



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

City Taxes: Subject of First Meeting for 2004



An interactive panel discussion will address the topic of City taxes at the January 21 SHCA General Membership Meeting.

How have City taxes affected your personal finances? Do you need someone to demystify the Tax Commission Report for you? To hear more about the topic of City taxes, come to an interactive panel discussion organized by the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA). We are pleased that the Sheraton Society Hill will host this forum, which will be the primary focus of our General Membership Meeting on January 21, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

Please join invited panelists in addressing the following issues:

- What are the major problems with the current tax system?
- What are the recommendations for change and how will these affect us?
- How can the City's various community civic associations act in concert to effect change?

The one-hour discussion will be framed by an invited panel, consisting of several local notables and will be joined by the audience, through their questions, observations, and feedback. Society Hill neighbor **Frances Beckley**, a graduate of Yale Law School, with a Certificate in Tax Law from NYU, has agreed to moderate and facilitate the interaction among panelists and you, the audience. Ms. Beckley

is an attorney with Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, where she concentrates on state and local taxation. She is a graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe College, Yale Law School and New York University Law School's graduate tax program.

Panelists include: Jonathan Sidel, Philadelphia City Controller; Ed Schwartz, Chair, Philadelphia Tax Commission; and Inga Saffron, Architecture Critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Jonathan A. Sidel is a four-term City Controller. An attorney and CPA, he is Of Counsel to the law firm of Silverman Bernheim & Vogel. Also he is counsel to the Democratic Chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate of Pennsylvania and counsel to the Chairman of the Labor and Industry Committee in the Senate.

Ed Schwartz is founder and president of the Institute for the Study of Civic Values in Philadelphia. A former City councilman-at-large and a national leader in the movement to revitalize neighborhoods, he has worked to expand citizens' participation in government for more than 25 years. Schwartz is credited with overseeing the rehabilitation of more than 4,000 houses and apartments for low-income residents.

Inga Saffron joined the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1985 and spent 15 years as a foreign, metro, and cultural reporter. Her award-winning column "Changing Skyline," which deals with a broad range of design, planning and urban issues, appears in the paper on Fridays and Sundays. Ms. Saffron has long been interested in the fate of cities.

The Society Hill Civic Association is delighted to use the facilities generously offered once again by the colonial-style **Sheraton Society Hill**. This lovely hotel was built in 1986 and remodeled in 2000. With its One Dock Street address, the Sheraton takes pride in its historic location. During its construction, many centuries-old artifacts were uncovered and can now be viewed throughout the hotel complex.

WED.	MARK YOUR CALENDAR
January 21	Society Hill Civic Association Meetings Wednesday, January 21, 2004
	<p>Sheraton Society Hill One Dock Street</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Board Meeting All SHCA members are welcome to attend.</p> <p>General Membership Meeting All Society Hill residents are welcome to attend.</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Meet Your Neighbors</p> <p>7:30 p.m. Meeting officially begins: Tax Forum</p>

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January/February

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Deadlines for next issue:

Editorial: February 15
Advertising: February 1
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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 publicize an event in this newsletter, copy should be submitted to the SHCA office by e-mail (MattDeJulio@aol.com), mail (Society Hill Civic Assn, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147) or fax (215-629-9914). Material must be submitted in writing and include the name of a contact person. Your edited material may appear if there is space; otherwise upcoming events may be listed in the calendar. Signed letters to the Editor are always welcome and may be published. The *Reporter* is a bi-monthly newsletter distributed between the third and tenth day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Old City Wins Historic Designation!

We congratulate our neighbors in Old City for being awarded status as a local Historical District in the City of Philadelphia. On December 12, 2003 the Historical Commission voted to approve the designation, which Old City had been seeking for several years. Just as Society Hill has been protected by this designation since 1999, Old City's buildings and streetscape, old and new, commercial and residential, will be preserved for now and the future. We applaud this designation.

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

Coming Together

If you were among the 150 or so neighbors who turned out for the November 13 SHCA social at our local Commerce Bank, (see photos on page 26) you know how nice it is when we all come together for a common purpose. That evening, our purpose was simply to enjoy an evening chatting with friends over a glass of wine. Many thanks go to Gordon Thomas, Commerce Bank Branch Manager, for hosting us, and also to SHCA Board Member Tania Rorke and SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio for making the party such a success. As we head into a new year, I'd like to capture some of the energy we shared at that event and focus it on the tasks we have before us in 2004. There are many, and as an organization comprised of volunteers, we are eager to have your participation in addressing such issues as these:

Tourist Traffic Management

While winter gives us a respite from the steady stream of tourist vehicles that visit Society Hill, we know that spring will bring them back in force. In the past year, Duck Boats and double-decker buses have been added to the mix, joining the horse carriages and trolleys that have been here for years. While we heartily welcome visitors who want to enjoy our beautiful neighborhood, we also need to let our friends in City Hall know that some oversight is needed. Simply put, there should be some kind of plan for managing various routes of the different vehicles so that congestion and noise are kept at acceptable levels. (See "Hot Off the Press," page 5.) Councilman Frank DiCicco has tried to promote a "Master Plan" that would assign specific routes to the tours. He shares our feeling that it is time to pursue this again in 2004, and he'll have our full support when he does.

Washington Square

Many neighbors are excited about the transfer of Washington Square to the National Park Service. A gift from the production company of the film "National Treasure" and efforts of Board Members Sissie Lipton and Paul Boni have ensured that the Square's fountain will be renovated, continuing to be a focal point for the park. I hope that these initial steps will encourage more neighbors to get involved with Washington Square's renaissance.

Penn's Landing

As of this writing in mid-December, the City's plans for Penn's Landing are on hold, but SHCA continues to move forward with developing a community-driven vision for the riverfront. We must not let development on our doorstep be determined solely by commercial interests that have made no attempt to involve the community in their planning. For this reason, we have united with ten other community organizations to promote a more comprehensive plan for Penn's Landing and the surrounding areas. We expect that at some point in 2004, Society Hill and other neighborhoods will need to mobilize to fight for our right to have a say in what happens at Penn's Landing. I hope we can count on you to join us when we do.

New Year's Greetings to Everyone

Even if you aren't inclined to be an activist on these issues, please be sure to do your part by joining the SHCA as a dues-paying member. For only \$40 a year per household, you'll contribute to these and other important SHCA initiatives that will help make 2004 an excellent year for our neighborhood and for each and every one of us. I send you my heartiest greetings for a Happy New Year, and if we haven't yet met, I certainly hope we do sometime soon—perhaps at our first 2004 General Membership meeting on Wednesday, January 21 at the Sheraton Society Hill.



Liza Seltzer
SHCA president

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Snow Removal: Every Neighbor's Obligation

Winter came upon us rather early this year. In fact, our first snowfall arrived in early December, baring its teeth with a measurable amount of the real thing—requiring city services to move into high gear clearing roads and making them negotiable for vehicles, while the shoveling of city sidewalks, unfortunately, remains the responsibility of all property owners and/or managers.

We thank all Society Hill neighbors who shoveled the pathways on their property in a timely way following that surprising early snowfall, and we remind all others who were remiss in that responsibility that shoveling snow in front of your sidewalk is not merely a courtesy: it is a legal responsibility!

Whether you are a townhouse occupant or an apartment complex manager, you are responsible for shoveling snow on your property, making sidewalks safe for pedestrians. If you live in a townhouse corner property, please be aware that you must shovel a pathway all along your entire property line. Yes, that means around the corner from your front door. We know that's extra work, but it is your legal obligation—and it's the right thing to do!

If you fail to keep up your part of the bargain by shoveling snow on your property in a timely fashion, your Block Coordinator will give you a nudge, and remind you that you could end up with a lawsuit on your hands.

Two years ago, our neighbor's 78-year-old mother slipped on an icy sidewalk that had not been cleared. The woman broke all the bones in her wrist, requiring surgery, and she was then incapacitated and in pain for quite some time. Her lawsuit against the negligent owner who failed to shovel snow on his patch of ground resulted in an award of \$33,000.

We don't want this to happen to you or anyone else! Please arrange to have someone shovel your walk if you are unable to do so, or if you know you will be away during wintertime when a snowfall is likely to occur. We recommend establishing a hand-shake agreement with your immediate neighbors: if you or your nearby neighbors are away, you can shovel for the absent residents, and vice versa. It's what neighborliness is all about! And kudos to the unknown neighbor who shoveled a path on Phillips at Spruce Streets after our December storm. We need more like you!



