

SOCIETY HILL

# Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.com

## The Best of Times, The Worst of Times

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity...*

Why does this legendary opening in Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities* sound so disturbingly close to home and ring so distressingly true? Is it because in the past forty or more years our community — originally settled in 1682 by William Penn — was reborn as a vibrant neighborhood enjoying the best of times? But now, in the first decade of the 21st century, has wisdom been abandoned for the foolishness of some political or bottom-line objective? Indeed, after the epoch of belief in the 1950's — when pioneers began to transform streets full of decrepit houses and

defunct factories into a friendly, family-oriented community — many Society Hillers now fear that we are entering an epoch of incredulity.

Why? Because of the imminent threat of two slots casinos so close to where we work and live, where we worship in historical churches and synagogues, where we attend classes and shop, where we dine at cozy local restaurants and where we stroll along cobblestone streets on our way to parks and museums — including Independence Hall, where our American system of democracy was first created. Many of us fear that the arrival of these gambling venues will be damaging to the quality of life we enjoy in Society Hill.

Not since 1965, more than forty years ago, has our community been so seriously threatened. At that time the plan to construct I-95 would have bisected our neighborhood with a roadway

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## Your Help is Needed Now!

### Society Hill and Queen Village Join Forces to Fight the Slots Casino at Columbus & Reed

In response to the State's decision to approve a slots-only casino along the riverfront at Columbus Boulevard and Reed Street, the Boards of the Society Hill Civic Association and the Queen Village Neighbors Association

have both unanimously decided to pool their resources and try to prevent this damaging development. Both groups are calling on all residents to contribute a significant amount designed to combat the single most significant threat since government officials, in 1965, decided to turn South Street into a six-lane interstate connector.

**Here's why:** The proposed Foxwoods Casino would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By its own official projections, Foxwoods predicts that at full steam it will attract 39,900 patrons on any typical Friday and Saturday night — for a combined weekend evening draw of about 80,000 customers. We expect that many of these people will be driving through our neighborhoods, possibly drunk and broke. The traffic situation along Columbus Boulevard is already abysmal, and the additional traffic to and from Foxwoods will force more cars onto local residential streets. Our own traffic engineer has analyzed Foxwoods' traffic studies and we find Foxwoods' conclusions full of

*continued on page 9*

**Foxwoods predicts 39,900 patrons on a typical weekend night**

<b>WED.</b>	<b>MARK YOUR CALENDAR</b>
March <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">21</span>	Society Hill Civic Association Meetings Wednesday, March 21, 2007 <hr/> <b>Old Pine Street Church, 412 Pine Street</b> <b>5:45 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting</b> All SHCA members are welcome. <b>7:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting</b> All Society Hill residents are invited.
<b>Prepare For The May 15 Primary at SHCA's Candidates' Forum</b> Meet Mayoral & District One Council Candidates — See back page calendar.	



SOCIETY HILL

# *Reporter*

**March/April 2007**  
**Society Hill Reporter**

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Please direct your editorial questions or submissions to Bernice Hamel via fax at 215-925-0877 or email benicehamel@comcast.net. Letters to the Editors will be considered for publication, but only if signed by the writer who provides contact information.

## SATURDAY, MAY 5TH

### Clean-Up Day: A Clean Sweep

Society Hill's annual spring Clean-Up Day takes place on Saturday, May 5th, between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. Join your neighbors by picking up brooms, trash bags and gloves outside of the 5th Street SuperFresh. SHCA Board Director Wally Wing is organizing the event. He reminds us to do a "clean sweep" on all blocks within our neighborhood's boundaries — which includes Walnut to Lombard Streets, and S. Front to 8th Streets. Contact Wally to volunteer or if you have questions at 215-592-9951 or wally.wing@verizon.net.



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


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TANIA RORKE, SHCA PRESIDENT

In 1965, residents in Society Hill and many neighboring communities united to prevent the building of an expressway that would have destroyed our neighborhoods. After a long, worthwhile fight, those communities learned that a “done deal” is not done until it is really done! (See article on page 15.) Today, in 2007, many of the same communities are coming together again to fight another battle — to prevent casinos from destroying our neighborhoods. This past December, we learned that SugarHouse and Foxwoods would each receive a license to operate slots in Philadelphia. Both casinos would be located along the Delaware River — SugarHouse to our north and Foxwoods to our south, which is only one mile from our community. We can only hope that the past will repeat itself and that this “done deal” is not done!

Over the past several months, meetings have been held in our community to address the “Casino Issue.” After listening to neighbors’ comments and concerns, it is clear that many in our community are against casinos and gambling in Philadelphia. There is outrage that the residents of this city did not have any say in this process. An anti-casino group, “Casino Free Philadelphia,” began a petition drive in the hopes of putting a legally binding referendum on the May 15 ballot that would disallow the zoning for casinos within 1,500 feet of any neighborhood. Many thanks to Society Hill’s Block Coordinators who circulated these petitions and collected hundreds of signatures for this effort. On February 14th, the petitions, with over 27,000 signatures, were handed over to City Council in the hopes that they would vote in favor of a referendum. While most citizens do not expect the State’s Act 71, which legalized gambling, to be repealed, they are hoping a referendum would prevent casinos from being built in close proximity to any residential neighborhood, (On page 6 you’ll learn how Pennsylvania became the only state in the country to legalize gambling without a voter referendum.)

On February 8, the SHCA called an emergency Board meeting to discuss the casino issue: how casinos would impact our community and what we as an association can and should do to voice our concerns. Our Board, like our community, has mixed feelings. However, we unanimously agreed that our organization is opposed to both sites identified by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB). We decided to join the Delaware River Neighborhood Alliance, a group made up of more than fifteen communities located along the Delaware River, from Port Richmond in the north to

Whitman Council in the south, in the hope of protecting our neighborhoods.

While SHCA opposes both sites selected and has joined this alliance, our Board has also decided to focus its primary efforts on preventing the building of a casino, identified by the PGCB as Foxwoods, at the present site selected, at Columbus Boulevard and Reed Streets. We will work with our closest neighbor, Queen Village, on these efforts. Queen Village and SHCA plan to file an appeal of the adjudication that was issued by the PGCB on February 2. We also plan to have a traffic study completed so that we can dispute many of the traffic statements Foxwoods submitted to the PGCB after the June 2 deadline for public comments. We are fortunate to have the support of Councilman Frank DiCicco on this issue. The Councilman plans to file an appeal of the casino decision and has secured funding from City Council to move forward with this. He has also refused to approve zoning changes for Foxwoods’ present site.

To protect and preserve our community, we need your support. A casino within a mile of our community will affect every Society Hill resident. Whether it is a decrease in property values, a rise in crime, an increase in traffic on our small streets or on the already overcrowded Columbus Boulevard, it will all have an impact on our quality of life. The SHCA must raise a significant amount of money to move forward with our legal fight — most likely \$300,000. Therefore, please consider making a generous tax-deductible donation to help fund this effort, which is described on page 9. We need as much support as possible, so we ask you to be as generous as possible. Let’s make it clear to both our city and state governments that if casinos are here to stay, they must select more appropriate sites that will not negatively impact our vibrant residential communities.

In my President’s Message, I usually touch upon a number of topics, but I have devoted much of this column to our fight against casinos — even though I am personally not opposed to gambling. I actually enjoy a night out in Atlantic City or a weekend in Las Vegas. But I do not agree with the “politics” and deals that have brought gambling to Philadelphia’s waterfront neighborhoods.

In conclusion, I wish to remind you that SHCA’s next General Membership Meeting, on March 21, will host a Candidate’s Forum for mayoral candidates and those running for the First District seat on City Council. I am sure that casinos will be one of the major topics addressed. I hope to see you then.



**Tania Rorke SHCA  
President**

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## Best of Times, Worst of Times

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built on a high embankment and passing between Independence Park and our waterfront. A summary about how that particular “done deal” was undone through the efforts of citizens appears on page 15.

You will most likely want to learn more about the behind-the-scene events that resulted in the selection of the two casino sites, Foxwoods and SugarHouse. On page 6 you’ll find a report entitled “How Pennsylvania Became the Only State to Legalize Gambling Without a Voter Referendum.”

Citizens are responding in several ways to the undemocratic process foisted upon our city’s riverfront neighborhoods by *unelected appointees*. First, a lawsuit was filed at the State Supreme Court in November 2006, seeking to declare the Gaming Act unconstitutional as it applies to stand-alone casinos. The plaintiffs, a coalition of citizens’ groups, contend that the Pennsylvania legislature had not issued guidelines for determining the social impact of casinos on nearby neighborhoods, and that leaving those judgments to the discretion of the unelected members of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB) is unconstitutional.

Philadelphia’s citizens were never given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they want casinos in the city, although we were made aware that two out of five competing sites would be chosen — four of these sites located along the Delaware waterfront. On December 20, 2006, the PGCB made its decision, issuing licenses to SugarHouse and Foxwoods, both on the waterfront. As word began to spread about the selection of these casino sites so close to residential neighborhoods, citizens began to react and fight back. One realistic way to oppose this undemocratic process imposed upon us is to respond through a decidedly democratic process: a petition drive.

Casino Free Philadelphia, a coalition of citizen organizations, was formed last summer. This citizen action group expects to place on the May 15, 2007 primary ballot an amendment to the City Charter prohibiting the construction of a casino within 1,500 feet of any home, school, library, house of worship, park or playground. Coalition activists, several of whom are Society Hillers, have worked long and hard. On page 5 you’ll read about how two of our many neighbors went about collecting signatures for this drive, which ended up as **one of the largest petition efforts in Philadelphia’s history!**

More recently, on February 8th, SHCA responded to this impending crisis with an emergency meeting of our Board of Directors to determine our association’s position. We had to decide whether to continue opposing only Foxwoods, located so close to our neighborhood at Columbus Boulevard & Reed Street, or whether we should take a broader position opposing both Foxwoods and SugarHouse, which is farther north on Delaware Avenue adjacent to the residential neighborhood of Fishtown.

