

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.org

A Membership Meeting You Won't Want To Miss

Our Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) is most pleased to host two out-of-town speakers who will inform neighbors about very promising new projects that will directly affect us.

Dr. Bruce Cole, President and CEO of the American Revolution Center, is visiting from Washington D.C. Dr. Cole will discuss the vision for establishing the first national museum commemorating the entire story of the American Revolution — to open on the former site of the Independence Park Visitor Center on S. 3rd Street. The American Revolution Center will display its distinguished collection of objects, artifacts and manuscripts from the Revolutionary era, and will offer educational programs, lectures and interactive learning for the general public.

Knowledge about the ideals and principles of freedom is essential for keeping our democracy contemporary and vital. According to the founders of the American Revolution Center, studies show a disturbing decline in the knowledge and understanding of our nation's founding period. The goal of this new museum will be to fill in the large historical gaps between the narratives offered at, for example, Independence Hall and the National Constitution Center. At this time, there are no building plans for the museum, but Dr. Cole hopes to engage our neighborhood

very early on about the exciting concept for this unique, new center. He is already working closely with Independence National Historical Park and is eager to meet with residents from Society Hill and other nearby communities.

Dr. Cole has a most distinguished background. Previously he served as the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. During his tenure there he launched an initiative to encourage the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture called *We the People*. In November 2008, he was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Bush for his work ensuring that our country's heritage will be passed on to future generations.

Mark Abraham, our second featured speaker, is visiting from New Haven, Connecticut. He will demonstrate a new, interactive website — called SeeClickFix — which allows residents to report non-emergency problems (e.g. pot holes, burnt-out street lights, graffiti, idling cars, etc.). The reports are directly routed to Philadelphia's 311 system and then channeled to the correct city department for remediation. For more information about SeeClickFix, you'll want to read his descriptive article on page 15. Mr. Abraham is the editor of Design New Haven, an open civic forum about urban affairs and design in New Haven. Formerly a planner for New York City's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, he is also involved with several neighborhood associations and regional advocacy groups.

At our November 18th General Membership Meeting, Mr. Abraham will have Internet access at the speaker's podium, and he will show the audience how SeeClickFix works in real time. SHCA has already set up a "watch area" for our entire neighborhood at the SeeClickFix site — so that we are notified of all reports as they come in. This innovative new technology promises to empower citizens and to aid government in responding to a variety of quality-of-life issues.

You won't want to miss these two fascinating presentations.

Students and citizens "should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom."

John Adams, 1787



The Spirit of Freedom is on the march — and coming to Philadelphia!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings

Wednesday,
November 11

SHCA Board of Directors Meeting
7 p.m. The Physick House: 321 S. 4th Street
All SHCA members are welcome

Wednesday,
November 18

SHCA General Membership Meeting
7 p.m. Pennsylvania Hospital Auditorium
(entry at 8th & Spruce Streets)
All neighborhood residents are encouraged to attend

Guest Speakers:

Dr. Bruce Cole
President and CEO, American Revolution Center
Mark Abraham
On-site Demonstration: SeeClickFix



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Submission Deadlines
 January/February Issue
 Advertising:
 December 1
 Editorial:
 December 10

Website
www.societyhillcivic.org

Submissions

We want to hear from you. Our goal is to print news of interest to Society Hillers – happenings in and around our community for residents, business people and professionals. Direct your editorial submissions and/or queries to Bernice Hamel via fax at 215-925-0877 or email BerniceHamel@comcast.net. To publicize an event, submit all press releases directly to Sandy Rothman. (See contact information above.)

Materials must be submitted in writing – via mail, email, or fax – and must include the name of a contact person. Edited submissions will be considered for publication if the subject matter is community-related and if space allows. Otherwise, upcoming events of interest may be listed in the Community Calendar. Letters to the Editors will be considered for publication only if signed and the writer provides contact information.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ROSANNE LOESCH

A Vision of Preservation

I enjoyed seeing all of you who were able to attend the Soiree at Head House Square, which our civic association co-sponsored. The weather was a bit chillier than last year's Soiree, but it was just as much fun. Participating restaurants provided an incredible range of delicious food, and all of the profits will be spent for maintaining and improving Society Hill's beautiful marketplace, known as the "Shambles." (See page 13 for more about this delightful community-wide social.)

We have received electronic copies of letters that many of you have written to the City of Philadelphia regarding the new bike lanes on Spruce and Pine Streets. The trial period for the bike lanes is expected to end this month. These letters express both pro and con opinions, and some included suggestions for how to make the bike lanes work even better. For example, many writers have commented that the city needs to launch a public education campaign regarding the "rules of the road" — for bicyclists as well as motorists. I appreciate the fact that so many of you took the initiative to communicate your opinions.

Since the trial period first began, I've noticed increasing bike traffic on my block of Spruce, and was encouraged to try a cross-town bike trip myself. In fact, one recent Sunday afternoon my husband and I used the Spruce Street bike lane to reach the trail along the Schuylkill River. This trail, open to both bicycles and pedestrians, travels north along the Schuylkill from Locust Street to the Philadelphia Art Museum. It then continues to Manayunk and beyond via Kelly Drive or Martin Luther King Drive. Further southward development of the trail to historic Bartram's Garden is planned, as is a similar "greenway" along the Delaware River. Greenway development on both rivers is being promoted by an energetic, new organization named the Coalition for Philadelphia's Riverfronts. (For more information, visit pennfuture.org and select "Coalition for Philadelphia's Riverfronts.")

Many readers have told me how much they enjoyed the "letter from France" found in my September President's Message, so I thought I would share a preservation story about a famous Paris landmark. Did you know that the world-famous Notre Dame Cathedral was used as a

saltpeper munitions plant during the French Revolution? By the mid-19th century the cathedral had been so neglected that the government considered demolishing it and using its stones to build bridges! Notre Dame's savior turned out to be Victor Hugo, who wrote the novel *Notre Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) in order to get French authorities to take an interest in it. Needless to say, his effort succeeded and should serve as a lesson for us all — so that we, who are privileged to live among so many historical buildings, can better understand the precarious nature of preservation endeavors.

Preserving landmarks and the urban fabric of which they are a part is a fundamental mission of our civic association's Zoning & Historic Preservation (ZHP) Committee. Currently our eyes and ears should be tuned to zoning code changes that are being proposed by Philadelphia's Zoning Code Commission. Our civic association has worked with several other civic groups — including Center City Residents and Logan Square — to formulate a joint response to the proposed zoning code changes. If you are interested in knowing more about how these changes might affect our community's voice in development, please visit www.zoningmatters.org and SHCA's website, at societyhillcivic.org.

I would like to thank outgoing ZHP Chair, Steve Weixler, for his dedicated work presiding over this committee for the last three years — prior to which he served as a valued committee member. Steve will continue to represent SHCA on the Central Delaware Advisory Group (CDAG), whose mission is to help make the PennPraxis "Vision for the Delaware Waterfront" come true. (PennPraxis is an arm of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design.) We hope that bringing Center City's dense street grid down to the waterfront and creating a meaningful greenway along the river will actually materialize through CDAG's advocacy!

Lastly, I hope that many of you will be able to attend our association's General Meeting — on Wednesday, November 18th at Pennsylvania Hospital's auditorium — to hear two exciting presentations described on page 1 of this newsletter. I look forward to your participation.

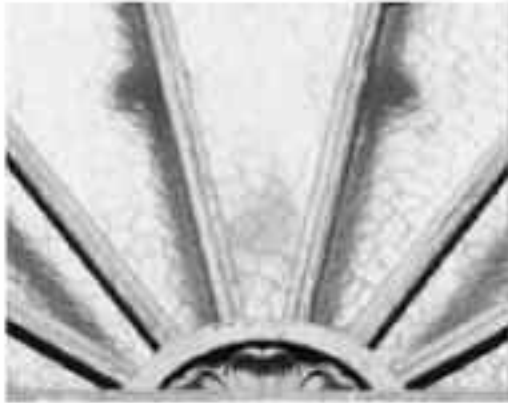


Rosanne Loesch,
President

...and Inspiration



Notre Dame, threatened with demolition, was saved thanks to a vigorous campaign championed by Victor Hugo when he drew attention to the need for restoration of this and many other neglected historic monuments in Paris.



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SPECIAL BOARD SESSION

Two-Way Traffic on Spruce Street? SHCA Board Votes To Oppose the Change

A special SHCA Board session was held on September 23rd to review the recent Spruce Street traffic change allowing vehicles to travel two ways, on a trial basis, beginning at Dock Street (aka: 38th Parallel) and ending at 2nd Street. As previously reported, this change was proposed and supported by the Society Hill Towers and its Political Action Committee, although until then the traffic pattern had been in place over 45 years. (Originally the Towers had also sought two-way traffic for the 200 block of Spruce Street, but that request was withdrawn after the city's Streets Department weighed in against it.)

SHCA learned of this proposal only after the Towers had set the process in motion with Councilman Frank DiCicco and the Streets Department. The proposal generated a great deal of surprise from nearby neighbors, who were not initially consulted about it, particularly residents of Penn's Landing Square — a condo complex located on the south side of the 100 block of Spruce Street bordering the block of the traffic change.

At the special meeting, SHCA Board Director Mary Purcell, representing Society Hill Towers and Board Director Michael Rochester, representing Penn's Landing Square, were each given ten minutes to present their respective pro and con positions. A wide-ranging discussion ensued among Board Directors and community residents in attendance. The merits of this traffic change were debated, with many expressing their concern about the lack of data supporting it.

