

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

Spring/Summer 2012

The Newsletter
of The Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org

34th Annual Society Hill Open House Tour



The Society Hill Open House & Garden Tour, to be held on Sunday, May 20th, benefits SHCA. Join Us!

Tickets are now on sale for this enjoyable, self-guided tour of more than ten private homes and gardens in one of our nation's most historic neighborhoods. Imagine walking on the same brick sidewalks frequented by Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin!

Each year, the Society Hill Tour offers a new selection of exceptional homes and gardens that range in style and décor from the 18th and 19th-century periods to the most contemporary. According to event coordinators Martha Levine and Linda Skale, some people "attend the tours for inspirational design ideas they may use in their own homes."

Sponsored by the Society Hill Civic Association, the tour's proceeds are used for neighborhood improvement and beautification projects.

For more tour information, go to our website: www.societyhillcivic.org and click on the link for Society Hill Open House & Garden Tour.

Advance ticket purchases are encouraged. To purchase a ticket, to receive a brochure or to get more information, contact Society Hill Civic Association at 215-629-1288, or email: mattdejulio@aol.com. Tickets can also be purchased on the day of the tour at Old Pine Community Center, 401 Lombard Street.

Date: Sunday, May 20th

Time: 1 to 5 p.m.

Cost: \$30 per ticket in advance, \$35 at the door

Group rates available

Complimentary light refreshments

Rest rooms available

Comfortable shoes encouraged

The Tax Debate Continues

The Society Hill Civic Association invites you to attend our General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 16th to continue the excellent discussion about Citywide Real Estate Reassessment begun at our March meeting. Expect an update on the debate about this topic that is currently raging in City Council. While the city has adopted the Tax Reform

Commission's recommendation to dramatically reduce the oppressive Wage Tax in future years, improvements to make real estate taxation in Philadelphia fair and understandable remain elusive. It is important that we stay informed both as a community and as individual homeowners. Plan on attending this meeting to have your questions answered and your voice heard.

In addition, SHCA will conduct its annual election of Board Directors (see nominees listed on page 2). We most heartily welcome incoming SHCA officers and quadrant directors and warmly thank all neighbors who donate their time and efforts on behalf of our civic association.

The General Membership Meeting, open to all neighborhood residents, will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the Zubrow Auditorium on the first floor of Pennsylvania Hospital, just inside the main entrance at 8th Street near Spruce. Prior to the General Meeting (at 6 p.m.), we will hold our monthly Board Meeting at the Hospital's Great Court Meeting Room. All current SHCA members are welcome to attend. We look forward to seeing you on May 16th!

WED.		MARK YOUR CALENDAR	
May 16		Society Hill Civic Association Meetings Wednesday, May 16th, 2012	
		Pennsylvania Hospital, 8th & Spruce Streets	
6:00 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting	Pennsylvania Hospital Great Court Meeting Room All SHCA members are welcome.	
7:30 p.m.	General Membership Meeting	Pennsylvania Hospital Zubrow Auditorium All neighborhood residents are invited to attend.	
Topic:	Continuing the Conversation on Real Estate Tax Reassessment		



Liberty Tree

by Thomas Paine

A song written early in the American Revolution.

In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;
Ten thousand celestials directed the way
And hither conducted the dame.

A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named Liberty Tree.

The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out this peaceable shore.

Unmindful of names or distinction they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;
With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was Liberty Tree.

Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unvexed with the troubles of silver and gold,
The cares of the grand and the great.

With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
And supported her power on the sea;
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
For the honor of Liberty Tree.

But hear, O ye swains, 'tis a tale most profane,
How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons, and Lords, are uniting amain
To cut down this guardian of ours;

From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms
Through the land let the sound of it flee,
Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
In defence of our Liberty Tree.



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Society Hill

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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, businesses and professionals. Direct your editorial submissions and/or queries to Sandra Rothman by phone at 717-715-5791 or email sandra.rothman@aol.com. To publicize an event, submit all press releases directly.

Materials must be submitted in writing – via mail or email – 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 Editor will be considered for publication only if signed and the writer provides contact information.

Slate of Society Hill Civic Association Nominees

President

Steven Weixler

Vice President

Jim Moss

Directors-at-Large

Bernice Hamel
George Kelley
Martha Levine
Kim Williams

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George Dowdall

Treasurer

Marc Feldman

Northeast Quadrant

2012 Heather Steiner
2013 Lorna Katz Lawson
2014 Lenore Hardy

Northwest Quadrant

2012 Diane Rossheim
2013 Lawrence Burstein
2014 Sissie Lipton

Southeast Quadrant

2012 Laura Temple
2013 Robert Curley
2014 Jane Ahn

Southwest Quadrant

2012 Marilyn Appel
2013 Melvin Buckman
2014 Francisco Carreno

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fighting for Fair Taxes

Taxes... an unpleasant but necessary part of life. In Philadelphia that includes real estate taxes assessed using an antiquated and bizarre system filled with opportunities for unfairness and abuse. As I commented in the last issue of the *Reporter*, the Nutter administration is floating the idea of a new method of taxation called the Actual Value Initiative, or AVI. On its face, it seems to be a step forward in producing a fair and predictable tax code. However, it has some alarming flaws. Speakers at our March General Membership Meeting addressed some of the obvious problems with AVI and heard questions and concerns from Society Hill residents.

Since that time, our Civic Association has joined a Tax Fairness Coalition that is made up of every civic group in the First Council District (plus others west of Broad and north of Market Streets). The Coalition is acting to make the voices of working Philadelphians heard while the city replaces one old tax code with another — another with the same potential for abuse and inequity.

None of us would say that real estate tax revenue is an unnecessary part of the City's budget. We all realize that adequate funding for our ailing public school system is an obligation our society owes its children. But, as hardworking and contributing citizens, we have the right to expect fair and equal treatment from our government.

In its early sessions, the Tax Fairness Coalition has started to form a general consensus on principles we intend to firmly express to the City Council, which must pass a new budget before it adjourns the current session. We are concerned that the Nutter administration's AVI plan is seriously flawed. In the rush to generate an additional \$90 million in revenue for the school system, new and unpredictably high real estate tax hikes could be coming our way.

