

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

Déjà vu: Richard Stengel to Speak



Spring Clean-Up Day

Saturday, April 30

8 a.m. - 1 p.m

- Sweep
- Paint
- Plant

Once again, we are delighted to announce that Richard Stengel, President and CEO of the National Constitution Center, will be our featured speaker at SHCA's General Membership Meeting on Wednesday night, March 16. Déjà vu, you say? Didn't the *Reporter* make the very same announcement in its January issue, encouraging Society Hillers to attend the "first meeting for 2005" in order to hear what our new neighbor, Richard Stengel, has to say?

Well, it is not déjà vu, because as you'll recall, January 19 was a snowy and cold night. Naturally, we expected a low turnout due to these unwelcome weather conditions. Rather than "embarrass" ourselves with only a handful of people in the audience, we phoned Richard and asked if he would be willing to postpone that evening's presentation in order to come before us at our March 16th session. The good news is that he will be available and we look forward to hearing his presentation.

We apologize to all those who ventured out on that nasty night expecting to hear Richard Stengel speak. Needless to say, we were quite surprised by the many stalwart neighbors — both familiar faces as well as newcomers — who attended the meeting to meet Richard and

be apprised of current community affairs. All was not lost that night, however, thanks to the ad hoc, improvisational but very comprehensive presentation given by Paul Boni, SHCA's Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee Chair, who brought us up-to-date on the many changes and challenges in the neighborhood.

CLEAN-UP DAY

Hillers Spring Into Action!

The Society Hill Civic Association will sponsor its annual Spring Clean-Up Day on Saturday, April 30th between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Brooms and bags will be available at Three Bears Park on the 300 block of Delancey Street. Join your neighbors in sweeping sidewalks, painting lampposts, and planting spring flowers. There will be restricted parking that day throughout the neighborhood, so please remember to look for the posted signs on your street. Help us put our best face forward for visitors to Society Hill's Open House Tour on Sunday, May 1st. Chairing this season's Clean-Up Day is Dana Hall. For more information, please contact her at danahall@yahoo.com or 215-351-9222, and look for a reminder flyer in April.

Are you a gardening enthusiast? Lend your green thumb to the Friends of Three Bears Park, where the Philadelphia Horticultural Society's "Parks Revitalization Project" will provide its expertise and lend a hand to help spruce up the park. Volunteers are needed to weed, to plant hanging baskets and to paint the park's lampposts. Adults and children are welcome! Contact Tania Rorke at TRorke@aol.com or 215-925-4544.

Hopkinson House and Independence Place residents need not feel left out on Clean-Up Day! Volunteers are needed to continue SHCA's Washington Square beautification efforts. Contact Kelly Nelson at klnelson22@msn.com or 215-925-6799 if you're interested.

Thank you for helping us maintain our beautiful neighborhood!

WED.

March

16

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, March 16, 2005

St. Peter's Church
3rd & Pine Streets

- 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting**
All SHCA members are welcome to attend.
- 7:00 p.m. Meet & Greet Your Neighbors**
- 7:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting**
Featured Speaker:
Richard Stengel, President & CEO
National Constitution Center
All Society Hill residents, businesses and institutions are invited to attend.

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Submissions

We want to hear from you. Our goal is to print news of interest to Society Hill residents, especially happenings in and around our community. To publicize an event in the *Reporter*, press releases or copy should be submitted to the SHCA office by email, mail or fax by the submission deadline above.

Material must be submitted in writing and must include the name of a contact person. Edited material may appear if space allows; otherwise upcoming events may be listed in the Community Calendar. Only signed Letters to the Editors will be considered for publication.

In this Issue...

Laurels

to our generous neighbors for making the walkway between 4th Street & Lawrence Court a brighter, safer area!

Residents David and Marcia Hurwitz and Dr. Chris and Alex Haines installed lights, one with a motion detector, to illuminate the walkways outside their homes.

Poop On You!

Dog owners, please scoop up the droppings of your pets! We've received several complaints, particularly about the appearance of sidewalks on 3rd, 4th and Delancey Streets.

Dog owners, help us keep our streets clean! Be considerate of your neighbors! It's the law!

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Noteworthy Neighbors:
James and Gail Trimble



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Speak Now, or Forever Hold Your Peace

If you have ever wanted to share your opinion with the civic association, now is the time! Several neighborhood projects currently being proposed involve residential and/or commercial development. There are many questions we need to ask: Should buildings be torn down? Should hi-rises be built? How much growth can our neighborhood handle?

We need your help, because SHCA may potentially fight several battles at once. This would require financial resources. Additional questions we may ask are: Do you want a portion of your dues to be used for opposing any of these developments? Are you willing to pay higher membership dues to help cover these costs? And are you, as members of our community, willing to contribute additional funds to preserve Society Hill's integrity? Please review these projects, summarized below, and give them your careful consideration. Remember: any new buildings constructed will become permanent fixtures in our neighborhood.

The Dilworth House: 223-225 S. 6th Street

As you may already know, the owner of this property is trying to demolish it and replace it with a 15-story residential condominium. SHCA voted to oppose this project for several reasons — the most important of which is that the Dilworth House has “iconic” status in Society Hill. Why? Because it was built by Mayor Richardson Dilworth as his family's residence when this area of the city was essentially a slum. Mayor Dilworth's action set the stage for what followed — the eventual revival and ultimate rebirth of Society Hill as we know it. We believe the house is an integral part of the recent history of our neighborhood and should stand in perpetuity as a symbol of his courage.

A petition to save the house has been circulating throughout the community. It appeared in the previous issue of the *Reporter* and is being reprinted on page 17. If you haven't yet signed, please do so and fax it or mail it to our office (see page 2 for addresses). We have been emboldened by the more than 1,100 signatures, and we will do our best working together to help save the house! But we may need your assistance. Please see the letter on page 19 written by a community resident, who passionately agrees that the building must be preserved. See what he is willing to do, and ask yourself if you are willing to join him.

NewMarket: Front Street & 2nd Street, between Pine & Lombard

This parcel of land was recently sold to developers from Northeast Philadelphia who also purchased the historic Ross House, adjacent to NewMarket at the corner of 2nd and Pine. The developers' plans are on a much larger scale than what had been previously proposed: to construct two hi-rise condominium towers, one of which reportedly will be 30 stories high. Many in SHCA's leadership believe that a 30-story building on this low-scaled Front Street site would be inappropriate and even harmful to the neighborhood. Part of the problem is that, as of press time, the developers have not responded to our invitation to contact us, so we don't know their plans. We sincerely and optimistically hope that this does not result in an adversarial struggle.

Corner of 5th & Walnut Streets

This empty parcel of land, enclosed by a fence, is being considered by its developer to become a hi-rise building. Although we are uncertain about the developer's exact plans, we wouldn't be surprised if he hopes to go as “high” as possible. We anticipate a design proposal equal to or approaching the height of the adjacent Penn Mutual tower.

Salvation Army Property: 3rd Street

This property, located on the west side of 3rd Street between Locust and Walnut Streets, consists of the vacant Salvation Army Building and an adjacent structure that served as a day care center. It is the goal of the developer to demolish these buildings and construct single-family townhouses that would be consistent with the character of the street and neighborhood.

In summary, our association's Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee has spent countless hours studying and considering the above proposals. One generous neighbor wants to help us preserve the Dilworth House and is willing to put his money where his mouth is. Consider what he has to say and see if you'd be willing to help contribute to the legal battle to save the Dilworth House. (We are currently investigating how your donations could become tax-deductible.) SHCA's Board of Directors wants to know how you feel about these projects, so please give us your feedback. Feel free to email your thoughts regarding any of these projects to TRorke@aol.com.