Several attendees reported unsafe incidents experienced during the very first week of the trial, which began on September 21st. Many critiqued the lack of detail regarding the length of the trial period and what specific standards would be used for the evaluation. They also wanted to know who or what city agency would make the final determination as to whether the change meets necessary safety criteria. Attendees also expressed concern that:

- No actual traffic counts had been performed to determine how many drivers would benefit from the change;
- The change was undertaken without consideration of effects on the new bike lane on Spruce Street; and
- The safety of right turns made by the Route 42 SEPTA bus from the 38th Parallel onto Spruce

Street was not sufficiently studied, according to the report of an independent traffic consultant hired by Penn's Landing Square.

Mary Purcell reported that recommendations by the Streets Department factored in a review of "crashes" in the neighborhood over the past two years. She noted that two-way traffic on the 100 block of Spruce could reduce accidents at Front and Delancey Streets — which according to neighbors were caused by the lack of stop signs at this intersection. She also explained, based on her understanding of a Streets Department report, that the 100 block of Spruce meets established criteria for allowing a one-way street to be changed to two-way traffic.

While many specific issues were raised during the meeting, especially regarding safety, one major reason for opposition was that the change is causing division in our community. Board Directors and attendees alike overwhelmingly agreed that there is little justification for making the change after so many decades of neighborhood harmony regarding the one-way traffic pattern.

Several comments were made to the effect that we all live on small, narrow one-way streets, that we all go out of our way in order to reach our destination, and that we should not be changing street direction due to the wishes of a relatively small set of residents. Also expressed was the fear that final approval of this change could potentially set a precedent for other campaigns to change traffic patterns from one-way to two-way.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the following Board motion was made: "The Board of the Society Hill Civic Association is opposed to the change in direction of the 100 block of Spruce Street due to the lack of any concrete data to support this change." The Board then voted eleven to one in support of this motion — thus signifying that only one Board Director supports the traffic change.

When will this two-way traffic "trial period" be concluded? We still don't know, but we do know that based on Councilman DiCicco's previous statements, the final decision whether to introduce legislation to City Council rests with him. If he does introduce such legislation and it is passed by City Council, this two-way traffic change would become permanent.

Motion Approved by an 11-1 Vote:

"The Board of the Society Hill Civic Association is opposed to the change in direction of the 100 block of Spruce Street due to the lack of any concrete data to support this change."



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Responses to Center City's Bikeways

A well-attended SHCA General Membership Meeting focused on Center City's Bikeways Pilot Project was held on September 16th, with a presentation given by Philadelphia's Deputy Commissioner of Transportation, Stephen Buckley. He was accompanied by Charles Carmalt, the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. The trial period for these two bike lanes began in September — with appropriate street striping and graphics to identify them. Evaluation of this pilot project will occur sometime in November. As we all know, the Spruce Street bike lane is for westbound traffic, while the Pine Street lane accommodates east-bound traffic.

The speakers fielded many questions from the audience on such topics as the logistics for creating bike lanes on our particularly narrow city streets. At the conclusion of the meeting, SHCA's President Rosanne Loesch asked residents to send comments and feedback directly to Mr. Carmalt at charles.carmalt@phila.gov, with copies to Mr. Buckley at stephen.buckley@phila.gov, as well as SHCA's Administrator, Matt DeJulio at mattdejulio@aol.com.

At press time we have received copies of more than thirty letters — half of which expressed enthusiasm for the new bike lanes, while the other half were critical.

Excerpts from viewpoints supporting these bike lanes include, for example:

- they are a much-needed, fantastic improvement for reducing pollution;
- they fill a long-overdue need to improve our environment and quality of life;
- bike paths encourage people to exercise;
- they slow down traffic and quiet the street;
- I'm proud to live in a city that recognizes the need for change.

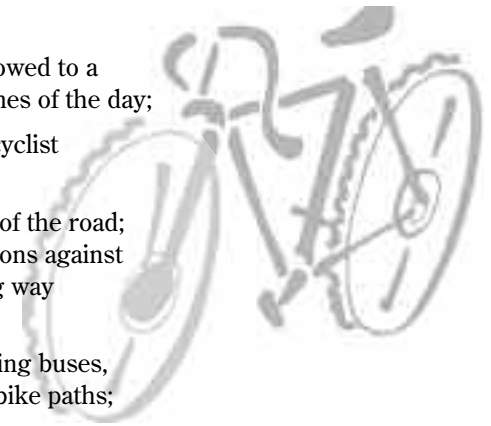
Negative responses include:

- traffic on these streets has slowed to a snail's pace during certain times of the day;
- I was heavily delayed by a bicyclist traveling in the auto lane;
- not all bike riders obey rules of the road; they speed through intersections against red lights and buzz the wrong way down one-way streets;
- with all the city traffic, including buses, there's insufficient space for bike paths;
- dangerous for bicyclists — especially when buses and cars are turning.

A recurring criticism of these bike lanes — even among bicycle enthusiasts — is not that there are increasing numbers of riders commuting from one part of the city to the other (often to save money), but that those who ride east or west frequently also must travel south or north. Since there are currently no north/south bike lanes, the pilot project adds a burden to all of the north/south streets lacking bike lanes.

SHCA will continue to monitor the pilot project to determine whether or not these bike paths are working effectively. For example: Do they cause traffic tie-ups? We hope to provide a full report to our community when we receive it some time this month.

Meanwhile, if you have comments or suggestions — whether in support of keeping and/or expanding Center City's bike lanes or to express specific concerns, please write to Philadelphia's personnel involved in the Bikeways Project, as indicated in the second paragraph of this article, where you'll find their respective email addresses.



Half of the letters received expressed enthusiasm, while the other half were critical.

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— *Bon Appétit*, July 2009

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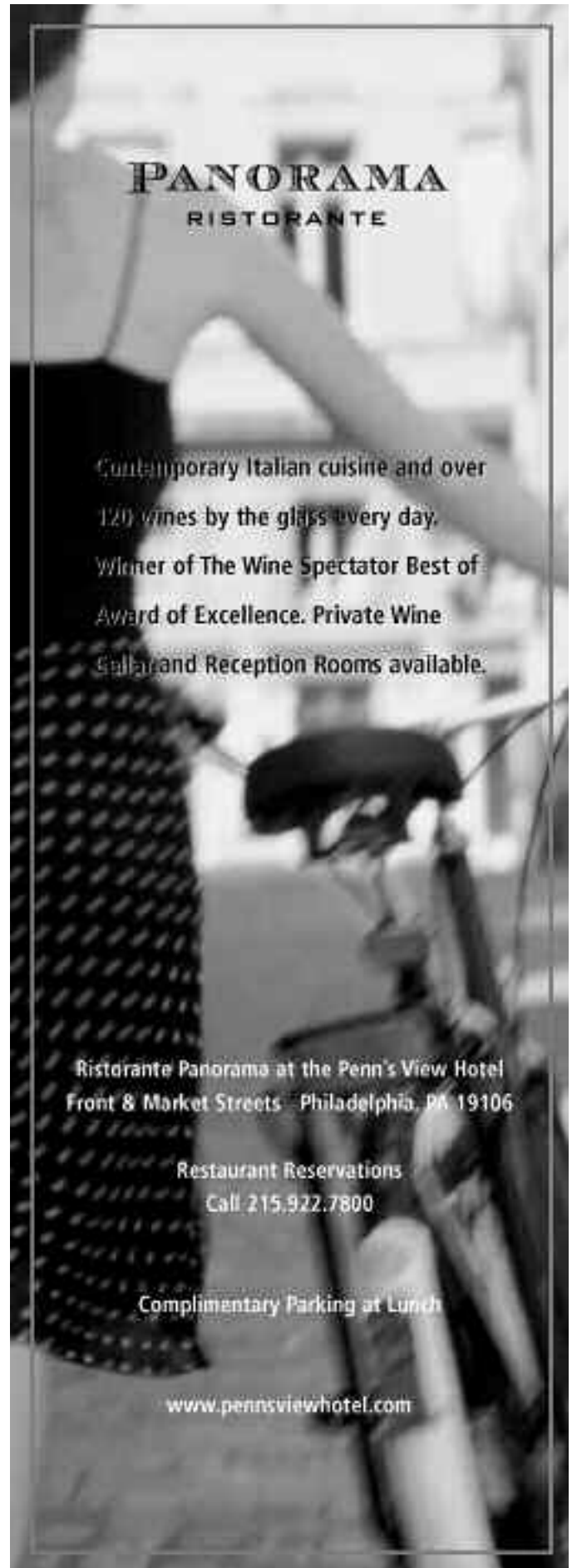
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Clean-Up Day Is Coming: Saturday, November 21st

Society Hill's traditional Fall Clean-up Day will be held on Saturday, November 21st — rain or shine. This season's Clean-Up Day will be co-chaired by Wally Wing and Spencer Finch. For the past few years Wally has singlehandedly led the effort, and now we are pleased that Spencer has enthusiastically agreed to assist. Brooms and trash bags will be available for your use — after 8 a.m. on Saturday — at our local SuperFresh on S. 5th Street. Of course, cookies and cider will be offered to help keep us all energized.

Here's what Society Hillers are being asked to do: Please sweep leaves from your sidewalks, walkways and alleyways into the streets — before the city's sweeper trucks arrive Saturday morning between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. We also ask neighbors to sweep leaves from the sidewalks surrounding Three Bears Park, McCall School and St. Peter's School. Bagged leaves can be left by 1 p.m. at the major intersections of Locust, Spruce, Pine and Lombard Streets, as well as Three Bears Park.

Please note that on Friday evening after 6 p.m., where posted, cars must be moved to the opposite side of the street. If they are not moved before 8 a.m. on Saturday morning, they could be ticketed. The 300, 400 and 500 blocks of both Spruce and Lombard Streets will be swept by trucks before 8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning in order to allow synagogue congregants to park their cars later on the south side of those streets. Please try to sweep leaves and litter from the sidewalks into those streets before 8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning.