Philadelphia Law: Shoveling Snow

According to Philadelphia Code 10-720, the owner, agent and/or tenants of any building or premises "shall clear a path not less than 30 inches in width on all sidewalks abutting the premises or building within six hours after the snow has ceased to fall."

The penalty for violating this can range from a minimum fine of \$25 to a maximum \$300 fine for each violation. Residents may call the Police Department Neighborhood Services Unit at: 215-685-3096 or 3097 to report sidewalks that are not shoveled.

If the storm occurs on a weekend, residents may call the Customer Service Affairs Unit Hotline at 215-686-5560. FYI: More information is available online at www.phila.gov/streets (click on Snow Emergency).

HOT OFF THE PRESS — QUACKING COMPETITORS

We recently learned that those amphibious open-sided "Ride the Ducks" vehicles which have waddled and quacked their way into and throughout our neighborhood last spring, summer and fall—transporting about 1,000 tourists daily—will soon have a competing tour company join the quack attack. "Super Ducks" a company that plans to operate vessels from Penn's Landing, intends to launch another vehicular series of tours in our area, to begin sometime soon this winter—consisting of four amphibious enclosed heated duck boats which will also transport people on both land and on water. But while "Ride the Ducks" operates out of vintage World War II boats that have been updated and modified, the soon-to-quack "Super Ducks" firm will be using brand-new, somewhat larger amphibious vehicles.

Pending approvals, these "Super Ducks" will tour near Independence Mall and travel through our historic district.

Both these companies are optimistic about the popularity of these tourist rides and they look forward to competing with each other. In fact, the owner of "Super Ducks" was quoted in the *Philadelphia Business Journal*, December 12 issue, saying, "The more ducks, the better." Whereas, in reality, the duck rides we have seen and heard have ruffled the feathers of many neighbors in our historic and relatively quiet Society Hill community.

We'll be on the alert as we look and we listen. And, if need be, we'll make our own noisy responses to those quacking vehicles. Stay tuned—for more fowl play?



Parking Congestion: Task Force Being Organized

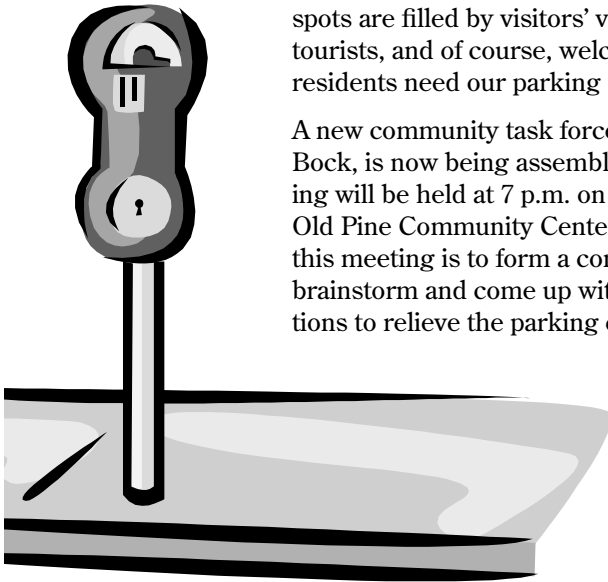
Many Society Hill residents who rely on finding parking spots by using their Residential Parking stickers (indicated by #5) have been complaining that on busy weekends or holidays there are no available parking spaces to be found anywhere in the neighborhood. Why? Often potential street parking spots are filled by visitors' vehicles. We love tourists, and of course, welcome them, but we residents need our parking spots.

A new community task force, led by Ms. Beaty Bock, is now being assembled. The first meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on February 4th at Old Pine Community Center. The purpose of this meeting is to form a committee that will brainstorm and come up with specific suggestions to relieve the parking congestion we tax-

paying residents often cope with—e.g. driving endlessly around the neighborhood until some one pulls out of a potential spot—often very late at night.

One promising idea being kicked around is to select a few city blocks, within each of Society Hill's four quadrants, which would be reserved only for residents whose vehicles are clearly marked with residential parking stickers. Another proposed idea is that a variety of sites within the neighborhood be given over specifically for residential parking—perhaps along some designated Front Street blocks that currently forbid vehicular parking. Additional ideas are certainly needed. When we've got some specific suggestions on hand, we can approach the Parking Authority and perhaps our City Councilman Frank DiCicco.

If you're interested in participating in this committee, please attend the February 4th session. Or if you have some ideas you'd like to share, Beaty asks that you contact her directly at 215-923-0603 or bdbock@earthlink.net, and let her know if you plan to attend the meeting.



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The Case of the Missing Street Signs

We city-dwellers are accustomed to an urban landscape dotted with street signs that both keep us safe and inform us, albeit not always in the most attractive way. We are so used to whatever signs we see routinely that they usually are not an issue...that is, until they disappear. Once signs are gone, we are left adrift and are even more vulnerable to possible accidents, while pedestrians and drivers may become disoriented or confused.

Street signs were removed from several Society Hill streets during last summer's filming of the movie "National Treasure." SHCA is now working with Councilman Frank DiCicco's office on replacing these signs, as a short-term goal. But the removal of these signs got the attention of neighbors, and there has been disagreement—not about whether but where they should be replaced. Questions arose. How many signs does a block need for safety and information? Where should these signs be placed? Should they be hung on existing

Franklin lampposts or should additional poles be erected? The task is more complicated than it seems at first glance. Striking a balance between safety and attractiveness is delicate. Opinions vary. Additionally, there are a number of agencies in Philadelphia that deal with signage, so coordination among them is essential.

A Society Hill task force has been formed, comprised of Block Coordinators who will address these issues and make suggestions to the City for long-term goals. Neighbors certainly should contact their Block Coordinators if they have opinions about this issue.

Meanwhile, the sorry saga of Delancey Street signage continues. A neighbor from the 200 block of Delancey was ticketed for unloading groceries in front of her own house because of posted "NO STOPPING" signs. What City agency is responsible for posting "NO STOPPING" instead of "NO PARKING" signs? Is this the City's latest method to collect more money?



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Good News: Three Bears Park

Councilman DiCicco Promises Funding

As reported previously, the play equipment and ground surfaces at Three Bears Park must be replaced, as they are deteriorating and do not meet current safety standards. The Friends of Three Bears Park are grateful to Councilman Frank DiCicco for committing funds to replace them. In addition, a Playground Committee has been formed to compare the quality and cost of play equipment and ground surfaces from two companies. Initial plans have already been presented to SHCA's Zoning and Preservation Committee. The plans, when they become more complete, will again be presented to the Committee, as well as to the neighborhood and Philadelphia's Historical Commission. It is the goal of The Friends to create a playground that meets the needs of the children in addition to being a restful place for adults.

When originally designed, Three Bears Park was an integral part of Society Hill's "Greenways" system, linking mid-block streets with open space and landscaping. The park was intended to be used by people of all ages. In fact, the park's playground was just a small part of the greater whole. In the last decade, however, Three Bears has become primarily a playground for youngsters from Society Hill and other nearby neighborhoods. Some families travel by car or public transit to the park because of its unique friendly and intimate character.

According to the Friends, cost for the new playground equipment is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Fortunately, the majority of funding will come from Councilman DiCicco's budget. Friends who raised \$6,000

at the annual Fall Festival are committed to raising the balance. In addition, Friends have raised funds to replace all of the bee-infested benches that were removed. The new benches will be installed when the playground structure and surfaces are replaced.

Many neighborhood businesses donated time and services to raise funds for the park at our recent Fall Festival. The Friends would like to thank the following: Dean Bielicki, Operating Partner at Johnny Rockets, who donated all the hamburgers and hotdogs; Alfredo Aguilar, owner of the recently opened Las Cazuelas Tam-Bien, located at 2nd and Bainbridge Streets, who donated Tamales; Jerry Roseman and Alia Bonna, owners of The Philadelphia Java Company, who donated and served coffee for the entire Festival, and John and Nikki Luciano, who donated sausage, pepper and onion grinders and an assortment of hoagies. Additional food donations came from Super Fresh, Famous Fourth Street Deli, Essene, Zeke's and Whole Foods. Other businesses donated gift certificates and services for our Silent Auction. Please thank these community businesses the next time you patronize them.