Tania Rorke
SHCA President

IN LOVING MEMORY

Sam Maitin: A Celebration of Life



Self-portrait, c. 1986

Samuel C. Maitin, a prolific Philadelphia artist, departed our world on December 23 following a brief illness — leaving family, friends and our own community with many loving memories. In addition, he left an enduring imprint on the world of art. Sam was a brilliant artist whose exuberant works hang in galleries all over the world and brighten public spaces across Philadelphia.

Unlike other painters of his generation, whose art depicts the darker side of life, Maitin's works display joyous bursts of color and light. Those who met Sam felt that the way he lived and shared his life was as colorful and energetic as his art. His optimism and persistence were indomitable.

Born in North Philadelphia of Russian-Jewish immigrant parents, Sam graduated from Simon Gratz High School at 16. He won a scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art (now the University of the Arts), while simultaneously earning a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. He also studied in London on a Guggenheim fellowship. A lifelong Philadelphia "homeboy," Sam moved into his historic Pine Street home in 1961 when our neighborhood was still considered "South Philly." The neighborhood was inexpensive and the house could accommodate both studio and living spaces. He and his wife, Lilyan, raised their two children, Ani and Izak, here in Society Hill above the studio. He taught art and graphic design at area schools, including the Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia Industrial School of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and Penn's Annenberg School of Communications. One distinctive mural in Annenberg Hall, called "Celebration," is an icon.

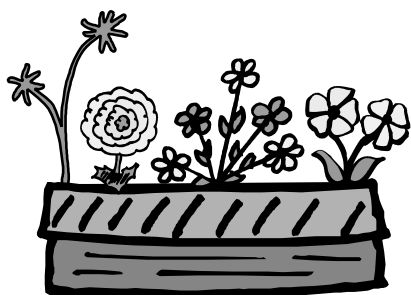
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IN LOVING MEMORY

October 26, 1928 - December 23, 2004

Sam worked in various media, including paintings, sculptures, prints, collages, murals, posters and even animated film. In the 1970's, before murals on blighted walls became common in Philadelphia, he painted a wall for the Fleisher Art Memorial in South Philadelphia, and he invited neighborhood teenagers to join him. Fleisher was a school he knew well, because as a child he walked four miles to take art classes there. He also helped develop an art program for children in a North Philadelphia Catholic parish. His murals adorn walls internationally, such as in Shanghai, as well as locally — the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the YM/YWHA at Broad and Pine Streets, and Temple University's Dental School.

Many of Sam's banners and posters are displayed at Penn's Wharton School, at synagogues and Jewish organizations, in the "Poetry on Buses" program of the National Endowment for the Arts, and on bus-shelter posters for the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. He was involved with several local organizations, including the Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness, and he served on several boards for worthy causes.

Sam exhibited at museums around the world, and today his works are displayed in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian, New York's Museum of Modern Art, and of course the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which alone has 76 of his pieces. Up to the end of his days, Sam worked intensely preparing for two simultaneous shows at two different sites on Penn's campus: One show at the Arthur Ross Gallery features his new and most recent works. The second show, sponsored by Hillel, offers a mix of old and new pieces in a variety of media. Both were installed with the help of Sam's family and his studio assistants. Opened on February 10, they will be on display through April 17. (Please see the back page Calendar for locations and times of these exhibits.)

At his memorial service, held on January 29 at Penn's Annenberg Center, Sam's daughter, Ani, described one of her favorite paintings created by her dad: a 1971 work featuring the words of 16th-century poet John Donne's "No Man Is An Island," written in red over a black, purple and green background. According to Ani, the poem sums up her father's social

activism, "since it says that we're all connected, and if anyone suffers we all suffer." She, along with others who spoke at the memorial service, described Sam as a very outgoing and warm person. "Everyone who was his friend was a good friend." Indeed, Thomas Hine, former *Inquirer* architecture critic, summarized what many speakers said about Sam's sense of community. "He tried to make good things happen. He wanted talented people to know each other."

At the memorial service, C.K. Williams, a renowned American poet, read a personal poem in celebration of Sam's life and concluded with "Epitaph to A Friend" by Robert Burns.

Contributions to help preserve Sam's artworks may be made to: The Samuel Maitin Trust, c/o 704 Pine Street, Phila, PA 19106

Sam Maitin stands at the entrance to his Pine Street home, c. 1990's



SOCIETY HILL TOWN WATCH

National Park Service Joins our Team!



Society Hill Town Watch (SHTW) is pleased to announce that the National Park Service has joined the effort to improve safety and security within Society Hill. The Park Service is the new custodian of Washington Square Park, and with an assist from Chief Ranger Ian Crane is happy to work cooperatively with Society Hill, the police, and SHTW.

Typically, several rangers are on duty at a given time, patrolling the historic area that includes landmarks such as the Constitution Center, the Liberty Bell and, within Society Hill proper, the Park. (These rangers are in addition to two rangers on duty around the clock outside Independence Hall.) Whether on Town Watch patrol or going about your daily routine, if you observe an emergency in Washington Square Park, you

are encouraged to call the Park Service's emergency dispatch in addition to calling 911. That dispatch number is 215-597-7077. Within moments, armed rangers will respond to the situation in the Park. Also, please feel free to call 215-597-9038 for non-emergencies involving the Park. And let Chief Ranger Crane know of any lights that go out in or around the perimeter of the Park. He will ensure they are promptly replaced; he can be contacted through SHTW or at ian_crane@nps.gov.

In addition to facilitating these communications, SHTW will be providing its newest member, Chief Ranger Crane, with periodic crime updates so that the Park Service can be as responsive as possible to crime and safety issues that fall within our common domain.

Philadelphia Police... Society Hill Town Watch... National Park Service

Won't you join us in keeping Society Hill safe?

To join SHTW or for more information, contact Mike Erdos at 267-251-0749 or michael.erdos@phila.gov.



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SAFE AND SOUND IN SOCIETY HILL

Protect Yourself With These Simple Steps

Take Steps to Avoid Identity Theft

If you think it will never happen to you — think again! Approximately 1 million Americans are at risk each year. Marie Lederer, our State Representative, culled information from a number of sources and developed a brochure describing what you can do if you become a victim. Consumer Reports and AARP provided additional info and this article is a summary from these and other sources.

Protect Yourself: Never give out your Social Security number or other financial data. Cut up unsolicited credit cards; obliterate account numbers. Shred outdated credit cards and ATM or bank deposit receipts. Check all your statements for accuracy. Avoid easy PIN numbers. Get a yearly credit report and check it for accuracy. Pay for on-line purchases with a credit card to limit liability if you get the wrong thing and use only secure sites starting with “http.” Call 800-567-8688 to remove your name from lists sold to credit card companies. Stop solicitations from direct marketers by sending for free forms to Direct Marketing Association, Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512. Remove yourself from mortgage refinancing and home equity offers by calling Axiom U.S. Consumer Hotline at 877-774-2094.

If you become a victim: File a police report immediately. Contact all credit card issuers. Contact everyone with whom you have a financial relationship, including your bank. Close all your accounts and tag them due to fraud. Check the post office for unauthorized change of address requests. Ask for bimonthly credit reports (free if due to fraud) until your case is resolved. Follow up all contacts with letters and keep copies of everything. Shred pre-screened credit cards and call 1-888-5-OPT-OUT to get your name off the list. Purchase an inexpensive paper shredder and use it, so that no personal information can be stolen.

To report fraud to credit bureaus:

Equifax — 888-525-6285 (www.equifax.com)
Experian — 888-397-3742 (www.experian.com)
Trans Union — 800-680-7289 (www.tuc.com)

Social Security Administration Fraud Line — 800-269-0271.