City trucks will sweep leaves from Front to 8th and from Walnut to Lombard Streets (not including Walnut itself). The trucks will also sweep the blocks surrounding Pennsylvania Hospital — 9th,

Pine, and Spruce Streets. Although "Other Side of the Street Parking" signs will indicate no parking "from 6 p.m. Friday until 3 p.m. Saturday," SHCA's Block Coordinators are encouraged to remove these signs promptly at 3 p.m. Saturday — so that cars will be moved back to the proper side of those streets at 3 p.m. This will prevent vehicles from being ticketed.

We are most pleased that Spencer Finch has agreed to assume responsibility for chairing future Clean-Up Days, beginning in the spring. He and his wife, Silvia, have been enthusiastic Society Hill residents for three years. We thank Wally for his dedicated leadership of successful past Clean-Up Days, and for his plans to continue being active in our community for many years to come.

For questions, please e-mail Spencer Finch at specfinch2@hotmail.com. He'll surely be in touch with us in time for our Spring 2010 Clean-Up Day. But if you have questions on the day of our Fall Clean-Up, you can reach Wally on his cell phone, at 215-284-5792.

Pick up your broom Saturday morning at SuperFresh — and then start sweeping!



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- Denis Kassel, *Philadelphia City Paper*, October 3, 2006

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- Andrew Hammer, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, Jan 5, 2009

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BY NORMA VAN DYKE

The passage of Act 71 legalizing slots gambling in Pennsylvania — making Pennsylvania one of the few states to do so without a voter referendum — came as a rude awakening that the democratic process has been severely compromised in Pennsylvania. Since then our dismay has continued to grow as the courts have joined with state and local legislators in pushing this process forward, despite all the evidence that casinos do not benefit either the economy or society.

At least a decade before the gaming bill was delivered at 2 a.m. on the 5th of July 2004, local elected officials were planning its birth, making a bed for it on the riverfront and making cooing sounds about beefing up the waterfront. Meanwhile, a mutually beneficial relationship developed among our official's strongest supporters while we accepted their assistance with various community projects.

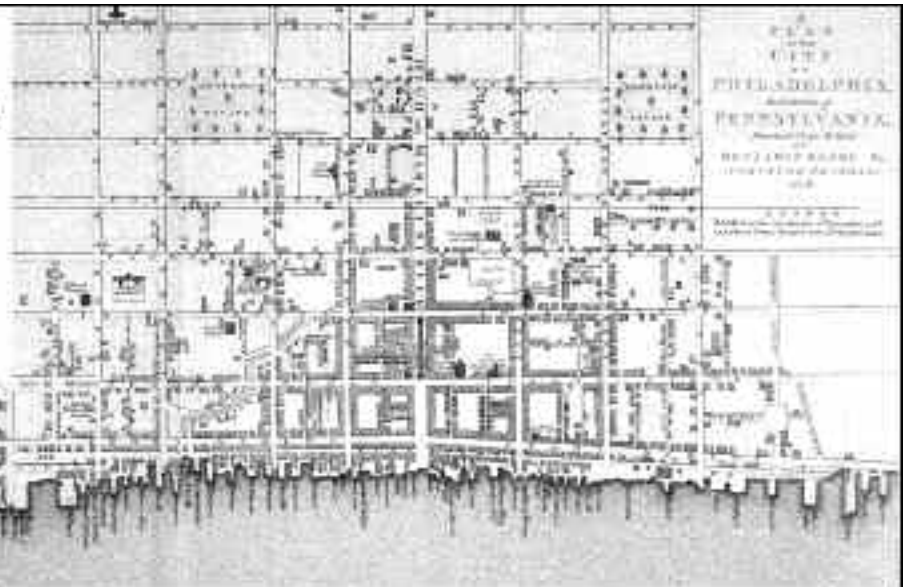
What have we learned from this? I hope that we are learning that we cannot assume that our elected officials will always act in our best interest; no matter what the issue. And, I hope that this realization leads to accepting our responsibility in

the democratic process. Certainly the very great effort of many in the community to keep casinos from our door suggests we have grown in our awareness and acceptance of our role. We have also engaged in this process on zoning issues and in the debate about Stamper Square.

But this experience has led me to feel that we need to broaden our organized vigilance, possibly through the creation of a legislative committee, or broadening the mandate of our civic association's Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee — to include a legislation watch on both the state and local levels. I am not advocating the support of parties or candidates, but rather speaking out on issues that can have great impact on our lives. Nor should the intent be seen as adversarial. Hopefully there will be issues where we will want to lend our support in getting legislation passed.

These could be time-consuming tasks, which perhaps could be shared by volunteers responsible for either state or local issues. Each of us has way too much to do already, but look what not being vigilant has done to our schedules!

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CASINO UPDATES

The House Loses Its Edge

At one time, owning a casino was essentially a license to print money. No longer. For example: Three months ago in the City of Pittsburgh, Neil Bluhm opened his Rivers Casino — a \$780 million, 400,000-square-foot facility with 3,000 slot machines, four restaurants, four bars, an amphitheater, a boat dock and riverfront paths. Rivers Casino is currently earning exactly half of its initially projected revenue. Standard & Poors has downgraded the casino's credit rating to a B-, citing its weak performance and questionable ability to meet debt service if its earnings don't improve. Consider this the context for where things stand (or don't stand) here in Philadelphia.

Foxwoods: Lost in the Woods

On October 16th, lawyers representing the proposed Foxwoods Casino submitted a letter to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board providing a status report on its efforts to build a casino on Columbus Boulevard and Reed Street, in South Philly. In this letter, Foxwoods admitted that it had no financing, no design plan and had not even hired an architect. (A copy of this letter is posted on SHCA's website, www.societyhillcivic.org.)

In the letter Foxwoods claims that due to "unanticipated new issues," it is "seriously considering" seeking permission to build a temporary facility — which could even be a tent — to be replaced by a permanent one, at a future but undetermined time. For example, at the Meadows Casino in southwestern Pennsylvania, a football-sized structure made of synthetic fabric was allowed to function as a temporary facility for two years.

Foxwoods and its investors continue to assert that they have the wherewithal to open a casino with 1,500 slot machines by May 2011, as mandated by Pennsylvania's Gaming Control Board. They will surely have to make up their mind about what they propose to build and start providing more details. Otherwise they may wear out their welcome with the Gaming Board, which has already indicated that stripping Foxwoods of its gaming license could be a possible option. In that case, the license would be placed on the market for rebidding.

SugarHouse: Up to Its Eyeballs in Debt

In early October, SugarHouse conducted a ceremonial groundbreaking at its waterfront property in the Northern Liberties/Fishtown neighborhoods, on Columbus Boulevard near Frankford Avenue.

The ceremony was private, behind the fence, and by invitation only. In attendance were Mayor Nutter, Councilmen DiCicco and Clarke, as well as various other supporters. On the other side of the fence, civic activists conducted their own "Community Groundbreaking" on the sidewalk. Their protest included an airplane that towed a banner stating, "Crime, Poverty, Addiction... Jackpot?"

SugarHouse's owner, Neil Bluhm, also is a part owner of the Rivers Casino. As previously mentioned, the Rivers Casino which opened last August 9th, is bringing in only half of its expected revenues. Mr. Bluhm claims to have sufficient funds to build SugarHouse, and to make debt service on its financing of \$180 million — even though Moody's Investor Service rated SugarHouse's debt obligation at "B3" — a "junk" rating.

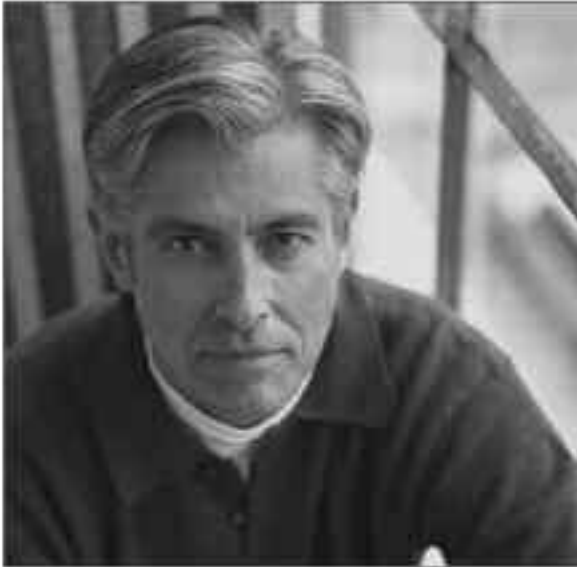
Blackjack: Next?

As of the deadline for this issue of Society Hill's bi-monthly newsletter, Harrisburg is poised to amend the state's Gaming Act, which would allow casinos to add various table games, such as blackjack, craps, etc., to their current "slots only" gambling operations. Lawmakers justify this expansion because the state hopes to balance its budget with the expected revenue. However, critics have pointed out that nowhere is there any study indicating that it is good public policy for a state to rely on gambling revenues to balance its budget. In fact, the Rockefeller Institute of Government recently issued a report concluding that, "new gambling operations that are intended to pay for normal increases in general state spending may add to, rather than ease, long-term budget imbalances." You can read this report by visiting www.rockinst.org. Of course, we will continue to keep you informed about the ongoing attempt to bring gambling to our historic city.



Outside the fence surrounding the private casino groundbreaking, civic activists conducted their own "Community Groundbreaking."

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Soiree at the Shambles: A Resounding Success

A chill was in the air on Wednesday morning, September 30th. There was even a brief drizzle. However, cold weather couldn't put a "damper" on our *FUNd*-raising social to benefit Head House Square, scheduled for later that evening. If worse came to worst, neighbors would huddle and remain cozy and dry under the Shambles' freshly plastered ceiling — paid for with the proceeds from last's year's successful Soiree. Fortunately, as each hour passed, the temperature rose and the clouds slowly drifted away.