Also, special thanks to the many park Moms and Dads, too numerous to mention, who gladly donated their time, as well as all those, young and old, who attended and enjoyed our Festival. If you would like to become more involved with Three Bears Park and join a planning committee for our new projects, please contact Tania Rorke at 215-925-4544 or TRorke@aol.com.



Councilman DiCicco has committed funds to replace deteriorating play equipment and playground surfaces at Three Bears Park.

Dialog about Security at Independence Park Continues

In the last issue of this newsletter, we reported that the Independence Mall Business and Residents Coalition (IMBARC, of which our civic association is a member) presented to the National Park Service (NPS) a security plan for screening visitors to protect Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. This plan, developed by architect Laurie D. Olin, provides for security screening of visitors at the entrance to the new Liberty Bell Center and in a building adjacent to Independence Hall. The Olin plan was offered as an alternative to the NPS's proposed security measures, which IMBARC found to be less desirable aesthetically.

The NPS, however, rejected the Olin design because it is adamant about having one screening area, not two. A building, larger than the footprint of Independence Hall, will be constructed for this purpose on the southwest corner of 5th and Market Streets. The NPS has abandoned plans to build a tunnel under Chestnut Street. Instead park rangers will halt vehicular and pedestrian traffic at certain intervals during the day to escort tourists across the road. NPS has also modified the fencing at the Liberty Bell Center to address some of IMBARC's concerns. Both the NPS and IMBARC are continuing to review proposals.

Honoring Two Society Hill Founders

The Society Hill Civic Association will honor with permanent plaques two pioneers who helped spearhead Society Hill's rebirth, Edmund N. Bacon and Charles E. Peterson. We hope that these plaques will be available in early 2004, and an appropriate installation ceremony will be held at that time. We will alert neighbors to participate with us.

SHCA will honor Edmund Bacon and Charles Peterson with permanent plaques.

Charles E. Peterson one of the "founding fathers" of American preservation architecture, has a long list of honors and lifetime achievement awards forever affixed to his name. He was the first Resident Architect at Independence National Historical Park, which was a catalyst for Society Hill's renewal. He himself moved to Society Hill and restored two great houses, and he was an information resource to his "pioneering" neighbors. From 1957 to 1968 he served as a director of the Society Hill Civic Association, inspiring a grassroots preservation movement. He is perhaps best known for originating the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1933, which is the largest architectural archive of its type in the world and a priceless national resource.

Edmund N. Bacon is credited with shaping the look of Philadelphia more significantly than any other person since the city was founded by William Penn. As Executive Director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission from 1949 - 1970, his designs and plans are familiar to many Philadelphians today. Most appreciated in our community were his creation in the 1950s and 60s of mid-block pedestrian passageways, called "Greenways." These landscaped spaces and shared courtyards link our neighborhood's historic churches to Washington Square Park and Independence National Historical Park. He also encouraged the building of residential apartment complexes designed by architects of distinction, such as Society Hill Towers, designed by I.M. Pei.

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Talkin' Trash

Update on Trash Collection

Because so many Society Hill neighbors put out their trash early on Monday mornings for the city's scheduled early evening pickups, our civic association appealed to the Sanitation Department requesting that trash collection occur before 1 p.m. instead of after 5 p.m. The City replied that it cannot make that accommodation, because, simply put, it would cost too much. Therefore, the unpleasant news we report to you is that for now and for the next few years, Society Hill will continue its after 5 p.m. sanitation pickup service.

We know this is a problem for people who leave for work early in the morning and do not return home until the evening. Therefore, we suggest that you ask a neighbor to set out your trash after 3 p.m. when you know you cannot, and then reciprocate in some other manner.

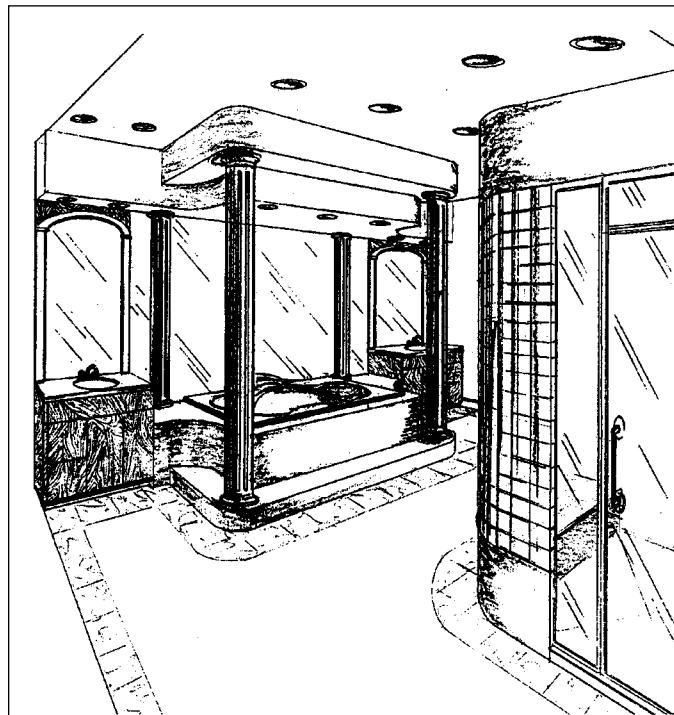
Please do what you can to prevent our neighborhood sidewalks from being littered with trash bundles all day long every Monday from 9 a.m. until pickup time, which can be as late as 8 or 9 p.m. Remember, the longer your trash sits out there, the more time some idle no-goodniks have to go peeping into those bags and bundles—which in the best of circum-

stances merely causes a messy looking streetscape; but in the worst of circumstances: well, let's not go to the subject of identity theft! In any case, we recommend the use of paper shredders, which can be purchased at any office supply store for about \$30—a worthwhile investment for your personal security.

Recycling: To Trash or Not to Trash

Philadelphia recycles mixed paper, metals and glass, and all households are provided with blue containers for this purpose. It only takes a few minutes to separate recyclable from non-recyclable waste, and future generations will thank you!

Place mixed paper beside your recycling bin in a paper bag or tied with a string. Place commingled materials (metal cans and glass bottles) in your blue recycling bucket. Mixed paper includes newspapers, junk mail, envelopes with or without windows, telephone books, magazines, catalogs, food boxes (e.g. cereal types). Commingled materials include metal and aluminum cans, empty aerosol cans without caps, empty paint cans (air dried), paint can lids (separated from the paint cans), glass bottles and jars. If you need information on the City's policy, visit their website: www.recycling.phila.gov.



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How Alert Neighbors Prevented a Crime

Never allow any servicemen into your home unless you have requested service or received a phone call from the company.

Last month an incident occurred on the L200 block of Locust Street that could have resulted in a crime. Three men posing as Comcast servicemen demanded admittance to a home for what they claimed was a necessary service call. Although the men wore Comcast sweatshirts, they appeared suspicious—they carried no ID, nor was a Comcast vehicle anywhere in sight. When our neighbors refused them entry, one man stalked off angrily, but the other two tried to force the door open. Fortunately, our neighbors prevailed and the impostors never entered the home. SHCA's Safe & Sound Committee and Town Watch went into action, as this was a scam or potential crime waiting to happen.

Never allow any individual or teams into your home who purport to be servicemen for Comcast (or other service company, such as PGW or PECO) unless you have received a phone call from the company alerting you to a scheduled service call at your residence; or you have personally scheduled a service call.

Always remember to check the peephole in your front door before allowing anyone to enter.

Here is what Comcast told us about procedures for their service calls:

- All Comcast residential service calls, whether inside or outside your property, are preceded by a phone call.
- All Comcast employees arrive in clearly marked Comcast vehicles.
- All Comcast employees wear uniforms with Comcast logos, including a photo ID chain.
- When an employee is terminated, Comcast attempts to collect these identifying logo items, but they may not always succeed.

To report a related problem or if you have a question, please call SHCA's Town Watch Chairman Michael Erdos at 215-629-5857 or Marilyn Appel of SHCA's Safe and Sound Committee at 215-922-2616.