If your wallet or purse is stolen: Photocopy (back and front) every item in your wallet or purse, include legible fraud hotline numbers — NOW! Update your records twice a year and every time you get a new credit card. If you don't need it, don't carry it. Leave check books and Social Security cards, and everything you haven't used in the last three months, at home.

One way to protect yourself from identity theft is to get a credit report yearly, and check it for accuracy.

Be Safe – Be Aware!

2003/2004 Crime Stats


In Society Hill plus Chestnut to Walnut Streets from Front to 8th Street, overall — crime went down by 17%. Good news, but don't get complacent, Hillers! You are helping by participating in Town Watch, and we have a very committed Captain of the Sixth District who has increased patrols in our area. We still have many thefts from auto, as well as stolen vehicles, several aggravated assaults, robberies and burglaries and an inordinate number of vandalism cases. Actual numbers for 2004 will be published in the next issue of the *Reporter*. Your participation is essential in keeping crime down in Society Hill.

Contractor Fraud Still Rampant

One feels stupid getting “ripped off,” but it happens, and you don't want it to happen to you. Several articles have appeared recently in the Philadelphia Inquirer, actually naming names of the “big guys” who prey on senior citizens throughout the city. One of our neighbors (he's embarrassed, so he will remain anonymous) got ripped off by a “contractor.” It was reported to the police, but so far no arrest has been made. We recommend using the Contractor List provided by Martha Levine (see page 27). Do not hire anyone until you have checked their references!

REMINDER


Keep all old cell phones and chargers coming to 414 Spruce Street. They are programmed to dial 911 and distributed to seniors citizens.



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April 29 Begins Philadelphia Open House Tours

Society Hill House Tour Set for Sunday, May 1

Behind the anonymity of Society Hill's streetscape is an amazing array of homes whose facades may appear to be similar or even indistinguishable. Very deceiving — because surprises await you behind every door! So if you're tired of peeking through windows to glimpse what's inside these homes, we suggest you save the date for this year's Society Hill Tour — scheduled for Sunday, May 1st, from 1 - 5 p.m. Whether you are interested in antiques, art deco or modern furnishings, interior design, architecture, gardens, or kitchens and baths, you'll find it all here.

The Philadelphia Open House Tour (POH) program was created right here in Society Hill more than 25 years ago, and now it extends regionally from New Castle, Delaware to Trenton, New Jersey. For example, this year's selection of 29 tours includes two historic art institutions, University City and "Independence Park By Candlelight." Of course, the Society Hill Tour continues to be one of the best attended of the entire series!

The POH program is coming to our region from April 29 through June 11. Each tour benefits its respective neighborhood or historic site. In Society Hill, two-thirds of the income comes back to our civic association, with one-third going to the Friends of Independence National Historical Park, the organizers of the program. For information about all these tours, call the POH office at 215-861-4971 or email the Friends at Friends_inde@yahoo.com.

Call 215-861-4971 to your reserve your Society Hill tickets in advance, at \$35 each, or purchase them on the day of the tour at Old Pine Street Church, on Pine between 4th & 5th Streets. (You must have a ticket for admittance.) POH tours require volunteer hosts and hostesses to "house-sit." If you volunteer for a two-hour spell, you can take the tour for free. Meanwhile, if you have recently undergone a loving renovation or if you're just proud to live in Society Hill and would be willing to open your home to neighbors, please call Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@msn.com.



M E E - Y O W !

Beans, The Cat, Responds

The black-and-white cat whom neighbors expressed concern about in the January/February issue of the *Reporter*, page 2, has responded with his own explanation of his feline escapades about town. We print his letter, herewith, in full:

Dear Kind Neighbors:

My name is Beans (aka the "Prince of the Hood"). I am not lost! I'm 13 years old and I have been prowling in the vicinity of 2nd and Pine since 1995. I grew up in Cheshire, England (yes, a real Cheshire Cat!), where I became a devotee of the outdoors and the hunting life. A six-month effort to turn me into an indoor cat, when I relocated to Philadelphia, just turned me into a miserable, neurotic wreck. In addition, without my hunting services, all my new neighbors ended up with mouse infestations.

I am literally allergic to collars and remove them very often, so my folks gave up on I.D. tags and equipped me with an implanted I.D. chip, which vets and animal shelters can read with a scanner.

As for the "cold and hungry" act referred to in your piece — well, I need to hang my furry black head in shame; it's a pure con job. I have access to dry food at home all day, and for dinner my folks give me canned food, and close my cat flap so I'm safe indoors at night.

When I'm not out and about (sometimes accompanied by my young protégé, a red cat named Simon), I spend much time snoozing in a comfy chair, bossing around the other three cats at home, playing with my dog Max, and generally being pampered by my humans (including Sue Farell, the best pet sitter in the neighborhood).

My folks want me to thank you for your concern, want me to stop taking food from strangers, and of course want to compliment your artist; we all thought the drawing really captured my princely bearing.

Yours affectionately,
Beans



Beans!

Carole LeFavre-Rochester, one of the editors of this newsletter, reports that Beans often visits her two "feline American princesses," Sophie and Zoe, who are not impressed with his attentions!



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Three Bears Park

When Will Park Renovations Begin?

The most frequently asked question is: "When are we getting the new playground equipment people keep talking about?" We wish we could give you a date, but here is what we can tell you at this time: Our recent new Master Plan for the park was created by the Delta Group, the original designers of Three Bears Park in the 1960's. This plan was funded by both the Friends of Three Bears Park, an independent, tax-deductible 501(C)(3) association, and the Society Hill Civic Association.

A collaborative committee was formed, made up of neighbors, Friends of Three Bears Park, and members of SHCA's Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee. This committee decided that additional work was required to improve the Master Plan to make it more comprehensive, although a final design for the improved play area had already been completed and approved. The new playground design features a structure similar to the present one, as well as a separate detached swing set containing four swings. The play surface will also be enlarged to meet current safety standards. The committee is now awaiting bids from several firms to complete the Master Plan for the rest of the park.

Lack of funding has slowed down the entire progress on park renovations, however. Although we received grants totaling \$50,000 from the State — through the kind assistance of both Senator Vincent Fumo and State Representative Marie Lederer — these funds have not yet been dispersed nor have those of

Councilman Frank DiCicco who had also set aside funds for the project. Unfortunately, costs for the park's complete renovation have exceeded original projected cost of \$300,000, which includes design work, repair/level slate and brick, replace play surface and structure, plumbing and electrical improvements, and horticultural design. Our plan is to proceed with the renovation in phases. The first phase will replace the play structure and surface and repair the surrounding bricks.

During this initial phase, new benches will be installed in the park. Although the Friends of Three Bears Park raised all the necessary funds for bench replacement last year, the purchase and installation of these new benches have been delayed due to upgrading the park's Master Plan, which will result in a comprehensive enhancement of the entire park. The first renovation phase will begin as soon as we receive the promised State funds. Further fundraising will be needed to complete renovation for the rest of the park.

This small area in our neighborhood evolved from an attempt to provide an attractive green space during Society Hill's revival in the 1960's, to include a safe playground filled with the laughter of happy toddlers. But now the entire park needs improvements — for reasons of both aesthetics and safety. To learn more about the project, please contact Tania Rorke, the Friends' current president, at TRorke@aol.com.



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NPS Northeast Director Marie Rust Retires



Marie Rust

Mary Bomar, Superintendent of Independence Park, is expected to become the next Regional Director

Marie Rust, Northeast Regional Director of the National Park Service (NPS) retired in March after 31 years of caring for the park system in thirteen northeastern states. A Society Hill resident for the past ten years, headquartered professionally in the Customs House at 2nd and Market Streets, Rust held the overall responsibility for thousands of acres of parkland and millions of artifacts that include two of the nation's most iconic treasures: the Statue of Liberty and the Liberty Bell. Under her stewardship many positive changes occurred in "our own backyard," forged by her creative partnership arrangements among the private

sector, the city and the state. Governor Rendell commented that she has been a "...staunch supporter of Independence National Historical Park (INHP), the crown jewel within my home city...and a true advocate for all of the parks in the commonwealth — federal, state and local."