The evening's festivities began at the Patron Party, graciously hosted by Susan and Bruce Shapiro. Our Soiree's most philanthropic "Cobblestone Sponsors" and Corporate Donors, as well as our hard-working Soiree volunteers were magnificently wine and dined in the Shapiro's lovely home. At 7 p.m. neighbors from Society Hill, Queen Village and Old City arrived beneath the Shambles — its beautiful brand-new lights lit for the very first time.

Neighbors ready for some food, fun and frolic soon began mingling with old and new friends, sipping wine, and taste-testing the fabulous array of delicious dishes creatively prepared and generously contributed by our community's participating restaurants. Special thanks to each participating restaurant and business for helping make this year's Soiree a success. In alphabetical order, these are: (The)Artful Dodger, Betty's Tasty Buttons, Birchrun Hill Farms, Bistro Romano, Bridget Foy's, Café Nola, Chick's Café, City Tavern, Continental, Cuba Libre, Fork, HeyDay Corporation (fine wines), Hillacres Pride, John and Kira's, Lovash Indian Cuisine, Lucky's Mexican Spot, Moore Brothers Wine Company, New Wave, Philadelphia Brewing Company, Philadelphia Java Company, ROOT, Supper, The Food Trust, Wild Flour Bakery, Xochitl, and Zahav.

The Head House Conservancy thanks Old City Civic Association, Queen Village Neighbors Association, Society Hill Civic Association, and the South Street Headhouse District for co-sponsoring the event, together with the Soiree's Corporate Sponsors: the Connelly Foundation and National Watch and Diamond. Oodles of thanks also go to Steven and Sonia Grasse, owners of Quaker City Mercantile, who again designed the Soiree's wonderful invitations.

The Shambles were subtly and suitably lit for the first time by fixtures donated by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 98, and were installed at no cost to us by MJK Electric. Particular kudos go to John Dougherty, Business Manager of Local 98, for facilitating this generous contribution to America's most historic marketplace — the entire cost of which totaled approximately \$90,000! These new lights will automatically turn on and off each evening, illuminating Head House Square and improving the area's security.



We are most grateful to all of the Soiree's hard-working, volunteer committee members (too numerous to mention) who each assumed specific event responsibilities. Kudos also to Dave Hammond, Treasurer of the Head House Conservancy and Executive Director of the South Street Headhouse District, and Matt DeJulio, SHCA Administrator, who helped coordinate the countless details related to the event's success.

Partying together we raised almost \$25,000, which will be spent toward the restoration of the historic clock at Head House — built in 1819 by Isaiah Lukens, the clockmaker who built the clock at Independence Hall. Indeed, our 2nd Annual Soiree was a most enjoyable social occasion, which could not have succeeded without the enthusiastic support and goodwill of so many neighbors. Thanks to one and all!



Below, left to right:
Yves Quintin
Rosanne's husband
Rosanne Loesch
President, SHCA
Bernice Hamel
President, Head House Conservancy
Jeff Rush
President, Queen Village Neighbors
Kathy Rush
Jeff's wife

Above, left to right:
Stephen Miller
Former SHCA President
Tania Rorke
Past SHCA President
David J. Cohen
Board Director, Head House Conservancy, Old City Resident
Amy Bluemle
David's wife
Kevin Miller
SHCA Treasurer

The Head House Conservancy is a grassroots, nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization devoted to preserving this City-owned National Historical Landmark — America's oldest surviving volunteer firehouse, which is attached to our nation's oldest existing marketplace. All contributions to the Conservancy are tax-deductible.

For inquiries or questions, please contact the Conservancy's President Bernice Hamel at bernicehamel@comcast.net or at P.O. Box 63675, Philadelphia, PA, 19147.

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A SPECIAL REPORT

BY MARK ABRAHAM

How Residents & Civic Groups Can Use A New Technology to Take Action

Imagine a world in which every citizen feels empowered to play an active role in their neighborhoods. Imagine a world where residents are engaged by local governments that are highly efficient and accountable to public concerns. These are the principles driving SeeClickFix.com — a free Internet, mobile web, and iPhone-based tool that allows citizens to identify and take action on non-emergency issues, no matter where in the world they live.

Founded in New Haven, Connecticut, by a resident who wanted to do something about the graffiti constantly marring local storefronts, SeeClickFix now sits at the forefront of a national movement to exploit technology for more open community governance. Sometimes known as Gov 2.0 — because of its relationship to Web 2.0 social networking and citizen-driven media — this movement was recently recognized as having the potential to vastly improve the quality of our urban spaces.

Philadelphia — A Demonstration Site for This New Civic Technology

Philadelphians have been among the “early adopters” of SeeClickFix. Using this new technology, residents in Society Hill and other neighborhoods are already documenting issues — such as vandalism, trash, potholes, dead trees and unsafe intersections. Other citizens use the resource to anonymously report law enforcement issues — such as speeding, idling vehicles and drug use.

Organizations including the Society Hill Civic Association, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, the Philadelphia Clean Air Council and the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia are using SeeClickFix to monitor and fix issues. Media organizations and blogs constantly check it for hot stories. Philadelphia 311 and government officials are also “wired up”: they currently receive notice of any issues submitted and have even joined the resulting discussions.

In fact, SHCA President Rosanne Loesch recently said that she is enthusiastic about using SeeClickFix as a way “to better connect to government services, encourage neighbors to become more involved, and help government find resolutions to key issues of neighborhood concern.”

As a result of the high degree of use and collaboration between residents, civic associations, city government and media, SeeClickFix recently announced that Philadelphia would be a priority site for demonstrating the potential benefits of engaging more residents in their neighborhoods.

How SeeClickFix Works

There are already many involved citizens and hard-working local authorities out there. So how does SeeClickFix offer them a unique advantage?

According to Ben Berkowitz, Founder and CEO of SeeClickFix:

“First, we allow anyone to report and track non-emergency issues via the Internet, or by email or phone, and allow anyone to watch areas and suggest solutions. This empowers the public to take care of and improve their neighborhoods.

“Second, SeeClickFix is very efficient. Two heads are better than one, and 300 heads are better than two. Besides, the government can’t be in all places at all times. With tools like our free iPhone application we make it easy and fun for everyone to see, click and fix.”

Ben seems to foresee a higher purpose for SeeClickFix. He says, “Citizens who take the time to report even minor issues and then see them fixed are likely to become more engaged in their communities over time.”

Want to be among the first to be notified via email about current issues? The Society Hill Civic Association has defined its own watch area: Visit www.seeclickfix.com/watch_area/1115 and click onto “Follow Society Hill Civic Association.” If you would like to create your own custom “watch” or discuss how you can best use the site, contact ben@seeclickfix.com.

Mark Abraham is the editor of Design New Haven, an open civic forum about urban affairs and design in New Haven. Formerly a planner for New York City’s bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, Mark is involved with several neighborhood associations and regional advocacy groups. He will demonstrate the ease of using SeeClickFix at SHCA’s November 18th General Membership Meeting.



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CENTRAL DELAWARE ADVOCACY GROUP

BY STEVEN WEIXLER

A Civic Vision to Improve the Riverfront

Our Society Hill Civic Association continues to play an active role in the ongoing effort to redevelop and improve a large stretch of the Delaware's riverfront by participating in the work of the Central Delaware Advocacy Group (CDAG). This long-term project is similar in many ways to the redevelopment process of our own neighborhood. Riverfront development will eventually involve the work of thousands of concerned Philadelphians — in much the same way that Society Hill's redevelopment involved Philadelphia pioneers almost 50 years ago.

In 2006 Mayor John Street and Councilman Frank DiCicco expressed concern about the hodgepodge of neglected land, scattered development and aging infrastructure along the Delaware River. Mayor Street formed CDAG to study the problems and make recommendations. Under the guidance of PennPraxis, the University of Pennsylvania's urban design consultants, CDAG brought together representatives from government and fifteen civic associations bordering the river. CDAG's mission was to involve the citizens of Philadelphia in an open public process of identifying the needs and hopes of ordinary residents, as well as industry and business to take a fresh new look at the waterfront.

Over the following year, the CDAG held public meetings inviting Philadelphians and urban planners to help identify and define the characteristics of a "new" riverfront. Participating members (including myself) studied the ways other cities had approached the problem of adapting their aging industrial ports to modern uses. We considered the history and unique qualities of Philadelphia and its neighborhoods. We argued the issue of the location and impact of casinos. Throughout the process, our goal was to make the best use of the chance to produce something good for the future. In November 2007, Mayor Nutter and Councilman DiCicco enthusiastically endorsed the result — identified as the "Civic Vision for the Central Delaware."

The Civic Vision is not a "Master Plan." Rather, it is a set of design principles that reflect good thinking about Philadelphia and practicality about its future. It is intended to serve as well-informed guidelines for the long

process of growth — in much the same way as Edmund Bacon's vision for Philadelphia had been. (The Civic Vision can be accessed by visiting www.planphilly.com.)

As the "official" process drew to a close, the participating civic associations were determined not to let the Civic Vision languish on the shelf, as has happened to many other good ideas. The Central Delaware Advocacy Group began a yearlong process of developing a plan to guide our government and other agencies in implementing the basic principles contained in the Civic Vision. With the help of PennPraxis — as well as input from the city's Planning Commission — this plan will be the basis for our work with communities, city government and others.

The Central Delaware Advocacy Group is now a nonprofit corporation. Its membership of twenty civic associations and other organizations is committed to the vitality of Philadelphia's shoreline. Thus far CDAG has successfully lobbied for a protective interim zoning overlay for the riverfront. It has also established credibility and dialogue with the City Planning Commission, the new Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (successor to the Penn's Landing Corporation), and Mayor Nutter's administration. CDAG intends to continue working for a better future riverfront.