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Society Hill Town Watch

Society Hill Town Watch thanks Society Hill Towers for their generous support during its period of revitalization. Every step of the way, Society Hill Towers has provided assistance and encouragement. They distributed the Town Watch recruitment letter door-to-door throughout their three buildings, provided a space for Town Watch meetings and created a secure area on their premises for the pick-up and storage of Town Watch gear. They even made a donation to help Town Watch buy customized T-shirts, which will increase visibility during warm-weather patrols and foster team spirit year round! Special thanks to Beverly Sherman, General Manager, and Brett Scioli, Director of Security, for their accessibility, their responsiveness, and their willingness to work creatively with Society Hill Town Watch in this collaborative and civic-minded enterprise. You have enabled us to hit the ground running!

To join Society Hill Town Watch or to find out more information, call 267-251-0749 or send an e-mail message to Michael Erdos, at michael.erdos@phila.gov.

REMINDER

Lights On After Dark Help Prevent Crime!

Front door lights brighten our neighborhood and ensure security! Lights should go on at dusk. But, if you've misplaced the directions on how to turn on your automatic light timer, the good news is that Martha Levine can secure the needed information for you. Just contact her at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@aol.com



CLASSICAL YOGA at Garland of Letters Bookstore



SKY Foundation has been teaching Classical Yoga at Garland of Letters Bookstore, 527 South Street for more than twenty years.

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A new introductory series begins the first Tuesday or Thursday of each month.

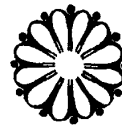
TUESDAY 7-8 PM
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A single class in the first week of the month is \$15.

The fee to attend the four week series is \$40.

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Six Months Later

The National Constitution Center

“The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen”

Justice Louis Brandeis



Since its opening with much fanfare last July 4th, the National Constitution Center has been a hit with tourists and Philadelphians alike. On an average day some 3,000 visitors, many of them school groups, roam through handsome exhibition halls beginning with an exciting presentation, “Freedom Rising,” in the 350-seat Kimmel Theater in-the-round.

They delight in meeting each of the large-as-life statues representing Constitutional delegates.



Founding Fathers: Created by Julie Lawrence, a freelance artist looking for additional assignments. If you would like to order an original historical caricature, or any other caricature from a photograph, for a unique reasonably priced gift, contact SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio at 215-629-1288 or mattdejulio@aol.com

The introductory presentation and the museum’s wide variety of exhibits leave visitors of all ages with a better comprehension of our 200-year constitutional history.

The Center’s theme, “We the People,” is conveyed in many of the murals, the quotations on the walls, and the interactive exhibits. Go to the information desk, for example, and you see not far away the words of Daniel Webster, “One Country, one Constitution, one Destiny.” (1857)

Older children will enjoy the hands-on exhibits, such as, “Ask a Senator.” (Although we think this exhibit needs to update its choices, since Democrat Dale Bumpers and Republican Robert Dole have since retired from the U.S. Senate.) When asked what would Framers think of the Senate today, Bumpers responds that they would be appalled and Dole responds, somewhat flippantly, “I wasn’t there.” Or you can touch a face on a huge mural depicting hundreds of portraits of various Americans, men and women, old and young, famous and less well-known: John Lewis, Wade Hampton, Pauli Murray, and Bella Abzug, for example.

Visitors young and old can add their views to a series of message boards with challenging questions, such as: “What does it mean to be an American?” Or, “Has the U.S. established justice?” You can learn who was permitted to vote in various historical eras—for example, 1765 when we were still colonies, or 1966 or 1975. And you have your choice of state.

A compelling quotation from Justice Louis Brandeis sums up the challenge of the Constitution Center: “The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen.” It would be hard for any American to leave the Center without renewed pride in our history and hopes for our nation, as well as appreciation for the Center’s exceptional design.

THE BOOKSHELF

We the People—Then and Now

Society Hill Remains Constitutionally Sound

One soggy May more than two centuries ago, a group of men arrived in our neighborhood, then called Society's Hill, intent on rescuing the American Revolution. These distinguished visitors located lodgings in boarding houses along Market Street and on 2nd Street above the river. Some quartered in hostels, such as the Indian Queen on 4th Street, often crowded two to a room. Massachusetts' representative Elbridge Gerry took a house on Spruce Street and sent for his family. Days were spent working at the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall) while evenings found the delegates relaxing at local establishments like City Tavern or one of 21 other pubs on 2nd Street.

Amazingly, this was the first time a group of people wrote down rules to create a nation from scratch. And even more remarkable, this process occurred right here—in our own backyard—offering local armchair historians, adults and children alike, an unprecedented opportunity to examine history “up close and personal.”

Throughout a sultry Philadelphia summer, as they endured heat and humidity, their arguments—by turns boring, passionate and brilliant—would give American government a unique and lasting shape. When they finished their work four months later, the United States would have a new Constitution, a blueprint, however imperfect, for turning the ideals of the Revolution into reality.

To learn more about this fascinating time, we recommend you start by reading Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia*. For younger readers, we suggest *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution* by Jean Fritz. Then stroll the same streets as trod by these extraordinary patriots, visit the churches where they worshiped and even pay respect at the local tombs of five signers of the Constitution at the Christ Church Burial Ground, located at 5th and Arch Streets. Visit Independence Hall again and finish your history lesson at Philadelphia's new jewel, the National Constitution Center.

**Miracle at Philadelphia:
The Story of the Constitutional Convention,
May to September 1787**

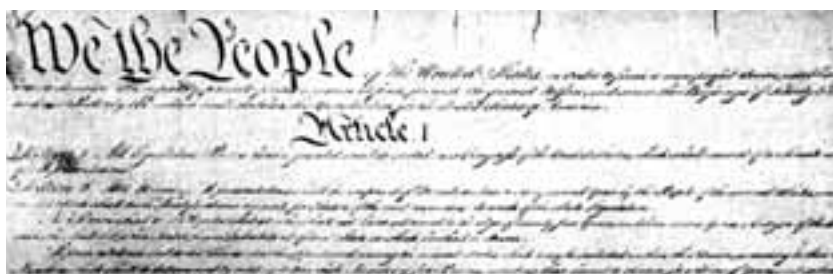
By Catherine Drinker Bowen
Little Brown and Company, reprinted 1986
(available at the Independence Branch
of the Free Library)

Catherine Drinker Bowen's classic history, *Miracle at Philadelphia*, superbly captures the personalities involved during the unforgettable summer of 1787, and, more broadly, what life was like in Philadelphia in the late 18th-century. She tells our nation's greatest peacetime story in terms that will engage the average adult reader while satisfying the critical historian. Additionally, Bowen gives an interesting social commentary of this period of American history through the eyes of foreign visitors. Critics have called it the most readable of all accounts of the Philadelphia Convention.


**The Constitution for Young Readers
Shh! We're Writing the Constitution**

By Jean Fritz, illustrations by Tomi dePaola,
(for grades 2-5)
Puffin, 1998
(available at the Independence Branch
of the Free Library)

With wit and accuracy, Jean Fritz introduces young readers to the delegates at the 1787 convention in *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution*. Fritz goes behind the scenes for a good-humored history lesson, brought to life by Tomi dePaola's quirky illustrations. Neatly woven into the discussion of what the Framers were doing and how they did it are some wonderful gossipy tidbits that are sure to catch children's imaginations and make the events come alive for them. Fritz draws out the personalities of the people at the Convention, the sights and smells, as well as curiosities of the surrounding Old City and Society Hill streets—culminating in the serious purpose that led them to achieve compromise and found a nation.