Rust has been a strong supporter of Mary Bomar, who has served graciously and sensitively as Superintendent of Independence Park for the past few years. It is expected that Bomar will be elevated to the role of Northeast Regional Director and will continue Marie's work across the entire region — although that information has not yet been officially confirmed. It is also expected that INHP's Assistant Superintendent Dennis Reidenbach will be promoted as the park's acting superintendent. We wish all these dedicated leaders well.



Mary Bomar

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St. Peter's Students Help Tsunami Victims

One of the most important things we can teach our children is to have empathy for others. Students at St. Peter's School proved they have heart by doing something to help victims of the Tsunami disaster.

On January 13, 2005, the fifth grade class held a bake sale for the entire school. Each child contributed home-baked or store-bought treats. The children organized the project completely, taking great care to set up the tables, display the baked goods and collect and count the money (a great opportunity for a math lesson). The kids were very motivated entrepreneurs, sometimes offering two-for-ones to make deals towards the end of the sale. With good weather on their side and an enthusiastic, hungry schoolyard full of kids, the sale was a big success, raising \$550, which included monetary donations from some fifth grade parents.

The following week, the school raised another \$500 in an unusual way. St. Peter's School traditionally requires all students, grades one to eight, to wear uniforms daily. To raise money for the Tsunami Relief, each student was asked



to bring in \$5 for the privilege of not wearing his or her uniform on a specified day. The response was nearly unanimous, with kids wearing jeans, tee shirts and football jerseys. The next day, of course, was back to normal.

St. Peter's School Fifth Grade Class delivers a check for \$1,050 to the American Red Cross.

The fifth grade class hand-delivered the donation, a total of \$1,050, to the American Red Cross offices at 23rd and Chestnut Streets. A job well done!



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GUEST OPINION

BY JERRY BELEW

A Different View of Street Lighting

The Editors thank neighbor Jerry Belew, for submitting the following article regarding the quality of light in our Franklin Lamps — as reported in the previous issue of the *Reporter*. SHCA's "Adopt A Franklin Lamp" proposes private subsidization for half of Society Hill's streetlights, while the cost of improving the other half would come from the city and state. These beloved fixtures, unique to our neighborhood, are visual replicas of Benjamin Franklin's ingenious design for street lighting.

A Dim View of the Lighting Project

Did you know that forty percent of Americans live in areas which are artificially illuminated so brightly and so constantly that their eyes need never adjust to night vision? The National Parks Conservation Association has estimated that only ten percent of the U.S. population can now view the Milky Way. The International Astronomical Union has warned that if present growth and pollution trends continue, the Earth may lose its view of the stars completely.

Three forms of light pollution have been identified by the International Dark-Sky Association, a forward-thinking lobbying and educational group founded by astronomers in 1988. All three forms are present right here in our beloved Society Hill. "Light trespass" occurs when unwelcome illumination crosses property lines. "Glare," which often causes traffic accidents, results from lighting that is unnecessarily bright. "Sky-glow" results from unshielded or upwardly aimed lighting, and dims the light of the moon and stars, especially

in urban and suburban areas. Grassroots campaigns have arisen from New York's Central Park to L.A. to combat this pollution. Local ordinances have been introduced and/or passed in at least 27 states, and New Mexico's legislature has passed a statewide Night Sky Protection Act.

Why should we support this growing movement? There are many good reasons, starting with economy and ecology. It is estimated that the U.S. wastes \$2 billion or more annually on unnecessary energy consumption. This increases our dependence on foreign oil. There are health reasons as well. Neurologists have warned that excessive light can disrupt sleep patterns, causing fatigue and compromising our immune systems.

According to *Preservation Magazine*, the Department of Justice has reported that, contrary to popular notion, there is no correlation between degree of brightness and levels of crime. Furthermore, avoiding or removing excessive lighting is a simple matter of aesthetics, particularly in a historic neighborhood like ours. When you want to "create a mood" inside your home, do you raise or lower the lights?

If SHCA were to embark on a campaign to enhance the charm and character of our neighborhood by reinstating gaslights, I'd be all for it. But spending \$500,000 for unnecessarily bright lighting — whether privately or publicly funded — would be an extravagant waste of resources better used elsewhere.



When you want to "create a mood" do you raise, or lower, the lights?

Editors' Response

SHCA's years-long effort to improve streetscape lighting stems from a perceived increase in crime in the neighborhood — particularly on dimly lit streets.

Whether or not good lighting or lack thereof is a factor related to crime, we believe that good city streetlights encourage people to go out at night rather than sit inside their homes behind locked doors. In fact,

the National Crime Prevention Council in Washington D.C. advises that good lighting does, indeed, deter crime.

Also, we'd like to remind neighbors that there are a few locations in Society Hill that already offer samples of these improved lights, so residents can see for themselves that they are not excessively bright, and that they illuminate downward,

not up toward the sky. Although these new lights have the same wattage (70W) as the older existing lights in the neighborhood, they produce a better quality of illumination. Look for them at 507 Spruce Street, 337 S. 7th Street, and opposite 421 S. 3rd Street, on the west side.

There are many justifications for providing good streetlights in the city. With better

lighting, people can see where they are going and avoid unevenly laid sidewalk bricks — thus, preventing falls and potential injuries.

The city itself is an artificial environment. Should there be bright lighting in a wilderness area, such as Philadelphia's Wissahickon Valley, we would certainly be opposed to that. Regarding Mr. Belew's environmental concerns, we con-

ferred with an environmental specialist who told us that current lighting technology is quite efficient in its use of energy.

Private funding to support improved lighting in our community is a topic that deserves our thoughtful consideration. Perhaps Mr. Belew's piece will help "spark" additional and "enlightened" dialogue that will contribute to improving our Franklin Lamps!

ZONING & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BY PAUL BONI

Fate of 3 Properties Will Affect Hill's Character

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



Developer John Turchi proposes to raze the Dilworth House and replace it with a 15-story condominium.

In this column we focus on three major projects that could have broad community impact. The protection of the Dilworth House is chief among our concerns, and the New Market project is catching up fast. We may have to fight for the community's rights under Philadelphia's zoning and historic preservation codes; at the very least, we must be prepared.

More than just advocacy is needed; now is the time to raise funds to hire attorneys and consultants so that historically significant buildings will be preserved and that large tracts of land can be developed successfully within existing zoning codes. We strongly oppose variances that allow the development of huge buildings that would alter the scale and character of our neighborhood. Our civic association needs to work very hard to help developers see the wisdom and benefit of working with us and not against us.

An anonymous neighbor has offered a donation to advocate for compliance with the zoning and historic codes. See his letter, printed on page 19, in which he offers to match your contribution dollar-for-dollar.

Developer Targets Dilworth House

Developer John Turchi has stepped up his efforts to demolish the Dilworth House in order to construct a 15-story condominium. He attended the February ZHP meeting with his team of attorneys, architects and public relations people. Noted architect Robert Venturi presented their design proposal, which the team believes will strengthen the argument to demolish the building. Although the building is currently protected by the city's preservation ordinance, the Philadelphia Historical

Commission might be persuaded by the team's proposal.

We publicly request that Mr. Turchi either live in the Dilworth House (as was his stated intention two years ago) or sell it, or otherwise transfer the property. Though only 50 years old, it **IS** the history of our neighborhood, as it was the catalyst for Society Hill's rebirth. It was Mayor Dilworth and other leaders who prompted early efforts at urban renewal.

