

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

March/April 2013

The Newsletter
of The Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org

Inside the Philadelphia History Museum



Charles Croce,
Executive Director
of the Philadelphia
History Museum

Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) is excited to announce that the March 20 General Membership meeting will be held at the Philadelphia History Museum. Attendees will be seated on the world's largest map of Philly — one that stretches across an entire gallery! Charles Croce, Executive Director, will be both host and speaker — providing us with an insider's look at the museum's recent transformation from the "City's Attic" into an important storyteller of Philadelphia's 330-year history.

Located at 15 S. 7th Street, the museum was founded by City Ordinance in 1938 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution. It's housed in a historic 1826 building, designed by John Haviland as the original home of the Franklin Institute.

The museum was closed for several years due to a total interior renovation. Since it reopened in September 2012, visitors can participate in Philly's history like never before through a variety of interactive features — even snap a digital portrait for use in one of the galleries or online. Plus see hundreds of priceless objects on display, including the wampum belt that the Lenni Lenape Indians gave to William Penn in 1682.

Croce, a Philadelphia resident whose career spans more than three decades in marketing communications, advertising, and public relations, invites us to arrive between 6:00 and 7:30 p.m., giving plenty of time to browse the displays prior to the General Membership meeting.

Just A Few Days Left to RSVP!

All SHCA members are invited to party at the Twisted Tail (509 S. 2nd Street) on Wednesday, March 13, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. There will be hors d'oeuvres (\$25), a cash bar at Happy-Hour prices, and just plain fun. Contact Matt DeJulio to make a reservation at mattdejulio@aol.com or 215-629-1288.



WED.

March

20

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Philadelphia History Museum
15 S. 7th Street

6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
Third Floor
All SHCA members are welcome.

7:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting
First Floor Main Gallery
All neighborhood residents are invited to attend.

Speaker Charles Croce, Executive Director of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent.

Topic: It's Not the "City's Attic" Anymore!

LOVE YOUR PARK



These McCall students volunteered some time and "elbow grease" at Starr Garden on Love Your Park Day. Read more about Starr Garden on page 25.



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Society Hill

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Find past issues of the *Reporter* with color photos at 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, 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.

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2013 Lorna Katz Lawson
2014 Lenore Hardy
2015 Heather Steiner

Northwest Quadrant

2013 Lawrence Burstein
2014 Sissie Lipton
2015 Diane Rossheim

Southeast Quadrant

2013 Robert Curley
2014 Jane Ahn
2015 Laura Temple

Southwest Quadrant

2013 Melvin Buckman
2014 Francisco Carreno
2015 Marilyn Appel

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Property Taxes — A Developing Story

As I have previously reported, the Philadelphia property tax system has been undergoing a substantial overhaul. The prior method was inequitable, subject to abuse, and did not make the City budget process transparent to taxpayers. The Mayor and Council have been working on a new system, and the Tax Fairness Coalition, a group of civic associations, including Society Hill, has been advocating for a reasonable new policy.

Under what has been called the *Actual Value Initiative*, the City's new Office of Property Assessment (OPA) has been doing a citywide analysis to determine the *actual market value* of every piece of real estate in the City. That analysis has now been completed and will be used to determine 2014 real estate taxes. You should have recently received a notice from the city advising you what the OPA determined to be the market value of your property.

How will the tax rate be set? In its budgeting process, the City will determine how many dollars it needs to provide services. It will then divide that amount by the total market value of all real estate in the City. So, hypothetically, if the City decided it needed \$1.2 billion (the current estimate), and if the assessed value of all City real estate was \$120 billion, each property would be taxed at a rate equal to 1% of its market value. Again, hypothetically, if the determined market value of your home was \$300,000, and if the rate is set at 1%, your tax for 2014 would be \$3,000.

City Council and the Mayor will have determined the new tax rate by June 30. Some have estimated that the ultimate tax rate will be between 1.3% and 1.5%. Council members Mark Squilla and Jim Kenney are hoping for a rate closer to 1% and think that might be possible if the Council, using zero-based budgeting, is forced to evaluate the necessity and projected cost of each desired expenditure.

The bad news is that despite three tax increases in recent years, it's likely that after applying the new tax rate to the new assessed value, our taxes will go up. You will have a better sense of that if you multiply the OPA's determination of the market value by a 1% to 1.5% tax rate.

The good news is that residents can challenge the City's determination of market value by pursuing two avenues of appeal: first to the OPA itself, and then to the Board of Revision of Taxes.

When you receive the notice from the City, there will be an enclosed form that can be used to obtain an informal meeting with an OPA representative (presumably one who was involved in determining assessments in our area). A meeting could conceivably result in an agreement to lower the assessed value.

The second avenue is a formal appeal to the Board of Revision of Taxes (BRT). That appeal must be filed by March 31 (assuming that date is not extended).

A number of initiatives are being considered to ease the impact of increased taxes, including a \$30,000 Homestead Exemption. If you have not done so, send back this form that was included in the mid-February package.

In addition, a movement is underway in Harrisburg to change the Uniformity Clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution that currently prohibits taxing commercial properties at a rate higher than that of residential properties. Whether that can be accomplished without amending the Constitution is unclear; any possible change probably will not occur for a few years.

Moreover, there will likely be some programs developed to temper the impact of sizable tax increases, especially for owners in gentrified areas, those of low income, and owners of a certain age. This may take the form of capping the percentage of increase or breaking in the increases over a few years. In addition, deferring the increase for qualified taxpayers until the property is sold or the owner dies is being considered.

The ultimate determinant for the dollar figure of your tax will be the OPA's assessment of the total value of the City's real estate held against the budget Council and the Mayor approve. This equation will set the tax rate each year; for 2014, we've heard estimates of 1.0 - 1.4% on a total value between \$95 billion and \$125 billion.



Steven Weixler,
President

Determination of the actual market value of all properties in the city has been completed. The new tax rate has not been set.

Thanks to Jim Moss, SHCA Vice President, for substantial contributions to this article.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Sunday, May 19
35th Annual
Society Hill
Open House &
Garden Tour

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.

Sponsored by SHCA, the tour's proceeds are used for neighborhood improvement and beautification projects.

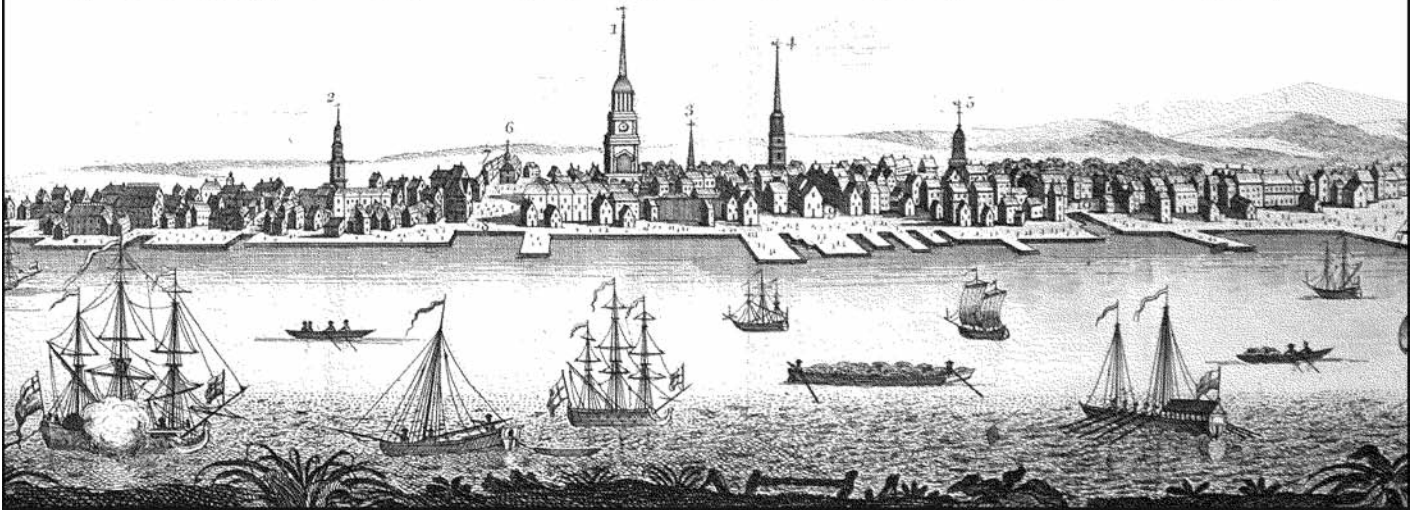
Thursday, June 13
Washington
Square
Affair