After three hours of discussion on that cold February night, SHCA’s Board resolved to go on record against both casinos — since these two riverfront gambling venues will offer an easy, north-south Las Vegas type strip, located on one major road along the riverfront — same highway, different names! Surely, the Gaming Board gave more consideration to transportation convenience for casino patrons than on how gambling would affect nearby thriving residential communities.

Also during that special SHCA Board meeting we agreed to focus our legal efforts on preventing the construction of the Foxwoods casino. A motion was unanimously approved to join with the Queen Village Neighbors’ Association — our adjacent neighborhood to the south — to oppose Foxwoods and split the cost for our legal struggle, and perhaps the cost of another traffic study. (SHCA’s traffic report critiqued Foxwood’s traffic study, which asserted that casinos would not negatively impact our riverfront communities. While our report outlined the flaws and weaknesses of Foxwoods’ traffic claims, we did not have the time or financial resources to conduct our own, independent traffic study.)

Fifteen north-to-south riverfront neighborhood associations have now joined together to share ideas and volunteer efforts, as well as lobby City Council members. It is critical that council members understand the depth of negative feelings their constituents have regarding gambling sites in our neighborhoods.

### What is the next step for SHCA?

Clearly, we will obtain legal counsel to oppose the PGCB, as well as conduct our own thorough traffic study. These efforts will require professional assistance, for which funds will be required. Please consider making as generous a donation as possible toward our collective fight against these casinos.

Stay tuned. We will keep you informed. Let us know if you wish to receive regular updates via email — and if so, let us have your current email address by sending a note to SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio, at [mattdejulio@aol.com](mailto:mattdejulio@aol.com).

**SHCA’s Board resolved to go on record to oppose both casinos — SugarHouse and Foxwoods.**

## Collecting Anti-Casino Signatures

**B**undled up against the bitter wind, Society Hill volunteers Pamela Todd and Penny Batcheler “walked the walk” for days, as part of one of the largest petition drives in Philadelphia’s history. The goal? A referendum question on the May 15 Primary Ballot asking voters to decide on a change to the City’s Home Rule Charter that will prohibit casinos within 1,500 feet of homes, schools, libraries, religious buildings, parks, pools and playgrounds.

The duo canvassed the 300 blocks of Spruce Street and S. American Streets, and also staked out several local supermarkets. Everywhere they found citizens eager to show City Council their anger about the State’s decision to place casinos in Philadelphia’s residential neighborhoods. Hospitable Hillers invited the intrepid petitioners in to warm their frozen toes and share concerns about traffic, crime, glitz and eminent domain abuse.

Of course, the great majority willingly signed their names for this cause, but surprisingly Pamela and Penny encountered a few who

welcome gambling — for the entertainment or perceived lower property taxes (not applicable here in Philadelphia). One person echoed a construction worker who yelled out to them, “It’s a done deal... Go home and bake cookies!” Instead, these two determined women just muttered a refined “HA!” then tightened their parka strings, lowered their heads into the wind, and marched off for just a few more names before calling it a night.



**Penny Batcheler, right, collecting a signature from SHCA Board Director Sandra Rothman.**

Penny and Pamela were only two of many thoughtful and caring neighbors who “walked the walk” throughout Society Hill, collecting hundreds of signatures. We are pleased to report that a total of over 27,000 signed petitions from all concerned neighborhoods were delivered to City Hall on Valentine’s Day, February 14th.



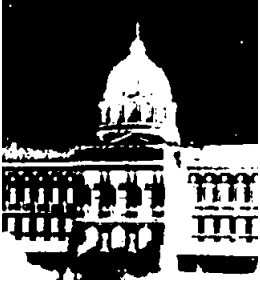
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## How Pennsylvania Became the Only State to Legalize Gambling Without a Voter Referendum!



The bill was passed with no public scrutiny, no public hearings and no public input.

While serving as the Mayor of Philadelphia, Edward G. Rendell (now Governor Rendell) attempted to establish riverboat gambling in the city. Amidst a great outcry from citizens and aided by the mainstream press, his effort was defeated.

### **We now jump to the Fourth of July weekend, 2004 — to report on the illegitimate origin of Act 71:**

On that Fourth of July weekend, Pennsylvania House Bill # 2330 — a 33-line bill on the subject of “background checks for people who work at the race tracks” — was on its constitutionally mandated third hearing. This bill had been in the House for 47 days with no amendments. It had been in the Senate for 100 days with no amendments. By 2:00 a.m. on that weekend, all 33 lines of House Bill 2330 had been crossed off and a revised bill with 144 pages of amendments established the means to bring gambling to Pennsylvania. The bill was passed with no public scrutiny, no public hearings and no public input. In fact, most of the legislators did not even know what they were voting for, because the bill now appeared to be on its third hearing. Despite the fact that nothing in the original bill remained, it was allowed to fulfill the constitutional mandate of three hearings and became known as Act 71. With this, Pennsylvania became the only state to legalize gambling without a voter referendum.

Act 71 established the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (PGCB), which has seven members plus two observers, all political appointments made by the Governor and other state officers.

Thus, Act 71 gave the Gaming Board authority to decide that two slots parlors would be located in Philadelphia. This Act promises property tax relief for residents of Pennsylvania, with the exception of Philadelphians who will receive wage tax relief. Such relief would take effect after gambling revenue exceeds \$400 million, projected to occur by the year 2009. Pennsylvania’s justification for Act 71 is that the Commonwealth will receive 54 percent of revenues from slots gambling — in contrast to other states which collect lower percentages from their gambling revenues.

Yes, but, we ask: *What about citizens who don't pay wage taxes, because they don't work or because they are retired? What relief will they receive?*

### **Philadelphia’s Response: It’s A Done Deal!**

Our city government’s response to the State takeover is that “It’s a done deal” and we have to make the best of it. Until recently there has been very little press coverage about the imminent arrival of slots casinos in the city. We wonder why the Philadelphia’s mainstream press has remained essentially silent or very low-key on the subject of casinos.

**Casino Free Philadelphia:** In the summer of 2006, when news leaked out regarding the Gaming Board’s decision on the number of casinos and their potential locations, citizens living in those areas grew alarmed. They mobilized, creating an organization called “Casino Free Philadelphia.” Leaders have emerged — utilizing the talents of volunteers who give of their time and donate funds to oppose the imposition of casinos in our city. Ann Dicker, a recent candidate for the state representative seat vacated by Marie Lederer, has been instrumental in organizing meetings of communities along the Delaware. The group’s key strategists are Jethro Heiko — a professional organizer, named as the city’s “top reformer” by *Philadelphia Magazine*; and Daniel Hunter — employed by “Training for Change,” who has coordinated citizen action groups all over the world. In addition, Ed Goppelt is serving a vital role as Casino Free’s webmaster.

**The Two Selected Casino Sites:** SugarHouse, the northernmost site, is located just 200 feet from the thriving community of Fishtown and close to Old City, Northern Liberties and Kensington. Foxwoods, the second riverfront site, is situated only 1½ miles from Independence Hall in Society Hill and close to Queen Village, Bella Vista, Pennsport, and Whitman Plaza, all riverfront residential neighborhoods. Residents from these communities are deeply concerned about the aesthetic, environmental, social and economic impact on their neighborhoods from SugarHouse and Foxwoods — each of which will occupy many acres, and each will ultimately contain 5,000 slot machines, more than any casino in Atlantic City except for Bally’s.

**Traffic Challenges:** Currently, Columbus Boulevard near Home Depot, the Riverview Movie Theaters, Ikea and the adjacent shopping complex is congested by major traffic jams most hours of every day; the situation is especially bad on weekends.

A more serious concern, acknowledged by casino developers, is that major highway construction will be required along Columbus Boulevard to accommodate the casinos. This means building a new off ramp — resulting in the “eminent domain” removal of many private homes, as well as business establishments. Society Hill won’t escape the negative effects of the construction that will continue for years after Foxwoods is up and running. Meanwhile, our neighborhoods will have to absorb major traffic problems. Increased air pollution will be another unwelcome by-product from all that automobile traffic.

#### **Security and Safety of Our Neighborhoods:**

We fear that gamblers who lose their last dollar and can’t get home will begin to populate neighboring streets — stealing from and harassing residents as well as businesses. Based on the experiences of other communities that had initially welcomed the income derived from casinos, these gambling sites tend to give rise to many disturbances — including increased auto accidents caused by drunk drivers, more bankruptcies, and embezzlements to cover casino debts. The National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, located in Washington, D.C., ([www.ncalg.org](http://www.ncalg.org)) reports that the number of robberies, aggravated assaults, thefts and burglaries increase by startling percentage points wherever gambling exists.

Businesses are also negatively affected — particularly restaurants — since casinos always subsidize their meals to encourage people to stay and gamble. The State has actually permitted the serving of unlimited free alcoholic beverages to casino patrons.

#### **Other major concerns are:**

- 1| The aesthetic impact of casinos on neighborhoods and their degradation of our waterfront;
- 2| Quality-of-life issues for citizens;
- 3| The detrimental impact casinos would have on tourism in our historic district, specifically damaging visitation to Independence National Historical Park. In fact, a Gaming Board member admitted that he did not favor a casino in the center of Philadelphia, because it would “cheapen our city’s history.”