Many Philadelphians have rallied to our cause, and we have amassed over 1,100 signatures on a petition to save the house. There is still time to add your signature by signing and faxing it back to us (see page 17).

NewMarket

Rumor has it that the new owners of NewMarket would like to develop two condominium towers, one of which would be 30 stories high. A building of that height would be out of scale with the area. Zoning variances would be required and we might have another battle in the near future. Despite a written invitation from our civic association, the developers have yet to contact us to discuss the project. We hope they will engage us in discussions so that we can work together. Nevertheless, we are preparing legal arguments in case this becomes adversarial. (See President's Message, on page 3, which seeks input from the community.)

500 Walnut Street

This property has recently been optioned by the development team of Seidman & Campanella. They and their architect recently invited SHCA to sit in on a brainstorming session about how this vacant property could be developed. While no decisions were reached, we appreciate the opportunity to begin a dialogue with them. The issue of height is one of our major concerns; traffic is another. We will continue to report on this project as concepts are transformed into proposals. We will also be working with the condominium council of St. James Court Condominiums (5th Street, between Walnut and the PSC gym), the residents who would be most directly affected by any development.

PETITION TO PRESERVE THE DILWORTH HOUSE

This petition, created by the SHCA, has been circulated in other neighborhoods by our sister civic associations. If you haven't already added your name to the petition that was distributed throughout our community by our dedicated team of Block Coordinators, please cut out this page and sign it, and fax it back to SHCA administrator Matt DeJulio, 215-629-9914.

We, the residents of Society Hill, are OPPOSED to any alteration or demolition of The Dilworth House, located at 223-225 S. 6th Street (on the east side of Washington Square). The house was built in 1957 as the personal residence of Mayor Richardson Dilworth, one of the most significant political figures in the history of the City. Mayor Dilworth chose this location to show his strong commitment to the renewal of what was then a severely blighted part of town. His house stands as a reminder of an important chapter in the history of Society Hill. The house was designed by the distinguished architect George Edwin Brumbaugh, who helped restore Washington Square. The building is currently protected by Philadelphia's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Under this law, the building cannot be demolished or altered, unless the owner obtains permission from the Philadelphia Historical Commission. Advised that a developer now intends to seek such permission (to make way for a high-rise residential building), we sign this petition to advocate that the property be saved. The Dilworth House should stand intact and unaltered in perpetuity.

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LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

Protecting Society Hill from Developers' Greed

DEAR NEIGHBORS, Over the past few months my wife and I have begun to realize that the character of our neighborhood is being threatened by aggressive real estate developers. We write to express our concerns and to ask for your assistance.



I have observed our civic association and the positive influence it has had over the quality of life in Society Hill. It does many wonderful things, from hiring clean-up people on a weekly basis to organizing our Welcome Basket program, from the Franklin Light upgrade project to subsidies for planting street trees. From my point of view, we have a highly motivated group of volunteers who truly work for the good of Society Hill.

Unfortunately, our neighborhood is threatened by developers who seek only tremendous profits from the booming real estate market. Ordinarily we would applaud the triumph of capitalism, but not when its success is achieved by wealthy developers attempting to persuade city boards and commissions that the law does not mean what it plainly says. One of the properties we are concerned about is the Dilworth House on 6th Street, an historic property that is completely protected by the historic preservation code. In that matter, there is no doubt that the house cannot be torn down under the law. Nevertheless, a wealthy developer has hired a team of lawyers, historic "experts" and public relations people to convince City Hall that we should trade in our history in favor of a modern fourteen-and-a-half story condominium. This is wrong. Equally wrong is a developer who is seeking to build a 30+ story condominium on the critically located NewMarket site, where the zoning code provides that nothing more than six stories should be built. If we do nothing, big money will simply enrich the developers at the expense of the character of the neighborhood. Our historic buildings and the scale and pace of our streetscapes are too important to sacrifice.

SHCA does a tremendous job advocating for compliance with laws. We can disagree on a given roof deck, parking slot, etc., but by and large our civic association represents us very well. My wife and I admit to sometimes taking them for granted.

The two projects to which I refer are too big for the civic association to handle on a volunteer basis. The developers have enough money to prevail in a fight against a volunteer organization. Therefore, I believe SHCA will have to hire attorneys and other consultants to advocate for compliance with the law. Fortunately, there are several among us who have modest or high levels of income and wealth.

To assist in this effort, my wife and I are willing to offer the following incentive: We will match, dollar for dollar, any amount of money other neighbors will contribute. The only limitation is that we will cap our contribution at \$100,000. Given the number of financially comfortable Society Hill residents, we believe that a matching donation is in the best interests of this effort. Our successes will be meaningful only if numerous people participate. We urge you to contribute whatever you can. If you are fortunate enough to be able to contribute \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000 or possibly even \$10,000, we urge you to do so.

I have met with SHCA's President and the Chair of the ZHP Committee. They are looking for professionals who will represent our interests at a deep discount. Unfortunately, *pro bono* representation does not make for a good fit in cases of this magnitude.

Let's pull together to protect our neighborhood. Let's throw our support behind the civic association so they can advocate for our collective best interests. Let's give SHCA the financial means to hire suitable professionals so we can check overzealous developers from damaging our historic neighborhood. We must come to our own aid in this time of need.

Let's give SHCA the financial means to hire suitable professionals who can effectively fight overzealous developers.

Note from the President, the ZHP Committee Chair and the Editors:

We are humbled, of course, by this offer. Usually we do not publish unsigned letters, but we think you'll see why we are publishing this one. It is a genuine and very generous offer from a good neighbor who wishes to remain anonymous, and we must honor his wish. We think you'll understand.

We ask all residents of Society Hill, from the grandest mansions to the smallest studio apartments, to make a substantial donation to the Civic Association by sending your check to the "SHCA" at P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147. In the memo, you can write "Challenge Donation 2005." Your contribution will be used solely for this purpose, and we will keep you posted on the totals.



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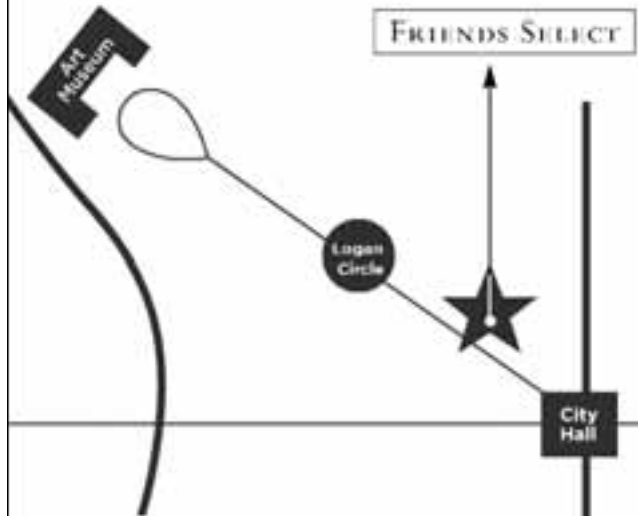
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Kids' Beat

A COLUMN BY KERI WHITE

Making A Wish List for Families

Most of us think our little corner of the world is perfect. With few exceptions, Society Hill offers everything a young family could need or want. It is, however, those few exceptions that have been on the minds of some local parents. In the hope of inspiring some motivated soul(s) to address these gaps, I am circulating the ideas to a wider audience than we generally reach in discussions at the 5th Street Sports Club, Three Bears Park, or the Java Company on 4th Street.