Society Hill is an important part of this process, as the riverfront is important to all of us. We have had the benefit of good urban planning, but we know that only decades of hard work by citizen stakeholders could have produced the fine neighborhood we see and enjoy living in today. We can help our neighbors and our city by continuing to be involved in this significant movement to improve the Delaware's riverfront.

For the past three years Steve Weixler has served as Chairman of SHCA's Zoning & Historic Preservation Committee. However, due to his many other commitments he has resigned from this committee on November 1st. We are most grateful for his leadership and expect that we will call on him for his continuing counsel. We thank him for all his efforts and we are most pleased that he will continue representing SHCA on the Central Delaware Advocacy Group.

Only decades of hard work by citizen stakeholders could have produced the fine neighborhood we see and enjoy living in today.

The Fountain at Washington Square

BY BILL DOUBLE



Stereopticon photograph, c. 1870, of Philadelphia Fountain Society's first fountain, erected in 1869 along Washington Square at 7th and Walnut Streets.

(The Library Company of Philadelphia)

The history of the squat granite fountain hunkered along the curb on the south side of Washington Square (across from Hopkinson House) belies its modest appearance. It began its existence in much grander form on the opposite side of the Square in 1869 — the first project of a movement that would both adorn the city's streets and quench the thirst of its residents — man and beast.

Philadelphia was growing rapidly in 1869. It had added more than 100,000 residents in the previous decade, with a population approaching 700,000. Aside from walking, transportation within the city depended largely on horsepower. An accurate count of the city's horses is not available, but one estimate places the number of horses in large 19th-century U.S. cities at one for every twenty residents. That ratio would yield an estimated Philadelphia equine population of about 35,000 in 1869.

These beasts hauled delivery wagons and streetcars laden with riders through the city's narrow streets. Philadelphia's first horse-drawn streetcar service began in 1858, and by 1869 streetcar tracks lined the major streets. Horses bore the brunt of extreme weather and, not infrequently, the abuse of impatient and brutal drivers. The summer heat could be especially harrowing,

as watering stations were all but nonexistent. As many as twenty draft horses a day died from heat exhaustion during the hottest months.

In February of 1869, Dr. Wilson Cary Swann convened a group of "ladies and gentlemen" at his home at 1512 Walnut Street (until recently the site of Susanna Foo's restaurant) to "consider the propriety of forming a society for the erection of fountains" along the streets of the city. He proved persuasive. Thus, the Philadelphia Fountain Society was organized for erecting and maintaining drinking fountains in the city. Practical rather than merely decorative contrivances, their primary purpose was to satisfy physical needs rather than aesthetic sensibilities.

Swann, a member of a prominent family in Alexandria, Virginia, was a patron of the arts and a social reformer, with a personal fortune permitting him to pursue his interests. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in 1830, and returned in 1847 to live in Philadelphia after marrying Maria Bell, a local resident.

Few public sources of drinking water — for humans or animals — existed in mid-19th century Philadelphia. By making fresh, free water amply available, Swann hoped to promote temperance and relieve animal suffering. These goals were intertwined, as he explained: "The greatest enemy to temperance, morality and virtue, is more or less associated with thirst. Many a good man, from necessity, is often driven to gin shops and places of debauch, where water is provided to his suffering beast, and he in return is expected to go in and spend his hard-earned wages at the bar."

A Washington Square site — along Walnut Street opposite 7th Street — was selected for the Society's first project. By April 1869, barely three months



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after the Society's founding, its first fountain had been erected, and a second one on Chestnut Street, facing Independence Hall, was almost completed.

A stereopticon photograph (c.1870) depicts the fountain shortly after its erection. The granite block construction now situated on South Washington Square formed the base of the fountain. It provided receptacles of running water for use by humans, horses and smaller animals. An Old Testament passage on the fountain's granite face above the horse trough proclaimed the Fountain Society's mission. Now scarcely visible, the inscription reads: "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets."

The original fountain stood over eight feet tall. A tablet mounted atop its base bore the inscription: "Philadelphia Fountain Society, Instituted AD 1869." On top of the tablet, a marble hemisphere served as the perch for a large cast iron eagle with outstretched wings. Public response was encouraging. On a single day in July 1869, 1,365 persons and 321 horses were counted drinking from the Washington Square fountain.

The Fountain Society would erect more than 70 fountains throughout the city. At least two others extant near Society Hill are at 9th and Clinton Streets and on Arch Street above 3rd Street (relocated from the front of Independence Hall). Many of the fountains were constructed through donor grants. However, over the years funding for their maintenance became increasingly difficult. Swann was disappointed by dwindling support for the Society by the city and public, including those in the temperance community. (He died in 1876 at age 69, and is interred in the vault of his wife's family in Christ Church burial ground.)

Electric streetcars, introduced in 1892, rapidly replaced the city's horse-drawn cars. This development did not immediately make horse troughs obsolete, because deliveries in the city continued to rely on horsepower. However, the proliferation

of electric streetcar lines led to the relocation of Swann's beloved first fountain from its original location at 7th and Walnut in 1916.

The move arose from a need to narrow the Walnut Street pavement to accommodate the re-routing of the 7th Street trolley, according to Fountain Society records. A team of horses stopped for water at the fountain would now block trolleys running on two different lines. Thus, the fountain was unceremoniously uprooted and moved to the opposite side of the Square by the Bureau of City Property, apparently without prior notice to the Fountain Society.

The fountain's embellishments — its decorative tablet, globe and eagle — appear to have been lost during this process. A Fountain Society inspection in 1917 showed the relocated fountain to be in good order, although its water was turned off. The inspection report simply noted that "the figure has been removed." (Please let us know if you have any idea of its whereabouts.)

The monumental Swann Memorial Fountain — with its striking Calder sculptures at Logan Circle — seems a fitting tribute to the Society's founder. It was erected by the Society in 1924 as a result of a bequest by Swann's widow. Like many venerable Philadelphia institutions, the Fountain Society continues to exist. It recently provided the lily pad sculpture for the decorative fountain in the middle of Washington Square.

About the Author

Bill Double, a Center City resident and recent retiree, is a free-lance writer and volunteer researcher for Independence National Historical Park. When the Park Service assumed administration of Washington Square a couple years ago, Bill was asked to research the origin of its horse-trough fountain. While reviewing Philadelphia Fountain Society records at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, he discovered that the fountain had been the Society's first. Further study of Washington Square convinced Bill that its 300 years of history deserved telling. This account is excerpted from the author's article on the Philadelphia Fountain Society in the summer 2009 edition of *Pennsylvania Heritage* magazine. His book — entitled *Philadelphia's Washington Square* — will be issued on November 16 by Arcadia Publishing as part of its "Images of America" book series. Additional "digging" yielded the remarkable photos above.



**Dr. Wilson Cary Swann,
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A Permanent Home for SHCA's Archives – Now at Temple University

In September 2009 the SHCA completed the transfer of its files to the Urban Archives at Temple University. Approximately fourteen boxes of historical documents and materials, representing our civic association's history and dating from the time it was first organized in April of 1965, are now available to scholars as well as the public. These materials consist of monthly SHCA Board minutes that summarize meetings over many years, correspondence relating to a variety of topics and issues, as well as the association's newsletters.

The selection of Temple University's Urban Archives as the permanent location for SHCA's records was determined at a Board meeting in October 2008 — given that it is recognized as the most important repository for Philadelphia materials of the 20th century and beyond. The Board unanimously approved a report by its Archives Committee, which had been formed specifically to determine *where* to deposit its records for now and for the future. The Committee — chaired by Stanhope Browne with members Matt DeJulio, Cynthia Eiseman, Bernice Hamel and Carole Le Faivre-Rochester — considered seven Philadelphia institutions as possible sites. After applying numerous evaluative criteria, the Committee unanimously recommended Temple's Urban Archives. In fact, at least fifteen other Philadelphia civic associations — including the Center City Residents' Association — have chosen Temple for their permanent collections.

Once SHCA's Archives Committee selected Temple for storing its records, it recommended that new talent carry forward discussions with the University's Urban Archives. Paul Snitzer, SHCA Board Director and an attorney at the firm of Duane Morris LLP,

willingly assumed this responsibility. The discussions proceeded smoothly and led to a formal agreement with Temple, which agreed to accept our civic association's archives at no charge.

As a happy coincidence, new Society Hill resident Larry Y. Alford is the Dean of Temple University Libraries, of which the Urban Archives is a part.

Also, special thanks go to SHCA's Administrator Matt DeJulio who personally transported all fourteen boxes of archival materials from where they had previously been stored at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia to Temple University — now the permanent home for the records of our Society Hill Civic Association.

Temple's Urban Archives, located at the Paley Library, 1210 West Berks Street, is open from Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If interested in visiting or inspecting these archives, please contact Brenda Galloway-Wright, Interim Head of Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, at 215-204-1639.

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Sissie Lipton Wins a Presidential Award



Sissie Lipton expresses thanks for the award presented to her by Cynthia MacLeod, Superintendent of INHP.

On Saturday, September 12th Independence National Historical Park (INHP) held its annual “Land Day” event in Washington Square. The day was dedicated to honoring the many volunteers who contribute their time and efforts to the upkeep and beautification our nation’s historical parks. Sissie Lipton, current SHCA Vice President and Chair of our civic association’s Washington Square Committee, was honored with a “President’s Volunteer Service Award” — signed by former President George W. Bush and presented to her by Cynthia MacLeod, Superintendent of INHP.* This award is given to Americans who dedicate at least two years or 4,000 hours in service — “demonstrating values that strengthen our nation and help build a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility in America.”