**Legal Actions:** A suit was filed on November 1, 2006, with the State Supreme Court, which seeks to declare the Gaming Act unconstitutional as it

applies to stand-alone casinos. The plaintiffs (organized by Casino Free Philadelphia) contend that the Pennsylvania legislature has not issued guidelines for determining the social impact of casinos on nearby neighborhoods, and that leaving those judgments to the discretion of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board is unconstitutional. As of this date, the Court has not said whether it will take this case. Read the full report by going to: [www.hallwatch.org/news/1162421985211](http://www.hallwatch.org/news/1162421985211)

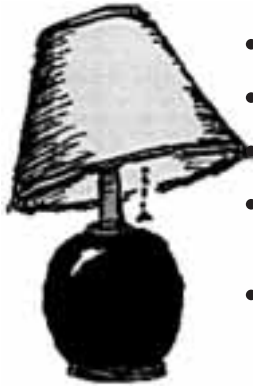
**Decision Day:** On December 20, 2006, the Gaming Board announced its two selections out of the five proposed casino developments. They chose SugarHouse and Foxwoods — both riverfront sites determined by many to be the worst potential sites in terms of the aesthetic and negative impacts on the environment and their nearby residential neighborhoods. Foxwoods, specifically, is located adjacent to Society Hill and Queen Village, thriving and revitalized historical residential communities — surely the worst possible of the five proposed sites. Upon learning of this site decision, the Society Hill Civic Association united with the Queen Village Neighbors’ Association and established a joint opposition only to Foxwoods. However, as our communities have learned more about the harmful effect of two casinos along the riverfront — less than three miles away from each other and impacting re-emerging communities, such as Northern Liberties — our civic associations have decided to oppose not only Foxwoods but SugarHouse, as well — in principle.

The Gaming Board’s selections have ultimately resulted in the mobilization of more than fifteen civic associations along the waterfront, as well as Philadelphia citizens from all parts of the city and all walks of life.

In addition, a Casino Free petition drive was organized throughout our neighborhoods with the goal of placing an amendment to the City Charter on the May 15, 2007 ballot. The amendment would restrict casinos from being built closer than 1,500 feet to any neighborhood, school, church or synagogue. (The amendment would, however, allow a casino to be built at the Navy Yard.) In twenty days, volunteers collected more than 27,000 signatures for the petition, which required a minimum of 20,000 signatures to be placed on the ballot. The petition will then require the support of nine City Council members in order that the referendum be placed on the May 15 ballot.

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**LETTER TO THE EDITORS**

*"...it does not require a majority to prevail,  
but rather an irate, tireless minority  
keen to set brush fires in people's minds..."*

—Samuel Adams

**The "C" in SHCA also stands for courage.**

My husband Ed and I appreciate the continued opposition of the SHCA to the proposed casinos, and strongly encourage you to continue the effort to stop this usurpation of our right to determine what's best not just for our neighborhood but for the entire city.

Act 71 will not transform, it will deform all that we value about city living. Our elected officials willfully passed this legislation in the dead of night — clearly, they feared that knowledge and transparency could have generated a far different outcome. Now that the full ramifications are more

apparent, I would hope that the SHCA will see fit to join with other organizations to push for no less than the repeal of Act 71.

Now more than ever, our civic association needs to present a robust and vigorous opposition to this and other issues that threaten our neighborhood; unless we are seen as having standing, any chance of retaining our ability to maintain the character of Society Hill (and Queen Village, Bella Vista, as well as all the other neighborhoods) will be lost. Cave on this one and we might as well throw in the towel.

Sincerely, Pat Coyle

**Your Help is Needed Now!**

*continued from page 1*

errors and omissions. This development and its impacts are entirely inconsistent with the historic characters of Society Hill, Queen Village and other nearby neighborhoods. We will see increases in crime and serious burdens on our local police force, which is already stretched too thin. There are many other reasons to fight this casino, but these are the most obvious. We are not against casinos per se, but situating them adjacent to highly residential neighborhoods is a terrible idea. The government is experimenting with our quality of life: Philadelphia is the largest city in the world in which casinos of this size would be located.

**Here's how you can help:** Society Hill and Queen Village have hired attorneys and will also be hiring additional traffic engineers and consultants to wage this fight. And by the time you read this, two other community civic organizations will most likely have joined us. They are Pennsport and Whitman Council. Our collective effort to wage this fight will be extremely expensive, and so our goal is to raise at least \$300,000 to cover legal fees and experts. (In the event not all funds are used, we will offer to return your proportionate share). Our only source of money is *you*. This is our neighborhood, and the time has come for us to protect it. We must do so ourselves, because our state and now our city are failing us.

**Your part:** We call on each of you to give as much as you can. How much do you pay in annual property taxes? Please consider donating

half of that amount, if you can. Your donation can be made to the "Society Hill Fund" and will be **tax deductible**. If you can donate \$100 we can use it; if you can afford \$5,000, please consider giving that much. Our neighborhood has contributed generously to many causes over the years, but none to oppose something as potentially damaging as the Foxwoods casino. We wish we could be less foreboding and we wish we all had started much earlier. Nevertheless, we are convinced that fundraising is worthwhile and that these casinos are not even close to a "done deal." There are opportunities we can exploit, through the courts and through our government, to shape the destiny of our own neighborhoods.

**We thank you  
from the bottom  
of our hearts!**

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**BASIC FACTS ABOUT  
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- Foxwoods proposes to build its casino about 800 feet away from residences
- SugarHouse proposes to construct its casino only 200 feet away from homes
- Ultimately each casino will have 5,000 slot machines — more than any casino in Atlantic City, except for Bally's
- With the addition of Foxwoods and SugarHouse, I-95 will have four casinos along this heavily traveled roadway. (There are already racetrack casinos at Bensalem and Chester on I-95.)
- Foxwoods and SugarHouse will be situated less than 2.5 miles from each other on Delaware Avenue, aka Columbus Boulevard
- Foxwoods' owners claim that at the start of operations, Delaware Avenue traffic at this casino site will increase by only an additional 15,000 cars per day

For more information, go to:  
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So what can we do? Stopping the casinos will take time, but most importantly, WILL require money! We need funds to help cover the cost of lawsuits to fight the intrusion of these gambling developments that will invade our residential spaces and the community we live in and love.

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**H O T O F F T H E P R E S S**

The Pennsylvania Gaming Board awarded the Foxwoods Development Company a slots license in Philadelphia (out of five competing sites) because Foxwoods does not have a casino in New Jersey, as do the other competing casino “wannabees.” However, Foxwoods never disclosed to the PGCB that it already had an agreement to pursue a gambling site in Atlantic City. This is a possible conflict of interest. One of the reasons the PGCB selected Foxwoods was on the basis that it did not have a casino in Atlantic City — because any gambling company with venues in both states would likely steer its more affluent patrons to Atlantic City, where the tax on gambling proceeds is 9.2 percent, compared with Pennsylvania’s 55 percent. (That means that a New Jersey casino can keep 91 cents on every dollar, while in Pennsylvania only 45 cents will be kept.) Learning that Foxwoods is seeking a casino site in Atlantic City at the same time it is planning to build a slots parlor in Philadelphia may be good news for our community. In fact, upon learning of this news, Councilman DiCicco suggested that this is further proof of the Gaming Board’s flawed site selection.

**H O T O F F T H E P R E S S**

We have learned much about Foxwoods recently. In fact, the corporation calling itself Foxwoods claims that it is owned and controlled primarily by a lost native American tribe, the Pequots. They are now the richest tribe in American history. The story behind these revelations is told in a book written by Jeff Benedict, who on February 5th, gave a presentation to neighbors at Old St. Joseph’s Church. The book — *Without Reservation: How a Controversial Indian Tribe Rose to Power and Built the World’s Largest Casino* — discusses the hidden cost of gambling to a community. Ordinarily the book retails for \$29, but in our effort to raise funds to oppose the casino, it is now being sold to our community at the cost of \$50. To purchase your copy, please contact longtime Society Hill resident Norma Van Dyke at 215-923-1721 or nvandyke2@verizon.net. We hope that through the sale of this informative book we will raise an additional \$3,000 toward our legal fight to oppose casinos in our “front yards.” Incidentally, the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut happens to be the largest casino in the entire world — grossing more than one billion dollars every year.

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 Lessons from the successful citizen fight to depress and cover I-95
 

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## When A Riverfront “Done Deal” Was Undone

After years of planning, in early 1965 the “done deal” final design for the Center City section of I-95 was unveiled to the public by the display of a model showing the highway on a high embankment as it passed between the historic waterfront (future home of Penn’s Landing) and Independence National Historical Park, birthplace of our country. All pedestrian and vehicular access to the river between Spring and Bainbridge Streets was cut off except for two one-block tunnels at Dock and Spruce Streets. The plan was approved by the Philadelphia Streets Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Highways (now PennDOT) and the federal Bureau of Public Roads (now U.S. Department of Transportation), as well as the Philadelphia City Planning Commission — headed by Edmund Bacon, world-famous city planner. These agencies with final say were backed by the powerful trucking, automobile, highway construction and cement lobbies.

### The opposition: Who was it?

The citizenry, especially those familiar with “America’s most historic square mile,” was horrified at the design. Two new *ad hoc* groups and one influential existing group combined forces to fight back:

- The Philadelphia Architects Committee was formed primarily by a group of younger, less-established architects. It developed a counter-proposal calling for depression of the highway and a six-block cover from Arch to Pine Streets. The Committee built a model to show its plan.
- The Committee to Preserve Philadelphia’s Historic Gateway (the last three words later became “America’s Birthplace”) was formed to serve as the out-in-front political and public relations voice of the fight. Its members were primarily young professionals living in Center City.
- Old Philadelphia Development Corporation, now Center City Development Corporation, a private corporation charged initially with guiding the implementation of the plan for the restoration of Society Hill, already existed, with a board of directors which included some of the most prestigious names from the business and professional communities. It acted as a behind-the-scenes liaison between the two new committees and governmental power.