This tented gala in Washington Square will include delicious food from area restaurants, wine, music and lots of merriment, as Society Hill friends and neighbors mingle and celebrate the square's beautification. Funds raised will be used for the continued improvement and maintenance of Washington Square. Put the date on your calendar and watch for your invitation in the mail.

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SUBMIT BY APRIL 1

Call for SHCA Board Nominations



SHCA's election of officers and directors for the year beginning June 1, 2013, will take place at our May 15 General Membership Meeting. All of the following officer positions are available for a one-year term: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition, four of the twelve Quadrant Directors will be finishing their three-year terms and will need to be replaced.

To nominate someone (yourself included), submit a letter to the attention of SHCA's Administrator Matt DeJulio, c/o Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147 or to mattdejulio@aol.com. Include information about your suggested nominee (and if nominating yourself, consider sending your resume).

Those being considered for a position must live within the boundaries of Society Hill, be at least 21 years of age and be a member of SHCA.

Please visit www.societyhillcivic.org for more information about our civic association, board or nominating process. Submissions must be received by April 1 in order to be considered.

In which quadrant do you live?

For the purpose of electing SHCA Board Directors, Society Hill is divided into four quadrants: Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and Southwest. Fourth Street serves as the North-South dividing line between the east and west quadrants. Spruce Street is the East-West dividing line between the north and south quadrants.

SAFE AND SOUND - A BRIEF WARNING

We have a pickpocket in our midst! If you get "bumped" in a respectable neighborhood theater, check for your wallet and credit cards. Yes, it has happened recently at a movie near you.

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A N A R R O W E S C A P E

BY ROSANNE LOESCH

Digital Signage — A Victory and Future Battles

Callowhill and neighborhoods south of it, including Society Hill, had a narrow escape from the billboard district bill. Mayor Nutter vetoed the bill in January, and First District Councilman Mark Squilla, in an eleventh-hour move, decided not to ask City Council to override the veto. The bill (front page article in the Jan/Feb *Reporter*) would have allowed a seven-story digital advertising sign on the Electric Factory building, at 7th and Callowhill, owned by New York developer Myron Berman. Whether three court decisions (including the Pennsylvania and U.S. Supreme Courts) and two mayoral vetoes will finally quash Berman's campaign to put a giant digital wall wrap on his building is anyone's guess. However, we hope that we have heard the last of this matter. (Read the January 30, 2013, *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial for more information on this bill.)

But beyond the success in this one instance is the overriding question of whether we Philadelphians are going to let digital signs take over our historic city. (Read Inga Saffron, *Philadelphia Inquirer* February 12, 2013.) Billboard companies are moving aggressively to convert existing billboards to digital signs and expand into new areas where billboards were previously prohibited. For Philadelphia, a city where commercial and residential districts exist cheek by jowl, the far-traveling, intense, pulsating light of digital signs could significantly affect the quality of life for residents and the look of this historic city.

The prospect of this type of light flashing day and night at six-second intervals into the loft-style apartments in Callowhill was one of the reasons that the President of the Callowhill Neighborhood Association, Sarah McEneaney, objected so strongly to the Squilla bill in her testimony before City Council. It is also why the St. James high rise on Washington Square is opposing the proposed digital billboard to be placed on top of the Lit Brothers building at Market and 8th Streets. Old Swedes Church (a national landmark) and neighbors in Pennsport, just south of Queen Village, testified in court in November against the proposed expansion of an existing billboard to a soaring 93 feet in height. Imagine the impact on neighborhoods of a sign of that height going digital. Why have highway sound barriers protecting neighborhoods, if we are going to allow residential tranquility to be ruined by pulsating light?

In addition to the concerns for the health and tranquility of residential life, Philadelphians should be worried about the impact that digital signage will have on the historic sites that attract millions of tourists

here every year. Already, Independence National Historic Park — home to Independence Hall — is

suffering the visual blight of a flashing digital billboard at 5th and Callowhill (the wrongfully issued, over-the-counter permit is on appeal). The owner of another billboard on the I-76 Expressway across from historic Boathouse Row on the scenic Schuylkill River is seeking to go digital. If permitted, not only would digital advertising become a backdrop for the boathouses, but the pulsating light would be reflected in the river, thus allowing commercial advertising to trump the tranquil scene.

Municipalities do have the power to regulate signage based on concerns for the health, safety, and welfare of the community. New sign laws are currently being drafted by the City and will soon go before City Council. Residents of Society Hill will want to have their voices heard once the proposed rules are presented to the public. Some issues at the time of this publication are of concern: allowing digital signs to be within 500 feet of residences (instead of the current 1,000), allowing billboards to be extended above the sound walls along I-95 (affecting residents along the corridor, including our neighbors Queen Village and Pennsport), allowing billboards on properties that previously allowed only a single commercial use (for example, a store or gas station could add a digital billboard), and multiple billboards on a single parcel.

City Council is also considering amendments that would allow non-conforming billboards in areas where billboards are prohibited to indefinitely extend the life of the sign. How? By allowing the replacement of the entire sign including the foundation.

The best, most up-to-date information on billboards, digital signs, and Philadelphia's new sign laws can be found on the Scenic Philadelphia website publicvoiceforpublicspace.org or by searching Google for "Scenic Philadelphia." Also on the site: an important new report entitled "Above the Law and Under the Radar, The Billboard Industry's Failure to Comply with Local, State & Federal Laws." Consider signing up for news alerts to hear about important legislation and court cases, as well as victories like the defeat of the Electric Factory seven-story wall wrap bill.



Is this in Philly's Future?

The billboard district bill was vetoed by Mayor Nutter.



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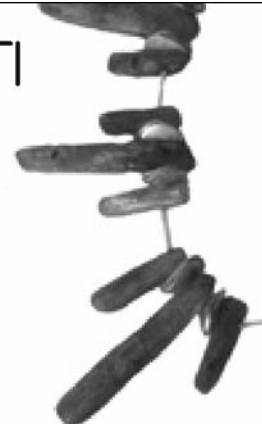
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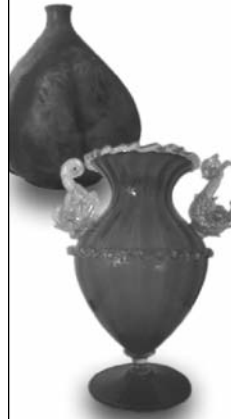
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ZONING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BY LORNA KATZ-LAWSON

The following items represent recent activities of the ZHP committee.