*President Barack Obama will not continue to present this “President’s Volunteer Service Award” — so Sissie’s award is most likely the last of its kind.

The park’s “Land Day” activities began with SHCA volunteers planting shrubs and perennials — donated by INHP in celebration of the event — followed by the award ceremony acknowledging Sissie for her contributions to the park.

Attendees then enjoyed lunch, as well as a cake-cutting ceremony, to help celebrate the wonderful day. While our civic association is perhaps the main driving force for the park’s ongoing beautification, the final result is certainly a joint effort. Together INHP and SHCA work to make Washington Square a welcoming and beautiful park for all to enjoy.


Sissie wishes to thank the many volunteers who contribute their efforts by planting bulbs, shrubs, and perennials; pruning the rose bushes; and maintaining the flower beds. She especially thanks Bobbi Karafin, Vice Chair of SHCA’s Washington Square Committee, acknowledging Bobbi’s dedicated and knowledgeable assistance. Sissie also sends special thanks to Myra Eskin, as well as Pat and Ed Coyle — three Society Hill neighbors who always make themselves available — even on short notice. Most importantly, all Society Hillers should thank our many generous neighbors who donate to SHCA’s Washington Square Fund, which is specifically dedicated to the park’s beautification.

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NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATES

Big Belly Trash Compactor Now At Three Bears Park

A neighborhood treasure for young and old alike, Three Bears Park has always been a favorite place to visit — with or without children. However, for many years maintenance of the park has required a great deal of work — especially regarding the disposal of trash — since the Streets Department was not responsible for collecting the park's trash. This was a serious problem, particularly during the warmer months, when visitors lunching or snacking at the park left huge amounts of trash.

The Friends of Three Bears Park, an independent group that raises funds to maintain the site, has for many years employed a worker to regularly clean and maintain the park. Until recently his responsibility was to collect all the trash and then store each bag of debris in a brick shed located adjacent to the Physick House. For the city's weekly trash collection, The Friends' volunteers would haul the many trash bags from this shed to the curbside. Although not an efficient system, it was practical and a less expensive alternative to the high cost of private trash disposal.

Fast forward to the Arrival of Big Belly — the trash compactor of choice for all of Center City! Several Society Hill neighbors complained about the city's initial placement of a Big Belly (BB) near Three Bear's Park, which was installed directly in the Walkway at Cypress Street.

This Walkway is one of Society Hill's many unique mid-block Walkways created during the period of our community's rebirth many years ago.

Fortunately, the Streets Department responded to our community's request for a more suitable location for the park's BB. It was moved and is now conveniently installed against the park's western brick wall, near the picnic tables. We are also pleased to report that the park's trash is now collected at least weekly by the Department of Parks and Recreation, and will be collected up to twice weekly during warmer weather.

Sometime in the near future the city also plans to install a BB recycling unit in the park, similar to the "twin BB's" we now see at various busy street corners. This new trash disposal system at Three Bears is a significant improvement that will enhance enjoyment of the park for one and all. For more information, please contact Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev@msn.com.

The Painting of Franklin Light Poles

The painting of all Franklin Light poles throughout Society Hill — previously scheduled for completion this fall — has been postponed to the spring of next year. In a future edition of this newsletter, we will keep you advised about what to expect — such as, for example, temporary parking regulations that will be in place on a block-by-block basis while the work is being done.



Remember, there is a hefty fine for illegal household trash dumping inside or beside any BB! Report incidents like this one by calling 215-686-3063.



The brown traffic controller box is one of three such boxes in Society Hill colorfully painted and signed by the artist P. Mangano.

Chamber Ensemble Performing at Old Pine

The Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble has already opened its 33rd season with concerts held at Old Pine Street Church in October. Future performances for the Ensemble's 2009-2010 season are scheduled for Friday evenings at 8 p.m. on January 22nd and March 19th; as well as on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. on January 24th and March 21st. Society Hill neighbors, Donald and Margarita Montanaro, are cofounders of the Ensemble: he is its Music Director and clarinetist, while she is the harpist. All the Ensemble's musicians are current or retired Philadelphia Orchestra members.

With exceptional acoustics, the Greek Revival architecture of Old Pine Street Church, at 412 Pine Street, provides a perfect chamber music experience. The Ensemble's programs are unique in that they are not typical string



performances. Rather they include piano, harp, clarinet, bassoon, horns, flute, trumpet, and even a guitar on occasion. Following each concert, a free reception gives audiences a chance to meet and mingle with the musicians.

To attend future concerts, unreserved single admission tickets, which can be purchased at the door, are \$25 and only \$5 for students. Group rates are also available. To learn about program selections for these performances, or for further information, please call 215-542-4890. Or visit the Ensemble's website at: www.pce.libertynet.org.



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ACCIDENTAL TOURIST IN MY OWN BACKYARD

BY JANE BIBERMAN

Once Upon A Midnight Dreary

*Ah, distinctly I remember
it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember
wrought its ghost upon the floor.*

*Eagerly I wished the morrow;
vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—
sorrow for the lost Lenore—*

*For the rare and radiant maiden
whom the angels named Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.*

You may not immediately recognize these second stanza of Edgar Allan Poe's world-famous poem, but every schoolchild can recite the first line of "The Raven" — perhaps the most popular poem of all time. A replica of the bird stands on a pedestal in front of the poet's charming brick house and garden near the northwest corner of 7th and Spring Garden Streets.

In honor of Poe's 200th birthday (he was born in Boston in 1809), I visited the museum, operated by the National Park Service. Each of the two times I visited, Andrew McDougall, a friendly park ranger, greeted me as if he were welcoming me into his own home. Indeed, my host was so congenial and knowledgeable that I felt like a special guest.

This modest dwelling was the fifth and last home in Philadelphia occupied by Poe sometime between 1842 and 1844, and it is here that he lived with his bride — his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia, and her mother, Maria Clemm, who was his mother-in-law as well as his aunt. The tour begins with an eight-minute film about Poe's life and work. And though I was an English literature major, I had forgotten almost everything about the short and unhappy life of the man who is credited with inventing the detective story by writing *Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

Poe was a writer who influenced generations of authors, from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Dick Francis. His poetry was praised by Allen Ginsberg, who believed that "you can trace all literary art to Poe's influence: Burroughs, Baudelaire, Genet, Dylan.... It all leads back

to Poe." Alfred Hitchcock said, "It's because I was so taken with Poe's stories that I later made suspense films... I've tried to put in my films what Poe puts in his works: a completely unbelievable story told to the reader with such a spellbinding logic that you get the impression that the same thing could happen to you tomorrow."

By the way, I learned about the above Hitchcock quote from one of the fascinating displays in the museum, many of which are designed especially for children to enjoy.

No original furniture remains in the house, but hand-painted screens in the rooms suggest how they may have looked. The parlor does have real furniture and was designed in accordance with Poe's own thoughts on decorating, expressed in his essay, "The Philosophy of Furniture." Mr. McDougall thoughtfully gave me a copy of the treatise in which Poe writes, "The English are supreme, the Italians have but little sentiment beyond marbles and colours... and the Yankees alone are preposterous." Visitors may sit in this room and listen to recordings of Poe's famous poems and stories.

What is totally original to the house is its cellar, which is believed to be the inspiration for "The Black Cat." Poe did in fact have a cat named Catterina. Last month, park rangers enacted "The Cave" here, and in the spring of 2010 a wine tasting will be held. No doubt, Amontillado will be served. (For more information about hours and upcoming events, call 215-597-8780.)

Although the museum is free, beware! There are all kinds of enticing goodies to buy in its little gift shop. I purchased an incomparable CD of Poe masterpieces read by Vincent Price and Basil Rathbone, whose sonorous voice I will for evermore hear dramatizing "The Raven." And for those who can't remember its first line: "Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary..."

*Quoth the Raven,
"Nevermore."*



Edgar Allan Poe



SAFE & SOUND IN SOCIETY HILL

BY MARILYN APPEL

It becomes redundant, to say the least, when we keep warning neighbors about the same things: do not leave purses on the backs of chairs while dining al fresco — too easy to steal; falling asleep on a park bench with your purse next to you is not a good idea — too easy to steal; leaving valuables visible in your car encourages thefts of those items.

Several cars were stolen in the last two months, as were several bicycles. Also several windows of parked cars were smashed. Out-of-town cars (identified by their license plates) are especially targeted. Please tell out-of-town family and friends that they are better off parking their vehicles in a lot, and that they should never leave anything of value visible in their cars — hide it in the trunk!

Also, as a good neighbor, please keep your eyes open and report anything strange to the police. Better to be safe than sorry. When in doubt, please report all dangerous behavior, theft, car break-ins, home break-ins, or muggings by calling 911.

Regarding the subject of bikes and the topic of Safe & Sound. Now that Philadelphia has two new bike lanes — one on Spruce Street and the other on Pine Street, motorists are expected to stay in the designated auto lane on these streets, except when making turns. When making turns, drivers should also yield to bikers. However, some bikers do not always follow the rules of the road. When they don't, they risk putting motorists and themselves in danger — for example, when failing to stop at stop signs, running red lights, riding right in front of moving cars while making a left turn, passing a car on the right when it is slowing and signaling to make a right turn, riding on the sidewalks or going the wrong way down a one-way street. Pedestrians should be especially careful to look in both directions even when crossing one-way streets. Also keep in mind that when pedestrians talk on cell phones or listen to iPods, they become less aware of what's going on around them and risk danger to themselves or others. It is always best to remain alert.