### The process: What steps did the three-pronged opposition take?

- 1| It very carefully articulated what was wrong with the official plan and published an elaborate document which presented the alternative plan, complete with an engineer’s feasibility study.
- 2| It formed a team of a few qualified people to tell the opposition story and frame the debate.
- 3| It courted the news media. One OPDC director enlisted the then-publisher of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* to support the opposition. That invaluable support lasted through the entire fight.
- 4| It courted the city, state and federal elected officials by making personal calls upon them.
- 5| It created a large constituency by successfully requesting numerous organizations simply to “endorse” the effort, not give money or take political action. This step gained 90 local names, starting with the obvious historical societies, preservation groups and close-by civic associations and expanding to include civic associations throughout the region, business and professional groups, labor unions, governmental advisory groups and others. When the effort went national in order to increase pressure on the federal government, 65 new groups endorsed; 23 states were represented. The names of 25 recognized local civic leaders were on the stationery for local purposes, and 40 similar national names for nationwide mailings, all recruited mainly through the efforts of OPDC directors. This impressive organizational and individual constituency was the strongest weapon, apart from the rightness of the cause. It quickly gave respectability and, as it grew, political muscle.

### The victorious outcome: How and when did the fight succeed?

The final victory was agreement by the city, state and federal governments (in that successive order) to depress and cover the highway for three and one-half blocks. It was achieved by the relentless pressure of the three opposition organizations, by the slowly increasing number of elected-official supporters and by the news media. This result came finally in early 1972, seven years after the fight started.

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It was a done deal. So what was the fight about?

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## TESTIMONY OF JEFF BENEDICT

## Before the City of Philadelphia's City Council, Committee on Rules, February 21, 2007

On Wednesday February 21, 2007, Philadelphia City Council held hearings on a number of zoning bills related to the casinos. Many people testified that day. We are proud that two SHCA Board Directors were among the witnesses, and we are pleased to reprint the testimony of our President Tania Rorke (on page 21) and Board Director Paul Boni, Esq.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify on the hidden economic and social impacts of casinos. I am from Connecticut, a state that spent the better part of a decade experimenting with casinos as a source of tax revenue and as a vehicle to jump-start a local economy. We learned from sad experience that casinos are simply bad economic policy. Despite receiving \$2.4 billion in revenue from Foxwoods over a 15-year period, as well as a similar amount from the state's other casino, Mohegan Sun, Connecticut recently took the extraordinary step of passing legislation to outlaw the construction of any more casinos, a move that came in the face of promises to double existing gambling revenues to the state with the addition of two more casinos.

The aim of my testimony is first to offer the Connecticut experience as a reference point for what Philadelphia might expect if the state follows through with its plans to permit the development of two casinos (Foxwoods and SugarHouse) along the Delaware riverfront. Second, I will identify general themes illustrating why casinos are an enemy to local business and the local economy.

### Background

At the outset it is important to acknowledge that there are significant differences between constructing casinos in a city the size of Philadelphia versus ones developed in rural areas, as was done in Connecticut. Population figures, traffic patterns, infrastructure and labor force are just a few of the differences that will put qualifiers on comparisons between casinos in urban areas and those in rural areas. Generally we can conclude that most negative aspects of casinos would be worse in a densely populated urban setting.

Nonetheless, certain universal truths about casinos remain.

One, casinos never get smaller.

Two, in order for a casino to succeed, its customers must lose money. By definition, states banking on tax relief from casinos are counting on the state's consumers to lose money gambling.

Third, the rate of problem and pathological gambling doubles within 50 miles of a casino.

All three of these truths should give Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania cause to pause. The first one is a warning shot to legislators counting on new tax revenues and to current Philadelphia businesses who will soon find an unfriendly competitor in the neighborhood.

But it's the third truth, the one about gambling addiction rates doubling within 50 miles of a new casino, which is the single most important conclusion in the national gambling impact study done for Congress in 1999. Casinos in rural areas or

(on page 23). Immediately below and on pages 18-19, we reprint the illuminating testimony of Jeff Benedict, based on his experience of casino operations in Connecticut. Jeff is author of the book *Without Reservation —The Making of America's Most Powerful Indian Tribe and Foxwoods, the World's Largest Casino*.

in destination cities like Las Vegas and Atlantic City require patrons to travel relatively long distances, a fact that minimizes to some degree the number of potential problem or pathological gamblers. The placement of casinos on the edge of densely populated urban neighborhoods should set off warning sirens considering that the rate of problem and pathological gamblers typically doubles within 50 miles.

Here in Philadelphia the casinos are proposed for locations within walking distance of hundreds of thousands of row-house residents.

### The Connecticut Experience

Whenever casino operators want to penetrate new markets, they typically promise legislators and state officials two things: tax revenues and jobs. Connecticut got that pitch in the 1990's, a time when the state faced the prospect of some of its largest budget deficits in history, which were coupled with a downturn in the economy. In 1993, Foxwoods approached state officials with the promise of tax relief. A couple of years later a second casino was built. By 2003 Connecticut was receiving over \$400 million annually from the slot machines at the state's two casinos, which employ over 20,000 people.

That same year casino developers were pushing for at least two more casinos in the state, a development that promised to double the state's slot machine revenues from \$400 million to \$800 million. This time, however, the state fought aggressively to reject the two new casinos and ultimately passed a law insuring that the state would never get another casino. A Republican governor, a Democratic-led legislature and a bi-partisan, state-wide non-profit coalition worked together to bring about this landmark, anti-casino legislation just ten years after embracing casinos as a source of new, easy revenue.

If having two casinos and \$400 million in slot revenues was such a good thing, it begs the question: why did the state fight so hard to stop more casinos?

Ten years of experience with the casinos taught the state a hard lesson: the \$400 million in annual revenue had many hidden strings and ultimately wasn't worth the costs of doing business with the gambling industry. The promise of new tax revenues turned out to be a mirage. Labor, affordable housing and the infrastructure needed to support the casinos were inadequate, putting unforeseen strains and costs on the state and its municipalities, costs ultimately passed on to the taxpayers. And social costs generated by a new wave of gambling addicts brought bankruptcies, property foreclosures, crime, divorce and suicides, all of which had hidden price tags for the state.

*continued on page 18*

*continued from page 17*

### **Casinos Don't Create New Tax Revenue**

Perhaps the most attractive thing casinos promise is tax relief. The standard line comes in the form of a question: 'Why watch your residents travel across state lines to gamble when you could capture tax revenues by having an in-state casino?'

In Pennsylvania's case, we've heard a variation of this argument in relation to the number of state residents that currently travel to Atlantic City to gamble. A couple of casinos in Philadelphia, the argument goes, would capture tax revenues from gamblers currently traveling to New Jersey to gamble.

But it's important to consider what else will occur.

First, local businesses and competing industries are the first thing to take a hit when casinos enter a new market. Casinos rely heavily on customers who will spend their discretionary income to gamble. This puts them in direct competition with other businesses and industries that rely on consumers spending discretionary income: tourism, food and beverage, entertainment, retail, and the service industry. Restaurants, bars, stores and entertainment venues in proximity to casinos will experience a drop off in business. When business drops off, tax revenues drop, too.

This gets to the heart of the myth that casinos generate new tax revenues and stimulate a local economy. On the contrary, casinos siphon revenues away from other tax-generating businesses. The new taxes from casinos aren't really new at all; rather the taxes paid by casinos represent taxes that used to come from other businesses that now are in direct competition with the casino's customer base.

It is important to note that Las Vegas and Atlantic City, to a lesser extent, are cities where casinos are the primary industry driving the economy. These two cities are destination places predicated on gambling. Philadelphia is not.

### **Labor**

Revenue isn't the only thing casinos strip away from surrounding businesses. Casinos are almost exclusively staffed by service industry employees. Cooks, clerks, chambermaids, bartenders, hostesses, custodians — these are the jobs that must be filled in a casino. And the demand to fill these jobs will steadily grow as the casinos grow.

Initially, the employees required to fill the ever-expanding casino will come from the local labor pool. Again, local businesses in competition with casinos will take a hit. Eventually, however, the casinos often reach a point where circumstances require them to recruit and import a labor force to meet its labor force needs. As this took place in Connecticut, the influx of new employees exposed other hidden costs, from affordable housing to funding for public schools.

### **Affordable Housing**

It is not uncommon for the annual salary of a casino employee to fall below \$30,000. The influx of workers making less than \$30,000 per year creates a big demand for affordable housing. In Connecticut, the county hosting Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun is in an affordable housing crisis. This in turn has had a major impact on the public school systems, which are funded by property taxes, and on social service providers.

### **Infrastructure**

Casinos are traffic generators. In Connecticut, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun are responsible for an additional 80,000 motor vehicles per day on the highways and roadways leading to and from their facilities. Traffic patterns at casinos are unlike traffic patterns generated by arenas, stadiums, movie complexes, and large shopping malls. Casinos typically remain open around the clock. However, there are peak times for business and often a steady stream of busses and other oversize vehicles making deliveries.

Traffic proved to be a primary reason behind the business community in Connecticut opposing the construction of more casinos in urban areas. It became clear that businesses relying on on-time delivery, not to mention large employers with a significant commuter workforce, would have been severely impacted had more casinos been built.

### **Addiction Made Easy**

Legislators often see slot machines as a painless way to raise revenue. But they fail to appreciate that slot machines are the most addictive device in a casino. The danger in putting casinos in densely populated urban centers is that slot machines will capture many new problem gamblers who are suddenly within miles — if not walking distance.

Connecticut, for example, had one gambling addiction treatment facility shortly after Foxwoods opened. Today the state



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has seventeen state-funded problem gambler clinics — and mental health and addiction clinicians insist there is a need for much more. And this takes into account that the entire state has just over 3 million residents and less than 200,000 people live within 25 miles of the two casinos. Philadelphia's population demographics, of course, are much different and the potential for addiction is much greater.

According to law enforcement officials, the county hosting Connecticut's two casinos has seen gambling addiction surpass drug addiction as the primary cause behind white collar crimes such as larceny and embezzlement. Bank robberies have increased, along with other crimes carried out by individuals willing to stop at nothing to get out from under gambling debts.

Bankruptcies and property foreclosures have also been an unexpected consequence of bringing casinos to Connecticut. Many individuals who would previously drive to Atlantic City or fly to Las Vegas once or twice a year now have the ability to visit the casino after work and on the weekends. Paychecks are lost and savings accounts, retirement funds, pension plans and college savings are tapped. Before long, individuals are in way over their heads and forced to file bankruptcy and even sell their homes to pay off gambling debts.