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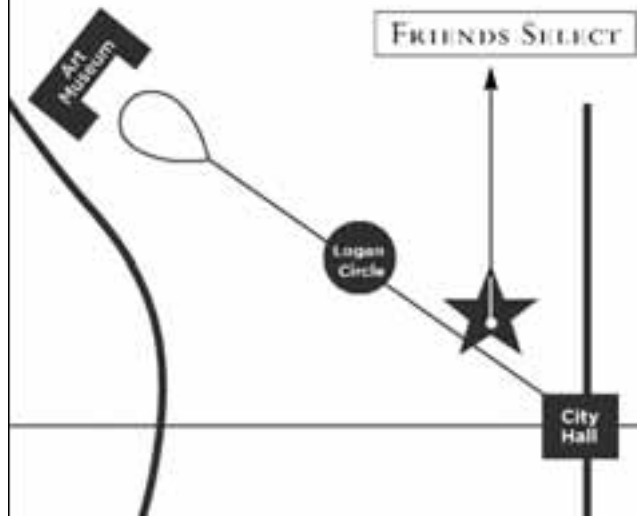
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Z O N I N G & H I S T O R I C P R E S E R V A T I O N

Society Hill is one of the most historic residential neighborhoods in the United States. Its extraordinary rebirth in recent decades was accomplished within the framework of overall redevelopment controls, based on preservation guidelines that helped create and protect this community we all now enjoy. In 1999 Society Hill was designated an "historic district"—pursuant to Philadelphia's Historic Preservation Ordinance, providing a level of regulatory oversight for all buildings within the district.

We are pleased that most property owners in the neighborhood take their home maintenance responsibilities seriously. And, of course, SHCA's Zoning & Historic Preservation (ZHP) Committee provides advice to property owners about exterior alterations or demolitions that can best be accomplished to protect the authenticity and value of our streetscapes. That is why we urge all homeowners to present any alteration, addition or demolition plans to the ZHP Committee prior to seeking approvals from either the Historical Commission or the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). We invite nearby residents to our meetings so those most immediately affected may be made aware of changes that might be in the works. Homeowners can arrange presentations to the ZHP Committee by contacting ZHP Chair Paul Boni at paulboni@bonilaw.com, or SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio at MattDeJulio@aol.com or 215-629-1288.

Below are news items or properties with which the ZHP Committee has recently been involved:

Protecting the Quality of Our Neighborhood

At the request of the Old City Civic Association, the ZHP Committee joined in Old City's objection to a developer seeking a variance for a huge new residential development in Old City. The letter the ZHP submitted to the Zoning Board contained the following text:

Society Hill should continue to be a quaint, quiet neighborhood, as it has been for the past several decades. We have had a stable population, a strong sense of community, and been able to benefit from the historic features of our neighborhood (and even show them off to tourists). Our property values have increased and Society Hill is one of the premier residential city neighborhoods in the country. However, with increased development all around us, our neighborhood is threatened. We are becoming increasingly impacted by the traffic, crime and congestion from South Street, from Old City, and soon, from Penn's

Landing. This means we will be bombarded from three sides. William Penn planned this City to be a "green country town." If we do not protect our existing quality of life, then our town will lose its character, and its draw to new residents. We will lose our appeal if we do not protect it. We are in favor of development if it meets with the Code. If, however, it needs a variance, one should be granted only if a hardship can be shown.

Helping Neighbors Understand the Importance of Historic Preservation

Recently a prospective homeowner expressed frustration at the administrative bureaucracy that exists in authorizing changes to Society Hill houses (even aside from our user-friendly ZHP Committee!) The ZHP Committee provided the neighbor with information and guidance about how to navigate the municipal offices, and added the following sentiments:

We understand your frustration with the bureaucracy. Here's a bit of a pep talk for you: most people move to Society Hill because of the historic feel of the neighborhood; and minding the character of the neighborhood by keeping an eye on appropriate changes helps to keep Society Hill from becoming just another place. That's why the laws are in place. As you work through the process, please remember that most people are simply trying their best to do what is right. Living downtown, especially in Philly, is different than living in the 'burbs – but, all in all, we think the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Changes to Properties in the Neighborhood

These past two months the ZHP Committee was pleased to support proposed exterior changes to 326 Lawrence Court and an expansion of the rear part of 306 Cypress Street. We express much thanks to these homeowners for staying true to the guidelines of historic preservation.

—PAUL BONI, CHAIR

UPDATE: "WILL SMITH" PROPERTY

Although the so-called "Will Smith Property" on Front Street between Pine and Lombard Streets is still undeveloped, the good news, according to the development company, Portman Associates, is that they see a general economic improvement nationwide.

Portman is encouraged by an availability of construction workers now that the football stadium has been completed and interest rates are still favorable. New Market Neighbors, a group of residents who live near the property, worked with these developers to

ensure that the result of the development would be a pleasing neighborhood asset. Portman assures the New Market Neighbors that their intent is still to build a hotel/condo combination facility on the site. But, at this writing, no date for the start of the project has been set.

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A Matter of Principal

This article, featuring Jeanne Meredith, the new principal at St. Mary's Inter-parochial School, continues the Reporter's series focusing on the three elementary schools located in Society Hill.

You can spot her weekday mornings at the corner of 5th and Locust Streets, keeping watch as girls in plaid and boys in navy and white dash by, chatting with parents, stepping into the morning rush to guide students safely across the busy intersection when the crossing guard isn't there. And no matter how hectic the early-morning arrival becomes, Jeanne Meredith, principal of St. Mary Inter-parochial School, makes time to greet students with a hug, a smile or a cheery "Ready for a great day?" as they race toward the stained-glass entryway and their classrooms.

In the year since she took over leadership of the 241-student school in Society Hill, members of the school community say Mrs. Meredith has infused it with renewed energy and purpose. She has introduced new programs, such as after-school art classes and technology training for faculty, and improved the appearance of the building with a top-to-bottom professional cleaning. Recently she unveiled the new library that was revamped with the help of parent volunteers.

St. Mary's, founded in 1782 by the Jesuit fathers of Old St. Joseph's Church, is known as "the mother school" of Catholic parochial education. Destroyed by fire in 1902, it was rebuilt in 1968, again with a distinction: With students drawn from seven Catholic parishes, it was the first "inter-parochial" school in the nation. Today its student body, in kindergarten through 8th grade, comes from 46 Catholic parishes in Philadelphia, its suburbs and South Jersey.

Jim Basile of South Philadelphia has four children at the school. "I see in Mrs. Meredith a strong leader and a strong administrator," he said. "She really cares for the kids and wants them to be their best."

Her goal for St. Mary's is as straightforward as she is. "I want us to be the best school in the Diocese," she said. To that end, Mrs. Meredith is on a campaign to make the school more visible, in the hope that our local community and the school's alumni will respond with offers of financial and technical support. And she was thrilled at how responsive local businesses were last spring in sponsoring the school's first Walkathon, an event that raised nearly \$8,000.



St. Mary Inter-parochial School Principal Jeanne Meredith with two of her 5th-grade students.

Also last year, two scientists from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital offered to teach biology to 7th- and 8th-graders, an example of the kind of community support Mrs. Meredith is eager to nurture.

Amidst the serious work of leading a school with an illustrious heritage and a challenging mission, Mrs. Meredith manages to have fun. She loves standing on the corner in the morning and joining students for recess on the school's rooftop play area. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, she treats herself to time in the classrooms. "My favorite thing is interacting with the children and the teachers," Mrs. Meredith said. "I would much rather be talking to a child than making up a schedule."

Mrs. Meredith was a senior at St. Hubert High School in Northeast Philadelphia when the call to academia came. "The Diocese had no teachers and they were recruiting us out of high school to teach," she remembered. "I was 18 years old, teaching 67 5th-graders."

She went to school nights and weekends, earning a Bachelor's degree in sociology from LaSalle University and a Master's degree in education from Holy Family College.

"We are blessed to have her," said Father Louis P. Bellopede, pastor-delegate in charge of the school. "This is a vocation for her, a way of life, more than just a job."

"We're the best-kept secret in Society Hill. But not for long," said Mrs. Meredith.

South Street Comings & Goings

The Community Advisory Council was disbanded. The South Street Renaissance Business Alliance, an independent business organization, was organized. The South Street Alliance brings together businesses, residents and government officials.

Much has occurred along the South Street corridor recently. The South Street Headhouse District, a municipal authority similar to, but smaller than, the Center City District, has undergone several changes. For example, last year its Community Advisory Council was disbanded by a decision made by the District's chairman of the board. This Council represented numerous communities affected by South Street—including Society Hill, Queen Village, Washington Square West, Bella Vista and others. Organized on the recommendation of Councilman Frank DiCicco, this Council (a committee of the District) met monthly, as each neighborhood association sent a representative ensuring that nearby residential communities could collectively have its single vote on the District's Board of Directors. Thus, this collective voice has been silenced.