Curtis Building

170 S. Independence Mall West

The application to install awnings on windows facing Washington Square was unanimously denied at the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC).

500 Spruce Street

New owners were granted permission by PHC to modify the façade by removing the existing first-floor horizontal window. This revises the masonry opening, allowing for new windows that look similar to those on the second and third floors. The window being removed was not original to the house and had been installed before nomination as a historic district.

516 Cyprus Street

After two public presentations at ZHP and subsequent design modifications by the developer, the application for a single-family house with garage was denied at the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The new zoning code no longer requires parking to be provided for single-family homes, and the parking space proposed did not meet the minimum dimensional standards required when parking is allowed.

Legal counsel representing eight homeowners from Cypress and Delancey Streets contended that the land running from 513 Delancey Street through to 516 Cypress Street had been conveyed by the Redevelopment Authority as a single zoning lot that had been in use as such for the last 50 years, with a historic house at 513 Delancey Street, a deep garden and open air parking accessible from Cypress Street. For property zoned RSA-5, the construction of a second house on the property is prohibited.

ZHP was not able to take a position on the application, because committee attendance at the last meeting failed to meet the quorum required for voting. It is not known at this time whether the applicant will appeal the decision.

Lit Brothers Digital Roof Signs

It is SHCA's understanding that owners of the St. James have proceeded in filing an appeal of PHC's decision to allow digital signage for advertising and Lit's identification. SHCA and the Preservation Alliance have offered to provide some financial support for the appeal. Other groups who are opposed to the signage are the National Park Service, residents of the Ayer and the St. James, Old City Civic Association, Washington Square West Civic Association and Scenic Philadelphia.

GUIDELINES FOR SOCIETY HILL'S HISTORIC DISTRICT

SHCA worked for many years so Society Hill would become a certified historic district within the city's laws, guaranteeing a level of protection and preservation for any building within its borders. We, therefore, remind all homeowners that Society Hill's Historic District designation applies to every building in its boundaries.

Even if your house was not built during the Colonial or Federal period, you must still adhere to the requirements of the district's historic preservation laws. Often owners are unaware about where to begin when undertaking repairs or replacements for deteriorated doors, windows, shutters, front stoops and the like.

Therefore, they may unwittingly contract for items that are inappropriate. A good reference is "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties," which is cited by Philadelphia's historic code. These guidelines are clearly written, fully illustrated and easily comprehensible to the layperson.

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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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What Does SHCA Do for Me?

SHCA occasionally hears from residents who refuse to support this association, which does so much for our community. Some comments focus on our Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee (ZHP) and range from complaints about inaction on the offensive “governor” sign (at 3rd and Spruce Streets) to anger about perceived interference in neighborhood development projects or specific homeowner plans.

ZHP helps residents (or developers) who wish to make changes to their properties understand and be prepared for the City’s review process.



It also provides near neighbors with a forum to discuss negative impacts with the property’s owner. The goal is to reach a consensus that preserves the character of the community and is consistent with zoning and historic codes. The ZHP is

then the public spokesman for that point of view at City meetings and hearings on the project.

SHCA also helps to develop agreements with new businesses to regulate how they operate, in order to maintain the community’s quality of life. ZHP hears about 24 presentations a year and, of those, very few are not supported.

ZHP strives, on your behalf, to preserve the historical character of our neighborhood, which is the reason why most people want to live here, and the reason your property values stay high and stable.

By the way, the “governor’s” sign has been difficult to remove because of freedom-of-speech issues dealing with political advertising, not for lack of trying.

Without a larger member base, SHCA can’t continue to provide all its current services. Please do your part and join SHCA today. See page 31 for a membership form and list of our many activities on your behalf.



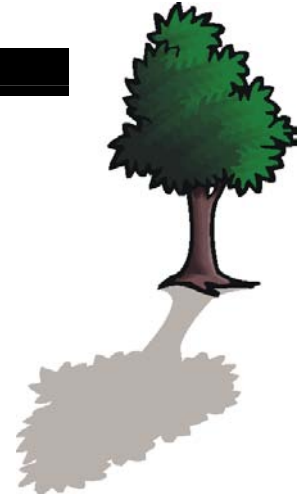
A SHADY PROPOSITION

Although our neighborhood may look bare right now, this is the perfect time to think about spring and consider planting a tree. If there’s space in front of your property, reflect on the benefits that a tree could provide.

Advantages include: beautification, increased property value, and lower energy bills. In addition, trees help the environment by providing carbon sequestration (which scientists believe might help mitigate global warming), as well as reducing storm water runoff and giving a habitat

to songbirds. Studies even show that large trees may help prevent crime by signaling potential criminals that the neighborhood is well cared for and therefore crimes are likely to be witnessed and reported.

Would you like to have a tree planted? Convince your neighbors to plant trees? Plant a tree yourself? Contact Society Hill Tree Tender Coordinator Mike Novak at treetendermike@gmail.com



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 RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

THIS OLD HOUSE

BY CHUCK GROSHONG AND DANIELLE GROSHONG-KEPERLING

Being as Original as Possible



Chuck Groshong



Danielle Groshong-Keperling

Chuck and Danielle will write an occasional column for the *Reporter* dealing with the joys and tribulations of restoring historic homes. Please contact the *Reporter* with specific issues, and our father/daughter team will be glad to address them.

It is easy to think that if the look of a historical building is maintained and the appropriate types of materials are used, then the building has been successfully preserved. But preservation is not just about preserving how something looks, it is primarily focused on preserving how something *is* so that it remains as original as possible for future generations.

As important as it is to preserve how our historical buildings actually are, inevitably replacements will need to be made when features are so deteriorated that stabilization, conservation, or restoration are simply not viable options.

One example in your very own neighborhood is the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial on the corner of 3rd and Pine Streets. The Thaddeus Kosciuszko house is a part of Independence Park, and, in 2011, the National Park Service embarked on exterior restorations of the building to repair and restore wood windows, doors and a cedar shake roof that were deteriorated.

Our company, Historic Restorations, was given the honor of performing this restoration work. To accurately preserve the Kosciuszko house, we needed to match not just the size, shape and textures of the shingles themselves, but also the craftsmanship details added during manufacturing and installation that characterized the roof.



Hand-split cedar shakes on the Thaddeus Kosciuszko house

To do this, we ordered hand-split cedar shakes and had our detail-oriented artisan craftsmen recreate the original installation.

Without this attention to detail, the Kosciuszko house would not have been preserved as an accurate testimonial to our architectural heritage. It would have been easier and less expensive to replace the shake roof with any number of other options, including some that are commonly considered “historically accurate,” but they would not have been historically accurate to this house. Even if they are considered “period appropriate,” when we choose a different treatment than what was there originally, we are altering, not preserving, the very things that make the building historic.

In order to avoid significant and sometimes irreparable damage to your building, consider replacing only the deteriorated or missing parts of your building’s features. Use materials that match the old in design, color, and texture (both physically and visually). Also, document the original material, the replacement process, and materials used, for future reference and research.

Things to ask yourself about the materials on your building:

- Do I have documentation of all former replacements, including documentation of the original features?
- Have I had my building evaluated by a qualified contractor to identify any inappropriate replacement materials or approaches?
- Do I document all replacements I do, including written and photographic documentation, noting the materials, details and tooling on both the original and the replacement?
- Are there any parts of my building’s original features that are deteriorated or missing and need replacement?
- Is it possible to just replace the deteriorated parts instead of replacing the whole feature?
- Have I checked with a qualified contractor to see if remediation is needed for any not-in-kind replacements previously performed on my building?