Between January 1998 and January 2005, eight percent of the consumer bankruptcies filed in 16 towns closest to Connecticut's two casinos listed gambling losses within the year leading

up to bankruptcy. And in 2003 and 2004, Foxwoods, one of the two groups that plans to develop a casino in Philadelphia, appeared sixteen times as a creditor in foreclosure actions in Connecticut's courts.

Those hardest hit by gambling debt are often senior citizens on fixed incomes. A study by the Pennsylvania State College of Medicine and the University of Pennsylvania found that casino bus trips can be fraught with financial peril for some seniors. Researchers surveyed a random sample of 843 people 65 and older and found that almost 11 percent were "at risk" gamblers — people who had recently laid down a single bet of \$100 or lost more than they could afford to. Unlike younger gamblers with greater earning power, many elderly gamblers can't work to pay off gambling debts.

Crime, bankruptcy and property foreclosure all bring costs to a state.

**Summary**

Casinos on the Delaware Riverfront will bring in tax revenue. The question is at what cost to other businesses, to the nearby neighborhoods, and to the state and city? Gambling revenue is not new money and it's not free money.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Jeff Benedict is author of *Without Reservation* and Co-Founder and Past President of The Connecticut Alliance against Casino Expansion, Inc.

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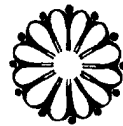
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## TESTIMONY BY TANIA RORKE

**Before the City of Philadelphia's City Council, Committee on Rules, February 21, 2007**

My name is Tania Rorke, and I am President of the Society Hill Civic Association, which is a founding member of the Delaware River Neighborhood Alliance. This past December, we learned that SugarHouse and Foxwoods would each receive a license to operate slots in Philadelphia. Both casinos would be located along the Delaware River, SugarHouse to our north and Foxwoods to our south. The precise mid-point is Spruce Street, in the heart of Society Hill. Our Association does not oppose gambling or casinos; however it does oppose putting them adjacent to highly residential neighborhoods. We are opposed to *both* sites identified by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

We are also upset by the entire process that brought gambling to Philadelphia. In 2004, over the Fourth of July weekend, Pennsylvania House Bill #2330, a 33-line bill on the subject of "background checks for people who work at race tracks," was on its constitutionally mandated third hearing. The bill had been in the house for 47 days with no amendments. It had been in the Senate for 100 days with no amendments. However in the early morning hours, all 33 lines of House Bill 2330 were deleted and a revised bill with 144 pages of amendments established the means to bring gambling to Pennsylvania. This bill was passed with no public scrutiny, no public hearings and no public input. Pennsylvania became the only state to legalize gambling without a voter referendum. How could this happen? Is it so shocking to learn that from 1999 to 2002, nearly \$2 million dollars in campaign contributions were poured into Pennsylvania politics by gambling interests, or that over \$800,000 of those contributions went directly to the Rendell campaign? We are sickened.

We have set our sights on the Foxwoods' site. Over the last few years, there has been a tremendous amount of development along the southern portion of Christopher Columbus Boulevard. The current roadway system is often unable to accommodate the present volume of traffic. Imagine adding 40,000 cars a day. Many of these cars will find their way onto our local residential streets. While Foxwoods has proposed improvements for the roadways to remedy the situation, a traffic consultant hired by our organization has found Foxwoods conclusions and remedies full of errors and omissions. This development and its impacts are terribly inconsistent with the historic character of our communities. We also expect to see an increase in crime — placing serious burdens on our local police force, which is already stretched too thin.

Over 15 communities, stretching from Whitman to Port Richmond, representing over 200,000 residents, have united in opposition to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board's decision to license two category II slot machine facilities along the Delaware River. Over 27,000 residents signed petitions in the hopes of putting a legally binding referendum on the May 15th primary ballot which would disallow the zoning of casinos within 1,500 feet of a neighborhood. We are here to ask each and every member of City Council — and the Mayor — to help us in our battle to protect and preserve the quality of life in our neighborhoods that many have worked a lifetime to build. We hope you will stand with Councilman DiCicco in his efforts to promote community interests by supporting his legislative agenda. If Philadelphia is getting casinos — we ask that you demand an independent study to identify the best sites for gaming in the city. The City of Philadelphia has the power and should decide where to put these casinos. Thank you.

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If you have an interest and want to get involved, please contact me or stop by our 5th Ward constituent services office at Suite 1000, 437 Chestnut Street. Thank you graciously for your interest in our great city and community. Please contact the 5th Ward GOP!

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## TESTIMONY BY PAUL BONI

Before the City of Philadelphia's City Council, Committee on Rules, February 21, 2007

## The City Can Control Where Casinos Are Built

There are many legal questions still in dispute concerning the casinos. Is the State Gaming Law constitutional? Did the State engage in a fair and honest process in evaluating the various applications? These questions have yet to be answered definitively.

But there is a settled question that has not received enough attention: the plain reality is that the City of Philadelphia has complete authority and control to affect the siting of the two casinos. Instead of the two sites identified by the State, the City can zone for gambling other properties within the City limits.

We know this because the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has said so. In June of 2005 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down as unconstitutional the State's attempt to preempt the City's local land use and zoning powers as they relate to casinos. The Court explained that the State did not provide the Gaming Control Board with sufficient standards about how to select the site. The power over land use regulation and zoning was therefore restored to the City of Philadelphia. In other words, the state cannot dictate where the casinos should be located. If you want to read the Court's decision go to: [www.courts.state.pa.us/opposting/supreme/out/j-19-2005mo.pdf](http://www.courts.state.pa.us/opposting/supreme/out/j-19-2005mo.pdf), and start reading at page 43. After the Court rendered its decision the state legislature amended the Gaming Law and expressly acknowledged the City's ability to determine the "location" of the casinos. There is no legitimate dispute about this.

Sure, we heap contempt on the politicians in Harrisburg; and we won't forget it. But the City has the power to affect the siting of these facilities. We therefore look to Council for help.

In 2005 the City amended the Zoning Code by enacting a template called the Commercial Entertainment District. But the CED is only a zoning template, and the City has yet to lay it down somewhere on the map of the City. Some say the template must be laid down at the two sites identified by the State Gaming Control Board. That's not true. The City can lay down the template wherever it chooses. But where?

Arguably, and solely for political sake, the City might want to respect the part of the Gaming Act that prohibits stand-alone casinos from within 10-miles of the two racetrack casinos, one in Chester

and the other in Bensalem. But even respecting those exclusionary zones, there are still other areas where the City can lay down the CED. One example of an available location is the Navy Yard, where the City has visions of grandeur for a huge marina; that property is so big it can accommodate at least one and maybe even both of the stand-alone casinos. As the Philadelphia Gaming Advisory Task Force stated in its Final Report in October 2005: "[The Navy Yard site], due to its quasi-public ownership, could provide the City with leverage over design issues and an additional revenue stream in the form of lease payments. It is also sufficiently large that the possibility of clustering two casinos adjacent to each other is a real possibility if the resulting traffic problems could be alleviated."

After meeting with community groups from all along the river and hearing the outrage over the locations identified by the state, Councilman Frank DiCicco understands that City Hall has power to influence the siting of these casinos. He has shown great leadership, and others in Council and City Hall should follow Councilman DiCicco's lead.

We are all watching closely to see how the City exercises its zoning and land use authority. At stake are the health and safety of our riverfront communities. Please help us.

Paul Boni, Esq. lives and works in Center City and can be reached at [paulboni@bonilaw.com](mailto:paulboni@bonilaw.com)



The marina complex contemplated for the Navy Yard (rendering courtesy of PIDC website)



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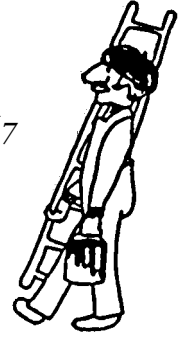
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**ZONING & HISTORIC PRESERVATION REPORT**


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 BY STEVEN WEIXLER, ZHP COMMITTEE CHAIR
 

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The Central Delaware Advisory Group's riverfront planning process has attracted quite a bit of controversy in the riverfront communities since the Gaming Board's December 20th decision on casino sites. Initially, interest in and excitement about the possibility of a thriving, livable waterfront was evident. Society Hill neighbors were enthusiastically involved in the early stages of planning. PennPraxis, consultants to the Advisory Group, welcomed us to express our values and hopes for the river. As your representative to the Advisory Group and its Steering Committee, I have attended every Group session to carry the concerns and hopes of Society Hill into the process.

In the meantime, the battle to prevent the negative impact of casinos on our neighborhood and riverfront has fully begun. The Society Hill Civic Association, along with the fifteen other civic associations involved, has experienced frustration and doubt in the Advisory Group's approach to the presence of state-mandated casinos as legitimate urban planning. Shawn Rairgh of Neighborhood Alliance for a Better Riverfront (NABR) spoke for most civic associations when he recently said: "We have become increasingly wary that the process is not fully representing the views and wishes of riverfront communities." I have heard comments from many of you that there is some misunderstanding on the role of the Advisory Group. Therefore, I would like to clarify the situation and outline our options in the process, along with the position SHCA's Board of Directors has taken.

As we commented in the last issue of the *Reporter*, a comprehensive plan for the development of Philadelphia's Delaware riverfront has never been attempted. We are the last major city in the country without a waterfront plan either in the conceptual stage or under implementation. Seattle, New York City, Boston, Chicago and other major cities had the foresight and the political will to craft citizen-driven urban plans. Even San Antonio, which had to create large portions of waterfront, is ahead of Philadelphia. As citizens of William Penn's "Greene Country Towne," we deserve much better than the opportunistic development, poorly conceived public space and decaying, unused brown-fields, which now separate us from our history and our future. The William Penn Foundation acted on this need and funded the creation of the Central Delaware Advisory Group, following the model of the Northern Delaware Group, which finished its work in 2005. Mayor Street signed an Executive Order in October mandating a stakeholder-driven, long-range plan.