Many aspiring ballerinas would love the chance to take dance lessons in the neighborhood. There was, until three years ago, a wonderful venue called DanceSpace, located at 2nd & Fitzwater Streets, which provided low-pressure dance classes to little girls who weren't necessarily headed for the Pennsylvania Ballet but simply enjoyed the activity. DanceSpace closed; the owner sold the building, and the instructor hoofed it to New York. I am continually approached by moms looking for a similar program that does not involve a car ride or a Saturday schedule. There are obvious local possibilities for space: Society Hill Dance Academy, Philadelphia Sports Clubs, Old Pine Community Center or Starr Garden. What we need is some motivated person to put this all together.

From many neighbors I hear the cry for a bookstore. While Tower Books may not have been everyone's vision of a cozy neighborhood bookstore, it was a convenient place for purchasing and ordering. Although Borders and Barnes & Noble offer more desirable atmos-

pheres, many of us prefer to order online. I have heard repeatedly that people would gladly pay the extra 10% (or whatever) to be able to shop for books in the neighborhood. People would love to have children's story hours, adult reading groups, writers' clubs, etc., all of which would naturally occur around a community bookshop. (Two separate rumors have recently circulated that area residents are interested in opening such a place, but so far no shelves have been stocked.)

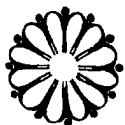
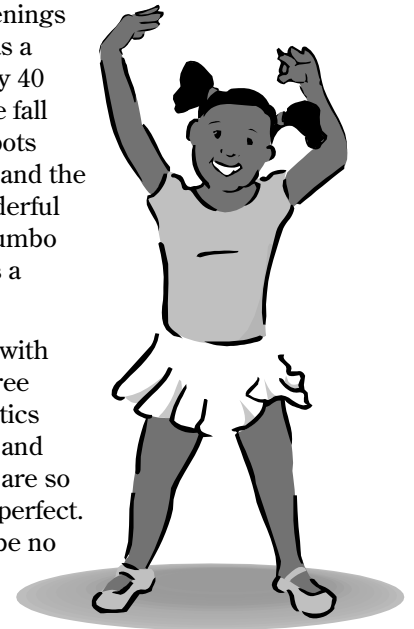
The worldwide soccer craze seems to have circumnavigated Society Hill. There are a few neighborhood kids involved in soccer who require their long-suffering parents to grueling hours of travel to Delaware County or deep into Fairmount Park, with weekends and evenings spent thus. I know, I know, Palumbo has a program. But I called them optimistically 40 minutes after registration opened for the fall league, only to be politely told that all spots had filled within 15 minutes of opening, and the wait list exceeded 20 children. It is wonderful that the City Recreation Program at Palumbo has such a following, but clearly there is a need for more local soccer programs.

I frequently hear of similar experiences with baseball/T-ball, "Little Gym" or Gymboree classes, swimming lessons, and gymnastics classes — limited capacity, late evening and weekend hours or distant locations. We are so fortunate to live in a place that is nearly perfect. With a few additions, there would truly be no reason to think of leaving!

Kid's Quote

"I don't want to go to school; I want to go to the Artful Dodger!"

James, age 3
Society Hill Kid



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 Virtual Tour* listed below each home

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PARKING!! Virtual Tour# 4427441

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 Luxurious 2 bedroom, 2 bath corner condo with den,
 gorgeous kitchen with custom cabinetry, and breathtaking
 panoramic views!!

241 S. 6th #1307 **\$699,900**
 Sumptuous corner unit with 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, oak
 hardwood flooring, and large balcony with amazing views!

213 S. Onizee Street **\$649,900**
 Beautiful completely renovated 3 bedroom, 2 bath home
 with finished basement, hardwood floors, historically
 accurate façade, master bedroom suite, balcony, plus
PARKING!

332 S. 3rd Street **\$619,900**
 Beautifully renovated 2 bedroom, 2 bath home with den,
 hardwood floors, new kitchen, central air, and moldings!
Virtual Tour#4427674

19 St. James Court **\$549,900**
 Spacious 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo with den, oak parquet
 flooring, lovely kitchen, and patio nestled in pristine
 courtyard! **Virtual Tour#4436485**

423 Pine Street #3 **\$449,900**
 Lovely 1 bedroom, 1.5 bath condo with den, sunroom,
 custom kitchen, fireplace, master bedroom suite with Jacuzzi
 and spacious deck with fabulous views! **Virtual Tour#**
4393050

518 Randolph Court B **\$399,900**
 Lovely multi-level home in quiet courtyard with 2 bedrooms,
 2.5 baths, den plus hardwood floors, fireplace and
PARKING! Virtual Tour#4445845

423 Pine Street #1 **\$399,900**
 Lovely bi-level 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo with high ceilings,
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SENIOR SCENE

BY JEAN BRYAN

Find Your Own Neighborhood Exercise Spot!

After focusing on exercise options in our area, we concluded that the only problem with exercise is, well, doing it. Health care givers extol the virtues of exercise and are supported by indisputable facts. Most of us repeatedly make resolutions to put exercise high on our priority lists. But the bottom line is: it's hard to keep up that daily commitment. For many of us, exercise is time consuming or boring when we do it, yet guilt producing when we don't.

Society Hillers who prefer the structure of a facility or personal trainer to their own uninspired routine are lucky to have a variety of exercise options within the neighborhood (or nearby). When we visited a few of these facilities, the owners and managers were welcoming, encouraging and helpful. Some mentioned month-to-month or short-term memberships and various "promotions" that lessen costs. Others do not require membership, but

instead offer class-by-class participation. Many of their activities (especially weight-training, yoga, pilates and swimming) are entirely appropriate for seniors of varying degrees of fitness and health. Diverse, appealing facilities, personal trainers, warm weather approaching — surely these are enticing "carrots" to prevent our becoming couch potatoes.

So how do you begin to take advantage of one of these local exercise venues? Review the list below. When one of the facilities piques your interest, then view its website to explore class offerings or call for an appointment to visit.

Questionnaires Update

Thank you for the many completed questionnaires (printed in our last issue) and emails you sent us. We are currently creating a spreadsheet to help folks with like interests to network. We will share the information with you as soon as possible.

TIPS

- 1) Exercise with a friend
- 2) Enjoy music or books-on-tape while exercising
- 3) Work out while watching TV or a rented movie
- 4) Exercise in short intervals, say 10 minutes, several times a day
- 5) Don't give 100% every time you exercise — simply do what you feel like, so you'll be more apt to develop the habit of exercise

NEIGHBORHOOD FITNESS CENTERS

Curves

1100 Columbus Blvd.
215-551-0401
www.curvesinternational.com
For women of all ages,
Curves offers circuit workouts with 12 hydraulic machines. A complete workout can last for as little as 30 minutes!

Equilibrium Pilates —
Trainer/Mgr. Brie

420 S. 2nd St.
215-923-3669
website nearing completion
Classical Pilates stretching and strengthening movements for all ages. Private lessons tailored to help set goals; beginning and advanced classes.

Excel Physical Therapy

420 Bainbridge St.
215-629-1270
Wellness seminars, with the next one on Tuesday, March 15 from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. "Non-Operative Treatment of Neck and Back Pain" by M.D. pain specialist. Call above number for more information.

Fit 24/7

Health and Racquet Club
325 Bainbridge St.
215-627-4900
www.fit24-7club.com
One-month trial membership: \$99 includes access to all activities and full refund if the club is not for you. Racquetball, basketball, rock climbing and martial arts. Open 24/7!

Maxercise

707 Chestnut St., 2nd Floor
215-928-1374
www.maxercise.com
Check out this website: no-frills approach to exercise; Personal trainers.

Philadelphia Sports Club

220-250 South 5th St.
215-592-8900
www.mysportsclubs.com
20% discounted membership for the 65+ crowd. Month-to-month memberships available. Mature fitness classes, e.g. "Silver Sneakers," that improves balance, posture, agility and co-ordination may be offered.