Experienced father/daughter preservation team Chuck Groshong and Danielle Groshong-Keperling own and operate Historic Restorations, a construction firm that specializes in historic buildings.

ON OUR SHELF

Premier Preservation Primer

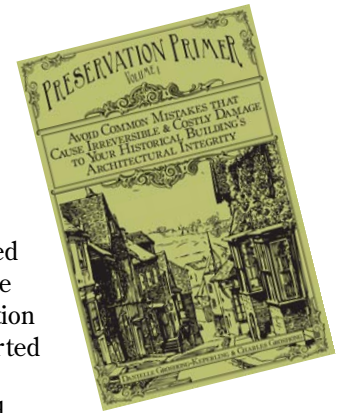
Society Hill homeowners will appreciate the recently published **Preservation Primer** by father-and-daughter preservationist team Charles Groshong and Danielle Groshong-Keperling. This volume is the first in a series of booklets developed to guide homeowners, contractors, and architects in restoration and renovation projects involving historical buildings.

The authors review common but devastating mistakes made when working on older buildings. Included are evaluation tools and guides that owners can use to survey their building for potential damage to its architectural integrity.

The book is influenced by the author's guiding philosophy that humans are here to serve as

caretakers of our built history, to cherish and to protect architecture, so it can be handed down to the next generation.

Danielle Groshong-Keperling has worked full-time in the restoration industry since 2001, but her education in the construction industry and historical preservation started in toddlerhood by exposure to both her father's work in the traditional trade and her mother's love of historical architecture. Charles Groshong has worked in the construction field for over 30 years, 20 of which were focused on the restoration of our built history and the practice of the traditional trade of handcrafted, fine millwork.



Historic Restorations is pleased to give a Primer to any Society Hill resident. Phone 877-461-6928 or email dkeperling@historic-restorations.com to have a free copy mailed to you.

AN OUTPOURING OF GENEROSITY AND LOVE

Dear Society Hill Neighbors,

I never would have guessed that major roof repairs would be an occasion for stunning inspiration and gratitude. Yet I feel inspired by and grateful for your outpouring of generosity and love! In June, when the structural engineer declared the 250-year-old roof of St. Peter's Church to be "at risk of catastrophic failure," we closed the church. In July, we launched "Raise the Roof," a capital campaign with a goal of \$1.8 million. I've been grateful, but not surprised that our parishioners gave generously — gifts of every size, according to their means.

The remarkable and inspiring part of this has been the outpouring of generosity from you, our neighbors of every faith and background. We have received dozens of gifts from \$50 to

\$1,500. Neighboring congregations offered us sanctuary; we've worshiped at Christ Church, Society Hill Synagogue, Old St. Joseph's and the Old Pine Community Center. If needed, we were invited to worship at Holy Trinity.

While there is still much work to be done, a few days before Christmas the structural engineer declared the roof safe. It was glorious to be home for our Christmas Eve celebrations. We couldn't have done it without you.

As of today, we've raised 91% of our goal. If you'd like to help with a gift, please contact randall@stpetersphila.org. Thank you to one and all for your care.

Peace!

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HISTORY HOW-TO

House Detective

Have you ever wondered about the history of your house? When it was built? Why it was built? Everyone who ever lived there? Tracing a property's history and learning about its former owners can be a fascinating and fulfilling project. There are two paths to travel on this journey.

Ever wonder
about the history
of your house?
When was it built?
Why was it built?
Who owned it?

Society Hill pioneers Harry and Marilyn Appel, 414 Spruce Street, hired an architectural researcher to do the work. Carol Wojtowicz Smith (856-429-6278) was able to identify most of the home's previous owners. For instance, immigrant Rose Zaager was running a boarding house at this location in 1930. Elizabeth Jane McCauley, an embroiderer, lived at the home in 1880. William Young, listed as infirmary and chemist, as well as oculist, lived there as far back as 1844. But the stunning discovery was that Richard Allen, co-founder of the Free African Society and founder of Mother Bethel Church, purchased the property in 1790 from John Willson, a farmer from Chester County!

Or you can do your own research — which is made easier by ready access to Philadelphia research libraries and archives. Here are some tips and resources to help you:

The Chain of Title

Examining all of your home's deeds is a big step toward learning more about its history. In addition to providing the names of property owners, deeds can offer information on construction dates, changes in value and use, and even plot maps. Begin with your deed and work your way back from one deed to the next.

The Philadelphia Department of Records registers all property transactions in the city. It maintains historical deeds and property transactions before 1952 at the Philadelphia City

Archives, 3101 Market Street. You can view the descriptions of the city holdings through their website page titled "Architectural Research Resources at the Philadelphia City Archives and the Department of Records."

Building Permits

Usually filed by street address, building permits can be especially useful when tracing a house history, often listing the original owner, architect, builder, construction cost, dimensions, materials, and date of construction.

Philadelphia building permits were required as early as the mid-19th century. Unfortunately, all permits before July 1889 are lost. The permits from 1889 to 1895 give only the barest of information about construction of a building, an addition, or an alteration. However, starting in 1895, two different forms were used: one for the construction of a new building, the other for repairs, alterations, additions, etc. In both cases, the forms contained spaces for the names of the owner, architect, contractor and applicant as well as spaces for details about the construction. The actual permits are now in the collections of the Philadelphia City Archives.

Insurance Records

Historical insurance records, most notably fire insurance claim forms, contain information about the nature of an insured building, its contents, value and, possibly, even floor plans.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (215-732-6200) has insurance surveys that include types of structures, building materials, ownership, and drawings. The data of the Franklin Fire Insurance Company, 1837-99, and Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company, 1830-89, are indexed by address within various

continued on page 15

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HISTORY HOW-TO

continued from page 14

geographical boundaries. The Philadelphia Contributionship surveys, 1900-1940, are indexed by street name; they also have descriptions of structures and, often, snapshots of the buildings. The records of The Mutual Assurance Company, popularly known as The Green Tree, include thousands of canceled insurance surveys, plans, prints, drawings and photographs, dating from the company's formation in 1784 through 1973. Visit the Society at 1300 Locust Street to explore their collections.

City Directories

Some of the best sources for information about the people who lived in your house are city directories. They can provide you with a timeline of former occupants, and possibly provide you with extra details such as occupations. As you search, it is important to keep in mind that your home may have had a different street number, and your street may have even had a different name. City and phone directories, in combination with old maps, are usually the best source for these old street names and numbers.


The City Archives has a complete run of the city and business directories for the period 1785-1935 on microfilm. These directories are an alphabetical listing of residents of the city, giving their occupation and address. You can also access the directories at the Historical Society, as well as the Free Library of Philadelphia at 1901 Vine Street (215-686-5322).

Census Records

Census records, depending upon the location and time period, may tell you who lived in your home or building, where they came from, how many children they had, the value of the property, and more. Census records can be especially useful in narrowing down birth, death, and even marriage dates that, in turn, can lead to more records about the homeowners.


The National Archives, Chestnut Street between 9th and 10th Streets, has the census schedules on microfilm available from 1790 to 1930.





nancy l. machinist JD, LCSW
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Society Hill Office



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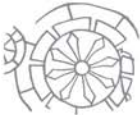
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**As a sideline, Jim also writes "Exploring the City" for the Society Hill Reporter*

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EXPLORING THE CITY

BY JIM MURPHY

The Lazaretto

In the summer and fall of 1793, panic reigned in Philadelphia, then the nation's capital. Yellow fever was quickly spreading through the waterfront area of the New World's busiest port, killing more than one out of ten residents. No one knew how to stop it.

