brigades. Not until the turn of the century would there finally be sufficient water pressure in the City to support the use of hoses. Each of the neighbors who rushed to help would bring a pair of leather buckets bearing his own initials and join bucket brigades of as many as a thousand people.

In 1781 The Contributionship determined that street trees were an impediment to the work of these bucket brigades and, declaring that it would no longer insure a property that had trees nearby, demanded that its members remove them. The Pennsylvania Assembly followed in the Contributionship footsteps in April of the following year and ordered that all street trees be removed. Colonial Philadelphians, being rightly proud of what remained to them of Penn's woods to shade their residential streets, must have expressed their displeasure with considerable force, for the law was repealed by that same September.



The Contributionship, however, did not rescind its by-law banning trees, and in July of 1784, sixty-one, or nearly half, of its policyholders announced their intention in the city's newspapers to form a new company unless the ban on trees were lifted within two months' time.

The Contributionship held firm and, in the end, eighteen dissident tree-lovers of Philadelphia broke away from the city's first fire insurance company to form its second on September 29, 1784. They elected thirteen of their number — some being absent at the time — as trustees and named George Emlen the treasurer of their new society.

The first meeting of the new society was held on October 16, 1784, at which time the members drew up the articles under which the new society would be governed. At a second meeting five days later, they met at the City Coffee House, and the members then present approved the articles, or Deed of Settlement, and the name of the new society: The Mutual Assurance Company for Insuring Houses from Loss by Fire. Soon after, the trustees decided upon a well-pruned tree as an appropriate emblem to signify the new company. The trustees determined that it should be printed on the Deed of Settlement, “and that a Tree, formed in Lead, shall be the Badge or Mark to be fixed upon all Houses insured by this Society.” The fire mark quickly caught on and from that day to this, the company has been known familiarly as The Green Tree. Many of The Green Tree's fire marks can still be seen on properties today. *To be continued...*

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Northwest

Morris Chomitz 215 629-0245 machomitz@aol.com
 Joe Gritz 215 629-7064 joedirector@aol.com
 Lisa Karlin 215-923-3889 lskarlin@earthlink.net

Southwest

Gene Gualtieri 215-923-5439 genegualtieri@earthlink.net
 Robin Komita 215-928-1535 rkomita@beckerwinston.com
 Frank Signorello 215-413-3380 fsignorello@gexchange.com

Southeast

Tania Rorke 215-925-4544 trorke@aol.com
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Condominium Representatives

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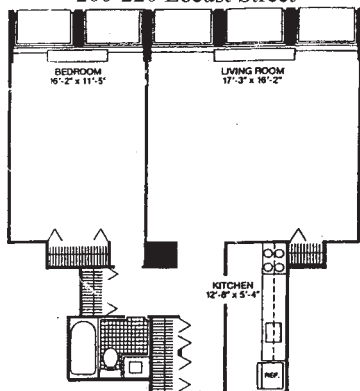


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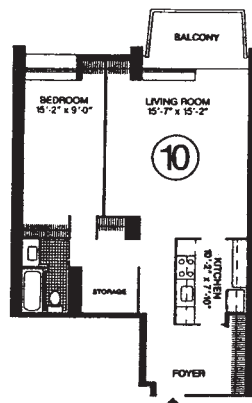
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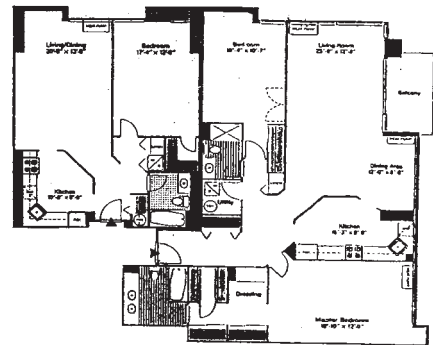
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