Randi Skibinsky of SCULPT

rskibi1011@aol.com
Certified personal fitness trainer experienced with the 50+ crowd; will train in either your home or hers—privately, semi-privately or groups.

Sheraton Society Hill

1 Dock St. 215-238-6000
Newly remodeled hotel health club, pool, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Annual membership \$350 with no monthly fees; shorter periods possible.

Society Hill Dance Academy

401 South 2nd St.
215-574-3574
www.societyhilldance.com
Come with or without a friend, as instructors are available to partner with. Six-week Singles class begins Wednesday March 30 @ \$99.

Yoga Child

903 South St.
215-238-0980
www.yogachild.net
Two classes tailored for seniors: Adult Yoga and Yoga over 45
March & April: 2-for-1 special: pay for only one @ \$15.

LECTURES

TARP Friday Forums

Mark your calendars!
Come to free, open-to-the-public lectures in the Temple Association for Retired Persons Friday Forum Series, 1515 Market St., Room 222, 10:30 a.m. Remaining dates:

March 18

Lucia Herndon, Columnist, Philadelphia Inquirer

April 1

Roberta Spivak, American Friends Service Committee

April 8

Thomas J. McCarthy, Actor

April 15

Jeff Shandler, Department of Jewish Studies, Rutgers University

April 22

To Be Announced

April 29

Eric Fisher, Editor, Philadelphia METRO

May 6

Rick Spector, Moderator, "Milestones" Radio Series

After researching neighborhood exercise options, we concluded that the only problem with exercise is... doing it!



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438 LOMBARD STREET
Just listed! Lovely immaculate 3BR 2 1/2 bath townhouse. w/ PKG, courtyard, enclosed porch, hw floors. **\$549,000.**

#29 ST JAMES COURT
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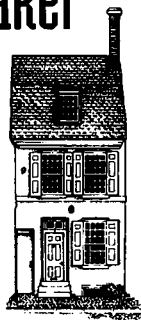


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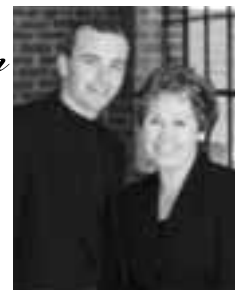
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Society Hill Year in Review

According to the Multiple Listing Service for Houses Sold between Front & 7th and Lombard & Walnut Streets in 2004

The lowest and highest priced homes sold for \$332,000 and \$1,775,000 respectively.

Of the 63 homes that sold the average sale price was \$766,288 and took 92 days to sell.

The average price increased 59% since 2000.

There are currently only 15 houses for sale in Society Hill but massive demand! To learn how much I could sell your home for call me on my mobile @ 215-917-1213.

Featured Listing:

316 Willings Alley

Incomparable elegance in this 3 BR, 2.5 BA home. Very dramatic I.M. Pei end unit with high ceilings, tons of light, 3556 sq. ft. of living space located in a serene courtyard setting overlooking a gorgeous garden. 1-car parking!



See all of Society Hill's Real Estate Transactions at:
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MARCH 1970

Jeff's Mom and Dad proudly watch him play on a warm day at Three Bears Park.

MARCH 2005

Jeff's Mom and Dad proudly watch as he once again competes for top level honors at the 2004 Greater Philadelphia Board of Realtors Awards (Jeff is the GPAR TOP SELLER IN CENTER CITY for both volume and units for 2002 and 2003)

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SOLD!

332 Lombard Street



SOLD!

248 South 3rd Street

Just Listed and Under Contract in 8 days!!!

245 S. 3rd Street: I.M. Pei Contemporary; fabulous 3 story brick townhouse w/parking, garden, elevator, spectacular spiral staircase, fireplace; all the amenities.

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248 S. 3rd Street: 1825 historic gem with 75' garden, 7 fireplaces; many original details, flooring, moldings; dramatic entertaining and living space! Elegant marble entryway, formal living and dining room.

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| 218 Pine St | 1104 Pine St |
| 909 Lombard | 211 Delancey St |
| 226 Lombard St | 231 Pine St |

Current Listings

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 507 Pine St | 2033 Chancellor St |
| 322 S Quince St | |

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UPDATE

Man Full of Troubles Tavern

We last wrote about the Man Full of Troubles Tavern in the May/June 2004 issue of the *Reporter*. We learned from the University of Pennsylvania's Vice Dean Ramin Sedehi that Penn had hoped to complete the building's renovations and begin using it by the summer of 2004 as living quarters for visiting faculty and to host small retreats or meetings. There was a delay.

This fine 18th-century city tavern was saved from demolition in the 1960's, restored by the Knauer Foundation, which filled it with period furnishings and managed it as a historic house museum open to the public. For about 30 years tourists enjoyed this small

museum. The tavern began a new chapter in its history when it was emptied of all its historic furnishings (after the Knauers died) and the vacant building was donated to the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Knauer's alma mater. For the next several years the building was unused and uncared for while concerned neighbors witnessed its deterioration. In more recent years, however, we have been heartened to see that Penn has made significant facade repairs and improvements to this Society Hill treasure.

Jean Bryan, a *Reporter* staffer, recently contacted Dean Sedehi again to learn about the status of the repairs and the University's plans for its use. He

responded with the following note:

Since our last meeting, we completed the renovations as planned ... the connections of the second floor between the two houses, a completely new kitchen and dining area, painting and carpeting throughout, bathroom upgrades, window treatments, and new bedroom and living room furnishings. Our current plan is to use the space for housing visiting faculty. These occupancies would be short term in nature, typically ranging from 6-12 months in duration. In the meantime, we intend to use the space for small academic retreats and events (10-20 people)... I want to take this opportunity to thank

everyone in the community for their patience and support while this project was underway. After years of neglect, The Man Full of Troubles Tavern is at last free of its facilities "troubles," and can proudly take its place among the area's many historical homes.

Jean asked Dean Sedehi if a modest "Open House" for the neighborhood could be scheduled so that we can see its new interior before it becomes occupied and off-limits. We will let our readers know if such an event will be feasible. Meanwhile, we extend our most sincere thanks to the University of Pennsylvania, as we look forward to seeing "signs of life" around this treasured pre-Revolutionary tavern.

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NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

A COLUMN BY DAVID WOODS

James and Gail Trimble

These inveterate travelers choose to call Society Hill home.

A recent issue of *The Economist* decries the decline of civility in society. The publication cited a British newspaper report of escalating antisocial incidents — from fewer than 500 in 1997 to about 1,500 in 2003. What happened to civility, and where did it go? James and Gail Trimble believe they have the answer — New Zealand.

Inveterate travelers, the couple recently returned from that country, which they describe as having a kind of gentility last seen hereabouts in the 1950's. But since they might claim to be products of that decade, they've managed to retain a good deal of courtliness themselves.

Jim Trimble served as rector of Christ Church Philadelphia for more than two decades. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he earned his masters and doctoral degrees in divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. He is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, a distinction first bestowed on Jacob Duché (1737-1798), who served as rector of Christ Church in 1775 and was a graduate of Cambridge. It was Duché who, in a highly civilized letter to George Washington, urged him to give up notions of independence.

When Jim is not serving on the boards of Temple University Hospital and the Reinvestment Fund of Philadelphia, or doing other community service, he writes for the National Episcopal publication, pens poetry, takes history courses at Penn and is an avid reader of history and biography. He also supports the Phillies, a passion he shares with Gail.

A widower, Jim met Gail when she was director of development at Episcopal Community Services, and the pair have been married for eight years. Between them, they have five children from their first marriages, and seven grandchildren.