Get it done right, not fast

First District Councilman Mark Squilla has introduced a bill that would delay the implementation of AVI for one more year — a move we strongly

support. The City has used a questionable method of assessing the value of property that lacks openness and accountability to the taxpayer. Apparently, the City's budget will be written and then the value of real estate citywide will be adjusted to realize the required revenue. We feel this is a disastrous policy. The taxpayer has the right to know what the assessment will be, and the right to an appeals process.

Protect vulnerable homeowners

There is some discussion among members of the coalition in working-class and developing or "renaissance" neighborhoods that the rise in taxes could make it impossible for fixed-income, low-income and long-term homeowners to stay in their homes. We are searching for a fair formula that shares the tax burden, but does not penalize any particular group.

Make the property tax regime fairer

Why does the burden fall so heavily on residential homeowners? Shift more of the burden to commercial property owners, who often pay a comparatively low rate. In addition, shift some of the tax load to empty land. There are many undeveloped parcels throughout the city that are not contributing. As a long-time proponent of our new Delaware Riverfront Master Plan, I would be delighted to see this powerful stimulus for development of the existing long stretches of brownfields (abandoned or underused industrial and commercial facilities available for re-use).

There are other concepts and principles under discussion, such as a stronger effort by the City to collect the huge amount of delinquent taxes and fees. The Coalition has an agreement with Councilman Squilla to cooperate in seeing our goals adopted. We are reaching out to other civic groups, such as the Center City Residents' Association — and are lobbying Council members. We will have an update on progress on this important issue at our May General Membership Meeting and also in our weekly email newsletter. In addition, a town hall meeting is planned. Please join me in expressing your concern.



Steven Weixler,
President

The taxpayer has the right to know what the assessment will be and the right to an appeals process.

In This Issue...

Page 11

Exploring the City:
Gaskill Baths

Page 14

Out and About:
Preserving Philly's Past

Page 17

On Our Shelf:
Beach Book Suggestions

Page 19

Safe and Sound: Security
Cameras in Society Hill

Page 21

Welcome Baskets:
Farewell to Zeke's

Page 26

Nifty Neighbors in My Own
Backyard: Susan Friedenberg



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Society Hill's Spring Clean-Up Day

Roll up your sleeves, break out the brooms and get ready for company! Visitors are coming (see front page) and we want our historic neighborhood to look its best.

Here's what Society Hillers are being asked to do: Sweep leaves and winter debris from your sidewalks, walkways and alleyways into the streets — before the city's sweeper trucks arrive Saturday morning between 8 a.m. and noon. Don't forget sidewalks surrounding Three Bears Park, as well as McCall and St. Peter's Schools.

Trash bags will be available — handed out by SHCA's Clean-Up Day volunteers — at the S. 5th Street SuperFresh, from 8 a.m. until noon. Your bagged street leaves and litter (but no household trash!) can be left by 1 p.m. at the major intersections of Locust, Spruce, Pine and Lombard Streets, as well as Three Bears Park.

Since the sweeper trucks start cleaning streets as early as 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, consider sweeping your sidewalks on Friday night, May 11th.

Wherever posted, cars must be moved to the opposite side of the street after 6 p.m. on Friday night — or they could be ticketed on Saturday morning, beginning at 8 a.m. Please note that to accommodate Saturday synagogue services, the 300, 400 and 500 blocks of both Spruce and Lombard Streets will be swept by 8:30 a.m. — leaving the south side of these streets available for congregants to park their cars.

All streets will be swept from Front to 8th and Walnut to Lombard Streets (not including Walnut Street). There will be NO PARKING on either side of the 300 and 400 blocks of Front Street. This also applies to the 200 and 300 blocks of 2nd Street and Lawrence Court. Although

“Other Side Parking” signs will generally read “from 6 p.m. Friday until 3 p.m. Saturday,” Society Hill's Block Coordinators are encouraged to remove these signs as near to 1 p.m. as possible — to permit cars to be moved back to their usual side of the street between 1 and 3 p.m. — since this move will prevent those cars from getting ticketed. (After all, Parking Authority personnel are more likely to ticket a car based on the posted signs rather than whether or not the street has been swept.)

Coordinating this spring's Clean-Up Day are Co-Chairs Spencer Finch (specfinch2@hotmail.com) and Bob Curley (bobpcurley@gmail.com). For Clean-Up Day questions, call Spencer at 215-592-0536 or Bob at 215-592-4251.

Paper-Shredding Services

SHCA is again sponsoring a paper-shredding service for the convenience of Society Hill residents only (sorry, no businesses). This service is limited to confidential materials. (All other papers should be recycled — not shredded!) Electronic recycling WILL NOT be available at the Spring Clean Up, but will return in the fall.

- Paper-shredding services will be available in St. Peter's School parking lot, at 3rd and Lombard Streets.
- Hours are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (earlier if the truck reaches capacity).
- Paper only is accepted — no CDs or disks.

If you use this special service and aren't yet an SHCA member, please consider joining our civic association — simply fill out the form, either online at societyhillcivic.org or on page 25 of this newsletter. Any questions? Call 215-629-1288.

If you're interested in joining a roaming group of cleaners who will pitch in where necessary, contact Bob or Spencer before May 12th.

Easy Steps to 'Fix the Brix'

SHCA will reimburse any Society Hill homeowner who has a professional mason level the front sidewalk (brick or cement).

- 1 We will send you a check for 40% of the total cost, with a maximum of \$300.
- 2 We can provide a list of masons (and arborists, if tree roots are the culprit).
- 3 After the work is done, mail a copy of the invoice for the work done with a copy


of the cancelled check to:
SHCA, P.O. Box 63503,
Philadelphia PA 19147.

- 4 Receive a check from SHCA.

To take advantage of this offer, contact Martha Levine at marthalev@msn.com, or 215-629-0727, or Frank Signorello at fsignorello@gexchange.com.