Simultaneously, frustrated businesses have established their own independent organization, calling themselves the South Street Renaissance Business Alliance. This group claims that it wants to reverse South Street's negative image—which, incidentally, was the major purpose for creating the District about a decade ago. In addition, last month the District's Executive Director, Barry Cassidy, was fired with very little warning—leaving many entrepreneurs and businesses frustrated and angered at the District. The Renaissance group has since distributed several e-mails and messages, from its own published newsletter, stating that the District is too strongly influenced by neighborhoods and government—and that Renaissance merchants must bring the Street back under its own control.

Renaissance merchants plan to initiate and publicize new annual events designed to be family-oriented and fun. For example, at the time of this writing prior to the holiday season and taken from their own marketing publicity materials: "Dozens of South Street's popular watering holes will donate a portion of their

sales to Toys for Tots." This is well-meaning, but can sales coming only from alcoholic beverages be truly considered a "family-oriented" campaign? Also, the Renaissance group is planning to schedule a three-hour Mummers Parade on South Street, proposed as an alternative to Mardi Gras—on the Sunday before Mardi Gras! New Year's Day Mummers Parades are, of course, a loved Philly tradition, but do we want a second Mummers Parade so shortly following New Year's?

But the good news is that under the "government influence," with thanks to Councilman DiCicco and State Senator Fumo's office, South Street events are being reviewed regularly by a more inclusive organization that meets for ongoing dialog at least four times every year. The South Street Alliance, under the auspices of the City's Managing Director Phillip Goldsmith, is made up of participants representing different groups—including the District's business leaders, as well as a spokesperson from each of the nearby residential associations. Bernice Hamel represents Society Hill, Colleen Puckett represents Queen Village and Judy Applebaum represents Washington Square West. Also at the table are Carl Engelke, aide to Senator Fumo; Mike O'Brien, chief of staff to State Representative Marie Lederer, and Lt. John Walker of the South Street Police Mini-Station, and, of course, Councilman Frank DiCicco.

There is cautious optimism that dialog among these mixed groups who come with differing agendas and often opposing goals will somehow reach a point of agreement. Of course, neighbors want to support Toys for Tots, but not if that means creating an alternative "mini Mardi Gras" that promotes drinking on the Street. The District, meanwhile, proudly announced at the December conference table of the City's Managing Director that it has established a new official Board seat recognizing the importance of the Renaissance merchants. We may ask why it does not reexamine the need to hear the voices of nearby residents and reinstate the Community Advisory Council? Shouldn't *all* voices be heard?

Let's be thankful for small favors, though. The South Street District and the Renaissance group have officially called a moratorium on Mardi Gras.

Happy New Year Everybody!!

What's Next?

There's a new bright spot at 223 South Street, right next door to Chef's Market. **Next** is the latest addition to Philly's hot BYOB dining scene, offering world-class cuisine combining flavors and textures from American, European and Asian traditions. This is not your usual cramped, dark BYOB. The room is bright and modern with huge windows. Every aspect of this restaurant has flair and gets high marks—the airy space, the fine service, but most important, the excellent food and moderate prices.

The owners, Rich Podulka and Jason Taylor, plus Executive Chef Terry Owens and their staff are experienced professionals, with resumés from some of the City's most distinguished restaurants. Their combined effort has resulted in Next, where the *Reporter's* editorial team enjoyed its annual holiday dinner on December 18th. It was a resounding success, and we suggest that Next is the next best place to have a good meal! The restaurant is open for dinner nightly except Monday from 5:30 p.m. and also Sunday brunch. Major credit cards accepted. For reservations, call 215-629-8688.





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Do you consider yourself a caring person who wants to help solve some of our region's challenges? If so, perhaps Philadelphia Cares, a nonprofit organization founded in 1994, may be of interest. This award-winning organization is launching its Social Change Leaders program to train and support volunteers in addressing social, educational and environmental problems affecting the region. Philadelphia Cares is looking for 25 concerned citizens for this course, to be held in seven three-hour sessions over a six-month period. Philadelphia's Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB) has been working with this organization to help develop the curriculum. To learn more, please visit www.philacares.com. Direct questions to Janice Lion, Director of Programs at 215-564-4544 or janice@philacares.com. ...Also, if this article engaged your interest, please let Philadelphia Cares know that you learned about this leadership program through the *Society Hill Reporter*.

Youth Aid Panel Needs You!

Philadelphia's Youth Aid Panel (YAP) needs a few good men and women. YAP is a volunteer program overseen by the District Attorney's office—geared to keeping kids out of jail and free from crime. Motivated adults are trained by the DA's office to work with police. Society Hill volunteers will work with the 6th Police District at 11th and Winter Streets interviewing clients. (Clients are perpetrators of minor offenses, such as shoplifting, vandalism, weapons violations, who are carefully screened by the DA's office.) Volunteer YAPs interview clients and their families with a view to helping these young people reform before they move on to more serious crimes. A contract drawn up for the client by the YAP lasts three months, and young offenders are charged to do community service, write essays, and, if appropriate, make restitution. If interested, please contact Jerry Ludden and/or Peg Robb at 215-686-6305 or 215-686-6310. Visit their website at www.phila.gov/districtattorney/community/youthaid.



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500 S. Front Street **\$1,100,000**
Virtual Tour# 4165749. Amazing 3BR Townhouse w/3 baths, family room, garage, rear yard + stunning river views. Red oak floors, cherry cabinetry, all new mechanicals + marble/granite baths.

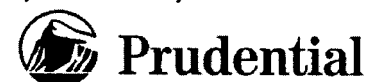
440 Spruce **\$759,900**
Virtual Tour# 425855. Lovely historically styled 4 bedroom, 3 bath home plus den, cherry hardwood floors, 2 fireplaces, 2-zoned central air, crown moldings, newer kitchen, 2-car garage and so much more!

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402-06 S. 2nd **\$439,900**
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We Welcome New Neighbor PhillyCarShare

“Why own when you can borrow?” This is the motto of PhillyCarShare, our newest neighbor in Society Hill. But what is PhillyCarShare, you may ask, and how does it work?

PhillyCarShare is a nonprofit, member organization dedicated to reducing automobile dependence in the Philadelphia region through community-based car sharing. It offers members the use of hybrid gas-electric vehicles throughout several locations in Philadelphia. In our neighborhood PhillyCarShare is located at Independence Place and Society Hill Towers. The program adds to the city’s livability by reducing the number of cars on the road, as each PhillyCarShare vehicle removes approximately 22 private cars from our community, since participating members often sell their vehicles or avoid purchasing new ones.

Some people say that they don’t need a car in the city, or that PhillyCarShare isn’t for them. But consider, for example, the need to pick up a friend or relative from the airport? A round-trip cab ride from Society Hill to Philadelphia International costs \$40 plus tip. With PhillyCarShare, the cost for a 2004 Toyota Prius wagon for two and a half hours is about \$16. Think of those savings alone—and then consider the occasional shopping trip to Home Depot for bulky items or a trip across town to the Art Museum. PhillyCarShare gives you the freedom to go where you want whenever you want, with 24-hour access seven days a week and the flexibility to choose the type of vehicle you want on any given day.

Here’s an example of a satisfied participating PhillyCarShare family. Jody and Marc Sage-man live in Society Hill Towers, the site of PhillyCarShare’s newest location. They donated their 1992 Subaru SVX to Philabundance last June, because, according to Jody: “We realized that we were paying enormous overhead, mostly parking and insurance, for something that we needed only because our son attends school in Bala Cynwyd. The idea of buying a new car, easily equal to a couple of years of private school tuition, seemed crazy to us. There had to be a better way, and we found it—it’s PhillyCarShare.” Now Jody drives a PhillyCarShare vehicle to Bala Cynwyd two afternoons a week when she picks up Joseph and two other children. In exchange, he gets five rides in the carpool. Occasionally, Jody adds an additional hour to shop at Whole Foods before picking up

the kids. “For about \$25 a week, my routine transportation problems are solved! But more importantly,” she adds, “PhillyCarShare has improved my quality of life. I am walking more and contributing less to traffic and pollution. I think that if more people who live and work in the city start sharing cars, we will have cleaner air, reduced traffic, more money to put into other parts of the local economy, and less justification for building so many big ugly garages.”