Gail, a graduate of Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, holds a masters degree in education from SUNY. Her first career was as a special education administrator in Rochester, New York. In 1992 she moved to Philadelphia (having lived here briefly in the 1960's) and she's now a licensed real estate agent, an endeavor in which she has clearly found a niche, noting that "I love people, houses and Philadelphia." She views the Philadelphia real estate scene as a vibrant one, with empty nesters and suburbanites increasingly seeking out a city lifestyle. And that's pretty civilized too — when you think of it — *civis* being also the Latin root for citizen, particularly one of the urban persuasion.

The pair has particular praise for city living in general and Society Hill in particular. They note the mixture of urban hustle and bustle with a neighborhood friendliness. They walk a lot and feel they know more people here than they would if they lived in the suburbs. There's also the local history, something they live each day in their cozy and compact 1783 house which they share with their dog, Ben. No room for the grandkids, though: when they're in town they are put up at local hostelries.

What's evidently not on the agenda for this courtly couple is retirement, even though they might want to push back the hands of the elegant grandfather clock that graces their living room, and return to a more mannered age — or perhaps to New Zealand.

David Woods can be reached at dwoods@healthpublishing.com

The Green Tree Perpetual Assurance Company

Episode XI • The Great Conflagration

The following excerpts from the unpublished history of The Green Tree, by Clifford Lewis, Jr., are representative of challenges faced by the Company in its 220-year history and its manner of meeting them.

On the night of March 9, 1819, a fire occurred that cured the Trustees of The Green Tree of the habit of writing large policies of insurance on single risks. A newspaper of the day recorded: "Last night the Masonic Hall on Chestnut Street between 8th and 9th was totally destroyed by fire. The loss was \$35,000, partly covered by an insurance in The Green Tree, of \$20,000. This fire will long be remembered as a grand spectacle."

Never again was The Green Tree to issue a comparative amount on a single risk, for there is no doubt but that The Green Tree had learned its lesson the hard way. For a number of years prior to 1819, new insurance had not been so eagerly sought as had wise investments of funds already at hand. The Board recognized that income from prudent investments, rather than receipt of deposits, was providing an attractive means for increasing funds without increasing the liability for fire losses. This ultra conservative stage of underwriting might be interpreted as representing a belief that increasing the Company's funds through invested income, offered greater protection to policies already in force.

A report dated October 3, 1884 indicates that that kind of underwriting is consistent with the attitude of caution practiced for many years, and not only by the Trustees of The Green Tree, but in other Philadelphia institutions as well. Further, the report stated: "Your Committee are happy to find that our Books exhibit investments to the extent of \$431,726.79. This happy result may be attributed (while we are grateful to a Divine Providence) to the Vigilance and ability of the various administrations of this Company.

The funds of The Green Tree continued to be tenderly nursed and cultivated, and the supreme test of whether or not the Company

was prepared to meet fire losses of more than ordinary consequence was delayed, with further good fortune or happy coincidence as far as the state of its funds were concerned, until "the Great Conflagration" of 1850, when \$95,000 and more was paid out, in less than two months, to meet obligations to its Policyholders. By that time, The Green Tree was well prepared to meet this loss, almost as though the timing of the growth of funds had been well planned in advance, with foreknowledge of things to come.

On July 12, 1850, a Special Meeting of the Board was called "in consequence of a disastrous fire which took place in the City on Tuesday afternoon the 9th Instant." Many Trustees were out of town, but those able to hurry home from vacation attended the meeting and recommended prompt adjustment to cover all losses, even if the sale of securities was necessary. It was.

In September, the Committee on Fires made the following report to the entire Board: "On the afternoon of July 9th last, a fire broke out in a store belonging to Mr. John Brock, situated on Delaware Avenue about 100 feet South of Vine Street. The fire is said to have been caused by friction in the hoisting apparatus attached to the store. This, however, is believed to rest on mere supposition. This store of Mr. Brock was in the upper part, principally used for the storage of hay in bundles. In the lower store, large quantities of Saltpetre Sulphur, and Sugar are reported to have been stored, and it has been rumoured that gunpowder was also stored there. This allegation does not appear, on investigation, to have been well founded and has been positively denied by those interested in the store.

"A short time after the fire commenced, several slight explosions took place in the store, which at last were succeeded by one of great violence and disastrous consequences both as to life and property; causing death and desolation with a wide spread range of its effects. Immediately after this last and terrible explosion, a large number of houses,



said to have been thirty or forty, in various places and distances, were set on fire by the burning timbers, Saltpetre, hay &c, thrown upon them. By this cause the conflagration was spread with such rapidity and violence as for a time to baffle all the energies and exertions of the firemen and citizens to check its course; until a change in the direction of the wind enabled them successfully to apply their efforts to arrest its progress. Not, however, until after having swept over and destroyed the buildings on the space of ground from about 150 feet South of Vine Street to the South side of Callowhill Street, and from Delaware Avenue to the East side of Second Street, inclusive.

"By this disastrous fire, The Green Tree has sustained a loss of about \$95,000, about \$86,000 are for total losses and \$6,000 for partial. It affords the Company's Committee great pleasure to state that this large amount, divided among fifty-eight claimants, has been arranged in every case without litigation or difficulty. But on the contrary, the parties concerned have all approved; and in many cases have been much gratified with the prompt and liberal manner in which these losses have been adjusted and paid."

No historian need apologise for the tone of these comments, however, since it served to emphasize the fundamental character of the Green Tree and is expressive of its policy throughout every decade of its long eventful life.

(To be continued.)

© 2005 The Green Tree

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing thru April 17
SAM MAITIN ART SHOWS
 at **The Arthur Ross Gallery**
 220 S. 34th Street
 between Walnut & Spruce
 Closed Mondays.
 Open Tues - Fri, 10 am - 5 pm
 Sat & Sun, 12-5 pm
and at Hillel at Steinhardt Hall
 215 S. 39th Street
 between Walnut & Locust
 Open weekdays 9 am - 9 pm
 Sat & Sun 9 am - 5 pm
 Free and open to the public
 See page 5

Wednesday, March 16
SHCA Meetings
 6 pm Board Meeting
 7:30 pm General Meeting
 St. Peter's Church
 See page 1

Wednesday, March 30
Society Hill Dance Academy
 401 South 2nd St.
 215-574-3574
 Special dance class
 See page 23

Wednesday, April 20
SHCA Board Meeting
 Site to be determined, 7:30 pm
 Wed-Sat, April 27-30
Traditional Building Exhibition
 Pennsylvania Convention Center
 1101 Arch Street
 See page 27

Saturday, April 30
Spring Clean-Up Day
 See page 1

Sunday, May 1
Society Hill Open House Tour
 See page 9

Wednesday, May 18
SHCA General Membership Meeting
 See May/June Reporter for details



Avoid Trash Disposal & Snow Removal Fines

Listed below are the Streets Department's guidelines for proper trash disposal and snow removal. The City may issue a \$25 fine to any homeowner who violates these ordinances.

- Secure trash in a bag or trash can and place outside for collection no earlier than 8 p.m. the night before collection.
- Use only the designated trash collection point for your household, whether in front or to the rear of your house.

Trash Disposal

- Recycled items: Glass jars, bottles and aluminum containers (no plastics) should be emptied, rinsed and placed in a recycle bin. Newspapers and mixed paper should be bundled and tied with string or placed securely in a paper bag and placed along side the bin.

- Corner litter baskets are for pedestrian use only, not for household trash.

Snow Removal

- Shovel snow within six hours of snowfall's end.
- The path must be 30 inches wide and clear of snow and ice.

Trivia Question

Why do most of the phone numbers in Society Hill begin with "92"?

This stands for WA (or 9 and 2 on a phone dial), as in "Walnut" back from the days when phone numbers began with two letters. You can tell residents who have been here the longest since their phone numbers still begin with "92."

Society Hill and Washington Square's Premier Condominiums

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 Raw Space Priced At: **\$925,000**

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