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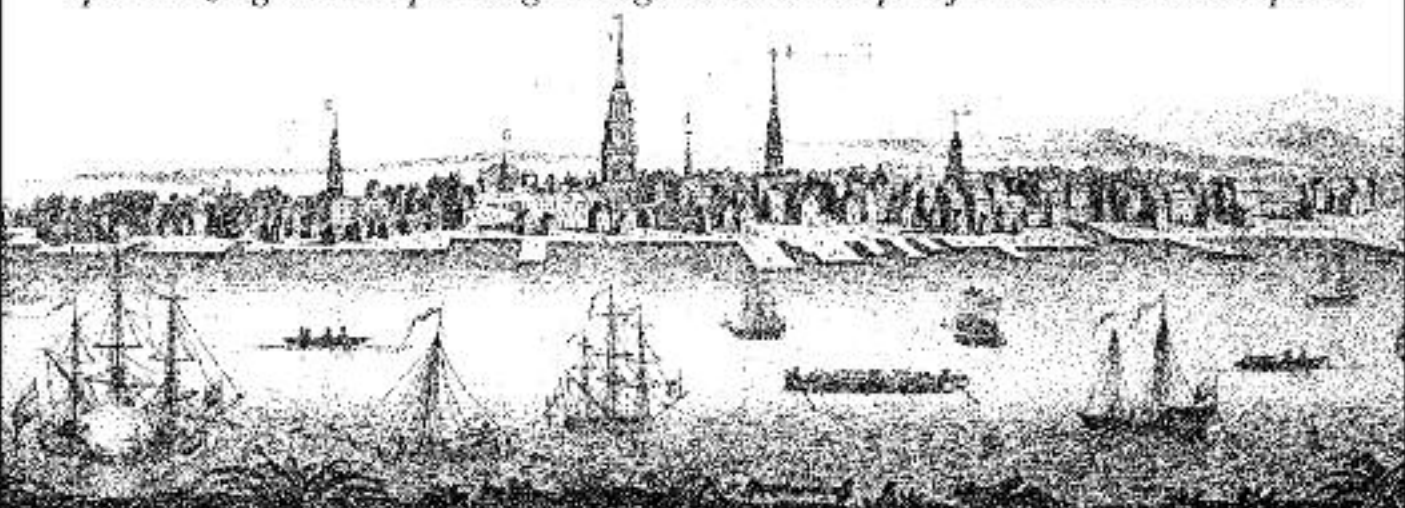
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UPDATED AND ON THE WEB!

Beyond the Bell

For years now, every time that a new version of Beyond the Bell has been printed, the Society Hill Civic Association has made certain that each of its members receives a copy. The pamphlet, which lists and describes more than 50 cultural attractions within walking distance of the Liberty Bell, is produced by the Philadelphia Historic Neighborhood Association — an organization of which SHCA has been a long-standing member — and has been written, designed and edited by many of the same people that bring you the *Reporter*.

Good news, everybody! With this issue of the *Reporter*, the tradition continues! A new version of Beyond the Bell has been printed, and a copy is included herein. Even better, should you lose your copy or simply wish to share it with friends, everything in the Beyond the Bell pamphlet is now available online at beyondthelibrarybell.org, including a PDF version that you can print at home. Unfortunately, all of the reasonable “beyondthebell” domain names were already taken, hence the slight variation, but the website content exactly duplicates that of the pamphlet, and in some cases it even exceeds it. You’ll find all of the sites sorted into the same general categories, such as Cultural and Historical Sites

or Historic Houses of Worship, and presented in alphabetical order with brief descriptions that always include hours of operation and whether you have to pay in order to get in.

The website amplifies the information in the pamphlet, by including pictures related to nearly every location and expanding the expository prose for some, because, unlike the pamphlet, the virtual nature of pages on the internet allows them to be virtually unlimited in size. There’s no longer any need to save words or shave images to make it all fit in a fixed number of fancily folded pages or panels.

One of the major additions is that of an interactive map. (Actually, there are two maps — a simple street map and a map including SEPTA transit routes — but they both behave in exactly the same way.) When your mouse hovers over the colored star associated with an attraction, its name appears, and when you click on the star, you automatically jump to the official listing, description and link.

If you dig deeply enough into the Beyond the Bell website, you will even find a description of SHCA and a link to our website. How’s that for a reason to visit it?



A copy of Beyond the Bell can be found in this issue of the Reporter.



A copy of the Washington Square Affair Tribute Book can be found in the Library of Congress!

The Affair Lives On

Congratulations! The Library of Congress has recently agreed to accept SHCA’s tribute book, “Washington Square Affair,” for inclusion in its collections. Published in 2011, it chronicles the park from the early 1700’s to the

present, and includes both historical photos and photos of contributors to the Washington Square Affair event, which raised more than \$100,000 to assist the National Park Service in the Square’s preservation. The cover features

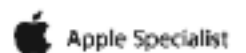
an original watercolor by local artist Elaine Lisle, and the center spread displays a map of the square and its topography circa early 1800’s. The Library of Congress collections include more than 32 million catalogued books and other

print materials in 470 languages. It’s thrilling to realize that our publication will permanently reside with such illustrious company. Many thanks to SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio for all his hard work in making this happen!

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

BY LORNA KATZ-LAWSON

SHCA's Zoning and Historic Preservation (ZHP) Committee meets monthly to address community concerns related to both zoning and historic preservation. It helps homeowners who would like to make changes to the exteriors of their properties understand and be prepared for the process of Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) approval, which is required for exterior changes, and for any zoning variance which may be needed. We urge you to submit your plans or ideas to the ZHP committee before submitting them to PHC.

223-225 South 6th Street (Dilworth House)

The decision from the Commonwealth Court on the February 14, 2012 hearing was handed down on April 9th. Quoting SHCA's legal counsel Paul Boni, "It's a huge victory! We got everything we asked for." Judge Simpson wrote for the court, "Where no hardship is shown, or where the asserted hardship amounts to the landowner's desire to increase profitability or maximize development potential, the unnecessary hardship criterion required to obtain a variance is not satisfied." The Court remanded to Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) because it deprived the protestants of their due process.