Interested in becoming a member of PhillyCarShare? All you have to do is pay a one-time \$25 application fee plus a fully refundable \$350 security deposit. Then, for just \$10 a month you can use these vehicles at anytime for just \$3.90 per hour and 39 cents per mile. PhillyCarShare covers premium insurance, reserved parking, maintenance, and even gas at no additional cost. Think of the savings in car payments and garage parking. You can easily reserve a car at anytime by an automated phone system or the Internet. Businesses get a special rate.

For trips up to about 120 miles, car sharing easily beats the cost of daily rentals, and for longer trips PhillyCarShare members receive discounted rates through its agreement with Enterprise Rental Car.

PhillyCarShare Executive Director Tanya Seaman says, “We’re interested in reducing car use in the city and, by extension, reducing pollution and freeing up parking spaces. Car sharing promotes use of public transit, walking and biking, and benefits the neighborhood as it raises property values and promotes a more environmentally sustainable planet.”

For more information about how you can join PhillyCarShare, call 215-386-0988 or visit www.phillycarshare.org.



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Introducing our Newest *Reporter* Team Member



We are happy to introduce Andrea Layden as a new team member of the *Society Hill Reporter*. Andrea and Dan, her husband, have enjoyed living and planting their roots in Society Hill for the past three years, although both were born and raised in Delaware County. Professionally, Andrea spent eight years as an insurance adjuster with State Farm Insurance

Company, but she switched to a part-time schedule following the birth of daughter Lucia, born August 21, 2003 and named after singer Luciano Pavarotti. Andrea is a 1994 graduate of Widener University, with a B.S. in Finance and three Varsity letters in softball. A second-generation Italian-American, she and Dan love to travel and were married on September 4, 2002 in Florence, Italy. They are now applying for Italian-American dual citizenship. Andrea—whose name in Italian is pronounced “Ondrea” rather than “Ann’drea”—would love for any of her St. James Court neighbors to greet her. You’ll recognize her if she’s with a beautiful baby who answers to your “Ciao, Lucia.”

P.S. If you enjoyed reading the article about PhillyCarShare, we’d like you to know that it was Andrea who wrote it.

Neighbors Gather for Holiday Party

On November 13th Society Hillers enjoyed a social evening hosted by our neighbor Commerce Bank, at 2nd and Lombard Streets. The turnout was great, as we met and mingled with many newcomers, as well as “old-timers.” We thank Commerce Bank for their warm hospitality. Here’s a small sampling of some smiling folks who partied with us:



Reporter columnist David Woods chats with Karen and Tony Biddle.



Jeffrey Heit, Bari Shor and SHCA Vice President Martha Levine.



Rosemarie and George Scarpulla, Carole LeFavre-Rochester and SHCA Vice President Bernice Hamel.

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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.

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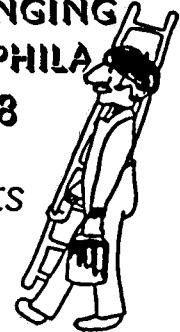
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Welcome Basket News

50 New Homeowners Receive Baskets in 2003

Don't believe everything you hear about Philadelphia losing its residents—at least not in Center City or Society Hill. As a result of the many newcomers to our neighborhood, a long list of residents will soon be scheduled for a basket delivery (by appointment only). However, we need help in identifying new home and condo owners. Each year 50 baskets, containing fresh foods, information and gift certificates to area restaurants, theaters, salons, and shops, are presented to new home and condo owners. We thank all of the generous businesses who continue to make our baskets a substantial and well-received gift. In addition, we appreciate the participation of several new businesses to our long list of contributors: Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia Theater Company, James Scott AID Interior Design; and Pearls by Leah.

If you are new as of 2003 and haven't yet received your Welcome Basket, please contact Coordinator Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@aol.com.

WELCOME BASKET DONORS

Coffee Shops

Olde City Coffee, 221 Church, Reading Terminal Market
 Starbuck's Coffee Inc., 347 South Street

Food Stores

Chef's Market, 231 South Street
 Whole Foods Market, 929 South Street
 ShopRite, 29 Snyder Avenue
 Super Fresh Food Markets, 5th & Pine Streets


Museums/Theaters/Entertainment

Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 36th & Walnut Sts
 Arden Theatre Co., 40 N. 2nd Street
 Ghost Tours of Philadelphia, 215-413-1997
 Independence Seaport Museum, 211 S. Columbus Blvd.
 The Kimmel Center, Broad & Spruce Streets
 Lights of Liberty, 6th & Chestnut Streets
 Mann Center for the Performing Arts, 52nd & Parkside
 National Liberty Museum, 321 Chestnut Street
 New Jersey State Aquarium, Camden, NJ
 Pennsylvania Ballet, 1101 S. Broad St.
 Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble, Old Pine, 400 Pine Street
 Philadelphia Shakespeare Festival, 2111 Sansom Street
 Philadelphia Theater Company, 1714 Delancey Street
 Philomel Concerts, 215-487-2344
 The Prince Movie Theater, Broad & Chestnut Streets
 Ritz Theater, 2nd & Walnut Streets
 Society Hill Dance Academy, 409 S. 2nd Street
 Society Hill Playhouse, 507 S. 8th Street
 TLA Video, 517 S. 4th Street
 Wilma Theatre, 265 S. Broad Street

Restaurants

Bridget Foy's South Street Grill, 200 South Street
 City Tavern, 138 S. 2nd Street
 Creperie Beau Monde, 624 S. 6th Street
 Cosi, 215 Lombard Street
 Deux Cheminees, 1221 Locust Street
 Fork, 306 Market Street

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 Knave of Hearts, 230 South Street
 Mustard Greens, 622 S. 2nd Street
 Overtures Restaurant, 609 E. Passyunk Avenue
 Panorama Ristorante, 14 N. Front Street
 Sfizzio Restaurant, Society Hill Towers, 237 St. James Place
 Tiramisu, 528 S. 5th

Salons

Brescia Salon, 118 South Street
 East End Salon, 219 Arch Street
 John Romano's, Curtis Center
 Pileggi on the Square, 717 Walnut Street
 Salon @5th, 316 S. 5th Street

Specialty Foods

Dairy Queen, 514 South Street
 Homemade Cookies by Roz, 510 S. 5th Street
 Metropolitan Bakery, 1114 Pine Street and 126 Market Street
 Mom's Bake at Home Pizza, 241 S. 6th Street
 Mums and Pops Confectionery, 932 Locust Street
 Pink Rose Pastry Shop, 630 S. 4th Street
 Rita's Water Ice, 239 South Street
 Zeke's Deli, 318 S. 5th Street

Specialty Shops

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NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

A COLUMN BY DAVID WOODS

Delores Brisbon

It was wily old Prussian chancellor Otto Von Bismarck who, in the 1880s, invented the notion of retirement at age 65—a time when the average life expectancy was less than 50 years. Today, more than a century later, we still stick to that arbitrary age for calling it quits, putting ourselves out to pasture. But Delores Brisbon is having none of it. “I’ve been on the verge of retirement a few times,” she says with a chuckle. But now she’s busier than ever.

A nurse by training, Delores left Alabama for Philadelphia in 1958 to take up a position as head nurse at the University of Pennsylvania where she eventually became chief operations officer and a strategic planner. There, she found time to acquire a master’s degree in organization and development. Between 1979 and 1986, Delores served as the Chief Operating Officer at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, with responsibility for a \$300 million annual budget and over 4,000 staff.



Deciding to retire in 1986, she immediately started her own healthcare consulting company, Brisbon & Associates, an enterprise in which she was aided for a full ten years by both her children, Edgar, now 48; and Nancy, now 39. Two years after the business got underway, Delores’s husband James was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

The pair moved to Independence Place in 1996. “We looked at 26 condos before moving here,” she says. And as a walker—the Brisbons don’t own a car—Delores says she finds the proximity to her church, Penn’s Landing, markets, Ritz theaters, and the Academy of Music a major benefit.

But it’s in her current “retirement” that Delores Brisbon has reached a fitting apex to a long career of service and achievement: she is Chair of the Mother Bethel Foundation, which is in the process of raising \$20 million to build the Richard and Sarah Allen Center at 6th and Lombard Streets. The Center, named for an African American former slave who influenced the founders of the United States, will house a museum, interactive learning center and archives. According to the Mother Bethel Foundation’s brochure, “the Center will tell about the contribution of African Americans to the American way of life. It will tell a story of challenge, opportunity, {and} determination ... and will chronicle the story of Richard Allen, a man whose beliefs, faith and self-determination changed the course of history.”