At the same time, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board (appointees by state legislators) were finishing the process of awarding licenses for two stand-alone slots parlors in Philadelphia. Whether it is an appropriate function of our state government to dictate land-use policy for the city is a subject for another article.

The state selected the sites on Columbus Boulevard in December over the opposition of citizens and against any identifiable

principle of urban planning. Harris Steinberg, Executive Director of PennPraxis, said in Mayor Street's Gaming Advisory Task Force Report that casinos are "a large-scale, traditionally anti-urban big money business that can easily deaden its surroundings and wants to corrupt those in the process." He concludes: "Above all, protect the public good." Yet City Council is now charged with crafting legislation to enable the construction of businesses which have clearly and repeatedly been identified to the Advisory Group and PennPraxis as destructive to our quality of life. As participants in the planning process, civic associations have continued to raise the issue. For an informative inside look at our efforts, visit: [www.planphilly.com/node/908](http://www.planphilly.com/node/908).

Recently, I asked Mr. Steinberg to comment on Society Hill's opposition to the casino sites. "We've heard the concern about the potential impact of the state-authorized casinos on the quality of life along Columbus Boulevard," says Steinberg "and we're bringing the finest urban planning and design minds to bear on integrating casinos into the civic vision in a positive fashion." About this surprising change in Mr. Steinberg's philosophy, Bruce Schimmel said in a February 7 opinion in the *City Paper*: "When Mayor Street charged the Penn professor last fall with running a public planning process for the central Delaware riverfront, Steinberg had to pledge that casinos would not be on the agenda... All Steinberg's group can do is suggest ways to mitigate the traffic."

### **What can we do now? There are three plausible options:**

First, and the least desirable, stop participation in the process. This would deprive us of our voice in the future of a project vitally important to our city and in the near-term decision on casino sites.

Second, continue participation but accept the Advisory Group's position that casinos are a "given" feature of the riverfront. The majority of residents along the seven-mile portion of the river are clearly opposed, and it would be irresponsible for their representatives to the Advisory Group to take such a position.

Third, remain involved in the planning process, but continue our advocacy for the rational intention of a master plan which, to quote the Mayor's Executive Order: "...must be developed in a manner that respects the needs of all stakeholders, including local residents, local businesses, and the broader public interests of all residents of and visitors to Philadelphia."

I have recently met with representatives of other civic associations, such as the Neighborhood Alliance for a Better Riverfront, and we have begun a dialogue on ways to bring our solidarity to bear on the Central Delaware Advisory Group. While we pursue the many other avenues described in this issue of the *Reporter*, we will be working to create a truly citizen-driven vision for our future. I will be reporting to you again as we continue our efforts. Meanwhile, you may contact me with questions or comments at: [stevenweixler@verizon.net](mailto:stevenweixler@verizon.net).

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# Kids' Beat

A COLUMN BY KERI WHITE

## Looking Ahead to Summer Camp

**B**ig applause to the organizers of the Center City Camp Fair held in January at Old Pine Community Center. We found dozens of exciting camp opportunities available for city kids, some within walking distance of Society Hill. For those of you who were unable to attend, here are some highlights:

### **National Constitution Center American Adventure Camp**

525 Arch Street, Independence Mall: runs June 25 – Aug 17 for 6-13 year-olds. Weekly themes include "Private Eyes," "Revolutionary Philadelphia" and "Pirates," among others. Kids will enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities, and will experience art, music, toy making, colonial crafts, treasure hunts and field trips. For more info, call 215-409-6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org/camp.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/camp.org).

### **Sweat's Summer Wellness Camp**

700 Passyunk Avenue: two sessions, June 18 – July 13 and July 23 – Aug 17 for ages 5-12. Activities include swimming lessons, basketball, yoga, boxing, dance and nutrition classes. Email [hollywaters@sweatfitness.com](mailto:hollywaters@sweatfitness.com) or call 215-564-0303 for more information.

### **Anthropologists in the Making— Summer Camp at the Penn Museum**

3260 South Street: runs June 25 – Aug 17 for kids ages 7-13. Each week offers a different theme — "Digging in the Dirt," "Let's Celebrate," "Egyptian Escapade" and "Journey Along the Silk Road" — to name a few. Kids will enjoy gallery tours, hands-on projects, cooking, dance, mythology, and arts as they relate to each weekly theme. Campers also have at least one hour of outdoor play on the Penn campus field each day. For info, call Eric Jensen at 215-898-4066 or email [summercamp@museum.upenn.edu](mailto:summercamp@museum.upenn.edu).

### **Levy Tennis Pavilion Junior Tennis Camp**

3130 Walnut Street: offers one-week sessions from June 11 – August 10 for kids ages 6-16. Tennis is the primary activity at Levy, with an emphasis on teamwork, court rules and conduct, leadership, and fitness. Contact Hal Mackin at [hjmackin@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:hjmackin@pobox.upenn.edu) or call 215-898-4741 for more information.

### **Summer FUNdamentals Art Camp at PAFA, Broad and Cherry Streets**

24 one-week sessions from July 9 – Aug 17 for kids ages 6-15. Choose topics such as painting, sculpture, cartooning, anime, decorative furniture, circus arts. Call 215-972-2061 or [www.pafa.org/camps.jsp](http://www.pafa.org/camps.jsp) for details.

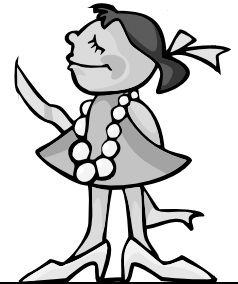
### **Penn Gymnastics Summer Camp, Hutchinson Gymnasium**

235 S. 33rd Street: sessions run weekly from June 1st – August 3rd for children ages 5-12. In addition to gymnastics, kids will enjoy arts and crafts, field trips, swimming, movies and other activities. For more information call Chris Kitrell at 215-898-6110 or email [kitrell@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:kitrell@pobox.upenn.edu).

### **Nature Ramblers Summer Camp, Schuylkill Center**

8480 Hagy's Mill Road in Roxborough: June 18 – Aug 17, ages 4-15. This environmentally based camp encompasses a wide variety of habitats, including five ponds, wetlands, streams, pine plantation, butterfly house, forests and meadows. Campers explore these environments as each week presents a new theme: "Wild in the Woods," "Mad Scientist," "Wildlife Tracker" and "Flower Power," among others. Contact Camila Rivera-Tinsley at 215-482-7300, ext. 122 for details.

Summer seems far away as we sit here freezing in the 10-degree temps — due, as my daughter informed me, to "global colding." But it will be here before you know it. Check these camps out — all the folks at the fair seemed enthusiastic, pleasant, and confident that their activities would appeal to kids. I just want something that will tire them out come July.



Kid's Quote

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**Veralyn, age 3,  
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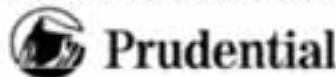
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**S A F E A N D S O U N D I N S O C I E T Y H I L L**

BY MARILYN APPEL

**Does crime increase when casinos appear?**

This is a question yet to be answered. I researched the topic on the Internet — but to no avail! Then I phoned the Atlantic City Police Department, which tried to be helpful and shuttled me to various people who might have the information I wanted, but so far — no info! Their Public Affairs officer promised to get back to me. Again, I went on the Internet to research the issue — there is so much information about gambling and crime — tons of articles — that is impossible to sort everything out before deadline. Many articles contradict each other, but more important is “who” funded a specific study and what were their biases. I will be doing more research on this, and hopefully in the near future we’ll be able to provide more up-to-date and reliable statistics that compare crime in relation to proximity of casinos.

**Auto Registration Stickers Missing**

It’s happening again, so be forewarned. To prevent your up-to-date registration sticker from being stolen, put a transparent plastic cover over the license plate. These clear covers are easy to obtain at any auto cleaning place or supply store or at the city’s AAA shop. These protective covers are easy to mount. So don’t get stopped by the police if your registration sticker was swiped and you no longer have an up-to-date sticker on your license plate. In any case, make sure you always have your current auto registration papers on hand.

**Cell Phones**

Do you have old or unused cell phones sitting in your basement and not being used? Please deliver them to 414 Spruce Street. (No appointment needed.) These cell phones are given to the D.A.’s office and reprogrammed to call only 911. They are recycled and then given to the elderly or to victims of abuse. By the way, you can take this donation as a tax deduction.

**Vandalism at the Vietnam Memorial**

If you see anyone vandalizing this memorial (or anything else, for that matter) please call 911 immediately. Do NOT try to stop the vandal(s). However, because this is not a priority call, don’t expect an officer to respond immediately. But a good description can help the police catch the perpetrator(s). Be a good observer — height, weight, hair and skin color, facial hair, type and color of clothes or anything else you notice could be a big help in tracking down the vandal(s).

**Value of Burglar Alarms**

**Lesson #1** If your home has a burglar alarm, by all means use it! Recently, a woman went to work and didn’t turn on the alarm in order that her house cleaner could later enter. When the employee arrived, she discovered that a glass window was broken.

**Lesson #2** The employee did the right thing. She did not enter the house. Instead she called 911. The police responded, searched the house and found no one there, but the house had, in fact, been burglarized and numerous items were stolen. The scene was processed for latent fingerprints.



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## SENIOR SCENE

A COLUMN BY JEAN BRYAN

In the last weeks, plans have crystallized that months ago seemed formless and dreamlike. The plan? To spend a sabbatical year partially in Paris and Cambridge, beginning in April. My husband and I are thrilled to have this new experience, but, at the same time, we will miss the delightful people and vitality of our neighborhood. Personally, I will miss writing this column and getting to know many neighbors through my involvement with the *Reporter* and our wonderful civic association.