221 Pine Street

An application for two-family occupancy and significant reduction of open space was unanimously denied at ZBA, appealed by the owner and subsequently remanded back to ZBA by the Court.

200-212 Lombard Street**(store front at 225 South Street)**

ZBA unanimously denied this application for a BYOB banquet hall/entertainment venue. As detailed in the January *Reporter*, Queen Village Neighborhood Association, the South Street/Head House District and SHCA were all on record in opposition to this use.

601-603 Lombard Street

This application discussed in the last *Reporter* involved creating three lots from the original, as well as building two single-family houses with garages facing Addison Street. The ZBA unanimously denied the application.

312-322 Walnut Street to Willings Alley

A permit was issued to relocate lot lines and allow for the conversion of this former office building into 66 market-rate residential dwelling units with commercial use on the ground floor and accessory parking.

312 South Philip Street

The new owners' architect presented a plan at the March ZHP meeting that would remove a significant portion of the existing older structure, as well as adding a projecting roof deck at the 4th floor level. Several concerned neighbors attended the presentation and commented on specific negative effects they believed the proposal would have on them, largely loss of visual and audio privacy, in addition to loss of air and light. On the plus side, the project would create new open space on a property that currently has 5% open space.

Advocacy Activities

Crosstown Coalition – Zoning Code/Signage

The Crosstown Coalition continues to work on the development of the proposed new signage code. It has identified nine issues it considers central to developing an effective code. Key among these is that licensing and permitting fees need to be set high enough to enable the City to have enough money to pay for enforcement.

Another idea is to require a community review process for major sign projects — assuring that residents retain some amount of control over what gets built in their neighborhoods.

New Public Utilities Commission Regulations

ZHP acquired a copy of the proposed amendment that will change how utility companies can operate and install equipment throughout Pennsylvania.

Some language that appears to offer protection to historic districts such as ours could be deceptive. ZHP will draft alternative language and will review it with ZHP members who have legal expertise. This will insure that SHCA can have a well thought out response to the proposed amendment when comments from the public will be taken.

SHCA will alert homeowners where to send individual comments and direct them to websites as these become known and the timing becomes appropriate. We thank Harry Schwartz for all his hard work.

A side note: Residents might have noticed that the egregious above-grade gas meter installation in Bingham Court has been corrected. BIG thanks go to Councilman Squilla on this one and "squeaky wheel" Ann Verber, Bingham Court resident and Board member of Bingham Court Owners' Association.

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EXPLORING THE CITY

BY JIM MURPHY

The Gaskill Street Baths

In just 16 years — from 1860 to 1876 — Philadelphia's population swelled by more than a quarter of a million people, most of them immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.

With this sudden crush of people came typical urban problems of overcrowding, poor sanitation and disease, especially in the densely populated areas of Southwark (an area bounded by the Delaware River on the east, 5th Street on the west, Lombard Street on the north and Washington Avenue on the south).

These newcomers to the City of Brotherly Love were considered unclean, unhealthy and uncivilized. Spurred by proof in the 1880's that specific microorganisms could cause typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria and more, public baths became the answer to all three problems.

The Philadelphia Ledger proclaimed: "Every dirty man or woman is a menace to the health of the community," says David Glassberg in *The Design of Reform: The Public Bath Movement in America*. A Chicago bath advocate went even further: "The greatest civilizing power that can be brought to bear on these uncivilized Europeans crowding into our cities lies in the public bath."

Naively believing that the immigrants had a moral defect that kept them from bathing, the movers and shakers of the time overlooked one simple fact: the lower classes simply didn't have access to baths.

In her book *Washing 'The Great Unwashed': Public Baths in Urban America, 1840-1920*, Marilyn Thornton Williams notes that not one in twenty families in Philadelphia had access to a bath in 1899.

Sarah Dickson Lowrie, a prominent upper-class Philadelphian in the mid-1890's, was the first to recognize the problem, says Melissa M. Mandell in her article, "The Public Baths Association of Philadelphia and the Great Unwashed," published in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's magazine, *Pennsylvania Legacies*.

While teaching a Saturday sewing class in the mission building in the most dense and wretched of the city's slums, presumably Southwark — "she was informed by her students that there was no way for them to take a bath in the winter."

Finally grasping the issue and becoming an advocate, Lowrie proposed an idea at a private dinner party hosted by retail mogul John Wanamaker: establishing public baths.

One attendee, Barclay H. Warburton, editor and publisher of the *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph*, assigned a reporter to investigate the lack of bathing facilities in the poorer areas of the city. Later, he helped raise money for the effort and urged the formation of a group to carry out the effort.

The result was the establishment of the Public Baths Association (PBA) of Philadelphia, which was incorporated in March 1895.

The PBA formally opened its first baths April 20, 1898 at 410-12 Gaskill Street in "one of the oldest and most thickly populated sections of the city." By the PBA's own count, says Williams, in a typical slum block near the new baths, there was "but one bathtub for 155 people."

The PBA considered the Gaskill Street Bath an immediate success, noting that it was "patronized by all nationalities, Hebrews, Italians, Germans, Irish, English, Japanese, Hungarians, as well as Americans, black and white."

"The majority of patrons, however, were Jewish," Williams says. "The total number of bathers in 1898 was 21,656, or an average of 88 per day, although the capacity of the bath was over 900 per day; only 256 persons patronized the laundry. As in other cities, the patronage also varied greatly between winter and summer; in July 1898 there were 4,945 bathers and in November the total was 787."

In 1903, PBA set up another bath — for women only — across the street at 413-15 Gaskill. Eventually it constructed six public bath sites in the city.

However starting in 1929, around the time of the Great Depression, patronage and surpluses declined and repair costs and deficits mounted. In 1942, the PBA closed the Gaskill baths, and dissolved the entire organization in 1950.

But in its time, the PBA filled a serious civic need, and left behind a sustained record of public service. Not a bad legacy.