Delores, who also serves on the boards of directors of Eastern University, the Community College of Philadelphia, and Mercy Health System, says: “I’m blessed. Service to others and relationships are the two things that bring the greatest joy to me.”

This public-spirited noteworthy neighbor describes herself as a private person, but not a shy one. And she’s certainly not a retiring one, either.

**Delores Brisbon
is not shy —
or retiring!**

The Green Tree Perpetual Assurance Company

Episode IV • The Birth of Perpetual Insurance

Despite the promising start of The Mutual Assurance Company in 1784, within two years the Company began to face difficulties. In 1786 The Green Tree wrote only forty-six new policies and in the following year only eleven. Treasurer George Emlen personally advanced one-third of a promised loan to John Harrison in the name of the Company, funds of The Green Tree being unavailable. In December 1788, the Trustees of The Green Tree were forced to foreclose their first mortgage, as John Phillips was unable to make the payments.

The Trustees enacted new belt-tightening measures to keep the Company operating, implementing a system of fines for their own absence or tardiness. These fines served to increase attendance and presumably were used to defray the expenses of their meetings at taverns, the usual site of business meetings in eighteenth-century Philadelphia. In January of 1788, clerk John Jennings suggested that his salary be reduced and that henceforward he be paid in proportion to the amount of insurance written. He subsequently received 7s. 6p. per survey and policy. As clerk, Jennings sent out notices of meetings, took applications for insurance, gave orders for surveys, accepted earnest money for policies, kept accounts, wrote policies, and carried out the various orders of the Trustees, such as sending out notices to trim trees.

Owing to The Green Tree's careful inspection of risks and the success of the City's fire-fighting system, the Company suffered no losses until 1792, and from 1792 through 1800 only £1,355 in damages were paid. The first loss, at Mordecai Lewis's house on Market Street, set the pattern for dealing with future such losses. The Trustees appointed a committee to view the damage and have it repaired. The repairs amounted to £50 and were paid from the Company's funds.

In an attempt to increase income—and no doubt encouraged by their extraordinarily low loss experience—the Trustees of The Green Tree broadened their underwriting policy to expand the limits of insurance they would allow on any one property,

such as James Galbraith's home for \$16,000 and the west wing of Pennsylvania Hospital for \$9,333.33. Increased building in the City also expanded in the 1790s, and speculative builders were among the new policyholders of The Green Tree.

Throughout the 1790s, mutual fire insurance companies were forming in other states based on the successful methods of The Contributionship and The Green Tree in Philadelphia. The Baltimore Equitable Society (1794) and The Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia (1794) both adopted their management structure, surveying practices and, at least initially, the concept of seven-year term renewable policies.

By the end of the 1790s, financial progress for the new country had the unfortunate side effect of placing an unexpected burden on The Green Tree. Although American shipping and foreign commerce had increased substantially throughout the decade, they suffered from the war between France and Great Britain, which placed American vessels at risk while carrying goods from both sides. Attacks on American shipping by both countries, and the fear of war with France, resulted in demands for an American naval force.

To raise the revenue for a navy, new taxes were enacted, including a duty placed on certain legal documents printed on vellum, parchment, and paper, such as bills of exchange, bank notes, naturalization certificates, insurance company stock, and marine insurance policies. This act, implemented in July 1798, was amended the following year to include fire insurance policies. Under this law, titled the Stamp Act of March 31, 1799, any insurance policy under \$500 was assessed 25 cents, and any policy over \$500 was assessed \$1.

As it happened, the passage of the Stamp Act coincided with the end of the second seven-year term of the first group of The Green Tree's policies. By this time, it was apparent that renewals were all but automatic, since cancellations had totaled only 37 in the entire 15 years of the Company's existence. Although no additional deposits were charged at the time of renewal, merely a small clerical fee, the renewal process



itself was irksome, both for the policyholder, who had to remember to bring his policy in for reissue, and for the Company, which had to handle the paperwork. The Green Tree suffered the imposition of this tax for the first 21 months, but by January of the following year, the Board realized that a more pragmatic approach would be to eliminate renewals, letting the single deposit stand to insure the property indefinitely. This would also obviate paying the stamp tax more than once—a benefit both to a competitive institution and to thrifty policyholders. On July 30, the Company put into effect a new Deed of Settlement that gave the Trustees the power to write perpetual policies, rather than the standard seven-year renewable term policies. Now, and indeed since that time, by the payment of the same single deposit as originally required, insurance remained in force with The Green Tree until the policy was cancelled.

The news traveled quickly, for on November 9, 1801 Caleb Carmalt, clerk of The Contributionship, wrote to Joseph Townsend, Treasurer of The Baltimore Equitable Society: *The Mutual Assurance Company of this City have lately altered their Deed of Settlement at a Genl Meeting;—it was formerly the same as the Hand in Hand except the permission to plant Trees before the Houses in the Streets, which was not allowed by our Company—in order to avoid the increase of Expense, Stamps &c. they have made their policies perpetual.*

Eventually, The Contributionship, The Baltimore Equitable Society, and The Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia all followed The Green Tree's lead and began to offer various forms of perpetual insurance.

To be continued...



*We wish all
of our neighbors
a Happy,
Healthy and
Peaceful
New Year!*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Monday, January 19
**Martin Luther King, Jr.
Social Change Leaders Program**
See page 25

Wednesday, January 21
SCHA General Membership Meeting
Topic: Tax Forum
Sheraton Society Hill, 7:30 p.m.
See page 1

Wednesday, February 4
Parking Task Force, Initial Meeting
Old Pine Community Center, 7 p.m.
See page 6

Saturday, February 7
**Library Event:
Philadelphia Folklore Project**
Stories from Philadelphia's Chinatown.
Independence Library, 2:00 p.m.

Monday, February 9
Library Event: LEAP PROGRAM
Black History Tribute—Remembering
Dr. King, Paul Robeson and others
Independence Library, 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 10
Library Brown Bag Program
How to Buy a Computer,
Independence Library, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 22
South Street Mummers Parade

Tuesday, March 16
Brown Bag Lunch Program
Money Smarts for Women
Independence Library, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 17
SHCA General Membership Meeting
Topic & Place to be announced.



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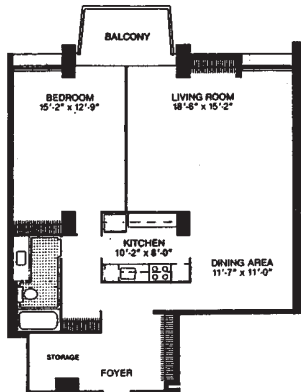
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Hopkinson House

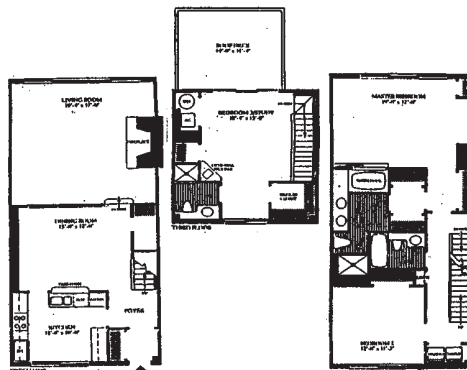
604-36 S. Washington Square



One bedroom, 1 bath, balcony with
treetop view of Washington Square
\$269,900

Pier 5

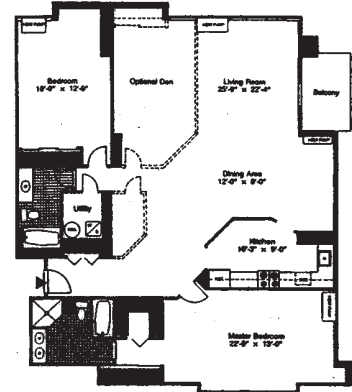
7 N. Christopher Columbus Blvd.



Three bedroom, 3.5 bath, fireplace,
roof deck, river view, 1 car parking
\$430,000

Independence Place

233 S. 6th Street



Two bedroom, 2 bath, spectacular
views of bridge, river and skyline
\$810,000

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