By October, as many as 100 people were dying each day. Before the four-month epidemic ended, over 4,000 people succumbed to the disease. In addition, 17,000 of the city's 45,000 to 55,000 residents, including President George Washington, fled to safer ground.

The deadly disease, which struck many teenagers and heads of families, turned the skin yellow. Other symptoms included bleeding from just about any orifice and "black vomit."

Medical authorities believe French colonial refugees — some with slaves and fleeing a slave revolution — carried yellow fever here from Saint-Domingue (now Haiti).

In response to what Dr. David S. Barnes, Ph.D., associate professor and director of the Health & Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, calls a devastating "9-11-type experience," Philadelphia erected a large Lazaretto or quarantine station on the banks of the Delaware River, about 10 miles south of the city, to help prevent further calamity.

Named for St. Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers, the new Lazaretto was more isolated than a closer, smaller station built in 1742 on Province Island near Fort Mifflin. Historically, Lazarettos were built as early as the 14th and 15th centuries near European port cities.

While doctors of the day did not know yellow fever was spread by a type of mosquito, Lazaretto personnel stopped and inspected all ships, passengers, and cargo from June to October 1 — the usual quarantine season. (Late summer until the first frost is sometimes called "the sickly season.")

If there were no problems, the process would take about a day. If dead bodies or infected passengers were found on board, or if the ship came from a port known for a contagious disease, the ship would be stopped and held. All cargo and possessions would be fumigated or "purified," and the ship would be scoured and whitewashed clean. The process at this stage could take a day to two weeks or more.

Dr. Barnes, who is writing a book about the Lazaretto, first learned about the station while working with colleagues at Temple University on a History of Public Health course.

Instead of "the dilapidated corrugated metal shell" he imagined, Dr. Barnes was "blown away" by the noteworthy architecture, the scale of the buildings, and the "wild, undeveloped Little Tincum Island."

He found the station "weirdly bucolic" and "intriguing" and considers it "Ellis Island's Great Grandfather."

The Lazaretto closed in 1895, with some of its local duties moved to Marcus Hook and to federal stations near Lewes, Delaware, and Reedy Island, Delaware. Later, it served as a popular athletic club, flying school, and one of the country's first seaplane bases. The Tincum site still includes the graceful, three-and-a-half-story main hospital building. However, it is not open to the general public and is in need of repairs.

After preservationists filed a lawsuit over plans to make the area into an airport parking lot, Tincum Township purchased the land for use as a fire station, ballroom, and administrative offices in the main building.

Did the Lazaretto work? Dr. Barnes, who's been writing his book, *Lazaretto Ghosts: Stories of Immigrants, Epidemics and Quarantines in the 19th Century*, for six years says, "It's impossible to say."

Consider this, though: when yellow fever broke out at the Lazaretto in 1870, 14 people died there, including the quarantine master, head physician, and head nurse. But the disease never reached Philadelphia.

In 1853, New Orleans reported 7,849 deaths from yellow fever, and 4,000 in both 1858 and 1878. Memphis recorded over 5,000 yellow fever deaths in 1878 alone.

So if you judge the Lazaretto by the lack of a Philadelphia epidemic in 1870, or by many other years when cases of yellow fever, cholera, or other epidemic diseases did not spread from the quarantine station to the city, you probably have to consider it a rousing success.



America's oldest quarantine station, known as "Ellis Island's Great Grandfather," helped protect Philadelphia residents for 94 years.

FAST FACTS

Location

99 Wanamaker Ave.
Essington, PA
19029

In Operation

1801-1895

Original Size

10 acres

Significance

92 years older than Ellis Island, the Philadelphia Lazaretto is the oldest surviving quarantine facility in the Western Hemisphere and sixth oldest in the world.

Web Sites:

www.lazaretto.org;
1799lazaretto.org

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Pine Street: Antique (and Boutique!) Row

Over the last 15 years, a change has come to what we've always known as Antique Row, located on Pine Street from 9th to 13th Streets. Many antique dealers have closed their storefront shops, marketing via websites, antique shows, and auction houses. As a result, Pine Street has diversi-

fied, giving us a vibrant, eclectic group of new business to visit. A more apt name now might be Antique and Boutique Row — since a plethora of new, contemporary shops and restaurants have joined the remaining traditional antique stores. Here is a handful of the many Pine Street businesses that add to its new image.



M. Finkel and Daughter
936 Pine Street, 215-627-7797

Proprietor Amy Finkel is the second generation to occupy this store. In 1978, after she joined her father in the business, the words "and daughter" were added to the store sign. She has always focused on women's folk art, especially needlework and quilts; and is known nationally for her collection of samplers (framed stitched pictures by schoolgirls from the 1700's to mid-1800's). Amy describes Pine Street today as a vibrant, retail-oriented village of stores.



Good Karma Café
928 Pine Street, 215-901-0906

Opened in 2011, this community-oriented coffee shop invites neighbors to take advantage of the free wi-fi, chat with friends, or just relax while enjoying the organic coffee and teas, as well as their fresh pastries and other treats. A private meeting room is available, as is an outdoor Zen garden. This café's karma is good for the Street!



Show of Hands*
1006 Pine Street, 215-592-4010

This is one of the few galleries in Center City to sell one-of-a-kind crafts, including a collection of Swedish and Murano mid-century glass, as well as ceramics, pillows, scarves and lamps by contemporary American artists. According to owner Paul Harris, his was the first non-antique business to open on Pine Street 20 years ago. Today business is better than ever as the Street welcomes new businesses. Closed Tuesdays

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Hello Home*

1004 Pine Street, 215 545-7060

Jay Lamancuso owns both Hello Home and Industry and each has its own unique inventory. Hello Home specializes in designer-inspired home furnishings, custom upholstery, as well as a mix of contemporary lighting, home accessories and mid-century modern furniture.



Industry*

1020 Pine Street, 215-733-0208

Industry carries a wide variety of art, fashion accessories and jewelry geared to the young, urban crowd. Jay says he likes serving the neighborhood with good merchandise and reasonable prices. He is pleased with the variety of new businesses sprouting up on Pine Street.



Happily Ever After*

1010 Pine Street, 215-627-5790

This delightful "Best of Philly 2012" toy store offers retro recreations of classic, old-fashioned toys from the past. Very few battery-operated toys here! The large collection of dolls (for children, as well as adult collectors) is impressive. The store even has a doll club, which meets regularly. Owner Ed Perry thinks the new influx of shops gives energy to the existing antiques shops and likes the mix. Receive 10% off your purchase with this article.



Yarnphoria

1016 Pine Street, 215-923-0914

Yarnphoria became the new kid on the block this January. The shop sells a wide selection of yarns, and offers a roster of knitting and crocheting classes. You can also find hand-knitted or crocheted hats, bags and scarves and or even have one made to order. Owner Dona Flam is a New York City native who says she likes the Pine Street eclectic mix of independent, small shops and restaurants. Look for grand opening soon. Closed Mondays.



Adornamenti*

1106 Pine Street, 215 922-2722

Originally part of Show of Hands, Adornamenti showcases chic, contemporary jewelry from Europe and the United States. Every piece is hand crafted and unique. It is the only store on Pine Street selling jewelry exclusively. With affordable prices, Adornamenti is very popular. "Earrings are our best seller," claims owner John Arneith. Closed Tuesdays.