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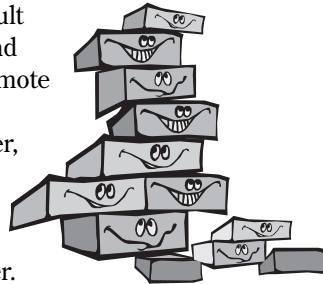
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Fix The Brix

So far, 49 households have inquired about our civic association's "Fix The Brix" incentive program. Twelve neighbors followed through and repaired their sidewalks, and we're pleased to report that they have already been reimbursed. Now that cold weather approaches, it will be difficult (if not impossible) to prune trees and repair sidewalks, so we hope to promote a big surge in our "Fix the Brix" activity for the early spring. However, the masons' pricing may be more competitive at this time of year — so perhaps you'll be lucky and get the job done sooner rather than later.



Our civic association has increased its contribution for individual "Fix the Brix" repairs from \$150 to \$300 per household. The SHCA has finite funds for this project, so household reimbursement will be given on a "first-come, first-served" basis. You may want to make plans to get this important work done before spring approaches — not only for the beauty of our streetscape — but for our safety. Perhaps you can begin the process by seeking cost estimates now — so that when the time comes you will be ready to "fix your brix."

Bulky Trash Pickup

Since January 1, 2009, the city has altered its curbside trash collection system and no longer accepts bulky items, such as household appliances or automobile tires. These items — such as stoves, washing machines, refrigerators, hot water heaters, etc. — must be disposed of either through private haulers or can be brought to one of the city's Sanitation Convenience Centers, with a limit of two items per drop-off. Residents can, however, continue to set out at curbside up to two compactible furniture items per week, such as sofas, mattresses, and box springs, etc.

The following three Philadelphia Sanitation Centers are located about four miles from Society Hill, and should be used for disposal of larger items, including appliances and automobile tires. Call these centers for hours of operation.

Southwest Philadelphia


1600 S. 51st Street
(off Grays Ferry Avenue)
215-685-2600

3033 S. 63rd Street
(near Passyunk Avenue)
215-685-4290

Port Richmond


Delaware Avenue &
Wheatsheaf Lane
(north of Castor Avenue)
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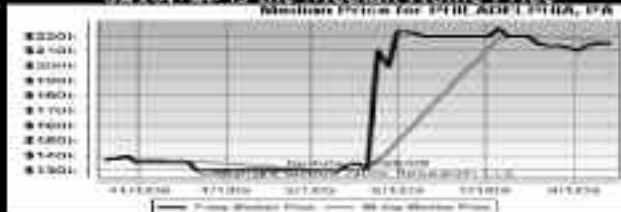


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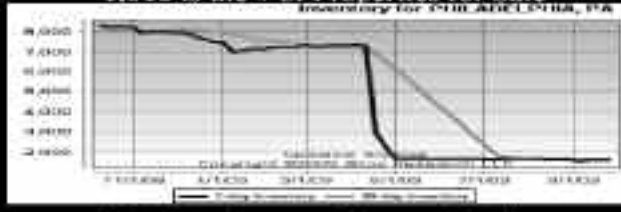
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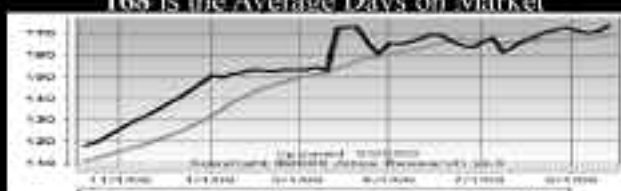
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241-43 CHESTNUT F \$859,000
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509 SPRUCE \$750,000
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213 DELANCEY \$719,900
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Society Hill's Tree Tenders

BY HANS BOMBECK

Good News

We have received formal notification that the state's TreeVitalize Program has approved our community's application for fifteen new trees. Ten trees — including two in front of Old St. Mary's Church, on 4th Street — will be available for planting before Thanksgiving. Five more will arrive next spring — four to be used at Holy Trinity Church, at 6th and Spruce Streets, and one on the 200 block of Spruce Street. The fifteen trees plus accompanying stakes and ties and any concrete cutting and disposal will be supplied free of charge.

As this newsletter is being prepared, we continue to work out various specific details — including, for example, the pick-up from a central warehouse and delivery to each location. We are also determining the degree of pit preparation required before the trees can be planted into the ground.

As previously reported, the Fairmount Park Commission will be merging with a branch of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation. This department has sole responsibility for site approval of any tree and type of tree selected.

New Tree Tender Classes

If you care about trees — whether planted in front of your property or elsewhere in Society Hill — you may wish to learn more about what is required to keep our historic district green with healthy trees. We encourage you to join your “tree hugging” neighbors by becoming a Tree Tender yourself.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), on 20th Street in Center City, will offer its next Tree Tender training program on two Saturdays: January 9th & January 16th, from 8:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The Society's highly qualified and dedicated instructors provide hands-on training that cover all related topics, including tree biology, identification, planting, proper care and how participants can work within their respective communities. These popular courses fill up quickly. If interested, you can register online by going to www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org and clicking onto “Tree Tenders Training.”

Whose Trees Need Pruning?

As most homeowners should know, we also own the sidewalk and any trees on or in front of our respective properties. This, of course, imposes responsibility (and potential liability) for the condition and upkeep of both our trees and sidewalks. While SHCA's “Fix-the-Brix” project addresses the repair of uneven sidewalk surfaces (to prevent tripping accidents), equal thought should be given to the equally dangerous hazards created by falling tree limbs.

It has been the practice of the Fairmount Park Commission to deal with “imminent, serious tree hazards” by stepping in with the removal of dead limbs or trees at the expense of taxpayers. This service, especially in current times of budgetary constraints, has often arrives late and requires constant prodding by caring homeowners.

Society Hill's Tree Tenders believe that an organized and pro-active approach by property owners can do much to prevent hazardous situations, and at the same time help our street trees remain healthy and vigorous. For example: dead branches should be taken down before they threaten to fall down; any branch or branches that overhang street traffic — where they can be struck by trucks and large vehicles or equipment — should be cut back; and any branch growth over sidewalks that would be at eye level of a tall person should also be removed.

While Tree Tenders are willing to prune branches from the ground (with the use of pruning poles), we cannot legally handle any task requiring professional equipment. We, therefore, recommend that you contact us regarding any tree condition described above. We will then determine how best to proceed — either by using the services of volunteers or we could negotiate a “package deal” with a qualified professional arborist. If a few Society Hill property owners would be willing to support a collective endeavor, we would likely be able to negotiate a cost-effective pruning program that would benefit all participants.

By all means, feel free to contact us.

Hans Bombeck: 215-627-1356;

hansbombeck@verizon.net

Garrett Smith: 215-760-1213;

garrett.smith@comcast.net

And thanks for doing your part to help keep Society Hill's trees green and healthy.



Any branch growth over sidewalks that would be at eye level of a tall person should be removed.



For a first-time homebuyer, Johanna made purchasing a home three things I never thought it could be – fast, fun, and stress-free! Because of her vast knowledge and experience, trustworthiness and professionalism, I have and will continue to recommend her to anyone looking to buy or rent in the Philadelphia area.

– Alyssa D’Alconzo 8 ’09

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Leo Kivell: Youth In Service Award

On a cold, rainy Saturday in April 2005, Leo Kivell and his companions, fourth graders from St. Peter's School, walked six miles in the Walk Against Hunger to raise money for the St. Peter's Church Food Cupboard. Leo created his own web page, sent e-mails to everyone he knew, and talked to his friends: "I asked them to help me raise money for people who did not have enough money to buy food." Since then Leo has "walked the walk," and over the past several years he has raised more than \$10,000 for the Food Cupboard. Volunteering is a natural part of his life. We send congratulations to Leo, now in the 8th grade at St. Peter's, where he also enjoys participating in soccer and basketball.

Leo Kivell will receive the "Youth in Service Award" — sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Greater Philadelphia Chapter — for his extensive volunteer efforts on behalf of the St. Peter's Church Food Cupboard and the Walk Against Hunger. The awards luncheon will be held on Thursday, November 19th, 12 - 2 p.m. at the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel.



Leo Kivell has raised more than \$10,000 for the Food Cupboard. Volunteering is a natural part of his life.

Since 1988, the St. Peter's Church Food Cupboard has been providing groceries to families in need every Saturday morning at 313 Pine Street, and last year more than 3,500 bags of food were distributed. In 2009, the Food Cupboard was generously supported by a grant from the Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial. To volunteer or donate food, please call 215-925-0856.

The Walk Against Hunger is sponsored by the Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger and will be held again on April 10, 2010. For further information, call 215-769-0659.

HOLIDAY SALE

St. Peter's School

Friday & Saturday, December 4th & 5th

St. Peter's School, at 4th and Lombard Streets, will hold its annual Holiday Sale on Friday, December 4th from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, December 5th from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Items for sale will include lush trees, fresh from upstate Pennsylvania; beautifully decorated wreaths, or the materials to make your own; and colorful poinsettias.

On Saturday morning there will be special activities for children, including a Holiday Breakfast with Santa. Please call and make reservations.

For additional information, please contact Marcy Leader at 215-925-3963 or mleader@st-peters-school.org.

Come and celebrate the season!



Happy Holidays!

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SHCA MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Winner of Free Dinner for Two Announced

We are pleased to announce that Kim Williams, a new civic association member, was the lucky winner of a free dinner for two at Cuba Libre. Kim is among seven new members who recently signed up for SHCA membership — perhaps as a result of the drawing promoted in the last issue which encouraged new or lapsed Society Hillers to sign up. Congratulations to Kim and welcome to all new SHCA members!

This year SHCA's total membership rolls are currently at 1,044 — only slightly fewer than the 1,063 members from last year's all-time high. Please know that we would not have come so close, were it not for the 118 new members who joined our association since the beginning of this year. So thanks to one and all!

Because we wonder why 116 previous members from 2008 have failed to renew, we hope to encourage missing "old" members to renew, as well as foster new members to sign up. Anyone who joins or rejoins before the end of this year will be automatically grandfathered through the entire calendar year of 2010.