Public baths at Gaskill and Leithgow Streets.

Two separate bathhouses served residents of 1890's area "slum."



Women at Public Baths Association laundry.

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Photos from the Public Baths Association of Philadelphia records at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

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PHILLY FOOD LOVERS

BY KERI WHITE

A Sure-fire Summer Dilemma

Grilling is a quintessential summer food ritual. It is simple, keeps the heat out of the house, and (without tremendous culinary skill) produces a delicious result. Stroll through Society Hill on a warm August evening and enjoy the intoxicating aroma of food being seared to perfection in gardens and patios throughout the neighborhood.

And so we ponder the controversial question: Gas or Charcoal? This is starting to rival “Democrat or Republican,” “boxers or briefs,” “Ginger or Maryann,” and “To be or not to be” in terms of a quandary.

I personally prefer the convenience of a gas grill — it is instantly usable, affords significant heat control, and stays lit as long (or as short) as you wish. “Real” grillers (and many men) turn their noses up at this modern convenience, favoring, at a minimum, charcoal grills, or, at most, a full pit-and-spit arrangement.

I think it harkens back to primitive days when men dragged a woolly mammoth back toward the cave and cooked it over an open fire. I know of very few women, save those in the grilling industry, who favor charcoal over the convenience and ease of gas.

My husband and I are currently in a domestic Cold War over a new grill. Our inexpensive Char-Broil from Home Depot is on its last rusty legs, having spent its formative years outside and unprotected through several Philly winters. My husband, who has developed into quite a cook, was perusing grill websites recently and discovered The Big Green Egg.

This (no doubt impressive) apparatus requires charcoal. Not just any charcoal, but rather specialized lump charcoal, which doesn't seem to be readily available at the average convenience store. It no doubt produces delectable dishes. But I don't do charcoal. I don't like the unpredictability. I don't like to wait (I am notorious for not preheating an oven), and I don't like the lack of control. Yes, I fully admit to being a control freak. The Big Green Egg apparently has the capacity to serve as both grill and smoker. (When it can clean my house, I'm in.)

Husband suggests that we acquire this item. I reply that he is free to do so but that I will never use it. As the primary cook in the family,

even with respect to the grill, I feel that I should have a weighted vote. He disagrees. Words fly. An early mid-life crisis is mentioned. “It could be a stripper or Porsche,” is fired back. It's ugly. And remains unresolved.

What to do? Well, like any sensible cook with a food dilemma in this town, I headed to Reading Terminal Market. First, I consulted Jack McDavid, decorated barbecue champion and chef/owner of the Down Home Diner. Unfortunately, Jack doesn't even consider gas as true grilling. But I still can't see myself fiddling with charcoal, and awaiting the perfect flame in order to chuck two burgers on the grill as a quick weeknight dinner for my kids. And I can't see having two grills in our tiny back yard. I pushed through the Market seeking further counsel, and found Chef Bill Beck of Beck's Cajun Café. He suggested a reasonable compromise: Buy some wood chips, soak them in water, place them in an open-topped foil pouch and put the pouch on the gas grill while you cook. When you close the lid, the wood smoke will circulate and infuse flavor into the food.

Hmmmm. I wonder if he's single.

For more of Philly Food Lovers, visit them at phillyfoodlovers.com/, follow them on Facebook: Philly Food Lovers and Twitter @PhillyPhood

Gas or Charcoal?
What a quandary!



GRILLED FLANK STEAK

Flank steak is relatively inexpensive, simple to prepare, and when marinated properly, utterly delicious. This, along with a simple salad and a loaf of good bread, is my standby summer dinner for a crowd.

- 2 lbs. flank steak
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1/2 cup oil (canola, vegetable, or other mild flavored oil)
- 1 TBSP grated fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 TBSP sugar

Mix all marinade ingredients in large Ziploc bag or Tupperware container. Add steak, and marinate overnight. An hour before cooking, remove steak from refrigerator and let come to room temp. Cook on hot grill about 4-6 minutes a side for medium rare. (Don't cook flank steak past medium; it will be unpleasantly tough.) Remove steak from grill, tent with foil and let it rest for 10 minutes. Slice thinly, on a diagonal, across the grain of the meat. This is also great leftover — served cold atop a salad, repurposed as a cheesesteak, or stuffed into a tortilla for a delicious steak fajita.

OUT AND ABOUT

Preserving Philly's Past — One Photo at a Time

Find historical images of your home and of your block!

Deep in the Philadelphia City Archives, a handful of dedicated interns sit at their computers, working in cooperation with the Philadelphia Department of Records to create the website PhillyHistory.org and preserve Philadelphia's past, one photograph at a time.

By digitizing the negatives in their collection, saving the scanned photos on servers and CDs, and re-housing negatives into an acid-free environment, they are guaranteeing that the visual record of the city's history remains safe and accessible to the public. The City's photo archive contains more than 2 million photo

records that date from the late 1800's. The website contains a growing collection of photos. You can access them by keyword and date, as well proximity to an address, intersection, place name, or neighborhood.

As the "past and present" pictures on these pages show, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to those intrepid neighbors who — encouraged by the city's unique urban renewal plan initiated in the 1950's — pioneered today's Society Hill. Thanks to PhillyHistory.org for providing these historic photos. Check out the website to find images of your home and block!

SW corner Front & Spruce Streets



1949

200-206 Spruce Street



1949

217-233 Spruce Street



1949



2012



2012



2012

OUT AND ABOUT

220-222 Spruce Street



1931



2012

Photos courtesy of PhillyHistory.org, a project of the Philadelphia Department of Records.

SW corner, 2nd & Spruce Streets



1949

NW corner, 2nd & Spruce Streets



1949

The Shambles at the Head House



1914



2012



2012



2012



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ON OUR SHELF

BY CLAIRE BATTEN

Beach Book Suggestions

The young adult novel *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, is currently flying off the shelves and it's not just teens buying the book. "We've got one of our book clubs reading it!" says Richard de Wyngaert, owner of local bookstore Headhouse Books at 619 South 2nd Street.