*Welcome Basket contributors



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PHILLY FOOD LOVERS

BY CLAIRE BATTEN

Very Sherry-Charred Brussels Sprouts

We believe that winter vegetables can be just as exciting as their lighter spring and summer cousins. It just takes a little imagination!

Happily, we recently bumped into Rick Nichols, former food writer extraordinaire for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, at the Reading Terminal Market and chatted about the undervalued Brussels sprout.

“People think they hate Brussels sprouts, because they associate them with the oversized, sulphurous orbs that you find in supermarkets. But baby Brussels sprouts are wonderful,” says Rick. He went on to describe his method of cooking them, which is a slightly simplified version of his friend Marc Vetri’s famous sherry-charred sprouts.

Speaking of Marc Vetri, I can’t wait to try his Spaghetti with Green Tomatoes & Clams... or the pork with noodles dish from Han Dynasty, an award-winning Chinese restaurant in Old City. Recipes for both of these dishes are in one of my favorite Christmas presents — *Philadelphia Chef’s Table* by April White, the former food editor for *Philadelphia* magazine.



The collection celebrates Philadelphia’s best restaurants and eateries with “at home” recipes and photographs from more than 50 legendary dining establishments, including Garces, Steven Starr’s empire and even the “gelato genius” at Capogiro.

This book would make a fabulous gift for any serious foodie. It’s available from good bookstores, including Headhouse Books (619 S. Second Street).

The Way the Cookie Crumbles

Cookies by Design, located at the Society Hill Towers Shopping Plaza, will sponsor their Grand Opening on Saturday, April 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. Free activities include cookie and coffee tasting, cookie decorating and other activities for kids. A portion of proceeds from any sales will benefit SHCA. Call 267-479-0000 with questions.

Nichols-Vetri Sherry-Charred Baby Brussels Sprouts



Serves 4 as a side dish

- 20 baby Brussels sprouts, trimmed & cut in half
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 to 3 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet, heat oil and butter. Add garlic and saute briefly, long enough to allow flavor to blend. Remove garlic from pan and discard. Add sprouts, face down, and char them over high heat until dark brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and season with sherry vinegar, salt and pepper. Return to heat, allow flavors to blend, and add remaining vinegar, heat through. Serve hot immediately or at room temperature up to six hours later.

**Fabulous gift for that foodie of yours:
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'FIX THE BRIX'

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Our Sidewalks, Our Responsibility

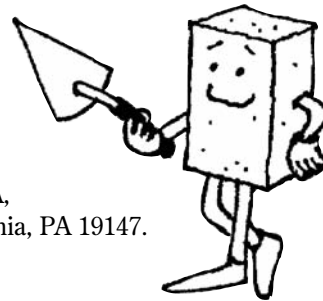
Over 100 households in Society Hill have participated in SHCA's "Fix the Brix" program over the last three years. If you have not yet heard about it, this is a sidewalk improvement program that assists homeowners in leveling their sidewalks. More importantly, this SHCA subsidy benefits each and every resident.

If you own a home in Society Hill and you wish to level your uneven brick or cement front sidewalks because they are a trip-and-fall hazard, SHCA can help. We will reimburse 40 percent of your total expenses, up to \$300.

Just look around our neighborhood, and on every block you will see broken, cracked, loose and uneven sidewalks. It is both unsightly and dangerous. We cannot rely on the city to remedy this, as they claim it is not their responsibility. In addition, we as homeowners are liable for any accidents incurred on our property.

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- 2** Suggestion: Call several contractors to get estimates.
- 3** Select a contractor who meets your needs and budget.
- 4** Please let us know when the work is done so that we may review it.
- 5** After work is completed, mail your invoice to SHCA, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147.
- 6** Receive a reimbursement check from SHCA.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, March 16**Robust Revitalization at Starr Garden**

Sculptor Roger Wing carved Pinocchio out of a 300-pound block of ice at the Starr Garden Winterfest.

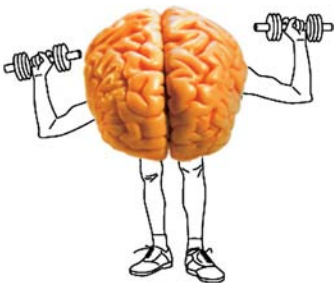
Revitalization efforts at Starr Garden, Philadelphia's oldest playground (6th & Lombard Streets) continue to be robust. Neighborhood volunteers cleaned up, planted, painted and just had fun during the citywide Love Your Park Day and Martin Luther King's Day of service.

Recently, Starr Garden hosted a Winterfest for over 200 neighbors, thanks to a generous grant provided

by the Fairmount Park Conservancy. Sculptor Roger Wing carved Pinocchio out of a 300-pound block of ice. In addition, children had free pony rides, a family-friendly DJ, face painting, balloon animals, and craft projects. The hot chocolate, soft pretzels, and baked goods hit the spot!

Don't miss out in all the fun! Come to the Second Annual St. Paddy's Day Fun(d)raiser on Saturday, March 16, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a pottery painting party for all ages.

If you would like to be involved in revitalization efforts or join the email distribution list, please send an email indicating your interest to StarrGardenNeighbors@gmail.com.

**Monday, May 13****Keep Your Brain Hot and Healthy!**

Join Society Hill — *Hot and Healthy!* on Monday, May 13, for a free talk featuring Andrew B. Newberg, M.D. Neighbors will gather at the Society Hill Synagogue (418 Spruce Street) at 7 p.m. to hear tips on how to keep your brain strong and healthy throughout your life.

Dr. Newberg, Director of Research at the Myrna Brind Center for Integrative Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Medical College, is considered a pioneer in the neuroscientific study of religious and spiritual experiences. He has been particularly interested in the relationship between the brain, religion, and health.

Society Hill — *Hot and Healthy!* is a free, community-based medical speaker series which provides up-to-date information promoting good health, well-being and disease prevention. Come join us and bring questions and comments! Refreshments will be served.

Sunday, April 7**Feverish Fun at Physick House***Pestilence Prevails*

Physick House (321 S. 4th Street) will host the opening of "Pestilence Prevails" on April 7 from 5 to 8 p.m. The evening will include live chamber music, food, a bar and tours of the new exhibit that will run from April 7 to September 30. Admission to the party is \$75 and space is limited. You can both register and pay at www.philalandmarks.org.

The exhibit "Pestilence Prevails" reproduces the sick room (complete with patient!) of a victim of yellow fever in the great Epidemic of 1793.

Philadelphia suffered many yellow fever epidemics, the most well known in the summers of 1793 and 1798. Visitors will learn about medical practices in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, particularly as doctors attempted to deal with this dreadful disease whose origins and pathology were unknown.

Physick House acquired its name from Dr. Philip Syng Physick, the father of American surgery. The doctor returned to America from studying medicine and surgery abroad just in time to use his skills in the yellow fever outbreak of 1893, assisting his mentor, Dr. Benjamin Rush.

Thursday, May 16**An Evening in Franklin Square**

Historic Philadelphia will host the fifth annual "An Evening in Franklin Square" on May 16. The event will commence at 5:30 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction, followed by dinner, a live auction, and dancing. One of the evening's highlights is the Square Derby, a carousel "race" where guests can buy a mount or place bets and race to the finish! Individual tickets are priced at \$200. Sponsorship and table packages are also available. Proceeds benefit this regional treasure that is one of William Penn's original squares.

For more information, contact 215-629-5801 ext. 207 or donation@historicphiladelphia.org.