Your membership dues subsidize the planting of new trees and fixing brick sidewalks, and pay for sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal supplies, the planting of flowers and general improvements at Washington Square, oversight of our neighborhood's zoning and development process, SHCA's administrative costs, and many other vital services too numerous to mention. Without your annual membership dues, SHCA would cease to function. Protect our neighborhood and *your* real estate investment. Join today!

Any questions, just call 215-629-1288 or email Matt DeJulio, SHCA Administrator, at mattdejulio@aol.com

C'mon Gals!

As long as it's not raining and you're suitably bundled up, there's no excuse not to join our Walkie-Talkies. Just appear at Three Bears Park before 8:10 in the morning for a healthy and invigorating one-hour walk with like-minded neighbors. We begin promptly at 8:15 and always welcome newcomers.



SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Your email (print clearly) _____

IMPORTANT: Today most everyone communicates via email. Please be sure that we have your current email address — so that you can receive important updates between publication of our community newsletter. All SHCA emails will be judiciously screened, and rarely will we send emails more than once a week. Nor will we share your email address with anyone else. This convenient, 21st-century system helps save our civic association postage costs while keeping you regularly informed.

Residential Memberships

- \$ 1,000 Benjamin Franklin Benefactor
- \$ 500 Washington Benefactor
- \$ 300 Jefferson Benefactor
- \$ 150 Georgian Grantor
- \$ 100 Federal Friend
- \$ 50 Basic Household Membership
- \$ 40 Senior/Student

Business Memberships

- \$100 Institutions—5+ employees
- \$ 60 Institutions—fewer than 5 employees

Additional Contributions:

\$ _____ Washington Square Beautification

\$ _____ Sidewalk Cleaning/Graffiti Removal

\$ _____ Society Hill Reporter

\$ _____ TownWatch/Safe and Sound

\$ _____ Zoning/Historic Preservation

\$ _____ No Casinos Near Neighborhoods

\$ _____ Franklin Lights

\$ _____ Street Trees

\$ _____ Three Bears Park

\$ _____ McCall School

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Charge VISA/MasterCard:

Number _____ Exp Date _____

Signature _____

The following topics are of special interest to me. I welcome receipt of email updates on these topics.

- Clean-Up Day
- Franklin Lights
- Dilworth House
- Reporter
- Washington Square
- Social Events
- Property Taxes
- Casino Issues
- Zoning & Historic Preservation
- Fundraising
- Local crime incidents & alerts

Please return completed application to:

Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147

NOTEWORTHY NEIGHBORS

BY DAVID WOODS

Irwin Levitan and Nancy Catterall



Meet a couple
who blend art
with science.

What is most striking about the airy and light-filled side of Irwin Levitan's and Nancy Catterall's modern house on Pine Street is not just the juxtaposition and contrast with its 1807 side, but the way in which artworks by Susan Point grace the home's walls and speak to their respective backgrounds. Susan A. Point is a Canadian Indian of the Salish tribe whose distinctive style is based upon the cultural artifacts of the Salish peoples from America's Northwestern region and Canada's British Columbia.

Now what, you might ask, does that have to do with Irwin and Nancy? Well, Irwin grew up in Canada and attended McGill University in Montreal; and Nancy — who first started collecting Point's work when she lived in Seattle — says: "I love art that represents something of a culture." These days the couple own thirteen Susan A. Point artworks featured throughout their home.

For this pair, it's a blending of art with science. Irwin — who lived and worked in Sweden and Switzerland after earning his Ph.D. from McGill — is a neuroscientist. He is Chairman of the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is also Director of the Mahoney Institute of Neurological Sciences. The Institute is one of the world's preeminent centers of neuroscience research and training,

emphasizing that advances in brain research call for the expertise and cooperation of scientists from many different disciplines. Irwin is also an editorial adviser to the Encyclopedia of Life Sciences. Nancy — who trained in speech and hearing science at the University of Washington, in Seattle — received her doctorate in audiology from the Pennsylvania School of Audiology. She is Director of Audiology at Jefferson University.

So, when returning home from their academic worlds do they talk primarily about brains and ears? No, but often they do compare and contrast (as well as enjoy) the different personalities they encounter in their respective disciplines. And after any work day they have lots of extracurricular interests that engage them: they each have two offspring from previous marriages, between 28 and 43 years old; they love to ski, and in fact met while skiing in Colorado during a science conference. They travel — recently cycling in the Loire Valley and walking in the English Cotswolds. Nancy is also an enthusiastic gardener who tends to their charming brick-walled garden. They also enjoy the Philadelphia Orchestra and both are avid readers. He's a big fan of John LeCarré, while she prefers historical works. Together they can often be found at their favorite local restaurants — Bistro 7, Vetri, and Cochon.

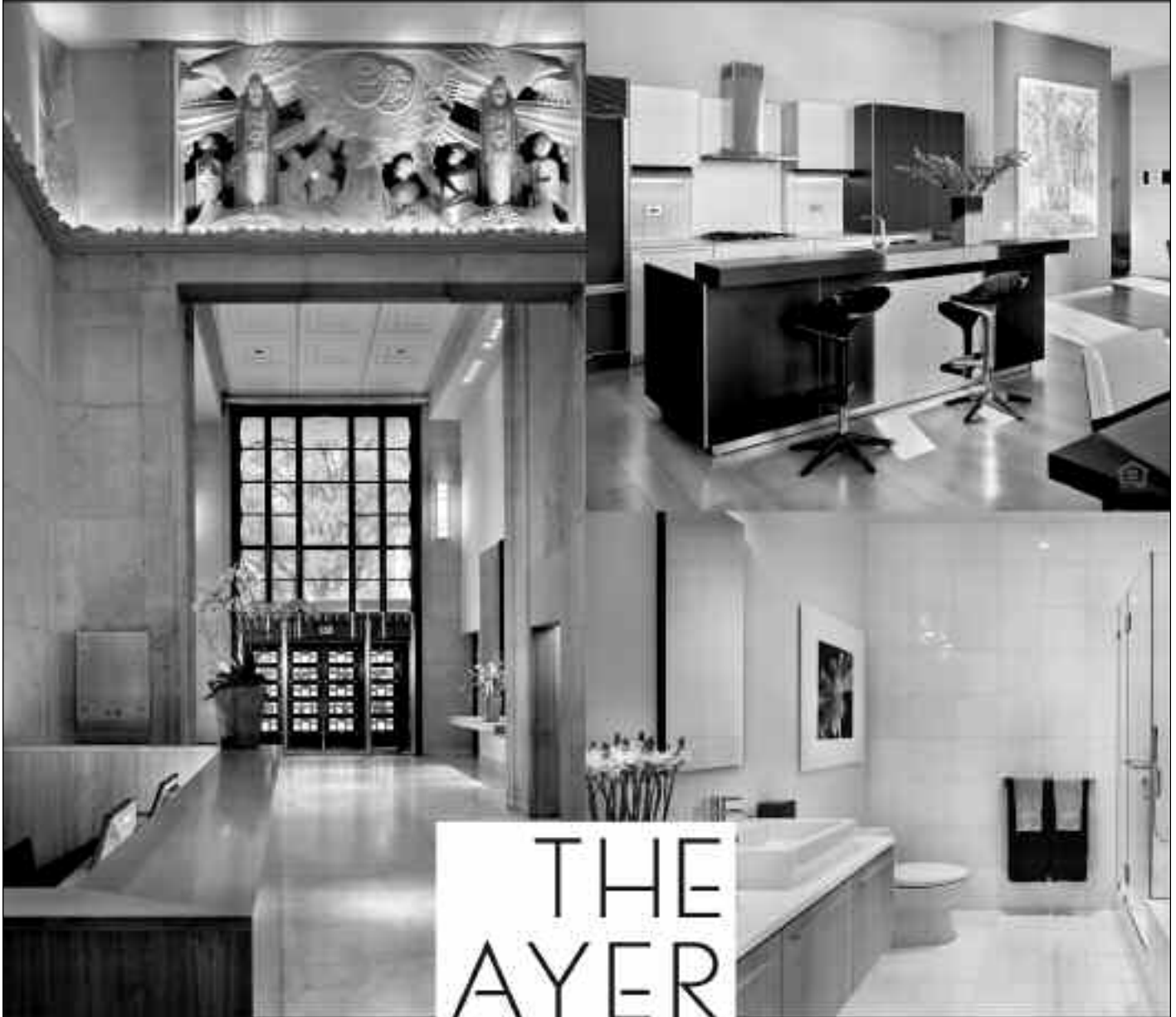
Of their love of Society Hill, they note the area's coherent sense of community, and the fidelity of its historical architecture. Says Irwin: "I walk the streets and never tire of it, the sense of neighborhood." And Nancy praises the diversity of neighbors, singling out the young parents at Three Bears Park where they look forward to taking their 15-month-old grandchild.

Perhaps, one day, their travels will take them to British Columbia and the northwestern U.S.A. — where art that expresses the Salish culture (and Susan Point's work in particular) — can be seen in galleries in Vancouver and Washington state. Who knows? More of these works of art might just find their way back to Pine Street.

David Woods can be reached at
HMI3000@comcast.net

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C A L E N D A R

Wednesday, November 11, 7 p.m.
SHCA Board of Directors Meeting
The Physick House
321 S. 4th Street

Wednesday, November 18, 7 p.m.
SHCA General Membership Meeting
Pennsylvania Hospital Auditorium
(entry at 8th & Spruce Street)
See page 1

Saturday November 21
Society Hill Clean-Up Day
See page 9

Friday, December 4, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Saturday, December 5, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
St. Peters School Holiday Sale
4th & Lombard Streets
See page 31



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