At least six separate book clubs currently associated with Headhouse Books are keen to avail themselves of the discount offered to book club members or regular local customers. One of these book clubs takes the relationship one step further, hosting their meeting at the store after business hours.

As a member of the Society Hill Book Club (how did we come up with such an original name?) I was curious to find out what other neighborhood clubs are reading. Are they more high-brow or low-brow in their reading habits than our group? Are they *literati* or fans of Oprah's picks? (We tend to mix it up, favoring a bit of both...)

According to Headhouse Books, club reading choices are "all over the map" and tend to change with the seasons, with lighter fare preferred over the summer months. Recent books that earned favorable feedback from readers include *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* by Adam Nicholson, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* by Edmund de Waal and *Persepolis*, a graphic novel from Iran by Marjane Satrapi.

There are no real trends but Richard did make an interesting observation about the sexes: men head towards the non-fiction section, particularly historical and business-related books, and the ladies opt for fiction — with a smattering of non-fiction. Psychology-related books appear to be very popular among the guys at the moment. He cites *Imagine: How Creativity Works* by Jonah Lehrer as an example, along with one of the books that he is currently reading, *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.

As summer approaches, we thought it a neat idea to compare notes with other clubs and nominate a book for poolside reading...

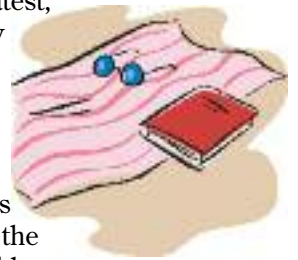
One of my group's top picks this year was *The Lotus Eaters* by Tatjana Soli. Set in Vietnam, this novel follows the fortunes of three war photographers embedded with troops prior to the fall of Saigon. The author interviewed Vietnamese refugees while working at a day center and many of these anecdotes are relayed in the course of the story. It's intense and moving.

Another friend, whose husband is in a book club that includes both men and women, recommends *Cloud Atlas* by the British author David Mitchell. This is an expansive, time-traveling novel consisting of a series of short stories — each of which is quirkily connected by a common thread (a story line, object, character or theme).

Several Society Hill families have joined forces to set up a mother/daughter book club, which meets at Sunday brunch. Their top picks for 2012 include local author Melissa Jensen's latest, *The Fine Art of Truth or Dare* and *Fifteen*, by Beverly Clearly — a cute, wholesome teen romance that is both funny and sweet.

Friend and neighbor Catherine Signorello participates in a lively, all-ladies book club. She reeled off a number of recommendations perfect for the beach: her tip-top choice was the novel *Labor Day* by Joyce Maynard, followed by a stylish western *The Sisters Brothers*, by Patrick de Witt, a "sleeper, which no one expected to like, but was a surprise hit with everyone," says Catherine.

What's on your shelf this summer?



HeadHouse Books Recommends:

***My Father and the Books We Shared* by Alice Ozma**

This memoir may well rekindle the very powerful act of reading to one another in our homes. Alice Ozma writes about her formative years, during which she grew up with her single father. He read to her from the age of eight until she left for college: one thousand nights of reading together.

***The Book of Madness and Cures: A Novel* by Regina O'Melveny**

This tells the story of a resolute and courageous woman practicing medicine in 16th-century Venice.



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SAFE AND SOUND IN SOCIETY HILL

BY MARILYN APPEL

Video Security Cameras in Society Hill:

Laura Temple, longtime block coordinator for 300 S. American Street, has spearheaded a pilot project (called Streetsmarts) designed to install video security cameras in an area limited to American Street, Philip Street, 200 Delancey and Second and Third Streets from Delancey to Spruce. In mid-April, Capt. Brian Korn, commander of the Sixth Police District, and Lt. Millilo gathered with Laura and a small group of concerned neighbors to give guidance on the appropriate locations for these cameras.

The purpose of the cameras is to record criminal activity and act as a deterrent to any incidents. The project will need approval from the Philadelphia Historical Commission, as well as the homeowners, since cameras will need to be affixed to selected house facades. Most of the devices would be located close to the block corners. Many Society Hill neighbors have shown great interest in this project and some feel it is long overdue. Investigation of other communities that have successfully used this equipment is underway. It is important to find the best technology for our purposes, as well as to get a reasonable price for installation.

Laura welcomes community input and any grant-writing expertise. Contact her at streetsmart@americanstreetassociates.org. For more information, visit societyhillstreetsmart.webs.com/.

If it's not brass door knockers, it's copper drain pipes

A rash of thefts occurred on American Street, as well as the 400 and 600 blocks of Spruce Street, where copper drainpipes were cut off from the ground level to about the third floor. We think this happened between 1 and 3 a.m. Again, as with the door knockers, report any suspicious late-night activity (including noises) to 911. Someone has already been picked up with a drainpipe in his truck. As far as the door knockers are concerned, the police toured the neighborhood and wrote down where the knockers have **not** been stolen. They are still looking for the perpetrator(s).

Sixth District Advisory Council Meetings

These meetings are always held the last Wednesday of the month at noon. Call the District for the location, as it changes each month. Ask for Tanya Brown, our Community Relations Officer, at 215-686-3060.



Laura Temple and Capt. Brian Korn scout out locations for security cameras.

Police Service Area (PSA) Meetings

Ours is PSA 3 within the Sixth District — located from Lombard to Chestnut Streets and Columbus Blvd. to Broad Street. Meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month at Jefferson Hospital (located at 111 South 11th Street). Any problems, as well as current crime trends, can be discussed with our police representative. Call the District at 215-686-3060 for exact location or more information.

The Choking Bandit

Willie Wyche, the career criminal who stalked, choked and robbed six women in the Society Hill area last year — beginning just one month after serving 20 years in prison — was recently given an even longer sentence.

Saying that Wyche, 40, had preyed upon women who were primarily older and smaller than himself, Common Pleas Judge Dennis Cohen sentenced Wyche to 50 to 100 years in state prison.