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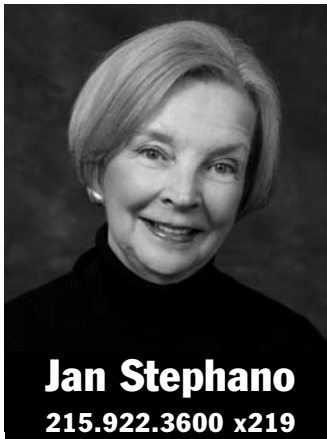
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SEE GRAFFITI? CALL GEORGE!

BY GEORGE KELLEY

A Graffiti-Free Zone

As we mentioned in the last issue, neighbors don't have to wander too far outside the borders of Society Hill to notice that mailboxes, street signs, lampposts, controller boxes, big belly trash bins, and newspaper kiosks are covered with stickers and graffiti. Is it a magical phenomenon that this is not happening in Society Hill? No!

Some years ago, SHCA volunteers grew tired of this blight and started to remove the unsightly stickers and graffiti from public property. Eventually the eyesores disappeared.

More recently, SHCA has hired professionals armed with proper tools and solvents, overseen by SHCA's Anti-graffiti Committee. Although almost all of the graffiti is gone before the residents ever see it, should you see any in your street or neighborhood, don't hesitate to contact Chairman George Kelley at Gkellaws@gmail.com or Administrator Matt DeJulio, at mattdejulio@aol.com.

And while we can't use SHCA funds to clean private property, the City does provide this service (the Neighborhood Services Division Hotline), that can be reached by dialing 311. Anyone who has difficulty reaching the City or who otherwise needs prompt advice or assistance should feel free to email Mr. Kelley.

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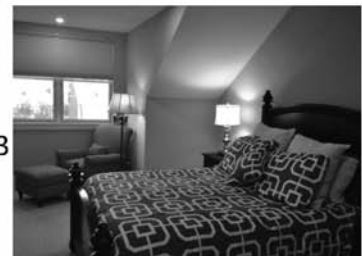
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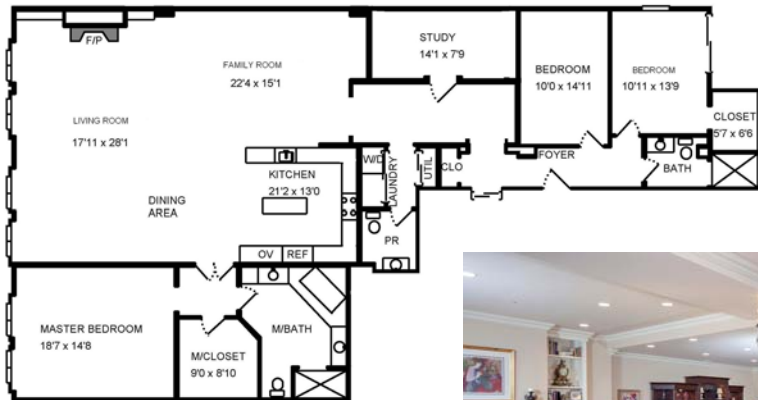
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\$3,500,000



Sun-soaked Three Bedroom Plus Study/Library

Sun-soaked three bedroom plus study/library, two and a half bathroom residence overlooking Washington Square with open floor plan, chef's kitchen, grand master suite and restored original building details throughout. 2716 sf
\$1,750,000



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www.ansp.org
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www.theclaystudio.org
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Franklin Institute Science Museum
222 N. 20th Street
Discovery.camo@fi.edu
215-448-1200

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Independence Seaport Museum
211 S. Columbus Blvd. & Walnut Street
Phillyseaport.org/camp
215-413-8630

Seaport Summer Camp explores maritime history, science, and boating in any of the one-week summer camp sessions.

Landmarks
321 S. 4th Street
philalandmarks.org
215-925-2251 ex. 5

Young Summer Sleuths explore history, colonial crafts, and fine arts utilizing both the Physick and Powel Houses.

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302-318 Salter Street **\$479,900-\$509,900**

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108 Lombard Street **\$850,000**

Absolutely stunning and spacious 3BD/2.5BA home with garage, cozy den, new rooftop deck, & Juliet balcony, expertly designed with a fireplace, detailed wood molding, hardwood floors, 2-story dining area, and custom granite and stainless kitchen.

210 Pine Street **\$875,000**

Fantastically located 3BD/3BA home featuring 1-year prepaid parking, contemporary kitchen, a red brick patio, and finished basement with bar, also complete with wood burning fireplace, beautiful hardwood floors, and charming crown moldings!

608 Addison Street **\$1,075,000**

Gorgeous 2BD/3.5BA home with 3 incredible outdoor spaces, 2-car garage, gated entry, and charming den, beautifully designed with a charming fireplace, hardwood floors, and soaring ceilings.

838-40 Lombard Street **\$1,695,000**

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415 Pine Street **\$1,945,000**

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2013 Membership Drive Continues Slightly Ahead of 2012

By mid-February, 845 SHCA residents had already renewed their membership — slightly ahead of the same time last year. If the current trend continues, we should surpass our 2012 membership total of 1,036.

A reminder was sent in early February to the 260 members in 2012 who had not yet renewed. If you are among those non-renewed members, please respond at your earliest convenience, so we may avoid the cost of further follow-up.

Winners of dinners for those who renewed before the end of 2012 were David and Suzanne Auten and Joanne Reider. Congratulations to these two households and a big thank you to all who renewed promptly.

In any event, we welcome all of the more than 2,600 households in Society Hill to join SHCA. 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 our social events — the Holiday Social, the Washington Square Affair, the Soiree at the Shambles, and the Spring Fling.

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 are not a member. All comments will be shared with the board, which represents every quadrant in our unique, historic neighborhood.

Appeal Parking Tickets Online

The City of Philadelphia has launched a new website that allows individuals to appeal parking tickets online. Appellants may upload documents in support of their appeal and browse a user-friendly guide to the rules of the parking ticket appeals process.

This new site, launched in cooperation with the Philadelphia Parking Authority, also puts into operation changes to the Traffic Code enacted by a City Ordinance passed earlier this year.

The new website is philapark.org/violations and can also be linked through the City's Finance Department website, www.phila.gov/finance.

SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

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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 \$ _____ Franklin Lights

\$ _____ Sidewalk Cleaning/Graffiti Removal \$ _____ Tree Tenders

\$ _____ Zoning and Historic Preservation \$ _____ 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

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\$1,150,000



4A ↘

IN MEMORIAM

Ralph Collier, 91

We are sad to announce the death of long-time neighbor Ralph Collier, 91, on Tuesday, January 29. Ralph was a well-known voice in Philadelphia radio, interviewing celebrities and newsworthy figures during a career that spanned seven decades. "He had a knack for opening people like a book," said his wife, Birtan.

Ralph Kisch was born in Berlin to an American father and a German mother. They fled the persecution of Jews in 1933 and relocated in the United States. He enlisted in the Army in 1943 and served in Europe with the Fifth Mobile

Radio Broadcasting Company, conducting psychological warfare against German forces.

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives said in the Condolence Resolution sent to Ralph's wife and his sister Gabrielle Elitov: "Mr. Collier exemplified the best qualities of the human experience. He generously gave of his heart and time to enhance the quality of life of his family and community..."

We offer our sympathy to Ralph's family and friends.