The good news is that Carole LeFavre-Rochester will be writing a column of particular interest to seniors — focusing on the activities, planning and implementation of our local “Aging-in-Place” project — now being called “Independence Community.” Isn’t that a wonderful name! The word “independence” captures the historical significance of our neighborhood and the essence of the project’s mission — a nifty play on words. Incidentally, for this issue of the *Reporter*, Carole has written an introductory piece about “The Independence Project” which I’m sure you’ll find useful — whatever your age! So please see the accompanying article on page 33 and know that you can simply email [sh1682@gmail.com](mailto:sh1682@gmail.com) to let the grassroots organizers of Independence Community know that you’d like to learn more or become involved with the project.

How, then, do I say farewell and thank you? Well, shortly after I began writing this column in January 2005, a small book caught my eye in a neighborhood pharmacy. The title, *Old Age Is Always 15 Years Older Than I Am*, amused me,

and so I picked it up. Next thing, I was at the register buying it. The book is a compilation of all sorts of thoughts on aging by various, usually well-known people. Some thoughts are poignant while others are reflective and philosophic. A few are resigned, and still others are nostalgic.

My favorites are those that always give me a chuckle. By way of saying thanks so much, please let me share a few of these musings that put a smile on my face and which I hope will do the same for you:

*Inside every 75-old is a 35-year-old asking, “What happened?”*

**Ann Landers, U.S. advice columnist**

*The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age.*

**Lucille Ball, U.S. actress**

*When I grow up, I want to be a little boy.*

**Joseph Heller, U.S. novelist**

*Middle age — by which I mean anything over 20 and under 90.*

**A.A. Milne, English writer**

There are many more delightful quotations in this book, but I’ll conclude with one that is, in my opinion, a realistic and optimistic outlook on age:

*The best age is the age you are!*

**Maggie Kuhn, U.S. activist and social worker**

Best wishes for a year filled with joy for all Society Hillers — whatever your age!



Columnist  
Jean plots  
a (brief)  
change  
of scene!


## Exercise Mind & Body

### Join The Walkie-Talkies

The Walkie-Talkies (W-Ts) continue to meet every Tuesday and Thursday morning — no matter how cold (as long as it’s not raining or snowing). Newcomers are always welcome. All you have to do is arrive at Three Bears Park (300 block of Delancey Street) on any Tuesday or Thursday morning by 8:05 a.m. On any day, as few as three to as many as ten W-Ts will make their rounds all across the neighborhood, and often much further — beginning promptly at 8:15 a.m. Because individual endurance and schedules vary, you can peel off from the group whenever you wish. Walk at your own pace for enjoyable conversation plus healthy exercise for both mind and body!



**Wendy Waxman, a neighbor from Center City, joined Society Hillers on this wintry day. From left to right: Wendy, Donna Thomas, Bernice Hamel, Susan Kaidbey, Helaine Greenberg and Izzy Sigman**




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## Independence Community: A Progress Report

BY CAROLE LE FAIVRE-ROCHESTER

Society Hill's aging-in-place program has a name: "Independence Community" — significant for those living in a neighborhood where American independence was born. That is a good first step.

Our committee has been delighted with the response to the community survey and questionnaire, which was included as a separate sheet in the previous issue of this newsletter. Over 120 surveys were filled in and returned to us thus far — answering questions about what kinds of amenities people over 50 think they might need as we develop a program that will assist our older Society Hill neighbors to "age in place."

If you have not yet returned your survey or need another one, please contact SHCA's Administrator, Matt DeJulio at 215-629-1288 or mattdejulio@aol.com. At present these surveys are being collated and studied. Look for a follow-up report in an issue of this newsletter later this year.

Committee members are busy researching the various steps needed to establish a program that will appeal to people in our immediate neighborhood and other communities nearby. Some members are visiting other groups that have established successful aging-in-place programs like those in Rhawnhurst and East Falls and another in New Jersey. The Haddonfield, NJ program, called "Interfaith Caregivers," is 15 years old and highly successful — providing such services as transportation, companionship, telephone reassurance, shopping and errands, as well as reading to the visually impaired.

As the committee studies resources now available in Philadelphia — e.g. home care and transportation — it will assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs, whether provided by the city, by religious institutions or private enterprise.

"Aging in Place" websites proliferate and offer many useful suggestions for setting up programs. In most cases, those that are successful require several years of planning. Boston's "Beacon Hill Village," one of the most successful, required three to five years of planning before it became fully operational. By studying Beacon Hill and others, we hope our committee will be able to reduce that time.

There is something **you** can do, however, to help yourselves now! Begin by making your home more user-friendly. One website suggests making practical changes throughout your home. For example, in the kitchen it recommends that you install pull-out shelves and lazy Susans for easy access for needed items; it suggests that you check your counter heights to see if they are near table height (30 inches); and recommends installing easy-to-grasp cabinet knobs or pulls, as well as refrigerators with side-by-side doors which are easier to manage. Install grab bars in shower and bath areas. Throughout the house, check the width of doorways and ask yourself how mobile you would be if you needed a wheelchair, even temporarily. Think about adding railings, especially on stairs. By the way, these suggestions are good for anyone who might break a limb on a ski trip or slip on wet leaves on our notoriously uneven brick sidewalks — no matter your age!

---

Here are some suggestions for making your home more user-friendly — no matter your age!

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## Franklin Lights Progress

UPDATE BY MARTHA LEVINE

Good News! The installation of "new, improved" Franklin Lights throughout the neighborhood should be completed by early this month. Hopefully, all the replaced lights will be installed by the time you read this. The delay in completing the project was due to many difficult-to-remove old light fixtures that required the assistance of an expert.

Next, we look forward to the painting of all the lampposts, which must wait until the temperature is consistently at 50 degrees or higher — most likely by the end of this month or in April. After the painting, commemorative plaques will be

affixed to the posts in order to acknowledge neighbors who have contributed \$1,500 or more to the project — either those who gave their permission or have requested the recognition. If you wish a plaque in honor of your family or loved ones, it is not too late. The plaques are free of charge.

Once again, many thanks to all who contributed to the Franklin Lights Campaign — giving Society Hill a much needed brighter and safer neighborhood. For further information, or to arrange for a commemorative plaque, please contact Franklin Lights committee chair Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@msn.com.



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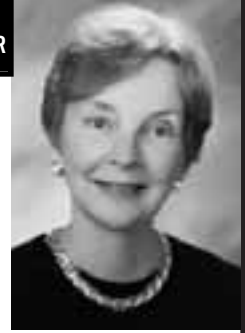
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**238 South Third Street**

(by appointment only)

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**Unit #2 • \$535,000**

Fantastic 2 bedrooms, 2 baths renovated condo in a Federal townhouse. Open kitchen, granite counter tops, slate floor, top of the line appliances; travertine tiled & marble baths!

**Unit #3 • \$450,000**

Dramatic bi-level renovated 2 bedrooms 2 bath condo; beams, brick wall, fireplace, French door, **SOLD**, custom steel staircase to loft bedroom; travertine tiled & marble baths

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## IN MEMORIAM

Recently Society Hill lost three good friends, all of whom are greatly missed by their families, as well as neighbors who relied on them for so many worthwhile projects.



### **Richard A. "Dick" Doran**

Longtime Society Hill resident, Richard A. "Dick" Doran, 71, died suddenly as he was leaving the Metropolitan Opera in New York on January 22. A dedicated civic leader, Dick served as executive assistant to Governor Milton J. Shapp in the 70's; commerce director under Mayor Green in the 80's; and director of communications for Independence Blue Cross, among other posts. He was involved with many arts and culture boards, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, The Opera Company of Philadelphia, Police Athletic League, Episcopal Academy and St. Joseph's Prep. An enthusiastic mentor to a generation of young musicians, Dick recently retired as Chairman of the Board of Curtis Institute, where he led the campaign to boost the school's endowment. He loved playing the piano, and even more loved listening to his protégés, including Lang Lang. He involved himself in the lives of many aspiring pianists and violinists.

Several major Philadelphians, including Governor Rendell, Chaka Fattah, and former Mayor Bill Green, were enthusiastic in their praise for this man who did so much for his city, had so much influence, and gave himself so wholeheartedly to institutions and people for whom he cared deeply. Dick is survived by his wife, Mary, his two sons, Richard and Patrick, and two grandchildren. Contributions may be made in his memory to the Opera Company of Philadelphia, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia or the Curtis Institute.



### **Rosemarie S. Scarpulla**

Rosemarie Scalse Scarpulla, a historic preservationist and tour guide died of cancer last December 22 at her Society Hill home. Rosemarie was a founding member and a guide for Walking Historic Architectural Tours, a guide at Society Hill's Physick House and she volunteered in the Egyptian gallery at the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. A previous board director of the Society Hill Civic Association, Rosemarie was a major contributing writer for a guidebook to Society Hill — the community she loved ever since she and her husband, George, purchased an early 19th-century row house in the neighborhood in 1971. They restored the home as their family residence and then went on to restore three additional Society Hill houses during the community's renaissance.

With a Master's degree in French literature from Fordham University, she taught at a variety of schools in New York, including at the college level.

At Old St. Joseph's Church, Rosemarie served on its council and also on its finance and historic preservation committees. In addition to her husband of 55 years, she is survived by a son, John; daughters Madelyn, Marie, Clare and Caren, as well as a granddaughter and a sister. She was 80 years old.

Donations in her memory may be made to Old St. Joseph's Historic Preservation Corporation, 321 Willings Alley, Philadelphia, PA 19106.



### **Stephen H. Skale**

Stephen H. Skale, who served as vice-president of the Society Hill Civic Association in the 1990's, died at his home after a long illness on February 6th. He was 55 years old. Originally from South Philadelphia, Steve practiced law for 30 years, concentrating on disability cases in his Center City practice. A natural in civic affairs, Steve was President of the South Philadelphia Businessmen's Association, and served as a Fifth Ward Committeeman since the early 1980's. He had a profound impact on youth in his roles as coach, teacher, mentor and friend — serving as leader of Boy Scout Troop 176, located at Old Pine Community Center, where his sons Joseph and Jonathan are both Eagle Scouts.