“It is clear to the court that the crimes you committed are brutal, absolutely brutal,” Cohen said. “It is also clear that you launched a terror attack against women.”

Many thanks to Captain Korn and the Sixth Police District for all their help in ensuring this predator got what he deserved and for making the community safer.

Old Cell Phones

Please drop them off at 414 Spruce Street. Used cell phones go to senior citizens and abused women. They are reprogrammed to only call 911.

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WELCOME BASKETS

BY MARTHA LEVINE

A Fond Farewell to Two 5th Street Fixtures

After 16 years, the owners of **Zeke's 5th Street Deli** have decided to retire. Mark Krauss and Paul Cohen were constant fixtures at the deli counter and cash register, where they served breakfast, lunch and dinner to Society Hill residents and members of the business community — seven days a week. Weekdays saw the work crowd on lunch breaks, and on the weekends, locals connected with neighbors and friends.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Paul and Mark, not only for being a Society Hill institution, but also for their continued dedication to our Welcome Basket program. They were one of our first contributors and never missed their donation to a basket. Since 1999, SHCA has presented 635 baskets, each containing a bag of half a dozen of Zeke's bagels. That's a total of **3,810 bagels!** We wish Paul and Mark well in future endeavors.



Mark Krauss and Paul Cohen of Zeke's Fifth Street Deli, have donated 3,810 bagels to our Welcome Baskets.

Long-time Society Hill residents Felix Maietta and Theresa Fera (of the Downtown Club at 6th and Chestnut Streets) will take over the location with a new restaurant, **Union Gourmet 5th Street**, an offshoot of Union Gourmet Catering. Happily, the new menu will

keep some of Zeke's customers' favorites. The new owners are in the process of making many changes to the interior. We wish Union Gourmet 5th Street much success and encourage everyone to stop in to welcome them — they are open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Good news: they will continue to provide bagels for our Welcome Baskets!

Please help us thank all of our generous Welcome Basket contributors listed below by patronizing their businesses and organizations. Also **if you are a new home or condo owner, please make yourself known to us so that we may present you with a Welcome Basket** filled with fresh foods, information and many gift certificates to area restaurants, theaters, shops and services. Contact Martha Levine at marthalev@msn.com or 215-629-0727.

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-Tinto, 114-16 S. 20th Street
-Distrto, 3945 Chestnut Street
-Chifa, 707 Chestnut Street
La Buca Ristorante, 711 Locust Street
Mustard Greens (Chinese), 622 S. 2nd Street
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Reboot for a New Independence Branch Library

Almost from the day it opened in 2001, the Independence Branch Library, at 18 South 7th Street, has been among the busiest neighborhood libraries in the city. The Free Library announced its desire to expand the Independence Branch to at least twice its current size and is soliciting comments and suggestions about a location.

If you know of a building or space that will be available, you can email your suggestions to the Friends at indyfriends@comcast.net or send your comment to Sarah Moran at morans@freelibrary.org. This is an opportunity both to suggest a new location and to make recommendations on what you would like in a new neighborhood library.

Starr Garden Receives Green Machine Grant

Philadelphia's oldest playground, Starr Garden (located at 600 Lombard Street), is getting some new attention. Through the hard work of Starr Garden Neighbors, it recently became a recipient of the Green Machine Grant from Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). This is a pilot program designed to assist volunteer "friends" groups with gardening projects. The Green Machine offers mobile workshops, gardening education, materials and supplies, and assistance with planning. For the next eight months, Starr Garden will be working with PHS to redesign, plant, and maintain the garden. PHS will be conducting workshops for interested neighbors as we learn about native horticulture. Stay tuned for details!

Neighborhood Festival and Flea & Craft Market

Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Old Pine Church's 35th annual Neighborhood Festival and Flea & Craft Market features a rummage sale with treasures donated by church members and neighbors, live music, burgers and hot dogs fresh off the grill, and vendors lining the sidewalk along Pine, Lombard and 4th Streets.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to announce the sudden death of long-time Society Hill resident Margaret (Peg) Robb on April 5th, 2012. Peg was a graduate of Goddard College's Adult Degree Program. She was also a member of the Screen Actor's Guild and landed parts as an extra in several movies. In addition, she graced many print ad campaigns. Peg dedicated her endless energy to multiple civic causes, including the Philadelphia City Youth Aid Panel, and was co-founder of the International Women's Club of Philadelphia. Survived by her husband Ted, Peg also leaves three children (David, Felicia and Gregory) and four grandchildren. The family requests that any contributions be made to either Goddard College, 123 Pitkin Road, Plainfield, VT 05667 or Youth Aid Panel, c/o Seth Williams, District Attorney, City of Philadelphia, 3 South Penn Square, 3rd floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107.



Margaret (Peg) Robb

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2012 Membership Drive Inches Up to 2011 Total

By mid-April, 973 residents have either renewed their membership or joined for the first time. This represents 94% of our 2011 total SHCA membership of 1,033.

A big thank you goes out to the 71 new members. But we still wonder why 133 residents — some of whom have been long-time members, have not renewed after several notices. Martha Levine orchestrated an outreach through the block coordinators in late March and we will see if the situation improves in the coming months.

We always strive to obtain memberships from all 2,600 households located in our most historic neighborhood. Why is your membership so important? Besides providing funding for our many neighborhood improvement projects, such as graffiti control, weekly sidewalk cleaning and plantings in Washington Square, numbers speak volumes. When our board advocates on your behalf re: zoning changes, real estate taxes, crime problems, ramp issues, trash receptacles, street lighting, bus re-routing, etc., it makes a greater impact if they can say they speak on behalf of the majority of residents. You are also guaranteed a personal invitation to each of this year's social events — the Holiday Social and the Soiree at the Shambles.

Without member dues, SHCA would cease to function. Protect your neighborhood and your real estate investment. SIGN UP TODAY!!

Email Mattdejulio@aol.com if you have any questions or wish to comment on why you have not renewed or are not a member. All comments will be shared with the board, which is representative of every quadrant in Society Hill.

Spring Has Sprung!