A Personal Remembrance

BY JANE BIBERMAN

Like thousands, if not millions, of people, I have listened to Ralph Collier's distinctive and cultured voice on the radio for decades. Whether it was talking about travel, reviewing books or interviewing celebrities, he was a beloved presence on the airwaves. I had the honor and privilege of meeting Ralph in person to profile him for the *Reporter's* "Nifty Neighbors" column, which appeared in the March/April 2011 issue. Naturally, I was nervous at the prospect of interviewing a master interviewer. But Ralph put me at ease and spent most of our time asking me about myself. I hope readers will go online and read the many articles devoted to him and his brilliant career. Whether talking about travel, reviewing books or interviewing celebrities, he was always fascinating. "Ralph was *very proud* to have interviewed four generations of Eisenhowers," his wife, Birtan, told me.

I was lucky enough to have a friendship with Ralph, albeit it for only a brief two years.

It was a relationship based on our love of dogs. He was very fond of my then-canine-companion, Butch, who was about 18 when I first took him to visit Ralph in his Society Hill home. Butch loved visiting and his host always provided delectable dog treats. Although advanced in years, both shared a zest for life. Both were strong, optimistic, and courageous.

After Butch passed away last May, I rescued a young dog of uncertain parentage. Ralph welcomed her eagerly and Trixie enjoyed sitting on his lap. Birtan invited us over a few weeks before Ralph died. We will miss him, but, as the rabbi reminded us at the funeral, we can all tune into Ralph anytime we want. Once broadcast, he told us, the man and his voice never die.

Fittingly, Ralph's obituary requested that contributions in his memory be made to the Morris Animal Refuge, 1242 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147.



Ralph Collier and Trixie

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First Steps to Good Health

The weather is warming up, giving neighbors no excuse to delay lacing up their sneakers and joining either (or both!) of Society Hill's walking groups. Together they welcome newcomers of any age or gender.

The **Walkie/Talkies** meet at Three Bears Park (3rd and Delancey) on Tuesday or Thursday mornings at 8:15 a.m. before heading

out for an hour's journey, exploring the interesting city streetscapes in and near our community.

"Philly Is Walking In the Park!" gathers at the fountain at Washington Square (6th and Locust) at 8 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 a.m. for a half-hour, self-paced walk through our beautiful park, led by Dr. Lisa Unger.



Dr. Robert B. Morris, M.D., Chief, Dept. of Cardiology, Pennsylvania Hospital, gave walkers heart-health tips during February's Communi-tea at the Bagel Factory, 510 Walnut Street.

F I N A L L Y . . .

Meet and Greet the Editor



Sandra Rothman, Editor

Jane Biberman is taking a break from writing the Nifty Neighbors column to celebrate a significant birthday, so I thought I'd take this opportunity to formally introduce myself as Managing Editor of the *Reporter*.

I came to Philadelphia from Chester County over ten years ago. Fortunately, fate settled me across the street from Bernice Hamel, who lost no time recruiting me for the *Reporter* team. I worked with Bernice for over a decade before taking the helm upon her retirement (and mine from the School District of Philadelphia).

Besides writing and teaching, many disparate interests have captured my imagination over time. I studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, owned a miniature furniture business called Kits and Kaboodle, spent ten years facilitating book discussion groups and 29 raising a great son.

In addition, I devoted a glorious few years to co-leading tour groups to the prehistoric caves of France (with a focus on Jungian psychology).

In that vein, I'm now a certified Philadelphia tour guide, working occasionally as a museum educator at both the Physick and Powel Houses. In addition, I'm an avid genealogist who spends too much time researching my Eastern European heritage!

I believe this newsletter is an important Society Hill institution, informing as well as building community. Now that you can put a face to my name, please stop and chat when you see me out and about. I'm interested in your thoughts and suggestions concerning both the *Reporter* and Society Hill.



SOCIETY HILL

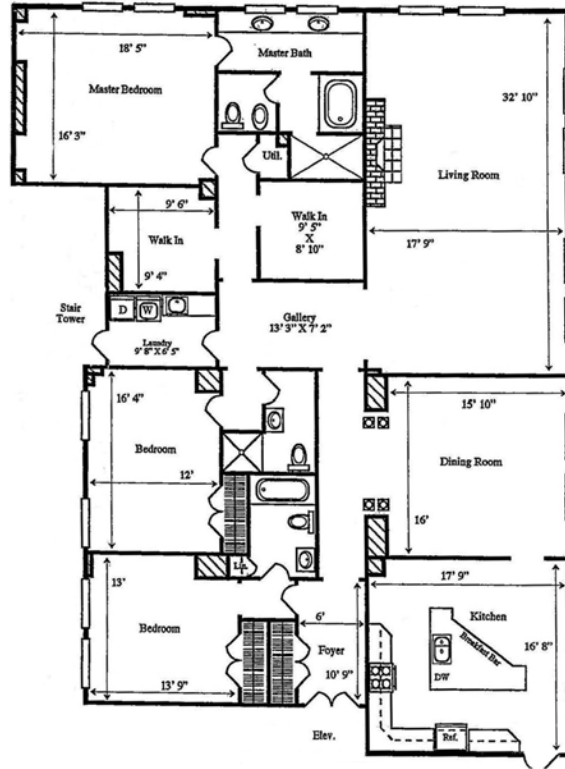
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Custom entire floor home with 360 degree city views including dramatic Washington Square vistas.

Enter the residence through a secure elevator that opens directly into a foyer appointed in marble. A grand gallery runs the length of the home. Perfect for entertaining, the large sun-soaked living room offers west and south facing windows, coffered ceilings, a gas burning fireplace and large mahogany wet bar. The arched entry to the formal dining room has beautiful faux-painted columns. The chef's kitchen features cherry cabinetry; granite countertops; under-counter and recessed lighting; center island with breakfast bar; and stainless steel GE Monogram gas range with electric oven and hood, Bosch dishwasher and Sub-Zero refrigerator with freezer drawer.

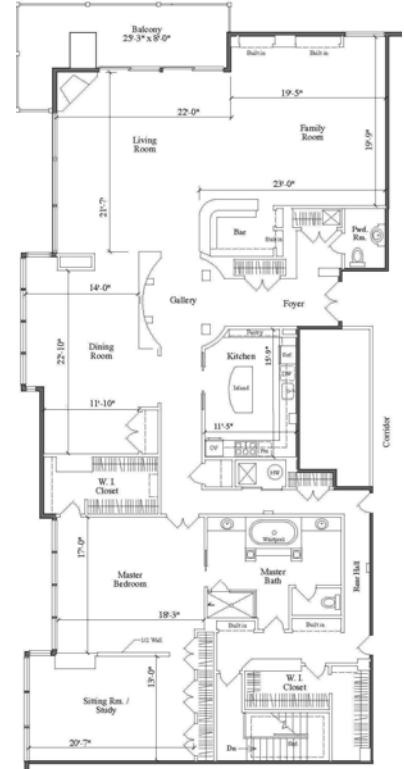
The lavish master suite has his and hers walk-in California Closets and an ensuite bathroom appointed in marble with a Jacuzzi tub, oversized seamless glass enclosed stall shower, private commode and bidet, and double vanity with windows overlooking Washington Square. Two additional bedrooms each have their own full baths, one ensuite and the other adjacent. Additional home features include oak floors in the living areas and carpet in the bedrooms, twelve foot ceilings and eight foot windows throughout, two Bose sound systems and a spacious laundry room.

The condominium comes with one parking space in a secure lot adjacent to the building and two storage spaces.
\$1,995,000

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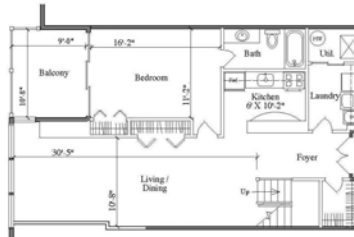
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