Steve was coach to several neighborhood soccer leagues, including the Masterman School's summer program. A wine enthusiast and connoisseur, he was a wise and gentle man and a gentleman as well. Steve will be sorely missed by many. He is survived by his loving wife, Linda Carnevale and his two sons, as well as two sisters. Contributions may be made to the Stephen H. Skale Memorial Athletic Fund at the Julie Reynolds Masterman School Foundation, 1699 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130.

## The Old House Fair, Coming March 17



The Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia has been a longtime ally of the civic association in our efforts to preserve the residential “antiques” in Society Hill. The Alliance is bringing back **The Old House Fair**. This popular event will be held on Saturday, March 17th at the Germantown Friends School Fieldhouse (31 West Coulter Street) from 9 a.m – 5 p.m. The one-day show will feature 50 professional vendors and consultants from the region’s preservation and restoration industry; demonstrations and workshops; free “Ask the Experts” consultations and the Restore Media Resource Center. Whether you are the owner of an old house planning repairs and restoration or you just have an interest in historic preservation, this Old House Fair promises to be an interesting day. For more information, including on-line tickets, visit the Alliance’s website at [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com) or call 215-546-1146.

## Mayoral Questionnaire: Please Respond

Do you want to tell the mayoral candidates where our neighborhood stands on critical issues facing the city? Well, you can. Just fill out this 10-15 minute questionnaire prepared by the Crosstown Coalition of seven civic associations.

This Coalition, of which SHCA is a member, will use your responses as follows: The survey results will be collated to ask the candidates where they stand on issues important to our neighborhoods. Their responses will then be posted in a blog where you can comment on the positions articulated by the candidates.

The more responses to this questionnaire, the more seriously the candidates will consider the downtown communities between the rivers. Tell your neighbors to log on and provide their input as well. Take this link to the survey: [www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB22647JL86Y7](http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB22647JL86Y7).

**To view the Multiple Listing Service visit: [www.CenterCityRealEstate.com](http://www.CenterCityRealEstate.com) Portal**

**Real Estate Q & A with Antonio**

**Q: Has the bubble burst?**  
**A:** No, but the market has changed from a seller’s market to a buyer’s market. Largely due to a massive increase in inventory coupled with a lack of consumer confidence and interest rates hikes.

**Q: Why have I seen the same homes for sale for months all over the neighborhood? Will I be able to sell my home if I list it?**  
**A:** In a buyer’s market different strategies are needed from pricing to marketing. It is no longer enough to just put the listing on the MLS for it to sell. Buyers need to be targeted (especially in the higher end of the market), pricing needs to be realistic and negotiations need to be creative. There are currently 114 homes for sale in Society Hill.

**Q: Are you uniquely qualified to sell my house?**  
**A:** Absolutely. On the business end, I am an award winning Realtor and an extremely accomplished entrepreneur who studied marketing at Wharton. On the personal side, I live in Society Hill, my brokerage is in Society Hill, my daughter attends Society Hill Synagogue pre-school, my son goes to the Hall-Mercer play group. My wife is active in the community and if there is anyone who can sing the praises of and knows all about the best neighborhood in Center City it is me, Society Hill’s top selling resident residential Realtor.

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# 2007 Society Hill Open House Tour

BY MARTHA LEVINE

## TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND THE SOCIETY HILL OPEN HOUSE TOUR!

- 10 Great reason to get your TV-watching husband off of the couch.
- 9 Need something to do with Uncle Larry and Aunt Gladys visiting from Cleveland.
- 8 Opportunity to show suburban friends what an authentic historic neighborhood looks like.
- 7 Chance to snoop inside your neighbors' homes without getting arrested.
- 6 Free food.
- 5 Move over Martha Stewart! Get decorating ideas from some of the best houses in town.
- 4 Get your daily workout by walking house to house and climbing stairs. Beats the treadmill and stair master at the sports club.
- 3 Chance to check out the dust bunnies.
- 2 Escape yet another Sunday shopping at Target.
- 1 This is a fundraiser for SHCA and the Friends of Independence National Historical Park. Two thirds of the profits go to our civic association and will be used for neighborhood improvement projects and/or initiatives. Annual House Tours is SHCA's third-largest source of revenues.

**Date: Sunday, May 6, 2007**

**Time: 1-5 p.m.**

**Cost: \$30 per ticket**

**Call the park's Visitors' Center for Tickets**

**For information, brochures, &**

**reservations: 1-800-537-7676**

In conjunction with Philadelphia Open House Tours, sponsored by The Friends of Independence National Historical Park and SHCA, this is SHCA's major annual fundraiser. Be there to support our neighborhood and have fun while you're at it! For more information, contact Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or [marthalev@msn.com](mailto:marthalev@msn.com).



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## NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

A COLUMN BY DAVID WOODS

## Cordelia Frances Biddle and Steve Zettler



You'll find nothing cryptic about this couple.

Crosswords come in many types, including cryptics, acrostics, diagram-less, and the fiendishly difficult “Polymath” in the Saturday edition of the *Financial Times*.

They're all about deciphering and figuring out. You're given the clues; you solve the puzzle. And that's what mystery novels are also about. Combining the two is exactly what husband and wife authors Cordelia Biddle and Steve Zettler have done — in addition to jointly producing a dozen crossword mystery novels under the pseudonym Nero Blanc. (There's a clue for you!) The pair have also written three novels each: Cordelia specializing in history; Steve in thrillers. Of the recently published *The Conjurer*, one reviewer noted that “Biddle's voice is uniquely suited to pre-Civil-War Philadelphia,” the book's setting.

It certainly is. Cordelia comes from an illustrious Philadelphia family: one ancestor, Nicholas Biddle (1786-1844), was president of the Second Bank of the United States; and large portraits of her grandmother Eugenia Law Biddle and great grandmother Emily Drexel Biddle face each other across the tastefully decorated living room of the couple's home.

But Cordelia and Steve are not only literary stars. Both have also enjoyed stellar acting careers. In fact, they met at an acting class in New York. Subsequently, Steve has worked on stage, in movies and television with such notables as

Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, and Clint Eastwood...and on TV in “Law and Order” and “Cold Case.” Cordelia began her stage career in “Gemini” and starred in the TV series “One Life to Live.”

The two have been married for 18 years — first marriage for Steve; second for Cordelia, who has three children from her first marriage. Both have strong Pennsylvania roots. Steve grew up in Bucks County, where his father owned the Washington Crossing Inn, and Cordelia was raised in Bryn Mawr. She went on to what she calls “a brief spell at Vassar,” and he joined the Marine Corps, serving 17 months in Vietnam.

Their home — built 40 years ago and considered practically “new” in much of Society Hill — features artifacts from Borneo, Oman, and Yemen ...as well as framed covers of their novels, and a *trompe l'oeil* rendering around the fireplace that reflects the battle between President Andrew Jackson and Nicholas Biddle over Jackson's disbanding of the Second Bank, which destabilized the nation's currency. A handrail for the steps leading from the living room to the dining room is a fallen branch of a sycamore tree from St. Peter's Church, where Nicholas Biddle is buried and where the couple serve as volunteers — Cordelia on the vestry and Steve as an usher.

Steve and Cordelia have lived in other cities and other countries, but they are appropriately eloquent about Society Hill, where they've lived for 12 years. It reminds them of Greenwich Village and, they agree, “the history of the whole country is right here.”

Of course, they are huge theater and movie enthusiasts...and clearly enjoy their literary collaboration, which will likely produce many more crossword novels and thrillers. No mystery about that — and nothing cryptic either.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cordelia's recently published novel, *The Conjurer*, focuses on intrigue, passion and the disappearance of a Philadelphia financier in the winter of 1842. This fast-paced tale happens to include some of Cordelia's actual ancestors as characters in the plot. You can pick up a copy at our local shop, Head House Books — at 629 S. 2nd Street.

David Woods can be reached at HMI3000@comcast.net



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## SHCA's March 21 General Meeting: Meet the Candidates for City Council & Mayor

Make informed decisions about who can best serve our neighborhood and city by attending SHCA's March 21 meeting in preparation for the May 15 primary election. A Question & Answer session will follow brief presentations by each candidate. Nearby communities have been invited to attend this lively session to hear the candidates' positions on a variety of issues — the most burning of which is, of course, the threat of two slots casino parlors coming to our riverfront neighborhoods.

### City Council Contest

City Councilman Frank DiCicco, having served our district since 1996, will state his reasons why he should be reelected for another four-year term. His Democratic opponent, Vernon Anastasio, will explain why he should be elected to represent District One — which includes Society Hill, Center City and all riverfront communities. Mike Seidenberg, on the Republican ballot for this First District Council seat, will also participate in the forum.

### Mayoral Contest

Following presentations by City Council candidates, each participating mayoral candidate will present his point of view about why he should be elected as Philadelphia's next mayor. This is an excellent time to ask your questions of competing Democratic candidates Dwight Evans, Chaka Fattah, Tom Knox and Mike Nutter. Bill Brady cannot participate due to a conflict in schedule, but the Republican candidate Al Taubenberger will join the forum.



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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, March 17  
**The Old House Fair**  
Germantown Friends School  
9 a.m - 5 p.m. See page 36

Wednesday, March 21  
**SHCA Board Meeting**  
5:45 p.m.  
**General Membership Meeting**  
**CANDIDATES' FORUM**  
**"Meet the Candidates"**  
7 p.m.  
Old Pine Street Church, 412 Pine Street

Wednesday, April 18  
**SHCA Board Meeting**  
Location to be announced

Saturday, May 5th  
**Society Hill Clean-Up Day**  
8 a.m. - 1 p.m. See page 2

Sunday, May 6  
**Society Hill Open House Tour**  
1-5 p.m. See page 37

Tuesday, May 15  
**Primary Election Day**

Wednesday, June 6  
**Society Hill Social**  
Oceannaire 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

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