Exercise & Socialize With the Walkie-Talkies Tuesdays & Thursdays @ 8:15 a.m.

Now that we're enjoying increasingly sunny skies and warm weather, this is an ideal time to step into a comfortable pair of shoes, meet with several Society Hill gals, and enjoy an exploratory walk and friendly talk throughout our historic neighborhood. Whether you're new to the community or an "old-timer," you are most welcome to participate in these one-hour strolls on any Tuesday or Thursday morning — when it is not raining. Simply show up prior to 8:15 a.m. at Three Bears Park (Delancey Street between 2nd & 3rd Streets) for this bi-weekly, non-stressful, one-hour exercise & socialize program. Any questions about this enjoyable, zero-cost fitness routine? Feel free to phone Bernice at 215-925-4363.

SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

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

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

Business Memberships

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

Additional Contributions

- \$ _____ Washington Square Beautification
- \$ _____ Sidewalk Cleaning/Graffiti Removal
- \$ _____ Zoning and Historic Preservation
- \$ _____ Franklin Lights
- \$ _____ Tree Tenders
- \$ _____ 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



NIFTY NEIGHBORS IN MY OWN BACKYARD

BY JANE BIBERMAN

“Up, Up And Away!”

“When I was six, I went to the Philadelphia Airport with my father,” recalls Susan C. Friedenber. “We were dropping off my grandparents to go to Cuba for the winter. Cuba was open and many Jews went there versus Florida in the 1950’s. I was fascinated with airplanes — there we were at the airport with all of the emotions that flow through a terminal and I was caught up with the drama. I looked at my Dad and said, ‘I want to be a stewardess.’”

Susan grew up in Margate, N.J. “My parents were very strict and I was rarely allowed to get off the island. We called Atlantic City ‘Uptown,’ and the street signs — straight off our Monopoly board — dazzled me. I told my parents and brothers that I was going to go to Mississippi, California, Georgia, etc. But the only way I could see the world without getting married at that early age, and in those times, was to become a stewardess.” After two years of college, Susan got a job with American Airlines in 1970. She wore a navy blue dress with a white hat and gloves.

After years of national flights, Susan was ready for international travel. She joined Capitol Air and covered the globe. “I’m the original wandering Jew,” says Susan, whose favorite city is Jerusalem and whose favorite country is Italy.

In 1984, Susan began working as a corporate aviation flight attendant. (“Stewardess” went out when men began being hired in the mid-70’s.) She has flown many of the nation’s Fortune 500 CEOs on private jets, mostly in and out of Teterboro, N.J. “I’ve flown a lot of famous people,” she confides, “but loose lips sink ships.” She *can* mention Henry Kissinger, because he introduced her as his Jewish Mother to the president of Chile after she managed to get him the matzoh ball soup he craved. But her most memorable passenger was a Beatle, whom she flew 13 times. “I went to the second Beatles concert in America at the Atlantic City Convention Hall, and they are my favorite band of all times.”

After decades of flying experience, Susan started her own business, Corporate Flight Attendant Training & Global Consulting Services, 13 years ago. She has worked hard to become the successful businesswoman she is, having trained hundreds of men and women to be flight attendants on corporate jets. “Business aviation supports the global economy,” she asserts.

Come Fly With
Susan Friedenber

Susan pals around with
Henry Kissinger

“It allows people to get where they need to be without relying on the airline schedules, which are a nightmare for executives. A business aircraft is an office at 45,000 feet.” Susan also consults for new business aircraft buyers.

Her four-day training program is 40 hours and consists of safety awareness in all aspects of flying. Food preparation is a major concern: where to find the best and safest business aviation caterers, as well as how to buy and prepare food in remote areas of the world. Susan says, “Passion, commitment, educa-

tion, organization and out-of-the-box thinking are the components that create opportunity and success for this career. You are always reinventing yourself.”

When she takes a commercial flight, Susan always brings her own supplies. “Even if I’m in first class, I pack my own food,” she says. “Two years ago, the FDA spot-checked several major airline-catering kitchens and found dead mice and flies, rats, roaches and food sitting out at room temperature. A commercial airline is dirty and the galleys are filthy. The flight attendants are touching luggage bins and they don’t wash their hands. I also don’t drink coffee or tea on commercial flights because the potable water tanks are filthy. The water on a private aircraft is distilled.” She also tries to nab an aisle seat so she won’t be entrapped in the event of an emergency, and carries some type of PBE (Portable Breathing Equipment). “People who survive an accident will die of smoke inhalation trying to get out of a burning plane,” she explains.

Now that Susan has been up in the air for the better part of her life, she relishes being grounded. “All airports are a nightmare as is the TSA screening process,” she points out. When she’s not conducting a training course (usually held in Teterboro or Long Beach, California), Susan enjoys staying home in Society Hill with her two cats, Apple and Dakota. “I’m blessed with great friends and I like to entertain at home. I go to the Ritz a few times a week and work out at the Philadelphia Sports Club on Fifth Street. I’m just as intrigued today watching the parade of people and pets in Washington Square as I once was seeing travelers in an airport terminal when I was six.”

And these days, going down the shore to visit her parents is a treat.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Monday, May 7
Herbal Medicine: Does Mother Nature Always Know Best?
 7:30 p.m.
 Society Hill Synagogue

Saturday, May 12
SHCA Spring Clean-Up Day
 See page 5

Saturday, May 12
Love Your Park Day
 9 to 11 a.m., Starr Garden,
 600 Lombard Street

Saturday, May 12
Neighborhood Festival and Flea & Craft Market
 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 Old Pine Church at Pine,
 Lombard and 4th Streets

Wednesday, May 16
SHCA Board Meeting
 6:00 p.m.
 Great Court Meeting Room
SHCA General Meeting
 7:30 p.m.

Zubrow Auditorium
 Pennsylvania Hospital
 8th & Spruce Streets

Sunday, May 20
Society Hill Open House and Garden Tour
 See page 1

Friday, May 25
Opening of Creative Collective Craft & Fine Arts Fair
 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
 2nd and Pine Streets



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